Introduction

THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK echoes and revises that of Rudy Wiebe's short story "Where Is the Voice Coming From?," in which a white male writer interrogates Canadian history in his attempt to recover a First Nations voice from the past. That story, published in the early 1970s and reprinted in numerous anthologies, signals the onset of a radical change in Canadian cultural awareness and its ideology of nationhood - an end to deafness, so to speak. Now, thirty years later, there has been a decisive shift to 'voices' in the plural in multicultural Canada, and a series of sustained inquiries into Canadian history to recover the lost and silenced voices that have shaped contemporary Canada. It is within this context that the present essays are situated, focusing on the legacies of Canadian history as represented in a series of comparative studies of novels and films in English and French, produced in Canada since the 1970s. But Wiebe's title and his story raise several other questions which eddy out behind that isolated indigenous voice speaking in a language the writer cannot understand, and which have been an important dynamic in the shaping of our collection. First of all, there is that representation of 'othering' as singularity (not plurality or multiplicity) and there is the writer's baffled recognition of the 'Other's' humanity across the abyss of linguistic incomprehension contained in the pun at the end of the story:

> I say "wordless cry" because that is the way it sounds to me. I could be more accurate if I had a reliable interpreter who would make a reliable interpretation. For I do not, of course, understand the Cree myself.[1]

[1] Wiebe, "Where Is the Voice Coming From?" in *Personal Fictions: Stories by Munro, Wiebe, Thomas, & Blaise*, ed. Michael Ondaatje (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1977): 73–81.

Wiebe's efforts to interpret the Cree/cri have stretched from *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1976) to the remarkable collaboration between him and Yvonne Johnson, the great-great-granddaughter of Big Bear in *Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman* (1998), and it is this model of cross-cultural interaction that we have endeavoured to follow in our essays, where as white critics we enter into dialogue with native voices and those of ethnic minorities. Such voices do not come from the same place, of course, for they speak through very different discourses of cultural identity owing to their very different histories, though both natives and ethnic minorities share a similar condition of being othered by the dominant groups, as E.D. Blodgett describes this in his recent *Five-Part Invention: A Literary History of Literary History in Canada* (2003): "Although their relation to the history of Canada is ontologically and politically asymmetrical, they have shared concerns":[2] namely, a preoccupation with catastrophe, dispossession, and survival.

Our 'five-part invention' through this collection represents a collaborative effort by three members of the Schools of English and Modern Languages at the University of Reading, with contributions from two colleagues who are experts on anglophone films – one from Glasgow Caledonian University and one from Brock University, Ontario. Our approach is both cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, aiming at articulating Canadian differences through a comparison of anglophone and francophone cultures, illustrated by the literary and filmic treatment of some of the different groups which make up Canadian society – English-Canadian, Quebecker, Acadian, native, and the Jewish Canadian ethnic minority. The emphasis will be on the problematic representation of Canadianness, which, we argue, is closely bound up with different constructions of history and its legacies.

The history of Canada can be told in many ways: the history of the native Americans, the history of the French, of the British, and of the later immigrants whether Ukrainians, Poles, Italians, Greeks, Lebanese, or immigrants from South Asia and the Caribbean. For the British the history of Canada must be seen as largely a success story: the conquest of Canada from the French; the settlement of vast areas of uninhabited or thinly inhabited country; the defeat and pacification of the native peoples; the successful resistance to the overpowering neighbour to the south; the integration of numerous immigrants of different races

[2] E.D. Blodgett, *Five-Part Invention: A Literary History of Literary History in Canada* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003): 201.

and ethnicities into the Canadian mosaic. For the French it is quite different. For them it is a story of colonial adventure followed by defeat in 1758, and then years of passive and not so passive resistance to the victorious power during which they preserved their church, their language and their culture until they were able to assert themselves both politically and culturally as equal partners in a country which many of them now wish to leave. For Canada's indigenous peoples, history is a story of treachery, betrayal, victimization and destruction as their way of life succumbed to the advanced technology and greater numbers of the invaders. Clinging desperately to their traditions and in some cases to their language, only now are they re-establishing their identity and finding their voices, which nonetheless have to be expressed through a language which is alien to their deepest instincts. The immigrants divide into two groups: those who immerse themselves in their new country and try to find a voice which will be unaffected by their past; and those who cling to the traditions and history of their homelands which they seek to relate to their Canadian experience, while their Canadian-born children are frequently engaged in complex private negotiations between different cultural traditions as they construct new hybridized 'Canadian' identities. Canadian history can be told through a multitude of voices and this book aims to study some of the manifestations of this rich and varied culture.

