BARBARA KORTE

Introduction to Anglo-Canadian Poetry

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an army chaplain on the Union side. Available as a Puffin Classic, the 303 page novel is divided into 23 chapters dealing with various episodes in the girls' lives that year. Purchasable on audio cassette in unabridged form from Audio Book Contractors, it was also produced as a Hollywood film in 1933 with Katherine Hepburn in the role of Jo, and is available on video.

2. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1875) by Mark Twain introduced the popular and enduring fictional bad boy character. Noted for its exceptionally fine literary style, the novel relates the daily adventures of the carefree and fun-loving Tom Sawyer, who simply cannot resist a good prank or adventure. Available as an unabridged audio cassette from Jimcin Recordings, the book was filmed no fewer than 4 different times, and the most recent version made in 1973 is purchasable commercially on video.

3. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is a sequel to *Tom Sawyer*, continuing the adventures this time of Tom Sawyer's friend Huck Finn, who leaves his drunken father. He meets the escaped slave Jim and they start a journey down the Mississippi filled with adventure, cruelty, and new insights. Distributed by Recorded Books, it is available unabridged on 7 audio cassettes. Made into a musical in 1974, the film is obtainable commercially on video.

4. Jack London's *Call of the Wild* (1900) is considered one of the best animal stories ever written. The short novel, 89 pages divided into 7 chapters, recounts the saga of Buck, a half St. Bernard and half Scotch shepherd, who having been stolen from an estate in the Santa Clara valley in California has to gradually adapt to an increasingly brutal existence among shed dogs in Canada where he finally runs off to join a pack of wolves. Available as an audio cassette from the Listen Library, it was also made into a film in 1972 which is available commercially and can be borrowed from the *Amerika Haus*, Köln.

5. E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) is a wonderful fable fantasy about the young pig Wilbur who is being fattened for slaughter, and his friend Charlotte, a spider, who figures out a way to keep her friend from becoming someone's breakfast bacon. A book of 22 very short 4—5 page chapters, it is unfortunately not available on audio cassette, but was made into a 94 minute animated musical film in 1972 which is commercially available on video.

6. Scott O'Dell's Newbery Medal winning novel *Island of the Blue Dolphin* (1961) is based on the true story of 12-year-old Karna who escaped the hands of hunters on her home island off the coast of California, only to have to spend 18 years totally alone there fending for herself. Made into a film in 1964, it is available commercially on video, but unfortunately as yet not on audio cassette.

7. William Armstrong's *Sounder* (1969) is the story of a Black family in the South between 1860 and 1900. Also a Newbery Medal winner, the book tells the very moving story of a Black man who is arrested for stealing food for his family. During his long and harsh imprisonment his family and his faithful hunting dog await his return which takes too long. After many years he comes home a broken man. Available from Random on audio cassette, it was also made into a 105-minute film in 1972 which is available commercially on video.

8. Robert O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh* (1975) another Newbery Medal winner, is a science fiction fantasy about a field mouse's attempt to save her son and her inadvertent discovery of a group of rats with superior mental abilities who have developed a very humane and social community which has to be relocated before it is destroyed by humans. Available as an audio cassette from Random, it was also made into an animated 90-minute film.

9. Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1980) is a highly dramatic example of the social consciousness novel for young readers. Told from the point of view of the young narrator, Cassie, it describes one year in the life of her family, a modest land-owning Black family in Mississippi. In this one year she learns what it means to be Black in Mississippi. Available as an audio cassette from Random, a 110-minute television film based on this Newbery Medal winner was produced in 1978.

Barbara Korte

Introduction to Anglo-Canadian Poetry[1]

The first Anglo-Canadian poets to receive attention outside their own country emerged a century ago. This is a short period compared to the history of British poetry, but it was long enough to produce a considerable body of verse. Poetry was the most flourishing branch of Canadian literature until 1960 and, in the following decade, played the lead in the literary revival sparked by a new national consciousness. Today, in quantity as well as quality, poetry rivals the novels and short stories that have recently made Canadian literature known to an international audience.

A short introduction to Canadian poetry cannot do justice to its variety or the expressive range of individual artists. After a brief survey of important landmarks of the genre, this article will therefore concentrate on a number of specific texts that are suitable for treatment in various thematic contexts of *Sekundarstufe II*.

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1. Survey of Anglo-Canadian Poetry

Anglo-Canadian poetry is rooted in the country's colonial past, but the bulk of settlement poetry up to the 1880s is of historical rather than literary interest. Oliver Goldsmith's narrative poem »The Rising Village« (1825, revised in 1837) is the earliest example of Canadian verse to which literary historians have devoted serious attention. In part, this interest is motivated by the existence of a direct Old World counterpart to which this piece of colonial literature frequently and explicitly alludes. The Canadian Goldsmith was a great-nephew of the Irish novelist, dramatist and poet Oliver Goldsmith, who, in 1770, wrote »The Deserted Village«. Sections from the two »Village« poems might be used to illustrate the two sides of the colonial experience: the social conditions in England which caused emigration and the hopes and hardships of the immigrants.

The elder Goldsmith's poem deplores the devastating effects of the British agricultural revolution, which released a wave of emigration to North America. »The Deserted Village« ends with the picture of a »melancholy band« waiting to be shipped across the ocean. »The Rising Village« continues the story of these emigrants, who, in Canada, are transformed into a »hardy band«. Their toils in taming the wilderness are, however, rewarded with the prospect of a bright colonial future. The following lines from the poem's beginning are typical of 19th century Canadian settlement poetry:

What dire distress awaits the hardy bands,
That venture first on bleak and desert lands.
How great the pain, the danger, and the toil,
Which mark the first rude culture of the soil.
When, looking round, the lonely settler sees
His home amid a wilderness of trees;
How sinks his heart in those deep solitudes,
Where not a voice upon his ears intrudes ...
(NOB, lines 56—63)

»The Rising Village« ends with a pledge of allegiance to the glorious mother country whose power protects the new colony. Standards of the old country pervade the poem in various respects. It is indebted to established forms and formulas of British models and, like colonial literature in general, nurtures the idea that the new country must and can be civilized — despite its fundamental difference from the gentle climes of the old world. As we shall see, later Canadian poetry presents a markedly changed view of the country's ›civilizability‹.

