

Feats and Defeats of Memory:
Exploring Spaces of Canadian Magic
Realism

Agnieszka Rzepa

**Feats and Defeats of Memory:
Exploring Spaces of Canadian Magic
Realism**

WYDAWNICTWO
UAM

Contents

Acknowledgments	7
Introduction: Preliminaries and Memorabilia	9
Chapter I	
Opening Spaces of “An Invisible Country”: Contexts of Canadian Magic Realism	27
Chapter II	
Broad Vistas, Open Spaces: Memory and Place	65
Chapter III	
House, Home, Community: Dimensions of Memory and Domesticity	93
Chapter IV	
Other Spaces: Memory, Trauma, Representation, Culture	129
Coda: Homecomings	157
Works Cited	161
Streszczenie	173

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to the small, but active, intellectually vigorous and inspiring Polish Canadianist community. The book has benefited greatly from discussions I have had with numerous colleagues, as well as their support and encouragement.

The opportunity to conduct an important part of my research on the key issues discussed in this book was provided by the Faculty Research Grant of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canada; and the Visitorship Grant of the Institute of Canadian Studies, University of Ottawa, which I received in 2004. Financial and institutional support was also consistently provided by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the AMU School of English. I am particularly grateful to Prof. Jacek Fisiak, the former Head of the School, and the late Prof. Andrzej Kopcewicz for encouraging me to take up Canadian literary studies and for providing institutional space for Canada-centred research and teaching. The support provided by the AMU School of English continues under the leadership of Prof. Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, which I also gratefully acknowledge.

Heartfelt thanks and much love go to Robert and Bartek: to the former for his unfailing support and relieving me of too many responsibilities than could have been reasonably expected as I was writing the book; to the latter for providing distractions and diversions. I am also grateful, as always, to my parents.

Introduction

Preliminaries and Memorabilia

Contemporary literary magic realism is without doubt an international phenomenon. It can no longer be treated exclusively as the Latin American domain, or even, more broadly, as a particular mode of expression employed by the postcolonial “fringe” to the exclusion of the hegemonic “centre,” as the popularity of magic realist expression among, for example, British writers makes clear (see Hegerfeldt 2005). It still, however, remains tied to a broad and varied area of “marginality,” to the expression of minority discourses. The omnipresence of the mode in world literature has encouraged critics to attempt syntheses related to its nature and characteristics. While the concept and practice of magic realism has drawn a steady stream of scholars rooted in Anglo-American academia at least since the publication of Angel Flores’s seminal (though by now controversial) essay “Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction” in 1955, the “internationalisation” of the mode justifying comparativist perspectives has gained legitimacy with the publication of *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (1995), edited by Wendy Faris and Lois Parkinson Zamora. The influential anthology of critical texts spanning 70 years of critical discussions on magic realism has undoubtedly contributed to the renewed interest in both the critical constructions and literary practice of magic realism, as attested to by many recent English-language book-length studies on the subject (for example Schroeder 2004; Aldama 2003; Faris 2004; Hegerfeldt 2005). It seems that after a long period of terminological and generic confusion Anglo-American critics have now reached a broad, though only tentative, agreement on the definition of the mode, and, to a certain extent also on related terminology. This does not mean that the discussion does not rage on—it does—but as Christopher Warnes concludes, “magical realism seems finally to have gained definitional legitimacy in a global literary critical context (Warnes 2005 8).

In spite of the international appeal of magic realism, its rise in particular locations is conditioned by specific national, cultural and literary histories. While the story of Latin American magic realism has

been quite extensively documented and discussed (e.g., in Bravo 1978; Chiampi 1983; Ricci 1985; Bautista Gutiérrez 1991; Angulo 1995; Camayd-Freixas 1998) most of those other “local” stories of magic realism remain untold other than in scattered articles. Studies on West African (Cooper 1998), and British (Hegerfeldt 2005; Klonowska 2006) magic realism constitute partial exceptions to this trend. Only recently has there appeared a comparative study of magic realism in the Americas by Shannin Schroeder (2004), which addresses U.S. and Canadian examples of magic realist texts as well as Latin American ones.

Schroeder’s study is valid for my own work on Canadian magic realism, though it also disappoints by its privileging of texts by U.S. authors, especially those by ethnic minority writers. The only Canadian novels the author discusses are Robert Kroetsch’s admittedly paradigmatic *What the Crow Said* (1978) and Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), so in effect Schroeder theorizes North American magic realism almost exclusively on U.S. examples. She also ignores some of the crucial differences between Canada and the United States, which in effect produce distinct magic realist practices and critical discourses. She concludes that “North American magical realism is distinguished by its intensive preoccupation with pop culture and capitalism.” This focus contrasts with the Latin American variety’s assumption of a more “historically based” perspective (Schroeder 2004 159), which Schroeder calls, after Frederic Jameson, “anthropological,” and which relies on “the coexistence of pre-capitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features” (Jameson 1986 302). The former makes assertions rooted in the social and cultural realms, the claims of the latter spring from political foundations (Schroeder 2004 66). Some works of Canadian authors, especially examples of more recent magic realist production, do support these conclusions: the authority of consumer capitalist and/or pop cultures is seriously questioned by, for example, Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998) and Margaret Sweatman’s *When Alice Lay Down with Peter* (2001). There are many others, however, in which concerns related to consumer culture are not structurally important, as in Kroetsch’s *What the Crow Said* or Jack Hodgins’s *The Invention of the World* (1977). This does not necessarily invalidate Schroeder’s argument, but rather underlines the specific nature and location of Canadian magic realism, which she does not do justice to. She ignores, for example, the fact that much of Canadian magic realist

production, while concerned with “the reviewing and revision” (Schroeder 2004 64) of the narrative of the nation, conducts it from the dominant cultural perspective. The revisions are not necessarily culturally or politically disruptive, even though also in Canada the mode provides a space for voicing marginalised perspectives.

My book constitutes an attempt to address Canadian magic realism in its specific context, and examine different approaches to individual and cultural memory in selected Canadian magic realist prose.

As the term “magic realism” started to be applied to literary works produced outside of Latin America, including English-speaking countries, critics set out on the ongoing work of re-defining and at the same time questioning the validity of the term as a generic label. The term has been applied to such a wide variety of texts as to become in some critical opinions almost meaningless: many have claimed that it has lost its discriminatory capacity and therefore has outlived its usefulness. Critics have identified Rabelais and Sterne as important predecessors of the contemporary practitioners of the genre, looked for its roots in the American romance tradition, and frequently related it to Bakhtinian “rhetoric (or poetics) of excess” (Durix 1998 42-143; Danow 1995 67). As Rawdon Wilson suggests,

magical realism can be, and indeed is, used to describe virtually any literary text in which binary oppositions, or antinomies, can be discovered. Furthermore, it is often employed so loosely as a historical-geographical term that its textual implications tend to become obscured.

(Wilson 1995 223)

The currency of the term is particularly frequently both questioned and confirmed (often in the same text) by many practitioners of the relatively new field of postcolonial studies. Critics tend agree, however, that magic realism seems to be a mode particularly well suited for the expression of the native element in cultures of postcolonial countries, the element previously suppressed or misrepresented (see Durix 1998). Wendy Faris perceives the mode as actually reflecting, through its narrative hybridity and “cultural environment, the hybrid nature of much postcolonial society” (Faris 2004 1).

Even though attempts have been made to narrow down the definition of the mode (e.g., Durix 1998 116), they seem to have been successful only in the circle of Latin Americanists, most of whom, as Erik Camayd-Freixas claims, “lean towards an ethnological version” of the mode represented by works by Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez among others (Camayd-Freixas 1996 584). In contrast, most recent criticism in English suggests a broad definition that recognizes (though not always openly) magic realism’s roots in visual arts criticism, its later flowering in Latin American literature, as well as contemporary reworkings of the mode. Understandably, such a definition is usually vague enough to invite more discriminating labels for different “varieties” within magic realism. For example, Wendy B. Faris, whose *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* (2004) constitutes a solid synthesis of existing scholarship on the issue, suggests “five primary characteristics of the mode” (Faris 2004 7), at the same time distinguishing between its “tropical lush” and “northerly spare variety” (Faris 2004 27). As her somewhat frivolous choice of names for the varieties suggests, they are treated more as indications of broad and rather imprecisely defined trends than tools allowing for fine-tuned discriminations among magic realist texts.

The primary characteristics of magic realism are described as follows:

First, the text contains an “irreducible element” of magic; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space and identity.

(Faris 2004 7)

The important “irreducible element” is defined by Faris as any element that disrupts the post-Enlightenment, empirically-based Western concept of what constitutes reality and “the laws of the universe.” The term “northerly” variety refers, in general, to what others have designated the “European” (Weisgerber 1987 27; Delbaere 1992 79) or “epistemological” (González Echevarría 1974 35) variety of magic realism. Its characteristics often evoke loosely the definition of *Magischer Realismus* in German Neo-Expressionist painting offered by Franz Roh in 1925 (expanded in 1927), and then taken over and rather radically

modified by writers and literary critics alike. Roh stressed the particular realism of the paintings that “celebrates the mundane” (Roh 1995 17), and in which “mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it” (Roh 1995 16). Similarly, according to Weisgerber, the European variety of literary magic realism, represented early on by such writers as Bontempelli or Jünger, is essentially intellectual and philosophical, linked to idealism in that it assumes the “magic” to inhere in reality, and attempts to show a “hypothetical world” that is basically a verbal construct (Weisgerber 1987 26-27). It is “epistemological,” according to González Echevarría’s classification, as it is the perception of the observer that constitutes the source of the marvellous (Faris 2004 27). In this case what Faris calls the “irreducible element” does not need to belong to the realm of the supernatural, but might resemble, rather than go beyond, the uncanny.¹ Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, having discarded the application of Roh’s concepts to magic realism in literature as being characteristic of hyperrealism rather than literary magic realism (Delbaere 1992 77-78; Delbaere-Garant 1995 256), describes the “European” strain of magic realist tradition as practiced in Canada as “subjective,” inhabiting “a narrow strip between the real and the uncanny” (Delbaere 1992 76) and links it to the textual presence of European myths “as immutable and universal points of reference and of nature in its most timeless aspects” (Delbaere 1992 83).

Faris’s “tropical lush” variety of magic realism is related to what Weisgerber refers to by means of Carpentier’s term *lo real maravilloso*. The definition rests on the use of folklore and myth as the source of the “irreducible element,” which usually belongs to the realm of the supernatural, and is related to the assumption that (American) reality as such is marvellous, hence González Echevarría designates this variety as “ontological” (Faris 2004 27). Delbaere-Garant uses the term “anthropological” for related Canadian texts (Delbaere 1992 83).

More recently, Delbaere-Garant has introduced a more fine-tuned categorization applicable to magic realist texts in English, distinguishing

¹ The point that magic realism does not necessarily need to use the supernatural is often raised in criticism (e.g. in Menton 1998 36). The similarities between magic realism and the uncanny (as a literary mode) have also been often noted. While critics usually attempt to differentiate between the two, David Mikics argues “that magical realism is a mode or subset of the uncanny in which the uncanny exposes itself as a historical and cultural phenomenon” (Mikics 1995 373).

three categories. “Psychic realism” is the intellectualised and often heavily symbolic “magic realism generated from inside the psyche” (Delbaere-Garant 1995 251); “mythic realism” is characterized by the literal “interpenetration of the magic and the real,” where the natural is the source of magic (Delbaere-Garant 1995 252-253); and “grotesque realism” is understood as “a combination of North American tall tale, Latin American baroque, and Bakhtinian ‘carnavalesque’” (Delbaere-Garant 1995 256). All three might be deployed in the same text, which suggests again a very broad definition of magic realism as such.

While attempts at distinguishing different types of magic realism are worthwhile, in critical practice it tends to be difficult to differentiate among those varieties, and their characteristics might coexist in the same text: a point stressed both by Faris (Faris 2004 27). and Delbaere-Garant (Delbaere-Garant 1995 261). In result, the proliferation of critical terms often does not contribute to a better understanding of the narrative mode, and sometimes seems to serve only as a distinguishing mark of a particular critical contribution. A recent example is, in my view, the introduction of the term “magiccorealism” by Frederick Luis Aldama. Making a legitimate and well-argued claim that most of magic realist criticism confuses aesthetics with ontology, which, he believes, is partly encouraged by the name of the mode, suggesting a “linguistic lean toward binary oppositionality” (Aldama 2003 15), Aldama attempts to break this bind by re-introducing strictly literary concerns to his discussions of magic realist novels and film. His scrapping of the established term in favour of the coinage “magiccorealism” is motivated largely by the prescriptive desire to indicate how magic realist texts should be approached in critical practice. Additionally, the new term is intended to label works that evince legitimate postcolonial concerns and at the same time avoid exoticising the culturally-different other, in opposition to what the author perceives as commercially-motivated, diluted magic realism. In my view, however, the term “magiccorealism” is not a step beyond binary oppositions, which it still encodes, and as such will not encourage a new critical practice. Also, the critical act of ideological valuation that has to precede the choice of the label—is the work truly postcolonial and thus “good” and magiccorealist, or reactionary and thus magic realist—is arbitrary and idiosyncratic, and as such potentially questionable as a basis for making decisions regarding generic placement of literary works.

In critical discourse, magic realism has been most firmly aligned with postmodernism and postcolonialism, and credited with generalised subversive potential, though critics have also underlined its links with modernism, most often resulting in less liberating features of the mode. Some of the critics who have stressed the modernist alignment of magic realism, underscore its interest in the extension of the notion of the real and the fact that it questions the realist principle of representation, pointing out, in particular, the similarity between principles of magic realism and Eliot's mythic method (Wexler 1999). The "European" variety of magic realism in Canada, as defined by Delbaere-Garant, seems to have clear affinities with modernism in that it is concerned with looking for mythical resonances and structure of the world under the incidence and fragmentation of the present. In particular, the sense of mystery hidden under the incidence of everyday life, and the phenomenal world with its landscapes and objects, the mystery always on the verge of being revealed, suggests modernist epiphanies. At the same time, texts that can be situated within her "anthropological" variety, are often congruent with broadly conceived modernism, as evidenced by Hodgins's *The Invention of the World or Resurrection of Joseph Bourne* (1979).²

Once the connection between magic realism and modernism is recognized, magic realism is open to criticisms levelled against modernist writing from postcolonial positions. Thus Liam Connell, stressing the ethnocentric bias of magic realism, has suggested that magic realist writings share most of the characteristics of early-twentieth-century modernist texts, and thus there exist no valid reasons for grouping modernist and magic realist texts under different labels (Connell 1998 95). What accounts for the differing designations is the persistence of the dominant Western bias, which places Western progress and modernism in opposition to the non-Western stagnation and primitivism connected with "residual belief in myth, magic, and the use of ritual" (Connell 1998 95) and thus essentially premodern. Given the binary, "modernism" becomes an exclusively Western label as magic realism is placed "in a distinct [non-rationalist] epistemology which is organically linked to the persistence of mythic material" (Connell 1998 108). Connell argues

² For a discussion of Hodgins's modernism in relation to his short stories, many of which have been identified as magic realist, see Zacharasiewicz (1985).

further that wilful blindness of critics allows them, for example, to hail magic realism as a “a site of resistance against the homogenizing tendencies of modernization” because it apparently refers to traditional indigenous cultures, and at the same time ignore similar tendencies in Western literature or label them differently, which results in essentialism (Connell 1998 97-98). He claims, finally, that while both modernist and magic realist writing constitute “attempts to negotiate rapid modernization,” the differences between the two are those rooted in “the material conditions of [cultural] production” (Connell 1998 108) This conclusion echoes Fredric Jameson’s concept of magic realism, which also reconciles it with Carpentier’s *lo real maravilloso*: “magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features” (Jameson 1986 311).

Jeanne Delbaere-Garant’s observation that specific varieties of magic realism she discusses are often used by writers when they want to convey a message of particular significance, and therefore the mode functions as “a post-modernist equivalent of the epiphanic moments of the modernists” (Delbaere-Garant 1995 261) provides a link between the supposedly modernist location of magic realism and its frequent postmodernist placement. Delbaere-Garant in an earlier text places magic realism as developing alongside, not within but separately from, postmodernism (Delbaere 1992 77). However, the critical location of the mode as a discourse of the margin, which poses challenges to the unitary “centre;” the fact that it dwells on difference; and the challenges it poses to binary and linear post-Enlightenment thinking have caused other critics to suggest that the mode is essentially postmodern. Theo D’haen concludes that magic realism is, in fact, “the cutting edge of postmodernism” (D’haen 1995 201). The claim is supported, among others, by the fact that both postmodern and magic realist texts are characterised by the use of such literary devices as “self-reflexiveness, metafiction, eclecticism, redundancy, multiplicity, discontinuity, intertextuality, parody, the dissolution of character and narrative instance, the erasure of boundaries, and the destabilization of the reader” (D’haen 1995 192-193). Faris, after initially making a similar contention that magic realism constitutes “a strong current in the stream of postmodernism” (Faris 1995 165), concludes that the mode in general

mediates between modernism and postmodernism. She summarizes its double alignments as follows:

the epistemological concerns, along with the mythic elements, the primitivism, the psychological interiors and depths, align magical realism with much of modernism; the ontological questions raised by the presence of magical events, and the confrontations between different worlds and discourses, together with the collective spirit and political pointedness of the writing, align it with postmodernism. [...] the autonomy of discourse that magical realism implicitly proposes through the irreducible element means that it mediates the modernist organization of the world's chaos through art and the postmodern occlusion of the world by the text.

(Faris 2004 32-33)

While configurations of modernist-postmodernist elements differ from text to text, it is most often clear that the mode cannot be claimed exclusively for any of them.

Magic realist texts, regardless of their location in relation to modernism and postmodernism, have been insistently associated with postcolonialism in literature. This postcolonial location has been connected also with the mode's alignment with earlier literary tendencies and genres. For example, in recognition of the essential links between magic realism and romance, the mode has been redefined as "postcolonial romance" by Christopher Warnes. Warnes suggests that

the task of understanding magical realism's relationship with romance is best approached by considering the ways romance has conditioned the imperialist imagination, and the ways in which magical realism, at least in its postcolonial manifestations, returns romantic and exoticist tropes to their points of origin in ambivalent acts of reclamation and assertion that are almost always associated with the practice of a cultural politics of one form or another.

(Warnes 2005 14-15)

The claims Warnes makes as to the political and postcolonial engagement of magic realism have been made before, though in different contexts. The source of the postcolonial claim to magic realism is the assumption that colonization produces an internally divided cognitive system expressed through language marked by a binary opposition: a direct result of the mismatch between the imported language of the colonizer and the

physical and cultural reality of the colony. Stephen Slemon suggests that this condition is reflected in the magic realist interplay of different cognitive systems: the two kinds of discourse employed in magic realism, those of realism and fantasy, interact in such a way as to reflect “real conditions of speech and cognition within the social relations of a postcolonial culture” (Slemon 1995 411). In a similar vein, Suzanne Baker (Baker 1993) claims that magic realism constitutes a prime example of postcolonial writing, i.e. a kind of writing referring to “a wide range of discursive practices which resist colonialism and colonial ideologies” and which are vitally concerned with issues related to history and identity, and the fact that for the colonized all these are necessarily viewed from a double perspective. A double space is created: the dominant space of the colonizer is imposed on the colonized, whose space is rendered marginal, silent and invisible. The two correspond to the real and the magical in magic realism. Both the postcolonial space and magic realism are, in Baker’s view, “hybrid spaces.” She argues that magic realism can voice the hybrid postcolonial space, and in effect demolish concepts of unitary, homogenous reality. Therefore, to extend Baker’s claims made in relation to aboriginal magic realist writing in Australia (Baker 1992), the mode might be treated as best suited to the double challenge writers belonging to marginalized, often aboriginal communities, have to face. The challenge is to urge their people to struggle for their rights, and validate their everyday experience, at the same time stressing the vitality and validity of the “magical” aboriginal tradition essential to their sense of unique cultural identity, and presenting national history from an alternative point of view.

This suggestion that magic realism as such is charged with subversive potential is not accepted by all practitioners of postcolonial criticism. Many critics refer in this context to the roots of contemporary magic realist writing in Carpentier’s *lo real maravilloso americano*.³ Carpentier conceived of the concept as oppositional to what he perceived as the European manifestations of the marvellous, from the English Gothic novel to surrealism, to which he himself subscribed in the 1930s (Carpentier "On the Marvelous" 1995 84-85). He believed that “all of

³ For critical purposes Carpentier’s “American marvellous real” is most often merged, at least partially, with magic realism. It is often treated as its antecedent or a strain within magic realism, though some perceive it as a related, but separate mode.

America” shares a unique heritage (Carpentier "On the Marvelous" 1995 87) in which the marvellous constitutes inherent part of the quotidian. Equating the marvellous with the strange, and seeing in it a manifestation of the baroque, he stressed that it permeates America (Carpentier "Baroque" 1995 102, 105-106). Carpentier called “the entire history of America [...] a chronicle of the marvellous real” (Carpentier "On the Marvelous" 1995 88) breathed in, lived and believed by the inhabitants of the region, unlike the premeditated marvellous of surrealism created by manifesto and according to rules. According to Jean-Pierre Durix, Carpentier’s concept is ethnocentric and expressive of typically colonial dichotomous thinking: “Europe is reality, whereas America is the materialization of dreams” (Durix 1998 105). America as the imaginative object of desire is constructed by the European or Europeanized gaze, which assumes “the Old World” as the essential point of reference. This attitude is rooted in the earliest European responses to America, Durix claims, documented in numerous discovery and travel narratives. Similarly, García Márquez suggests in his Nobel Prize lecture as he traces the sources of the marvellous real to Renaissance narratives and chronicles that “what is ‘imported’ from Europe is [...] not its comparatively recent realism but its sense of what constitutes the marvellous” (Spiller 1999 375; see also García Márquez 1982). Likewise, Baker stresses that what is interpreted by white “Western” readers as “magic” in the works she discusses, is in fact “real” for aboriginal readers in the same sense in which immaculate conception or miracles performed by Jesus are “real” for Christians. Thus the real-magical dichotomy can be sustained only by accepting a non-indigenous, Eurocentric point of view, which questions the subversive potential of the mode.

The privileging of non-indigenous perceptions of reality coupled with the focus on marginalized cultures in magic realist texts is often accompanied by claiming the perspective and voice of such cultures by writers representing dominant cultures, which provides another potential link with modernist primitivism. The idealization of indigenous peoples as having access to realms of spirit and magic, long denied to “civilized” Europeans, was important, among others, to surrealists, whose ideas are related to, though distinct from, those of magic realism. Even though Carpentier when conceptualising the American marvellous real contrasted it explicitly with the “contrived” magic of surrealists, his concept, and that of magic realism, similarly explore and exploit myths and spirituality

of non-European cultures. Both might be interpreted as aimed at spiritual regeneration and expressing/experiencing a certain suppressed wholeness of experience; and as recuperative voices attempting to speak for marginalized cultures or groups that have been silenced.

Nevertheless, there arises the problem of the appropriation of voice (or “ventriloquism,” as Faris calls it [Faris 2004 145-154]) often raised by members of indigenous communities.⁴ In the context of colonialism (as this is how many Native Americans and Native Canadians understand their own position) or postcolonialism, it is claimed, non-indigenous writers have no right to claim indigenous voice: this leads to the commodification of indigenous cultures, no matter how sympathetic such appropriation might be. Faris defends magic realist uses of the cultures of marginalized groups by stressing the role of the mode as “a two-way cultural bridge,” which creates “a mysterious presence of spirit within the body of realist fiction. That spirit, with its occasional literalizing of metaphor, helps to decolonize mimesis, even though it may occasionally appropriate indigenous magic” (Faris 2004 157). Thus, she fashions magic realism as such into a tool of decolonization.

Even though a lot of magic realist critics, like Faris, tend to celebrate the mode, with only a few qualifications, as almost revolutionary in its implications, there is no conclusive proof validating such claims. The mode of magic realism is not inherently subversive; nor is it necessarily charged with Eurocentric biases. Even though it indeed might possess a subversive potential and function as a jolting counterdiscourse, it lends itself to various, widely differing, also reactionary, uses. Even though magic realism often validates minority perspectives and world-views, these are often at the same time undercut or suppressed, even in the same text. Such processes can be noticed, to use a Canadian example, in Jane Urquhart’s *Away* (1993): the novel both validates postcolonial “hybrid” spaces by focusing on dispossessed Irish settlers and Celtic mythology and their interactions both with the English colonizer and the colonized indigene; and confirms colonial biases and erasures through symbolic and

⁴ This question is analysed further in chapter I of the present work in reference to the First Nations in Canada.

marginal use of Native characters and beliefs, in fact obliterated in the novel by the settler narrative. Depending on the focus of the critic, the novel might then be treated as creating a “hybrid space” of postcolonialism, or as confirming and exemplifying the unitary space of colonialism. The textual context that evokes folk traditions and validates deep individual involvement with the community through structures of myth and belief, as much as it might question our received notions of reality, can at the same time promote social conservatism.

While recognizing the strong links magic realism has with modernism, I follow Faris in assuming its alignment both with modernism and postmodernism, and Stephen Slemon in placing it also as a postcolonial mode, especially given the recent redefinition of Canadian modernist novel as expressive of postcolonial sentiments (see Willmott 2002). Naturally, the exact location of particular texts in relation to these broad trends differs widely. At the same time, even though I accept magic realism as a postcolonial mode, which might be deployed in modernist and postmodernist textual contexts, I follow Hegerfeldt in her disentangling of the mode from the actual postcolonial placement of the author. As she writes, “regardless of the author’s place of birth, magic realist fiction [...] is decidedly postcolonial in that it re-thinks the dominant Western world-view in a number of ways” (Hegerfeldt 2005 3). This allows for a better understanding of contemporary Canadian magic realist prose, which springs from a troubled (post)colonial context of the former settler colony, and is often written by white writers holding a dominant social position as well as by First Nations writers, who are still in many ways in the position of colonial dependence. Regardless of authorship, however, though in different ways, Canadian texts of magic realism aim at dislodging the dominance of the rationalist worldview and rethink as well as validate marginalised worldviews. While this suggests a certain decolonising potential of such texts, the potential is not necessarily realised.

Postcolonialism, as evidenced by the vigorous discussion within Canadian⁵ as well as international academic and activist communities, is a loaded term and not necessarily a comfortable framework within which to discuss Canada and its literature. In spite of that, and bearing in mind all

⁵ Moss (2003) and Sugars (*Unhomely* 2004) are excellent collections of articles on different aspects of the thorny issue of Canadian postcolonialism.

the traps of the approach (which I address later in the book), I choose to adopt postcolonial approaches to literature and culture as the primary, though loose, methodological framework that allows me to ask and explore specific and valid questions related to Canadian magic realist texts selected for discussion. I partly follow here Terrie Goldie's suggestion (Goldie "Answering the Questions" 2003 311) and treat this particular lens as one of the tools that might help to understand not so much Canada itself as the imaginative rendition of Canada in selected works of Canadian magic realism.

The mode of magic realism, combining realism with the "irreducible element," lends itself particularly fruitfully to explorations of different aspects of memory. From the moment of its rise in Latin American literature, the mode has been used, among others, to interrogate the "tenuous fissure between past and present that constitutes memory" (Huyssen 1995 3); but also to address the future, often endowed with certain characteristics of such presenced "pastness." The rise in the popularity of magic realism and its vigorous spread around the world throughout the 1980s and 90s and into the 21st century may be perceived as related to, or perhaps part of, the parallel "memory boom of unprecedented proportions" (Huyssen 1995 5) manifested through social practice, and accompanied by theoretical reflection in diverse areas.

Always based on representation, and at the same time providing a basis for it, as Huyssen stresses (Huyssen 1995 3), memory is part and parcel of literature. Magic realism, however, tends to thematise memory-related concerns, exploring in particular the suppressed or erased aspects of memory, collective and individual, often through their non-realist manifestations. The political focus of memory-related issues, characteristic of Latin American magic realism, has persisted in texts from other parts of the world, though it has also been transformed: the concept of politics has widened to embrace not only significant social upheavals (power take-overs, revolutions, uprisings and wars), but also more covert power-related issues of ethnicity, gender, sexual preference. At the same time, postcolonial reflection on literature has made critics more sensitive to the covert meanings and potential implications of literary renditions of colonial and postcolonial experience, stressing the

palimpsestic nature of the (post)colonial space and culture. Memory in magic realism is then often used as a tool that allows for the recovery of the hidden “text” of pre-colonial past and mythology and validate it in the contemporary context. It is also often posed as a tool allowing for the reestablishment of severed community links, a renewal of community, giving a possibility of both retribution and reconciliation; as well as for examining the formation and deployment of the narrative of the nation and revising it. In the process of the recovery and validation of suppressed stories and worldviews, magic realism typically privileges memory over history, often juxtaposing the two, or in a postmodern fashion reconceptualising history as a highly selective, ideologically driven and ambivalent story open to interpretation.

This book approaches magic realist renditions of different dimensions of memory (individual and collective) as interlocking with other, variously conceived “spaces” of concern to magic realism: physical spaces (the landscape, the house), and social spaces (those of family and community; of social norms, including those related to race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality) and well as spaces of representation (photographs, narratives; in particular in relation to the retrieval of traumatic memories). This approach is inspired by Edward Casey’s broad conceptualisation of memory that frees it from the mind and allows it to enter the world beyond it. As Casey writes:

neither the human mind, nor even the individual rememberer in his or her self-identical being, could any longer claim to be the unique vehicle of memories. Instead, remembering can be said to be going on *between* the embodied human rememberer and the place he or she is *in* as well as *with* the others he or she is in the presence *of*.

(Casey 2000 312, Casey's emphasis)

Memory in this approach is “co-extensive with world” (Casey 2000 311). It is considered not simply as a mental capacity, but rather as a phenomenon at the crossroads of the individual, the cultural, the social, and the historical, but also the animate and the inanimate.

My focus in this work is the placement of Canadian magic realism and the re-workings of memory it effects against the background of Canadian fraught postcoloniality. Chapter I is devoted to a discussion on the place of magic realism in Canadian literary tradition. I argue that the popularity of magic realist expression in Canada is not necessarily at odds with its

predominantly realist literary tradition, as it is sometimes presented, but might be comfortably placed within it. At the same time, I show that early Canadian discourse on magic realism, in particular the influential reworking of Carpentier's "Americanist argument" (Hegerfeldt 2005 29) by Geoff Hancock in the 1980s, is best understood in the context of Canadian nationalism of the era; and it still remains entangled in the Canadian search for its specific mode of expression.

Issues related to the construction and de-construction of the national narrative in Canada still hold a central place in much of Canadian literary and cultural criticism, though they are approached from new perspectives (with a particular stress on hybridity) and are often an implicit rather than explicit presence in critical and literary texts. Likewise, memory-related issues in the context of Canadian magic realism often manifest themselves in relation to revisions of the settler narrative and reconsiderations of the fluctuating Canadian narratives of the nation, or the placement of marginalised subjects and communities vis-à-vis these narratives.

While contemporary Canadian magic realism springs from a hugely diversified cultural background, and reconsiderations of memory it offers are geared to a variety of purposes not necessarily connected with Canada-specific issues, this book examines texts that specifically address the context of Canada. Even within this group of texts, however, it would not be possible to do justice and provide a more or less unified perspective on Canadian magic realist texts springing from and referring to a myriad of ethnically-specific contexts; therefore I have decided to focus on texts rooted in the broadly conceived Euro-Canadian and Native Canadian cultural contexts. Additionally, while I accept Faris's broad definition of magic realism, I have limited myself in the selection of texts for discussion to those in which the "irreducible element" belongs essentially to the realm of the supernatural, though several works include also elements bordering on the uncanny. Chapters II, III and IV address then different "spaces of memory" as developed in magic realist prose by Euro-Canadian anglophone writers and First Nations writers.⁶

⁶ The reasons for my potentially controversial placing of First Nations texts in the context of Canadian literature as well as qualifying them as magic realist texts are addressed in chapter I.

My First Nations texts corpus is admittedly more limited than the Euro-Canadian corpus. Texts by non-Native authors span the period of twenty years (1976-1996) and include three short stories by Alistair MacLeod (“The Road to Rankin’s Point” [1976]; “Vision” [1986] and “Island” [1988]) as well as four novels: Jack Hodgins’s *The Invention of the World* (1997), Jane Urquhart’s *Away* (1993), Gail Anderson-Dargatz’s *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996) and Ann-Marie MacDonald’s *Fall on Your Knees* (1996). First Nations texts corpus consists of three novels written in the last decade of 20th c.: Lee Maracle’s *Ravensong* (1993), Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998) and Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach* (2000). This apparent imbalance is motivated not by the relative importance I attach to the texts, but rather by two important factors. The first one is my focus on the aspect of magic realism in Canada that ties it to its “Second World” context and the settler-invader nation-making project: a specific postcolonial perspective that endures in contemporary texts by Euro-Canadians, though it is crucially modified or even discarded by texts coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The second factor is related to the trajectory of the development of magic realism in Canada as well as the specific development of Canadian First Nations literatures. While it would be possible to trace the beginning of Canadian magic realist prose tradition back to at least 1939 and the publication of Howard O’Hagan’s *Tay John*, the prototypical texts of the Canadian variety of the mode were written in the 1970s—hence my selection of the non-Native texts starts with those coming from this “formative” decade. In the case of the First Nations texts, my choice was more limited as first Native Canadian novels started to appear and make felt impact on Canadian literature only in the 1980s and during that decade they tended to rely more on realism-related and documentary mode of presentation.

The texts by white authors are treated as “ethnic majority” writing in response to Padolsky’s plea for a more pluralistic approach to ethnic literature (Padolsky 1997). They are assumed, in other words, to come from a marked ethnic, rather than “neutral,” culturally and racially transparent background. Many foreground their own ethnic anchoring, especially by the use of mythologies and histories of specific ethnic groups (in particular elements of various Celtic mythologies). Nevertheless, these Euro-Canadian texts are all related to imaginative renderings and revisions of the settler narrative and/or the narrative of the

nation via intertwining “spaces of memory,” and they address in various ways issues of exile and home-(re)making. The novel *Fall on Your Knees* by Ann-Marie MacDonald, a writer of Scottish-Lebanese origin and therefore often identified as “transcultural,” is included in the discussion as it addresses, and is partially written from within, the legacy of the settler context, but at the same time, unlike the other texts, explicitly addresses the context of Canadian multiculturalism. First Nations writers’ texts deal with the same or similar issues through a different lens, and provide an important counterpoint and corrective to the postcolonial perspectives variously expressed in the non-Native texts. All the texts tend not to flout hybridity and movement, even though in some both constitute important areas of inquiry. What emerges from my discussions is a complicated web of memory-related “spaces” that criss-cross contemporary Canadian literary magic-realist landscape.

Chapter I

Opening Spaces of “An Invisible Country”: Contexts of Canadian Magic Realism

The label “magic realism” has consistently been applied by critics to many works of contemporary Canadian literature since at least mid-1970s. While this is not surprising, as many Canadian novels and short stories indeed fit comfortably basic generic requirements, the explanation why in Canada itself magic realism is often an appellation of choice is clearly closely tied to all the deep-rooted concerns related to national and cultural self-definition, and Canada’s search for national literature, as well as its complex and contested postcolonial placement. Discussions on magic realism were particularly fervent in the late 1970s and 1980s, gaining in the process a new inflection through the context of postmodernism and postcolonialism. They subsided in the early 1990s, but now seem to return in the context of fresh reconsiderations of Canadian social and literary landscapes on the one hand, and the internationalized mode of magic realism, on the other. Other cultural and political contexts and national histories might not have produced such a clear preference for the term, in spite of the existence of the appropriate body of literature.

The case in point might be the United States. While in Canada the term “magic realism” treated as a label for the discourse of the marginal has often been employed to extol the margin and allow it to energize national literary production, in the U.S. it has been used to nominally recognize but at the same time to contain the margin. While Canadian critics have devoted much attention to the appearance of national magic realist works, the U.S. critical community has been reluctant to apply the term to mainstream American literature. In the United States literary critics seem to prefer to apply the broader term “postmodernism” to magic realist novels that can be placed within the discourse. The effect of such privileging of apparently non-ideological formal experimentation, it has been suggested, might be a strategy serving to diffuse the political potential of those texts (D’haen 1995 200-201). The term “magic realism” has been reserved in the U.S. almost exclusively to describe “ethnic,” in particular

Latina/o, African-American and Native American texts, thus placing them beyond the mainstream American literature, with similar results. Writers and critics related to those communities (in particular the Latina/o community [see Christian 1996]) have been critical of the indiscriminate use of the label in the context of ethnicity as stultifying, essentialising, and producing a ghettoization effect, making it difficult for minority writers diverting from the magic realist standard to be published and critically recognized. Thus after the initial acceptance of the label, it has been rejected by many writers, including the group which most significantly contributes to the U.S. magic realist production: “cross-cultural women with a political agenda relating to gender and the marginalization of cultures” (Bowers 2004 57), including such writers as Toni Morrison or Maxine Hong Kingston. Critical responses to southern novels constitute an exception to the trend described above; partly because of the specific nature of the tradition, and partly perhaps in response to García Márquez’s recognition of the Faulknerian tradition as formative for Latin American magic realism.¹ Other exceptions are few and far between, and include discussions of Tim O’Brien’s novels, in particular *Going After Cacciato*; and works by William Kennedy, especially his *Ironweed*, which are interesting also because of the urban setting, relatively unusual for the mode.²

In Canada, on the other hand, the label has been sometimes used rather indiscriminately for almost any work containing elements of fantasy or grotesque (as in *Magic Realism: An Anthology* [1980], edited by Geoff Hancock) or in general diverging from realist expression (as in the case of Yann Martel’s modern parable/fable *Life of Pi* [2001]); or describing the passing of traditional ways of life of a particular community (e.g., to describe a collection of short stories by Joan Finnigan *Dancing at the Crossroads* [1995]). Additionally, as Delbaere-Garant points out, realism characterised by particular attention to detail or hyper-realism in writing has sometimes been confused in Canada with magic realism (as in the case of Alice Munro’s works). Delbaere-Garant traces the tendency to the fact that the term had been applied to a Canadian school of painting before it started to be used as a literary term (Delbaere 1992 78). Most often, however, the term has been employed (especially in the 1970s and

¹ See for example Taylor (2004) for his discussion of Lewis Nordan’s *Wolf Whistle* carried out in this vein.

² See Ude (1989) for a slightly more varied list of magic realist interventions into the United States literature.

80s) to underscore, and construct, the uniqueness of marginalized regions, in particular the Prairies and British Columbia, indicating both a particular manifestation of and escape from regionalism. By elevating the regions, it was also to elevate the status of Canadian literature as such. Questions concerning race and ethnicity in magic realist works by Canadian authors have only recently been given some critical attention. Throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s the majority of critically popular early works of Canadian magic realism were written by white writers and concerned largely white communities, though sometimes using Native American mythology and tradition as the source of magic. Hence both the writers and the stories were treated as "neutral" or "transparent" in terms of ethnicity and ethnic content, and to a certain extent they still are. Broadly speaking, while in the U.S. the dominant critical placement of magic realism might be described as "ethnic," in Canada it tends to be "geographical."