Canada is officially a bilingual country, and that dual English–French language phenomenon has always been a fact of Canadian history. Now codified as the marker of Quebec sovereignty, French language in Quebec was enshrined in the nineteenth century by the British North America Act of 1867. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's bilingual–bicultural policies of the 1960s and his introduction of the first Multicultural Policy in 1971 reflected a demographic and cultural reality and a political will which became the basis for the multiculturalism of the late 1980s, codified into the Multiculturalism Act of 1988. Official acts and their attendant social and economic policies have redefined official discourses of nationhood, contextualizing white colonial heritage narratives in a broader recognition of Canada's history which is in the process of radically changing the face of Canadian culture. Contemporary multicultural complexities are, however, expressed within a bilingual framework: the majority of Canadian writers publish in English or French, whatever their linguistic background, for it is the two official languages that command the large

readerships in which most publishers in Canada are interested.[3] In this book, while the essays will be in English, we believe that the English/ French language difference is emblematic of Canadian difference. Equal attention will be paid to literary texts and to films in both languages.

The telling of Canadian history and the quest for – or the questioning of – inheritance always carries an ideological weighting and a subjective charge, for, as Margaret Atwood remarked of historical fiction in English Canada, "By taking a long hard look backwards, we place ourselves."[4] Victor-Levy Beaulieu's comment on the importance of folklore to Quebec writers offers a parallel: "It is in those things that you recognise yourself, and when you recognise yourself, you can go forward, you can do something else."[5] Through that backward look both writers link themselves with the past that they as inheritors have reconstructed. However, it seems that history differs according to the language in which it is told, for anglophone and francophone speakers have different frames of cultural reference – different heroes and villains, differing significant events. Such specificities of cultural and national identity suggest that there are different symbolic landscapes to be represented in their literatures. Novelists may use history in their re-evaluation of cultural myths, but are these myths the same in English and French Canada? It would seem not, and in many ways this book seeks to continue the dialogue between anglophone and francophone perspectives engaged in by Atwood and Beaulieu in the mid-1990s, amplified through several critics' voices and across the two most popular art forms: novels and films. The essays will explore these differences, which are focused most precisely in Maritime fiction and film, where regionalism demonstrably offers no guarantee of any unified perspective across different linguistic groups who speak from very different stores of cultural memory. These differences of perspective are multiplied in the case of First Nations writers, while versions of immigrant experience in post-World War II Montreal and Toronto represent yet another, far more cosmopolitan view of history. We have chosen examples by Jewish Canadians here. Whose history is being

[3] Despite the dominance of English and French, there continue to be publications in minority languages – newspapers, periodicals, books, as well as Heritage Language programmes in some provinces, while federal institutions like Canada Post provide services in a wide variety of non-official languages.

[4] Margaret Atwood, *In Search of Alias Grace* (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1997): 27.

[5] Margaret Atwood & Victor-Levy Beaulieu, *Two Solicitudes: Conversations*, tr. Phyllis Aronoff & Howard Scott (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998): 224.

told? Jewish or Canadian? And how to tell European Jewish history to Jews born and brought up in Canada?

Is it possible to speak about 'Canadian History', or is the concept, like 'Canadian Identity', always in the plural? Arguably so, for the telling of history is marked not only by linguistic difference but also by the awareness of cultural and ethnic differences which make up the collective, often contradictory histories of Canada. And what, after all, is the purpose of telling history if not to recognize and to try to understand the complexities within present-day lived experience? To return to the dialogue between Beaulieu and Atwood about the purpose of stories being unburied/retold:

> I don't think the past is preferable to the present. I do think that the present is often uninhabitable because we've forgotten the past, because we don't use it as a lever to make the present conform more to our desires, needs, and dreams.[6]

And:

> The past no longer belongs only to those who lived in it; the past belongs to those who claim it, and are willing to explore it, and to infuse it with meaning for those alive today. The past belongs to us, because we are the ones who need it.[7]

If these two statements about history and literature are put beside the statement made by Pierre Perrault, Quebec poet and film director, it is possible to highlight similarities and differences not only between genres, but between cultures as well: "It is beyond dispute that countries are born within the memory and that memory does not lack imagination."[8] Canada is still forging its identity and is increasingly recognizing the complexity of its past and the memory of that past. The multiple perceptions of history, sometimes divergent, sometimes parallel, are evoked and fixed through articulation.