A growing sense of nationalism is characteristic of the years leading up to and following the Confederation of 1867, which established Canada as a political unit. The Confederation gave its name to the first Canadian school of literature, the Confederation Poets. Four poets, who were linked by ties of family or friendship, are the chief members of this group: Charles G. D. Roberts, Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman and Duncan Campbell Scott. Some literary histories include their contemporaries, Wilfred Campbell and Isabella Valancy Crawford. The label ›Confederation Poets‹ is a misnomer in so far as these poets played no role in the constitution of the new political entity; all of them were born around 1860 and published their first works during the 1880s and 90s. However, they wrote at a time which, in its attention to the Canadianness of Canada, was marked by the confederational spirit. Their poems on ›Canadian subjects‹ — the country's landscape and its native Indian population — constitute the part of their output which is still appreciated today.

Around the 1920s a new kind of poetry began to emerge in Canada under the influence of British and American modernism. The first anthology of modern Canadian verse, *New Provinces*, appeared in 1936. It was compiled by two of the foremost exponents of modernism in Canada, F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith. *New Provinces* contains works by six poets whom the editors perceived as distinctly different from the former generation of poets who had »painted the native maple«[2] and looked for their models in Romantic and Victorian English poetry. The editors included not only work of their own but also of Robert Finch, Leo Kennedy, A.M. Klein and E.J. Pratt. Apart from Pratt, the poets around the editors of *New Provinces* constitute the first and highly influential school of Canadian modernism, which is nowadays referred to as the ›Montreal Movement‹.

As Margaret Atwood observes in the introduction to her *New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse*, it is difficult from the 30s onward »to confine poets to any neat time slots. Many of them remain stubbornly alive, inconveniently turning out new work« (p.xxxv). The 40s and 50s saw an »astonishing outburst of poetic activity« (ibid.) which increased further during the cultural explosion of the 60s. Amongst the most important poetic voices of the second half of our century are Earle Birney, Douglas LePan, Dorothy Livesay, Irving Layton, Margaret Avison, Al Purdy, Eli Mandel, James Reaney, Leonard Cohen (who, in Europe, is best known as a singer-songwriter), and the omnipresent Margaret Atwood.

2. Canadian Poetry in the German Classroom

The thematic range of Canadian poetry is as wide as that of any other national literature — a fact easily overseen if one is confronted with the mountain of

books and articles concerned with ›what is Canadian in Canadian literature‹. As the poet Ralph Gustafson has said; »an eskimo eating maple syrup on snowshoes is not a good Canadian poem[3]«. The presentation of many a theme suggested for English in the German classroom can be enriched by a selection of good Canadian poems, be it life in cities,[4] the experience of war,[5] or adolescence. It is an additional advantage that Canadian literature often reflects a specifically Canadian experience and thus introduces a perspective that is a little different from the familiar English or American one. Glimpses of the social, historical, political and natural conditions of Canada can thus be conveyed even if Canadian poems are treated outside a unit entirely focused on Canada[6].

2.1 Man and Nature

Candian verse offers a wealth of texts on man's relationship with his natural environment. The Canadian experience of landscape is a manifold one: the Great Lakes, the wilderness of northern Ontario and Quebec, the vast prairies, the West Coast and the arctic circle. The poets' responses to all these environments are mani-facetted — Canadian poets, too, have described nature as benign, peaceful and grand or as faced with the ravages of pollution and destruction. More frequently, however, the country's vastness and solitude has been perceived as overwhelming, intimidating and even horrifying: »to enter Canada is a matter of being silently swallowed by an alien continent. ... One wonders if any other national consciousness has had so large an amount of the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly undigested, so built into it«.[7] Canadian verse of all periods conveys a distinctive experience of nature as a threat to man's physical and mental existence. This becomes obvious when Canadian nature poems are compared to British or American counterparts.

The Confederation poets and their contemporaries were indebted to the themes, forms and diction of British poetry. Like the Romantics, they regarded communion with nature as a prime source of inspiration, consolation, and escape. However, the desolate landscapes evoked in some of their poems contrast notably with the perception of nature in some classic examples of Romantic poetry, for example Wordsworth's »I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud« or Keats' »To Autumn«. Wilfred Campbell's »The Winter Lakes« (NOB, p. 40) depicts »a world of death far to the northward lying«:

Lands that loom like spectres, whited regions of winter,
Wastes of desolate woods, deserts of water and shore:
A world of winter and death, within these regions who enter,
Lost to summer and life, go to return no more[8].

