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## Playpens for Leviathan: Canadian Uses of 'Postmodern'

robert r. wilson

In July 1984 a conference on postmodernism was held at the University of Sydney. 'FUTUR\*FALL: Excursions into Postmodernity' explored, in papers and in performances, a number of aspects of the concept of postmodernity. With few exceptions, the papers tended to establish a consistent pattern of attitudes and approaches. The papers at the 'FUTUR\*FALL' revealed, as would be perhaps only natural, the influence of one of the conference's chief speakers, Jean Baudrillard. They persistently returned to the Baudrillardian hypothesis that 'reality' has been displaced by a superimposed layering of images, an immeasurable surplus signification, whirling always away from human grasp into the vortices of 'hyper-reality'. As one of the participants, George Alexander, wittily expressed things: 'Hyper-reality is a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there... It is a para-semiotic game of nominating a different value from the value of the opponent's cards, until the whole deck or discourse no longer exists as before'.

The Australian participants followed either Baudrillard or, more generally, other recent French uses of the term 'postmodern' - such as Jean-François Lyotard's - in emphasising the analysis of contemporary Western culture and in situating works of art, including literary texts, within a complex symptomatology. In general, they perceived a great deal of doom hanging over this world, even in, or perhaps especially in, its discourses. Not only reality but history as well might be said to have ended. Given such perceptions, it is not surprising that a rather heavy, and maximally serious, prophetic tone clung to the proceedings. Thus Terry Smith, having urged a 'streetwise sociology of the simulacra (1986, pp.78-79)', concluded with a discussion of the *Mad Max* films: 'The accuracy of the Australian metaphor in *Mad Max II* obliges us to ask questions about the power of the future...'. And the power of the future-imagery in *Mad Max* led Smith to a prophetic vision of the Australian future - a kind of postmodernity plus - in which a society constituted by nomadic intellectual packs, lacking both memory and hope, roams desperately on the edges of extinction:

All they inherited was an entropic environment, with its winding-down ecology, and an ensemble of signs, arbitrarily encoded. For example, the names which they circulate around each other - Feminism, Liberation, Sexuality, Rights, Class Consciousness, Creativity, Nationality, New Wave, Ecology, Protest, Appropriation, Nomadology, Survival - shift uncertainly between designating the packs themselves and how their members dress, itself variable (Smith, 1986, p.80)

The *Mad Max* metaphor helps to focus one important sense of the elusive, uncertain term 'postmodern': holistic, culture-encompassing, doomstruck, prophetic.

I have begun with this backwards glance at the 'FUTUR\*FALL' conference in order to emphasise a distinction between what seem to be the 'normal' (in the Kuhnian sense) uses of 'postmodern' in Australia and in Canada. No doubt there are Canadian critics who understand 'postmodern' in the holistic, cultural and prophetic mode.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there are certainly Australian critics who employ 'postmodern' as an analytic designation in order to categorise distinct techniques, conventions and levels of textuality that mark, or otherwise underscore, the self-consciousness of a particular text. (Indeed, marking textual reflexivity, at all levels, seems to be the essential point about 'postmodern' as an analytic-isolating term.) My point is simply that the *Mad Max* metaphor seems to serve certain ends for Australian critics that Canadian critics barely pause to consider. (One may note in passing that while contemporary Australian fiction possesses several notable catastrophe tales, post-apocalyptic fables of disturbing intensity, such as the generically-eponymous *Mad Max* films, Canadian fiction has barely exploited this genre.)<sup>2</sup>

The Australian understanding of 'postmodern' provides an approach to culture as a whole, to the contradictions inherent within contemporary Western society, to the difficulties of demarcating a precise period in human history (or, it may be, to confronting the 'end' of history), or to taking the pulse of international capitalism in its lat(est) phase. Similar large perspectives play through *Postmodern Conditions* (1988), in which various contributors attempt to characterise a definite historical period known as 'postmodernity', develop global models that allow them to refer, deductively, to works of art as 'postmodern', or fine-tune the models of others. Thus the editors of *Postmodern Conditions* observe that whether or not the contributors attempt 'periodizing accounts', the distinction between a 'view of postmodernism as fundamentally complicit with the socio-political status quo, as a culture of incorporation, and that of postmodernism as open-endedly subversive and paralogistic' recurs (Milner et al., 1988, p.ixx). In his para-discursive refinement of Jameson's model of postmodernism, David Bennett neatly captures the taxonomic-deductive impetus behind global accounts of postmodernism:

Contemporary aesthetic innovation and experimentation have lost their oppositional or subversive potential and are themselves stimulated and catalysed by the culture industry's reliance, for the reproduction of its market, on generating fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming commodities, from clothing to cars to artistic movements - and no less, we might want to add, their situating cultural theories (1988, p.20).<sup>3</sup>

The properties of individual literary texts are not in question. The global perspectives, chosen by many Australian critics, are not specifically pointed towards aesthetic objects, neither individual works of fine art nor literary texts. They are not primarily concerned with conventions, techniques, or textual practices. They cast large nets with loose weaves: useful, perhaps, to critics of

culture, but baffling for students of literature.

The argument of this paper, on the other hand, is that an analytic-isolating use of 'postmodern' serves important uses in Canadian criticism. I will suggest the following glib formula, derived from brooding upon the proceedings of the 'FUTUR\*FALL' conference: just as the shadow of Jean Baudrillard darkens Australian uses of 'postmodern', so the shadow of Jean Ricardou infiltrates, if it does not actually loom over, Canadian uses of the same term. Linda Hutcheon comments on Ricardou that his scheme for classifying metafictional modes is an 'appealingly neat, *a priori* structuring' that presents 'problems for specific textual analysis [Hutcheon, 1980, p.21]', (Ricardou's 'neat' structuring plays off vertical and horizontal axes of auto-representation, or reflexivity, in which the vertical axis indicates *inter*-dimensional textuality, between the 'what' and the 'how' of fiction, while the horizontal axis indicates *intra*-dimensional textuality. What is the case for Ricardou's own analyses is also, of course, the case for Hutcheon's approach to literature.) 'Postmodernism' becomes an agenda for a range of problems 'for specific textual analysis'.

The scope and inherent diversity of such an agenda will vary, of course, but the absence of either an agreed-upon inventory or an encyclopaedia of problems is less important than the proposition itself that 'postmodernism' may be seen as a schema (or an agenda) for the analysis of specific textual problems. Discreteness and specificity (not global commentary upon the state of contemporary culture) are the key notions. Here, for example, is a dictum from an American student of 'postmodernism', Carlos Caramello:

Postmodern fiction... seems to present the discrete book as a play of signs severed from referents outside of its context, a presentation that affirms the formalist and modernist ideals of the claim of contextual restraint over that of referentiality, of the autonomy of the work of art, of the work of art as a crafted artifact, a composition, a construction realized through technique rather than generated from the heart [Caramello, 1983, p.15].

The agenda could be quite long - as long, perhaps, as the inventory of all possible techniques that, in one way or another, might contribute to textual self-consciousness - or as short, say, as Ihab Hassan's recent 'catena' of eleven discrete factors, such as indeterminacy, fragmentation, decanonisation, hybridisation and carnivalisation, and so forth (1986, pp.501-20). Hutcheon's own agenda in *Narcissistic Narrative* (1980) is relatively compact, but highly suggestive: the distinction between process and product, wordplay, parody, allegory, *mise en abyme*, embedded narrative structures (such as the detective plot, fantasy, games and the erotic), the problem of fictive referents, and a few more besides.

Hutcheon's work is illustrative. Most Canadian critics who write about 'postmodernism' follow similar procedures. (George Bowering, for instance, writes that '... hockey, with its clock running out, is a modernist game, whereas baseball, whose every square we fill, in which the game is over not when the existential clock ticks last but when the last human runner is finished, is a post-

modernist game... [1982, p.120].') Hutcheon's example shows clearly two important motivations in the use of 'postmodern' in Anglophone Canadian writing. First, and most obviously, this usage replicates the orthodox American treatment of 'postmodernism', as my references to Caramello and Hassan were designed to indicate (This is not surprising, of course; it is no more damaging to the integrity of Canadian discussions of the 'postmodern' than it is, say, to point out that Australian uses of the same term are dominated by recent French thinking, or by neo-Marxian proscriptions.) Second, and most importantly, the Canadian usage entails significant cultural advantages.

