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Translated from the French by Elaine Kennedy

The North and the Great Expanse:
Representations of the North and Narrative Forms
in French-Canadian Literature

Maybe I had entered, through the coincidence of events and landscapes, a contrived, pictorial place of pure memory, which analysis could not reach or frequentation exhaust.¹

IN WESTERN HISTORY, the North is a mythological space shaped by centuries of imaginary figures from Greek writings, Biblical texts, Nordic sagas and accounts by the great explorers. In the twentieth century, the North is portrayed as an elusive land of conquest that recedes when approached. These representations of the North are not mere descriptions of a geographic place; rather they constitute a fascinating multicultural discourse uniquely nurtured by various layers of ancient cultures, carried on by European cultures, fuelled by Nordic cultures and brought into play by indigenous cultures. Established as a discursive system and not as a description,² the North unfolds in its historical depth and, when analysed in literary works, in its narrative function.

In Quebec literature, the North has been an element used to differentiate French-Canadian from French literature, from Louis Fréchette's *Les Fleurs boréales* to contemporary fiction like Lise Tremblay's novels about Saguenay. One can also find a fundamental difference between representations of the North by writers born in Quebec and writers from Europe. Among those, three novelists born in France have been particularly influential to our knowledge of the North at the beginning of the twentieth century and to the creation of a cultural idea of North in Quebec literature: Maurice Constantin-Weyer, who has written a number of works set on the north coast; Marie Le Franc, who has provided a woman's point-of-view representation of the Quebec North; and Louis-Frédéric Rouquette, who has created some ten works on the far North of Canada and Iceland. The North represented by these authors differs both in the ways they create it and in the narrative definitions they give it. The North can be seen in their work as a discursive system applied by convention to a particular territory, but

established more through narrative modes and schemes, figures and intertextual references than through allusion to a geographical referent. Their discourse transcends different cultural and textual forms and is based on different historical layers associated with distinct perspectives of representations.

Even if we can find many literary and cultural works that deal with the representation of the North and winter, it was not until recently that Quebec and Canada began to consider themselves northern cultures, in their own separate ways. For English-speaking Canada, the North has become symbolic, as the need to differentiate Canadian culture from American appeared more pressing and distinctions based on Quebec culture and bilingualism seemed more difficult to justify because of obvious cultural and political rifts. It is paradoxical to see the Canadian identity today defined in representations like the Inukshuk, an Inuit figure symbolising the presence of man in the territory – which is sold in Toronto to foreign tourists – because it represents, as analysts and philosophers are quick to point out, a form of modern colonialism. In an essay on this topic, *Esthétique du pôle nord*, Michel Onfray writes that the Canadian flag in the Arctic remains an emblem of colonisation, and that the symbolism of the maple leaf is inappropriate and out of place in a landscape where the closest maple tree grows 3,000 kilometres south.³ Sherrill E. Grace indicates in her recent work, *Canada and the Idea of North*,⁴ that while the North in Canada is more an idea than an experience, it is still part of the Canadian identity – an idea also expressed by novelist Margaret Atwood when she wrote: ‘I never have gone to James Bay; I never go to it; I never shall. But somehow, I’d feel lonely without it.’⁵ For Quebec, considerations of the North are bound up with the need not so much to differentiate itself from other cultures, but to define a new unifying symbol of identity acceptable to the Inuit, First Nations, French-speaking majority and immigrants,⁶ who see the cold, snow and winter as symbols of a collective challenge and experience. Such depictions of the North, in both Canada and Quebec, require a historical rereading of cultural representations.

The work of geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin has greatly contributed to changing notions about ‘northology’ and has shed light on the fact, known in geography, that the boundary of the Arctic Circle determined by astronomers is merely the limit of the midnight sun⁷ and does not represent the northern character or, as Hamelin says, the polar degree of a place. Montreal, whose latitude is more in line with cities in southern France like Marseille than Scandinavian capitals like

Oslo, has harsh winters and is located at the southernmost limit of the polar region. Paradoxically, the continental climate and the cold current from Labrador, which runs down the gulf and estuary of the St. Lawrence, make Quebec the only place where the Arctic reaches such low latitudes.⁸ Thus, Quebec is the place where the North extends the farthest south.



FIGURE 1: illustration by André Collot, in Louis-Frédéric Rouquette, *Le grand silence blanc* (Paris: Éditions Arc-en-ciel, 1942), p. 32.