The emptiness of the Canadian landscape, which arouses existential fears, is a topos of Canadian poetry. The last lines of Anne Marriott's »Prairie Graveyard« (NOB, pp. 164f.) epitomize this loneliness: »stiff with silence, lone/in the centre of the huge lone land and sky«. But the Canadian landscape poses not only a psychological threat. In the arctic climate of the north, life is almost impossible. One might doubt that ›survival‹ is the archetypal Canadian theme that Atwood claims it to be[9], but it is conspicuous in poetry about the north. Northern Canada is »a country/where a man can die/simply from being/caught outside«[10]. Al Purdy's «Country North of Belleville« (NOB, pp. 212f.) is a »country of defeat«; his »Trees at the Arctic Circle« (PCA, pp. 12f.) have been crippled by their hostile environment: »They are 18 inches long/or even less/crawling under rocks/grovelling among the lichens/bending and curling to escape«. A.J.M. Smith's »The Lonely Land« (NOB, pp. 98f.) acknowledges the rugged beauty of the north, but this beauty, like Purdy's trees, bears the marks of struggle: »This is the beauty/of strength/broken by strength/and still strong«. A fearful response to nature is also the distinguishing mark of many Canadian immigration poems. Early immigrants to Canada came for reasons and with hopes comparable to those of their brothers in the south; however, more frequently than the U.S. immigrants, the Canadian settlers felt oppressed by the natural environment. The American myth of the moving frontier implies the idea of a conquerable country. According to Northrop Frye, the national myth of Canada is the exact opposite, not expansion but delimitation — man shields himself against an overpowering environment, develops a »garrison mentality«[11]. The Canadian pioneer does not conquer his country but tries to survive, physically as well as mentally.

The psychological dimension of the Canadian pioneer experience has been exploited in a number of modern poems; one of the best-known is Atwood's »Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer« (NCA, pp. 233—236)[12]:

He stood, a point
on a sheet of green paper
proclaiming himself the centre,

with no walls, no borders
anywhere; the sky no height
above him, totally unenclosed
and shouted:

Let me out! ...

Disorientation is the dominant impression this poem conveys. Man is a tiny »point« in a vast landscape which he cannot grasp. The pioneer tries to map the country (the map is implied by the »sheet of green

paper«), but the country refuses to be compartmentalized; all delimitations that could provide orientation are negated: »no walls, no borders«, »no height«, »unenclosed«. As a result of his failure to impose limits on boundlessness, the pioneer suffers from a paradoxical mixture of disorientation and claustrophobia (»Let me out!«) which eventually drives him insane. The same experience is investigated in Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970), a cycle of poems based on the autobiographical account of a mid-19th-century pioneer woman, Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852). As soon as Atwood's Moodie arrives in Canada, she, too, loses her orientation. Outside the safe territory of »civilized distinctions«, she finds herself in a »large darkness«, her »own ignorance«:

I have not come out yet
My brain gropes nervous
tentacles in the night, sends out
fears hairy as bears ...
I need wolf's eyes to see
the truth ... (»Further Arrivals«, PCC, p. 99)

In her attempt to understand the foreign country, Mrs Moodie turns into an animal; she needs »tentacles« and »wolf's eyes« to penetrate the dark: man cannot civilize the wilderness but is transformed into a part of it. At the end of the cycle, Mrs Moodie's transformation is complete; her identity has entirely merged with the spirit of the wilderness.

Self and landscape frequently merge in modern Canadian poetry. One of A.M. Klein's most famous poems is titled »Portrait of the Poet as Landscape« (NOB); in Atwood's »Journey into the Interior« (PCC), the exploration of the country is at the same time an exploration of the speaker's self. And in Gwendolyn MacEwan's »Dark Pines Under Water« (NOB), the country is presented as a mirror in which the self gets lost:

This land like a mirror turns you inward
And you become a forest in a furtive lake;
The dark pines of your mind reach downward,
You dream in the green of your time,
Your memory is a row of sinking pines ...

The sense expressed in all of these poems of being determined and oppressed by the country may be regarded as an essentially Canadian experience.

However, like all urban and industrial nations, Canada has transformed the landscape and exploited the country's natural resources. Many modern Canadian poems emphasize this deplorable side of the contemporary man-nature relationship. Dorothy Livesay's »Pioneer«, for example, »has ravaged earth/Of her last stone, her last, most stubborn tree«[13]. Similarly, Earle Birneys »Transcontinental« pictures Canada as a »great green girl grown sick/with man«[14]. Alden Nowlan's *»The Bull Moose« (NOB, p. 299) presents a haunting image of how modern man has perverted God's command to subdue the earth and its creatures. A moose, one of Canada's indigenous animals, loses its way into modern civilization, where domesticated animals have replaced the native fauna:

Too tired to turn or, perhaps, aware
there was no place left to go, he stood with the cattle.
They, scenting the musk of death, seeing his great head
like the ritual mask of a blood god, moved to the other end
of the field and waited.

The moose's primeval strength is stressed by the comparison of his head to an Indian ritual mask. Like an Indian shaman, he is out of place in modern society. The cattle, scenting the moose's wildness, stand back, but man no longer respects the animal's dignity: the moose is mistreated and finally killed. An allusion to Christ's Passion — the animal wears a crown of thorns — emphasizes its victimization:

And the bull moose let them stroke his thick-ravaged flanks,
let them pry open his jaws with bottles, let a giggling girl
plant a little purple cap
of thistles on his head.

The white man's irresponsible destruction of the natural environment contrasts with the native peoples' attitude. Songs of the Indians and Eskimos (who refer to themselves as the Inuit) express a deep respect for the sacredness of creation. The native hunter does not kill for sport, but for his living, and he thanks God for the food he provides. The first quotation is from an Inuit prayer, the second from an Indian song of thanksgiving for a salmon catch:

Here I stand
Humble, with outstretched arms,
For the spirit of the air
Lets glorious food sink down to me.
Here I stand
Surrounded with great joy.
For a caribou bull with high antlers
Recklessly exposed his flanks to me ...[15]

O Kia-Kunae, praise!
Thou hast opened thy hand among the stars,
And sprinkled the sea with food;
The catch is great; thy children will live.
See, on the roofs of the villages, the red meat drying;
Another year thou hast encompassed us with life.
Praise! Praise! Kunae! ...[16]

In contrast to the fear expressed in many examples of White-Canadian poetry, the dominant response to nature in native songs is one of joy. The following example, »Ecstasy«, is by a female Inuit shaman, Uvavnuk:

The great sea
Moves me!
The great sea
Sets me adrift!
It moves me

Like algae on stones
In running brook water.
The vault of heaven
Moves me!
The mighty weather
Storms through my soul.
It tears me with it
And I tremble with joy.[17]

Here, too, the human being is determined, »moved« by nature, but the native experience of this determination is not a negative one. Native man lives in a natural communion with his environment, while the white settler approaches it with a set of »civilized« and inappropriate distinctions.