Nevertheless, even though the choice and foregrounding of the label might be perceived as ideological, the flowering of the Canadian variation of the mode can be, to a large extent, explained in terms of Canadian literary tradition. The mode can be understood as continuous with the specific Canadian realism, constantly in contest with romance; the popularity of the gothic; and the double pull of regionalism and nationalism in Canadian literary production, among others. While some of these are not necessarily unique, and can also be claimed, for example, as features of the United States literary tradition, the inflection given to them by the broader historical and cultural context has been markedly different. At the same time, due to the multiple influences of the United States on Canada, and certain elements that the two literary traditions--though often treated as disparate--do share, Canadian magic realism can also be placed within a more general context of English-speaking literary North America. All in all, with all dues given to cultural and historical differences, one can apply to Canada what Amaryll Chanady has claimed for Latin America: "the impetus provided by the imported concept of magic realism only strengthened and gave new directions to a current already present" in Canadian literature and culture (Chanady 1986 55).

At the same time, it is important to note that the "current already present" has necessarily consisted of a myriad strands, and multiple contexts, which have also produced, since the 1940s and 50s, varied manifestations of magic realism in Canada. Also, as Canadian literature had such a meagre presence

in Canadian school and university curricula and cultural life till the 1970s, its impact on many writers was not necessarily direct. It is then particularly important, especially in the oeuvre of writers of Robert Kroetsch's and Jack Hodgins's generation, to recognize the influence of the international literary context, like those of Faulkner, Carpentier and García Márquez, which Kroetsch and Hodgins readily admit.³ Also, even though the British Columbia and Prairie magic realism represented by Hodgins's *The Invention of the World* and Kroetsch's *What the Crow Said* respectively is treated as paradigmatic, one should remember that it does have predecessors and contemporaries; and that both past and present magic realist production in Canada is often markedly different from the standard established by these two writers. For example, works written by recent immigrants and Native Canadians form a magic realist category of their own, often straddling the "mainstream" Canadian literary tradition and very specific literary and cultural traditions their authors are part of. In consequence, the "geographical" locus of Canadian magic realism has shifted, and as the "ethnic" component has become more pronounced, the label is now more often contested, frequently by minority communities members, for the same reasons as in the United States, though the major thrust of criticism in Canada comes from the Native Canadian community and focuses on the issue of cultural appropriation. Additionally, marginalities explored in magic realist texts in Canada are now more often related to gender and sexuality, frequently in their intersection with ethnicity: representative examples of this trend might be Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees* or Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*.

Unfortunately, as some critics have noticed, the critical discourse on Canadian magic realism, while successfully elevating the mode to the status of a "sub-genre" of Canadian literature (Andrews 1999 1) has at the same time served to obscure its variety. The almost uniform focus on "the works of well-known, white, male, Western or West-Coast-based authors" has resulted in the marginalization of East-Coast writers, ethnic minority and women writers in critical discussions on magic realism in Canada (Andrews 1999 7). The bias persists even though magic realism is often treated as a mode particularly well suited to the expression of minority group concerns, and praised for its decolonizing capacity (Faris 2004 1): issues of primary concern to many Canadian critics.

³ See Hancock's interview with Hodgins: Hancock (1979/80 37, 39); and Neuman and Wilson (1982 43, 172).

* * *

The major impetus behind Canadian magic realist literary production in the 1970s was undoubtedly that of the Latin American boom of the 1950s and 60s, García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) providing probably the most important single influence since it appeared in English translation in 1970. The profound influence of the book on North American writers in general has often been noted. John Barth pronounced García Márquez to be "an exemplary postmodernist and a master of the storyteller's art" (Barth 1980 71) thus making him a blueprint figure for postmodernism as "a literature of replenishment," and at the same time by implication placing magic realist discourse as an important strand within literary postmodernism. Later and in the Canadian context, Geert Lernout linked Hodgins's and Kroetsch's novels to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, claiming at the same time that the three novels are representative of a new kind of postmodern novel, which followed the "novel of exhaustion." The new novel, he explained, was still narcissistic, but more socially grounded and rooted in orality and rural folklore, characterized by abundance of plots and subplots, employing the third person narrator in a novel way (Lernout 1985 52-53). *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as the paradigmatic text of magic realism is also present in those early classics of Canadian magic realism through intertextual echoes that reverberate likewise through more recent Canadian magic realist texts, be it in the image of Esther labelling furniture in her house with remembered stories in Jane Urquhart's *Away* or blue flax flowers falling from the sky in Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. It is at least partly due to García Márquez's influence that those two earlier texts, that set the tone for much of Canadian magic realism, have a clear postmodernist and postcolonial slant.

It was not only the superb Latin American literary production that caught attention of literary critics and authors in Canada, but also the rhetoric behind it, which coincided with the nationalist and regionalist fervour in Canada, and world-wide movements of liberation and protest. In this respect, Canada participated in a broader trend: because of the deep political engagement of North American and European intellectual elites of that era, as Jean-Pierre Durix notes, magic realism, with its political edge, found a conducive ground for spreading from Latin America to North America and Europe (Durix 1998 116). Particularly seductive,

also in Canada, was Alejo Carpentier's concept of *lo real maravilloso americano* (the American marvellous real) presented in 1949, elaborated in 1975, and now, in spite of the author's protestations, almost completely fused with that of magic realism. For Carpentier *lo real maravilloso americano* was, quite literally, Latin America. This concept will be echoed later in the preoccupation of magic realist texts with geography and land, which have also traditionally provided important conceptual and thematic anchors for Canadian literature and criticism alike. While Carpentier, and numerous other critics, perceived the "boom" in Latin American novel of the 1950s and 60s as an attempt to finally voice the continent (Carpentier "Baroque" 1995 107), some Canadian writers and critics saw Canadian magic realism as an equally direct response to Canada.

The fact that the geographical vastness and variety, as well as multiplicity and hybridity of cultures hailed by Carpentier as constituting the magic realist condition of Latin America are also present in Canada, was quickly seized on by critics and writers alike. The underpinning of native myth, so important for Carpentier, can also be found in the Native Canadian beliefs and stories. These correspondences were used by Geoff Hancock, editor of the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* (1975-1997), in his crusade for magic Canada carried out through articles, statements, interviews with writers, and the publishing of magic realist texts in his magazine, especially in the 1970s and 80s. Hancock, who has been called a "guru" of magic realism in Canada (Dahlie 1989 107), is a relatively influential cultural figure more than a rigorous literary or cultural critic, as he himself willingly admits (Hancock 1986 39). His articles on magic realism, full of unmitigated enthusiasm, usually have a broad scope, and his knowledge of the national and international magic realist scene cannot be questioned, though many of his arguments, especially in relation to Canadian magic realism, lack substance. Dahlie's response to one of Hancock's longer articles, rings true also in relation to others: "It is a lively piece [...] but I have some trouble with the subjective or even solipsistic nature of its verifications" (Dahlie 1989 107). While his texts are not, strictly speaking, scholarly articles, they have been influential enough to merit serious attention, especially that they seem to fit smoothly the politicised discourse of the era on Canadian literature in general, and magic realism in particular.

While Hancock makes it clear in some of his texts that he does not want to simply transplant Carpentier's ideas to Canada, and that the concept of the marvellous reality of Latin America, and Latin American

magic realism itself might rather serve as sites of inspiration for Canadian writers attempting to find their own, original way of expression, he often at the same time follows a similar, essentialising line of reasoning as Carpentier does. One of Hancock's central Carpentieresque claims is that "Canada is an invisible country in the same way that Colombia, Peru, Argentina, and Paraguay are invisible" (Hancock 1980 11). The role of the magic realist writer is to seize this hidden reality and make it visible, "to convince us that the marvellous is possible in a bland surface, and indeed inherent to the place" (Hancock 1980 10).

This tendency to link Canadian magic realism with Canadian geography is clear in the work of other critics, notably Jeanne Delbaere-Garant. In her interesting attempt to come up with more precise critical vocabulary that would adequately describe and allow to classify contemporary magic realist texts in English she draws on Canadian examples to suggest the term "mythic realism." She borrows the term itself from Ondaatje, who used it in his 1989 afterword to Howard O'Hagan's novel *Tay John* (1939) to mark what he perceived as the text's specifically Canadian engagement with myth and landscape:

O'Hagan's mythic realism seems to me [...] much more apt as a way of portraying the west and much of this country than magic realism, which doesn't really seem to nestle that convincingly with the cold-blooded sternness that is at the heart of the Canadian character. O'Hagan charts a clash of romance and myth against the cold realities of a progress-oriented world.

(Ondaatje 1989 263)

Ondaatje places O'Hagan's novel among a few other texts—Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* (1945), Ethel Wilson's *Swamp Angel* (1954) and Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook* (1959)—which, he believes, mark the beginning of Canadian contemporary novel. What they share is, among others,

a sense of geography that results in a deep connectedness between the characters and place. [...] In these works the landscape moves around [...], *behaving* towards characters. It is not a landscape that just sits back and damns the characters with droughts. It is quicksilver, changeable, human—we are no longer part of the realistic novel, and no longer part of the European tradition.

(Ondaatje 1989 272, Ondaatje's emphasis)

Delbaere-Garant treats these active landscapes intimately connected with character and constituting the source of “magic” as a feature of her “mythic realism”: a variety of magic realism characteristic of post-settler colonies “from which indigenous cultures have largely vanished, even though they remain hauntingly present in the place itself” (Delbaere-Garant 1995 253). The term is not prescriptive or specifically connected with a particular national context, and the author makes clear that “mythic realism” tends to coexist even within one work with other varieties of magic realism (“psychic realism” and “grotesque realism”). At the same time, the term itself and the majority of her examples link it with the Canadian context, and implicitly with the earlier approaches to Canadian magic realism.

Hancock’s attempts to pose magic realism as a Canadian mode of writing *par excellence* are illustrative of the eternal problem of representation and mimesis, as well as the long standing “confusion of narrative with ontology” (Aldama 2003 2) in magic realist criticism. Paradoxically, the mode often referred to, even by Hancock, as anti- or post-realist is praised for its realism, for apparently managing to achieve a perfect mimetic relation with extra-textual “reality” that it reveals. The contention, quite often found in criticism, has also been made by writers. Jack Hodgins, for example, stresses that his magic realist works are, in fact, “realistic,” true to his vision of reality promoted by the natural and social specificities of British Columbia, and that he wants what he describes to be believed “quite literally” (Hancock 1979/80 48, 57). He is not the only one making such argument. Carpentier and García Márquez, among others, have directly linked this particular mode of writing to “reality as experienced.” Hodgins himself later in the same interview qualifies his statement by pointing to a deeper reality that magic realism purportedly reflects: “It’s not the realism of the tree. It’s this other thing, the reality beyond the tree” (Hancock 1979/80 57).

In his writings Hancock claims in particular western Canada—the Prairies and British Columbia—for magic realism. He conceptualises British Columbia as “less a state of nature than a state of mind” (Hancock 1986 32) and compares it to García Márquez’s Columbia. The isolation of the province, its dramatic landscapes, its nature that becomes “the meta-

phor for mankind" (Hancock 1986 32), local life, folklore, and myth: all these make magic realism a natural expression of the B.C. reality, which needs to be reclaimed, and re-membered.

Hancock's pronouncements of magic realism as a basically western Canadian mode rooted both in the geographical and cultural givens of the area, supported by personal sentiment and experience, can also be placed in the context of the economic and cultural differences between eastern and western provinces, and the skewed power relations between the two. Stanley E. McMullin, for example, perceives western Canada as being marginalized (economically, politically and culturally) by eastern Canada, and maintains that "if the heartland [eastern Canada] defines imperial identity, the hinterland [western Canada], striving for cultural survival, seeks mythology which reveals its unique regional identity" (McMullin 1986 16), this mythology being expressed more and more often through the "eccentric" and "peculiar mode which central Canadians call 'magic realism'" (McMullin 1986 21). According to McMullin the "eccentricity" is in danger of being soon rationalized, smoothed out, by the heartland and then passed "back to the hinterland as an imperial judgment" (McMullin 1986 21). Clearly, according to the author, attaching the label of magic realism (or perhaps attaching any label at all) to the mode, serves such a proprietary purpose. This specific kind of hinterland magic realism, like other kinds of "marginal" writing, is, according to him, an expression of the constant identity search of the hinterland, as it is a medium through which authors explore regional histories suppressed by the heartland and its realistic literature (McMullin 1994). Thus it is both a means of glimpsing the process of internal colonization and marginalization, and a way out of it.

The question of colonialism and postcolonialism, inherent to Hancock's texts, was first introduced into discussions on magic realism by Carpentier, who was the first to define the mode as being a specific product of colonial and postcolonial Latin-American societies when he stressed a mixture of cultures and races (*mestizaje*) producing an awareness of otherness (Carpentier "Baroque" 1995 100), as well as the landscapes and natural conditions, as constituting the sources of his marvelous real. As Amaryll Chanady has pointed out, Angel Flores's 1955 essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," an early attempt at defining magic realism, had similar aims: to add validity to, and to advertise the literature of former colonies (Chanady 1995 127), by stressing its

similarity to the colonizers' European canon treated as universal, but also, in a somewhat contradictory way, by underscoring its specificity. Chanady calls the strategy of ascribing "a particular manifestation of international avant-guard [...] to a particular continent" (Chanady 1995 131) a territorialization of the imaginary: a condition present on a smaller scale also in Canada.

Canadian writers and critics were quick to notice that the culture of their country, like Latin American cultures, springs from the collision of the intellectual tradition of Europe and largely oral Native traditions based on myth, mirrored by the collision of the mythic/folkloric and realist elements in magic realism (Stephen Guppy qtd in Hancock 1986 34). Thus magic realism has also been used to stress the ambiguous (post)colonial status of the country. In the 1970s and 80s Canada was still perceived as "invisible" culturally and politically; existing, unlike the United States, in a certain, now celebrated, aporia of identity, which is a legacy of its prolonged colonial status. Then as now Canada has perceived itself as being subject to new cultural, economic and political colonization on the part of its southern neighbour, which stands for the ultimate hegemonic "centre" of the post-WW II world. In spite of its economic stature, it still inhabits cultural and political margins, the grey zone of relative insignificance, which supposedly might be linked to the preference for magic realist expression (Kroetsch qtd in Slemon 1995 408). Using the label "magic realism" for a current present in Canadian literature has been then an attempt to stress the particular status of Canada, while focusing on the uniqueness of its literature diverting from both the "conventional" British models and the "postmodern" U.S. standard; but also stressing its affinity and forging a new alliance with literary Latin America, and consequently the discourse of postcoloniality,⁴ which was to make a felt impact on Canada only in the late 1980s.⁵ Hodgins and Kroetsch set in their works, in various ways, the postcolonial and postmodern example for the Canadian variation of magic realism. For Hancock, clearly, magic realism was a way both to claim a unique national identity ("the marvellous has strengthened our definition of ourselves" [Hancock 1986 48]) and to put Canada on the world literary map, thus ending its cultural invisibility

⁴ A similar point has been made by Durix (1998 145)

⁵ Donna Bennett maintains, however, that "one could read an inchoate postcolonialism out of the whole history of the Canadian literary and cultural dialogue" (Bennett Winter 1993-Spring 1994 170).

("Magic realism opens up possibilities of language, of imagery, of literary conventions that can indeed elevate Canada's prose writers to international stature" [Hancock 1980 14]).

The drive for the national magic realist tradition is then closely related to the search for quality national literature, for the literature that would express Canada and define it to the world, hopefully also elevating its literary status. This concern of Canadian literary criticism has been a well-documented one since at least early in the 20th c. The urgency of the search is rooted in Canada's complicated heritage of colonization. When Americans in the U.S. were busy forging their national literature in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Canada still perceived itself, also in terms of culture, as continuous with the United Kingdom and the Empire it was part of. Thus at the time when a "national literature" started to be treated as expressive of national character, and, accordingly, one of the defining features of a national unit, Canada still did not have a coherent national discourse. In spite of waves of nationalism, even after the Confederation of 1867 it tended to place itself in the context of the Empire and later that of the newly formed British Commonwealth of Nations. It was only in the 20th c., in particular since the 1920s, that there clearly arose a need for such a cultural national definition through literature. As Glenn Willmott (2002) argues the whole Canadian modernist project from the beginning of the 20th c. till the transitional decade of the 1960s was rooted in the necessities of the unfinished national project, the sense of Canada as an "unreal country." This nationalist urgency continued through the next two decades and it still fuels much of Canadian literature and literary criticism, though it has gained a markedly different inflection.

Carpentier's "geographical fallacy" in its Canadian variation has also been part and parcel of Canadian literary criticism, clear it its "topocentrism" as Leon Surette calls it. The wave of nationalism which followed World War I made Canada a fashionable literary topic. Canadian setting and themes were heavily promoted and popular, and literary renditions of nature (in particular landscape) elevated as expressive of the essential Canadianness of the country. In spite of social changes and the growth of cities, the favourite setting, as W.H. New notes, was still the countryside (New 1989 139): a tradition continued in many Canadian magic realist

novels. In spite of the debate initiated in the 1920s by A.J.M. Smith's promotion of literary cosmopolitanism over "nativism" and the right of the Canadian artist to "freedom in the choice and treatment of his subject" (Smith April 1928), the assumption that national literature should be reflective of the collective soul of the nation has remained a constant in Canadian literary criticism for many years. The soul of the nation, on the other hand, has remained yoked to geography. Since at least the beginning of 19th c., Surette claims, Canadian literary criticism has been dominated by different varieties of the assumption that truly Canadian literature must be expressive of Canadian natural environment, which shapes Canadian culture. Consequently, Canadian literature has been conceptualised as "that literature informed by a concern with the accommodation of a European imagination to a harsh and hostile physical environment" (Surette Spring/Summer 1982) and its canon formed accordingly. As Kertzer notes, even more recent (he refers to the late 1980s) postmodernist attempts to banish the *genius loci* and the nationalist concerns from Can.Lit. criticism have achieved only a displacement and dispersal of these concerns, without quenching the urge to define the unique nature of Canadian literature (Kertzer 1991 82-85). The general shift of the critical discourse to focus on postmodern, postcolonial and multicultural issues is accompanied by, often veiled, concerns with defining Canada as expressed through its literature.

Most concerted attempts at the creation of the Canadian canon, which is related to this desire, were made after World War II, when new canon-shaping forces appeared. The dissolution of the British Empire, the dwindling of the significance of the United Kingdom in the world arena, as well as the rise of the political and economic influence of the United States, provoked the rising wave of nationalism which reached its peak in the late 1960s and 1970s, and was partly fuelled by alarming findings described in the Massey Report on "National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Science" of 1951. Among others, the report revealed the overwhelming influence of the U.S. culture on Canada, and noted a lack of distinctive Canadian national literature and culture in general. In response to the recommendations of the report the federal government developed a new framework in order to promote and sponsor Canadian culture, and monitor foreign cultural imports, as well as the Canadian-ness of Canadian artistic production. Consistent federal funding of cultural activity heavily contributed to the unprecedented rise in literary production in the

years 1960-1985 (Corse 1997 59). Among others, the state supported a number of literature-related projects including the *Literary History of Canada* (1965). The aim was clearly twofold: on the one hand, Canada was striving to define itself culturally as a North American nation distinct from the United Kingdom. On the other, it attempted to show its cultural difference from the United States, perceived mostly as a cultural, but also political threat. Nevertheless, the obvious parallel between the situation of literary Canada in mid-20th c. and the U.S. a hundred years earlier was used to underline the importance of the "literary awakening" and identity search. This parallel frames, for example, Hugo McPherson's chapter on Canadian fiction between 1940 and 1960, the last period treated by the first edition of *Literary History of Canada*. As he writes at one point, contemporary writers such as Hugh MacLennan, Mordecai Richler, Robertson Davies and Ethel Wilson "persuade us that the Canadian novel has begun to find its tongue; has begun, indeed, to 'create' Canada in the way that Hawthorne, a century earlier helped to create New England" (McPherson 1965 694).

At the time the national literary canon was taking shape thanks to the rising academic interest in anglophone writing since the 1950s (New 1989 198). The canon-making process was affected by such critical efforts as that demonstrated by the *Literary History of Canada*, but also by more concerted attempts at canonical regulation, such as the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel in 1978. The controversy surrounding conference organizers' strategy of compiling lists of the Canadian canon based on the responses of participants provoked an explicit debate on the "canonless" status of Canadian literature, and the conference in result helped to boost research on Canadian literature, and "to institutionalize both the subject of 'Can Lit' in colleges and universities and the likely content of the syllabi of those courses" (Corse 1997 54). The concurrent rise of thematic criticism, spurred by Margaret Atwood's nationalistic and controversial *Survival* (1972), also influenced the process of shaping the canon at the same time affirming the sociological focus of Canadian literary criticism. The canon, or perhaps just the critical bias, the era produced⁶ was based, among others, on the assumption that "'realism' (how-

⁶ The ontological status of Canadian literary canon is uncertain: while many critics do refer to it, usually stressing its being bound to the discourse of the nation, others insist that there exist multiple canons, or stress the canon's extreme flexibility, or even question its existence altogether. A good survey of these critical positions, and a discussion

ever romantic in execution)” is preferable to “discontinuous narrative. ‘Documentary’ maintained its appeal, and [...] the natural landscape (rather than the people) was still accepted as the distinguishing national characteristic” (New 1989 198).

The persistent realist bias in Canadian literary tradition that New is referring to started to find its way to Canadian literature in the second half of 19th c., when realism was perceived by some writers and critics as the best medium to express the nation, though it was also often violently opposed at least up to the 1920s (see Bobak 1981). In spite of the efforts of such writers as Sarah Janette Duncan, under the influence of William Dean Howells, it was apparently only in the 1920s and 30s that the truly realist treatment of urban and immigrant themes entered Canadian prose, and that, at the same time, “prairie writers [...] began the systematic transformation of Canadian fiction from romance to realism” (Pacey 1965 676). However, during the two decades between 1920 and 1940, as Pacey writes with clear regret, not many serious realist prose works were written, the majority of writers producing historical romances and regional idylls. Pacey’s regretful tone and his treatment of realism as a measure of excellence is rather typical of Canadian criticism up to at least the 1960s. In the context of the critical “topocentrism” and the preference for realist expression, it is interesting to note that McMullin and Hancock claim magic realism, defined often as an anti- or a post-realist mode, for Canadian regionalism, which is treated as one of the foundations of Canadian literature and is usually connected with realism. The foregrounding of mythologies expressive of shared regional marginality, or “eccentricity,” as McMullin calls it, which seems to allow for a redefinition of regionalism, remains, in fact, within the confines of traditional regionalist discourse, or to be more specific, within “the first solitude” literary regionalism, to use Lisa Chalykoff’s term. The discourse assumes that regional “space,” very much conditioned by geography, has a “spirit” or “essence” responsible for the mentality of the region’s inhabitants, and, ideally, reflected in the region’s literature (Chalykoff 1998 163-167). The *genius loci* can be expressed in a variety of forms and styles, including that of magic realism.

on the implications of the possible “canonless” status of Canadian literature can be found in Lecker (1993).

Even considering the radical change of the scene of Canadian literature and criticism in the late 1970s and 80s, when more attention started to be paid to counterrealist trends, part of the attractiveness of the label of magic realism might perhaps be perceived in its ability to combine an indication of both an adherence to an important, and critically highlighted, element of the tradition (realism) and an attractive non-traditional element (magic). In fact, as Jeanne Delbaere-Garant has pointed out, magic realist writers in English-speaking countries, including Canada, "devise ways of heightening the real" more consistently than the Latin-American prototype, the "magic" in their works providing only significant interludes: "a postmodernist equivalent to the epiphanic moments of the modernists" (Delbaere-Garant 1995 261). Thus the axiology-typology-ideology link claimed by Zofia Mitosek in her conceptualization of magic realism as an example of critical appropriations of realism (Mitosek 1997 72) would be confirmed: high valuation of realism might have prompted Canadian critics to label works diverting from it, but still considered of high literary quality, as a specific kind of realism.

Such qualification, perhaps, might be perceived as continuous with the somewhat ambiguous nature of Canadian realism itself. Early 20th century Canadian realism was more a matter of the subject and setting than of particular formal and narrative devices (New 1989 156). Even though many Canadian critics, like Pacey, have framed the generic history of Canadian literature in terms of the realism-romance antinomy, as Glenn Willmott maintains,

realism is understood, from Duncan [...] to [...] Callaghan, not to oppose romance, but to absorb it. [...] this absorption may be thought of as a kind of turning-inside-out of realism and romance alike, where realism must always register an incomplete reality, and romance an historicized wish, and therefore to mark the production of a new formal practice.

(Willmott 2002 23)

While for Willmott the new formal practice, expressive of Canadian modernism, is a specifically elasticised *bildungsroman*, it is equally possible to argue that at a later date, the double pull of realism and romance might have produced a context conducive to the magic realist expression and its critical acceptance. In fact, affinities between romance, in particular gothic romance, and magic realism allow for considering a certain continuity of the two, and explain why Canadian magic realism seems to be often accompanied by elements specific of North American gothicism.

The realism-romance interaction is a property of a broader North American literary space. While the United States boasts romance and realist traditions sharply delineated by critical consensus, the consensus has been seriously contested, and currently much of its literature is also described in terms of an “uneasy standoff” between realism and romance.⁷ It was only in the 1950s that romance in the United States was contrasted with the European novelistic tradition, and canonized, partly through the efforts of Richard Chase and, as some critics maintain, at the cost of “devaluing the non-romance elements in major authors” (Reising 1986 128). Even Chase, however, was careful to note that “the romances of our literature, like European prose romances, are literary hybrids, unique only in their peculiar but widely differing amalgamation of novelistic and romance elements” (Chase 1957 14). Part of the importance of the romance in the U.S.A., much as the conceptualization of the tradition has been questioned, is its being yoked to the important moment of national self-definition and expressive, though not necessarily explicitly, of the anxieties of the nation-building process. Thus, at the moment of Canadian national fervour and literary growth, it is the romance tradition epitomized by Hawthorne that McPherson evokes in reference to the few Canadian writers of the 1940s and 50s who, according to him, were finally imaginatively creating Canada by working, in their individual ways, in line with the romance tradition, and sharing “the technique of combining social documentation with symbolic patterning” (McPherson 1965 702).

That such combinations are also present in magic-realist works has become obvious to critics, some of whom have suggested a romance lineage for magic realism. The link has been underscored by magic realist writers themselves, especially through repeated acknowledgements of Faulkner as an important or even formative influence.⁸ Thus critical for-

⁷ The term in quotes comes from Wendy Steiner’s article on the U.S. novel between 1910 and 1945 in Elliott (1988 862).

⁸ Examples include Gabriel García Márquez, whose declarations as to whether Faulknerian overtones critics see in his works are a matter of influence or simple “analogy of context” have been contradictory (see [Plummer 1999] and [Oberhelman 1999] for relevant quotes from interviews and critical views on the García Márquez-Faulkner

mulations concerning the nature of the American romance, as well as Northrop Frye's theorization of romance in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) seem to be of particular importance for the conceptualization of magic realism not only in the North American context. Much as some critics would like to see the whole of the American romance tradition as a predecessor of contemporary North American magic realism,⁹ it seems that the particular variation of American romance that magic realism can claim for itself is most importantly the one represented by Hawthorne and Faulkner, both of whom, in their diverse contexts, stressed the entanglements of the individual within the community, in contrast to what some see as "the Romance's abandoning of community" (McWilliams 1994 73). Canadian literary tradition and magic realism likewise tend to foreground communal ties and the social and familial context, whether sustaining or constraining, rather than focusing on individuals abstracted from the community. In magic realism and romance alike, as Zamora claims, "the self is politically empowered only when it is mythically connected to communal values and traditions, that is, to the collective unconscious of its culture" (Zamora 1994 511). The tendency to "archetypalize the self" (Zamora 1994 499) as well as the non-disruptive presence of the "irreducible element" also link magic realism to the Hawthornian, as well as mediaeval (Warnes 2005 14), romance. Additionally, Zamora connects magic realism with the romantic context of Hawthorne's romance by ascribing to it a similar positioning in the ravages of the present, at the intersection of the past and the future into which the "romantic longing" is projected: the "nostalgia for the lost innocence of the New World" and the "wistful desire for an ideal realm that the New World might yet become" (Zamora 1994 510). The romantic provenance of magic realism is also clear in the privileging of oral tales (mythologies, folk tales and legends, tall tales) and, often, the use of the supernatural.

Zamora perceives romance and magic realism as embarking on a "shared project: the expansion and redefinition of our conceptions of subjectivity against the ideological limitations of Cartesian (and Freu-

connection). In Canada, one of the writers of magic realist works who have declared their fascination with Faulkner is Jack Hodgins (see Hancock 1979/80).

⁹ See, for example, Ude (1989). Ude perceives North American magic realism as a "contemporary incarnation" of "the romance-novel" shaped by "the frontier and wilderness experiences," stressing the importance of the expanses of the inner wilderness as explored in contemporary magic realism.

dian) consciousness, hegelian historicism, scientific rationalism” (Zamora 1994 519). The statement once again makes clear her Jungian bias, shared explicitly or implicitly by many critics of magic realism. The reliance on mythical structures and archetypes, and the assumption of the existence of the “collective unconscious,” which might indeed be considered critical to many magic realist novels, including the Canadian novel *Two Strand River* (1976) by Keith Maillard, in many cases mark, however, a difference between magic realism and romance rather than providing a point of convergence. It is particularly clear in the case of gothic romances, for which there exists a strong tradition of Freudian, or more recently post-Freudian (often Lacanian or Abraham and Torok inspired) criticism, stressing the individual unconscious, and often locating the source of the supernatural, or seemingly supernatural phenomena, in the disturbances of the individual psyche.

Freud’s idea of the uncanny, so essential for the gothic romance, has been used many times in reference to magic realism, though it has not proved influential in magic realist criticism. Critics usually attempt to differentiate between magic realism and the Todorovian uncanny as a literary mode continuous with, though not identical to, the Freudian concept. David Mikics argues, however, that magic realism “is a mode or subset of the uncanny in which the uncanny exposes itself as a historical and cultural phenomenon” (Mikics 1995 373). In his argument Mikics, unfortunately, never identifies what he means by the uncanny, though he probably refers chiefly to the Freud’s concept rather than Todorov’s mode, as he does indicate, in an endnote, that he believes magic realism to be similar to the Todorovian marvellous (Mikics 1995 400). In any case, he leaves out of his discussion an essential part of the definition of the uncanny: the undercurrent of horror, fear or at least anxiety that it is associated with. While it is true that both magic realism and the uncanny destabilize and potentially revitalize the notion of reality “suggesting that ordinary life may also be the scene of the extraordinary” (Mikics 1995 372), the uncanny belongs to the “class of the frightening” (Freud 1971 [1919] 220), from which magic realist texts, at least of the variety related to Carpentier’s *lo real maravilloso*, which Mikics refers to, are most often excluded. In general, the vision magic realist texts project is much more optimistic than the one projected by gothic novels; evil and the intimations of the darkness of human spirit, while present, are not pervasive and defining in the magic realist world. The principle

of the reconciled antinomy between the "real" and the supernatural¹⁰ that magic realist texts tend to follow acts actively to eliminate the frightening: the supernatural, or the numinous, in whatever form it appears, is treated as part of the real rather than in opposition to it, and is not figured as disruptive. Instead, through the device of narratorial distance from the events described, however strange, tragic and frightening they might be, the novels achieve at the most the effect of defamiliarisation, indeed similar to, but at the same time distinct from the uncanny. Even though figures and images that in gothic novels often evoke the uncanny do appear in magic realist texts, their impact and meaning is usually different. A good example in this respect is the usage of the figure of the double in Hodgins's *The Invention of the World*. Wade, one of the characters, confronts his double in a quintessential gothic site: the prison of a colonial fort in the wilderness. The fort, however, is a counterfeit he himself has created, in which he finally imprisons the double, Horseman, who represents the more idealistic, "real" rather than counterfeit, part of Wade. The fort becomes thus symbolic of Wade's self, though the double mysteriously disappears from it. In the end, however, he drives Wade and Maggie, "the new man and the new woman" (Hodgins 1994 455) after their carnivalesque wedding to their home, and is never seen again. The double, while initially disquieting for Wade as he indeed figures the uncanny otherness within himself, is finally accommodated and acts as a catalyst for the emergence of Wade's "true" integrated personality, contributing to the development of the theme of renewal. In contrast to many gothic doubles, Horseman is not the projection of the dark, but rather the positive side of Wade's personality, and their confrontations are mildly comic rather than terrifying.

The idea of the uncanny seems to be more readily applicable to the "European" variety of magic realism, allied to Roh's concept of *Magischer Realismus*. In Canada it is perhaps best represented by some of Alistair MacLeod's short stories, like "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun" or "Vision," with their subtle though consistent reliance on Celtic stories and myth producing a multi-layered vision of contemporary reality and a sense of a disquieting mystery, though not horror, behind the everyday,

¹⁰ Chanady, from whose work the concept of the "reconciled antinomy" originates, considers the principle to be fundamental for the differentiation between magic realism and the fantastic. See Chanady (1985).

which indeed “leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (Freud 1971 [1919] 220), though with stress on intergenerational family and community links. In this case, it is indeed clear that “a central aspect of magical realist and uncanny aesthetics [is] the sense of a world that looks all the more fantastic because of its extreme or hyperreal ‘actuality’” (Mikics 1995 390).

The possible affinities between magic realism and the uncanny indicate a broader realm of the multiple confluences between magic realism and the gothic. Both modes contest the Enlightenment-bred approaches to reality as expressed through fiction, both contest binary oppositions, and in spite of, or perhaps because of, volumes of critical literature, are only very broadly defined. As a result, there exists a considerable area of definitional overlap, especially since both are now often connected with post-colonial and feminist discourses. Contemporary writers often use in the same work devices characteristic of both modes, which allows for multiple generic placements of the same work. The confluence of magic realism and the gothic in the Canadian context cannot be missed: it can be found in texts as varied as Anne-Marie MacDonald’s *Fall on Your Knees*, Gail Anderson-Dargatz’s *The Cure for Death by Lightning* and Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach*. It thus merits attention, especially in view of the well-pronounced Canadian gothic tradition, which provides, to my mind, one of the elements of the cultural environment conducive to the popularity of magic realism among authors and critics, and to the ubiquity of gothic elements within contemporary Canadian magic realist texts. Additionally, the vigorous critical recognition and promotion of magic realism in the 1980s was certainly encouraged by the general turn in critical studies on Canadian literature towards the recognition of its non-realistic dimensions which started in the 1970s and elevated also Canadian gothic into critical prominence.

Literary gothicism, always popular among Canadian writers and the public, was first conceptualized as a Canadian tradition only in 1976 in Margot Northey’s *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction*. Her book links Canadian gothic to the broader North American tradition, pointing also to characteristically Canadian elements: the ambiguous view of nature as both potentially revitalizing and danger-

ous (Northey 1976 23); "a pattern of *double* menace [...] of natural and civilized life"; the persistent "sense of threat to or collapse of an entire culture" as the source of horror (Northey 1976 109). The gothic has also been more recently further politicized and identified as expressive of the perennial Canadian concern with national identity; the lack of answers to the central question of 'who are we?' constituting its dark terrifying centre. The obsession with the question produces, Justin D. Edwards claims, "an anxiety about the complete collapse of subjectivity through the transgression of the boundaries of nationality, sexuality, gender, class, race and ethnicity (Edwards 2005 xxxiv). Canadian gothic replays also in many ways, and from multifarious perspectives, the encounter between Natives and settlers, and the theme of the domestication of the wilderness. Thus Canadian gothic, like the U.S. gothic, is crucially concerned with "obsessive concerns of [...] national life" (Fiedler 1966 27).

Canadian magic realist novels often share gothic locations—suffocating houses and haunted natural landscapes, often forests, so typical of North American gothic—frequently combining typically magic realist expansive and invasive, though not necessarily threatening, landscapes of magnified proportions, with "inevitably claustrophobic" gothic landscapes (Armitt 2000 308). The use of the numinous, supernatural, or pseudo-supernatural ("supernatural explained"), violence, taboo-breaking (often in sexual terms through incest or rape) are characteristic of both modes, as is the theme of the encounter between the indigenous and colonial cultures and worldviews.

Lucy Armitt's key to the phenomenon of the alliance between the gothic and magic realism, though not in the specific Canadian context, is, again, the uncanny. The two modes, she writes, exhibit, "a surprising narrative similarity" (Armitt 2000 308) based on the metaphor of travel, which is in fact the travel into the unknown/unconscious. When she connects "the oxymoronic quality of magic realism and the paradoxes of the unconscious" (Armitt 2000 315, 307), she finds the link via Freud's essay on the uncanny and his use of everyday phenomena the significance of which emerges only when it is traced to the unconscious. She suggests that Freud's essay provides a means through which to approach the narrative model that magic realism follows, which she defines as "a type of ghosting formula, which [...] constructs a palimpsest that interrogates the mimetic as it coincides with it and tracks its progress" (Armitt 2000 315, 307).

Armitt's another key to gothic works with pronounced magic realist elements is the Abraham-and-Torok-inspired criticism relying on the idea of cryptonymy and transgenerational haunting. She maintains that when magic realism and the gothic "come together," which is often the case,

we find a perfect territory for cryptonymy, magic realism reminding us of the omnipresence of transgenerational haunting by giving it a shared cultural, political and mimetic sanction, while the Gothic continues to endow that presence with the sinister particularity of the nuclear family unit."

(Armitt 2000 315)

Like Zamora, Armitt stresses the political investment of magic realism, which, when it coincides with the gothic, results in the politicization of "the unconscious through transgenerational haunting" (Armitt 2000 307).

The canonized realist foundation of Canadian literary production, coupled with the importance of "romanticism" (in the form of historical romances and regional idylls), and gothicism have prepared a conducive ground for the flourishing of magic realism. Of note is also the general reluctance to employ radical formal experimentation even in otherwise modernist or postmodernist works. Both Canadian modernism and postmodernism have been theorized as particular national varieties of those broad trends. Just as Canadian modernism in fiction is marked not by a radical break with traditional form but rather by "an excessive elasticization of form" (Willmott 2002 8) through which modern concerns are expressed, so is Canadian postmodernism, with its important historiographic metafictional and magic realist varieties, indebted to realism and historiography, which it, at the same time subverts and contests (Hutcheon 1990 29).

Willmott's claims that there existed a coherent modernist tendency in Canadian novel contradict many earlier critical pronouncements that there was no clearly defined modernism in Canada, in particular in Canadian prose writings. Robert Kroetsch has even famously denied its existence, tracing the development of Canadian literature from the Victorian straight into the postmodern (Kroetsch "Canadian Issue" 1974 1). Willmott, like Hutcheon in the case of postmodernism, posits the specific Canadian realism as the ground for the modernist novel in Canada: when deconstructed,

the "binary of realism and romance" results, according to him, in the "'unreal' experimentalism" (Willmott 2002 102), i.e. a specific reconfiguration of existing genres. In view of the scarcity of linguistic and formal experimentation aimed at questioning "the representational function of language, questioning mimesis as such" (Mikics, 372) in the Canadian context modernism and magic realism, in their transformed portrayals of reality, do not follow diverging trajectories as Mikics claims in relation to the more general context. Rather, they both effect "a transformation of the object of representation, rather than the means of representation" (Mikics, 372).