Film articulation and expression present different challenges from novels, though Canadian film production like Canadian fiction is remarkable for its diversity of narrative genre – documentary, fiction and docu-fiction being three genres that are explored by many of the major directors as they test out one genre-based articulation of history against another. First, there are competing language and other cultural

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[6] Margaret Atwood & Victor-Levy Beaulieu, *Two Solicitudes*, 216.

[7] Margaret Atwood, *In Search*, 39.

[8] In Yves Lever, "Mémoire battante," *Relations* (December 1983): 339.

identities, the power of Hollywood against that of Canadian production, English versus French versus the multitude of other cultures resident in Canadian space. Secondly, there is the issue of the continuing tension between the federal government's cultural policies which control the budgets of the National Film Board versus the aspirations of individual directors. Jennifer VanderBurgh articulates the issues from a different perspective:

> The concept that cultural products produced in Canada will somehow be innately 'Canadian' in form and content first presupposes the existence of such things as inherently Canadian qualities that can be observed. Second, it presupposes a certain commonality to all Canadian artists and posits them as vessels through which these said 'inherently Canadian qualities' can naturally flow. Third, it also assumes the loosely Lacanian principle that Canadian consumers of culture are predisposed to identity and enjoy the semiotic and mythological systems of their nation, and further connotes that Canadians have fair access to their own cultural products.[9]

Given such divergent and complex underpinnings, the essay chapters in this book will focus, through comparative analysis of a range of themes explored from anglophone and francophone perspectives, on the emergence of cultural paradigms representing the competing voices within contemporary Canadian history. These themes are related to the perception of historical, national and personal identity – wilderness, history and violence, immigration, nomadism, dispossession. A frequent figure which cuts across this landscape is that of the 'outsider' who haunts both historical and contemporary representations of Canadianness. The themes we have chosen would seem to represent the experience of the peoples of Canada, faced with the multiplicities of their history and their various perceptions of it, while that ambiguous marginalized figure at the vanishing point of the picture might be read as an emblem of the attempt to facilitate understanding of who those 'others' are and where their voices are coming from.

Although the book is divided into two sections, 'Literature' and 'Film', the same themes are explored in both, following a pattern of pairings. Essays in the Literature section will be mainly on single texts, grouped so as to permit dialogue; the Film section, with its mirror structure, both supplements and amplifies this dialogue, extending

[9] Jennifer VanderBurgh, "'Identity' Crisis in Canadian Film," *Queen's University Film Studies* (1996) at http://www.filom.queensu.ca/Critical/VanderBurgh.html.

notions of Canadianness with its emphasis on voices traditionally 'othered' in Canadian history.

Stories of Wilderness and Settlement

The first two essays in each section are concerned with Canada's favourite cultural myth of the wilderness, that staple of the foundational fictions of nationhood based on colonial histories of settlement. Though it is often claimed that it is the English-Canadian imaginary which is oriented towards space and land possession in arguments constructed in the interests of an anglocentric Canadian identity,[10] there is an equally strong preoccupation with wilderness and settlement in francophone cultural narratives. In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, Margaret Atwood focused in the early 1970s on the spatial metaphor of wilderness, though it is W.H. New who has most thoroughly investigated the connection between images of land and nationhood in the Canadian imagination. He asks when, why and how people identify with a particular land and why so many writers (as well as film-makers and visual artists) have accepted the land as a comprehensive image of nationhood. But it is also an image that is infinitely open to reinterpretation in different ideological contexts, as these four essays show, where all but one of our chosen literary and filmic texts question that cultural framework and so position themselves as postmodern narratives which challenge the very traditions to which they allude. Alice Munro's Anglo-Canadian heritage narratives of Scots–Irish settlement in south-western Ontario begin as chronicles of regional history with a strongly patriarchal and imperialist base, though when history is recorded from a feminine perspective those certainties are undermined. Her stories become metafictional commentaries that emphasize nothing so much as the fictive nature of historical narrative and the endless possibilities for reconstructing history. Gabrielle Roy's story of francophone settlement in the northern Manitoba wilderness in the 1920s and 1930s also employs all the tropes of pioneer narratives, and like Munro she tells history from a woman's perspective. The novel, which has often been used as a French text in schools, belongs to the tradition of the rural idyll (set, like L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, in the Maritimes), though, as Peter Noble argues, that is a deceptively simple reading