2.2 Ethnic Minorities

The Canadian constitution lists three aboriginal peoples whose status can be compared with that of the Indians in the U.S.[18]: Inuit, Indians and the Métis, who are offspring of an Indian-white union. The history and contemporary status of the Indians in Canada deviates in several respects from that of the Indians south of the border. But in Canada, too, the Indian population (like the other native peoples) has been relegated to the outer fringe of an affluent white society. As in the U.S., Indians live on reservations (the Canadian term is reserves), under the control of the state and largely dependent on its welfare.

Until a few decades ago, the only well-known Canadian poet with a native background was a contemporary of the Confederation poets, Pauline Johnson. The daughter of a Mohawk father and an Englishwoman was born in a reserve but received a white education. Johnson, who was a celebrity in her own time, used native material and donned a native dress when she gave recitals of her Indian poems. But her poetry, which addressed a white audience, frequently presents Indian themes in a picturesque manner and is rooted in British poetic traditions. The Indian poems of her white contemporary, Duncan Campbell Scott present a less sentimental view of Indian life. For more than 50 years, Scott was employed in the Department of Indian Affairs and was thus familiar with the Indians' living conditions and problems. *»The Forsaken« and »On the Way to the Mission« (NOB) are the most famous of his Indian poems. In the latter poem, white men shoot an Indian for what they believe is a bundle of furs. This bundle, however, is the body of his wife, whom he wants to be buried in a Christian graveyard. The Indian on his way to the mission is a practising Christian, in obvious contrast to the white »servants of greed«. Scott's sympathies are with the Indian. However, the poet's vision is limited by his own Christian belief: the fact that the Indians have been missionized in the first place is not recognized as an encroachment on their original way of life[19].

Modern non-native poetry finds stronger words of accusation for the white man's treatment of the aboriginal population. Three years after World War II, A.M. Klein, a Jewish poet, likened an Indian reservation to a Jewish ghetto, thus linking the fate of the native Americans to a genocide which had recently shaken the world:

This is a grassy ghetto, and no home.
And these are fauna in a museum kept.
The better hunters have prevailed. The game,
losing its blood, now makes these grounds its crypt.
The animals pale, the shine of the fur is lost,
bleached are their living bones. About them watch
as through a mist, the pious prosperous ghosts.
(»Indian Reservation: Caughnawaga«, NOB, pp. 128f.)

As in Scott's poem, the Indian is presented as the white man's victim. Klein emphasizes this victimization with imagery closely linked to Indian life. Hunting constituted an essential element of traditional Indian life and culture; but in Klein's poem, the Indian hunters have become the hunted game and have been almost exterminated by »the better hunters«. The presentation of the Indians as an extinct people is stressed by the second complex of imagery used in these lines. The Indians in the reserve are not physically dead, but they are only the »living bones«, the remnants of a people whose culture and way of life are doomed. The Indians' place is in a »museum«; they are displayed like stuffed, bloodless animals in a department of natural history — their fur has lost its shine.

However, the 60s saw a growing awareness of Indian identity and the native Indian right to self-government. Duke Redbird and Dan George are two of the best-known representatives of Indian protest literature in Canada. Redbird's »I am the Redman« expresses a renewed pride in being »red« that goes hand in hand with a rejection of what the white man's culture believes it has to offer:

I am the Redman
Son of the earth, water and sky
What use have I of silk and velvet
What use have I of nylon and plastic
What use have I of your religion
Think you these be holy and sacred
That I should kneel in awe.
I am the Redman
I look at you White Brother
And I ask you
Save not me from sin and evil
Save yourself[20].

Being a child of nature no longer means being primitive; the »Redman« is no longer fooled by the white colonizer's trinkets and religion. Rather, the ›natural‹ Indian way of life appears as the superior one, and it is

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the white man who has to be saved. However, he has to save himself — in contrast to the white man, the »Redman« has no vocation to be a missionary.

Dan George's »No Longer« strikes a mournful rather than aggressive note in its accusation of the white oppressor. As in Redbird's poem, the structural principle of the poem is that of repetition and enumeration. But while Redbird enumerates white ›achievements‹, Dan George lists what is lost of Indian values and customs:

No longer
  can I give you a handful of berries as a gift,
no longer
  are the roots I dig used as medicine,
no longer
  can I sing a song to please the salmon,
no longer
  does the pipe I smoke make others sit
  with me in friendship,
no longer
  does anyone want to walk with me to the
  blue mountains to pray,
no longer
  does the deer trust my footsteps ...[21]

Like Duke Redbird, Dan George presents a harmonious relationship of man and nature as the quintessence of Indian life. But while Redbird's poem is assertive, Dan George's is pessimistic in its outlook: the long list of »no longers« implies that the traditional Indian way of life is irretrievably lost.