Willmott places Canadian modernism as related to and expressive of typically postcolonial concerns connected with the nation-building and social transformation processes, and thus politically engaged. The political engagement becomes obvious also through the placement of the Canadian modernist character not as irrevocably alienated from the community, but rather as deeply engaged in it, in contrast to the broader Anglo-American literary tradition that has come to epitomize modernism, but in keeping with contemporary magic realism. It is the communal context, though not necessarily political engagement, that dominates the three significant early works of Canadian magic realism: Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John* (1939), Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook* (1959), George Elliott's *The Kissing Man* (1962). The communal context is also related to the strong modernist component of contemporary Canadian magic realism, often coexisting with postcolonial elements, as in *The Invention of the World*, works by Alistair McLeod or Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. While Canadian magic realism is not as overtly political as the prevailing Latin American version of the mode, it nevertheless most often interrogates by different means, and politicizes, issues related to national, communal and individual history and identity.

Similarly, emerging in the wake of the period of the reinvigoration of Canadian literary production stimulated to a large extent by governmental intervention spurred by the Massey report, Canadian postmodernist literature instead of steering free of political commitment has been engaged in ideological pursuits, including the search for Canadian national identity and literature. Canadian postmodernists, as Walter Pache posited in the 1980s, seek "national self-expression through new narrative structures rather than national themes" (Pache 1985 77), and their work constitutes, according to him, a stage of the progress of Canadian litera-

ture towards independence: a claim rather typical in the Canadian context, in which critics have tended to talk about literature in terms of maturation from inexperienced and inept youth to independent maturity defined as national, i.e. unique and specific, literature. The political commitments of Canadian postmodernism are likewise stressed by Hutcheon, to such an extent that postmodernist ex-centricity becomes a part of national identity: "Since the margin might also describe Canada's perceived international position, perhaps the postmodern ex-centric could even be seen as part of the nation's identity" (Hutcheon 1990 20). Hutcheon consistently places Canadian postmodernism in the context of Canadian literary tradition, suggesting, for example, that realism, still featuring high in Canadian literature, is in fact "the specific and defining base on which postmodern challenges operate" (Hutcheon 1990 29): it is not so much rejected as explored and exploited. In fact, many works claimed for Canadian postmodernism express postmodern sentiments primarily by interrogating genre boundaries and conventions through the use of parody and irony, as Hutcheon claims (Hutcheon 1990 20-21). Regionalism, in Hutcheon's view, becomes another foundation of Canadian postmodernism:

The postmodern has [...] translated the existing Canadian emphasis on regionalism in literature [...] into a concern for the different, the local, the particular—in opposition to the uniform, the universal, the centralized. [...] Canadian novelists have refigured the *realist regional* into the *postmodern different*.

(Hutcheon 1988 19, Hutcheon's emphasis)

Writing out of marginalized regions, as many Canadian magic realists/postmodernists do, becomes then an exercise in postmodern positionality.

Robert Kroetsch goes even further proclaiming Canada as such to be a quintessential postmodern country: "Canada is supremely a country of margins. [...] [The] willingness to refuse privilege to a restricted or restrictive cluster of metanarratives becomes a Canadian strategy for survival" (Kroetsch 1997 356-357). In another essay, he relates a certain identity void he traces throughout Canadian writings to the necessities of historical overcontextualization:

The Canadian writer in English must speak a new culture not with new names but with an abundance of names inherited from Britain and the United States. [...] The problem then is not so much that of

knowing one's identity as it is that of how to relate that newly evolving identity to its inherited or "given" names. And the first technique might be simply to hold those names in suspension, to let the identity speak itself out of a willed namelessness.

(Kroetsch 1986 127)

Hutcheon again agrees, suggesting that Canadian postmodernists indeed write out of an aporia of identity, and thus are engaged in the contestation of received myths, be it European or American, and in pinpointing Canadian identity and myths, which are then, in turn, subverted (Hutcheon 1988 6). As the case of Canadian magic realism suggests, recontextualisation, or perhaps seeking new alliances, like those with the postcolonial Latin America, has been perceived as one of the ways out of the conundrum. It is out of this contradictory context of Canadian literary traditions that Hancock makes his enthusiastic proclamations, looking to Latin America for an alternative way of voicing his "invisible country."

Magic realism seems to be a label that allows for the constructive exploration and re-evaluation of Canada's position in keeping with the postmodern valuation of hybridity and marginality, but also in keeping with the traditional, though radically reconfigured, ideological commitments of Canadian literature. As according to Geert Lernout magic realism used to stand in Latin America, and in the mid-1980s still stood in Canada, for what in other parts of the world is recognized as postmodernism (Lernout 1988 129), the critical preference for the magic realist label in Canada might be understood as confirming the new context of postcoloniality and marginalisation that Canada often claims for itself. The fact that Lernout treats magic realism in Canada as Canadian postmodernism is not unusual: as D'haen notes, many critics, including Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, and himself, treat the mode as a strain of postmodernism. The ex-centric discourse of magic realism provides a corrective to the dominant discourse of realism, from within which it works, and its image of reality, by "dis-placing" various cultural and literary "privileged centres" (D'haen 1995 195).

As such dis-placements form also important part of postcolonial discourses, no wonder that magic realism has been often classified as a postcolonial mode. In fact in Canada, as some critics claim, postmodernism

and postcolonialism not only clearly overlap, but as at least one critic maintains, are “partly synonymous” (Pache 1985 76). At the same time, in terms of strict temporal placement the “postcolonial moment” in Canada is tied to the Confederation of 1867 and thus extends essentially through the second half of 19th c to the early decades of 20th c., and has consequently been connected by Willmott with the discourse of Canadian modernism, which thus becomes postcolonial (Willmott 2002 43). Nevertheless, as postcoloniality is usually associated with concerted efforts to forge a distinct national identity, the delayed period of nationalist ferment indicating a refusal “to engage with concepts of cultural difference, place and displacement,” also in literature, means, to many critics, that Canada started to seriously grapple with issues related to its postcoloniality only after WWII (Litvack 1996 121), and that it still remains, to a certain extent, colonial. From this perspective, the temporal coincidence ties Canadian postcolonialism most firmly to postmodern discourses, especially in view of the social changes Canada has been going through since the 1960s. Indeed, Canadian postmodern writing as Hutcheon conceives of it, seems to share essential features with postcolonial writing as defined by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*: both rest on abrogation and appropriation of language (Ashcroft 2002 37-38), both crucially engage in the acts of rereading differently conceived texts of the Empire, questioning received versions of history and identity to a large extent through irony and parody, which in the process are also transformed as modes of representation (Ashcroft 2002 191).

As Hodge and Mishra claim,

the postcolonial is [...] lumbered by the discourse of the colonized and is inexorably fissured. [...] It has also a political agenda that requires it to deconstruct an ‘alien’ subjectivity (a subjectivity growing out of a Hegelian master-slave relationship) but still hold on to the dominant genre through which it had been initially constituted, realism, that leads to the crossing over of post-colonialism into postmodernism.

(Mishra and Hodge 1994 281)

In this context, it is possible to assume, as Stephen Slemon does, that using the label “magic realism” in Canada might be a sign of resistance to “monumental theories of literary practice” indicating their inability to deal with certain specificities of experience and their literary expression, which is reflected in magic realism’s ambiguous location within estab-

lished genre systems (Slemon 1995 408). The "monumental theory" of literary realism, questioned, but not denied in magic realist practice, involves also in the postcolonial English-Canadian context, again, the regionalist discourse, so transformed, however, that "the site of the text, though described in familiar and local terms, is metonymic of the postcolonial culture as a whole" (Slemon 1995 411). Canadian magic realism would then constitute a prime example of postcolonial writing re-enacting the collision of the worldviews of the colonizer and the colonized in the specific context of a former settler colony, and Canadian magic realist texts would "recapitulate a postcolonial account of the social and historical relations of the culture in which they are set" (Slemon 1995 409).

The celebratory discourse of postcoloniality is, however, often disrupted by the spectre of colonialism that exists in Canada under the guise of internal colonization, the term being often used in reference to the Francophone population and, more appropriately, the aboriginal population; and neocolonialism, which describes Canada's position vis-à-vis the United States. The creation of the national narrative in Canada, as in other settler colonies, relied for a long time on both wiping out pre-colonial history of the country and silencing the unsavoury details of the treatment of the aboriginals by the white population. This contributed to the creation of the image of decent Canada with no disturbing history and no "ghosts", as opposed to the aggressive United States. Such myth is, in fact, confirmed by claims of those strands of postcolonial thought that assume a chronological development from colony to nation and then the postcolonial status. As many critics have claimed, Canadian postcoloniality is much more complex and it constitutes only an aspect of contemporary Canadian realities (Besner 2003 48). Its specificity derives from the particular context of the settler-invader society, in which, as Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson write, the nation rests on the substitution of the settler-coloniser for the indigene. As the difference between the settler and the native is transformed into the difference between the settler and the empire, the settler assumes the role of the colonized (Johnston and Lawson qtd in Brydon 56-57). This process, it has been claimed, results in the inherent ambiguity of identity, the "internalization of the self/other binary of colonialist relations" projected by postcolonial writings, which compromises the ambitions of any textual anti-colonial resistance in the "Second World," i.e. (former) settler colony, context (Slemon 148).

First Nations people have actively worked, also through their literature, to reclaim their history, their silenced cultures and traditions, and to work towards their own vision of postcoloniality. The term “First Nations,” commonly used in Canada to refer to the aboriginal population, has been adopted as a claim of legitimacy, a “rhetorical intervention to counteract the racist nationalist discourse of ‘two founding races’ which undergirds the Canadian state and all its social and cultural hierarchies. It exposes the glaring omissions in the legitimizing fictions of white-settler Canada” (Mukherjee 1999 156). The application of the term “postcolonial” to include the situation of the First Nations people has been heavily criticised from different standpoints. Many point out the fact that First Nations “are still a classically colonized people albeit somewhat privileged” (Maracle September 2003), stressing economic and cultural subjugation of the Native population in Canada, and neglect of Native rights to the land. In a gesture of resistance, many indigenous thinkers, as Marie Battiste claims, “use the term ‘postcolonial’ to describe a symbolic strategy for shaping a desirable future, not an existing reality” (Battiste 2000 xix). It becomes then a new term, not related to the Eurocentric concept as described above (Battiste 2000 xix). Similar reconceptualisations of the question of postcolonialism in Canada are posed by many non-aboriginal thinkers. As Stephen Slemon writes in his afterword to the article collection debating the question *Is Canada Postcolonial?* (2003), the postcolonial in Canada emerges from the texts in the collection as “an incomplete project; it is colonialism’s shadow; it is a dialectic of engagement and not a singular logics. [...] [It] appears [...] not as an answer, not as a single project or hypothesis, but as a set of engaged differences” (Slemon 2003 320).

The issue of discrimination/empowerment of the First Nations people through discourse, often raised in debates over Canadian postcolonialism, is related to the problem of representation or “voice”. In Canada, First Nations members have for a number of years vociferously denounced non-Natives appropriating the Native voice through translating, transcribing, re-telling Native stories, and using Native heritage, beliefs, and Native point of view in works of imaginative literature. All these are treated as an offence comparable to that of taking Native land by force (Keeshig-Tobias Summer 1991), and thus as a new cultural colonization of the aboriginal population. Some also oppose writing down, and translating of the

traditional oral stories by representatives of the First Nations themselves, arguing that orality, based on memory and face-to-face contact, is the core of the Native tradition easily destroyed by the change of the medium and form of expression (Lutz 1990 31).

These concerns have a direct bearing on considerations on magic realism in Canada, as many texts that can be readily classified as magic realist use extensively elements of First Nations mythologies and rituals, as well as Native characters (as, for example, in *Two Strand River* [1976] by Keith Maillard, *Dreamspeaker* by Cam Hubert [Anne Cameron; 1978], or more recently *Away* by Jane Urquhart and *The Cure for Death by Lightning* by Gail Anderson-Dargatz). The potential gain attached to the rise of a supposedly illuminating textual "hybrid space" by accommodating Native beliefs is often offset by losses resulting from what many Native Canadians have perceived as unauthorized stealing of Native stories and traditions, and what has often been explained in terms of the futile desire for true indigeneity ("the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous" [Goldie 1989 13; see also Ashcroft 2002 133-134]) on the part of settlers and their descendants. Critics seem to agree that, regardless of how extensive their "Native component" is, such works tend to reveal much more about the white population than the Native one. As Margery Fee has claimed, "a complicated process, simultaneously a confession and a denial of guilt—an identification and a usurpation—ensues when white writers choose Native people as literary material" (Fee 1987 15). The ubiquity of Native elements and characters in Canadian literature by non-Natives in general has been related by Fee to the discourse of the margin, to Canada's marginality breeding its nationalism. In an argument related to Hutcheon's, she suggests that Canadians cannot "kill off the literary Indian for good" as the uncertain national identity limits their access to literary techniques that would allow them to do so, especially those related to postmodernism. "We are afraid," she concludes, "that if we don't believe in Indians, we will have to become Americans" (Fee 1987 30-31).¹¹ She points to the double danger of suppressing

¹¹ While the stereotyping of Natives in Canadian literature by non-Natives is well-documented, it is interesting to note the point made by Goldie that has not, to my knowledge, been further pursued by scholars: the fact that similar images, and patterns exist also in Native texts about their own people (Goldie 1989 217). As Goldie suggests,

The epistemological assumptions in the indigene writer's "control" should be examined as well. No matter how much the object of a

Native presence and of trying to highlight it by speaking for the suppressed and in result effectively silencing the Native voice. At the same time, she suggests that the representation of the indigene is one of the central issues related to Canadian national identity. The “invisible” indigenous space, then, that much of magic realism attempts to recover seems be necessary, from the Euro-Canadian point of view, to start unravelling the Gordian knot of Canadian identity.

This necessity to accommodate the Native in the national and thus also literary discourse is paradoxical in view of the fact that indigenous peoples of North America tend to eschew national designations as colonial impositions. Many North American Native writers (for example Lee Maracle) stress that their first identification is with their nation/tribe and particular locality, and not Canada or the United States. The Canada-U.S. border is perceived as artificial, and attempts at incorporating Native texts into any nationalist discourse, and national literary canons denounced. Hence the incorporation of texts by indigenous writers into the literature of Canada can be viewed as problematic: many critics, including the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, argue that Native texts should be treated as an independent discourse exploring alternative metaphysics and political concerns, and not merely a late addition to a national literature (Ashcroft 2002 143). In the Canadian context, it has likewise been pointed out that First Nations literatures have their roots in a unique worldview and experience, as well as a rich tradition of oral literature, which provides for their uniqueness in the Canadian literary landscape (Akiwenzie-Damm 2005 170). The continuity of specific Native literary traditions on which Native literatures rest might also constitute the ground for excluding them from the realm of postcolonial literatures. Thomas King in his well-known article “Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial” discards the term “postcolonial” as misleading and in effect inapplicable to Native literatures because of its focus on colonialism as a defining factor of Native life, which has the effect of producing false boundaries between precolo-

writing subject approximates the self, the object cannot be turned into subject. The writing subject no doubt has a number of unusual insights into that object, but the process of textual production creates inherent restrictions on the subject's liberation of the object. How much more so when the object is a long-established sign as rigid as the indigene.

(Goldie 1989 217-218)

nial Native traditions and contemporary Native community (King 1997 243). King is also critical of the implications of progress and nationalism that the term "postcolonial" invokes.

While the postcolonial placement of North American indigenous writings is questionable, many indigenous thinkers in Canada have placed First Nations literatures within Canadian literary discourse. For example, Jeanette Armstrong claims that these literatures do constitute part of Canadian literature, a "distinctive genre" within it (see Armstrong 2005). Therefore it is important to recognize multiple interactions among texts and ideas of Native and non-Native writers within the context of national literatures. As Akiwenzie-Damm writes

Our [First Peoples'] literatures come from our own sources both in style and content; although, of course, because we exist and operate in the world, we are influenced by other art forms from other cultures and traditions. Our literatures are part of cultural continuum that continues to grow and develop.

(Akiwenzie-Damm 2005 170)

Responding to metaphysical and political concerns of Native cultures, and thus indeed forming a category of their own, texts by Native authors are also embroiled in a larger cultural and political Canadian context, and they contribute significantly to the literary discourse in Canada, to the network of texts and ideas constituting Canadian literary and cultural discourses. Akiwenzie-Damm goes as far as to pose the centrality of First Nations literatures to the literature of Canada as rooted in the land without which Canada cannot exist (Akiwenzie-Damm 2005 175). For the above reasons, texts by First Nations authors are also included in my discussions of magic realist works in Canada on the assumption that the relationship between the Euro-Canadian and First Nations texts might be considered as that of "ongoing dialogic interactions between very different cultural traditions" (Schorcht 2003 4). The postcolonial critical framework within which I discuss these works is applied to them as a critical tool that allows for recognizing both a continuity of concerns related to "spaces" of memory between Euro-Canadian and First Nations literatures and the specificity of both.

In magic realist works by Native writers the question of the appropriation of voice is transformed into the problem of the role of the narrative and the story-teller in the community, and that of generic classification.

As community plays a central role in Native cultures, the role of the oral narrative, and the community-appointed story-teller, is to transmit cultural knowledge, aid tribal memory and thus contribute to the sustenance of the community. Oral narrative is essential for shaping communal and individual identity. Writers, who have not been appointed by the community and by giving up orality are necessarily distanced from it, while attempting to aid the community always have to face their alienation from it.¹² The choice of English to convey the story broadens and diversifies the audience, at the same time bringing new limitations, especially given the existence of the realm of sacred knowledge that is not to be revealed to outsiders. Thus while Native writers speak with their own voice and often attempt to testify to Native tradition and experience, this voice is also constricted by community-related concerns, and thus it speaks differently to and for community-members and outsiders. As Howells concludes, many contemporary Native writers

with their white education are facing both ways, seeing their Native communities and the majority society from both inside and outside. Such positioning makes for a problematics of location and a kind of cultural nomadism, where the writer has to face the challenge of constructing—or reconstructing—contemporary Native identities through narratives which both acknowledge and refigure the conventions of European literary genres while not erasing signs of Native difference.
(Howells 2001 146)

The link between contemporary writers and traditional story-tellers is not lost; it is often underlined in written texts by the choice of oral cadences, devices and conventions. Given the particular fusion of the oral and the written in many Native texts—hence Thomas King’s terms “inter-fusional” and “associational” literature (King 1997 244-247)—even though Native writers obviously do use certain established generic conventions of Western literature “their uses [...] judged by Western literary criteria of structure, style and aesthetics, do not always conform” (Petronie 1990 183-184). The core structure and narrative techniques of their texts are often inspired by conventions of oral narratives, the choices being guided by the desire to express their cultural belonging and culturally-grounded view of the world. Hence, for example, Lutz’s cautionary re-

¹² For a broad discussion of the problem see Weaver (1997 36-43).

mark that the circular, non-linear plot and sketchy characterization found in some Native texts, are not to be interpreted as related to postmodern techniques, but rather to Native oral traditions and beliefs, like "holistic concepts of time, place and development," and that they constitute "the literary realization of tribal identity rather than individual isolation" (Lutz 1990 40).

At the same time, it is in the context of Native writing that the question of the cultural mediation, extremely important also for the mode of magic realism, has often been raised. Native writers, Greg Sarris claims,

mediate not only different languages and narrative forms, but, in the process, the cultural experiences they are representing, which become the content of their work. Their work represents a dialogue between themselves and different cultural norms and forms and also, within their text, between, say, characters or points of view. This cross-cultural interaction represented by the texts is extended to readers, many of whom are unfamiliar with the writers' particular cultural experiences and who must, in turn, mediate between what they encounter in the texts and what they know from their specific cultural experiences.

(Sarris qtd in Weaver 1997 34-35)

While this view is not universally accepted, it well expresses what might be perceived on the narrative level in many magic realist works by First Nations writers. The texts rest on the principle of disjunctive but coinciding worlds and worldviews, and even though they often collide sharply, simple juxtapositions of the community-based realm of Native myth and spirituality, and the spiritual aridity of the individualistic white world are problematised, as exemplified by Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*. Such texts often become, indeed, "sites of translation across cultural gaps" (Howells 2001 147). This principle of cultural mediation, which to a certain extent allows to place First Nations literature within a postcolonial framework as it constitutes a contemporary rethinking of the colonial paradigm, at the same time suggests the validity of those claims which place Native literature as an independent literary tradition, which does not hinge on the fact of colonization, but rather develops independently, translates "Native categories into English" and necessarily incorporates non-Native realities as they constitute part of contemporary Native experience (Schorcht 2003 16).

The principle of cultural mediation, incorporated into literary texts, constitutes, in my view, an important argument for recognizing Native

texts as magic realist texts, which validate marginalised voices and perceptions of reality, as long as the texts are characterised by a number of other mode-specific features. These include: reliance on orality, focus on community and its relation to the land and the surrounding world in general; focus on questions of memory; and the presentation of the coalescence or interaction of antithetical worlds. While the term “magic realism” admittedly implies a Eurocentric bias in that it explicitly refers to revisions of the European post-Enlightenment concepts of reality as well as the project of literary realism—the “centre” to which it “writes back”—I believe that, given the contemporary redefinitions of the mode, and the interaction between European literary modes and genres and traditional Native genres, applying the term to First Nations literatures is justified. Admittedly, Native writers’ texts are most often deeply rooted in Native oral traditions and beliefs, which are themselves widely varied. At the same time, as written literary texts and works of fiction, these texts situate themselves in the context of the genre system of European provenance, which they often challenge. Also, the terminology related to Native literature in general is at this point apparently inescapably embroiled in existing literary terminology. While at least a part of what is now often classified as magic realist texts by Native authors can be adequately described by the term “mythic verism,” introduced by the Anishinaabe author and critic Gerald Vizenor, it seems that the term is as flawed as that of magic realism. The label itself also juxtaposes two terms that are antithetical from the Western perspective, but not necessarily so from the Native point of view, while the concept behind it underlines the “natural” interpenetration of those realms in literary texts. Introduced in the context of Vizenor’s postmodern conceptualization of “trickster discourse,” and therefore related to myth, community and comic discourse, “mythic verism” is defined as follows:

Verisimilitude is the appearance of realities; mythic verism is discourse, a critical concordance of narrative voices, and a narrative realism that is more than mimesis or a measure of what is believed to be natural in the world. Stein Haugom Olsen explains that “naturalism and verisimilitude need not be measured against reality. It can simply be measured against what is natural with the world of the work [...]” [...] mythic verism is a concordance, the discourse we choose to hear and believe in literature.

(Vizenor 1993 190)

Vizenor's conceptualization of the term returns us, then, to the fact that literature is not and cannot be a simple mirror of reality, however we conceive of it, but a verbal construct that exists on its own terms. The concept of "magic realism," like that of "mythic verism," evokes first of all a coexistence of the *codes* of realism and fantasy within particular texts, and not extra-textual "realities". At the same time, the verbal construct, however free the play of signifier within it, has the power to validate certain visions of reality and undermine others. The majority of readers, inevitably, will measure it against their extra-textual experience. Given the distance of a European literary scholar like myself from Native cultures, it is necessary to recognize as valid the fact that from the Native perspective the purportedly magic realist Native texts might present simply "reality" as it appears to Native peoples (Lutz 2002 220), with the magic and the real constituting "twin manifestations [of reality] that are mutually interchangeable" (Gunn Allen 1992 60). While the claim is by now a familiar one and far from unique in the context of magic realism, it still underscores the fact that any attempt to place First Nations texts in the broader Canadian literary discourse on magic realism has to recognize the specific cultural placement of the texts, which might determine their reception, and the fact that they come from a specific literary tradition of their own. At the same time, as they exhibit clear affinities with many aspects of Euro-Canadian magic realism, they cannot be simply left out of the discussion.

How can magic realist texts by First Nations writers be situated in relation to the Canadian discourse on magic realism as implicated in the discourse of the nation? From the non-Native point of view, the texts do fulfil the task of the magic realist text as Hancock saw it in the 1980s: they reveal the invisible, because until recently suppressed and silenced, aspects of Canada, both in terms of their "magical" component related to Native beliefs and traditions, and the "realist" component related to the conditions of life and the historical and current treatment of the First Nations in Canada. In this sense they respond to Hancock's pronouncements on magic realism that link the mode directly to the Canadian search for national literature and national identity. At the same time, they tend to contribute to the further destabilisation of the national narrative of Canada by questioning its validity, undermining the presumptions on which it is founded and opting out of it. They question the settler narrative based on the erasure of Native cultures, and thus both respond to the Canadian construct of the nation and provide alternative visions of Canadian culture.

They validate specifically Native worldviews both for non-Native and Native readers. Many, in one way or another, constitute community-renewal and memory-saving projects (for example, Lee Maracle's *Raven-song* or Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*). At the same time they provide corrective visions of contemporary Native communities as rooted in history, tradition, but also in the realities of contemporary culture of Canada and North America, different aspects of which are viewed as both dangerous and revitalising, repulsive and compelling (as in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach* or Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*).

As I have indicated at the beginning of the chapter, substantial changes in the ethnic and racial make-up of Canada in the wake of the overhaul of the immigration policy in the late 1960s have had a powerful impact on Canadian literary scene, including magic realist production. More general changes in Canada, including the introduction of the official policy of multiculturalism, a process that started in 1971 and was completed in 1988 with the introduction of "Canadian Multiculturalism Act," have resulted in weakening the culture based on Anglo-conformity and in opening new spaces for marginalised discourses. At the same time there appeared new concerns related to the question of contested Canadian multiculturalism; and the conundrum of Canadian postcolonialism became even more complex.

While early magic realist novels in Canada were written by white, Euro-Canadian writers, the majority of the current magic realist output comes from non-white authors, many of them women, who write from and into widely differing historical and cultural contexts and literary traditions. While their works are most often rooted generically in the broadly conceived Euro-American literary tradition, their structure, style, and themes are crucially modified by the introduction of elements of non-European cultures (especially non-European mythologies) and literary traditions. While such revitalising and revealing contaminations constitute the essence of the mode of magic realism, what astounds is the sheer variety of those cultural contexts.

Some of those writers include Canada in their magic realist works as a setting or point of reference and engage in a work of cultural recovery and revision, analyses of power relations, discussions on race, ethnicity, sexu-

ality in reference to Canadian realities. Often their works are acts of reclamation of histories and stories of particular ethnic groups in Canada (as in the case of Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* [1994] or *The Kappa Child* [2001] rooted in Japanese mythology); or destabilising interventions into Canadian founding fictions, regional and national discourses based on myths of whiteness and heteronormativity (as is Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*). Other works, especially those by writers of South Asian or West Indian origin do not address the Canadian context at all or only marginally. They tend to exhibit the characteristically postcolonial focus on exile, homelessness, often in connection with the motive of immigration, local liberation movements leading to the postcolonial status, which is often depicted with ambivalence (as in M.G. Vassanji's *The Book of Secrets* [1994]). The stress falls on the general reflection related to colonialism and postcolonialism often in connection with characteristically postmodern metafictional and historiographic reflection, but also in relation to gender and sexuality (Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* [1996]). While all of these texts have their place in Canadian literary landscape, many cannot be located in a continuous relation to Canadian literary tradition. They do not necessarily disrupt it, and might even be compatible with it (for example, *The Book of Secrets* fits comfortably within the important postmodern strand of historiographic metafiction in Canada), but they certainly modify it. This is also what these works often achieve for the mode of magic realism in Canada.

Contemporary magic realism in Canada fully participates in the general shift in Canadian literature towards intertwining discourses related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, hybridity. At the same time, though from different perspectives, it still reworks major preoccupations and themes established by early Canadian practitioners of the mode. Most importantly from the point of view of this study, Canadian magic realist texts, if they speak at all to the Canadian context, now as before interrogate questions of memory in accordance with Hancock's claim that "magic realism reminds [Canadians] that [their] memory is in a state of crisis" (Hancock 1986 33). The urgency of the reclamation and reworking of memory in its relation to individual identity and the unstable Canadian project of the nation, as well as related pressing social and cultural concerns have been consistently foregrounded in magic realist texts, the "magical" component of which usually allows for a serious engagement of different suppressed or marginalised discourses.

Chapter II

Broad Vistas, Open Spaces: Memory and Place

While in considerations of memory primacy has long been given to temporality,¹ spatiality has more recently been forcefully claimed to engage both individual and collective memory in crucial ways. Remembering, Edward Casey claims from a phenomenological perspective, is not “a sheerly temporal phenomenon” (Casey 2000 182); rather, it is always crucially grounded in experienced space, i.e. grounded in place. Even though Casey himself is basically interested in memory as a mental faculty, his reaching beyond the mind and into the world necessitates also a recognition of memory as a cultural configuration. Place, characterized by diversity and emotional potential, not only invites memorability, he writes, but promotes it, actively “eliciting” remembering, and such elicited memories are necessarily not only private but also cultural (Casey 2000 207).

Casey’s differentiation between space and place, though highly specific, is in line with recent multi-disciplinary critical literature on space-related issues, which tends to recognize place as having an “emotional gravity” (Lovell 1998 1), as remaining in a relation of intimacy with the subject, in contrast to a more geometric and emotionally neutral conceptualization of space. The active nature of space/place that Casey posits has also been explored in social sciences and cultural studies, which similarly tend to recognize broadly conceived space as characterized by temporal and social sedimentation, as constructed. The link between time and such non-transparent space charged with meaning is particularly important for

¹ Edward Casey, pointing to “the primacy accorded to time and to temporal phenomena generally” (Casey 2000 184) in philosophical considerations of memory, traces also the beginning of the neglect of place in philosophy to the end of the 17th century and the geometrization of space (Casey 2000 185). Soja connects the demise of interest in space in social theory with the last decades of 19th century and the “rise of a despatializing historicism” (Soja 1989 4). Hodgkin and Radstone state more generally that “whereas, in modernity, figurations of memory foregrounded questions of temporality, contemporary figurations emphasise rather issues of spatiality” (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003 16).

memory-related issues. Casey goes as far as to say that time is “a dimension of space through the active influence of place” (Casey 2000 214). Patricia Yaeger suggests, on the other hand, a specific enfolding of space and time: “space [...] also possesses a history: not as a vertical dimension but as a series of folds and pockets, as the dimensional incorporation and exhalation of time. [...] just as time enfolds and produces space, space also enfolds and tries to consume time” (Yaeger 1996 25). Space is pocked with “spatial crypts,” “stories hidden in normative space,” it reveals as much as it hides, becoming an agent of forgetting as much as of memory (Yaeger 1996 6-7), haunting and haunted.

Such enfolding of space and time seems to be particularly meaningful for issues related to postcoloniality. Natural spaces in different guises (as land, territory, place) emerge as major actors in the colonial drama as well as postcolonial reclamations of the past, and constructions of the present and future. Space is crucially at stake in the colonial encounter and postcolonial experience, bearing marks and exhaling emanations of precolonial cultures, and equally densely written over by the colonizer. The result is the postcolonial “privileg[ing of] space over time as the most important ordering concept of reality” (Ashcroft 2002 35). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin also differentiate between space and place. In their approach the concept of place is complicated by the notion of resistance to representation in language that the colonial place offers; resistance experienced by the colonizers as well as the colonized whose language has been destroyed or marginalised by the imposition of the language of the colonizer. Colonial space resists cooption into colonizers’ mental frame and cannot be easily articulated in their language: there exists a discrepancy between language and place, which as a result cannot truly become “home” (Ashcroft 2002 81-82). Such displacement produces the need to “re-invent language,” and to realign the parameters of the self in relation to place (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995 392) defined as “a complex interaction of language, history and environment,” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995 391). In postcolonial literatures, this results in a specific engagement with issues of space and place in relation to the immigrant experience of settlement and the aboriginal experience of dispossession. The palimpsestic nature of place, especially postcolonial place, necessitates a careful questioning of spatial mapping and special attention to be paid to memories that place conceals: to the “spatial cryptography” that Yaeger calls for.

This process of multiple realignments accompanying a pronounced focus on space and place can be traced throughout the body of Canadian literature and has been a focus of much critical attention.² It plays a significant role in many texts of Canadian magic realism, in which it is often coupled with a consideration of memory-related questions. Remembering clearly emerges in many of those texts not “as a form of re-experiencing the past per se, [but] an activity of re-implacing: re-experiencing past places” (Casey 2000 201). While the re-implacing in Casey’s perspective concerns individual memory, in the texts discussed in this chapter the individual memory and perspective merge crucially with the collective ones. The intimate individual experience of place, and re-implacing, is often restricted by the boundaries drawn by collective re-implacing, collective memory. The phenomenological perspective interacts with social and cultural perspectives elucidating the process of the formation of individual and collective identity in the specific postcolonial context of Canada. Therefore, the notion of place employed in this chapter constitutes an overlay of the concepts of place described above. Place is understood as experienced space marked by intimacy, familiarity and memorability, usually arising both from personal and collective experience, whether direct or mediated through representation (in this case usually narrative representation: handed-down stories of the place of origin). It is multi-layered, criss-crossed by discourses of history and culture, but also written by individual experience.

The magic realist texts by Alistair MacLeod, Jane Urquhart and Eden Robinson explored in this chapter focus on the intimate connection between characters and colonial/postcolonial space. The texts trace also, in different configurations, the process of the oscillation of space between the status of site—geometrical, cartographic, devoid of particularity, and thus uninviting for memories (Casey 2000 181-215)—and place. The transformations are related to the interweaving of memory and forgetting in the texts: the stress often falls on the transformation of site into memory-harbours place; the recovery of place, which facilitates the recovery of “hidden” memory from its spatial crypt; as well as the obliteration of place and its reverting to the status of site, related to the process of forgetting. The place-identity link is not dissolved in the texts. The myth of place constitutes an important element on the basis of which

² See for example Kroetsch (“Unhiding” 1974), McGregor (1985) and New (1997).

characters create the myth of the self: the magic-realist places by harbouring and mediating memory are to a certain extent constitutive, though not necessarily definitive, of individual and collective identity. At the same time the texts undercut a simple place-identity link; rather, the emergent vision seems to support the thesis that “place and identity are rarely made or inhabited in a singular or straightforward manner, but are most often constructed and experienced as a variety of both literal and metaphorical roots and routes” (Dawson and Johnson 2001 321), as an interplay of fixity and movement, not only physical, but also cognitive.

The fact that the spaces and places both haunt and are haunted underscores the complexity of the place-identity link, suggesting “the enigma of what gets forgotten, or hidden, or lost in the comforts of ordinary space” (Yaeger 1996 4). The enigmas are those related to historical forces, which encroach on the mythological landscape and the mythical coherence of place; but also those of obscured myth that imposes itself on contemporary, historically conditioned certainties of space and place. Contrary to claims that by renewed critical and literary attention to place and region we lose “a historical perspective” (Dainotto 2000 2), by focusing on place as a meeting point of myth and history, of acts of cultural and private memory and forgetting, these magic realist texts do not gloss over historical tensions and struggles, but rather highlight the dimensions of history that do not rely on pure factography, but are nonetheless “real.”

What Jane Urquhart calls in her novel *Away* “abandoned geographies” (Urquhart 1993 128)—culturally- and emotionally-significant places loved and lost, though sometimes imaginatively regained and never forgotten—dominate the literal and metaphorical landscape of the texts selected for discussion in this chapter. It is through those places—lost Scotland and Ireland, the “forgotten” Haisla territory—clamouring to be retrieved by memory, that protagonists come to an understanding about themselves, and the tensions of myth and history are introduced. Characters develop deep emotional links with these magic-suffused places of the past, which resonate with cultural and spiritual geographies projected on contemporary spaces.³

³ Parts of my present discussion of *Away* and *Monkey Beach* were also presented in Rzepa (“Considering” 2002) and Rzepa (2005).

Spatiality, placedness, re-implacing rule Alistair MacLeod's oeuvre. In the majority of his stories and the single novel he molds Cape Breton into a quintessential place, endowed with emotion and memorability, reverberating with echoes of the islands of Scotland and the history of Scottish migration to Canada. In some stories, it is the Celtic lore as the source of supernatural interventions into the contemporary world of his characters, and magic realist techniques that allow him to create a myth of Cape Breton that endows it with timelessness. At the same time, place, locality, to which his protagonists are always deeply attached, are rendered in realistic detail. The fictional space created in many of his stories can, in fact, be described as that of spacialized memory.⁴ Events are described from a distance of both space and time or, even when experienced in the "here" or the "now" of the story, they are infused with recollections or echoes of the past, with which the present is inextricably intertwined. The memory-infused places are often clearly demarcated and contrasted with space-as-site that resides outside of them. At the same time, individual memory understood as re-implacing relies often not only on bodily-experienced places, but rather on places themselves recreated and revitalised through memory. Collective memory of place handed down from generation to generation effectively colours the memory of individually experienced places, giving to it resonances that exceed individual experience. At the same time, several critics have noted, the stories most often transcend the meticulously rendered local, and become comments on human condition in general: "regional materials take on philosophic importance, and this elevates an interest in place to a universal concern with one's place in the world" (Berces 1991).

In "The Road to Rankin's Point" (1976) the spatial division between the "big, fast, brutal road" into the "larger world" (MacLeod "Road" 2001 145), described in terms of cold cartographic sites, is contrasted with the road leading to the narrator's grandmother's house and Rankin's Point itself: a narrow, tortuous dead-end path spotted with memory cues. The two emerge as metaphorical spaces demarcated not only spacially but also

⁴ I make this and related claims also in Rzepa ("Alistair" 2002) using as example MacLeod's short story "In the Fall" (written in 1973), and arguing that it might be read as a magic realist story.

temporally. The site, “the larger world,” criss-crossed by highways that symbolize it, is coldly and blindly of the present. The place is associated with the past, “retrospectively tinged” (Casey 2000 195), and infused with deep emotion, but at the same time “it is an end in every way” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 146).

The narrator’s return to the ancestral village to die is described in terms of instinct: he comes back “almost as the diseased and polluted salmon, to swim for a brief time in the clear waters of [his] earlier stream” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 165). The call of the blood, the blood ties are literalized as Calum thinks about his “own blood, diseased and dying” and relates it to the image of the scarlet blood of his grandfather on the white snow of “The Little Turn of Sadness,” where he found his death many years before. “The Little Turn of Sadness” functions throughout the text as its spacial and emotional anchor. Named to commemorate the sad event, it is part of the nostalgic geography that rules the story. It is a place of remembrance, a *memento mori* for the family members, standing also for their lives intertwining like the symbolic “twining Scottish thistles” of the grandmother’s brooch. “The Little Turn of Sadness” marks not only a personal, or even familial, but also a collective drama. Images of abandoned property along the road to Rankin’s Point, and of grandmother’s neglected yard culminate in the grandmother’s death at “The Little Turn of Sadness,” and narrator’s realization as he finds her body that “for the first time in the centuries since Scottish emigrations there is no human life at the end of this dark road” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 178). The abandonment of place marks the dispersal not only of the family, but also the community: Calum’s “blood” is dying in more ways than one.