These advantages lie in the direction of (even, perhaps, upon the horizon of) national unity. Canada is a difficult country to think about. Its inherent fragmentariness and centrifugal tendencies undercut monologic accounts. This seems to be particularly the case with literature, since linguistic plurality and distinct regional affiliations reinforce, while exemplifying, Canada's extravagant friability. It is possible to impose reductive models, no doubt, and this may be taken as one of the important projects of the Can Lit industry (Stanley McMullin's (1986) analysis of Anglophone Canadian literature in terms of the distinction between 'heartland' and 'hinterland' that is, metropolitan centre against rural boondocks makes Central Canada, if not Toronto alone, the condition of normalcy in literature, while leaving the rest at the level of marginal exuberance. McMullin's model, one should note, simply formulates on the level of literature the eighteenth-century mercantilism that dominates Canada's internal economic policies (1986, pp. 13-22). The more interesting, as well as the most crafty and shifty approaches to this diversity have been calculated to acknowledge it, even to pay homage to it, while still weaving conceptual webs over the always-absent whole. The *thing* may be diverse, fragmentary and centrifugal, but the discourse need not be so.

'Postmodernism', on the other hand, stands out, in its Canadian uses, as largely a textual method. As such, it permits the critic to ignore the problems of national history. (As Robert Kroetsch famously observes, 'A great deal of what happens in Canada, including our literature, has to do with our having always to deal with gaps and spaces. Our national discontinuities made us ripe for Postmodernism [Newman & Wilson, 1982, 112]). Above all, 'postmodernism' imports into the analysis of literary texts the entire scope of recent literary theory. One may make an incision into the text at any point (at the point of a play upon words, at the point of evident reflexivity, at that of an embedded narrative, at the mirrorplay of a spectacular *mise en abyme*, anywhere) and immediately the incision itself, as well as all that has been excised from the text for analysis, becomes a problem for theoretical discussion. The agenda, however long or short, problematises textual detail. 'Postmodernism' thus permits a discourse that is even more diverse than the regional particularities of Canadian literature itself. 'Postmodern' literary texts, being self-consciously and emblematically constituted by 'gaps and spaces', will open to the entire array of theoretical problems. They permit, even call for, a discourse of immense sophistication, but a discourse in

which regional and historical factors play no essential roles. What is more, 'postmodernism', as a vehicle for literary theory, is an international discourse. Hence it internationalises Canadian literature. This move possesses several advantages: it makes history unnecessary, it chops off the consideration of regionalism, and it makes the whole business of analysing Canadian literature a great deal more interesting. It proposes the following dazzling solution to the problem of centrifugal spin: Canadian literature is international, a matrix of theoretical issues, and can best be discussed, problem by problem perhaps, in the same terms, and even in the same breath, as all the other texts of world literature.

Before expanding upon this point, I must indicate an obtrusive paradox. Few Anglophone Canadian writers seem actually to be 'postmodernist' in either technique or outlook. (The canon of Anglophone postmodernists is brief: Kroetsch, Bowering, Michael Ondaatje, perhaps Timothy Findley, Jack Hodgins and Margaret Atwood in some of their manifestations, a few others at most.) Most writers are profoundly regional and their regionalism is supported (rewarded, one might say) by the activities of the Canada Council, the provincial arts councils, secondary and tertiary teaching, literary journals, and the scanty book-review pages of the newspapers. Furthermore, most Anglophone Canadian writers are dedicated to realism in either a canonical form or in the recent American revisionism known as 'minimalism' (sometimes as 'dirty realism' or 'brand-name realism'). Realism seems to have become codified into an inflexible ideology among the editorial boards of most Anglophone Canadian literary journals (there are exceptions, though few). Here is David Carpenter, the sometime fiction editor of the *NeWest Review*, in a 'Polemic on fiction' with which he introduces a recent special issue of short fiction:

Since the wholesale importation of deconstruction, metafiction, and the metalingus that comes with it, much of our fiction has lapsed into an academic, labyrinthine, almost terminally cerebral exercise of wit. Characters become mouthpieces for authors, mental constructs rather than humans worthy of human response. The humanistic enterprise of writing stories that reflect the moral complexities of being alive in our own time has to some extent been replaced by a mode of discourse designed to exhibit the verbal tapdancing and the intellect of the writer.

A story published in a Canadian periodical over the last fifteen years has a greater likelihood of winning the applause of the academy if it emulates the example of Borges (or Barth, or Calvino, or Marquez, or someone important out there), or if the writer's own sense of reality is redecorated with the brush of magic realism [Carpenter, 1986, p. 2].