The Inuit way of life differs significantly from that of the Indian population. As inhabitants of the circumpolar region, the Inuit have been a lesser obstacle to white expansion than the Indians and Métis, at least during the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were not expelled from their original territories or forced to live in reserves. However, their rights have also been severely restricted under the pretext of white ›protection‹, and their traditional lifestyle has been encroached upon by white civilization and technology. Of non-native Canadian poets, Al Purdy is the foremost speaker for the indigenous peoples of the North[22]. The following poem, »Eskimo Hunter (New Style)«, shows how old Inuit traditions have been superseded by a modern, white style of hunting:

In terylene shirt and suspenders
sun glasses and binoculars
Peterborough boat and Evinrude motor
Remington rifle with a telescope sight
making hot tea on an Coleman stove
scanning the sea and shore for anything
that moves and lives and breathes
and so betrays itself
one way or another
All we need in the line of further equipment
is a sexy blonde in a bikini
trailing her hand thru the sunlit water ...[23]

The hunter in this poem is equipped with everything a modern sports store has to offer; hunting is no longer essential for survival but has degenerated into a macho pastime (the »sexy blonde« stresses this impression). The high tech killer in Purdy's poem contrasts notably with the respectful, humble hunter in the Inuit prayer quoted above, and he is significantly referred to in the title as an Eskimo — the white name for his people.

Like the Indians, the Inuit have recently developed a political consciousness which focuses not only on aboriginal rights but is also concerned with the ecology of the Arctic region. ›Nunavut‹ and ›Denendeh‹ are names for parts of the Northwest Territories claimed for native self-administration. The native poet Mary Carpenter Lyons expresses the hopes connected with native self-government in her poem; »Nunavut? — Denendeh? = Northwestterritories«. The poem's speaker blames the North for being too tolerant towards the white exploiters of its natural resources and its native population:

O tenderland, uniquely north
Your fate is much discussed
By distant men who sit
And watch your primal lovers
Slowly dying
... You hum disgust
But your crowning skies forgive
Granting oppressors safe journey south ...[24]

The poem suggests that realization of the Nunavut scheme would release the North from its white oppressors and restore it to its native and ecologically responsible inhabitants, its »primal lovers«.

The status of non-native minorities is another aspect in which Canada can be compared to the U.S.A. One of the cultural myths of the U.S. is its ›melting pot‹ ideology: in a process of assimilation, all immigrants become equal. In contrast to the U.S., Canada is a dual society with two major linguistic and cultural mainstreams. Apart from this basic split between the French and English parts of the population[25], Canada pursues a policy of multiculturalism which encourages further ethnic diversity: a ›cultural mosaic‹ or ›fruitcake‹ in which the original ethnic components of its population are still recognizable. Canadian poetry offers many examples of an ethnic consciousness. Miriam Waddington, for example, has traced the Ukrainian roots of her familiy in *»Transformation« or *»The Transplanted«. An anthology of 1971, *Volvox*, collects translations of Canadian poems originally composed in one of the many immigrant languages. The following poem »The Laundress«, is by an immigrant from Iceland, Einar Pall Jonsson.

She worked as a housemaid, then as a laundress
in small town Winnipeg, full of emigres speaking
every language except her own: she was Icelandic

and as she worked she sang the old Icelandic hymns
and songs: the songs had all her joy, they brought
all her peace. She kept reaching for the language
that got lost in her life. She could never speak it
again, though it always measured her breath ...[26]

Although the woman forgets her native language, she never loses her deep attachments to the old country. Her old cultural identity is never melted down despite the lack of people to share it with.

However, the ideal of the cultural mosaic deserves as much critical scrutiny as that of the American melting pot. The discrimination against visible minorities, in particular Blacks and Orientals, is a reality of Canada's history as well as its present society. During World War II, Canadian citizens of Japanese origin were interned in the prairies following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan* (1981) makes use of her childhood memories of this event, which is also the subject of her poem, »What Do I Remember of the Evacuation«. The poem ends with the child's painful recognition that it is better to be white in Canadian society:

... And I remember how careful my parents were
Not to bruise us with bitterness
And I remember the puzzle of Lorraine Life
Who said ›Don't insult me‹ when I
Proudly wrote my name in Japanese
And Tim flew the Union Jack
When the war was over but Lorraine
And her friends spat on us anyway
And I prayed to God who loves
All the children in his sight
That I might be white[27].

The people to whom injustice was done try to bring their children up without resentment and prejudice, but their white compatriots continue their discrimination, and what is even worse, pass it on to their children. Joy Kogawa's account of growing up Japanese in post-war Canada provides a sad parallel to accounts of ›growing up Black in America‹.

The background of Blacks in Canada differs significantly from that of Black people in the U.S. The number of slaves in 18th-century Canada was limited to a few thousand, and the British Emanicipation Act abolished slavery as early as 1833. In the 1850s and 60s, Canada became a haven of freedom for American slaves, many of whom, however, returned during and after the American Civil War. In modern Canada, the Black section of society comprises only one to two per cent of the population, as opposed to over ten per cent in the U.S. The major proportion of Canadian Blacks consists of recent immigrants or ›guest workers‹ with a limited residence permit, most of them born in the Caribbean.

Only recently has a Black literature emerged in Canada; Austin Clarke, novelist and short story writer, is its most prominent representative. The anthology *Other Voices* (1985) is the first of its kind. Many poems in this volume attack the racial discrimination and exploitation of Blacks in Canada. Black workers are imported to increase a prosperity in which they are not allowed to participate. Charles Roach gives vent to his indignation in »Guest Worker Blues«. To Roach, Canada's treatment of its Caribbean ›guest workers‹ constitutes a modern form of slavery; the country is compared to a cotton plantation in the American South. Rebellious ›guest workers‹ cannot be sold, but they are deported:

Conditions on this plantation
Are the same as before emancipation
But they take taxes from your pay
Unemployment dues, OHIP and pension
But you get no benefits
When they dump you an' say ›That's it!‹

This is the hard life
Of a guest worker
Here in Canada

In the land of Opportunity
The true north strong and free[28]
You get no attention
When you complain of oppression
They'll say shut up and don't complain
Or we'll deport you on the next plane ...[29]

Dionne Brand's *Winter Epigrams* picture Canada as frosty in its attitude towards Caribbean immigrants as in its climate:

I give you these epigrams, Toronto,
these winter fragments
these stark white papers
because you mothered me
because you held me with a distance that i expected,
here, my mittens,
here, my frozen body,
because you gave me nothing more
and i took nothing less,
I give you winter epigrams
because you are a liar,
there is no other season here[30].