The enormous gap between climatology and cultural representations of the North is sometimes what establishes the limits of the imagined. As well, both within and outside Quebec culture, discourse on the North incorporates universal elements associated with ancient myths and the Western conception of culture. A frontier of knowledge, beyond which an inconceivable world unfolds,⁹ the North is a sort of nomadic infinity of desolation and emptiness, which is dangerous because it is devoid of reference points. But it is compelling in fiction because it opens up the potential for a new epistemological conquest of reason, Western civilisation and the strict delimitation of time and space that would put an end to man's last virgin territory. This place at the end of the world is defined by Louis-Frédéric Rouquette as the end of man, beyond which there is nothing, nothing but the desolate vastness of arctic regions where never-ending ice affirms divine power.¹⁰

Seven main representations of the North

While the North is determined by multidisciplinary, universal references, it is also depicted in contexts familiar to each culture and in historical frameworks specific to them. In Quebec, cultural representations of the North, particularly in film and literature, refer to popular elements that may be categorised along seven main lines. The fundamental opposition, on which French Canada was founded, between sedentary and nomadic life – depicted in the safety of the settlers versus the freedom of the trappers – is reflected in two types of northern territories, found in both the history of the country and in its literature. The first representation of the North, that of a space to be colonised, determines what is referred as the ‘historic North’, or regions which were defined as northern during history but are no longer considered as such today; for example, Lac Saint-Jean, the Laurentians, the Mauricie and – in Marie Le Franc’s novel *La Rivière solitaire* – Abitibi and Témiscamingue. The northern character of these regions, all located on the north shore of the St Lawrence, is not so much reflected in their geographic location as it is in the virgin forests to be cleared, the land to be settled and the parishes to be established. This representation spawned novels about settlers, regional accounts and a profusion of pamphlets urging people to return to the land.

Diametrically opposed to the first category, the second representation of the North is that defined by and associated with the adventurer, the trapper, the explorer. The territory evoked is the land to be colonised, but not yet settled, and the prophetic ‘North-west’: the passage taken by discoverers who journeyed along uncharted routes and rivers from west of Montreal up the Great Lakes to Manitoba, and then to the North-west Territories and the tip of Alaska. The body of literature associated with this territory includes accounts by explorers, popular tales, the best known being ‘Chasse-galerie’, and adventure stories, often targeting teenage audiences. *Le grand silence blanc* by Rouquette is a good example of this representation of the North, as are the more Laurentian novels like *Le survenant* by Germaine Guèvremont. *Maria Chapdelaine* by Louis Hémon, a masterpiece of Quebec regional literature, clearly reflects the fundamental ambiguity between the first two representations of the North: the erotic temptation of wild adventure embodied in the figure of the trapper, François Paradis, who traverses virgin forests but freezes to death; and his double, who seeks only to settle fertile land that is farther and farther North, making both reason and the country extend deeper into the forest, the father figure, Ephrem Gagnon.

The third representation of the North is based on the mythology of the First Nations and the Inuit, sometimes invented for the purposes of the writings themselves. Traditionally, these writings were intended to be ethnographic, and refer to the northernmost territories: present-day Nunavik or the far North of Quebec, the land of the Inuit; James Bay, the land of the Cree; and the North Shore, the land of the Montagnais.



FIGURE 2: illustration by Jean L  b  deff, in Louis H  mon, *Maria Chapdelaine* (Paris: Arth  me Fayard   diteur, 1933), p. 5.

The works emblematic of this corpus include the first documentary in film history, *Nanook of the North* (1921) by Robert Flaherty, and the Quebec novel *Agaguk* (1958) by Yves Th  riault. Recently, however, discourse based on ancient myths, ethnography, and works created or written by white people has been questioned, with the self-affirmation of the First Nations and the Inuit. Works like *Atanarjuat* (2001),¹¹ the first Inuit fiction film, and *Sanaaq* by Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk,¹² the first Nunavik novel published by a main editor in French, constitute a reversal of the gaze operated within previous representations of Aboriginals by white authors. Such a reversal redefines discourse on the North through the use of competing stereotypical figures. The far North is no longer

only a land of absolute desolation¹³ described by southern writers, but also a land inhabited and imagined by its inhabitants: *Out There is Somewhere*,¹⁴ as the title of an exhibition about representations of the North, organised by Peter White in 2002, clearly affirms.

