

“Travels through forbidden geography”:
Métis Trappers and Traders
Louis Goulet and Ted Trindell

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THE “MEMOIRS” of the Métis trappers and traders Louis Goulet (1859-1936) and Ted Trindell (1900-81) are among the first sources that depict ways in which the colonized Métis represent themselves, their Native relatives, the Indians, and the white man. As part of a considerable indigenous contribution to the Canadian literature of the western plains, which has been almost completely neglected, these “memoirs” belong to the genre of as-told-to life history. The as-told-to life history is, by its very definition, of a dialogic nature:

In it, the reader is placed inside the dialogue between two voices or perspectives, between the subject (informant) and the interviewer (anthropologist); this is, in the simplest terms, what we refer to as the extra degree of dialogicity that distinguishes the *life history (auto-)biography* from the other two—the “purer”—forms of “biography.”
(Isernhagen 222)

Life histories as texts of mediation and cultural hybridity, created in collaboration with and filtered through an Other consciousness, represent an “extra degree of dialogicity” and at times a thinly camouflaged “double autobiography” of both interrogator and interrogatee (Langness 99). The “memoirs” are Métis literature, which grows out of oral performance. The “frame narrative” that establishes the con/text (and may consist of the voices of the interviewer, translator, editor or of historical documents) constructs the text formally as oral (see Hochbruck 15). Whereas in Louis Goulet the “frame narrative” encompasses the whole text, in Trindell the frame remains open. In the case of the life history of Louis Goulet, the gap between the narrator and the reader is even further widened by the translation of the original

French text into English, thereby adding yet another dialogical process. In addition to the external dialogue between two (or more) people, a "spacial communication act," life histories also incorporate an internal historicizing dialogue between an "earlier" and a "later" self, a "temporal communication act" (Lotman 22). In this essay, the genre of the life history is understood to be not only of documentary, but also of literary importance as a genre in which the narrator imagines himself in the act of storytelling and questions the monologic master narrative of dominant eastern Canada. Goulet's and Trindell's life histories must be perceived as "traces" in the construction of a Métis self in relation to its Other(s). Questions of difference, mediation, and dialogicity are, therefore, at the centre of these texts.

The importance of *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet and Ted Trindell: Métis Witness to the North* lies, on the one hand, in their rejection of the stereotypical uniformity of the Native Other and in their success in depriving the language system of its apparently "naive absence of conflict" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 368), thereby acknowledging the presence of an "alien" linguistic consciousness within the speaker's discourse, and, on the other hand, in their constitution of a peripatetic tradition in Métis literature. I will argue that in contrast to the immobile, sedentary white Other, the travel-trope or the (semi-) nomadic life-style of the Métis is a major factor in the constitution of difference and some kind of ethnic identity. This identity in its dialogic orientation, however, resists binary closures. It is, despite occasional tendencies towards a monologic discourse, constantly shifting and contaminated with "traces" of the Other's voice. The memoirs, shaped by hidden dialogues, reveal, apart from occasional instances of sameness between Métis and Indians (usually in relation to the perception of nature and cultural change and in opposition to the modernization implemented by the white Other), a multitude of differences and distinctions between Métis and Indians. Nomad thought "moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference" (Massumi 5). These two life histories also represent a cross-section of different kinds of Métis origins and definitions. While Louis Goulet is a French-speaking Métis of Manitoba, Ted Trindell is a trapper of the Northwest Territories.

I "My Vagabond Life": Louis Goulet (1859-1936)

It was an awe-inspiring and unforgettable sight to see hundreds of ox carts loaded with human clusters, making their way towards the buffalo country in three or more parallel lines. What made this scene of an entire population on the march even more picturesque was a noisy assembly of dogs, hundreds of them, who always tagged along with the travellers.

GUILLAUME CHARETTE, *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet*

Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet is the English translation of the French original *L'Espace de Louis Goulet* by Guillaume Charette, published in 1976 by Editions Bois-Brulés (Winnipeg) and edited by its founder Emile Pelletier (1917-79). Charette (1884-1952), for many years president of *L'Union Nationale Métisse*, collected the material for his biography of Goulet, the *voyageur* and prairie Métis from Manitoba, in 1930, "just as it came from the lips of the narrator, reaped in bundles of stenographic notes as he paused to pull on a good pipe of 'hart rouge'" (ix).

The title of Goulet's memoirs, *Vanishing Spaces*, functions programmatically as a microtext, which helps our reading of the macrotext as a document of accelerated change in the Canadian West, the closure of the frontier, the volatile communication between the different races, as well as the loss of geographical space and, therefore, of a unique nomadic existence on both sides of the international border. Despite the translator's effort to remain as close as possible to its "authentic form" (ix) by means of the inclusion of original French expressions, the act of translation from French to English adds a further degree of dialogicity to Goulet's as-told-to life history. Goulet himself exemplifies the problem of "translation," "unnaming," linguistic appropriation, and language imperialism when he refers to the various alienating linguistic changes to place and river names:

I came into the world on October 6, 1859 by the banks of the Gratias River, a tiny stream branching into the Red River a few miles downstream from the United States. The Gratias got its name from a type of burdock that grew thick on the banks for the whole length of the river. The old-time Métis used to call that burdock *gratchias*. (1)

Goulet's dialogue between his French-speaking Métis self and his English Other is grounded in moments of "now" and "then."