Although the status of racial minorities in Canada is only in part comparable to that of the U.S.A., Canadian poetry also bears witness to social inequality and discrimination. As the American melting pot rejects certain metals, the Canadian fruitcake mixture does not accept all ingredients.

2.3 The Search for a National Identity

Canada contrasts significantly with the U.S. in its ongoing search for a national identity. Margaret Atwood, in her »Afterword« [sic] to the *Journals of*

Susanna Moodie, contrasts the mentalities of the two nations: »If the national mental illness of the United States is megalomania, that of Canada is paranoid schizophrenia[31].« To many Germans of the post-war generations, German national identity has been a controversial problem. A juxtaposition of American assurance and Canadian doubts about their respective national identities might help German pupils to develop their own ideas about the advantages and inherent dangers of national identities.

The American identity is built on unifying ideals and historical events: the ›American Dream‹, the ›pursuit of happiness‹, the ›frontier‹, the Boston Tea Party, the Civil War, or the common national trauma of the Vietnam War. Canada, in contrast, is »not written on by history, empty as paper«[32]; it is »a country without a mythology«, as Douglas LePan titled one of his most famous poems (NOB). In the 40s, the Canadian identity became a major preoccupation of Canadian authors. Hugh MacLennan's novels on this question, *Barometer Rising* and *Two Solitudes*, both appeared in this decade; amongst the many poems on the subject is Patrick Anderson's »Poem on Canada«. *»Cold Colloquy«, a section of Anderson's poem, lists some of the major factors of the Canadian identity crisis: Canada has always had to define itself against more powerful countries, first a mother country, then the colossus in the south. Other factors are the country's ethnic diversity, the split between French and English Canada, and the pronounced regionalism of the provinces. The nationalism of the 60s launched another series of identity poems. Margaret Atwood's »A Place: Fragments«, ends with the following lines that summarize the Canadian identity dilemma: »an/identity:/something too huge and simple/for us to see« (PCC, pp. 89—92).

While most poems lament the sense of disorientation that derives from the identity lack, this lack may also be regarded as an advantage, an opportunity to take a fresh start and a view unencumbered by national heritage. George Jonas (1935—), a poet born in Hungary, takes this position in »On the Virtues of Being a Canadian«:

Let me put it this way:
If I were a German
I could say to myself Mozart and Rilke
But I would also have to say
Goebbels & Bergen-Belsen
Words I could not pronounce lightly.

...

And if I had to call the US of A my home
It might be more than my selective memory could handle.
But being a Canadian
By conscious and considered choice
I have to remember no one & nothing
Which in this 1969th year of grace
Suits me just fine[33].

2.4 Canadian-American Relations

The relationship between the U.S. and Canada is also worth considering in its own right. Canadian literature presents the U.S. from the point of view of an immediate neighbour, a view or set of views which can be compared to our own European and thus more distanced perspective[34].

Canadian-American relations have been strained since the last century. Contemporary Canada is dependent on the U.S. in economic respects and feels threatened by American cultural imperialism. Canada's sheltering of American draft-dodgers during the Vietnam War may be seen as an act of self-assertion and protest against an overpowering neighbour. In a period of massive anti-American feeling during the 60s and early 70s, Canadian literature presented Canada as a victim of U.S. imperialism. In Atwood's »Backdrop Addresses Cowboy«, an American culture symbol, a »starspangled cowboy«, invades Canada, leaving a

... heroic
trail of desolation:
beer bottles
slaughtered by the side
of the road, bird-
skulls bleaching in the sunset.

...

my brain
scattered with you
tincans, bones, empty shells,
the litter of your invasions.
I am the space you desecrate
as you pass through. (PCC, pp. 98f.)

American tourism is the poem' s superficial target of attack, but the violation of the landscape also stands for the general American influence in Canada. The American tourist has no respect for the Canadian landscape; he regards it as a picturesque backdrop or film set in which he feels free to behave as he would never dare in the national parks of his own country. In John Newlove's »America« (NOB, p. 344), the U.S. drain Canada of its natural and intellectual resources. Released from its former mother country Britain, Canada has entered another phase of dependence and colonial exploitation. The Canadians are »barbarians« ruled and fleeced by a new Imperial Power:

Outside the borders of royalty
the barbarians wait in fear,
finding it hard to know which prince
to believe; trade-goods comfort them,
gadgets of little worth, cars, television,
refrigerators, for which they give iron,
copper, uranium, gold, trees, and water,
worth of all sorts for the things
citizens of Empire take as their due.

In the Empire power speaks from the poorest
and culture flourishes. Outside the boundaries
the barbarians imitate styles and send their sons,
the talented hirelings, to learn and to stay ...

It is interesting to compare how in this poem Canada's relation to the U.S. is caught in the same colonial metaphor that Duke Redbird employed to express the red man's status in White-Canadian society.

Like Canada, Europe has experienced the massive influence of two super powers since World War II and developed ambivalent attitudes towards them. These attitudes can be investigated and clarified in comparison to the Canadian position. But a treatment of Canadian-American relations also reveals a number of parallels to the new relationship between the Eastern and Western parts of Germany.

Anglo-Canadian poetry offers a variety of texts to supplement the canon of British and American poems in different thematic contexts of English at the level of *Sekundarstufe II*. It should be regarded as a particular advantage that Canadian texts frequently present a different view of familiar topics. Like Canada's landscape and its cultural mosaic, Canadian poetry offers a richness and variety which the teacher of English should not neglect to exploit.