Scandinavia comprises the territory traditionally referred to in European etymology as the 'Nordic countries'. It is the fourth representation of the North, and is defined by the mythical land of Thule – described in the fourth century BC in the lost work of the Greek traveller Pytheas – the coastal landscapes of the Vikings, and the insular world depicted in Icelandic sagas. In its extremes, mixed with referential fog specific to the North Pole, Scandinavia appears in Quebec literature in historical novels and fantasy writings set in isolated villages on the Norwegian coast or on the archipelago of Svalbard, as is the case in *La nuit de Magdalena* (1938)¹⁵ by Maurice Constantin-Weyer. The Scandinavia of Quebec is also reflected in the sudden, unexpected appearance of Norwegian or Swedish characters in Northern accounts, such as in *Un sourire dans la tempête* (1934)¹⁶ by Constantin-Weyer and *La montagne secrète* (1961)¹⁷ by Gabrielle Roy.

The fifth representation of the North refers to what Louis-Edmond Hamelin calls 'nordicité saisonnière'¹⁸ (seasonal nordicity) or wintriness. This concept, which varies with the context, time and perspective, brings the issues dealt with permanently in the far North into territories farther south. This brings the challenges associated with the northern climate to interrupt the narrative with a physical challenge, which is meant to be an inner test. Thus, winter opens up the possibility of the sacred, of rites of passage, on the human landscape: man thinks he is confronting nature, but quickly realises that the only true confrontation is within himself. Here all space – and no particular landscape – is dominated by winter and its constraints. Moreover, the perspective of writers who have emigrated North, like the Haitians in Quebec, amplify winter into a new exoticism and joyful discovery: 'nous donnons un grand bal tropical en plein Nord'¹⁹ (we are holding a tropical ball in the midst of the North) writes Joël Des Rosiers, a novelist of Haitian origin, about Montreal. On the other hand, wintriness also appears in the poetry of the Quiet Revolution, in the political condemnation of the failure to take action during the dark period of 1950s Quebec.²⁰

Wintriness is not so far removed from the sixth representation, that of the 'aesthetic North'. In this representation, the North is not defined by its geographic features, but as a world of cold, purity, ice, death, eternity, light, whiteness and darkness. A source of inspiration for poetry and

poetic accounts, it runs through twentieth-century Quebec literature, from the poetry of Émile Nelligan: 'Ma vitre est un jardin de givre'²¹ [my window is a frost garden] to that of Élise Turcotte: 'Le pôle Nord se trouve quelque part dans notre cerveau'²² [the north pole is located somewhere in our brain], and in the formalist novel *Neige noire* (1974)²³ by Hubert Aquin, set in an imaginary Svalbard, a place where narrative time and the possibility of description are suspended.