The abandonment echoes, as Christopher Gittings has noted, the Highland Clearances, and more specifically the forced abandonment of Scottish Islands. The new homeland of Cape Breton is likewise abandoned due to economic forces (Gittings 1992), and the result is devastating for the family and community. Significantly, earlier in the day when the grandmother dies, younger family members attempt an “eviction” of the grandmother to a nursing home. At the same time they try to enact the lost wholeness of the extended family and the continuity of generations by going through the motions of a family get-together, complete with traditional music-making, dancing and picture-taking: acts of commemoration that accompany the end of family and community traditions.

The “ancestral islands long left and never seen” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 159) exist as a haunting presence for the narrator, though he is not sure of their significance. They provide an essential spatial reference point for the collective memory of the family. These past places, like the past itself, are accessible to Calum only through their echoes in family stories and recreated images. They nevertheless bear on his present by contextualising it and by providing the mythical source of family unity and individual identity. The intangible gifts of musical talent and the ability to foresee their own deaths that all the MacCrimmons are supposed to have, are mentioned by the grandmother in the context of a particular tangible memory cue: a cairn erected to the memory of the MacCrimmons on the Isle of Skye, its existence verified by Calum’s uncles. The place of origin extends far beyond Rankin’s Point, to embrace the long-lost islands. As Gittings writes, “the invisible is made visible (or the inaudible audible), through a narratorial reconstruction of disappeared peoples from the inscriptions they have made on the spiritual and physical landscape of the community” (Gittings 1992). At the same time, through the grandfather’s inscription on the rafters of the barn: “We are the children of our own despair, of Skye and Rum and Barra and Tiree” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 159), the image of the long-lost home, in the context of the story, becomes permeated with the sense of loss and despair as defining elements of the Scottish diaspora, and of human condition in general.

The sense of ending is underlined by the fact that 26-year-old Calum faces his grandmother’s death at exactly the age she was as she travelled down from her house to “The Little Turn of Sadness” to face the death of her husband. Unlike her, however, Calum cannot expect a difficult life, focused on keeping the family together, but rather a lonely death. At the same time, his replication of his grandmother’s experience confirms the mystical vitality of family ties and his Scottish heritage: his half-hearted delving into the past as a remedy for his foreshortened future and the coldness of the larger world attunes him to the ancestral gift of hearing the music “strangely familiar in its unfamiliar way” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 176) which both informs him of grandmother’s death and allows to predict his own. The music, the howls of the dogs also reiterate grandmother’s past experience. Contrary to Zagratzki’s claim that the narrator fails to establish “a viable relation with his grandmother,” (Zagratzki 2007) the fact that Calum becomes attuned to her in a physical and mystical way, suggests that the two do develop a viable and essential

tie. What binds them as they hold hands earlier in the day and weep “for each other and for ourselves” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 175) is not the strength they are both seeking, but the weakness they discover in each other, their awareness of the impending and inescapable end, but also the recognition of the ties of love and blood.

Through the agency of the places of the present and those of the past Calum attempts to recognize his life as contextualized not only by his immediate family, but also by past generations and the diasporic community, and to get a better understanding of death. What he achieves, finally, through his re-implacing is not a conscious understanding of life or death, but memory-induced sense of mystical connectedness expressed, somewhat paradoxically, through a sense of balance at the moment of his falling to his death from the cliff of Rankin’s Point. As he is falling, “the internal and the external darkness reach to become as one. Flowing toward one another they become enjoined and indistinct and as single as perfection. Without a seam, without a sound, they meet and unite all” (MacLeod “Road” 2001 179).

The magical, non-rational layer of life validated through ancestral gifts, spectral appearances, intuitions, repetition of experiences, gestures, even words through time and generations is in some of MacLeod’s stories treated like a burden of obscure and often terrifying possibilities. At the same time, it provides a concealed, and not completely intelligible pattern to individual life, and anchors individual memory in collective memory. The past asserts itself over the present, as past places of origin assert themselves over the space of colonial settlement. Characters remain place-bound, driven by hidden forces related to place, even though they might abandon it. As one of the characters of “Vision,” born and living in Canada, says in reference to the dispersed population of the Hebridean island of Canna: “[...] some of us are here. That is why this place is called Canna and we carry certain things within us. Sometimes there are things within us which we do not know or fully understand and sometimes it is hard to stamp out what you can’t see” (MacLeod “Vision” 2001 347). The place of origin becomes almost a fate to the characters, who have often not even seen it, and it has a hold over them that they can hardly rationalize or understand. The narrator of “Vision” (1986) in his attempts to recover from memory and twist in re-telling a number of interrelated, fragmentary stories of the past into a narrative of the people and family afflicted with too much or too little “vision” (treated literally and

metaphorically), underscores the collective nature of memory, its unreliability, mutability, and vitality.

The crucial link such stories as “The Road to Rankin’s Point” or “Vision” suggest between collective and individual identity and the relationship that a group forms with the space it inhabits, suggests the early notion of collective memory as developed by Maurice Halbwachs. While Halbwachs makes the group perhaps too categorically a determining influence on individual memory, he stresses also the importance of place for collective, and individual memory, as he perceives them. “The reason members of a group remain united, even after scattering and finding nothing in their new physical surroundings to recall the home they have left,” he suggests, “is that they think of the old home and its layout” (Halbwachs 1980 130). The major concern of many MacLeod’s stories is in fact the interplay of the persistence and dissolution of such collective memory. The loosening of the otherwise inescapable link between remembered and experienced landscapes and the community is frequently symptomatic of the slow dissolution of the group. His texts often explore such a twilight zone of the decline of a traditional way of life, recognized as essential and valuable, but nevertheless slowly disappearing. They are permeated by what Colin Nicholson calls “an abiding note of loss and regret, with the Scottish allusions seeming to operate like a kind of choric threnody” (Nicholson Winter 1985 98). Nevertheless, in “The Road to Rankin’s Point” and “Vision” the memory of the long lost islands and their culture persists through obscure visions, gifts, and premonitions.

Similar concerns, producing a parallel elegiac and nostalgic effect, feature in Jane Urquhart’s *Away*, the novel which focuses on the 19th century Irish migration to and diaspora in Canada, narrating the process of the settling of the new land as two-pronged. The process is, on the one hand, dominated by the surfeit of memory, relentless and paralyzing looking into the past, symbolized by “all the mourning for abandoned geographies” (Urquhart 1993 128); on the other, by the present-oriented blithe forgetfulness symbolized by the unceasing work of the quarry machinery destroying the landscape densely written over with “the fossilized narratives of ancient migrations” (Urquhart 1993 356). The

disjunction of place and site, as in MacLeod, is then also temporal: place is of the past, site of the present. Additionally, it gains a gendered dimension: place, bound by the past, becomes a female sphere, while site, present- and future-oriented, is a male sphere. The disjunction underlies the dialectic of wholeness and fragmentation that constitutes an important dimension of the novel.

The story itself constitutes a conscious attempt by the narrator, the last in the line of women “plagued by revenants” (Urquhart 1993 3), at guarding memory, so that “nothing should escape” (Urquhart 1993 133). Esther declares her belief in the power of orality and memory, and explicitly places herself in the bardic tradition, attempting to save the past marked by the experience of loss by narrating it. However, the fact that there is no audience for her story, that the teller herself is an old woman about to die, and that her account is accompanied by the hum of the machinery pulverizing the landscape identified as a repository of memory, announce the inevitable demise of memory and the past under the onslaught of the present related to the process of forgetting. As in MacLeod, the process indicates double displacement and loss: that of the memory of the European place of origin; and of the “original” place of settlement suffused by that memory. As in MacLeod’s “Road to Rankin’s Point,” future possibilities are in effect foreclosed.

In contrast to inert, though at times dangerous spaces of MacLeod’s texts, natural spaces of Urquhart’s novel are active, almost predatory. They both resist and claim, “take away,” literally and metaphorically, both people and flimsy shelters, literal and metaphorical, that they construct. In MacLeod’s stories spaces and places allow protagonists to remain culturally and psychologically grounded even when displaced: the longing for the lost place of origin persists as a haunting presence, but does not obstruct the process of taking the new land in physical and mental possession. In *Away* the conceptualization of space bifurcates, as indicated above, to match the double-pronged process of colonization.

The space that Mary, one of Urquhart’s protagonists, inhabits is, even before her forced abandonment of Ireland, a space of loss and fragmentation; her home is always already a colonial space. The fragility of what remains of the endangered cultural whole, and the whole-some landscape that housed it, is stressed through the metaphor of a tidepool: a delicately balanced, self-contained world that is destabilized by any outside intervention (Urquhart 1993 130). Mass migration and British law

upset the balance to such an extent that, as the text suggests, the Irish “tidepool” literally disappears. What remains is indeed a space of memory and fragmented tradition: vaguely remembered, but no longer lived. Mary, however, becomes mystically attuned to the disappearing world of the cultural wholeness. When as a young girl she finds a dying sailor on the coast of her native Rathlin island, she immediately recognizes him as one of the “others,” who had come “from an otherworld island” to claim her as Moira. As a result, she is rapidly separated from her community. The whole population of the island immediately know that she has been claimed, that she is “away”. Even for herself Mary is only a trace, a fragment, a memory of her former self (Urquhart 1993 47). She inhabits the space of myth and local folklore, which takes for granted shape-shifting, snatches of humans by faeries, and the intersection between the “otherworld” and water as well as land. Mary becomes literally a repository of collective memory and “fragments of the old beliefs” (Urquhart 1993 75). The motive of fragmentation returns in the expansive historic vision of “the world’s great leavetakings” (Urquhart 1993 128) showed to Mary by her daemon lover. The vision reaches far back in Irish history and into the future of the community in Canada. In the vision “all was fragmentation” (Urquhart 1993 98). Native population of Ireland is ruptured by immigration, just as later the Irish immigrant community in Canada is fragmented by political quarrels that result in the assassination of D’Arcy McGee. Mary inherits the cultural whole already marked by the experience of loss, as well as the fragmentation imposed by different histories of invasions and migrations (Urquhart 1993 127–28).

Place, in the form of internalized, remembered landscapes, acquires the status of one of “revenants” haunting female protagonists of the novel (Urquhart 1993 3). The projection on the Canadian landscape of the memories and mythologies carried from Ireland by Mary, and inherited by her female descendants, renders its strangeness familiar, and in effect annuls it. The physical space of the lost home and by extension that of the colony are timeless, mythological; they constitute the eternal abode of the demon lover, and thus the essence of place. At the same time, Canadian space becomes dematerialized to such an extent that its physicality disappears, it cannot be truly inhabited and experienced. For Mary and her female descendants colonial and postcolonial space is accessible only through the mediation of the imported mythology: it is always primarily a space/place within. New landscapes remain forever wedded to

“abandoned geographies,” Canadian forests forever echo the lost forests of Ireland that none of the women has ever seen. The pull of the mythological space, “the homeland” described as “a city underwater” (Urquhart 1993 48), is such that Mary finally literally disappears into the Canadian landscape. She becomes, as her son muses, “one of several trees rooted in an alien landscape. Sap was running through her veins [...]” (Urquhart 1993 186), all other allegiances forgotten. The image stresses the intertwining of the colonist’s embracing of and alienation from colonial space. “The awful power of memory” (Urquhart 1993 153) perpetuates the condition, binding Mary’s daughter Eileen, and her grand-daughter Esther, to remembered, inherited landscapes. The “city underwater” is then in fact the city of memory. It is the water, standing metaphorically for memory, and, as Sugars notes, the “symbolic medium of emigration” (Sugars 2003 12) that facilitates the transformation of site into place, of the alien landscape of exile into “home,” but at the same time dematerializes it.

The paralysing excess of memory that obstructs the process of domesticating colonial space and active engagement with life is juxtaposed with the present-oriented, activist attitude related to the commodification, and the literal fragmentation of the land. The selling of the land by Liam (Mary’s son), abandoning it to the former landlord, allowing its resources to be mined results in “the curse of the mines” haunting the family. Place, the barely domesticated landscape, is transformed back into site, which results in the wiping out of memory. The consequence is, again, the literal and metaphorical homelessness of the memory-bound settler.

The apocalyptic ending of the novel does not wipe out, however, the embedded story of successful psychological adjustment to the new land, the indigenization of the colonizer, embodied by the fate of Mary’s son. Liam is symbolically born only as he glimpses the shore of Quebec from the board of the immigrant ship: this is the “birth” he remembers, his entry into the New World. His “first real souvenir,” the first memory, is “the act or arrival—immigration—and a white house with water dancing on its windows” (Urquhart 1993 207). In contrast, his sister Eileen, even though she is born in North America, has only “lost landscapes and [...] inherited souvenirs” (Urquhart 1993 208). The magic of the souvenir, Susan Stewart maintains, consists in the fact that it can “envelop the present within the past. [...] Yet the magic of the souvenir is a kind of

failed magic. [...] The place of origin must remain unavailable in order for desire to be generated” (Stewart 1993 149). Eileen’s souvenirs originate from and result in nostalgia and loss; her present remains enveloped within the communal, mythological past, which she partly learns from her father and partly intuitively. Liam, on the other hand, magically envelops the past within the present. He leaves the area of the Canadian shield, which is, in spite of its forests, reminiscent of barren Irish landscapes, and repossesses the landscape of his earliest Canadian memories by re-enacting the act of arrival. He acquires and inhabits the object of his most precious souvenir-like memory—the house—but also moves it to a different, lush landscape. “The sphere of labour” (Urquhart 1993 162) that he constructs to keep his world whole, restricts it, but also allows him to remain bound to the present of the new country, and to avoid the fragmented “memoried” world of his mother and sister.

His home-making is undermined, however, by the projected fate of the house he lovingly moves to a fertile landscape, which, threatened by the quarry, will share the fate of other family houses. The fact that they are sooner or later obliterated by, though at the same time “integrated” into, the landscape (buried in sand, flooded by water, struck by lightning) suggests again the paradox of alienation and integration: the impossibility of making home in the country of exile, the inescapability of the condition of being “away” (“you are never present where you stand [...] Each corner is a secret and your history a lie” [Urquhart 1993 345]) that accompanies settler’s integration with the metaphorical and literal landscape of the colony. Landscape buries and contains, obliterates and preserves the memory symbolized by the house (Urquhart 1993 19) and by women: landscape- and house-bound passive guardians of memory. It is, however, itself threatened by the forces of forgetting that threaten the house. The abandoned place of origin forever haunts the new home-place, and is integrated into the colonial and postcolonial landscape.

An interesting aspect of the problematics of haunting is the spectralisation of the settler in *Away*. In Urquhart’s novel the ghost-like status of the women who are “away” is shared by the Irish diaspora in general. The wake-game played at the wedding in which Mary and her husband Brian O’Malley participate short before leaving Ireland underlines the tragedy of famine, but also points to emigration as a kind of death. As the men “build” a ship out of their own bodies, they anticipate the possibility of death by hunger or during the transatlantic

travel, but also the figurative “death” that emigration brings. Interestingly, a ritual recognizing emigration as a kind of death, has indeed been present in Irish culture in the form of the “American wake,” and is related to traditional Celtic beliefs. Writing about the tradition of organizing the “American wake” for the prospective emigrants from Ireland, Grace Neville comments that “in age-old Irish tradition, the Afterlife was situated, inter alia, over the Western Ocean, in the Isles of the Blest. This belief reinforces the image of the destination of most of these emigrants—America—as a kind of earthly paradise” (Neville 2000 118). As Sugars concludes in her analysis of *Away*, “the state of being away is not only to be haunted by a lack of ghosts—or, perhaps, overwhelmed by a surfeit of inauthentic ghosts—but to be a ghost as well. This is particularly noteworthy since being ‘away’ is, after all, the opposite of indigeneity” (Sugars 2003 24).

In *Away* and MacLeod’s stories, as discussed above, what haunts the protagonists and landscapes they inhabit is cultural memory inscribed in place; traces of handed-down histories and beliefs, which offer intimations of cultural plenitude, hint at the intimate wholeness of the past, and an irretrievable explanatory framework. At the same time, what haunts are also social relations, stories of abuse and dispossession. While MacLeod essentially avoids the question of the settler-invader duality, and focuses on the memories of the lost place of origin and the progressing dissolution of its surrogate in Cape Breton, Urquhart explores the “spacial crypt” of Canadian space to engage the question of settlers’ dispossession of Native people, and the issue of the indigenisation of the settler.

The indigenous presence is marked in *Away* by the hybrid figures of Exodus Crow and Molly. Exodus Crow, an Ojibway, whose name suggests the conflation of white and indigenous culture, brings Mary’s corpse back to her family and indigenizes her story of being “away” as a version of a woman on a vision quest, staying close to her spirit-guide. He explicitly suggests a commonality of the Irish and Native heritage, a commonality resting on the confluent mythological visions of the world and place, embracing and validating invisible aspects of existence, but also on shared experience of colonization. As Mary tells him, “the same trouble stayed in the hearts of both our peoples” (Urquhart 1993 185). Exodus Crow arrives dressed in European attire, though sporting a crow’s feather on his hat, and brings a message of cultural reconciliation. Urquhart dramatizes the double status of the colonized colonizer that the

transplanted Irish community has, sidestepping the problems involved in equalizing the plight of the Irish and Native Canadians by creating Molly, a descendant of an Irishman and an Ojibway woman, “who carried the cells of both the old world and the new in the construction of her bones and blood” (Urquhart 1993 302). Molly embodies the idealized, though, even in the novel, unrealized future of interracial fusion of body and spirit. As Liam’s wife she legitimizes the successful settler’s claim to the land. The cultural fusion is reflected in the double source of magic in the novel: while it is grounded most firmly in the Irish mythology, it also employs Native beliefs, by making a crow Eileen’s guiding spirit. In spite of its attempts to the contrary, the novel enacts the settlers’ “impossible necessity for incorporating the Other, for becoming indigenous in order to belong in the land they have conquered” (Godard 1990 190; see also Goldie 1989 16).

The forced abandonment of ancestral place haunting MacLeod’s and Urquhart’s protagonists acquires a different dimension in Eden Robinson’s novel *Monkey Beach*. *Monkey Beach*, *Away*, and MacLeod’s stories share the theme of the disintegration of the traditional community accompanied by forced alienation from place. The play of fragmentation and wholeness performs a significant role in the texts. However, by focusing on the Native experience of displacement and exile, Robinson provides the point of view of the colonized, who have never had the advantages accorded to the Celtic settlers because of their double status. As internal colonization remains a reality of life for the characters, the novel allows for pondering on exile from place that one still inhabits.

For Lisamarie, the narrator and protagonist of *Monkey Beach*, the experience of exile is chiefly psychological, a legacy of the process of colonization and deculturation. She grows up in Kitamaat, the Haisla village that spatially and emotionally anchors Eden Robinson’s novel. The protagonist is immersed both in contemporary North American culture and contemporary Haisla culture. In the process, she gathers bits and pieces of obscured cultural knowledge that coupled with her own experience allow her to develop a deep emotional attachment to the area that constitutes the ancestral Haisla territory. The reclamation of place, with its zones of danger and lacunae of mystery and magic, requires from

the contemporary indigenous protagonist mental openness and psychological reorientation, as well as guidance of her elders. It is a long process resting on a specific labour of memory, as contrasted with Mary's instinctive knowledge of and attachment to place in *Away*.

Native heritage is encoded in the haunted natural spaces of the Haisla territory in the form of stories attached to topographical landmarks and plants. Physical attributes of space are bearers of cultural memory. Old burial sites and abandoned villages underline the abandonment of place; brief remarks on polluted rivers, and the protagonist's dreams of pristine nature, suggest its slow degradation. As the novel proceeds, the natural space does not undergo a radical transformation, it does not lose its dangers, secrets and magic. It is roamed by carnivorous ghostly presences and the elusive *b'gwus*. Even though the natural space has the nature of "place" as it possesses a deep memorial and emotional dimension for the protagonist and her community, its domestication, resulting from the presence of ancestral spirits and benevolent, though sometimes misleading guide spirits, is incomplete. At the same time, as the protagonist slowly learns to accept her dangerous gift of communing with the spirit world, and recognizes the need to control it, she becomes more open to varying magical dimensions of her home territory. However, she is not necessarily more knowledgeable of their significance, which underlines both the inherent mystery of the ancestral place and the loss of a considerable amount of cultural Native lore in the wake of colonialism.

Through the description of the geographical location of Kitamaat provided at the beginning of the novel, the apparently neutral space of the map is transformed into a contested space of overlapping discourses of history, memory and culture, from the intersection of which the text emerges. It hints at territorial disputes between the Haisla and the Tshimshian nations, the white colonization and the cultural and linguistic ignorance of the early traders, drawing the reader's attention to the process of cultural reinscription of space involved in constructions of the narrative of the map, and to the silences, gaps and erasures that the process of (colonial) mapping involves. As Rob Appleford notes, the narrator in effect makes readers pay attention to the difficulty, verging on

the impossibility, of creating a faithful map in view of all the complicating factors that are erased or obscured in the process (Appleford 2005 96). The narrator guides the reader's finger on the map, providing first a bird's eye view of British Columbia, then focusing on the Haisla territory and finally on the village and the narrator's house, reviewing at the same time the transition from space to place. Meticulous attention paid to the spatial positioning of the village both underscores and undermines its marginal geographical and cultural location, and grounds the character firmly in culturally and historically determined space.

The paradigm of the map as evoked and problematized at the beginning of the novel constitutes an important aspect of Canadian literary preoccupation with space. As Graham Huggan maintains, the challenging and reworking of the map characteristic of postcolonial literary discourse, particularly in Canada and Australia, is a decolonizing move of "creative revisionism," which recognizes and validates "the relativity of modes of spatial (and, by extension, cultural) perception" (Huggan 1989 128). Such revisionary moves both challenge colonial paradigms and provide space for postcolonial explorations (grounded in specific cultural and historical realities) of discourses marginalised by or banished from dominant discourses of colonialism that are modified but endure in postcolonialism. Huggan links the process to a series of oppositional, de-centring marginal counterdiscourses of "feminism, regionalism and ethnicity" (Huggan 1989 127).

Monkey Beach clearly foregrounds the discourse of ethnicity. As the Eurocentric reader's sense of security that the map is meant to provide is jolted by a series of commentaries by the narrator, the process of an alternative mapping of space is set in motion. Instead of suggesting a cognitive distance between the observer and the land, and posing the map as an objective reflection of landforms and a dependable guide, the novel follows a process of a mental mapping of space based on spirituality, and resulting from the recognition of the intimate link between human beings and natural spaces. Such an emotional and spiritual, culture-based map, however, is not objective, reliable and definitive, especially that it is constructed out of obscured and incomplete cultural markers. The contemporary narrator, who lives in a necessarily hybridized cultural space, fuses also the two systems of space mapping, partially recovering the one related to Native culture and orality.

In *Away* the spiritual mapping of space is likewise related to an indigenous (Celtic) culture and oral stories it produces. Like the visions shown to Mary by her daemon lover, the maps she studies function not as spacial but as temporal guides, as premonitions. The maps are occasions for building mental landscapes, but they also mediate between inner geographies and outer landscapes they are traces of. Mary imaginatively transforms the geographical maps that she reads. Infused with the essence of the “otherworld” that her demon lover inhabits, and coloured with the cultural losses effected by invasions and migrations they lose their presumed objectivity. When still in Ireland, Mary maps her immediate surroundings in keeping with the traditional designations that define places through stories. As she moves to Canada, she becomes part of the place only as she finds lake Moira, which promises to harbour stories she knows from Ireland. Her son Liam, in contrast, uses a map to verify familiar Canadian landscapes, and then discards both the map and the barren landscape of the Canadian Shield, by extension finalizing his prolonged gesture of discarding Ireland and the labour of memory. He seeks, and finds, greener fields of southern Ontario. Liam reads the map in the rational colonial fashion for its economic implications: a kind of reading that in time brings destruction both to the land and the stories it harbours, but at the same time ensures the physical survival of the settler.

The process of the making of intimate geography not connected with the official map paradigm, and of developing a mental possession of space through naming and mapping constitutes one of the themes of MacLeod’s short story “Island” (1988). The story involves also the subsequent abandonment of such intimately mapped place, with its implied reversal to the status of site, when the intimate geography is lost with its inhabitants. The story is again structured so as to suggest a continuity of memory and experience through generations and to echo the experience of the dispossession of the population of the “Highlands and Islands” of Scotland. The lighthouse keeper’s family, as they move to an island off the coast of Nova Scotia, perceive themselves as continuing the experience of their Scottish ancestors, “who had for generations been used to [...] the long nights when no one spoke and to the isolation of islands” (MacLeod “Island” 2001 375). As time and generations pass, they take the island in imaginative possession, though it never becomes

“theirs” in any legal sense. The family map the island by means of names, unrecorded other than in personal, family or community memory, and related to its natural features (*creig a bhoird*, the table rock), memorable events (*bagh na long bhriseadh*, bay of the shipwreck), and personal milestones (*Áite na cruinneachadh*, the meeting place). For the MacPhedrans, the island marks the continuation and limits of their experience, and as such defines them:

with the passage of the years, the family’s name as well as their identity became entwined with that of the island. So that although the island had an official name on the marine and nautical charts it became known generally as MacPhedran’s Island while they themselves became known less as MacPhedrans than as people “of the island.” [...] As if in giving their name to the island they had received its own lonely designation in return.

(MacLeod “Island” 2001 376)

The protagonist, the last of the MacPhedrans, the only family member actually born on the island, figuratively becomes the island. Her bond with it is described in terms of instinct and necessity. The two times in her life that she makes love, she makes it, metaphorically speaking, to the island. The trajectory of her first love—secret meetings, silent love-making in the dark, the disappearance of her fiancé, his death in far-away Maine, and most of all the absolute ignorance of others of their affair—renders the lover demonic, and precipitates his ghostly return at the end of the story. Much later, the frenzied love-making with four fishermen on the table rock in broad daylight, induced by the mating frenzy of the mackerel, is likewise never commented upon by the participants or revealed to anyone, and acquires an aspect of unreality. Confined to the island by circumstances, with her daughter abandoned to the family in the mainland, the protagonist in a sense “mothers,” creates the island. As she prepares to leave it, she reflects that “the places would remain but the names would vanish [...] She looked across the landscape, repeating the phrases of place-names as if they were those of children about to be abandoned without knowledge of their names” (MacLeod “Island” 2001 407). Her final mythical leave-taking with the ghostly lover means also the disappearance of the island she and her family have created, though its physical shape will remain on nautical charts. With her memory of places and events, the island as place is effectively wiped out, just as the woman herself is emotionally and physically “wiped out” by the governmental

decree that her services as a lightkeeper are no longer needed and she has to leave the island. At the end, she simply vanishes with her ghostly lover into hail and snow over the sea.

In the story, place provides the only accurate map and record of human experience, and becomes a place of memory. All the errors on the protagonist's birth-certificate suggest the limitations of the archive and of written history. Her life and her experiences, never verbalised, are best recorded on the body of the island: she is, quite literally, "of the island." The exile of the protagonist from the home-place, the abandonment of the island caused by economic and political changes, stand metonymically for the experience of exiled Scots, and the abandonment of their islands.

The encryption of the memory of cultural and personal loss in an overlay of abandoned and contemporary geographies produces "the strange effects of ordinary space" (Yaeger 1996 9) in the texts under discussion. In effect, places and spaces function as spacial crypts, hiding stories of marginalisation and erasure, echoing with half-forgotten community and family traditions, and fading echoes of a world of myth and pattern that still has the power to evoke personal resonances.

In magic realist texts the "ghost" that externalises memory, the "what is and is not" at the same time, and that unburies silenced stories, tends to be figured through images of magical presences that roam or reside in the landscape. Memory understood as re-implacing is compelled by such hauntings and becomes inflected by Avery F. Gordon's conceptualisation of "memory as haunting" (Gordon 1997 167), haunting being defined as "the sociality of living with ghosts, a sociality both tangible and tactile as well as ephemeral and imaginary" (Gordon 1997 201). Place as such functions, on many different levels, as both the parchment, and the text, indeed "in some sense place is language, something in constant flux, a discourse in process" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995 391). It allows for attempts at re-implacing based on the concept of "geography as ghost story" (Yaeger 1996 25).

In *Monkey Beach* the ambiguity and opacity of the abandoned ancestral space teaming with magic presences is maintained throughout the novel. These characteristics underscore both the immanent mystery the space harbours, and the suppression and consequent failure of collective and individual memory that result in Lisa's confusion about her culture and family history, which has roots in the limitations of her access to both. As Appleford comments, by announcing at the very beginning of the novel her confusion about the meaning of crows' urgent, and perhaps crucial, calls in Haisla, which she does not know well, Lisamarie "remembers" and admits "cultural loss" and "calls into question her own reliability as a 'Native informant'" (Appleford 2005 92). The ancestral space she lives in reveals zones of forgetting resulting from partial cultural displacement of the protagonist and her community, at the same time both demanding and resisting their reclamation by memory.

The half-forgotten ancestral language stands at the door to the crypt, promising and at the same time obstructing access to what it hides: the marginalised cultural system, with its specific modes of thinking and perception. The cultural mapping of physical space by means of place names and stories attached to places, as well as the mental mapping of experience as expressed through language, are erased or obscured when "translated" into the language of the dominant culture. The forgotten and repressed elements of traditional culture come back in the form of intuitions, ghostly presences, creatures and events that can adequately be accounted for only in the language that is itself forgotten or repressed. The stories the narrator learns are mediated by English and because of that are always to a certain extent distorted, imprecise. Any revelations they might hide remain obscure. As Lisa's grandmother (Ma-ma-oo) explains, "to really understand the old stories [...] you had to speak Haisla" (Robinson 2001 211).

This sentiment, which links the survival of community memory and worldview with the survival of its language, is echoed in MacLeod's stories, for example, in the narrator's comment in "Vision": "The story was told in Gaelic, and as the people say: 'It is not the same in English,' although the images are true" (MacLeod "Vision" 2001 359). The point is also stressed in *Away*, in which Brian O'Malley, a hedge schoolmaster ousted from the job by the coming of the National School realizes that

with the demise of Gaelic, “There will be none of us left [...] in the way that we know ourselves now” (Urquhart 1993 73). Memory as re-implacing becomes then, at least to a certain extent, an impossible feat to achieve, as the act of remembering past places is obstructed by the limited access to the cultural stories that make them memorable and to the cognitive structures that would be able to accommodate the places and stories into a larger cultural whole.

Places function in the novels and short stories under discussion as they do, in general, in postcolonial texts: as palimpsestic reminders of the cultures irrevocably changed or wiped out by colonialism, though the ghostly writing is not necessarily that of a native culture, as in *Monkey Beach*, but also of the lost cultures of the settler-invader, as in *Away* or MacLeod’s short stories. Place names themselves, and even the distorted stories related to them, remain markers and reminders of the vanishing world of traditional cultures: they are intimately linked to cognition and experience, and facilitate the process of re-implacing. Hence in all the texts place names are particularly charged with cultural and personal significance, functioning as important signposts of memory and experience, and endowed with power “to summon forth an enormous range of mental and emotional associations” (Basso 1996 76).

The construction of space in *Monkey Beach* supports the tenet of indigenous beliefs explored in much indigenous fiction of North America: that place has a life of its own, that it is “invested with the same type and degree of spirit as humanity,” and that there exists a fundamental relationship between place and the people who inhabit it (Nelson 1993). Lisamarie’s final vision of family ghosts around a fire on Monkey Beach makes it clear that the people belong in the landscape. Throughout the novel, her stumbling, but consistent contact with the spirit world and meetings with the elusive *b’gwus* (sasquatch), all lodged in and specific to place, suggest that she is attuned to it. At the same time, the attunement is often perceived as a curse rather than a gift as its possible significance is not remembered: the cultural context that would allow Lisa to accommodate what she sees and hears is obscured. The final encounter with the family ghosts is literally life-saving as the narrator, pursued by carnivorous presences is rescued by family ghosts from drowning. At the same time, its significance for Lisamarie is far from obvious. There is no

message of healing or strengthening Native identity by entering into identity with the land that can often be found Native texts considered paradigmatic by critics, like N. Scott Momaday's *The House Made of Dawn* (1968) or Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977). Instead, the ending of the novel rings with the ambiguous howl of a *b'gwus*: "not quite human, not quite wolf, but something in between" (Robinson 2001 374), which evokes the discourse of monstrosity permeating the novel.

It is through the recovery of monstrosity immanently residing in natural spaces that monstrosities of the social space are explored in *Monkey Beach*. The discourse of monstrosity is related, on one hand, to West Coast Native lore, full of stories related to shape-shifting, and humans turned into animals. On the other, it both evokes and subverts the colonial vision of Native as monster, reflecting it back on the white community, as some of the monstrous acts reported in the novel (e.g., Josh taking sexual advantage of Pooch and Karaoke) are clearly caused by white influences (in this case, the experience of sexual abuse in a residential school), and the Native experience of abuse and dispossession.

The figure of the *b'gwus*—the "monkey" that Monkey Beach, the key power-place of the book, is named after—is particularly evocative. It haunts both the Native and white cultural imagination, has its place in traditional stories as well as in popular culture. It is monstrous not only because of its reported ferocity, but also because of its in-between status that threatens to break established categories. At first sight the *b'gwus* can be taken for a human being and as such, at least temporarily, blur the boundary between self and other (Appleford 2005 93). The Haisla stories recounted in the novel suggest in fact that the *b'gwus* is a human being turned monstrous, its monstrosity reflecting the monstrous act of taboo-breaking, a warning against transgression: in Ma-ma-oo's story a husband killed by his unfaithful wife, who has an affair with his brother, turns into a *b'gwus* and then takes revenge on the couple. At the same time, this "wild man of the woods," as the word translates from Haisla into English (Appleford 2005 88), evokes the colonial perception of American indigenous population as "wild men" and "monsters": two paradigms whose traces have survived in stereotypical images of the Native population of America.⁵ The metaphorical link is explicitly

⁵ Alden T. Vaughan points out that the early image of Natives in America as "wild men" was rooted in the universal European folk belief in the existence of savage, hirsute

explored by the narrator as she recounts the story of the *b'gwus* as “part of a larger social complex” whose collective fate resembles that of the Native people of North America (Robinson 2001 318). In *Monkey Beach* one of the functions of the sasquatch figure is clearly to provide a wry comment on the myth of the Native as circulated in North American culture, and imposed on the Native community. Such employment of stereotypical images of Natives is, as Cynthia Sugars notes, a strategy Robinson uses consistently in order both to reflect on the legacy of colonialism on the community and to problematize ethnic identity (Sugars “Strategic” 2004 78-79). Appleford’s well-argued claim that “the *b'gwus* motif [...] introduces into the contemporary Haisla context traditional concepts of crime and retribution” (Appleford 2005 90) suggests that the *b'gwus* becomes, among others, an agent of buried or suppressed memories. Harboured by place, lodged in it, the figure stands for the magical dimension of the world, a traditional worldview rendered marginal and transgressive in contemporary America. At the same time it functions as an embodiment of the erasures and distortions of colonization.

As Cohen claims,

The monster polices the borders of the possible [...] The monster prevents mobility (intellectual, geographic, or sexual), delimiting the

wild men, who provided an image of the Europeans’ other even before their encounter with the Natives of America (Vaughan 1995 35-38). The “wild man paradigm” was later replaced by the “monster paradigm”:

Despite some superficial similarities, the monster paradigm functioned differently than its wild-man counterpart. The latter had initially been Europe's image of all Indians; and if it was fundamentally pejorative, it nonetheless was flexible enough to acknowledge benign characteristics and even to evolve in the eighteenth century into the noble savage image. The monster paradigm, by contrast, was not a description of the norm but instead a wholly pejorative metaphor, a verbal excess, an excoriation of Indians at their imagined worst. The perception of Indians-as-monsters existed alongside Indians-as-wild-men throughout the sixteenth century and faded rapidly thereafter, although in America the paradigm enjoyed a long and inglorious career as a sporadic militant metaphor.

(Vaughan 1995 40)

social spaces through which private bodies may move. To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monster oneself.

(Cohen 1997 12)

In accordance with this logic, the “monsters’r us” paradigm in *Monkey Beach*, first evoked through Native stories of the *b’gwus*, is quite consistently used in association with Native characters who in white-centred North America are boundary-breakers, rebels in different ways attuned to Native tradition and contesting outside influences. Lisa herself, her uncle Mick and Ma-ma-oo resist cooption into the value system imposed by white culture, even though they are necessarily under its influence, and their identities might be described as hybrid.⁶

As Lisa struggles through the growing-up pains, Mick and Ma-ma-oo function not only as her loved relatives, but also memory- and culture-transmitters. Their attachment to Elvis Presley and TV soap operas respectively does not prevent them from taking pride in the Haisla tradition. In effect, they constitute the twin pillars of Lisa’s developing sense of identity. Ma-ma-oo introduces Lisa to half-forgotten traditions woven seamlessly into her everyday life, and to family history. She is the only one who treats Lisa’s ability to see and contact the spirit-world not as a mental disturbance, but as a special gift, running in the female line of her family, though consciously suppressed by Lisa’s mother. She is the source of Native lore, herself talks to spirits, and knows about presences roaming the wilderness. Mick, a former AIM activist, is a consciousness-raiser for Lisa, and a rebel she identifies with. Both die by accident, killed by the elements (by fire and by water respectively), their bodies monstrously disfigured. Mick, half eaten by seals, looks like “an ugly fish [...] a bad catch” (Robinson 2001 148); Ma-ma-oo, consumed by fire in her house, “had no hair, no skin. She was charred and smelled like bacon” (Robinson 2001 292). While the novel does not give conclusive indications as to the possible interpretation of these gruesome deaths, they might be perceived as revelatory of the monstrosity of the cultural resistance that the characters represent. At death, the characters also cross, in a sense, the human/non-human boundary that constitutes one of the preoccupations of the novel. Their mutilated bodies provide a grotesque comment on the rigidity of the

⁶ See chapter 9 in Howells (2003), in which she discusses the theme of cultural hybridity and hybridized identities as developed in *Monkey Beach*.

boundary which, according to traditional stories, used to be much more fluid and allowed for shape-shifting. The manner of death of the two characters, and images of the mutilated bodies, are woven into a pattern of motives and stories related to predatory behaviours whether in the animal, human or spirit world, which hint at the world of danger and violence hidden under the calm surface of the everyday.