Carpenter's hysterics display the ferocity with which the realist ideology can speak and one might have some sympathy with him if it were possible to think of many examples. The writers Carpenter describes scarcely exist - certainly not on the pages of the *NeWest Review*. The fierce (and altogether monologic) ideology common among the editorial boards of Anglophone literary journals seems to combine an unexamined commitment to 'realism' (the only term, Nabokov remarked, that should always be placed within inverted commas) with a distrust,

verging on fear, of academic interests, and a terror of being accused of elitism. One suspects that it must reflect, to some extent at least, the preoccupations of creative writing programmes.

Anyone who has given any thought to the directions of Anglophone Canadian writing will recognise that its dominant mode has been, and continues to be (in the words of an Australian writer about his own national literature), 'dun-coloured' realism. There are certainly distinctions to be made within that mode - between, say, canonical realism and the currently fashionable 'minimalism'. One might even agree with Bowering that there is a distinction between the 'Canadian norm of Eastern realism and Western naturalism [1982, p.98]', though that formula plays, perhaps too neatly, the national game of regional categories. Lorraine Weir observes, both accurately and memorably, that in 'Canada the realist tradition - grounded in Anglo-Protestant injunctions against ritual, "mystification" in language and doctrine and so on - has assumed the status of smug credo'. Anglophone Canada possesses, she continues, a 'class of mainstream critics whose ideology is capitalist, bourgeois, patriarchal, and, in its origins if not in current practice, Anglo-Protestant [Weir, 1983, pp.131-32]'. Those 'mainstream' critics review books, sit on editorial boards, and award grants.<sup>4</sup> One concludes that there is some kind of dichotomy between the academic insistence upon 'postmodernism' and the mainstream, and sometimes academic, insistence upon realism, whether canonical or minimalist, and its corresponding (if illusory) textual wholeness and concinnity.

In an unpublished essay Margaret Turner argues that Kroetsch's reputation in Canada is as much, if not more, a function of his critical writings and his openness to recent Theory as it is of his fiction. She sees him as the creation of academic special interests (a point that David Carpenter would probably find congenial):

As Kroetsch performs as novelist, as poet, and as critic, and as his use of each genre reflects his practice in another, the phenomenon of Robert Kroetsch in Canadian letters occurs. The canonization has been of that *phenomenon* of Kroetsch, caused largely by the multiplicity and variety of his textual products, rather than of any of his texts in particular and in themselves. He has become significant precisely because he does it all, with a particular flair and with important ramifications in Canadian and postmodern literature, and in literary studies. Robert Kroetsch has become a literary icon; his works have not become our classics [Turner, forthcoming, p.18 MS.].

Kroetsch, in Turner's view, has displaced writers, such as Margaret Laurence, say, whose works, closer to the Canadian (mainstream) tradition, might legitimately have served as the basis for *their* canonisation. I take this to be a thoughtful academic opinion that more or less matches Carpenter's. (Or, put the other way round, Turner cheerfully places herself in the critical camp that Weir denounces.)

I shall raise, and pass over, two fundamentally important questions. (Their discussion falls into the scope of another essay.) Firstly, why do we need 'postmodernism'? The same conceptual work could be accomplished, directly and

without mediation, by considering a literary text as a nexus of theoretical problems. If one merely said that every text is like a free-standing museum of theoretical aporia, of paradoxes, riddles and enigmas, then the work could begin directly, forthwith. Secondly, how can postmodernism do conceptual work when it cannot be defined? Its notorious shapelessness (at once over-determined and boundary-broken) ought to keep it from doing significant conceptual work, should it not? (The distinction between modernism and postmodernism, Bowering writes - in fact, he has written it more than once - is that the former was ontological in purpose while the latter is epistemological [1982, p.82]. Brian McHale reverses the formula: '... the dominant of modernist fiction is epistemological... the dominant of postmodernist fiction is ontological' [1987, pp.9-10]. As Elizabeth Grosz remarks in her introduction to the FUTUR\*FALL Proceedings, 'postmodernism' lacks specification but this carries certain advantages: it creates an 'ambiguous silence, capable of being used to cover a broad range of different practices [Grosz, 1986, p.8].') The answers to both questions, roughly sketched, seem to lie on the level of pragmatics, in the murky traditions of English as a professional discourse, and in the mind-sets of literary critics.