Canadian Poetry in German Publications

Abbreviations refer to the following textbooks and other sources:

C/S = H. Combecher/G. Schad (eds.): *The Word Sublime* (Frankfurt a. M., 1967)
D/F = G. Düsterhaus/R. Franzbecker (eds.): *Canada: Regions and Literature*
d/f = Teacher's Book
D = G. Düsterhaus (ed.): *Growing Up on the Prairies* (München, 1985)
G/K = K. Groß/W. Klooß (eds.): *Voices from Distant Lands: Poetry of the Commonwealth* (Würzburg, 1983)
O = K. Oser (ed.): *Perspectives 9: CANADA* (Stuttgart, 1989)
R = A. Rau (ed.): *Glimpses of Canada* (Frankfurt, 1991)

Patrick Anderson: »Cold Colloquy« (C/S)
Earle Birney: »Pacific Door« (D/F) and »Atlantic Door« (d/f)
George Bowering: »Prairie Music« (D/F)
Elizabeth Brewster: »Munchhausen in Alberta« (D)
Bliss Carman: »How Soon Will All My Lovely Days Be Over« (d/f)
Robert Currie: »The Circle on the Prairie« (D)
Robert Finch: »Turning« (R)
Fred Cogswell: »When Time Has Closed My Coffin-Lid« (d/f)
Gary Geddes: »Promised Land« (d/f)
Alootok Ipellie: »How Noisy They Seem« (R)
Charles Lillard: »Quixote in the Snow« (d/f)
Dorothy Livesay: »Pioneer« (R)
Alexander McLachlan: »Young Canada« (D/F); »Old England is Eaten by Knaves« (d/f)
Anne Marriott: »Prairie« (D)
Joseph McLeod: »As You Move North« [A Common Language, English Project Book 3 (Berlin, 1980)]
John Newlove: »If You Would Walk« (D)
Alden Nowlan: »The Bull Moose« (O)
P. K. Page: »Stories of Snow« (d/f)
Al Purdy: »Innuit« (D/F;O); »A Handfull of Earth: To René Lévesque« (d/f); »At the Movies« [D. Buttjes (ed.): Panorama: English Cultures around the World (Dortmund, 1986)]
James Reaney: »To the Avon River above Stratford, Canada« (D/F)
Duncan Campbell Scott: »The Forsaken« (D/F)
F. R. Scott: »National Indentity« (d/f); »TransCanada« (C/S;R); »The Canadian Authors Meet« (G/K)
Robert Service: »The Land God Forgot« (D/F)
A. J. M. Smith: »To Hold in a Poem« (R)
Peter Stevens: »Prairie« (D)
Miriam Waddington: »Canadians« (D/F); »Wonderful Country« (C/S); »Transformations«; »Thou Didst Say Me«; »Love Poem«; »The Season's Lovers«; »How Old Women Should Live«; »The Transplanted: Second Generation«; »The Visitant« (G/K)
R. Franzbecker has collected Canadian poems on kites; cf. »Der Flugdrachen als Lebenssymbol in der kanadischen Literatur«, FU 22, No. 89 (1988), 8—12.
Song: Gordon Lightfoot, »Canadian Railroad Trilogy« (O)
National anthem: »O Canada« (D/F;O)

Audiovisual Teaching Aids

The following 16 mm films can be borrowed from the Canadian Embassy:

»A.M. Klein: The Poet as Landscape«, 58 min, 1978
»Earle Birney: Portrait of a Poet«, 53 min, 1981
»Wood Mountains«, 28 min, 1978 [the poet Andrew Suknasi talks about this part of Western Canada]
»Morning on the Lièvre«, 13 min, [portrait of the Lièvre river in Québec, accompanied by a reading of Archibald Lampman's poem]

Notes

[1] Abbreviations refer to the following anthologies of Canadian poetry: *NOB* = M. Atwood (ed.): *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* (Toronto, 1982) [available in Great Britain]; *PCC* = E. Mandel (ed.): *Poets of Contemporary Canada 1960—1970* (Toronto, 1972); *NCA* = R. Lecker/J. David (eds.): *The New Canadian Anthology: Poetry and Short Fiction in English* (Scarborough, Ont., 1988).
* refers to the list of poems in German publications at the end of this article.

[2] Cf. Scott's satiric poem written in 1927, *»The Canadian Authors Meet«.

[3] Quoted from *Voices of Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Culture*, ed. J. Webster (Burlington, Vermont, 1977), p. 19.

[4] Louis Dudek and Raymond Souster in particular are poets of urban Canada. Montreal with its cultural mix is the subject of A. M. Klein's *The Rocking Chair* (Toronto, 1948). From this volume, »Montreal« might be compared to Earle Birney's impression of the city, »Montréal 1945«, which is contained in *The Collected Poems of Earle Birney* (Toronto, 1975), vol. 1.

[5] In both world wars, Canadian soldiers fought in countries and for causes not their own. One of the most famous patriotic poems written in and about World War I, »In Flanders Fields« was composed by a Canadian poet, John McCrae *(NOB)*. For Canadian poetry about World War II see, for example, Douglas LePan's »The Net and the Sword« *(NOB)* or Earle Birney's »The Road To Nijmegen«, which is contained in R. Weaver/W. Toye (eds.): *The Oxford Anthology of Canadian Literature* (Toronto, 1973).

[6] Cf. A.-R. Glaap: »›That true North, whereof we lately heard‹: Kanada«, *FU 22*, No. 89 (1988), 4—7. For material on units focused on Canada cf. G. Düsterhaus/R. Franzbecker (eds.): *Canada: Regions and Literature*, TEAS, 20 (Paderborn, 1987, teacher's book 1989) and A. Rau (ed.): *Glimpses of Canada*, TAGS (Frankfurt, 1990). Both volumes provide background information on central Canadian issues. For excellent brief introductions to various aspects of Canadian society cf. J. Curtis/L. Tepperman (eds.), *Understanding Canadian Society* (Toronto, 1988).