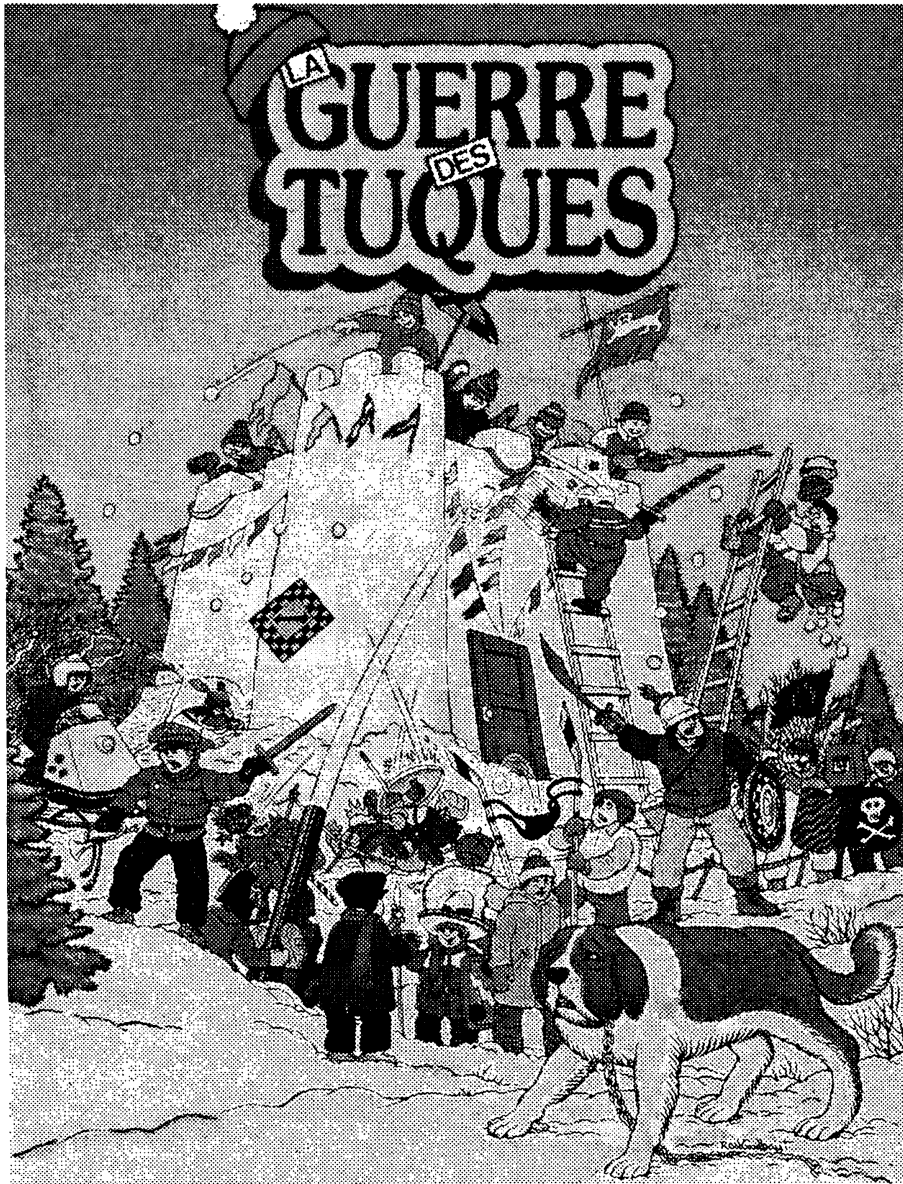


FIGURE 3: Poster from the film by André Melançon, *La guerre des tuques*, 1984.

The last representation of the North, reflecting popular and commercial culture, is the 'imagined North'. It is an idealistic, fantasised world inhabited by a motley crew of wild characters, ranging from Santa Claus to monsters rising out of the ice, talking snowmen, thawed corpses coming back to life, and elves. It is also a purely imaginary world that cannot be located geographically, such as Thule, Atlantis, the Old Norse sacred grounds, utopian Arctic research stations, and Santa's village. A prime setting for children's stories, sci-fi films, tales and legends, the imagined North is represented in a host of works, from *La guerre des tuques* (1984) to Christmas movies, which use only some of the vast narrative potential offered by the discursive system of the North, transposing ancient texts onto contemporary forms.

Three novels of first encounters with the North

These seven representations of the North enable us to discern the relationship between conceptions of the North and the narrative forms underlying them. In Quebec literature, for example, there are three novelists originally from France – Louis-Frédéric Rouquette, Maurice Constantin-Weyer and Marie Le Franc – whose works illustrate the issues associated with different representations of nature, particularly the North, but share a number of formal characteristics.

Le grand silence blanc by Louis-Frédéric Rouquette, published in France in 1921, is in the aesthetic of Jack London; the narrator is a traveller who, during his journey along the American west coast up to the Yukon and the absolute North, meets various characters who give meaning to each of the short chapters that comprise the work. Thus, the novel is structured like a series of sketches, marked by solitude, nostalgia and the quest for gold. The narrator, Freddy, sets off to brave the infinite expanse of the far North. Although he claims he is seeking a fortune in gold, his journey becomes a source of inspiration for his writings; *Le grand silence blanc*, dedicated to his dog Tempest, becomes an account of his travels. In the twenty disconnected chapters of the book, Freddy encounters different people by chance, the odds of which are shown to be infinite, through his random travels in a desert defined by solitude, but inhabited by a few colourful characters: Jessie Marlowe, the wife of the mounted police sergeant from Dawson; Hong-Tcheng-Tsi, a figure known in San Francisco's Chinatown; Kotak, the Inuit; Gregory Land, his chance companion, Bobby le Rouge, the man with the top hat; and

Sandrino, a Florentine pianist from Rupert City. These characters, who have nothing in common, are united by Freddy's wanderings through a territory that seems unlimited but, in a way, determines his entire quest. The most important character for the narrator, however, is Tempest, the husky to whom Rouquette dedicated his novel.