The characters' association with the discourse of monstrosity, and in particular links that might be established between Lisa and the in-between *b'gwus* figure, underscore also their "in-between" cultural status. In Lisa's case, as noted before, the hybridity she lives, while unavoidable, seems also incapacitating. The grandmother gives her only cryptic advice on how to integrate her gift into her life, underlining the unfathomable and double nature of the world of spirits, which Lisa never seems to grasp fully. Ma-ma-oo and Mick, who necessarily live with the heritage of colonialism and surrounded by non-Native culture, are nevertheless able to integrate them partly into the traditional worldview, partly to reject them. Even though they cannot successfully reconcile the opposing influences, as the white culture constitutes the major source of tragic events in their lives, they are able to fall back on their internal resources based on traditional beliefs. As noted before, Lisa's access to resources of traditional culture, which would allow her to accept and understand her gift, and perhaps make a use of it, is obstructed, which results not only in confusion, but also in an overpowering feeling of guilt, which almost destroys Lisa's life. Her world, destabilised by Mick's death, breaks up completely when Ma-ma-oo dies, not only because she loses loved relatives, but also because she is obliquely forewarned of the tragedies: her special gift allows her to see or hear signs and presences that often either warn her of approaching disasters or are able to precipitate them. Not knowing how to respond to the warnings, she ignores them, and feels guilty thereafter as she thinks she could have prevented the disasters. The lack of an explanatory cultural framework, a coherent system of beliefs and values that would allow the protagonist to successfully complete the process of mourning and reconciliation with death compounds the problem. Remnants of old beliefs compete in the community with Christianity, but Lisa has internalised neither. When she finally decides to take action and use carnivorous presences to reveal to her the fate of her brother Jimmy, lost at sea, the experience almost costs her life. Even though she gets in touch with the spirits of ancestors and relatives, including Jimmy, she is finally left stranded on the beach with the

ambiguous howl of a *b'gwus* ringing in her ears. She remains stranded in the fluid borderline zone between the overlapping and yet separate worlds of humans and spirits, humans and animals, Haisla culture and white culture, symbolised by the space/place of Monkey Beach.

The magic realist novels and stories discussed in this chapter display a particular sensitivity to place constituted as spacialized memory, its individual and cultural aspects intertwining. Memory is closely related to the experience of re-implacement, which has not only individual but also inter-generational, cultural aspect. Memory of place constitutes an important part of the heritage of the protagonists, the heritage that might be both a burden and an aid in the process of the crucial contextualisation of individual experience. All texts stress an intimate connection between character and place as agent and object of memory.

MacLeod's and Urquhart's texts, which are related to the settler experience in Canada, dramatize it by underlining the ambiguity of settlers' position in the land which can be fastened in memory only by layering the place of settlement with memories of landscapes and mythologies of the abandoned home. In MacLeod's stories discussed in this chapter the "spacial crypt" reveals only incomplete, haunting traces of settler mythologies, but completely obliterates the memory of First Nations, traces of First Nations stories and experience hidden in place. In Urquhart's *Away* First Nations mythologies are conceptualised as convergent with settler mythologies and incorporated into the settler narrative, allowing for taking the land of the colony into imaginative possession by the settler. The novel explicitly converges memory and place by indicating that the destruction of landscape by the blind forces that commodify it results in the obliteration of memory.

Robinson, writing from a different perspective, charts the contemporary Native experience of memory as related to place. She focuses on the process of incomplete re-membering of cultural traces of lost Native histories and mythologies buried in the ancestral landscape, and likewise stresses the ambiguity and the haunting nature of only partially remembered cultural and historical heritage written in place. Interestingly, the "uncanny" experience of place as both unfamiliar and familiar, the quintessence of the settler experience, becomes in the novel

also part of contemporary Native experience of ancestral landscapes. They are no longer “transparent” in the sense of being the comfortable “home” immediately accessible through a coherent cultural and belief system. Rather, they have to be re-membered and re-experienced, and combine the mysterious and often terrifying unfamiliar with a vague and haunting sense of familiarity.

In all cases, though in different ways, the conceptualisation and experience of place in the texts relies to a large extent on projections of memories of the long lost home-places on contemporary landscapes, and suggests the concept of memory that

is itself a place wherein the past can revive and survive; it is a place for places, meeting them midway in its own preservative powers. Unlike site and time, memory does not thrive on the indifferently dispersed. It thrives, rather, on the persistent particularities of what is properly *in place*: held fast there and made one’s own.

(Casey 2000 187, Casey’s emphasis)

Chapter III

House, Home, Community: Dimensions of Memory and Domesticity

Bachelard's famous mythologizing of felicitous, domestic spaces, and his conceptualisation of the house as an intimate universe itself, its immensity blending with the immensity of world space (Bachelard 1994 203), touches on an important aspect of the meaning of the house as place: its openness to and connection with what surrounds it. As Casey asserts, in Western philosophical tradition Bachelard's ideas constitute a rare and paradoxical example of achieving a "metaphysical unity" between the house treated as the primary locus of intimate memory and the world. While the house has enjoyed a privileged position in post-Cartesian Western thought in its capacity of "an archetypal place for the most significant remembering" (Casey 2000 221), Casey states, it has usually been conceptualised as self-enclosed and isolated from its surroundings, and treated at the same time as an emblem of the architectural space. While his own concept of place and place memory includes the house, the philosopher at the same time works to dislodge the house from its privileged position or rather to open it up. A comparison between the Western concept of inhabited space, "at once highly interiorized and heavily built-over" (Casey 2000 212), with the Chinese concept, in which architecture opens into nature, allows Casey to specify his idea of place memory as based on "a radically inclusive notion of space in which the full landscape contexture of given places can be accounted for" (Casey 2000 210). Such an inclusive notion of space, he posits, is hardly possible in the West, but at the same time he makes a case for conceiving of the house as part of a broader context, of what surrounds it.

The open nature of architecture that he posits, which would allow it better to respond to his idea of memory as re-implacing, ties in the house with a much broader concept of home. Domestic spaces both give rise to memories and provide space for complex intersections of different aspects of memory, providing an anchor for the search for or rethinking of home. The distinctive feature of domestic spaces, in particular the house, is their

capacity to hold numerous aspects of intersecting discourses of the past, the present and the future; and the fact that they are the stomping ground of private as well as the public: “because domestic spaces are the product of a society, they express and reinforce its norms, social practices, and ideologies” (Mezei 2005 81) They are shaped by history and by myth, and provide a ground for identity formation (George 1996 26). House-related themes and motives are repeatedly used in postcolonial literatures to address multiple issues related to postcolonial identity and experience (Ashcroft 2002 26). The notion of “home,” often approached through the figure of the house, functions here in its narrowest and broadest senses: in its relation to family and the ancestral house, community and locality, as well as to the nation and the country; as a private, political, and metaphysical project.

The importance of the notion of home and the figure of the house for Canadian literature, especially as perceived in the troubled context of Canadian nationalism and postcolonialism, has often been noted in criticism. Russel Brown, for example, suggests that English-Canadian narrative from the colonial period on has consistently been “organised” by the theme of home contaminated with the theme of road that finally circles back home, and therefore connected with the theme of homecoming. He also notes that the “home” that characters return to is usually not without its flaws and problems (Brown 1994 41), and the concept of home itself is complicated by a set of questions of belonging and exclusion that it raises. It seems, indeed, that it is within this broad thematic frame of home, home-leaving and home-coming, that familiar postcolonial concerns return in many works of contemporary English-Canadian literature, including magic realist novels: the colonized turning into the colonizer; the impossible desire of the settler to become indigenous while othering the indigene; the dispossession of the Native population; the need to claim the colony as home in spite of experiencing it as an alien territory; and the feeling of alienation not only from the home territory but also from the language in which to articulate it; finally the need to reclaim the lost home. As Karen MacFarlane notes, attempts to express the notion of “home” in English-Canadian literature requires “a negotiation between multiple versions of histories, identities, and places” (MacFarlane 2003 223) and for at least some contemporary writers of (however remote) European origin results in coming up with a complicated paradigm that never quite matches either the paradigmatic

postcolonial hybridity or any of the poles of the colonizer-colonized binary. This conclusion follows also from an earlier, more general article by Stephen Slemon on the necessarily compromised nature of textual resistance in “Second World countries” as Alan Lawson defines them (Slemon 2004).

This ambivalence about the notion of home, Canadian national project and Canadian (post)colonial location is best expressed by the title of the first comprehensive anthology of texts on different aspects of Canadian postcolonialism: *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism* (2004). While the plural suggests the multiple, often highly contradictory approaches to and versions of the question of Canadian postcolonialism as a useful, but also—the editor notes—insufficient framework in which to discuss Canada, the “unhomeliness” infuses the discussion with dark resonances of the Freudian uncanny: the feeling of the strangeness of home connected with the inescapable presence of the repressed always poised on the point of returning. This makes Canada as a settler colony, Diana Brydon has argued, “an unstable site for memory” (Brydon 2003 55). Colonial erasures and appropriations of Native cultures that persist in Canada, and other former settler colonies, “the survival of certain ways of seeing and not-seeing from the past into the present” (Brydon 2003 56) produce, she posits, “the urgent need [...] to rethink this question of ‘how to remember’” (Brydon 2003 55).

This exploration of memory in its intersection with questions of broadly conceived home dominates, likewise, literature produced by First Nations writers, though the question of “how to remember” is here inflected in radically different ways and approached from different perspectives. Novels by First Nations writers usually do not express a nostalgic attachment to the domicile as the favoured site for and the “treasure-house” of memories. Even though houses play a prominent role in some works of contemporary Native Canadian literature, they tend to function as markers of social change and cultural difference, places of both individual and communal significance, thus embodying also a host of memories. For example, in Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), Eli’s childhood hut, while connected with intimate memories, becomes first of all his “last stand” against neocolonial forces of big capital that would like to destroy the natural environment and Native culture for financial gain. The exploration of the notion of home, on the other hand, holds an important place in the majority of First

Nations texts. Grounded in the Native worldview, but often also besieged by competing cultural influences, “home” is a necessary and complex reference point, though—as I indicated in the previous chapter—in the contemporary context it might also acquire an aspect of uncanniness. Home is constituted through an intricate web of continuities and relationships between the past and the present stretching into the future; between the visible and the invisible; among the land, animals, natural environment and the human being; and among people themselves.

This chapter constitutes an attempt at reading selected Canadian magic-realist novels to reveal how the question of memory intertwines in them with the “investment in the notion of ‘home’” (George 1996 1) that Rosemary Marangoly George perceives as one of the central aspects of contemporary novels in English worldwide. The novels selected for discussion revolve around the themes of home and memory in the context of Canada as a former settler colony, though they approach the theme in a variety of ways. The motive of the house as a figure aiding the rethinking of the notion of the colonial/postcolonial space as home is used in disparate ways. Houses function here as memory-nods or anchors for memories, as places of particular (though not necessarily positive) emotional investment, as sites of social significance reflective of certain cultural features and social characteristics, but also as symbols of the constricting attachment to the physical and the material. Houses themselves are not necessarily main loci of magic in the texts; rather, the magic tends to have its locus outside of the house, and only invade it from time to time, which necessitates a revalorisation of the domestic space in its broader context.

The texts I discuss—Jane Urquhart’s *Away*, Jack Hodgins’s *The Invention of the World*, Gail Anderson-Dargatz’s *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, and Lee Maracle’s *Ravensong*—do not confirm Wendy B. Faris’ findings concerning the role of houses in magic realist novels as nods of cosmic energy, which receive and disperse their magic, rather than hoarding it. However, the broader domestic sphere in the novels is, in accordance with Faris’s claims, definitely “opened outward into communal and cosmic forces” (Faris 2004 182) Healing, in very many different senses, “second growth” and renewal or at least reconciliation

constitute indisputably the core of these novels. Nevertheless, the process is usually long, painful, often unresolved; and the cosmic and communal openness of the house often comes but slowly if ever. The felicitous surface of the house conceals painful family secrets, stories of the abuse of power, (sexual) transgression and trauma. The spaces of house and home are related to multiple stories of exile (from homeland and familiar landscape, as well as from a safe family context) and transformation. They are dynamic and multiply contextualised.

The novels, while often focusing on private traumas, explore also the changing shape of the Canadian national project. While *Away* and *The Invention of the World* are directly concerned with rethinking the national ideal for Canada, the other two novels are more compatible with what Rosemary Marangoly George describes as “the search for viable homes for viable selves” (George 1996 5) conducted, however, within the constraints of Canadian realities. In their desire for home-making, all the texts rely on community; and while some put forward the ideal of human oneness and conceive of community as all-encompassing, they nevertheless not only rethink but also underline inclusions and exclusions on which the idea of “home” rests. As Marangoly George aptly writes, “Home is the desired place that is fought for and established as the exclusive domain of a few. It is not a neutral place. It is community” (George 1996 9). In what follows, I explore links between the figure of the house, the multiple, often definitely not felicitous spaces of “home” it suggests, and memory-related issues in magic realist novels which blend different dimensions of memory, in particular its individual, communal, and historical aspects.

* * *

In Urquhart’s *Away*, as I have shown in the previous chapter, family houses of the Irish settlers, destroyed by natural forces and integrated into the landscape, become symbolic of the secret persistence of memory, and the paradox of (post)colonization. They disappear into the landscape, but also persist within it. The ancestral Loughbreeze Beach house on the lake is Liam’s souvenir of the moment of arrival, his badge of indigeneity and groundedness. Originally, as an inn for Irish immigrants and sailors, the house functions as a centre of communal memory and tradition. From the beginning it reflects the lake in its windows, which young Liam interprets

as “the house’s own memories painted there” (Urquhart 1993 137). When Liam buys the inn, he floats it down to Loughbreeze Beach, which belies the mirage of groundedness the house offers. From this moment on, the history of the Irish diaspora in Canada, the history of Canada as such, and intimate family history intersect symbolically within the space of the house, which becomes the dwelling-place of collective and personal memory.

It is also in the house that the forces of myth and history intersect. Eileen’s home-bound existence after the failure of the affair with Aidan Lanighan, Esther’s confinement as she re-tells to herself the family story, suggest that the house constitutes a metaphorical “prison-house” of memory: an externalization of the inner prisons of the mythical past that the women who are “away” inhabit as they “translate from myth to life” folk stories and songs (Urquhart 1993 296). It provides the necessary anchor to keep the women from floating away in pursuit of their otherworldly lovers by grounding them in the here and now. The house holds the evanescent memories of the everyday that Esther attempts to commemorate and save as she roams the house labelling furniture with notes describing memories of events and emotions connected with them. This best shows how “things congeal the places we remember, just as places congeal remembered worlds—and as the present of remembering congeals the past remembered” (Casey 2000 206).

In spite of this meticulous attention paid to the minutiae of the everyday, Esther cannot escape the mythological that the house also embodies and contains. This closed receptacle of memories, just like other family houses in the novel, displays an affinity with the natural world and is indeed in tune with the forces of the universe: it underscores both the rootedness and rootlessness of its inhabitants. As the narrator explains, the house

is solid but it has always responded to stimuli. Made of slender pine boards, lined with cedar, insulated with sawdust, it is alive with a forest life never experienced by walls of stone or brick or cement. [...] the women of this family have been known to believe that the house has *become* the storm; that some ancient quarrel is going on between that which is built and that which is untouched, and that the house might fling itself in a moment of anguish into the arms of its monstrous liquid neighbour.

(Urquhart 1993 5)

The description responds to Bachelard's conceptualisation of the house as an intimate universe itself, a closed and interiorised space, whose immensity blends nevertheless with the immensity of world space. The ancestral house—even though originally owned by the stolid Liam—is a true home to the women of the family ready to give themselves to their otherworldly lovers. The “ancient quarrel” it is involved in seems to be an externalisation of their inner struggle, the quarrel between the forces of myth and history that tug at the female protagonists and mould their perception of the landscape. The house both anchors the women in the present, in the here and now, and helps maintain links with the mythological lore and the water, which works as its agent, attempting, as Eileen suggests, to push Esther out towards the lake and the “inherited mythology.” In contrast to Liam or Aidan, and in spite of their intimate links with the house, the women never fully inhabit it, they never own it. Their feeling of “at-homeness” in the house, in North America, and in the world remains contaminated with what the narrator describes as the tendency to invent and interpret rather than fully experience “the real moment” (Urquhart 1993 355), which the men, especially the passionate Aidan, embody.

The emblem of these multiple intersections of disparate forces that shape the fate of the characters is the charred hoof-like mark Eileen's iron burns into a floorboard as she runs to meet Aidan. At this point, she leaves, temporarily, her private world steeped in myth and intuition, to enter the world of politics and history as she later tragically misreads Aidan's intentions and contributes unwittingly to the murder of D'Arcy McGee. Her love and disappointment, the story of other otherworldly lovers, Irish heritage, the history of the Irish diaspora in Canada are thus etched into the floor and commemorated. The mark brands the house, just like Aidan's hand “brands” Eileen's body and soul. It indicates both the desire for “wholeness” and the accompanying unrestrained forces of separation and fragmentation. The former is symbolised by McGee's vision of the federation Aidan subscribes to, as well as the traditional mythology; the latter is suggested by the cutting short of the vision by violence, progressive forgetting of the mythology and mythological communal oneness and the fragmentation of the land. Through the figure of the house myth and history, the magic and the real that weave through the narrative, are presented as intertwining and not opposing forces, though they are always constantly at war; they emerge as two equally elusive, evanescent and at the same time persistent and durable forms of memory.

The bleak image of the insecurity of the settlers' hold on what they designate as "home"—the "old" and the "new" worlds they continue to inhabit—is countered in Jack Hodgins's *The Invention of the World* by images of the successful beginning of a redefinition of the terms of settlement through the renewal of community. While in *Away* the traditional community disintegrates and it is clear that even Esther's weaving of myth and history will not magically reassemble it, Hodgins in his novel starts imagining a new community built on the basis of common "humanity" and not shared cultural roots, history or mythology.

In *The Invention of the World* the psychological redefinition of home is metaphorically represented through the reconceptualisation of Donal Keneally's settlement on the Vancouver Island and the House of Revelations placed at its centre. While Keneally tells his people that the House of Revelations will "be a monument to their success" (Hodgins 1994 158) it becomes, in fact, like the colony itself, a monument to his own mythical origins and to the country left behind (Ireland), its social structure and colonial dependence. Keneally recreates the history of colonization by imposing servitude upon his people and as a result the story of the colony functions as a "metaphorical representation of the process of colonization which serves to transform the novel's regional setting into a metonymic focal point for English-Canadian culture as a whole" (Slemon 1995 412).

As Slemon maintains, the story of the difficult process of individual and—to a certain extent—communal liberation from Keneally's heritage that Hodgins's *The Invention of the World* recounts, in effect "recapitulates a process [...] of psychic liberation from Old World domination and its cognitive codes" (Slemon 1995 413): the process whose difficulty, if not impossibility, is underscored in Urquhart's novel. However, to achieve this "psychic liberation" the major characters of *The Invention of the World* have to re-member the past, to engage their memories creatively, regardless of how much they would like to forget about the past. This proves to be the road "home": rather than living solely in the present or for the future, the past has to be engaged through the process of re-membering in the interest of the transformation of both the present and the future through communal engagement.

The central location of the House of Revelations in the design of Keneally's colony underscores its meaning as the symbolic focus of the intersections between the past, the present and the future, and as an anchor of memory. It stresses and makes tangible one of the central symbols of the novel, that of a circle, and all that it suggests. The colony and the house function as physical anchors for the complex discussion of the meaning of "home" developed in the novel. Part of the meaning, as Susan Beckmann points out, can be related to the colonial and postcolonial experience that Slemon also focuses on in his analysis of the text: to the insecurity, rootlessness, spiritual homelessness produced by immigration. However, this does not fully explain why, as Beckmann herself notes, "virtually all the major characters [...] experience at some point in their lives a sense of homelessness and so embark on a search for home either literal or figurative" (Beckmann 1980-81 108). Ultimately, the novel places the meaning of "home" on the spiritual level and recounts a variation of the mythical and biblical story of human desperate struggles to reach the "home" of spiritual perfection and wholeness. The story is described as that of "a lot of people trying to get back to that first beginning, back before the mist and the clay" (Hodgins 1994 320), which for the majority ends when they "accept the swindle, eat it whole" (Hodgins 1994 413), not listening to their instinct and settling for a variety of the "invented," as opposed to "created," world. Postcolonial reflection constitutes then only one of the nodes in a broader network of meanings related to house and home in the novel.

What remains of Donal Keneally's Revelations Colony of Truth—a few cabins with the House of Revelations at its centre—function as the only tangible and verifiable facts related to the history of the colony that the reader and contemporary protagonists have access to. All the rest is based on the contradictory and fragmentary, mostly second-hand, evidence that Becker hoards and that, as he originally believes, hides "the tale" somewhere at its centre (Hodgins 1994 10). As the crucial conceptual difference between "invention" and "creation" is developed in the novel, Becker recognizes the impossibility of getting at "the tale," which finally helps him to get out of his own invented world. This new awareness is accompanied by the simultaneous rejection of myth and recognition of its force and vitality: "Myth [...] like all the past, real or imaginary, must be

acknowledged. [...] Even if it's not believed. In fact, especially when it's not believed. When you begin to disbelieve in Keneally, you can begin to believe in yourself" (Hodgins 1994 406-407), Becker tells Maggie and Wade. The story of Donal Keneally, firmly placed as it is in the context of Celtic mythology and traditional beliefs, is the "home" that needs to be acknowledged, but whose hold on the present should be broken. The role myth and memory play in the novel is then, as it is in *Away*, dual: they nourish, but also constrain.

Donal Keneally selects Vancouver Island as the location for his colony because it reminds him of Ireland: the lost home he wants to replicate and at the same time replace by what he conceives of as an Edenic alternative. Vancouver Island, roughly the size of Ireland, and equally rainy and misty, strikes him, in spite of its dramatic landscapes, as a suitable place for his settlement. The spacial design of the colony alludes to the colonial order—with the House of Revelations functioning as a manor house—but at the same time explicitly recreates ancient holy places in Ireland, one of which is the place of Keneally's mythical birth. The House of Revelations faces the sun and functions as a symbolic "altar" and the centrepiece of the circle of houses built around a well symbolising the source of life. The well recreates also, in effect, the "lips of soil" that according to the legend disgorged Keneally at the same time devouring his mother, and later it becomes the mouth of the tunnels he digs as he corkscrews himself back into the earth. His scream as he dies in the ensuing cave-in recreates in its mythical magnitude the scream of his mother dying at childbirth. Keneally, the novel suggests, completes the circle by returning to the womb of Mother Earth. The fact that Keneally and his wife call themselves the Father and the Mother likewise both evokes the metaphor of the imperial family, underlines Keneally's role as a landlord and colonial master, and carries deep mythological and religious resonances, suggesting Keneally's self-assumed role as the creator of a "New World", the giver of life and the law.

The circular arrangement of the colony, even though it hints, in Keneally's intention, at the circle as a symbol of enlightenment and perfection, suggests also spacial confinement and thus reflects the constraining power of myth as well as the slave-like status of Keneally's colonists and limits of his ideology. The enslavement of Keneally's colonists is the enslavement of the mind and spirit resulting originally, they believe, from the mythical Year of the Mist when the villagers of

Carrigdhoun fell pray to the “fear disease.” The mythical event which makes them open to Keneally’s schemes, and results in emigration, clearly marks a fall from grace, and their passage from a created to an invented world: “though the world looked nearly the same as it had before the mist, there was a sense that all of it was a fiction, an imitation world that hid a multitude of unsuspected unfamiliar things” (Hodgins 1994 139). In exchange for the feeling of security and belonging Keneally manages to make the people live within the constricting circle of his invented, exploitative world based on the ideology he promotes, which his third wife describes nevertheless as “legal, moral, sane” (Hodgins 1994 335), and guided by sound economic principles: the qualities ascribed also to the colonial order by its proponents. Lily Keneally believes that the organization of the colony is expressive of “what most of the world believed anyhow [...]: ‘All the gods we need are in matter [...] in earth and wood and stones. All the mind we need is in our bodies, a magnificent brain. All the worship we offer is to ourselves’” (Hodgins 1994 333).

This materialist philosophy and the rule of fear explain why, in spite of the fact that Keneally evokes transcendental values as he builds the colony, and locates it on a cliff overlooking the Pacific, in the forest, its spacial arrangement has the effect of discouraging the feeling of “cosmic” oneness with the environment, or even an awareness of the surrounding nature. Reflecting his ideology, it binds people to the earth and their own bodies and narrowly circumscribes the limits of their experience, denying anything beyond the material, including spiritual links that used to bind the community. As Lily Keneally reminisces:

they’d cut down all the trees, anything tall that tempted you to look skyward. [...] Even the sea somehow had lost its pull, it was only more flatness, even less varied than this land. You were conscious only of the earth, the dirt. The houses—except for the thing, this House of Revelations--the houses were all squat, dark, made of logs, as if they might have grown from the earth too, centuries before, and belonged there.

(Hodgins 1994 323-324)

In Lily’s recollections the imposing House of Revelations is cluttered, dark, closed. It exists apart from the colony and apart from the natural surroundings: a looming image of the Old World authority and opulence that memorializes colonial power.

When Maggie takes over the settlement after the colony collapses, and establishes a trailer park on the premises, she redefines the colony and the house in such a way that they reflect her own aims and ideology. Her first act is the symbolic erasure of the memory of the past: she scrubs the house and burns the furniture to “make room for newer growth” (Hodgins 1994 63), and adopts the policy of willing amnesia. While Becker looks into the past for the meaning of home, Maggie locates home in the present and the future, and attempts to banish the memory of the past. As she declares emphatically, she is simply not interested in what had happened in the house and the colony before she bought it. In her aspiration for spiritual growth, she welcomes the second-growth forest that grows among the cabins, and the “sharp awareness of the sea [...] and [...] the blue and jagged mountains in the mainland” (Hodgins 1994 65) that enter her parlour. The House is now open to its surroundings, and more welcoming to people. It becomes part of Maggie’s personality and a projection of it: “when Maggie Kyle took possession of a house she absorbed it, it entered her bloodstream [...] It breathed with her, and reflected her state of mind [...] It inhabited her as certainly as she inhabited it” (Hodgins 1994 63-64). The house is redefined as a place of rest and refuge, a base from which she could “rise” and grow as an individual, till she can “see right down into the centre of things” (Hodgins 1994 27). This centrally located house promises that the attempt will be successful. In time Maggie plans to make it a true “meeting house,” the centre of a community based on compassion: she takes boarders, who flock to her out of their own free will, and reside in the house and the cabins that surround it. This echoes and redefines the function of the community centre that the house was supposed to play in Keneally’s times. In the past, however, the colonists crowded into it to listen to Keneally’s speeches and admire his magic tricks designed as displays confirming his authority and worldview. In the present, it becomes the centre providing nourishment to the community in the form of food and human interaction, though Maggie’s attitude to her boarders is, in fact, ambivalent. Ultimately, it might be presumed, the house is also to become a monument to Maggie’s, and her community’s, success, although it is first designed to function merely as a springboard to help her soar to an unspecified aim of self-realisation.

Maggie’s initial symbolic gesture of discarding the past, is necessarily, however, inadequate. Without recognizing the legacy of Keneally, painful

as it is, acknowledging the past and giving it its due in memory, the process of growth cannot be successful. Though Maggie does not realise it, Keneally persists in the colony, and the house, both physically, as his remains still rest buried by the cave-in at the mouth of the well; and spiritually, as his legacy, his personality and his story still have a hold over many, including several residents of Maggie's "colony."

The redefined House of Revelations, dreamed up originally, after all, by Keneally himself and built by his colonists, is not free of his influence. The only original piece of furniture that Maggie keeps—the kitchen table— bears silent witness to Keneally's rise and fall; and becomes in a sense a conjuring table during Lily Keneally's night-long vigil. Maggie's living room, its unorganised chaos that includes "a battered globe that advertised the expanse of the British Empire" (Hodgins 1994 64) and various maps suggest both the complicated heritage symbolised by the house and Maggie's confusion about how to reach her aim of personal growth. The room hints at the legacy of Keneally, and colonialism, the legacy of a constricting "invented" order that is related to it, and at the same time at a potentially creative freedom that defies order and that Maggie aspires to.

The old kitchen table in its function as the focal point for significant remembering exemplifies the role things play in remembering places in accordance with Casey's dictum that "things are pivotal points in a given place, constellating it by their presence. [...] Things fill out place memories by acting as their gathering-point, their main means of support. [...] *Things put the past in place; they are the primary source of its concrete implacement in memory*" (Casey 2000 206, Casey's emphasis). The table is a memory-hook and an emblem of multiple intersections between the past and the present, and in this respect resembles the hoof-shaped mark in *Away*. Unknowingly, Maggie places the table at the same spot where it stood in the times of Keneally. This allows Lily, his third wife, now Maggie's boarder, to finish the process of re-membering her life with Keneally; the process started against her will as a result of Becker's insistence on getting at the "truth" about the man. Lily's story, or at least much of it, is never revealed to Becker, but rather "tells itself" in her memory. "You could find as much of a marriage in the wood-grain of a kitchen table as in the sagging springs of a double bed. The ghosts were different but no less potent" (Hodgins 1994 360), Lily reflects. Her vigil at the table underlines also the role of the body in remembering: to

facilitate remembering she moves physically to the place where the events she recalls happened, and recreates her vigils during the days and nights when Keneally was digging the tunnels of his tomb in the middle of the circle to close it. The table, the kitchen, are transformed into a time machine, a capsule that carries Lily into the past and into the memories she was trying to shut out:

Now in the dark of the house she thought that if this were space she were rocketing through, if this dark kitchen were her ship and time the space she moved through, she'd know that the imploded star had been found, not by its black nothingness but by the terrible pull of its suction. Was a man's destiny, then, to blast a hole into space? Did Keneally after all, exist in all time as a lightless rupture? You're going in with him, Lily Hayworth, she thought, you've lost the control of your own direction. You're going in.

(Hodgins 1994 364)

The pull of Keneally is the pull of memory, of the past that Lily has consistently attempted to disregard and forget, and of the ignored future, a result of living only in the narrowly defined present. Paradoxically, it is Becker and his own fixation on the past that not only push Lily into the world of memories, but that also allow her to envision a future. It is Lily who facilitates the closing of the circle and allows the possibility of regeneration by demanding in her will that Maggie exhumes Keneally's remains and scatters his ashes in the ancient stone circle in Ireland where he was reputedly born. This is when the past might be finally properly acknowledged, though not buried, not forgotten or ignored, and when the process of building a future might begin.

Like the table, also the maps strewn around Maggie's parlour and pinned on the wall facing the ocean, indicate a link between the present and the past, between Maggie and Keneally, who is consistently associated with maps and mapping. Maggie's fixation on maps, which accompany her in her everyday life, clashes with her distaste of limits and borders and her aspirations for personal freedom and growth. The maps show different layers of the "invented" world that Maggie inhabits, but would like to break free from. They constitute her private, though detested, hiding place from the vertiginous possibilities of what is "real" rather than invented (Hodgins 1994 407). It is Maggie, Wade and Becker's "pilgrimage" to Ireland to scatter Keneally's ashes that results finally in Maggie's freeing herself of his destructive heritage of the

imposed order, which is indicated by the shedding of her fixation on maps and turning to the “created” world that breathes beneath the constructed order symbolised by the grid of the map.

The journey leads also to a realisation that the house and the human “invented” order it is related to are only temporary, perishable shelters, not the true “home” to aspire to, which prompts Maggie to try to reassemble her community and provide them with a true home based on caring and support. As she contemplates the remains of Carrigdhoun, Keneally’s village, whose inhabitants followed him to North America, she asks Wade: “The stones, [...] these walls. Can you imagine these being all that separated inside from outside? All that made *home* separated from *world*?” (Hodgins 1994 394, Hodgins’s emphasis). Later, as the mist rises and the world appears fresh and gleaming, Becker verbalizes what Maggie implied through her question: “These fences will fall down some day, the world will grow right up through the ruined houses. It’s alive, underneath everything is *alive*” (Hodgins 1994 397, Hodgins’s emphasis). As their awareness of the clash between the created and invented order rises, Maggie, Wade and Becker are gradually released from their obsessions which, as the novel suggests, separate them from their own better selves and from the world. Becker forgets about his notebook and his search for the “truth” of the past, Maggie discards the maps, Wade gives up the fake fort, his own counterfeit world, and opens himself to love and responsibility.

The realisation that the house is but a flimsy and temporary shelter in the midst of the “real” that survives and persists, does not annul, however, the importance of the house, but rather suggests how the realisation might contribute to the redefinition of domestic and other spaces. As Davey points out, the novel allows for a substantial redefinition of houses and buildings in general: what they are and what they mean depends on who inhabits them (Davey 1988 193). Maggie breathes a new life into the House of Revelations as she moves into it, but it is only after she returns from her pilgrimage that she is able to complete the process of the re-invention of the colony as she consciously decides to take responsibility for others: “she couldn’t heal them all by herself or cancel that monster’s damage alone, but she would do what she could” (Hodgins 1994 397).

The decision, however, comes only after Maggie faces another re-invented domestic space: her own dilapidated shack in Hed, which has been remodelled by a young couple who squat in it. For Maggie the shack

is indeed “a prison of memory” (Davey 1988 193), housing mostly unhappy memories and unfulfilled hopes. The fact that this is where she goes immediately after her return from Ireland, where she experienced the epiphanic moment on the mountain top, suggests her intuitive awareness of the fact that, situated in a circle formed by “water on three sides and mountain behind” (Hodgins 1994 33), the shack constitutes her personal counterpart of Keneally’s “lips of soil” at the centre of the stone circle. It is the symbolic place of her own origin. By going to Hed, she continues her pilgrimage, returns to her own beginnings to close the circle and be “reborn.” Her return to this home suggests that she is ready to acknowledge the past, but is also strong enough to resist the pull of it, and to use the present to effectively redefine the future. It is only when she faces the fact that the shack can also be a place of self-realisation and not just a prison of troubling memories that she consciously formulates and feels ready to shoulder her new responsibility. The young couple for whom Maggie’s shack constitutes a realisation of their dreams, their place from which to grow, and not a symbol of failure, represent an unadulterated utopian longing. Their vision of a simple and fulfilled life, their openness to others, readiness to help prompt Maggie to continue to listen to her instinct. Maggie’s achievement as she lets them stay in her house is her recognition of the relationship between this genuine, idealistic if somewhat naïve vision they cherish and the “created” world. Consequently, she refuses to kill the utopia by violence: the fate of numerous utopias mentioned in the novel (including Keneally’s colony and the Jimmy Jimmy Arts and Craft’s Commune). The meeting with the young couple that results in the redefinition of the domestic space finally brings home the meaning of what Madmother Thomas tells Maggie when she is still a girl: it is the “how” and not “the where of a life” that counts (Hodgins 1994 33).

As the novel closes, the burden Maggie accepts is metaphorically represented through the hyperbolic list of wedding presents that she and Wade get: they include different aspects of individual and communal human experience, the good and the bad, but also Canadian and North American heritage, including “badly-treated Indians” and “disappointed immigrants” (Hodgins 1994 397). If Keneally indeed represents “the past compelling the present” and “Europe shaping North America in its own closed patterns, the epic, the pastoral, the quest romance, the *return* to the garden” (Davey 1988 196, Davey’s emphasis), then he and the past are

not overcome, as Davey suggests, but rather accommodated. As Madmother Thomas gives up her lifelong search for the place where she was born and returns to the former Revelations Colony of Truth and the House of Revelations, the home where she suffered abuse; and as Maggie takes responsibility for her and others, they do not so much overcome the past as refuse to be slaves to it. Even though they transcend the limiting search for origins, they take responsibility for the past and its consequences in the present and the future. The endurance of the places of the past—the colony buildings, the House of Revelations—and the mark the past left on the people deny the possibility of making a clean break with it. The persistence of the past is also visualised through the ghost of Keneally and his three wives participating in Maggie's wedding reception.

At the end of the novel the House of Revelations, envisioned by Keneally and built by communal effort from the best that Europe and America could offer at the time, now redefined as a healing centre, seems to represent the past used by the present on its own terms for the benefit of the future through personal and communal integration. Even though Becker attempts to create a new, indigenous myth and to conjure up a new beginning by calling Wade and Maggie "the new man and the new woman" (Hodgins 1994 397), this beginning is also, after all, a *return* home—symbolised by the House of Revelations--motivated by the desire to counter, and not deny, the power of the abusive past to shape the present and the future. By the same token, to return to the postcolonial resonances of the novel, if Maggie and Wade are also the new Canadians, then Canada they aspire to is Canada that takes responsibility for the past in the interest of healing. However, the fullness, completion, the mending of the fragmented circle that the new myth gestures towards are undermined by the spirit in which the myth is constructed, revealed by the style of the novel, in particular the closing chapter. As Beckmann writes, in the novel the "mythopoetic trappings are undercut by burlesque" (Beckmann 1980-81 123), and so is the future-oriented myth the novel closes with. Just as fire and water cannot completely cleanse the house of its past, so a new myth, especially one that has been shown as open to abuse, cannot simply and innocently replace the old ones.

Gail Anderson-Dargatz's novel *The Cure for Death by Lightning* closes with an image of two couples representing different generations, the young one interracial, looking in two different directions. The image has been read—like the ending of *The Invention of the World*—as hinting at a vision of new Canadians, suggesting also a redefinition of Canada as home (Howells 2003 181). However, the two endings follow from different contexts and premises. Hodgins's vision is that of a hope for communal regeneration, which, while not race-specific, is envisioned mostly through white characters of different class and gender. Hodgins's novel does not dwell specifically on the question of the interaction of white and First Nations communities. Native characters appear only briefly to signal the colonial heritage of the present day Canadian community on which the text focuses, and the dispossession of the Native population. In the only memorable fragment in *The Invention of the World* in which Native characters play an important part, their plight becomes metaphorised to stand for human fate. Julius Champney's imaginative rendition of the capturing and hanging of two First Nations men, who—not knowing English—cannot grasp what their supposed transgression against the white law consists of, constitutes the basis for his conceptualisation of the human condition as an incomprehensible life sentence finishing with capital punishment. *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, on the other hand, makes the relationship between white settlers and indigenous people central to the development of the plot and the understanding of house and home that the novel suggests. Accordingly, the closing vision has a more multicultural cast and has been interpreted as suggesting a “revised definition of Canadianness, which takes account of Canada's history in order to accommodate white immigrants and First Nations people and their descendants in a pluralized society” (Howells 2003 181). In her interpretation of the novel Howells admits, however, that, as in Hodgins's text, the optimistic closing vision is not confirmed or validated in any way. The narrator does not explicitly undermine it, as Becker does in *The Invention of the World* by the formula fairy-tale-like ending. Rather, like *Away*, in which what is at stake is likewise an ideal of racial reconciliation and blending, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* offers a tampered vision. The possible failure of the vision is suggested in *Away* by the childlessness of Liam and his mixed-race wife Molly, and in Anderson-Dargatz's novel

by withholding information about the future fate of the young interracial couple. In the latter, the vision is also undermined by the banishing of disturbing Native presences haunting the landscape, represented by the mythical figure of Coyote and Beth's (the protagonist's) mixed-race lover Nora. This banishment, apart from its implications related to questions of gender, sexuality and sexual preference, suggests a renewed suppression of the destabilizing memory of the first inhabitants of the area and their culture, now confined to the margins, and a return to the racial and sexual norm that the white community Beth lives in represents. Nevertheless, one of the questions at the heart of *The Cure for Death by Lightning* is that of the persistence of Native culture and belief, and their interaction with and partial accommodation into the imaginative framework of the settlers so that the settlers can feel at home in the "unhomely" land their ancestors took over.