[7] From the »Conclusion« to Klinck's *Literary History of Canada* by Canada's most prominent literary critic, Northrop Frye (2nd ed. Toronto, 1976, vol. II, pp. 333—361, here pp. 336—338).

[8] For other famous nature poems of the period see Campbell's »How One Winter Came in the Lake Region«, Carman's »Low Tide on Grand Pré«, Lampman's »Heat«, »In November«, »Winter Evening« (all in *NOB*).

[9] In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Poetry* (Toronto, 1972).

[10] Alden Nowlan, »Canadian January Night«, quoted from D. Daymond/L. Monkman (eds.): *Literature in Canada* (Toronto, 1978), vol. II, p. 536.

[11] Loc. cit., p. 342.

[12] Also cf. the three poems in *NOB* with the title »Bushed«, by Earle Birney, Barry McKinnon and Charles Lillard.

[13] Quoted from B. Littlejohn/J. Pearce (eds.): *Marked by the Wild: An Anthology of Literature Shaped by the Canadian Wilderness* (Toronto, 1973), p. 270.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

[15] Quoted from E. Carpenter (ed.): *Anerca* (Toronto, 1959), n.p.

[16] Quoted from A. J. M. Smith (ed.): *The Book of Canadian Poetry: A Critical and Historical Anthology* (3rd ed. Toronto, 1957), pp. 44f.

[17] Quoted from P. Petrone (ed.): *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English* (Toronto, 1988), p. 21. For another collection of Inuit writing see R. Gedalof (ed.): *Paper Stays Put* (Edmonton, 1980).

[18] For information on the native peoples of Canada cf. B. A. Cox: *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Métis* (Ottawa, 1987).

[19] For other ›Indian‹ poems of the Confederation period cf. two of Isabella Crawford's best-known poems, »Said the Canoe« and »The Dark Stag« (both in *NOB*)

[20] Quoted from Waubageshig (ed.): *The Only Good Indian: Essays by Canadian Indians* (rev. ed. Don Mills, 1974), p. 61.

[21] Quoted from J. Hodgins (ed.): *The West Coast Experience* (Toronto, 1977), p. 104. For other anthologies of Canadian Indian poetry cf. D. Day/M. Bowering (eds.): *Many Voices: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Indian Poetry* (Vancouver, 1977) and B. Reid (ed.): *Raven Steals the Light* (Vancouver, 1984).

[22] For example in *»Innuit«, »Lament for the Dorsets«, »Beothuk Indian Skeleton in Glass Case« or »Remains of an Indian Village« (all in *PCC*).

[23] Quoted from J. Hodgins (ed.): *The Frontier Experience* (Toronto, 1975), p. 92.

[24] Quoted from *Northern Voices*, p. 273.

[25] For an English-Canadian poem on the Quebec question see Al Purdy's *»A Handful of Earth«. Leonhard Cohen has recorded one bilingual and one entirely French song, »The Partisan« (*Songs from a Room*, CBS 1969) and »Un Canadien Errant« (*Recent Songs*, CBS 1979).

[26] M. Yates (ed.): *Volvox: Poetry from the Unofficial Languages of Canada ... in English Translation* (Port Clements, B.C., 1971), p. 191.

[27] Quoted from *The West Coast Experience*, pp. 88f. This collection also contains Dorothy Livesay's documentary poem on the Japanese deportation, »Call My People Home«.

[28] This line is taken from Canada's national anthem.

[29] Elliott (ed.): *Other Voices: Writing by Blacks in Canada* (Toronto, 1985), pp. 145f.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[31] *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (Toronto, 1970), p. 62.

[32] F. R. Scott, »Laurentian Shield« (*NOB*, p. 95).

[33] Quoted from A. Wainwright (ed.): *Notes for a Native Land: A New Encounter with Canada* (s.l.: Oberon Press, 1969), pp. 111f. This volume conveniently assembles several texts, prose and poetry, on the identity problem.

[34] Cf. A.-R. Glaap: »Look at It This Way: The USA Today Reflected in Canadian Attitudes and Literature«, in *Teaching Contemporary American Life and Literature in the German Advanced EFL-Classroom*, ed. P. Freese (München, 1985), pp. 257—271. Also cf. P. Goetsch: »Das Bild der Vereinigten Staaten in der anglokanadischen Literatur der Gegenwart«, *Die amerikanische Literatur in der Weltliteratur: Themen und Aspekte: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Rudolf Haas*, ed. C. Uhlig/V. Bischoff (Berlin, 1982), pp. 476—504; D. Meindl, »Kanadas Verhältnis zu den USA im Spiegel seiner Literatur«, in *Zur Literatur und Kultur Kanadas: Eine Erlanger Ringvorlesung*, ed. D. Meindl (Erlangen, 1984), pp. 173—194.

Kurs für Englischlehrer

In Zusammenarbeit mit dem *English Language Centre* führt das *Informationszentrum für Fremdsprachenforschung* (IFS) der Philipps-Universität Marburg vom 13.—24. April 1992 einen Fortbildungskurs für europäische Englischlehrerinnen und Englischlehrer der Sekundarstufen I und II in Brighton (Hove) an der Südküste Englands durch. Neben einer intensiven sprachlichen Betreuung werden in Seminaren, Vorträgen und Projekten landeskundliche und didaktisch-methodische Fragen erörtert. Die Unterbringung erfolgt bei englischen Gastgebern. Weitere Informationen können angefordert werden vom IFS, Hans-Meerwein-Straße, Lahnberge, 3550 Marburg, Tel.: 06421/282141, Telefax: 06421/285710.