[10] See W.H. New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence and Power in Canadian Writing* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997): 73–82.

which neglects both the struggles and hardships of pioneer life, especially for women, and the sociological interest of this account by a member of the francophone minority in a prairie community between the wars made up of ethnic minorities from all over Europe, together with native people and Métis. Roy, however, does not radically challenge the wilderness myth in the ways that both the film-makers do – Gilles Carle in his adaptation of Louis Hémon's novel, and Atom Egoyan in his contemporary cinematic transformation of the concept of wilderness into psychic space. Tony Simons argues that Carle's film, in its critique of Hémon's representation of Quebec history, expresses all the political scepticism of the Quebeckers in the 1980s towards a national heritage narrative. Through his rearrangement of narrative events and his contrasting perspectives on the wilderness from both white settlers' and natives' viewpoints, Carle tackles stereotypical images of the *habitants*, showing their unreality. By foregrounding the mythical and by stressing the cliché, Carle offers a revaluation of history and the way it has been falsely recorded. Atom Egoyan takes his deconstruction of the wilderness trope several stages further in *The Sweet Hereafter* by turning away from the historical dimensions of the cultural myth altogether, as David Hutchison's analysis shows. Set in a small town in British Columbia in the mid-1990s, Egoyan's film focuses on the aftermath of a school-bus accident in which several children are killed, although the incident retains something of 'death by landscape' in the circumstances of the crash in mid-winter when the bus plunges into a frozen lake. However, Egoyan overlays wilderness with a different imaginary landscape, that of Browning's poem *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, where the children all vanish into a mountainside. As the resonances between Canadian and European traditions blur, Egoyan's film constructs a metaphor of communal loss and betrayal which far exceeds the territorial dimension of Canadian heritage narratives.

History and Its Secrets: Criminality and Violence

The history of any nation, even a peaceable nation like Canada, contains episodes of violence, whether private or collective, which are often conveniently forgotten in official stories of nationhood. It is with the telling of scandalous secrets that the four essays in this section are concerned, and it is symptomatic that the three novels and one of the films are based on real historical events. Two of the novels by Atwood and Hébert focus on domestic violence in nineteenth-century Ontario

and Quebec, in stories by women who are both victims and agents of violence, while Hébert's other novel is concerned with the rape and murder of two teenage girls in 1930s Quebec. Focused on the nexus of love, lust and death, these are narratives where everything is split and doubled so that it is impossible to arrive at the truth: "few facts emerge as unequivocally known," as Atwood remarks.[11] Both authors offer detailed explorations of the specific social contexts within which these crimes occur, whether it be the sexual and social hypocrisy of anglophone Upper Canada or francophone Quebec, where even the most aristocratic French speakers live in a society ultimately dominated by the British conquerors and where women of all classes in both societies are at the mercy of patriarchal rule. The two male film narratives, set in Montreal and British Columbia, move beyond domes tic entrapment to offer very different accounts of violence and its relation to social history. *Jésus de Montréal* is not about crime at all but is cast as a tragedy, and it is, incidentally, the only text that makes an explicit political statement on violence in relation to national history.