The reminder of the mystery of the secret dangers of the land and the threat that the silenced past poses to the settler lies buried at the centre of the farm house in which Beth Weeks and her family live. The fact that the house is built around the original homesteader's cabin that now forms its centre underscores accretion and sedimentation as aspects of place memory. Just as Maggie settles in the Revelations Colony of Truth and tries to remodel it banishing the past and the ghost of Donal Keneally, so Beth's father settles with his family in the old Olsen's farm assuming that he will get rid of the bad luck that plagued the former inhabitants. However, his own symbolic gestures are as ineffectual as Maggie's scrubbing of the House of Revelations. His piling stones over the graves of the homesteader's children killed by Coyote, and re-inventing the Olsen's cabin as a parlour, to which all the other rooms and the kitchen open, does not cancel the past, even though it conceals it. The dark parlour and the homesteader's children rattling the stones of their graves in warning provide a reminder that Beth's story of being pursued by "it"/Coyote and the parallel community story of racial and class trade and exclusion are continuous with other similar stories from the past, and are part and parcel of the textual present crucial to the definition of home.

The farm-house remains then, in a sense, a house of memory; even more so that Beth recounts the story of the most difficult year of her adolescence from a perspective of an adult woman in her attempt to confirm and impose order on her experience by writing it down. In her new and gleaming kitchen with its electric stove, she leafs through her

mother's scrapbook that resided in the kitchen of the family farm-house, and sets down her own story in words, reconstructing it from traces and reminders in the scrapbook that aid her memory. Writing the story is in a sense a collaborative effort, Beth's way of engaging in a dialogue with her mother, the dialogue the latter, in turn, was having constantly with the ghost of her own mother. While the story is Beth's, all the memory props come from the mother's scrapbook, which thus significantly influences the shape of the story. The scrapbook, the "private place" which allows the mother to make sense of everyday experience and find refuge from it, is an associative, fragmentary record of everyday life and concerns that both reveals and obscures them.

Beth's story foregrounds the interweaving of the personal with the public; and of issues related to sexuality, gender, class and race in the formation of identity and definitions of home. Therefore, the borderline location of the farm-house, between the town of Promise and the Turtle Creek Reserve constitutes an important context in which the drama of adolescence and abuse develops. It suggests those other borders, edges and thresholds, including metaphoric ones, that feature significantly in the novel. It is at the intersection of the multiple binary pairs of opposites that Beth, an adolescent hovering between childhood and adulthood, is building her identity and her image of home. The pairs of opposites include those of the private and the public, "civilisation" and wilderness, the white town and the Native reserve, sanity and madness, childhood and adulthood, reality and fantasy, heterosexuality and homosexuality, me and the other. The binaries, as well as the valuation and interpretation of the sides of those binaries are destabilised and questioned in the course of the novel, though some are reaffirmed as it closes.

At the beginning of the text the inside and the outside, the home and the wilderness, seem to be constructed in a conventional way. The inside, the house, seems separated from its surroundings, suggesting safety and the warmth of domesticity, while the outside is presented ambivalently as the realm both of benevolent, profuse nature and secret danger. Beth's story opens with her flight from the invisible "it" coming to get her as she is daydreaming, enjoying the "illicit treasures" of a bottle of perfumes, a lipstick, a red rag, and flowers of spring by Turtle Creek. Fleeing to the house she thinks about the dangers of the open: about the bear attack on the family sheep camp, which left her father changed and unhappy and confined the family to the house all year long

as he went from sheep to cattle; and about Sarah Kemp's, her peer's, recent death as a result of a bear attack. As the novel develops, the wilderness is no longer the dangerous but comprehensible stomping ground of the bear and the graspable dangers it represents, but is identified as the realm of elusive and mysterious Coyote. Coral Ann Howells points out that even though the novel uses some of the conventions of pioneer women's narrative and female *kunstlerroman*, "the wilderness places in this novel are neither the empty spaces of white colonial myth nor are they the spaces of [female] liberation" and resistance. Rather, the wilderness "is a dangerous place to be, situated on the borderlines between the haunted wilderness of Aboriginal legend and a frighteningly realistic terrain where children disappear and girls are sometimes raped and killed" (Howells 2003 173). Though she still wanders alone, Beth is sharply aware of the dangers of the wilderness, though it quickly becomes clear that her "bushed" father brings the dangers and irrationalities of the wilderness home, so the inside-outside opposition becomes ambiguous. As the novel proceeds, the house more and more often loses its qualities of refuge and becomes a zone of danger and unpredictability. Beth's "homeground", both the house and its surroundings, acquire suddenly an unfamiliar, hostile, aspect.

The destabilisation of the opposition between the house and the wilderness is rationalised by Beth through her adaptation of First Nations Coyote stories she learns from Bertha, the head of an all-female Native "clan." While Bertha's stories and her advice help Beth to deal with fascinations and fears related to her budding sexuality, they also provide her with a frame through which to approach sexual abuse she suffers at home and outside of it. They give her a language in which to express her traumatic experiences which she had no choice but to suppress as in the white discourse of the time sexuality functions only as the unspeakable, as the silent void. Beth's mother, though worried about Beth's safety as her scrapbook attests, is not equipped by her culture to discuss touchy sexual issues with her daughter; even less so as she was herself a victim of incest. She retreats into denial or withdrawal, just as her own mother, the text suggests, retreated into illness.

Beth remakes Coyote for her own needs, perceiving him as a kind of a shape-shifting male demon, roaming the wilderness, taking possession of men and changing them into sexual predators. Gone is the gender ambiguity of the Trickster from Native tales. The Trickster-men-sexual

transgression connection, often voiced also by First Nations characters (Bertha, Billy and Nora), is made explicit, among others, in Beth's dream in which she re-lives the experience of being raped by her father. In the dream the father comes as coyotes:

when I cried the coyotes put their claws over my mouth. They lifted my nightgown. They rubbed their wet tails between my legs and over my belly. They told me to keep quiet. I [...] watched the shadows of the coyotes suck the breath from my body. When they had their fill, the shadows sighed deeply, came together, and took the form of my father.
(Anderson-Dargatz 2002 264)

Coyote, always a danger in the open, pursuing Beth as an invisible "it", as shape-shifting Coyote Jack or her school-mate Parker, also haunts the house, and it is here that Coyote shows his real power and gets Beth through her father. The house becomes the locus of abuse providing a parallel to the wilderness as constructed in the novel: it is a homeground that houses dangerous, inexplicable, unpredictable danger and otherness.

Coyote, the ever-returning shape-shifter, embodies for Beth the intertwining of sex, madness and death, as well as fears of the lack of control over one's own body, and attempts to control bodies of others explored in the novel. He functions as "the other" threatening the unstable boundaries of the adolescent body and self. Bertha, who is a guide and a surrogate mother-figure for Beth (which is stressed by the fact that as a midwife she attended at Beth's birth), is aware of the complexity of the Trickster figure as a culture-maker and a teacher, a creator as well as a destroyer, which she tries, without much success, to convey to Beth. At the same time, she recognizes that Coyote's duality includes misogyny and that Coyote stories play a social function of constraining and controlling female desire, thus playing more or less the same role as Mrs Bell's moralizing. Even though Bertha herself warns the girls of the dangers of wandering the literally and metaphorically conceived wilderness, she also stresses the empowerment that comes from taking control over one's fears rather than being controlled by them. "There is always something out there to get you. Know that, but don't be scared. Go hunt it down, so it don't get you" (Anderson-Dargatz 2002 168), she says. By taking Bertha's advice and confronting Coyote-Jack, the Coyote possessed shape-shifter, and then her father, Beth expels Coyote. On the one hand, it is a crucial step in her process of growth, which effectively

eliminates abuse. On the other, the act results in banishing, though temporarily, of the disturbing indigenous ghosts from the landscape, in a sense obscuring once again the Native presence.

Even though the text focuses on Beth and her experience of abuse, the presence of Coyote in the novel carries broader resonances related to interactions within the white community and between the white and First Nations communities. Coyote, the Trickster and rule-breaker, affects both the Native and the white community: in both children disappear, women and children are killed, men become “mad” or “bushed,” Coyote-possessed. While Beth takes from Bertha’s stories only what helps her to deal with her own problems, she at least acknowledges, though reluctantly, the inescapable presence of Coyote conveyed through Native myth and legend and recognized by the Native community. This attitude reflects her awareness of and relative openness to Native culture, which might be explained by her malleable teenage personality, but is also related to the borderline location of the house, which allows for some intercultural interaction. In a sense, it is through Beth that the mythical lore, the memory of one culture is found significant for and with some distortion transmitted to the other. The rest of the white community resist accepting that the myth might have a real-life counterpart and resonance, and they attempt to come up with what they perceive as common-sense, though clearly unsatisfactory, answers to tragic community events, like the death of Sarah Kemp. Stories of Coyote’s victims—for example, the story of the Olsen children—are silenced or forgotten as they defy what the community perceives as rational and common-sense explanations. Their denial of Coyote is consistent with the silencing of other stories of abuse and transgression plaguing the community. Even though the land and the settlers’ houses are haunted by Coyote under many different guises, his presence is ignored, just as the presence of anything that spells difference and that does not conform to the white norm is concealed, ignored or marginalised, and despised, be it household abuse, mentally retarded children or Native presence. Coyote becomes then a figure standing for the other that resides within the community and is in a sense internalized, but also silenced and suppressed.

Significantly, even though Coyote affects both communities, the Coyote-possessed characters—Coyote-Jack and Beth’s father—are white, which underlines Bertha’s suggestion that the white settlers are “Coyote’s children,” and replicate Coyote’s cruel tricks. The fate of many Bertha’s

daughters and granddaughters becomes in the context symbolic of the fate of violated Native America. These “Coyote’s daughters,” as Bertha calls them, are born as a result of rape by white men, and marked physically by the violence (some have webbed fingers, extra fingers, birth marks, eyes of different colour), or, like Nora’s mother, are marked otherwise by encounters with the white culture—in this case, by cultural uprootedness and psychological misadaptation as a result of the residential school experience. Beth’s Coyote-possessed father and his violent obsession with borders and ownership, evidenced by his treatment of Beth and her mother, and his conflict with his neighbour over a fence, might be seen as a re-enactment of colonial violence, which is clearly self-destructive. At the same time, the character provides a link to the broader international context of WWII raging in Europe, and a more remote one of WWI, that also hint at Coyote-inspired violence. As her father runs over painted turtles struggling through the Blood Road, Beth connects the act with the violence of war in remote Europe: “The storm had carried the red dust of Blood Road to our farm and rained it down [...] covering everything with the blood of the turtles, the blood of our recklessness. The blood of a war a thousand miles away rained down on us” (Anderson-Dargatz 2002 63). The immediate communal and domestic context becomes then an echo of the violence of war, suggesting again the existence of dark, Coyote-like forces loose on the world.

The story of the Trickster bringing white people to the shores of America, which indigenizes the story of colonization, can be found also in texts by Native authors, for example in texts by Thomas King or Lee Maracle. However, in Anderson-Dargatz’s novel the implications of the incorporation of the story in association with the theme of Coyote-possession are troubling. Validated in the text as based on Native views, the intertwining Coyote stories suggest lack of agency on the part of the “possessed,” and therefore exclude any serious engagement with the question of responsibility both on the individual level, which is significant in the novel in relation to Beth’s experience of incest, and on the communal/national level related to the history of colonisation and contemporary treatment of First Nations people.

Beth’s process of growth is completed as she finds a niche in traditional, though interracial, coupledness, and decides to write the story down. Nora, the mixed-race lesbian other, and Beth’s lover, is banished, like Coyote, not to be heard of again, though her memory remains inscribed in the landscape

itself (Anderson-Dargatz 2002 291-292) Instead, Beth accepts Billy, now cured of his compulsive swearing because he no longer is “Coyote’s house,” as her boy-friend. Billy, though also mixed-race, is relatively close to the white norm: with his “fairer skin and odd blue-brown eyes” (Anderson-Dargatz 2002 27), Beth comments, he is less “Indian” than Dennis, the other hired hand. Expelling Coyote means then not only the end of abuse and a possibility of healing, but also suggests suppression of the other in general and the return to a relatively narrowly defined norm: not only sexual, but also racial and social. Significantly, it is only as Beth banishes Coyote that her family can hope again to be taken in by the community that ostracized it when both the family and the community were Coyote-haunted. The wilderness pushed again beyond the walls of the house is not only the wilderness of Nature and untamed (sexual) drives but likewise the wilderness of communal and social life entered when the norms upheld by the community and the nation (including racial and sexual norms) seem violated. It seems important, in this context, that Beth’s mother takes steps to deal with the Gordian knot of family problems when her Coyote-possessed husband’s behaviour causes her not only to face her own suppressed memories of incest and recognize the sexual abuse of her daughter, but also causes serious public disturbance. At the end, the boundaries of home are not comprehensively redrawn, but rather adjusted, so that the norm “home” represents is upheld, even though it becomes slightly more flexible.

In spite of its optimistic ending of the “promise” related to the questioning of race and gender construction by the protagonist that Howells foregrounds in her interpretation (Howells 2003 187), the novel in its construction of home re-enacts (perhaps unavoidably) major concerns of what Alan Lawson calls “the Second World,” i.e. former settler colony, narrative. In particular, the broad vision of home it posits hinges on the suppression of the threatening Native other (represented here symbolically by Coyote), whose implied presence is nevertheless necessary to “signify the boundary of the self,” and who therefore remains always poised for return, like—as Lawson notes in a broader context— the Freudian uncanny (Lawson 2004 157). In Anderson-Dargatz’s novel the construction of the other is simultaneously related to issues of race, gender and sexuality that affect the negotiations of the meaning of home in the novel. Crucially, the novel precludes the process of home-building based on accountability

Beth, as a bridging character with some access to two disparate cultures sharing the same “homeland”, finds her more mature and thoughtful, though also imperfect, counterpart in Stacey, the Native protagonist of Lee Maracle’s *Ravensong*.¹ Maracle’s text also poses questions concerning borders and bridges between individuals and communities, and the relationship between the margin and the centre. However, it unapologetically gives primacy to a minority, culture-specific (Salish), Native point of view; a strategy which, as Helen Hoy notes, repositions both the white and Native reader by foregrounding and legitimising the Native point of view, and annulling the presumed transparency of the white culture (Hoy 2001 135-36). The process of the “adjustment of vision” that the novel requires, and the feeling of alienation it produces in the white reader (though, as Hoy notes, non-Salish Native readers might, to a degree, experience similar challenges), reproduce to a certain extent the process the main character goes through. As Stacey, an adolescent Salish girl, daily crosses the bridge between her village and the “white town,” where she goes to school, she also has to negotiate the cultural and social rift between the two. Even though by the end of the novel the clear-cut physical and cultural division between the two communities is destabilised, the process of “bridging” the two is incomplete and imperfect, to say the least. At the same time, through the figure of Raven and her vision, the white community is integrated into the broad indigenous vision of the world.

The shape of Stacey’s story is defined by memory, partly because the story is conveyed orally to a young Salish boy in order to help him deal with suicide within family, and partly because within the narrative memory and its transmission are clearly a result of communal effort. The story is reconstructed collectively by a group of women who were also its participants, but it is—as the text suggests—shaped also by other voices of those who once belonged to the community, and by voices of ancestors mentoring and admonishing the protagonist. These voices, visions of little Celia, as well the voices and presences of Raven, cedar and the earth, reported in the context of the oral transmission of clan and personal history combine to form a vision of omnipresent cultural memory. It

¹ I briefly approach the question of memory in *Ravensong* also in Rzepa (2005).

resides in the people, but also in the natural world itself, which shapes the experiences of the Native community, both on the literal and metaphorical, mythical level.

The text stresses the oral reproduction of home that Maracle describes as follows in a different context:

In our memory is housed our history. We are an oral people: history, law, politics, sociology, the self and our relationship to the world are all contained in our memory. Home is for us the origin, the shell of nurturance, our first fire and the harbinger of our relationship to the world. [...] Stone is the foundation of the beginnings of the natural world. [...] Home is our first stone; the stone from which humans shape relationship.

(Maracle 2000 i)

Home shapes then human relationship to others and the world, and the principles of what “home” means are committed to memory and conveyed orally. *Ravensong* is a dirge on the disintegration of such traditional home to be found in a closely-knit community, and an attempt to recapture it in words, to reproduce home in a changed context. Urquhart’s “abandoned geographies” are here echoed through the image of villagers abandoning the village as the community feeling weakens. The “ravensong, powerful almost inhuman” (Maracle 1993 198) mourns the loss of the community. Raven’s grieving song bemoans specifically the victims, especially the children, the future of the community, who died as a result of numerous epidemics the community suffered since the moment of colonisation. The communal fight with the epidemics provides an example of the traditional role of the community. As Stacey explains to her son, the flu epidemic of her adolescence

was the last epidemic we fought as a community. The world floated in, covering us in paralysing silence and [...] the village fell apart. [...] it was as though the whole consciousness of the village changed at the same moment. The women lost the safety of family. The village lost its clan base because of it. Now we are caught in an epidemic of our own making and we have no idea how to fight it.

(Maracle 1993 197)

The novel is not simply an exercise in commemorating and grieving for the home lost in the tragic aftermath of colonisation. Rather, it attempts to fathom the “why of things” in the context provided by magic interludes

revealing the history of the white invasion to be the plan of Raven gone awry. Through the story of Stacey's education the women imaginatively reconstruct their community, the "clan base," reconsidering and revising notions of home, and at the same time rebuilding and enacting some of the principles on which it was based. Home emerges as a communal project based on the oral transmission of knowledge and experience, informed by openness and compassion. Projected through multiple, often clashing and fluctuating perspectives, including the non-human perspective of Raven and cedar, the multi-layered story is presented in the spirit of Native storytelling, as open to individual interpretations reflecting respect for the integrity and judgment of the recipient: the intra-textual listener as well as the reader.

The story is framed by and built around death: it starts with the funeral of old Nora, proceeds through the story of Polly's suicide, the epidemic which claims numerous lives in Stacey's village, and closes with little Jimmy's suicide. Through little Celia's visions the broader context of death and dying in the Native community related to numerous post-contact epidemics is provided. The whole story, as Judith Leggatt (Leggatt 2000) argues, is based on metaphors related to the danger of disease, pollution and contamination connected with inter-cultural contact. As the human perspective intersects with the vision of Raven, death is defined as indicative of different aspects of the difficult process of change, transformation and renewal, which become part of the rethinking of home in the text:

Change is serious business—gut wrenching, really. With humans it is important to approach it with great intensity. Great storms alter earth, mature life, rid the world of the old, ushering in the new. Humans call it catastrophe. Just birth, Raven crowed. [...] Raven was convinced that this catastrophe she planned to execute would finally wake the people up, drive them to white town to fix the mess over there.

(Maracle 1993 14)

Stacey's perspective, which dominates the novel, shifts and fluctuates. At the beginning of the novel she believes that she is, because of her "context," her white education and relative familiarity with the life over the river, different from her clanswomen, and the kind of "simple" life they lead would not satisfy her. Even though she is critical of the white community, she is also dissatisfied with her own: "no one wanted to face the fact," she muses "that life here at the edge of the world was empty for

anyone”(Maracle 1993 13). While she does not rebel or seriously contest it, she does not possess the visceral sense of connectedness and continuity that her sister Celia gets intuitively through her visions of the past life of the community. It is the news of another approaching epidemic, the Hong Kong flu, that pushes Stacey towards a more conscious identification with the village people and makes her rethink the split social context she participates in. Stacey is not an uprooted character hovering between the two cultures and having no real claim to any of them that is featured in many Native American and First Nations novels. Rather, she firmly identifies with the Salish culture, and it is from this position of self-conscious cultural identification that she tries to understand the white culture.

The Salish village and the “white town” are separated by a river and connected by a bridge. The clearly-cut spacial division between the communities, and their differing spacial arrangements, serve as material equivalents of the social, cultural and spiritual rift that divides them, while the bridge, besides its obvious function of the connector between the two communities, serves first of all the function of an “in-between” place for Stacey to think about the two cultures she participates in. Houses function in the novel both as closed spaces and gateways. On the one hand, they constitute specific, visible markers of the cultural and economic difference, and stand for mental and cultural limitations and isolation of the two communities, the isolation that Raven attempts to break. On the other, they provide a tangible point of entry opening up for Stacey’s scrutiny the intangible spaces of family and social relations, not only those characteristic of the “white town,” but also those of her own community. In effect, it is in and through domestic spaces that Stacey begins the nuanced process of imaginative exploration of the two communities as well as of her own potential, limitations and prejudices.

Warm houses of Maillardville and their well-kept gardens when juxtaposed with the simple house in which she and her family live, and its unadorned front yard, at first bespeak beauty and comfort to Stacey. Soon, however, she starts to see them not as indications of economic and social privilege, but as places of waste and of spiritual and emotional draught; empty and sterile. Garden-weeding and family dinners become opportunities for an analysis of cultural difference. Watching white housewives weeding out plants that her community treats as foodstuff Stacey qualifies it not only as economic waste and failure of judgment,

but also as a metaphor for “weeding out” of valuable individuals from the white community; of people, who like her classmate Polly, are rejected because they trespass against rules of social decorum that Stacey finds nonsensical. As she eats dinner with her friend Carol’s family, she judges the conversation to be ritualized and meaningless, notices that the children seem to be guests in the house, and that Mr Snowden chides the wife and the kids equally. “Their trussed-up yards, their empty houses full of crushing air” (Maracle 1993 43) now indicate a lack of connectedness and spiritual depth, fatal rootlessness that she condemns. This contemporary disconnectedness of the white community, their lack of feeling, is given a diachronic dimension through Raven’s command to Stacey to imagine Polly’s death in the context of “generations of lostness” (Maracle 1993 39); and the image Raven conjures of “poor pale creatures who had forgotten their ways centuries before” (Maracle 1993 44).

In effect, the white community is presented as affected by a congenital failure of memory and feeling. At the same time, the Salish community is also defined as lacking by Raven, who notices that it is plagued not only by the disease of the body, but also by a spiritual disease: “a drought of thought. They had not retreated for some time to the place of sacred thought” (Maracle 1993 23). One of the symptoms of this disease is “their obsessive focus on the now” (Maracle 1993 23) coupled with the refusal to truly engage with the present by reaching out to the white community in order to “shape the future of their homeland” (Maracle 1993 43). Stacey’s impulse to discard the white town and its culture altogether imperils Raven’s plan to force the villagers, through the predicament of the plague and Stacey’s engagement with the white community, to take an active stance in shaping their future.

Stacey perceives her own community as more fluid, open and understanding, more “connected,” but her displeasure with the ways of the white town that she scrutinizes forces her to look more carefully at the customs and views of her own people, including her own, and in effect verify some of her opinions regarding the village. She condemns the lack of family ties among the Maillardville people, yet she at the same time ignores her younger sister Celia, who seems to yearn for Stacey’s attention. She denounces the white hypocrisy, yet replicates it through her fear that her mother’s unusual sexual arrangement with her husband and his twin brother, approved of by the community leader, is also known to the rest of the village. She notices that her family and village also accept

gender hierarchy and racial prejudice—the two aspects of the white culture that she strongly disapproves of. Gender roles are clearly assigned, male decrees rule, though they are most often issued much more subtly, through non-verbal signals. The community do not readily accept whites: German Judy, a long-time partner of a Native woman, Rena, who lives in the village, is treated as marginal and not included in the community. Stacey's own mother dismisses white people as simply "not human."

Even as Stacey is put off by the multitude of rules that drive the white world, the rules that she does not grasp and often perceives as superfluous or even lethal, she becomes more and more conscious of the fact that there exists an unspoken law that guides the behaviour of the inhabitants of her village. What is more, she at times fails to read this law correctly or finds it confusing even though it is part of her own culture. For example, when Stacey goes "to pick medicine" in the hills with Rena and German Judy, she is threatened with ostracism by Momma. She does not expect Momma to apply regular rules for meetings between single men and women to her walk with Rena and her partner. However, because of Rena's sexual preference and German Judy's race, which effectively changes the status of the former into that of a young man and annuls the presence of the latter, in Momma's eyes what Stacey perceives as an innocent expedition in the company of women amounts to an unchaperoned meeting with a single man, which is a serious trespass against community rules. In the wake of Momma's sharp reaction to her disregard of rules, Stacey feels "dispensable," which brings to the reader's mind her earlier reflections on the inferior and transitory position of children in white families. Putting the two observations side by side sheds a different light on her more general observation regarding the lack of "connectedness" within the white community as set against the closeness of her own community. Stacey's observations reflect precisely the stress on extended kinship networks in Native communities and the stress on the nuclear family within white ones. This difference is not deleted in the wake of her new observations, it remains crucial, but it is no longer self-explanatory and uncomplicated.

The event illuminates also other aspects of community rules in the two cultures. The seemingly incongruous image of Polly side by side with Old Nora that presents itself to Stacey as she mulls over the question of trespassing against community laws, and which she tries to dismiss,

makes perfect sense in the context. Polly is Stacey's white classmate who commits suicide after a teacher reads aloud the note that a boy sends her in class that reveals their sexual indiscretion. Old Nora is an unlikable and eccentric village woman whose funeral opens the book. Thinking about them, Stacey initially wonders about their attitude to sex: how could Polly kill herself because of lust? How could Nora live a solitary and sexless life after her husband's death? Polly and Old Nora become catalysts for Stacey's search for the "why of things." As the text proceeds, some similarities between the two, which Stacey herself does not necessarily notice at the time, are revealed. She notices, for example, the role gender, and not simply transgressing community rules, plays in the way their communities treat both women. While Polly is condemned, her partner escapes the condemnation. Her suicide, it turns out later, might also have been caused by trouble at home, her mother's inability to divorce her abusive husband, and the lack of support from the community. When Stacey learns the story, the monolith of the white community starts to crumble and she suddenly perceives a difference between white men and white women, which she feels "a little uneasy about" (Maracle 1993 81). Nora's story, after her husband dies, is a story of independence and crossing gender roles, a choice that the Speaker, but not all of the community members accept. Because of her gender, and in spite of her suitability for the position, Nora is passed over when the village choose the new community Speaker. While Polly cannot bear the burden of community disapproval of herself and its indifference to the family trouble, Nora demonstrates a way to break the rules and survive.

Stacey's meditations on the bridge that spans the river dividing the two communities yield, in retrospect, a better understanding of the two cultures. However, even though the teenage Stacey decides to leave the village and gain white university education to help her own people and try to penetrate "the why of things," she still leaves convinced that a gulf divides the two communities. Her limited human perspective is supplemented by Raven's and earth's knowledge of the incipient change that Stacey helps initiate. As they envisage the disintegration of the village and its "innocence," as well as Stacey's dreams, they also rejoice in the transformative shame that Stacey manages to incite in Steve, her white classmate. While Stacey has some access to the dominant white culture, she decides that Steve has no "context" to understand her that might be a basis for a relationship. Raven's perspective makes it clear that

clinging to separate cultural “contexts” will soon be possible no longer. The curative power of the Native world view will bear fruit only when there is more extensive contact and exchange between the two communities, more traffic over the bridge that spans the gulf. Sadly, Raven envisages more plagues, affecting not only the body but also the spirit, as necessary for the transformation to take place: “Until the villagers began to feel as ugly inside as the others, none could come forward to undo the sickness which rooted the others to their own ugliness” (Maracle 1993 191).

The suicide of Stacey’s nephew that occasions the telling of the story, an event unthinkable for villagers twenty five years before, illustrates the paradoxical success of Raven’s plan, expressing also her “folly.” The villagers have been driven to white town, presumably getting the cure necessary to deal with physical diseases, but they suffer from the spiritual epidemic caused by the “lost sense of community” (Maracle 1993 197), of which the suicide is symptomatic. Within their limited perspective the women who tell the story cannot know how it will develop, but in their own way they attempt to remedy the spiritual epidemic, to rebuild the lost home through their telling of the story, which constitutes part of the search for the general understanding of “the why of things” that the text focuses on, and, more specifically, for the ways and acceptable terms of engagement with the white culture. The oral transmission of the story is in itself a tool of regeneration. As Weaver writes following Vizenor, in Native cultures “language and narrative have tremendous power to create community. Indeed, it may be that the People cannot have life outside of stories, their existence contingent upon the telling and hearing of communal stories” (Weaver 1997 40). Maracle’s text illustrates the essence and value of storytelling in the search for understanding and in the evolution and building of home.

On the narrative level the text enacts the inescapable necessity of the transformation of the discursive home-making process. While it employs some of the oral narrative conventions and provides an oral narrative framework, complete with the listener, the process of the rebuilding of home through storytelling is nevertheless conveyed to the reader, and by implication also to the broader community, in writing and in English, which is necessitated by the dispersal of the community and the substantial changes within Native culture. Even Raven as presented in the text reflects the transformed and contemporary concept of the figure. As

Maracle comments in an essay, radical changes in Native communities, including her own community, have also “restructured our raven repertoire of stories. We have carefully preserved and retold those stories that urge us to cherish change” (Maracle 2004 252). Raven becomes in these stories the transformer and preserver of the attachment to “environmental responsibility and spiritual responsiveness” (Maracle 2004 254), to be understood only within the ever-changing communal, cultural and historical context. Raven is a figure so complex that

To refer to her as a ‘trickster’ is to return to her origin in the kindergarten kind of way. It denies change, it alleviates the effect of death, of oppression, of emancipation, of reconciliation with change itself. It obviates our having become conscious, of having become people for ourselves, mature and knowing, discriminating and discerning in a powerful way.

(Maracle 2004 253)

Raven, and other transformer figures as employed in contemporary novels by First Nations writers, including her own, Maracle concludes, has become “a beacon of hope, a call to rebirth and cultural re-clamation. She has become a complex metaphor for continuous growth and transformation. We can no longer understand Raven any other way” (Maracle 2004 255).

The prominent element of the difficult process of adjustment to change as envisioned in *Ravensong*, but also in Maracle’s extra-textual pronouncements, is the stress on the dynamic approach to the relationship between the past, the present and the future, which cannot be neatly separated; as well as to myth, tradition, memory and history, which are co-dependent. Traditional stories and ancestral memories, whether retold or intuited, inform one another as well as the present context because they are employed for specific contemporary purposes. The changed context is in itself necessarily transformative of tradition, responsive to specific communal and individual needs. The presence of Raven in Maracle’s text as symbolic of such approach to tradition, as well the reliance on communal storytelling for the making of home constitute optimistic pronouncements of the possibilities of “rebirth and cultural re-clamation” of the First Nations.

The magic realist novels discussed in this chapter make an attempt at redefining and reconstituting home through memory. Urquhart's *Away* pronounces the failure of the settler project of home and of attempts at its imaginative reconstitution: fragmentation wins over wholeness symbolised by forgotten mythologies. The other three novels manage to rebuild, if tentatively, imaginative communities that allow for a rethinking of the notion of home. Memory of the past abuses remains an important building stone for the present-day and future community, though the mode of engagement with those abuses differs. The history of colonization haunts in various ways *The Invention of the World* and *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, which like Urquhart's novel are based on attempts at the rethinking of the settler narrative. In both, a utopian communal space is projected and undermined, though both texts attempt also to give a message of healing and reconciliation, though the terms of reconciliation seem sometimes problematic, especially in the case of Anderson-Dargatz's novel. *Ravensong*, which explicitly engages the question of the Native-white relationship, suggests a possibility of rebuilding home through narrative rebuilding of community and offers an extended rethinking of the ways in which the two communities might interact. In all cases, "home" is constituted mentally, imaginatively, emotionally by engaging memory, buried in the land, in the natural environment, in the mind, for the benefit of the future.

Chapter IV

Other Spaces: Memory, Trauma, Representation, Culture

When the narrator of Anne-Marie McDonald's *Fall on Your Knees* declares that "memory plays tricks. Memory is another word for story, and nothing is more unreliable" (MacDonald 1997 270), by suggesting the textual, narrative nature of memory, she stresses both its intimate relation to representation and its constructedness. Contemporary memory studies support this insight: "ordinary" memory is often called narrative memory. Out of the details of everyday life, some are edited out of memory, and those that we retain are always endowed with emotional import and integrated into existing memories to form a story: "often, the string of events that composes a narrative (and narratable) memory offers high and low accents, foreground and background, preparatory and climactic events" (Bal 1999 vii). The space of memory is, by definition, a space of representation. At the same time, remembered autobiographical narratives are always culturally embedded and flexible: what we remember of the past is modified to actively respond to the needs of the present (Bal 1999 vii-viii). As Huyssen concludes, "the mode of memory is *recherche* rather than recuperation" (Huyssen 1995 2).

The fact that even most personal narrative memory is culturally mediated and negotiated, interpersonal, dialogic seems particularly important for the two works to be discussed in this chapter—McDonald's *Fall on Your Knees* and Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Both novels focus on the process of transforming suppressed, unarticulated memories into stories which, although deeply personal, are also cultural; on the *recherche* of the not-so-remote past the results of which "must be articulated to become memory" (Huyssen 1995 2), and on the process of finding ways to articulate them. The process of searching for those memories is particularly painful because these are traumatic memories that defy narrativisation (Bal 1999 viii). The mixture of magic realism and the gothic allows the authors to engage with problems and issues that belong to the unarticulated realm of traumatic, prerepresentational

memory, of events suppressed, not integrated into the story of the character or community, whose existence might be therefore described as spectral, and which return to haunt. Both novels, while dealing with the crucial issues of the recovery of individual traumatic memory foreground a variety of spaces of representation (photograph, theatrical performance, fairy tale, myth, film, drawing, story-telling and more) that help characters to integrate traumatic memories (suppressed or silenced) into narrative memory. They place the suppressed and then recovered story in a broad cultural and social context, making it part of a suppressed or only partially known community story; they foreground the social context of memory, the “sociality of haunting, [the fact] that we are haunted by worldly contacts” (Gordon 1997 197). Both novels, through their focus on representation and storytelling in connection with traumatic memory, and by foregrounding the communal aspects and healing effects of memory and remembering, as well as numerous aspects of the process of home-making, continue the preoccupations explored in the works discussed in the previous chapter. In the process, however, fluid hybrid cultural spaces are created that function both as projects and realities providing an alternative to and questioning the established national and nationalist discourse of Canada and Canadian-ness, in particular in relation to race and sexual orientation.

The beginning of *Fall on Your Knees* displays both the pastness (“They’re all dead now” [MacDonald 1997 2]) and “gappiness” of the story that will follow. Structured as a series of “silent pictures,” verbal static photographs, and one “moving picture,” the opening ekphrastic images share the ambiguity of photographic representation and the family album. Their presentness, which nonetheless belongs to the past, gives the illusion of intimate contact with characters and events, while in fact the “pictures” evoke more questions than they can answer. Even though they are rendered by means of language, they still foreground one of the characteristic tensions produced by photographs: “the tension between the photograph’s flatness and its illusion of depth, between the little a photograph reveals and all that it promises to reveal but cannot (Hirsch 2003 119). In the context of the novel, these questions, silences and gaps in the “family album” point to the lacunae of memory and its story-like nature. At the same time,

they suggest expressly that the novel will dwell in the space photographs occupy according to Marianne Hirsch: “the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life” (Hirsch 2003 8).

The opening images explicitly defy the tradition of the family album in which they situate themselves. As Hirsch notes, “Family albums include those images on which family members can agree and which tell a shared story. Pictures that diverge from the communal narrative tend to be discarded as ‘bad’ or ‘unrepresentative’” (Hirsch 2003 107). The “album” that opens McDonald’s novel, with the exception of the first more or less conventional image of New Waterford, seems to consist of those discarded, “bad” photographs: there is one of Mumma, dead, “half in half out of the oven like the witch in Hansel and Gretel” (MacDonald 1997 2), of Daddy sleeping with his hair braided by Lily, of Mercedes with her opal rosary saying “Shshsh,” of little Frances emerging from the creek behind the house with a bundle in her hands. Interspersed among those are images or evocations of lack and loss: the picture of Ambrose’s empty crib, the “white blank” that portrays “other Lily,” the evocation of the destroyed pictures of Kathleen and the only one that survived but has “been put away” (MacDonald 1997 4). The sheer unconventionality of the images arranged to suggest the convention of the family album, their focus on death and loss, coupled with the child-like naiveté and innocence of narrator’s comments, as well as narrator’s questions which underline lacunae and mysteries of the past behind the illusory clarity of the image undermine but also focus the reader’s attention on idealised notions of the “family romance.”

The haunting gaps and twists in the family story, the need to remember, to uncover and tell the story is similarly evoked by the complex tree imagery employed in the novel, at the centre of which lie Mercedes’s attempts at reconstructing the family tree. The process as described in the novel clearly exposes the fact that, as Balsamo writes, following Derrida,

One must engage genealogy as a *construct*, whose contrived architecture is best exemplified in the trope of the genealogical tree: a modular assemblage of legitimate filiations, a treelike structure, whose ramifications, apparently all-inclusive, hide the intricacy of exclusion, determination and abusive graftings.

(Balsamo 1999 17, Balsamo’s emphasis)

The construct of the family tree, which parallels the construct of the “official” family album evoked by its imperfect other that opens the novel, underlines again the inescapable entanglement of the individual and the family in the broader communal, ideological context, which necessitates the suppression of the images and family tree branches and connections that deny the social vision of the ideal family and patrilinearity. As the chapter “The Official Version” makes clear, the community actively support and encourage the suppression of the events in the family history that contradict the “family romance,” in such a way shaping both the family and community memory: “as the years go by the facts get eroded and scattered by time, until there are more people who don’t know than the people who do” (MacDonald 1997 66). Though the community have only limited access to the family story, it is common knowledge that the hasty return of the oldest daughter of the Pipers, the talented Kathleen, from New York must be related to unwanted pregnancy. When she dies at childbirth, however, the community accept the story that attributes her death to influenza, not to the choice her mother Materia made not to save the young mother. The community accept Materia as the mother of the newborn girl Lily. Soon they also support the story of Materia’s death by natural causes, which masks her suicide. The acts are interpreted as motivated by “communal charity” as they allow the family to keep its place within the community and help the community to accept the illegitimate baby rather than reject it. However, they also effectively cut off the “stray offshoots” of the family tree and prune it back to an acceptable shape. Besides, “the official version” of events wreaks havoc with autobiographical memory of the younger Piper sisters, who will have to combat it in order to recover the suppressed family and personal past, re-member it and integrate it into their own autobiographical memories. In the novel the work of recovering the family genealogy and the personal stories connected with it becomes, in result, a life-long project of all three younger Piper sisters. Consequently, Frances and Lily make crucial interventions into Mercedes’s initial family-tree project. In spite of her impulse to “prune” the tree, based on the lack of knowledge of certain family events accompanied by the desire to conform to the official concept of family history, the image of the completed, finally reconstructed family tree at the close of the novel goes against the “official version.” In effect, it partly parallels, and completes, the “alternative” family album with which the novel opens. This is the result of the fact that, as Gordon points out, “Much of the narrative focus in

Fall on Your Knees [...] is an exploration and recuperation of the ‘non-chosen’ line or lines that traverse religion and race and that privilege maternity and, especially, siblinghood over the constraints of paternity” (Gordon 2005 171) The reconstructed family tree fills in the gaps foregrounded in the opening album, and answers at least some of the questions that it raises.

The family tree, enmeshed as it is in the dense network of biblical allusions, becomes finally the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, at the centre of which lies the sin of incest. The foundation of the tree is a series of transgressions against group and social rules, including miscegenation that functions in the novel as another haunting presence, both a lived reality and a threat and scourge to some of the characters. Paradoxically, the fall into knowledge/experience the reconstructed tree both provides and confirms suggests a return to the context of wholeness, plenitude and love from which, at the beginning of the novel, the founders of the family (James and Materia) are exiled. The image continues, then, the work of undermining the traditional patriarchal order on which the traditional concept of the family is founded. It also underlines the healing that the recovery of memory might provide.