Few women writers have turned their attention to the man's world of the North, where women are seldom represented and then only as objects of lust. Marie Le Franc would appear to be an exception, with such works as *Héliér, fils des bois* (1930)²⁴ and *La Rivière solitaire* (1934).²⁵ The latter recounts the heroic adventure of farmers and city folk who set off for the St Lawrence valley to settle the northern regions of Témiscamingue; it poeticises their journey towards the desolation of the North. Their arrival in the bush gives the impression of destitution: 'Le train s'arrêta au petit village d'Angliers, sur les bords du grand lac Témiscamingue. La voie ferrée finissait là. Après, c'était la brousse, le désert'²⁶ [The train stopped in the small town of Angliers on the shores of the great Lake Témiscamingue. That's where the railway ended. Beyond that was the bush, the desert]. The novel is set in the 1930s, when big cities were grappling with the economic crisis and propaganda was issued urging entire families to settle the vast barren regions of Témiscamingue. The new wave of settlers in *La Rivière solitaire* go beyond cultivated areas into a remote northern region in the middle of the winter, making their survival all the more difficult. Faced with the cold, snow, wind, solitude, isolation and poverty, the small colony on Rivière solitaire becomes the testing ground for a disturbing individual and collective quest to humanise the world. As the months go by, the people struggle to dominate nature, a harsh adversary: those who lose the battle have no choice but to leave. The personification of nature in this novel reflects the relationship between man and his environment.

La nuit de Magdalena (1938),²⁷ by prolific novelist Maurice Constantin-Weyer – who published some 60 works between 1921 and 1964, including *Un homme se penche sur son passé* which garnered the Goncourt prize in 1928 – recounts the journey of a French man to Svalbard, where he meets a Norwegian scientist and her husband who are conducting research on meteorology, magnetism and the aurora borealis. In a strange love triangle which reflects insular life, the ice is personified, hemming in the characters and continually striving to push them toward the Arctic sea. In the end, it is not the ice, but the cold and snow that get the better of Ejnar, Clara's husband, as he lets himself die. The work portrays the impossibility of inaction in Arctic regions: to kill himself,

Ejnar simply did nothing, remained inert in the snow, and hoped his wife would start anew with the narrator. However, after a brief romance, the couple is forced to admit defeat. The narrator returns to France, but through his journey to Spitzbergen, he has come to reject the values of civilisation and has undergone an inner transformation in which the elements of the North played an active role: the ice, which constantly dominates and crushes; the light, which becomes absent and changes perceptions of time; the predominance of blue, and the mute sound of the glaciers all contribute to creating an environment that is unreal.

Discourse, territory and the imaginary

These three novels about the North show that the relationship between the territory and its representation is determined more by discursive elements than by mere description of geographical referents. In all three novels, there is a structural link between the choice of territory evoked, the narrative mode, the types of encounters that spur the action, the relationship with nature and its personification, and the determination for the characters to embark on an inner quest. In *Le grand silence blanc*, the narrator roams through a northern space, akin to an endless womb of solitude, populated by different characters who contribute to the random potential of the journey through their adventures. The narrative mode follows this random path, picking up on the quest against the cold and solitude in the short disconnected chapters: in this setting, there is no need to settle down, to clear a space for oneself, to fight the invasion of the forest. This issue is more one of giving meaning to the emptiness of the land and forgetting the reasons for one escape in yet another escape further down the line, which nonetheless comes up against more metaphysical limits, that is, those of madness. The relationship with the land, however implacable, is one of dangerous seduction: as Rouquette says, 'la terre du Nord, mangeuse d'hommes, attire comme une maîtresse'²⁸ [the Northern landscape, a man-eater, lures like a mistress].