This film features the staging of a Passion play, with all its attendant conflicts between religious beliefs and right of expression, in order to ask broader questions about the way historical events are interpreted and presented to the public. The man playing Christ is brought to trial for having destroyed film equipment that is perpetuating 'myths', and at the end dies on the cross in a violent scene caused when the forces of law and order attempt to calm the unrest of the spectators. The authorities are portrayed as having a hidden agenda, one that is predicated on retaining a safe, accepted vision of the past and rejecting any attempts to review history. *The Grey Fox* also challenges popular myths, though this time through the American traditional genre of the Western. This is a Canadian Western which insists not on emulating but on critiquing the genre and its version of Frontier history, and in reinterpreting in the Canadian context. It is based on the real life story of Bill Miner, an American stagecoach robber who after his release from gaol in 1901 crosses the border into British Columbia, where he becomes a train robber. He is not a hero in the brutal existential outlaw tradition, but a gentle, elderly non-violent outlaw who is more attractive on screen than the police. In every case, these novelists and film-makers take up the challenge of telling stories of deliberately marginalized or silenced figures whose 'little narratives' resist containment by the metanarratives of history.

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[11] Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace* (London: Virago, 1997): 541.

Maritime Gothic

Marginality - geographical, political, cultural, even historical - is the key concept explored in the essays on Maritime Gothic. As a narrative mode, the Gothic has always been obsessed with what has been repressed or hidden in the individual psyche or in the collective social memory, and with those moments of rupture and revelation when the borders between past and present are transgressed and "the ocean finally gives up her dead," to use a Maritime metaphor.[12] This borderline territory of myth and folklore, of the supernatural and the grotesque, is peculiarly suited to marginalized discourses of the displaced and dispossessed, none more so than those voices of Acadian culture, that francophone minority of Altantic Canada whose history is very different from that of the Quebeckers, focused as it is on *le grand dérangement*, the deportations of 1755, when a whole francophone white-settler community was sent into exile, only to return ten years later to find themselves without a homeland. The consequences of this loss have had wide social and economic repercussions which are reflected in the artistic productions of the Acadian Renaissance of the 1970s.[13] Antonine Maillet is the great chronicler of Acadian history and folklore in fiction, and extremely influential in the revival of its cultural and linguistic heritage, though her two novels discussed here (like Jacques Savoie's film *Massabielle*) fuse history and legend with twentieth-century social realism. They reflect the struggle for survival against harsh climatic and economic conditions suffered by the francophone minority during the Prohibition era of the 1930s, or more recently by the expropriation of lands by conglomerate mining companies. Once again the theme of expropriation and anglophone domination resounds against folk memories of two hundred years earlier. In every case, there are threatened communities and isolated figures, female as well as male, who engage in heroic resistance against the oppressors, while exhibiting behaviour as exaggerated and grotesque as that of figures out of folklore. These narratives, which focus on irrationality, desire and dream, recontextualize Gothic conventions in a bizarre form of realism which, while endeavouring to preserve a sense of distinctive cultural identity, seems to be afflicted by what E.D.

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[12] Ann-Marie MacDonald, *Fall On Your Knees* (London: Vintage, 1997): 565

[13] For further discussion of Acadia, its historical and political background, and the fiction of Antonine Maillet, see essay in *Tricks with a Glass: Writing Ethnicity in Canada*, ed. Rocío G. Davis & Rosalía Baena (Cross / Cultures 46; Amsterdam & Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 2000): 111–48.

Blodgett has described as a "'difficulty of being' that all the ethnic communities that constitute the county suffer from."[14] Certainly *Fall On Your Knees* and *Margaret's Museum*, both set in Cape Breton, share many of the same characteristics: not only the same haunted landscapes but also similar conditions of poverty in a coal-mining culture in decline since the early twentieth century and exacerbated by the Depression and emigration. Interestingly, there is a similar resistance to narratives of imperialism from these outlying anglophone communities to what we see in the francophone communities. The heroic figures of resistance are often women who sometimes engage, like Crache à Pic, in physical confrontation, but more often in storytelling, reconstructing family histories or establishing a bizarre museum of a family's pickled body parts, in order to put back together "something that's missing, a part of the truth, part of themselves."[15] Like the French texts, they employ Gothic conventions, frequently in a parodic form of gallows humour, though the impulse behind these 'resurrection narratives' is, unlike their French counterparts, predominantly elegiac.[16]