The expulsion of James and Materia from the “Garden,” as the first part of the novel is called, starts the process of the transposition of the biblical story into a Cape Breton tragic family saga. When James Piper, a 15-year-old piano tuner of Scottish descent, elopes with 12-year-old Lebanese-Canadian Materia Mahmoud, he, figuratively speaking, plucks an apple from Mr Mahmoud’s tree. The exile from the safety of the family and, symbolically, into the wilderness of the world after the fall, into death, is the punishment inflicted on Materia for her transgression. While the Father ensures that James and Materia are married again in the Roman-Catholic church and provides them with a house, Materia remains dead for him and the rest of the family. Since that moment, she acquires a ghostly status, which will, eventually, though for different reasons, become also the fate of her husband and her daughters. As the narrator makes clear, the house the couple get from Mahmoud is then, from the very beginning, a haunted house (MacDonald 1997 18).

In spite of the multi-faceted source and nature of the burden of the ghostly, liminal existence of the Piper family, it is clear that its weight is rooted in the traumas of the past, in the inescapability and failures of memory and remembering. The burden of the yawning abyss of the past

that clearly hides more than the sanitized community version of the story suggests prompts Mercedes and Frances to search for the family history and their own suppressed memories. The laborious reconstruction of the past is hindered not only by traumatising experiences the memory of which is suppressed by the two girls or the fact that as children they could not grasp fully what was happening, but also by the gaps in their knowledge of the immediate family history. In the process of searching for memory/story, Frances, who more directly participated in the tragic events that constitute the dark core of the story, becomes the conscience of the family, and a haunting presence for her father, a constant reminder of his wrongdoings and guilt.

Neither Frances nor Mercedes can know that their father raped his beloved oldest daughter Kathleen before bringing her home, when he stumbled on her making love to her black and female lover, Rose. The girls possess only disjointed, unclear, tucked away snatches of the memories from their childhood: Kathleen's seclusion in the attic, the "tumor" in her belly, her funeral. While Mercedes was spared the gory details of Kathleen at her deathbed, Frances shares with her father the immobile "paintings" of the scene, "this silent portrait: *Death and the Young Mother*. It's an overdone, tasteless, melodramatic painting. [...] This is not a gauzy Victorian death scene" (MacDonald 1997 143, MacDonald's emphasis). The narrator focuses again on the contrast between the (Victorian) convention, which reflects the incipient "official" version of events that supports the social construct of the family and Victorian decorum, and the shocking nature of the real image. What James and Frances see is Kathleen, covered with blood and dead after the home-made caesarian section performed by Materia, who killed her in what she perceived as an act of charity. Between her knees twin babies lie squirming. For James and Frances the image becomes a "cave painting," an heirloom stored by the "cave mind," a horrible point of reference around which their future lives will pivot. However,

The difference between Frances and James is that [...] Frances is young enough still to be under the great influence of the cave mind. It will never forget. But it steals the picture from her voluntary mind [...] and stows it, canvas side to the cave wall. ... So Frances sees her sister and, unlike her father, will forget almost immediately, but, like her father, will not get over it .

(MacDonald 1997 146)

Frances's "cave mind" soon becomes a storage place for other suppressed images. As Frances tries to baptize the twins in the creek, the baby boy slips out of her hands, and drowns. James buries him in the garden. The baby girl, Lily, survives the baptism, but gets polio and will grow up lame. The evening of Kathleen's funeral Frances is sexually abused by her father, and the next day her mother commits suicide. The abuse and suicide are witnessed by Mercedes and then partially forgotten or silenced, partially twisted to conform with the sanitised community story and her own childlike vision of the world.

While Frances does not remember the tragic events, she still, though not consciously, sets out on her own version of the family-tree project, attempting to reconstruct her own story, and in particular to give back to Lily her twin brother. A major part of it is a storytelling project: Frances makes up stories of her own and Lily's past for Lily, then re-makes them providing alternative versions and corrections. It is a laborious and long process. Though she is not sure herself how much of her stories is true, she tells the stories to try them out, to check whether they are or might be true; and discovers that the more she tells, the more she remembers and understands.

Frances experiences "a destruction of a sense of the self as continuing over time" (Brison 1999 43) characteristic of traumatic memory. This break in the sense of a coherent self explains her feeling that she, and her surviving family, are ghosts haunting the house since the moment of Kathleen's death (MacDonald 1997 295). As a result of the trauma, her past and her future in a sense disappear. She is trapped in the eternal present of the suppressed traumatic events that nevertheless nag at her, and attempts to retrieve them from the "cave mind" and integrate them into her narrative memory.

James, the traumatised abuser, who remembers the story and keeps it secret, is nevertheless also a captive of this distorted sense of time and self, likewise experiencing the night of Kathleen's death as the night of his own death. The event marks the irreparable break between the present and the past, which also become inverted. As James's present is transformed into the past he is, in effect, consigned to a ghostly status. "Now is the dim past. Then was the shining present. [...] You think you're safe. Until you see a picture like that. And then you know you'll always be a slave to the present because the present is more powerful than the past, no matter how long ago the present happened" (MacDonald 1997 260).

The picture that occasions this reflection is the only surviving picture of Kathleen, kept in secret by Mercedes, suddenly on the piano for everyone to see. James's experience of the photograph is that of striking immediacy, time annihilated. At the same time, the picture, the only one that could conceivably be included in a conventional family album, acquires an aura of ghostliness and inappropriateness. When he notices it, James does not so much suddenly remember the past as is thrown into it, an effect often stressed in theoretical reflection on photography, and exacerbated by his trauma. "Photography's relation to loss and death is not to mediate the process of individual and collective memory, but to bring the past back in the form of a ghostly revenant, emphasizing, at the same time, its immutable and irreversible pastness and irretrievability" (Hirsch 2003 20). Though in his "reading" of the photograph James focuses on and is jolted by Kathleen's presence-in-absence, what the narrator foregrounds and repeatedly draws readers' attention to is the hovering, blurred presence of Materia behind Kathleen, barely visible through the kitchen window, gleaming scissors in hand, waving. The gleaming scissors in Materia's hand function here as the Barthesian *punctum* interfering with the culturally mediated reception of the *studium* of Kathleen, the disturbing element that "shoots out of [the scene] like an arrow, and pierces [the viewer]" (Barthes 1981 26). The scissors, with which Materia will perform the caesarian, killing Kathleen in the process, foreshadow the future that has already slid into the past, become an indicator of the dark secret. Likewise, the *studium*, the seemingly culturally transparent image of laughing Kathleen, threatens with the detail that might function as the *punctum* breaking the placidity of the image: her likeness to Lily is potentially revelatory of the little girl's true parentage. These details transform the seemingly uncontroversial picture into a discard that disturbs the official discourse of the family and thus has no place in the "family album."

Frances's motivation in her search for the "bad" pictures, hidden memories, is Lily. Her intentions are, to a large extent, expiatory. Lily's role is also that of the sympathetic audience necessary for the recreation of the self by the trauma victim: "to the extent that bearing witness reestablishes the survivor's identity, the empathic other is essential to the re-making of the self" (Brison 1999 46). However, as Frances's story of trauma, revealed for a long time only in snatches of contradictory stories, is also the story of Lily's origins, Lily actively starts to co-create and

“remember” it. The cooperative and creative nature of the process of remembering is foregrounded. Frances’s wild stories are transformed by Lily into a flamboyant version of the family tree, which “corrects” and obliterates Mercedes’s original, austere version based on both deliberate and unintended exclusions. Lily transforms Mercedes’s lifeless graphic representation of the family history, with each name hanging from it “like a piece of desiccated fruit” (MacDonald 1997 207), into a life-like tree, a tree of life, with branches full of juicy apples, suggesting the temptation of forbidden knowledge. Lily’s tree is presented in context: with grass all around it, a little creek flowing by, and the system of roots, the tree’s “subterranean branches” among which rests “a golden chest encrusted with diamonds. Buried treasure” (MacDonald 1997 214). The picture visualises the family history as living history, foregrounding at the same time the incompleteness of the “official” version. What is more, it recognizes as real, though hidden, Frances’s versions of the past. The chest, Lily explains, contains Ambrose, the imaginary brother cum “guardian angel,” whom Frances “invented” for Lily.

The image of the “buried treasure” in a chest evokes the cedar hope chest in the attic, which functions as the repository of family memory and secrets, tangible and intangible memorabilia put away for safekeeping. Made by James for Materia in hope that she will take up the duties of the wife, it is first filled only with Materia’s sorrow. The sweet fragrance of cedar it exudes gives Materia an impression of intimate contact with the lost and idealised family and home, strengthening her allegiance to Lebanon she does not remember. The cedars of Lebanon become for her the trees of a lost Eden; the chest a “treasure chest” of unanchored memories of the home from which she was exiled.

The location of the chest with Ambrose as the “buried treasure,” another family secret hidden among its “roots,” points also explicitly, though neither Lily nor Frances fully realises it, to the actual burial place of Lily’s twin, and the haunting figure of Pete the scarecrow. Apart from his other functions within the novel, Pete constitutes also part of the intricate tree imagery related to the theme of the exile from the Garden of Eden and related questions of sin, guilt and rule transgression; but also sacrifice and redemption. Made of a young apple-tree that James cut in the woods, and with “a plank of driftwood across it,” dressed in Materia’s old dress and a fedora (which recurs later in the novel as the attribute of Rose), the scarecrow haunts Kathleen. He first comes to her when she is

nine years old, after Materia baptizes her during her bath: an emergency baptism foreshadowing Frances's attempts to baptise Kathleen's twins. Even though James takes Kathleen to the garden to confront the scarecrow and her fears, and she knocks off Pete's head, Pete does return later, and, significantly, accompanies Kathleen at the moment of her death. While "Pete represents James and his demon," and therefore leaves and releases Kathleen when she dies (Parro 2005 186), he also suggests Kathleen herself. When James removes Pete to bury the infant, and it turns out that Pete has struck root and started to grow the narrator comments:

Eventually a tree would have grown right up through the scarecrow. Maybe with fruit too. A branch would have grown straight out through his mouth, and on the end of the branch a big red apple. 'Imagine,' thinks Frances. 'Imagine if you had a tree growing inside you.' Imagine seeing the green leaves everywhere, trapped just under your skin and growing [...].

(MacDonald 1997 157)

The image evokes a conversation between Rose and Kathleen in New York, when Rose tells Kathleen: "There's a tree growing inside you" [...] She traces the green shoots of this alleged sapling, starting from behind [Kathleen's] ear" (MacDonald 1997 534), and then comments that the tree is "the part that goes on living" (MacDonald 1997 535). Pete and Kathleen are both "planted" and then "uprooted" by the father, but the presence of neither can be completely erased. The image of the tree that "goes on living" suggests the continuity of the family, generations stretching through and beyond individual lives. In this context, it is not surprising that Frances and Lily bury Lily's picture of the family tree under the rock that replaced Pete and marks the grave of Lily's twin brother. When Frances finally manages to "give back" to Lily her vague "memories" of the baptism in the stream as well as her brother Ambrose, Ambrose visits Lily in dreams and introduces himself as No Man. "Pale as a root" (MacDonald 1997 225) and greenish, he inhabits the "no man's land," an in-between place, a limbo, his humanity suspended. The image again evokes Pete the strawman straddling the human-non human divide, and James (in particular in relation to his war experience), but also the liminal existence of the rest of the family. Pete's metonymic connection with Materia, whose dress he wears, and with Rose through the fedora on his head makes him into a terrifying image of the un-

pruned family tree. At the same time it suggests, by implication, his link with the space of not only personal, but also communal, cultural hauntings related to race, gender, sexuality and sexual preference that are explored in the novel.

In her search for a coherent family narrative, Frances deliberately transgresses against rules of propriety that prop up the discourse of the family and community. For her father and the community she is the “bad” daughter thrown out of a Catholic school, who drinks too much, who is the “diva” of the local speakeasy, where she also dispenses sexual favours while “technically” not losing her virginity. While this allows her to “get back” at her father for his transgressions she does not remember, she is also on a mission to resurrect Ambrose and return him to Lily. Her story, though she does not know it, both reflects and distorts Kathleen’s story, so in a sense Frances “acts out” the past. Her older sister’s fascination with Harlem jazz and her preparations for a stage career as an opera diva are transformed into Frances’s wild improvised performances; Kathleen’s “modern” attitudes and a certain insouciance about sex into Frances’s “sexual favours.” Most importantly, Kathleen’s love for Rose is foreshadowed and reflected by Frances’s admiration for Teresa, as well as by her seduction of Leo Taylor.

The relationship between Frances and Teresa, limited to a few chance though poignant meetings, follows a circuitous route that finally merges with the trajectory of the Kathleen-Rose affair in that it becomes a healing and life-changing experience for both. Teresa, the black beauty Frances remembers from her childhood, becomes symbolically the agent of Frances’s pregnancy. She is the “father” of the child conceived when Frances tricked Leo Taylor (Teresa’s brother) into making love to her in an attempt to bring Ambrose back to Lily. Frances maintains that she lost the baby when she was shot by Teresa (who believes her to be a demon set on destroying her family); and that she was at the same time impregnated by her bullet. Unknowingly, she provides a legitimation to and recognition of her sister’s yet unrevealed lesbian love affair, at the same time subverting both the discourse of white patriarchy and the logic of the family tree. This helps her to finally get hold of the story of the past and start the process of healing both herself and the family.

After Frances gets pregnant and reconciles with the now partially disabled father, as well as the community, she engages in the performance of traditional domesticity. However, this confirmation of the traditional values on the part of Frances is elusive. Retrieving for herself and her family the memory of her Lebanese mother and her heritage, she at the same time overwrites it with her love for Teresa. Wearing one of her mother's old flowery dresses, she almost magically reproduces Lebanese dishes. When she explains that she "learnt by watching" (MacDonald 1997 430), the reader realises that she learnt by watching not only Materia, but also Teresa, her grandfather's domestic servant, whom she observed for hours when she sneaked into his house. Thus, Frances writes her own and her sister's lesbian desire that overcomes the boundaries of race into the context of heteronormativity and white patriarchal family.

Frances's attitude to her pregnant body has much the same effect. As Rifkind points out, pregnant Frances, enamoured with her changing body, is transgressive of the heterosexual norm yoking lesbian desire and narcissism through the space of the maternal:

she only becomes autoerotic once she has attained the feminine ideal of reproduction. While pregnant, Frances occupies her own version of transgressive sexuality, which is as monstrous as her prior sexual behaviour in its manifestation of the maternal body's absolute desire for itself. [...] Frances finds herself and learns of her sister's [Kathleen's] discovery of herself at the moment when her body is prodigal with a desire only available in the maternal.

(Rifkind 2002 46)

By her love for herself as mother, Frances retrieves and celebrates a quintessentially female space as well as certain aspects of traditional domesticity, at the same time subverting discourses that construct them. It is when she is pregnant that she can finally openly retrieve and love also in herself the space of the maternal, related both to Materia and Kathleen; the space represented earlier in the novel by images of dark, dripping, womblike depths of the old French mine. The conscious retrieval of the memory of her mother brings also to the fore the suppressed "language" of intimacy and connection, and in consequence contributes to a temporary reconstitution of the family. This "language" is metaphorised earlier in the novel through the ancestral languages of James's mother (Gaelic) and Materia (Lebanese). Both function as "private" languages used be-

tween mother and child. While James dismisses Lebanese as “gibberish,” it is absorbed by Materia’s daughters (even the resistant Kathleen) and later transformed by Frances and Lily into their own, new, intimate, private language.

Questions of gender (also in relation to motherhood), transgenderism (in reference to Rose, who starts with crossdressing to transform later in her life into a fully defined transgendered figure of “Doc Rose”), and lesbianism intertwine with ethnic and racial issues, which are foregrounded in the novel. As social constructions of race and ethnicity are inextricably and universally connected with constructions of gender and sexuality, and central to the discourse of the nation and nationalism (Nagel 2000), the exposition of the constructedness of racial and sexual boundaries and the destabilisation of these constructs function in the novel as the tools of the contestation of the traditional Canadian discourse of the nation based on Anglo-conformity and heterosexual normativity. At the same time, as Rukszto claims, they question constructions of Canadian multiculturalism based on the assumption that culture is “acquired, inherited outside of social relations” and that it produces stable and predictable cultural identity (Rukszto 2000 20). What the novel poses, instead, is a complex intersection of race, ethnicity, and sexuality that radically destabilises individual identity. Additionally, as the narrative is firmly grounded in the realities of life in Cape Breton from the ending of 19th c. throughout the first half of 20th c., it firmly links those discourses with the social context, in particular that of “class and migration,” in consequence questioning constructions of homogeneous regional identity (Rukszto 2000 33).

The crucial and at the same time provisional and shifting nature of ethnic and racial identification on the personal and social level is emphasised in the novel through the concurrent fear and presence of miscegenation. The threat of or the actual breaking of the taboo on interracial sex tends to emphasise the dividing lines among racial groups, while in everyday life the differences are often glossed over and overshadowed by different aspects of social intercourse or personal sentiment. Degrees of the adherence to a racial or ethnic standard are measured in reference to cultural proximity, class, business relations, personal likes and dislikes. For example, while Kathleen’s dark-skinned Mahmoud nieces are treated by their friends at school as “white” because of the family’s financial status, Kathleen’s racial belonging is all the time commented upon (though not to her face) and questioned in spite of her milky white skin and red hair.

Also, while “whiteness” is culturally dominant, it implies not only race, and actual skin colour, but also ethnicity, and each of the groups represented in the novel measures otherness according to its own standard. Examples abound. While James first dismisses the “Hebrew farmer” Luvovitz, he is soon happy to enter a business relationship with him and overlook their differences because Luvovitz is likable. This changes also his neighbour’s perceived racial status: “Compared to Materia’s family, the Luvovitzes seemed downright white” (MacDonald 1997 30). Mrs Luvovitz, on the other hand, while happy to befriend Materia and her daughters, intervenes later to break the growing intimacy between her son and Mercedes: she does not want non-Jewish grandchildren. The Mahmouds, who are Lebanese, define themselves as “Mediterranean,” “almost European” in opposition to darker skinned and presumably uncouth “Arabs” and insist on their difference from “blacks.” James calls them “filthy black Syrians,” though he actually places them somewhere between his own whiteness and the blackness of the Cape Bretoners coming from the Caribbean.

The fear of miscegenation brings to the fore both the tenacity and the fluidity of racial designations. Even those who themselves transgress against the miscegenation taboo (Mr Mahmoud, James Piper, Rose’s mother) later enforce it, which precipitates the tragic turns in the novel. The racial boundaries are most explicitly interrogated and undermined by the relationship between Kathleen and Rose, and their discovery of identity through love, but not necessarily beyond racial identification.

Even though both young women come from a bi-racial background, Kathleen identifies herself and is socially identified as white and Rose as black, which to a large extent determines their social position and the chances they have of fulfilling the promise of their talents. When she meets Rose, Kathleen has to face and rethink for the first time her own background as well as her relationship with Materia. At home she absorbed and replicated James’s denigrating and marginalising attitude to her mother, and his insistence on Kathleen’s whiteness. Rose challenges these attitudes and assumptions. She places Materia as “black” in spite of Kathleen’s insistence—“I’m pure white. My mother is white” (MacDonald 1997 504), and asserts that Kathleen is ashamed of her mother. Rose’s assertions provoke a physical reaction—nausea—which suggests the extent of the impact they have on Kathleen’s perception of herself. Rose’s racial positioning and her relationship with her own white mother are, however, more or less par-

allel to Kathleen's. Rose's mother, Jean, disowned by her rich white family because of her relationship with a black man, shares Materia's ghostly status, and is defined as the racial other in her community. Unlike Materia, however, she skilfully uses her marginalised and disempowered status to manipulate white men with access to power and financial resources, and in many way resembles James. Both represent the dominant culture and inculcate in their daughters an ambivalent attitude to the heritage and culture of their non-white parent. They try to further the daughters musical careers to vindicate their own choices of the past. In result, while Rose identifies herself as "black," she does not necessarily celebrate the fact or feel fully part of the Harlem community that looks down on her mother (MacDonald 1997 512), and certainly resists its culture. Therefore nightclubs of Harlem, with their blues and jazz, are places of transgression and revelation to both Kathleen and Rose.

When Kathleen appears and threatens to ruin Jean's plans to raise Rose to be "an example to the Race" (MacDonald 1997 127), Jean uses the white patriarchal fear of miscegenation to make James come and take Kathleen back to Cape Breton. This, and not the lesbian nature of the affair, is what she stresses in her unsigned letter to James, and what still disturbs him many years after he arrives to New York prompted by the letter and stumbles on Kathleen making love to Rose. His raping Kathleen, provoked first of all by his own pedophilic tendencies, can be seen also as acting out of the white man's "duty" to protect white womanhood and family. At the same time—as Stevenson asserts—it might also suggest that he recognises the concurrent breaking of the miscegenation and homosexual taboo as a condition that frees him to break the incest taboo (Stevenson Spring 2001 52).

The silencing of the taboo-breaking is ensured by the reproduction of the self-serving, predatory maternity/paternity that Jean and James represent and their patriarchal attitudes. While Mercedes, the "good" and pious daughter, is the one who ensures the reproduction of the rules of white patriarchy by placing Frances's baby, Anthony, in an orphanage to hide "the blot" of his interracial parenthood, her motivation suggests that the fear of miscegenation replaces and hides other fears. Having taken up the role of Frances's "mother" and protector when still a child, she is awed by pregnant Frances's self-sufficiency and scared that she will no longer be needed when Frances herself becomes a mother. Like Frances, Mercedes also owns a number of memory "pictures," but unlike her sister she has

the inventory and is a careful curator of her “gallery.” While Frances has no mastery over the “pictures” that surface and attack her at odd times, Mercedes simply chooses to keep the painful ones, like the one of her father sexually abusing Frances, out of sight. Nevertheless, as the one who remembers, she takes up the responsibility to comfort Frances. Just as her sister forever stands in the creek with the baby boy slipping out of her hands, Mercedes forever takes Frances’s hand as she slips down from James’s knees.

After reading Kathleen’s diary, listening to James’s confession and granting him forgiveness, Frances gives Kathleen as mother back to Lily. The agent of the revelation is the picture of laughing Kathleen with Materia in the background, retrieved from the hope chest. Guiding Lily’s eyes from the *punctum* of Materia’s scissors, the instrument of Lily’s birth and her mother’s death, to the *studium* of Kathleen that Lily clearly avoids, Frances makes her admit what really pierces her as she looks at the picture: the striking similarity between Kathleen and herself. Equipped with Kathleen’s diary, Lily is sent by Frances on her *hejira* to her surviving symbolic parent, Rose, to allow Rose to finally mourn Kathleen, and to take the place of her mother at Rose’s side.

The image of the complete family tree that Mercedes finally sends to Lily many years later, suggests redemption through knowledge/memory and love, a return to the Garden of understanding and connectedness. It accommodates and brings to the open illegitimate feelings and transgressions of the family romance, but also recognizes and legitimates the love between Kathleen and Rose. The tree constitutes the heritage of Anthony, Frances’s son and Mercedes’s ward, who brings it to Lily. Anthony, brought up in an orphanage, is free of the burden of the past and the burden of belonging, of family secrets and constrictions, though he instinctively sympathises with them. As the narrator comments, “he belongs everywhere and nowhere. [...] no matter where he is, there is something about people’s struggles to keep their memories that bruises his heart, because it’s too soft to break. [...] He can’t see differences. Only variety” (MacDonald 1997 563). Anthony, no pictures hidden in his cave mind, is however returned to his background and roots, placed as one more apple on the family tree. Mercedes’s drawing, and Lily’s telling of the family story for his benefit constitute a recognition of the dangers of the lack or denial of family memory, and the benefits of narrative memory that fills the gaps in the family album. At the same time, Anthony himself repre-

sents in the space of the novel a project of a new identity construction relieved of, though not denying, the past and dwelling in the space of variety rather than binary difference. In this sense, Anthony, who is also Ambrose finally returned to Lily, is the treasure hidden among the roots of the family tree she drew many years before: a hope for the future.

Fall on Your Knees foregrounds the interaction of the processes of forgetting and remembering, memory suppression and memory retrieval both on the individual and communal level, underlining the dialogic nature of memory. Frances's private struggle to retrieve her suppressed traumatic memories and transform them into a coherent personal and family narrative may be finally realised only with the cooperation of her sisters and her father. The interrogation of the space of the family, variously implicated in cultural and social spaces, suggests also a postcolonial questioning of region and nation through the destabilisation of the notion of cultural and individual identity, the racial, ethnic, gender and sexual components of which are presented as intertwining to form ever-changing configurations.

While in MacDonald's novel reconstructions of memory are placed in a complex multi-ethnic and multi-racial context, Tomson Highway's novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen* addresses explicitly the specific and troubled context of the First Nations interactions with the non-Native population. The novel focuses on the process of deculturation and sexual abuse of two Cree boys through the education system of residential schools in Canada, and the gradual and painful restitution of their links with Native tradition and the value system of their culture. It explores, in other words, the process of the reclamation of memory, both individual and cultural. The novel explores complicated issues of sexual abuse, sexual preference, as well as contradicting religious and cultural influences by means of the central metaphor of consumption/cannibalism, related among others to the figure of Weetigo, which provides the means through which the boys conceptualise and attempt to deal with their experience.

The novel provides an example of a potentially productive intercultural interaction between Native and white cultures in Canada. This intercultural potential is realised by the two brothers, and symbolised by the figure of Ulysses Thunderchild, the protagonist of the play they write and

stage together: an indigenized version of Ulysses and at the same time a Europeanized version of the Son of Ayash. Representational spaces of performative arts, and magic-realist worldview grounded in Native tradition provide counterforces to consumption in its many incarnations, and constitute a means of reclaiming the traumatic memories of abuse in particular for the older brother, Jeremiah. At the same time, the process underlines not only the difficulties of narrativising trauma, but also interrogates the process of cultural “witnessing.”

The story of the sexual abuse of Gabriel and Jeremiah by Father Lafleur, the principal of the residential school they are forced to attend, is a story that, Jeremiah feels, cannot be told. The brothers cannot find words in their native Cree to express it, though Gabriel jokingly suggests the word *michipoowamoowin*’ (“bad blood” or “bad dream power”) as adequate (Highway 1999 91). Additionally, their parents are under such influence of the Roman-Catholic church that Jeremiah fears they might discard the truth of abuse as a sacrilegious lie. The white culture, on the other hand, as becomes clear when Jeremiah continues his education in Winnipeg, both condones and denies transgressions against First Nations people, so that stories of abuse are in the open, but at the same time remain secret. The Okimasis brothers’ stories remain then untold, though not unwitnessed.

The lives of the brothers unfold under the watchful eye of the Fur Queen: a complex figure that merges with that of the Trickster, but has also a number of other meanings and connotations. The Fur Queen watches over the brothers from a photograph, though she also enters the world beyond it. The photograph in its literal dimension documents the moment of triumph of their father, Abraham Okimasis: having become the world champion of dog-mushers, he receives the Millington Cup, a cheque, and a kiss from the 1951 Fur Queen Beauty Pageant winner. The image invokes the context of both colonization and misogyny: the commodified female body is clothed in the fur of an animal that has also become a commodity and a source of profit. The rather conventional image the Fur Queen kissing the winner of the contest, reproduced photographically, is imaginatively transformed and indigenised by the father, who changes the event into myth using Cree conventions of storytelling that rely on exaggeration. The white girl in a white arctic-fox fur cape, with a white fox-fur sparkling tiara adorning her head becomes first a reflection of the winter northern landscape: “her skin looked chiselled out of arctic frost, her teeth pearls of ice” (Highway 1999 10). As she approaches the

musher, the Cup she is carrying is transformed into something “like a sacred vessel, a heart perhaps, a lung, a womb?” She kisses Abraham and then she floats up and becomes the northern sky, gleaming beads of her tiara constellations of stars, her cape transformed into aurora borealis (Highway 1999 12). Out of this incarnation of the North, from her tiara, bursts “a human foetus, fully formed” that tumbles through the “womb of space” (Highway 1999 12) and turns out to be Champion-Jeremiah.

The image explicitly evokes elements of the Native worldview as Highway describes it in *Comparing Mythologies*:

if time lords it over space in Christian mythology, space lords it over time in Aboriginal mythology. [...] time, in Aboriginal mythology, is one vast circle. [...] And within that circle—of Aboriginal mythology—within that womb [...] lies the vast expanse of space, the vast expanse of land, the vast expanse of ocean, the vast expanse of air, the vast expanse of sunlight, of lakes [...], of forests unlimited, of wildlife unlimited, of a garden of pleasure, a garden of joy unlimited *and* of beauty unlimited and most, most wondrous. And on that circle—of time—moreover, there is no beginning, there is no middle, there is no end. Existence in the universe is merely one endless circle of birth and life and death and re-birth [...] so that those who lived in times before us [...] live here with us, still, today, in the very air we breathe, in the shimmer of a leaf on that old oak tree, in that slant of sunlight that falls in through your window and lands on your wrist.

(Highway 2003 43-44, Highway’s emphasis)

Both Jeremiah and Gabriel are born into this mythological landscape; in tune with the universe they tumble through the womb of space down into the earth. The first part of the novel stresses the feeling of community and close connection with nature on which traditional Cree life is based. This is the Native counterpart of the Garden of Eden, the “dream world” from which, as Highway stresses, according to aboriginal mythology we have not been exiled (Highway 2003 45). Nevertheless, the dramatization of the fate of the two Cree boys, which resonates with broader cultural implications, rests on their exile from the “dream world” precipitated by their forced removal from it to enter the residential school system. Physically removed from the context of aboriginal life, they are also forced to forget their language, culture and worldview, and to absorb English and Christian mythology with its linearity and dualities.

The space of Native culture and spirituality that the Fur Queen represents is suppressed and tarnished in the context of the white culture, in which it functions only through images of degraded and violated Native

femininity and is evoked metonymically by the dirtied or yellowed polyester fur the Native women wear. The images of Native women, raped and killed, contribute to the development of the tropes of colonization as penetration and suppression of the female principle. In *Comparing Mythologies* Highway writes explicitly:

Christian mythology arrived here on the shores of North America in October of the year 1492. At which point God as man met God as woman [...] and thereby hangs a tale of what are probably the worst cases of rape, wife battery, and attempted wife murder in the history of the world as we know it. At that point in time [...] the circle of matriarchy was punctured by the straight line of patriarchy, the circle of the womb, was punctured, most brutally, by the straight line of the phallus. And the bleeding was profuse.

(Highway 2003 47)

The punctured “circle of the womb” is the major source of drama in the novel, and is embodied, among others, by the recurring figure of an ever-pregnant Native Madonna. In a vision, Jeremiah imagines her baby tumbling “to a bed of broken beer bottles and screwdrivers filed sharp as nails” (Highway 1999 144): into a hostile world rather than the benevolent sphere pictured at the beginning of the novel.

In the process of complex cultural negotiations the brothers develop a worldview that situates elements of Christian ritual and belief alongside Native stories and mythology. Even though throughout much of their adult lives the link is obscured and traces of Native stories muted, it survives and constitutes an important element of the explanatory framework of their experiences. The novel focuses on the negotiations between forgetting and remembering on the cultural and individual level, which is to a large extent mediated by the process of telling and absorbing stories.

The figure of the Weetigo, the flesh-eating monster of the Cree mythology provides one of the recurring images in the novel. The image relies on both the implicit connection between Weetigo’s cannibalism and sexuality (Sanday 1986 108) that can be found in aboriginal stories, and on the fact that according to those stories a human might turn into a Weetigo. The image of the monster is associated first of all with Father Lafleur and his abusive behaviour. When Jeremiah sees the priest sexually abusing his brother, he first associates the image with “the Weetigo feast-

ing on human flesh” (Highway 1999 79). The association is then extended to Christianity in general. In particular the holy communion as the symbolic ingestion of the body of Christ is literalised, and the image of blood-dripping flesh in priest’s fingers returns throughout the novel. As the text develops, the link is secularised and applied to the white consumer culture represented synecdochally by the shopping mall: “a church for titans” (Highway 1999 115).

While the brothers are metaphorically devoured by the Weetigo in its different incarnations, they at the same time envisage, though not consciously, a way to be saved. The incompletely remembered story of Weesageechak (the Trickster) sneaking up the Weetigo’s “bumhole” and killing it by destroying his entrails, provides a metaphoric rendition of the consumer culture. The Okimasis brothers reconstruct the story together as they move through the shops of the mall into one of its many restaurants. They let themselves be devoured by the beast of consumerism and as they leave, the mall looming behind them is described as “the rear end of a beast that, having gorged itself, expels its detritus” (Highway 1999 121). However, an earlier scene in the restaurant, which combines the image of the brothers “gnawing away with the mob” and Weesageechak chewing “the Weetigo’s entrails to smithereens from the inside out” (Highway 1999 120) complicates the leave-taking scene. The duality of brothers’ cultural positioning is stressed by their association with both the cannibalistic Weetigo and the Trickster. While they participate in the rituals of the lay church of consumerism, they at the same time challenge its principles from within. They are devoured, but cannot be wholly incorporated into the body of the beast, and thus emerge as the indigestible detritus; changed and seriously damaged, but not destroyed.

The brothers, destined from the beginning to become a musician (Jeremiah) and a dancer (Gabriel), realise the promise by excelling in the classical music and ballet. As Susan Knabe concludes, for both, though in different ways, their art functions as a channel of their desire: Jeremiah suppresses his body and sublimates his desires through music, while Gabriel expresses his desires through dance and bodily movement (Knabe 133, 139). However, their attachment to these Western art forms initially separates them further from their community. It is only when they apply their talents to explore the significance of traditional Cree stories for the contemporary Native community and to retrieve silenced or distorted histories of abuse that their art becomes an important, regenerative

tool. Before they fully retrieve their private stories of sexual abuse from memory, they re-work them in the form of the musical.

“The cultural context whose frame evokes and enables [narrative] memory,” the “social component” (Bal 1999 x) that helps Jeremiah to sublimate his story of abuse into a musical, and only then to recall it, is provided by the double-voiced discourse of his dying father and the priest who comes to administer the last rites. As Gabriel and Jeremiah stand ready to finally reveal to their father their residential school experience, they are interrupted by the priest, “his crucifix wedged like a handgun in the sash of his cassock” (Highway 1999 226). What follows is a war of mythologies, worldviews and languages. The devout Christian Abraham Okimasis reverts at the moment of death to traditional mythology. He retells, in Cree, the story of the Son of Ayash, who descends to the darkest depths of the human soul to fight “evil after evil [...] the most fearsome among them the man who ate human flesh,” and consequently to “make a new world” (Highway 1999 227). Concurrently, the priest recites fragments of the Bible, but the only words the brothers catch are those from the Book of Job (19:25): “This I know. [...] That my Avenger liveth, and he, at the Last, will take his stand upon the Earth” (Highway 1999 227). Even though the snatches of stories come from antithetical belief systems, the dying Cree hunter and the priest do not seem to talk at cross purposes, but rather to tell the same story. The warrior figure of the Son of Ayash and that of Christ the Avenger partially merge, and the words of the Bible seem to become part of the Cree myth. What follows is the ambiguous scene of Abraham Okimasis taking the holy communion: “the tongue darted out, grabbed the body, flicked back” (Highway 1999 227). As he dies, he is both the Weetigo and a victim of the Weetigo-like alien religion and culture. The final image suggests, by extension, limits and dangers of relations between the two cultures of unequal status.

The story of the Son of Ayash retold in these dramatic circumstances, and more broadly, the space of myth, become a means through which both brothers attempt to rethink and rebuild the spiritual and emotional link with their culture, broken by the residential school experience and their career choices. At the same time, they try to recover the link with their father, severed as a result of the failure of language as a means of articulating traumatic experience and their father’s attachment to the Church. The story of the Son of Ayash forms the basis from which springs Jeremiah’s musical, directed by Gabriel, and titled “Ulysses Thunderchild.” The title explicitly

posits a double cultural reference, a conflation of the Cree and Western mythology. Additionally, Jeremiah's story of one day of a Cree man in contemporary Toronto explores not only similarities between the Son of Ayash and the hero of the *Odyssey*, but also seeks links with Joyce's *Ulysses*. The story becomes successful only when, at the prodding of his group of Native actors, Jeremiah allows himself to really feel it and composes his music accordingly, in tune with the company wailing, chanting, hissing, reenacting a Cree rite. Nevertheless, the structuring principle of the musical, as its title suggests, is the double-voiced, intercultural discourse that gestures back to the death scene of Abraham Okimasis.

In spite of the intercultural nature of the performance, Jeremiah fails to convey the story of abuse to his audience, which suggests again the limits of intercultural exchange and the limits of storytelling and representation in the negotiations between the rememberer and the witness. Bal claims that

art—and other cultural artefacts such as photographs or published texts of all kinds—can mediate between the parties to the traumatizing scene and between these and the reader or viewer. The recipients of the account perform an act of memory that is potentially healing, as it calls for political and cultural solidarity in recognizing the traumatized party's predicament. This act is potentially healing because it generates narratives that 'make sense.'

(Bal 1999 x)

In this case, however, the story couched in myth and metaphor remains obscure and precludes the recognition of the crime and solidarity with the victim. In the words of a reviewer of the performance, the scene in which the dying Weetigo's costume is removed to reveal a cassock "confuses the viewer. The image comes from nowhere. And goes nowhere" (Highway 1999 283). What is more, Jeremiah himself cannot produce a narrative that "makes sense" of the story: he is equally surprised by the review as by his brother's remark that he "didn't say it loud enough" (Highway 1999 283). Even though the medium of myth promises to transform Jeremiah's and Gabriel's story into a story of cultural trauma it is symptomatic of, the only sympathetic community to whom Jeremiah might tell the story to make sense of it is his brother and possibly other victims of sexual abuse within the residential school system. The details of the intercultural context which enables his telling of the story remain a closed space for his audience. Nevertheless, the "padlocked doors" of his memory, which slammed shut when Jeremiah saw Father Lafleur abusing his

brother, open to reveal the extent of his own abuse. Gabriel's "witnessing" validates his private experience, but the performance fails to fully validate the trauma as a cultural experience.

At the same time, the act of writing and the performance itself are also potentially meaningful for the community. The first prompt for the re-working of the story, both for Gabriel and Jeremiah, is provided by their participation in a Manitoulin Island Pow Wow, which results in a new awareness of their history and culture, but also in the recognition of the necessity and the possibility of creating an artistic, representational space that addresses both the traditional community context and contemporary Native life. This is when the brothers glimpse intimations of the link between the indigenous people and the surrounding world, and Gabriel, in recognition of the power of traditional dancing, decides to learn it. This is also when Jeremiah perceives for the first time, as he watches Amanda Clear Sky starring in a Native soap opera, that Western culture and arts can be adapted to address Native life. The more immediate prompt for Jeremiah to write the musical is the shock of learning about the sexual abuse of one of his wards at the Friendship Centre, in the context of his own slow awakening to the horror of his past experience and the horror of the possibility of his replicating the abusive behaviour.