I shall conclude this paper with a few brief comments on magic realism as an example of how the 'postmodern' problematising of texts (or the different practices smothered by 'ambiguous silence') serves fairly large cultural, even political, ends. Magic realism may be naturalised on the level of canonical realism ('the peasant *Weltanschauung*') as McMullin, for example, manages to do with striking nonchalance:

... *What The Crow Said* is the best example of prairie magic realism. Set in Saskatchewan, the novel is essentially a history of people in the province, a history of human endurance and fortitude in the face of hostile nature 1986, p.19].

(One admires that crisp, scholarly 'essentially'. Talk about 'ambiguous silence'!) More generally, it may be incorporated into the symptomatology of cultural analysis as a manifestation of dichotomous codes reflecting divisions between (say) colonial and post-colonial, or peasant and technological, discourses. However, seen as a postmodernist text, *What The Crow Said* exemplifies a recurrent textual problem: the overfolding of textual inscriptions, the inscription of dual, incompatible geometries. A discursive plane (call it the 'realist' plane, if you wish, but the process is both symmetrical and transitive) is interrupted by something quite different, as if the embryo of a another world, bearing the strange markings of distinct worldhood, had abruptly sprung into existence.<sup>5</sup> Hutcheon, discussing the uses of embedded fantasy in narcissistic (or metafictional, or postmodern) texts, argues that the presence of fantasy calls attention to the text's claims of representationality, and thus constitutes a covert element in its self-consciousness. 'The "fantastic" temporal and spatial self-involvement of metafictional works', she writes, '... is ultimately emblematic of the imaginative leaps in time and space required in the reading of any fictional work [Hutcheon, 1984, p.81]'. If one cuts into a text (but a magic realist text, let

us say, to keep the example clear - *What The Crow Said*) along the shifting boundary between one space and another, between one geometry and another, one finds not so much a map, or a place, even a dual place (and certainly not Saskatchewan!), but a nexus of problems, a hive of theoretical concerns, and a vast, implacable intertextual field.

This proposition can be illustrated by reference to the two most recent pieces of critical commentary upon *What The Crow Said*. First, Brian Edwards traces the influence of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's most famous novel upon Kroetsch's novel. It is rather like laying a template over a complex surface to see what shows through, or inscribing one map upon another. An immense amount corresponds:

Each text makes exuberant use of hyperbole, blends dream and waking, suspends the notion of time as linear progression, dissolves the boundary between life and death, and involves the reader in its self-reflexive reminders of text as artifice, explanation as uncertain, and multiple possibilities as the condition of communication in language [Edwards, 1987, p.97].

'A game is on', Edwards writes, 'the play begins [1987, p.98]'. Edwards plays Kroetsch's novel off against Marquez's and the results are as instructive as spectacular - complex, provocative, wholly international. He also brings the conclusions of both structuralism (Todorov) and poststructuralism (Derrida) to bear upon the analysis, and the consequence is a further template, one composed entirely of theoretical problems. There is no regionalism in this analysis, and it probably makes no difference at all whether *What The Crow Said* takes place in Saskatchewan or Alberta. It is the multiplex effort of tracing cognitive patterns that counts. 'The tracking of meanings', Edwards writes, 'is a more exciting prospect than the closure of fixed definition, a contract which limits discourse [1987, p.101]'. That exemplifies one advantage in taking the text as a 'postmodern' paradigm: as it cracks open, its inherent fissures (running, let us say, somewhere between the buffalo beans and the bee-swarm) inviting an active, penetrative effort of 'tracking', the international world of postmodern literature as well as that of Theory erupts from the text.

Second, Stephen Slemon's recent essay investigates Kroetsch's novel and Jack Hodgins' *The Invention of The World* in order to place the concept of magic realism 'within the context of post-colonial cultures as a distinct and recognizable kind of literary discourse [Slemon, 1988, p.10]'. Although Slemon invokes much of the same textual evidence, and many of the same critical citations, that Edwards brings to bear in his essay, he finds something altogether different. He finds a Bakhtinian dance between contrary voices, a choreography of suppression and expression, in which magic realism's contradictory codes (the magic and the real, say) embody the opposed, yet interlocked, discourses of colonial and post-colonial cultures. 'A binary opposition within language', Slemon writes, 'that has its roots in the process of either transporting a language to a new land or imposing a foreign language on an indigenous population [1988, p.12]'. The textual binaries emblemise or, in Slemon's own phrase, constitute a 'speaking mirror' of the colonial encounter which is a 'condition of being both tyrannized by

history yet paradoxically cut off from it, caught between absolute systems of blind cognition and projected realms of imaginative revision in which people have no control [1988, p.18]'. Slemon, like Edwards, problematises textual detail, opens this detail to an array of theoretical difficulties, and systematically internationalises the text. Like Edwards, he finds the fissures and follows the track into them, but the results are startlingly different. History, not imagination, and context, not text, inhabit the fissiparous depths.