History and Dispossession: First Nations Writers

The comparative essays on francophone and anglophone Native writing and films examine the differences between male and female approaches to the histories of their peoples in order to bring out the multiplicity of voices and the fact that for the native peoples there is not one history but many. Indigenous cultural productions since the 1970s have contributed significantly to the postcolonial discourse of Canadianness through the voices of those othered and dispossessed by the historical facts of European colonization. For Bernard Assiniwi, part-Cree, part-Algonquin, and one of the few Native writers in French, history and legend are of major importance as he tells a tragic story of cultural clashes between whites and natives in the 1870s, when loggers and traders were opening up northern Ontario and Quebec to settlement. His narrative, which reads as a written form of native oral traditions of storytelling, is focused on the accidental cut-

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[14] E.D. Blodgett, *Five-Part Invention: A History of Literary History in Canada*, 177.

[15] Eve Tihanyi, "Jane Eyre in a Cape Breton Attic," *Books in Canada* 25.8 (November 1996): 21–24

[16] See also Lesley Choyce, ed. *Atlantica: Stories from the Maritimes and Newfoundland* (Fredericton, P.E.I.: Goose Lane, 2001): 7–10.

ting-off of a Native man's hand by an Englishman which functions as a powerful symbol of the tragic fate of Algonquins in the wilderness territory that was their home. Asssiniwi emphasizes history as catastrophe, whereas Tomson Highway's emphasis is on surviving that history by reinventing a native cultural identity in the contemporary urbanized world. A Cree from northern Manitoba who is also fluent in English and French, Highway, in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, writes a Cree version of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* about two artist brothers, one a musician and the other a ballet dancer, who are educated at a Roman Catholic residential school before finding their vocations. The narrative moves continually between Native and white cultures, exploring the destabilizing effects of this clash on the young men's lives, each of whom has a dual identity as a Cree artist classically trained in a white milieu. The story ends with the death from AIDS of one brother, now an international ballet star. While Highway's narrative, unlike Assiniwi's, is not an outright rejection of the dominant culture, it offers a devastating critique of white racism in its social effects and of the Roman Catholic church. However, unlike many First Nations texts, this novel moves through tragedy to celebration and the promise of the survival of Native culture, albeit in a hybridized form, signalled by the presence of the ambiguous Native 'trickster' hero, transformed here into the figure of a white carnival queen. Highway's rather camp humour contrasts with representations of Native experience in the two films discussed: in Alanis Obomawin's documentary of the Oka Crisis of the 1990s and in *Map of the Human Heart*, a multinational co-production directed by a New Zealander, which tells the story of Native disinheritance through a mixed-race Inuit protagonist. Obomsawin is a Native film-maker of Abenaki descent who works in English and French, and her documentary was released in both languages in 1993. Dealing with the confrontation between Mohawk warriors and the Canadian armed forces at Kanehsatake in Quebec, the film is explicitly concerned with the power politics of colonial history and the historical theme of Native dispossession. Her documentary shows the 'facts', while foregrounding the politics of media interpretation for a mass audience, arguing that there are "a thousand stories to Kanehsatake," and not only the official version shown by the CBC. It is a narrative of the dispossessed not unlike Maillet's Acadian stories of the struggle of minority groups against governmental and legal oppression, for this is storytelling as resistance in a continuing narrative of Native dispossession and marginalization. *Map of the Human Heart* offers a parallel narrative of history through

the life story of a tragic figure, Avik, who is the son of an Inuit mother and a white trader, and whose encounters with white culture bring about extraordinary changes in his life and ultimately his destruction. The film is epic in its scope as it moves from the high Arctic to London and Dresden where Avik becomes an RAF pilot during the Second World War, but it is also a tragic love story between Avik and a young Métis woman, illustrating the struggles of two Canadians of mixed race to come to terms with their private and collective histories. The story ends with Avik alone and freezing to death on an ice floe in his home place, as his history represents that of a Native culture being invaded and unsettled, then ignored in the larger Canadian context. A different version of the Inuit experience is represented in *Atanarjuat* (2000), the first full-length Inuit fiction film, which turns back to the legends of precolonial history in an unpolluted Arctic space. Made in the newly independent First Nations territory of Nunavut, this film speaks out of the optimism of a particular historical moment in an attempt to revise the historical narrative of catastrophe to turn it into a story of survival, as its director has explained: "to preserve and enhance Inuit culture and language and to create jobs and needed economic development in Igloolik and Nunavut."[17]