This quest, this voyage in an Arctic womb devoid of reference points, seems almost entertaining in comparison with the escape to the North in *La Rivière solitaire*. In this novel, the characters' relationship with the environment is the result of their economic and psychological distress and their difficult obligation to produce results. Without training, the appropriate equipment or support, the poor men and women in this

novel have to do their best as settlers, cut down the forest surrounding them, clear a patch of fertile land on which they can survive. The form of the novel is that of an epic, with the characters brought together by chance in a new northern settlement, struggling individually against the cold and nature. Although they have to cut down trees, the forest is sometimes personified as a friend that fights against a common enemy – the cold, which Marie Le Franc describes as an invasive creature: ‘Vers le matin, le froid se glissa sous les portes, rampa sous les fenêtres à triple épaisseur de vitre’²⁹ [Towards morning, the cold slipped under the doors, crept under the triple-pane windows]. The only benign symbol of life in this ice-hardened land is the unrelenting river that seemed ‘vouloir échapper à l’emprise du Nord par cette agitation sans fin, angoissante à regarder’³⁰ [to try to escape the grip of the North through its endless movement, which was agonising to watch], but necessary to imitate in order to survive. In this land, unremitting movement and despair appeared to be the only ways to escape inhumane nature.

Although the framework of the scientific expedition in *La nuit de Magdalena* should have imposed some rationality, the narrator feels the need to personify nature and the cold in this intimate but lonely world. The storyline is defined through both its psychological and adventurous dimensions. The land portrayed, the north of the North, is in the form of an island whose shores are ice-covered: ‘La colossale beauté de ces architectures de glace et de roches, écrit le narrateur, me dominait, m’écrasait. Jamais . . . la nature ne s’était imposée à moi avec tant de force’³¹ [The colossal beauty of these ice and rock sculptures dominated me, crushed me. Never had nature prevailed over me with such force].

The narrative representations of the North, defined first by a political context, then by an accumulation of centuries of discourse, are also marked by historical situations specific to their context of expression. The North thus poses, in an original way, the question of the relationship between a geographical referent and the imagined.³² In these novels, this relationship is determined by the choice of place (which has an impact on the structure of the novel and the narrative schemes) and by the recurrence of elements, situations and characters who make up the imagined North. Although the North is first seen as a place of escape, it is also a place of great desolation, devoid of reference points, which leads to an inner challenge and, in some cases, to madness. In this notional disorder and stark solitude, nature, the elements and the odd animal are personified and assume the stature of characters. Sometimes the North as a whole becomes active, thus excluding the possibility of inaction from

the narration. The infinite expanse of the Yukon, the misery of settling Témiscamingue and the insular unreality of Svalbard pit the characters of the North against extreme solitude and climatic conditions, forcing them to confront themselves. This inner confrontation sometimes leads to madness, albeit ephemeral, which is embodied in a wild animal, as in Rouquette's novel: 'mon Dieu! s'écrit-il épargnez-moi, éloignez de mon cerveau l'affreuse bête qui ronge; je la sens, elle arrive, elle vient, elle est là . . . Moi qui n'ai pas reculé devant le grizzli des Rocheuses, j'ai peur. Je suis tout seul, Seigneur, ne m'abandonnez pas! tout seul, perdu dans l'immensité blanche de la terre polaire'³³ [God! Save me, take my mind off this hideous beast that's gnawing at me; I can sense it, it's here, it's coming, it's here . . . I didn't back down from a grizzly in the Rockies but, here, I'm afraid. I'm all alone, Lord, don't leave me! all alone, all alone, lost in the white expanse of the Arctic].

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Notes

1. Michel Rio, *Mélancolie Nord* (Paris: Seuil, coll. 'Points', 1997 [1982]), p. 75.
2. The characteristics of this discursive system can be found in figures (iceberg, Inuit, Viking, Santa Claus, monsters, polar bear, etc.) and in descriptions of places (North Pole, Ungava, Svalbard, Russia, Alaska, land at the end of the world, etc.), but also in colours (white, blue, etc.), in elements (cold, snow, ice, wild forest, desolation, alcohol, nomadic life, etc.) and in comparisons (with desert, South, etc.).
3. Michel Onfray, *Esthétique du pôle nord* (Paris: Grasset, 2002), p. 124.
4. Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal and Kingston:

- McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
5. Margaret Atwood, 1987, quoted by Frédéric Lasserre in 'Le mythe du Nord', *Géographie et cultures*, 21 (1997), 60 n.1.
 6. It is interesting to note that when Quebec writers born abroad define their sense of belonging, they do not necessarily use the term 'Québécois', but rather refer to the wintriness and nordicity of Quebec and, particularly, Montreal.
 7. Yvon Pouliot, 'Le Québec dans le monde nordique', *Le naturaliste canadien*, 122: 2 (Summer 1998), 49.
 8. Yvon Pouliot, 'Le Québec dans le monde nordique', 50.
 9. According to Monique Mund-Dopchie, 'Pour les poètes latins de l'empire romain et des premiers royaumes barbares, celle-ci incarne la limite septentrionale de l'oecumène, au-delà de laquelle surgit l'inconnu, l'inhumain.' [For the Latin poets of the Roman Empire and the first barbaric kingdoms, this embodied the northern limit of the conceivable world, beyond which lay the unknown, the inhuman.] In 'La survie littéraire de la Thulé de Pythéas. Un exemple de la permanence de schémas antiques dans la culture européenne', *L'Antiquité classique*, 59 (1990), 81.
 10. *L'épopée blanche* (Paris: J. Ferenczi et fils, éditeurs, 1926), p. 195.
 11. Directed by Zacharias Kunuk.
 12. Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk, *Sanaaq* (Montréal: Les Éditions internationales Alain Stanké, 2002).
 13. Louis-Frédéric Rouquette, *Le grand silence blanc* (Castelnau-le-Lez: Éditions Climats, 1996 [1921]), p. 82.
 14. *Out There is Somewhere: The Arctic in Pictures* is a collaborative project between Edmonton Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Windsor, curated by Peter White in 2002.
 15. Maurice Constantin-Weyer, *La nuit de Magdalena* (Paris: Librairie des Champs-Élysées, coll. 'Bibliophile', 1938).
 16. Maurice Constantin-Weyer, *Un sourire dans la tempête* (Paris: Éditions Rieder, coll. 'Prosateurs français contemporains', 1934).
 17. Gabrielle Roy, *La montagne secrète* (Montréal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1961).
 18. Hamelin writes the following in this respect: 'Historiquement, le vocabulaire de la nordicité, d'abord réservé à la zone polaire proprement dite, a gagné vers le sud. C'est donc par extension spatiale et par analogie, et cela en rapport à une ou deux saisons hivernales dans l'année, que l'on parle de nordicité temporaire, nordicité hivernale, nordicité plurimensuelle ou nordicité saisonnière. On se situe au sud du monde circumnordique proprement dit, soit, dans l'Est canadien, approximativement au sud des

48e - 50e degrés de latitude.' [Historically, the terminology designating nordicity originally referred to the Arctic region properly speaking, then to areas farther south. It is thus by extension in space and by analogy with the winter season that we have come to speak of *temporary nordicity*, *wintry nordicity*, *multimonthly nordicity* and *seasonal nordicity*.] In *Discours du Nord* (Québec: Gétic, 2002), p. 41.

19. Quoted by Suzanne Giguère in *Passeurs culturels. Une littérature en mutation. Entretiens* (Québec: Les Éditions de l'IQRC, 2001), p. 111.
20. At the same time, some novels, like *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* (Marie-Claire Blais, 1965) use wintriness as a way to criticise regionalism.
21. Émile Nelligan, 'Soir d'hiver', *Poésies complètes, 1896–1899* (Montréal: Fides, coll. 'Nénuphar', 1952), p. 82.
22. Élise Turcotte, *La terre est ici* (Montréal: Vlb éditeur, 1989), p. 65.
23. Hubert Aquin, *Neige noire* (Montréal: La Presse, 1974).
24. Marie Le Franc, *Héliar, fils des bois* (Paris: Rieder, 1930).
25. Marie Le Franc, *La Rivière solitaire* (Paris: J. Ferrenzi et fils, 1934).
26. Marie Le Franc, *La Rivière solitaire* (Montréal: Fides, coll. 'Nénuphar', 1957 [1934]), p. 15.
27. Constantin-Weyer, *La nuit de Magdalena*.
28. Rouquette, *Le grand silence blanc*, pp. 78–79.
29. Le Franc, *La Rivière solitaire* (1957 edn), p. 18.
30. Le Franc, *La Rivière solitaire* (1957 edn), p. 21.
31. Constantin-Weyer, *La nuit de Magdalena*, p. 24.
32. Previous studies examined the representation of Montreal in literary works – among them, Pierre Nepveu and Gilles Marcotte (eds), *Montréal imaginaire* (Montréal: Fides, 1992) – but mostly in a realistic way, which isn't always the case for the representation of the North.
33. Rouquette, *Le grand silence blanc*, pp. 100–01.