I do not mean to argue that the one reading excludes the other. Edwards' point that 'the tracking of meanings' is a more exciting prospect than trying to close them off might fly like a banner over all attempts to read magic realism in its duality (rather than to naturalise it, as McMullin does, into one code or another). Both Slemon and Edwards find in the concept of magic realism a way to open *What The Crow Said*, both to problematise and to internationalise it. The results, in either case, are rewarding. If one recalls that magic realism, or fantasy in general, is only one stop on the postmodernist agenda (only one mode of textual embedding, in Hutcheon's terms), then it is possible to see, I think, how richly postmodernism frees the critic's activities. Let us imagine the old Jacobsonian model between vertical and horizontal axes (a model employed by Ricardou in the passage I cited earlier, and by Slemon in his essay - it is certainly one of Theory's oldest chestnuts). Let the horizontal represent the text's on-goingness, its metonymic progression, then let the vertical axis represent the points at which the postmodernist agenda may be brought into play. Even, one supposes, the vast, global concerns of the FUTUR\*FALL conference might loom over the incised text. 'The museum', Julian Pefanis remarks (thinking perhaps of Bouvard and Pécuchet), 'is our answer to Hegel's encyclopaedia [1984, p.30]'. The museum of Theory, once constituted, is paradoxically interminable. (Or, as Pefanis writes in *Postmodern Conditions* in discussing Bataille's heterological model of writing, the refusal to foreclose discourse, opening it to its own impossibility, leads, whether 'ineluctably' or paradoxically, to the creation of 'a meta-discourse on writing [1988, p.148]'.) Once the postmodern template has been shifted into position upon a (eager or hapless) text, the points of incision mark the intersections with conceptual paradigms as inexhaustible as all lightward-twisting thought.

## Notes

1. Stanley Fogel (1988) comes to mind, whose recently published *The Postmodern University: Essays on The Deconstruction of the Humanities* might be said to follow this approach.
2. See Wilson (1984, pp.8-23).
3. One needs always to inquire how what is common to a whole (in this case, a culture) can be the specific differentia of a part. It may only be a caveat, and not a riposte on a fundamental level, but it is worth interjecting that the culture of mass consumption does not seem to promote, in any important sense (permitting and allowing are distinct from

promoting), what the analytic-isolating sense of 'postmodern' normally seems to have in mind. TV drama, Hollywood 'action' movies, 'sitcoms', thrillers, horror tales, 'best sellers', what have you, do not actually seem to be innovative, though they are certainly massively consumed. The Canadian writers I shall mention later in this paper, and who are often called 'postmodern', do not sell large numbers of books, are reviewed badly, or not at all, in the popular press, and are in all respects opposed to what is massively consumed (i.e., American schlock). Their reflection of Canadian culture, it must be asserted (even if this seems either obvious or ideologically unpromising), seems to stand at a rather sharp angle to the whole.

4. The 'mainstream' dedication to unexamined principles of 'realism' can take improbable turns. Recently Toronto's Women's Press has become embroiled in a controversy concerning the rights of writers to imagine experience other than their own. Three narratives, contributed to a proposed anthology to be called 'Imagining Women', were rejected at a late stage in the editing process on the grounds that the authors, all white, had appropriated the experience of women of colour by attempting to imagine (i.e., write fiction about) women, not themselves, in African or Latin American contexts. The editorial decision to reject the previously accepted contributions claimed that such appropriations constituted 'structural' racism. The Writers Union of Canada (normally as 'mainstream' as maple sugar) denounced the Women's Press for violating the rights of writers as workers as well as for breaching contract. (See 'Race issue splits Women's Press', *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 9 August, 1988, p.A13.) The proposition is always implicit that, to be 'realistic', the experience of fiction must be authentic or 'sincere'. The corollary, seen in its full grotesqueness, is that fiction must be autobiographical, the exclusive property of an individual (though modified to be read 'group') who has already lived what has been written.
5. I have developed this argument more fully elsewhere. See, 'The metamorphoses of space: magic realism' in Hinchcliffe & Jewinski (1986), pp.61-74.

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