Nomadism and History

We have chosen in the last group of essays to focus on novels and films treating the issue of Jewishness as a significant theme in Canada's multicultural history, highlighting conflicts over issues of immigrancy, ethnicity, cultural and personal identities. The two novels and the francophone film *Anne Trister* are very much stories of nomadic subjects by women who are themselves either European Jewish immigrants or the children of Jewish immigrants to Canada. Régine Robin was born and brought up in Paris and now lives in Montreal, like Léa Pool, who is also a francophone immigrant from Switzerland; Anne Michaels was born, and still lives, in Toronto. The main theme of Robin's novel *La Québécoite* is the difficulty experienced by a European ethnic-minority immigrant settling in a North American society which is French speaking though culturally alien to her; the stream-of-consciousness novel is pervaded by the protagonist's memories of Paris as a place elsewhere and by a strong sense of European Jewish history, as

[17] See http://atanarjuat.com/about isuma/index.html for information on the work of Zacharias Kunuk, director of *Atanarjuat*.

she struggles to convey to her young Canadian-Jewish students the history and suffering of their people, particularly in eastern Europe where her origins are. The narrator is a split self, continually reinventing her identity but, unable to settle, finally leaving Montreal to return to Paris. Michaels' novel is also a study of the nomadic consciousness of traumatized European Jewish immigrants to Canada after the Second World War, those 'fugitives' forever in flight from memories of the Holocaust and the weight of the centuries of persecution and exile that make up Jewish history. In this two-part novel, with its variations on a theme across two generations, Michaels investigates the enigma of 'home' for a Polish-Jewish survivor whose village has been wiped off the map, and who all his life moves restlessly between Canada and Greece (but never back to Poland), working across multiple languages as a poet and translator in his quest to come to terms with the tragic losses of his family and community history. This is a novel which, like *La Québécoite*, is full of journeys and maps where places in the present are overlaid with maps of other places in the past, always suggesting the illusory quality of boundaries. The film *Anne Trister* uses a similar device of the *trompe l'œil* to tell the story of a young Jewish female artist's search for a new identity when she emigrates from Switzerland to Montreal. However, Anne has chosen a condition of perpetual 'otherness', following a nomadic existence that eludes any national or gendered categorization, and at the end of the film she leaves Canada, like the protagonists of Robin's and Michaels' novels, for somewhere else. In total contrast to these, Ted Kotcheff's film of Mordecai Richler's novel *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* presents a Canadian-born Jewish working-class hero from St Urbain Street, Montreal – rather, an anti-hero, for in this film the tragic epic of Jewish persecution and diaspora is displaced into social satire on post-war North American capitalist values and consumerism. Indeed, as Scott Henderson remarks in his analysis, this film, made in 1973 in the brief heyday of Canadian tax-free film-making, could have been one of Duddy's own get-rich-quick schemes which handsomely paid off with international success. Certainly Duddy belongs to an immigrant Jewish subculture in the Montreal of the late 1940s and 1950s, trapped in a particular historical period just as he is trapped between Roman Catholic francophone culture and the mainly Scottish WASP aristocracy of Westmount. The Montreal Jewish ethnic minority is threatened with cultural disintegration, though the major forces of oppression are now the business success ethic and Duddy's ruthless ambition to make money and become a 'somebody'. Duddy continually reinvents him-

self, but, unlike Anne Trister, not in order to remain 'other' but to belong, for this film is about identity, both personal and cultural. Duddy, though he never leaves Montreal, shares the isolation of the immigrant and the exile, for ironically material success costs him his identity through his loss of love and self-respect. In *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, Jewish traditions are reduced to parody and Jewish history is displaced by fantasies of New World success. None of this spells the end of history or of cultural memory, of course – rather, what results is their distortion into monstrous shapes by modern mythologies, for this is history in process, a contemporary version of stories of New World settlement.

The range of voices, images and locations discussed in these novels and films testifies to the vitality of personal and collective memories, which are always in the plural. There is a continuous negotiation between present and past which structures and restructures the imagining of what being Canadian means.

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