He entwines both his distant past and the recent trauma in a mythic discourse he can ultimately control as writer. Thus, he actively prevents himself from feasting on others like the Weetigo, seeking instead emotional, spiritual, and psychological nourishment in the creative process. Rather than being consumed by past trauma and passing it on to others, Jeremiah channels his anguish into creative work that will not only aid his personal healing but will provide the cultural materials for a broader Indigenous empowerment.

(McKegney 2005 102)

The next production the brothers stage, "Chachagatoo, the Shaman," is both an act of cultural recuperation of suppressed memory and a continuation of their complex negotiations with the Weetigo of the white culture. On the one hand, the production recovers and validates the story of the last shaman, Chachagatoo. The story accompanies the brothers from their childhood, but only as adults, during the Manitoulin Island Pow Wow, do they learn the truth behind it: Chachagatoo, denounced as a witch, was in fact a powerful medicine woman. When a priest intervened in the process of her trying to free a hunter from the Weetigo possession,

the man died. Chachagatoo was imprisoned and in despair committed suicide. Telling her story through the medium of Western art constitutes an intervention into the narrative of dominant culture, a recovery of the memory of suppression and injustice. On the other hand, the story dramatizes Gabriel's private, though culturally resonant, fight with the Weetigo of sexual abuse and cultural dispossession, but also—more immediately—with the flesh-eating disease of AIDS.

As the hunter whom he plays attempts to protect himself and the community from the Weetigo, the monster leaps into his mouth and disappears. The scene reiterates the ambiguity of Abraham Okimasis's deathbed scene. Penetrated by the Weetigo, the hunter/Gabriel becomes both the victim and the representation or agent of the monster. This duality is underlined by Gabriel's continued sexual promiscuity even as he knows about his disease; the behaviour, which might be interpreted as spreading the flesh-devouring disease, the Weetigo possession, even as he is himself being devoured by the monstrous disease. The same aspect is underlined in Gabriel's dying vision:

The Weetigo came at Gabriel with its tongue lolling, its claws reaching for his groin.

"Haven't you feasted on enough human flesh [...]?" hissed Gabriel. But the cannibal spirit now had the face of Father Roland Lafleur. Gabriel crept towards the holy man. "But I haven't eaten meat in weeks, my dear Sagweesoo," Gabriel whined, and flicked his tongue at the old priest's groin. "Don't move away."

The creature lunged at Gabriel, brandishing a crucifix.

"Get away from me," Gabriel thrashed. "Get away, *awus!*"

(Highway 1999 283, Highway's italics)

While the scene returns the reader to the original scene of abuse, it focuses on Gabriel's complicated positioning in relation to it. Throughout the novel, Gabriel's unapologetic homosexuality and the life he leads are presented as crucially affected by the early experience of abuse: terrifying and damaging, as the novel makes clear, but at the same time gratifying. His sexual imagination is channelled through religious images, the sado-masochistic element of which is particularly frequently stressed. At the same time, Gabriel identifies also with the Native space of the homosexual as a "two-spirited" person, combining elements of the two genders, or perhaps a person of no gender. This identification is not instantaneous, as evidenced by his initial reaction to the figure of a Native androgynous

character that he encounters in a gay bar: Gabriel is both repelled and riveted by the “man-woman’s” performance (Highway 1999 168). However, later, as he is recognized and verbally attacked by young Native men during the Pow Wow and they denounce both his ballet dancing and his homosexuality, Gabriel identifies their hostility as motivated by the terror of recognizing in him what they suppress in themselves: their own dual nature, the presence of the “spirit of a woman.” His identity as a Native gay man is clearly built out of elements of both cultures he participates in.

Even though Gabriel finally dies of AIDS, the description of his final hours suggests his symbolic victory over the Weetigo of white culture (at least some aspects of it), even as it foregrounds his inescapable dual cultural positioning. Jeremiah associates Gabriel with both the Son of Ayash and a shaman, his “eyebrow pencils, the make-up” left in the green room as he is dying in hospital becoming “magic weapons of a shaman, a weaver of spells” (Highway 1999 203). By extension, the space of art, the Western art of ballet dancing, is associated with the space of myth and cultural resistance. Additionally, as Terrie Goldie argues, his shamanistic powers might consist in “an inherent transformative power within Gabriel” (Goldie *Pink Snow* 2003 216) related to his homosexuality, his “two-spiritedness.” This suggests that what Gabriel leaves behind in the green room are not his true magic weapons, but just the tools of the trade. His power to affect transformation remains undepleted. His request not to allow a priest to get near his deathbed allows Jeremiah to exercise resistance. Bolstered by the recovered memories of his abuse, and the collaborative exploration of the space of Native myth and history, the *recherche* of individual and cultural memory, he falters, but finally finds the strength to resist the Weetigo, the strength he did not have when his father was dying. The priest is not allowed into the room. Instead, Jeremiah arranges for a traditional Native ceremony to be performed.

As Ann-Adele Ghost rider arrives to perform the ceremony, she removes the rosary placed in Gabriel’s hands by his mother, replaces it with an eagle feather, and then hangs the rosary on a Ken doll figure in a cowboy hat and a skirt, rather than discarding it. The presence of Gabriel’s white lover, Robin, lovingly holding his head, additionally complicates the picture. The scene does not signify an uncomplicated return to the space of tradition, though it confirms its vitality. Rather, it constitutes a recognition of multiple formative influences that might shape contemporary Native identity. As Gabriel dies, he floats off with the Fur Queen

back to the womb of space: a validation of the Native worldview, both confirmed and compromised by the tricksterish wink of the white fox at the Fur Queen's collar.

The constant presence of the Fur Queen in the life of the Okimasis brothers suggests necessary corrections to the role of sympathetic "witnessing" in the retrieval and validation of traumatic memories. As I have suggested, the sexual abuse of the brothers at school as well as its consequences might not be publicly admitted, but in fact they are not unwitnessed. The Fur Queen, from her photograph and under the guise of a white fox in full make-up, a campish singer, who turns out to be Weesageechak, provides an audience to the drama of their lives. The Trickster plays the role of a transcendental witness. For both brothers their dream-like recollections of rape by Father Lafleur include the presence of Weesageechak appearing behind the face of the abuser. In both cases, Weesageechak, as the arctic fox in a white sequined gown, sings a carol, the words, "Holy infant so tender and mild," providing an ironic comment on the act of the violation of innocence by a person who is by profession supposed to be its guardian. The nature of the Trickster, "the clown who bridges humanity and God—a God who laughs, a God who's here, not for guilt, not for suffering, but for a good time" (Highway 1999 298), precludes mawkish sympathy, but her presence nevertheless validates their memories and allows the brothers to go on. The Fur Queen is a witness, but not necessarily a protector, which implicates the Trickster in the process of abuse and deculturation. She gives life, as suggested by the initial images of the novel, but also gives the kiss of death to Abraham and Gabriel; death, which might also mean rebirth.

Kiss of the Fur Queen, like *Fall on Your Knees*, shows the process of retrieving, narrativising and articulating suppressed traumatic memories, which while deeply personal, have important cultural resonances. The process of memory-retrieval is cooperative, interpersonal, immersed in the specificities of multiple cultural contexts characteristic of contemporary Canada and often mediated through various spaces of representation.

In the process, both novels create potentially hybrid, fluctuating cultural spaces that influence individual identity formation. Significantly, while both novels acknowledge and validate perspectives rooted in specific cultural placements, they at the same time complicate them by foregrounding the inescapable intercultural influences that modify these perspectives.

One of those formative influences is the presence of multiple aspects of Catholicism as part of social and state apparatus (the latter aspect is particularly clear in Highway's novel). Roman Catholicism, on the one hand, negatively affects lives of all the protagonists: through open cultural and sexual abuse in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*; and more subtly though as tragically in *Fall on Your Knees* by leading characters, in particular Maria and Mercedes, into making false, but fateful choices. On the other hand, it provides an enduring, though often contested and denounced, symbolic and spiritual point of reference for the characters, and functions as an important source of imagery in both novels. In this respect, the two novels apparently participate in a broader trend: in accordance with Marie Vautier's claims, such use of "the trope of religiosity" constitutes an important element in current explorations of "the postcolonial acceptance of the dynamic praxis of memory and the continual becoming of identity" (Vautier 2003 269), and contributes to the explorations of postcolonial side-by-sidedness (rather than postcolonial resistance) in both English-speaking Canada and Quebec.

Coda

Homecomings

The texts of Canadian magic realism discussed in this book thrive in explorations of various “spaces”—physical, communal, representational—implicated in the processes of remembering and forgetting. This connects them with the broader field of international magic realism. At the same time, the way in which memory is engaged in those texts is closely tied to the specificities of their (post)colonial Canadian locations and contexts. MacLeod, Hodgins, Urquhart and Anderson-Dargatz engage memory-related issues to reconsider in various ways the settler-invader legacy in contemporary Canada, while MacDonald shifts the discussion towards issues related to the project of multiculturalism. Maracle, Highway and Robinson, on the other hand, are more concerned with the cultural project of recovery and validation of traditional First Nations cultures and worldviews for the purposes of the present; with the work of revealing the abuses of colonialism, but also of forging out acceptable ways of the inescapable engagement with the white culture. In all texts these broad memory projects are always related to both individual and communal experience, which are shown as inseparable. In the end, all the texts, in their different ways, constitute homecoming projects, though the “homes” they posit are not exactly the same, and the homecoming is not necessarily a viable option.

In several texts memory is “spacialised”: it is conceived as “re-implacing,” as being connected with the process of re-experiencing past places (Casey 2000 201), whether the settler-invaders’ European place of origin or their “original” place of settlement in North America; or those First Nations ancestral places and spaces stolen and lost because no longer truly inhabited and meaningfully mapped by cultural lore. In MacLeod’s short stories, Urquhart’s *Away* and Robinson’s *Monkey Beach* the legacy of myth and a variety of traditional worldviews are shown as residing in place, whose loss is lamented; but also in family and community threatened with disintegration and forgetting. Memory is transmitted from generation to generation not only by means of cultural narratives, but almost genetically, the past returning in the form of

magical gifts, visions, premonitions, repetitions of events or gestures through generations. MacLeod and Urquhart lament this loss of memory lodged in place to the commodified and blind forces of the present: in their texts, coming back “home” to the mythical communal wholeness, the space of myth, is impossible. Robinson’s vision, related to her protagonist’s explorations of ancestral landscapes and beliefs, is more optimistic, though also more ambiguous. Memory and space, intertwining, partly open up to the protagonist, though they retain potentially dangerous pockets of mystery and obscurity. The present, in all texts, is marked by the experience of forgetting and loss encrypted in place, on whose contemporary geography the characters project the abandoned geographies of the past. All the texts encode a yearning for the mythical unity of time and community lodged in place, the lost home.

The project of home-making and home-revisioning is addressed explicitly by Urquhart, Hodgins, Anderson-Dargatz and Maracle in their texts. While in *Away* the home-making in the land of exile is presented as a feat that can only be achieved at the cost of the commodification of the land and immersion in the present, which means forgetting, and results in fact in an apocalypse of fragmentation, Hodgins attempts to rescue the project by redefining it. He posits a possibility of returning to the communal wholeness. Taking responsibility for the community-building process, creative re-membering that does not mire the community in the past, but rather allows it to use the past for building a future become crucial elements in the process. While Anderson-Dargatz’s novel attempts to suggest a similar trajectory, and addresses specifically relations between the settlers and the indigenous population, it in fact finishes with an image that suggests home-making based on forgetting rather than accountability. In contrast, Maracle’s *Ravensong* is a bridge-building project that debates a possibility of the existence of the middle-ground for an intercultural exchange, a possibility of intercultural engagement not based on forgetting.

Some aspects of Maracle’s “homecoming project,” based on the oral and communal exchange, are echoed in Highway’s novel, which addresses traumatic memory in the individual and communal context through spaces of representation and culture. Both texts suggest that Native “home” can no longer be built without a recognition of the inescapable presence of the white culture, which has had most tragic and destructive influence on Native communities and cultures, but at the same

time in the contemporary context offers spaces that can be meaningfully explored also by First Nations people (like the space of Western arts in Highway's text). Contemporary Native identity, Highway suggests, can hardly exist in separation from the vital space of traditional culture, but at the same time can hardly be understood in separation from a multitude of those other cultural influences. MacDonald in her novel broadens this space of cultural interchange to address questions related to Canadian multiculturalism, but also to sexual preference, the latter likewise addressed in Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*.

The texts through their different approaches to specific memory-related spaces underline the fact that magic realism, in Canada and elsewhere, is a literary mode that lends itself to different uses. All the magic realist texts validate worldviews and approaches to reality that contradict and disrupt the dominant Western worldview based on the legacy of the Enlightenment and are in this sense "postcolonial" (Hegerfeldt 2005 3). However, in the specific setting of Canada as a "Second World" country this postcolonial aspect does not exclude settler nostalgia, clear in MacLeod's stories and Urquhart's *Away*; or silencing of those minority voices that might at the same time be recuperated in a particular text, as in Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. Clearly, while the general project of magic realism in Canada seems to be confluent with the broadly conceived project of postcolonial literatures—that of remembering the past and remembering the future, in the sense of using "the past to reorient that future" (Faris 2004 80)—it is by no means realised by all magic realist texts. At the same time, judging in particular from novels by MacDonald, Maracle and Highway discussed in this book, magic realist prose by Euro-Canadians and First Nations writers might indeed provide a space allowing for considering the potential desirability, but also dangers, of the postcolonial „side-by-sidedness."

Works Cited

- Akiwenzie-Damm, Kateri. "First Peoples Literature in Canada." *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*. Eds. Dan Beavon, Cora Voyageur and David Newhouse. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 169-76.
- Aldama, Frederick Luis. *Postethnic Narrative Criticism: Magiccorealism in Oscar "Zeta" Acosta, Ana Castillo, Julie Dash, Hanif Kureishi, and Salman Rushdie*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.
- Anderson-Dargatz, Gail. *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. New York: Anchor Books, 2002.
- Andrews, Jennifer. "Rethinking the Relevance of Magic Realism for English-Canadian Literature: Reading Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 24.1 (1999): 1-19.
- Angulo, Maria-Elena. *Magic Realism: Social Context and Discourse*. New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1995.
- Appleford, Rob. "'Close, Very Close, a B'gwus Howls': The Contingency of Execution in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *Canadian Literature* 184 (2005): 85-101.
- Armitt, Lucie. "The Magical Realism of the Contemporary Gothic." *A Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter. Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000. 305-15.
- Armstrong, Jeanette C. "Aboriginal Literatures: A Distinctive Genre within Canadian Literature." *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*. Eds. Dan Beavon, Cora Voyageur and David Newhouse. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 180-86.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
- Baker, Suzanne. "Binarism and Duality: Magic Realism and Postcolonialism." *Span* 36 (1993). 21 January 2002 <<http://kali.murdoch.edu.au/~continuum/litserv/SPAN/36/Baker.html>>.
- "Magic Realism as a Postcolonial Strategy: *The Kadaitcha Sung*." *Span* 32 (1992). 23 January 2002 <<http://kali.murdoch.edu.au/~continuum/litserv/SPAN/32/Baker.html>>.
- Bal, Mieke. "Introduction." *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crew and Leo Spitzer. Hanover and London: Dartmouth College, University Press of New England, 1999. vii-xvii.
- Balsamo, Gian. *Pruning the Genealogical Tree: Procreation and Lineage in Literature, Law and Religion*. Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1999.
- Barth, John. "The Literature of Replenishment." *Atlantic Monthly* January 1980: 65-71.

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Fontana, 1981.
- Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- Battiste, Marie. "Introduction: Unfolding the Lessons of Colonization." *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Ed. Marie Battiste. Vancouver, Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2000. xvi-xxx.
- Bautista Gutiérrez, Gloria. *Realismo Mágico, Cosmos Latinoamericano: Teoría y Práctica*. Santafé de Bogotá, D.C.: Librería-Editorial América Latina, 1991.
- Beckmann, Susan. "Canadian Burlesque: Jack Hodgins' *The Invention of the World*." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 20 (1980-81): 106-25.
- Bennett, Donna. "English Canada's Postcolonial Complexities." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 51-52 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994): 164-210.
- Berces, Francis. "Existential Maritimer: Alistair MacLeod's *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 16.1 (1991). 20 May 2004 <http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol16_1/&filename=Berces.htm>.
- Besner, Neil. "What Resides in the Question, 'Is Canada Postcolonial?'" *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 40-48.
- Bobak, E. L. "Seeking 'Direct, Honest Realism': The Canadian Novel of the 1920's." *Canadian Literature* 89 (1981): 85-101.
- Bowers, Maggie Ann. *Magic(al) Realism*. New Critical Idiom: Routledge, 2004.
- Bravo, José Antonio. *Lo Real Maravilloso En La Narrativa Latinoamericana Actual: Cien Años De Soledad, El Reino De Este Mundo, Pedro Páramo*. Lima: Editoriales Unidas, 1978.
- Brisson, Susan J. "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self." *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crew and Leo Spitzer. Hanover and London: Dartmouth College, University Press of New England, 1999. 39-54.
- Brown, Russell. "The Road Home: Meditation on a Theme." *Context North America: Canadian/U.S. Literary Relations*. Ed. Camille R. La Bossière. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994. 23-48.
- Brydon, Diana. "Canada and Postcolonialism: Questions, Inventories and Futures." *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 49-77.
- Camayd-Freixas, Erik. *Realismo Mágico y Primitivismo: Relecturas de Carpentier, Asturias, Rulfo y García Márquez*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1998.
- "Reflections on Magical Realism: A Return to Legitimacy, the Legitimacy of Return." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue canadienne de littérature comparée* 23.2 (1996): 580-89.
- Carpentier, Alejo. "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real [1975]." Trans. Tanya Huntington and Lois Parkinson Zamora. *Magical Realism: Theory, History,*

- Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 89-108.
- “On the Marvelous Real in America [1949].” Trans. Tanya Huntington. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 75-88.
- Casey, Edward S. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Chalykoff, Lisa. “Overcoming the Two Solitudes of Canadian Literary Regionalism.” *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 23.1 (1998): 160-77.
- Chanady, Amaryll. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy*. New York, London: Garland, 1985.
- “The Origins and Development of Magic Realism in Latin American Fiction.” *Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories*. Eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski. Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1986. 49-60.
 - “The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigms.” *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 125-44.
- Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957.
- Chiampi, Irlemar. *El Realismo Maravilloso: Forma E Ideologia En La Novela Hispanoamericana*. Trans. Augustin Martinez and Margara Russotto. Caracas: Monte Avila, 1983.
- Christian, Karen. “Performing Magical Realism: The “Boom” In U.S. Latina/O Fiction.” *Americas Review* 24.3/4 (1996): 166-78.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. “Monster Culture (Seven Theses).” *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 3-25.
- Connell, Liam. “Discarding Magic Realism: Modernism, Anthropology, and Critical Practice.” *Ariel* 29.2 (1998): 95-110.
- Cooper, Brenda. *Magical Realism in West African Fiction: Seeing with a Third Eye*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Corse, Sarah M. *Nationalism and Literature: The Politics of Culture in Canada and the United States*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourn: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- D’haen, Theo L. “Magic Realism and Postmodernism: Decentering Privileged Centers.” *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 191-208.
- Dahlie, Hallvard. “*Magic Realism and Canadian Literature* (Review).” *Ariel* 20.1 (1989): 106-09.
- Dainotto, Roberto M. *Place in Literature: Regions, Cultures, Communities*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Danow, David K. *The Spirit of Carnival: Magical Realism and the Grotesque*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995.

- Davey, Frank. "Disbelieving Story: A Reading of *The Invention of the World*." *Reading Canadian Reading*. Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1988. 181-97.
- Dawson, Andrew, and Mark Johnson. "Migration, Exile and Landscapes of the Imagination." *Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*. Eds. Barbara Bender and Margot Winer. Oxford, England: Berg, 2001. 319-32.
- Delbaere-Garant, Jeanne. "Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magic Realism in Contemporary Literature in English." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995. 249-63.
- Delbaere, Jeanne. "Magic Realism: The Energy of the Margins." *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*. Eds. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992. 75-104.
- Durix, Jean-Pierre. *Mimesis, Genres, and Post-Colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magic Realism*. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Edwards, Justin D. *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005.
- Elliott, Emory, et al., eds. *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Faris, Wendy B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004.
- "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Zamora Lois Parkinson and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 163-90.
- Fee, Margery. "Romantic Nationalism and the Image of Native People in Contemporary English-Canadian Literature." *The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives*. Eds. Cheryl Calver, Thomas King and Helen Hoy. Toronto: ECW Press, 1987. 15-33.
- Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Stein and Day, 1966.
- Flores, Angel. "Magical Realism in Spanish American Ficiton [1955]." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. 109-17.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny'." Trans. James Strachey. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. XVII (1917-1919). London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1971 [1919]. 219-52.
- García Márquez, Gabriel. "The Solitude of Latin America (Nobel Lecture, 8 December, 1982)." (1982). 07 May 2002 <<http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture-e.html>>.
- George, Rosemary Marangoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Gittings, Christopher. "'Sounds in The Empty Spaces of History': The Highland Clearances in Neil Gunn's *Highland River* and Alistair MacLeod's 'The Road to Rankin's Point'." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en*

- littérature canadienne* 17.1 (1992). 10 November 2005
<http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol17_1/&filename=Gittings.htm>.
- Godard, Barbara. "The Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women Writers." *Canadian Literature* 124-125 (1990): 183-225.
- Goldie, Terry. "Answering the Questions." *Is Canada Postcolonial: Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 300-11.
- *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
 - *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2003.
- González Echevarría, Roberto. "Isla a Su Vuela Fugitiva: Carpentier y El Realismo Mágico." *Revista Iberoamericana* 40.86 (1974): 9-64.
- Gordon, Avery F. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Gordon, Neta. "Twin Tales: Narrative Profusion and Genealogy in *Fall on Your Knees*." *Canadian Review of American Studies/Revue canadienne d'études américaines* 35.2 (2005): 159-76.
- Gunn Allen, Paula. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Tradition*. Boston: Beacon, 1992.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory*. Trans. F.J. Dulles and V.Y. Ditter. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Hancock, Geoff. "An Interview with Jack Hodgins." *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 32/33 (1979/80): 33-63.
- "Magic or Realism: The Marvellous in Canadian Fiction." *Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories*. Eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski. Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1986. 30-48.
 - "Magic Realism." *Magic Realism: An Anthology*. Ed. Geoff Hancock. Toronto: Aya Press, 1980. 7-15.
- Hegerfeldt, Anne C. *Lies That Tell the Truth: Magic Realism Seen through Contemporary Fiction from Britain*. Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2005.
- Highway, Tomson. *Comparing Mythologies*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003.
- *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1999.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Hodgins, Jack. *The Invention of the World*. Toronto: M&S, 1994.
- Howells, Coral Ann. *Contemporary Canadian Women's Fiction: Refiguring Identities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- "Towards a Recognition of Being: Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *Revista Canaria De Estudios Ingleses* 43 (2001): 145-59.

- Hoy, Helen. *How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Huggan, Graham. "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection." *Ariel* 20.4 (1989): 115-31.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction*. Toronto, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- "The Canadian Postmodern: Fiction in English since 1960." *Studies on Canadian Literature: Introductory and Critical Essays*. Ed. Arnold E. Davidson. New York: MLA of America, 1990. 18-33.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.
- Jameson, Frederic. "On Magic Realism in Film." *Critical Inquiry* 12.2 (1986): 301-25.
- Keeshig-Tobias, Lenore. "Not Just Entertainment - Storytelling." *Whole Earth Review* (Summer 1991). 11 May 2007 <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1510/is_n71/ai_10806653>.
- Kertzer, J.M. "Genius Loci: The Ghost in Canadian Literature." *Canadian Literature* 130 (1991): 70-90.
- King, Thomas. "Godzilla Vs. Post-Colonial." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Eds. Ajay Heble, Donna Palmeteer Pennee and J.R. (Tim) Struthers. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997. 241-48.
- Klonowska, Barbara. *Contaminations: Magic Realism in Contemporary British Fiction*. Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2006.
- Knabe, Susan. "Corporeal Resistance/Corporeal Reconciliation: Body and Language in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*." *Connections: Non-Native Responses to Native Canadian Literature (in Memory of Dr. Howard Adams)*. Eds. Hartmut Lutz and Coomi S. Vevaina. New Delhi: Creative Books. 129-59.
- Kroetsch, Robert. "A Canadian Issue." *Boundary 2* 3.1 (1974): 1-2.
- "Canadian Writing: No Name Is My Name." *The Forty-Ninth and Other Parallels: Contemporary Canadian Perspectives*. Ed. David Staines. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986. 116-28.
- "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Eds. Ajay Heble, Donna Palmeteer Pennee and J.R. (Tim) Struthers. Broadview Press, 1997. 355-65.
- "Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 3.3 (1974): 43-45.
- Lawson, Alan. "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject." *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004. 154-64.
- Lecker, Robert. "A Country without a Canon? Canadian Literature and the Esthetics of Idealism." *Mosaic* 26.3 (1993): 1-19.
- Leggatt, Judith. "Raven's Plague: Pollution and Disease in Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*." *Mosaic* 33.4 (2000). *Questia*. 13 January 2008 <<http://www.questia.com>>.

- Lernout, Geert. "Postmodernist Fiction in Canada." *Postmodern Studies 1: Postmodern Fiction in Europe and the Americas*. Eds. Theo L. D'haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988. 127-41.
- "Twenty-Five Years of Solitude." *Canadian Literature* 104 (1985): 52-64.
- Litvack, Leon. "Canadian Writing in English and Multiculturalism." *English Postcoloniality: Literatures from around the World*. Eds. Radhika Mohanram and Gita Rajan. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996. 119-34.
- Lovell, Nadia. "Introduction." *Locality and Belonging*. Ed. Nadia Lovell. London: Routledge, 1998. 1-24.
- Lutz, Hartmut. "Native Literatures in Canada Today: An Introduction." *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien* 1.17 (1990): 27-48.
- "'Voices of the Mother': The Survival of First Nations Literatures and the Beginnings of Indigenous Criticism in Canada." *Approaches: Essays in Native North American Studies and Literatures*. Augsburg: Wissner-Verlag, 2002. 209-27.
- MacDonald, Ann-Marie. *Fall on Your Knees*. Vintage Canada, 1997.
- MacFarlane, Karen E. "'A Place to Stand on': (Post)Colonial Identity in *The Diviners* and 'The Rain Child'." *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 223-37.
- MacLeod, Alistair. "Island." *Island: The Collected Stories*. Toronto: Emblem Editions, McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001. 369-412.
- "The Road to Rankin's Point." *Island: The Collected Stories*. Toronto: Emblem Editions, McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001. 143-79.
 - "Vision." *Island: The Collected Stories*. Toronto: Emblem Editions, McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001. 321-68.
- Maracle, Lee. "Preface." *My Home as I Remember*. Eds. Lee Maracle and Sandra Laronde. Dundurn Press Ltd, 2000. i.
- "Radical Writing, Radical Women: An Interview with Lee Maracle (by Tania Willard)." *Redwire Magazine*, 6.1 (September 2003). 12 February 2007 <<http://www.redwiremag.com/radicalwritingradicalwomen.htm>>.
 - "Raven Understood." *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Human Rights in a 'Post'-Colonial World*. Eds. Peter H. Marsden and Geoffrey V. Davis. Asnel Papers. Amsterdam--New York, NY: Rodopi, 2004. 247-55.
 - *Ravensong*. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993.
- McGregor, Gaile. *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- McKegney, Sam. "From Trickster Poetics to Transgressive Politics: Substantiating Survivance in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 17.4 (2005): 79-113.
- McMullin, Stanley E. "„Adams Mad in Eden": Magic Realism as Hinterland Experience." *Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories*. Eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski. Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1986. 13-22.

- “A Matter of Attitude: The Subversive Margin in Canada.” *Margin* 6.1 (1994). 20 January 2002 <http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/cmp/6_1_07.html>.
- McPherson, Hugo. “Fiction 1940-1960.” *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. 695-722.
- McWilliams, John. “The Rationale for ‘The American Romance’.” *Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon*. Ed. Donald E. Pease. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994. 71-82.
- Menton, Seymour. *Historia Verdadera Del Realismo Magico*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1998.
- Mezei, Kathy. “Domestic Space and the Idea of Home in Auto/Biographical Practices.” *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Ed. Marlene Kadar. Waterloo, ON, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005. 81-95.
- Mikics, David. “Derek Walcott and Alejo Carpentier: Nature, History, and the Caribbean Writer.” *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995. 371-404.
- Mishra, Vijay, and Bob Hodge. “What Is Post(-)Colonialism?” *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Eds. Laura Crisman and Patrick Williams. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 276-90.
- Mitosek, Zofia. “Realizm [1988].” *Mimesis: zjawisko i problem*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1997. 58-94.
- Moss, Laura, ed. *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003.
- Mukherjee, Arun Prabha. “Canadian Nationalism, Canadian Literature and Racial Minority Women.” *Floating the Borders: New Contexts in Canadian Criticism*. Ed. Nurjehan Aziz. Toronto: Tsar, 1999. 151-69.
- Nagel, Joane. “Ethnicity and Sexuality.” *Annual Review of Sociology* (2000): 107-33. *Questia*. 21 March 2008 <<http://www.questia.com>>.
- Nelson, Robert M. “Conclusion.” *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in Native American Fiction*. 1993. 17 November 2006 <<http://www.richmond.edu/~rnelson/PandV/conclusion.html>>.
- Neuman, Shirley, and Robert Wilson. *Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982.
- Neville, Grace. “Rites de Passage: Rituals of Separation in Irish Oral Tradition.” *New Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora*. Ed. Charles Fanning. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. 117-30.
- New, W.H. *A History of Canadian Literature*. New York: New Amsterdam, 1989.
- *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Nicholson, Colin. “Signatures of Time: Alistair MacLeod & His Short Stories.” *Canadian Literature* 107 (Winter 1985): 90-101.
- Northey, Margot. *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

- Oberhelman, Harley D. "The Development of Faulkner's Influence in the Work of García Márquez." *Gabriel García Márquez*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999. 65-79.
- Ondaatje, Michael. "Afterword." *Tay John*. By Howard O'Hagan. Toronto: M&S, 1989. 265-72.
- Pacey, Desmond. "Fiction (1920-1940)." *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. University of Toronto Press, 1965. 658-93.
- Pache, Walter. "'The Fiction Makes Us Real': Aspects of Postmodernism in Canada." *Gaining Ground: European Critics on Canadian Literature*. Eds. Robert Kroetsch and Reingard M. Nischik. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. 64-78.
- Padolsky, Enoch. "Cultural Diversity and Canadian Literature: A Pluralistic Approach to Majority and Minority Writing in Canada." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Eds. Ajay Heble, Donna Palmateer Pennee and J.R. (Tim) Struthers. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997. 24-42.
- Parro, Gabriella. "Who's Your Father, Dear? Haunted Bloodlines and Miscegenation in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*." *Canadian Review of American Studies/Revue canadienne d'études américaines* 35.2 (2005): 177-93.
- Petrone, Penny. *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Plummer, William. "The Faulkner Relation." *Gabriel García Márquez*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999. 33-47.
- Radstone, Susannah, and Katharine Hodgkin, eds. *Regimes of Memory*. London, New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Reising, Russell. *The Unusable Past: Theory & Study of American Literature*. New York and London: Methuen, 1986.
- Ricci, Graciela N. *Realismo Mágico y Conciencia Mítica en América Latina: Textos y Contextos*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: F. García Cambeiro, 1985.
- Rifkind, Candida. "Screening Modernity: Cinema and Sexuality in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 27.2 (2002): 29-50.
- Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001.
- Roh, Franz. "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism." Trans. Wendy B. Faris. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995. 16-31.
- Rukszto, Katarzyna. "Out of Bounds: Perverse Longings, Transgressive Desire and the Limits of Multiculturalism. A Reading of *Fall on Your Knees*." *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 21 (2000): 17-34.
- Rzepa, Agnieszka. "Alistair MacLeod's Magic Configurations of Cape Breton." *Continentalism and Nationhood in Canada: Essays*. Ed. Anna Jakabfi. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University-Canadian Studies Centre, Budapest, 2002. 55-64.
- "Beyond Hodgins and Kroetsch: Other Spaces of English-Canadian Magic Realism." *Central European Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (2005): 7-17.

- “Considering Magical Resolutions: Jane Urquhart’s *Away* and the Politics of a Genre.” *Exploring Canadian Identities/Vers L’exploration Des Identites Canadiennes*. Eds. Anna Branach-Kallas, Ewa Welnic and Jakub Wójcik Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002. 231-40.
- Sanday, Peggy Reeves. *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Schorcht, Blanca. *Storied Voices in Native American Texts: Harry Robinson, Thomas King, James Welch and Leslie Marmon Silko*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Schroeder, Shannin. *Rediscovering Magical Realism in the Americas*. Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2004.
- Slemon, Stephen. “Afterword.” *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 318-24.
- “Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse.” *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995. 407-26.
- “Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World.” *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004. 139-50.
- Smith, A.J.M. “Wanted--Canadian Criticism.” *The Canadian Forum* (April 1928): 600-01. *Canadian Poetry: An Electronic Resource*. 13 October 2005 <<http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/eng%20274e/smith.htm>>.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London, New York: Verso, 1989.
- Spiller, Elizabeth A. “‘Searching for the Route of Inventions’: Retracing the Renaissance Discovery Narrative in Gabriel García Márquez.” *Clio* 28.4 (1999). *Questia*. 20 May 2004 <<http://www.questia.com>>.
- Stevenson, Melanie A. “Othello, Darwin, and the Evolution of Race in Ann-Marie MacDonald’s Work.” *Canadian Literature* 168 (Spring 2001): 34-54.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Sugars, Cynthia. “Haunted by (a Lack of) Postcolonial Ghosts: Settler Nationalism in Jane Urquhart’s *Away*.” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 79 (2003): 1-32.
- “Strategic Abjection: Windigo Psychosis and the ‘Postindian’ Subject in Eden Robinson’s ‘Dogs in Winter’.” *Canadian Literature* 181 (2004): 78-91.
- ed. *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004.
- Surette, Leon. “Here Is Us: The Topocentrism of Canadian Literary Criticism.” *Canadian Poetry* 10 (Spring/Summer 1982). 10 October 2002 <<http://www.arts.uwo.ca/canpoetry/cpjr/vol10/surette.htm>>.
- Taylor, Art. “Magical Realism and the Mississippi Delta.” *The Mississippi Quarterly* 57.3 (2004). *Questia*. 11 May 2005 <<http://www.questia.com>>.
- Ude, Wayne. “Forging an American Style: The Romance-Novel and Magical Realism as Response to the Frontier and Wilderness Experiences.” *The Frontier*

- Experience and the American Dream: Essays on American Literature*. Eds. David Mogen, Mark Busby and Paul Bryant. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989. 50-64.
- Urquhart, Jane. *Away*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Vaughan, Alden T. *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Vautier, Marie. "Religion, Postcolonial Side-by-Sidedness, and *La Transculture*." *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ed. Laura Moss. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003. 268-81.
- Vizenor, Gerald. "Trickster Discourse: Comic Holotropes and Language Games." *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Literatures*. Ed. Gerald Vizenor. Norma and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. 187-211.
- Warnes, Christopher. "Avatars of Amadis: Magical Realism as Postcolonial Romance." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 40.3 (2005): 7-20. September 1, 2005 <<http://jcl.sagepub.com>>.
- Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. New York: Oxford, 1997.
- Weisgerber, Jean. "La Locution Et Le Concept." *Le Réalisme Magique: Roman, Peinture Et Cinéma*. Ed. Jean Weisgerber. Brussels: Université libre de Bruxelles. Centre d'étude des avant-gardes littéraires. L'Age D'Homme, 1987. 11-32.
- Wexler, Joyce. "Realism and Modernists' Bad Reputation." *Studies in the Novel* 31.1 (1999). *Questia*. 16 May 2005 <<http://www.questia.com>>.
- Willmott, Glenn. *Unreal Country: Modernity in the Canadian Novel in English*. Montreal and Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
- Wilson, Rawdon. "Metamorphoses of Fictional Space: Magical Realism." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995. 209-33.
- Yaeger, Patricia. "Introduction: Narrating Space." *The Geography of Identity*. Ed. Patricia Yaeger. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996. 1-38.
- Zacharasiewicz, Waldemar. "The Invention of a Region: The Art of Fiction in Jack Hodgins' Stories." *Gaining Ground: European Critics on Canadian Literature*. Eds. Reingard M. Nischik and Robert Kroetsch. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. 186-91.
- Zagratzki, Uwe. "Sea, Land, Earth: The Experience of Dislocation in Alistair Macleod's Short Stories." *Being/s in Transit: Travelling, Migration, Dislocation*. Ed. Liselotte Glage. Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000. 205-13.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson. "Ghostly Presences: Magical Realism in Contemporary Fiction of the Americas." *Mattoid* 48 (1994): 118-49.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson, and Wendy B. Faris. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.

Streszczenie

Streszczenie: Książka „Feats and Defeats of Memory: Exploring Spaces of Canadian Magic Realism” poświęcona jest fenomenowi kanadyjskiej prozy realizmu magicznego, wskazując na usytuowanie nurtu wobec anglo-kanadyjskiej tradycji literackiej. Analiza wybranych tekstów prozatorskich należących do tego nurtu, przeprowadzona za pomocą postkolonialnych podejść do literatury i kultury, z uwzględnieniem specyfiki kanadyjskiego postkolonializmu, skupia się na różnych aspektach obecności pamięci (indywidualnej i zbiorowej) w tych utworach. Dyskusja jest zorganizowana wokół fizycznych, społecznych i innych „przestrzeni” ważnych dla realizmu magicznego, co zostało zainspirowane specyficznym fenomenologicznym podejściem do kwestii pamięci reprezentowanym przez Edwarda Casey, który lokuje pamięć także poza umysłem, w świecie. Chociaż kanadyjskie teksty należące do nurtu realizmu magicznego reprezentują i odzwierciedlają mnogość kultur i tradycji oraz skupiają się na kwestiach związanych z pamięcią w różnych celach, niekoniecznie związanych z tematyką i specyfiką kanadyjską, do analizy zostały wybrane teksty autorów pochodzenia euro-kanadyjskiego (Alistair MacLeod, Jack Hodgins, Jane Urquhart, Gail Anderson-Dargatz, Ann-Marie MacDonald) oraz Indian kanadyjskich (Lee Maracle, Tomson Highway, Eden Robinson), które są tematycznie zakotwiczone w kontekście kanadyjskim. Kwestie pamięci w tych powieściach i opowiadaniach powiązane są z rewizją kolonialnego dyskursu osadniczego i płynnych dyskursów narodowych w Kanadzie, a także z rozważaniami dotyczącymi umiejscowienia jednostek i grup mniejszościowych wobec tych dominujących dyskursów. Złożony krajobraz „przestrzeni pamięci”, jaki wyłania się z tekstów powiązany jest z literackimi projektami „powrotu do domu” („homecoming”), chociaż znaczenie „domu” jest różnie rozumiane, a powrót nie zawsze jest opcją możliwą do zrealizowania.