inscribing origins (and hence identity) by dates and places that trigger off further strands of his "vagabond life" (165): "Those names bring back so many things, so many memories" (42). With the name change of the Gratias River to Morris River, for example, the Métis of Goulet's generation are transferred into a world of difference and the status of the subaltern. By an act of "unnaming," the plains are re-defined as empty and without history by an alien(ating) tradition, thereby negating the priority of Métis and Indian presence. Further examples that highlight the ontological impact of this alterity of perception of space by the "[n]ewcomers especially from Ontario" (59) abound and are mirrored in the gradual appropriation of the Métis voice and in the act of "renaming" the local landscape. Goulet's reminiscences, in their inclination to (re)etymologize, tentatively reclaim and, in Deleuze and Guattari's term, "reterritorialize" the space of the prairie for future Métis generations. As the translator's notes show, this process of reclaiming places and their names has already been successful in some cases. Potentially, Goulet's voice undermines the Orientalizing discourse of official white Anglo-Canadian history by making the absent present again. At times, however, Goulet himself is in danger of "translating" other voices into a monologic discourse of his own.

In *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet*, Métis ethnic identity is often constructed as binary. In its rhetorical strategies, the text corresponds to some Native American autobiographies examined by Arnold Krupat in *The Voice in the Margin*. These autobiographies, like parts of Goulet's life history,

suppress the dialogic or collective constitution of both Native self and autobiographical text. It is the aim of these autobiographies to attain to—in my view, to submit to—one or another monologic model of the self and the text as given by the dominant Euramerican culture at a particular moment in time, to accommodate themselves to a reigning authoritative discourse. (134)

In the language of this hegemonic discourse, Indians, for example, are met with "continuous mistrust" (17) and depicted as "hostile or potentially hostile . . . always on the look out for a chance to pillage or commit other forms of larceny" (20). Even their breed of horses is interpreted as an allegorical representation of difference of the character of their owners:

The big difference between the two, besides their physique, was that the cayuse [the typical Métis horse] was like a dog; you always knew pretty well what you had on your hands, whereas the bronco was like an Indian; you couldn't trust him until you'd known him for a while. (75)

Employing the monologic voice of Catholic indoctrination as well as the popular captivity and Indian war genres of the nineteenth century, Goulet describes the bloody incidents at Frog Lake, Alberta, in 1885. He calls the Indians, whose "fiendish look reminded me of demons fit for hell-fire" (122), "dirty dogs" (120) fond of eating lice (149), and refers to their children as a "brood of little savages" (131, 135). With horror he relates how the Indians tear out the heart of Gowan, a policeman they had killed (133), while, correspondingly, the following Sundance ceremony is perceived solely in terms of self-mutilation and as devoid of religious significance.

Similarly, white people find themselves incorporated into the same Othering discourse: "If there was any trouble, it was always uninvited strangers ('Peters' we called them) who caused it. They were usually White men looking to pick a fight with somebody" (45). Stressing the cohesive force of traditional Métis community life, cultural change, rapid modernization, and any form of conflict is perceived as having "come along . . . with each wave of people from the outside" (47). In his authoritative voice, Goulet maintains that

[n]ewcomers, especially the ones from Ontario, were eagerly sowing racial and religious conflict, banding together to fan the flames of discord between different groups in the Red River Settlement. These *émigrés* from Ontario, all of them Orangemen, looked as if their one dream in life was to make war on the Hudson's Bay Company, the Catholic Church and anyone who spoke French. (59)

White people are considered as not fit enough to survive in the wilderness and generally "to be of good riddance." When Goulet is forced by Little Big Belly to participate in the Indian uprising of 1885, and to shoot at Colonel Steele's troops in order to save his own life, he bluntly states: "Luckily it wasn't anybody but . . . a few *Anglais!*" (141).

Goulet depicts North America as one big open space. Characteristically, on the map inside the front and back covers of his

memoirs, the border between the United States and Canada is merely a thin and interrupted line, whereas natural geographical features dominate. Nevertheless, the international border seems to coincide with, and to have helped to develop (although somewhat vaguely) some sense of an identity distinct from the American one. This distinction is based largely on moral difference. In Goulet's view, the 49th parallel delimits "the good old days and the golden age" (14) of the Métis with its "virgin prairie, with all the buffalo" (42), the "communal, pastoral life" (43) with close family ties, self-reliance, and virtues, from the godless, lawless, and vicious Americans, the harbingers of change. According to Goulet's own experience, the "moral decline" of all those who worked and wintered-over in the United States was "a result of our contact with the Americans" (45): "Commerce and industry grew too much, too fast at the expense of moral and religious development" (46), whereas "the hunters who wintered in Canadian territory escaped this contamination almost entirely" (45). In March 1881, at the age of twenty-two, Louis Goulet travelled to Montana, "a refuge for gangs" (46), where he worked for eighteen months as a scout for the American government. Despite his fond memories of his defeat of the famous pugilist John L. Sullivan, his financial success, his good looks, and posh clothes — so ardently rejected by the "salvationist" voice of his "later" self (Krupat, *Voice* 142) — it is, in his view, also "a time when the worst savages in the Wild West were the cowboys" (92), a time "when the Bad Men used to visit mining towns and logging camps periodically" (101). Time and again, Goulet's voice subverts the romantic images of the "old Wild West" established by the American master narrative by testifying, for example, to "the summary hangings imposed on horse thieves by the vigilantes" (94). The brutality and racism of these vigilantes were notorious:

Before long they were lynching for any kind of theft, murder or rape, especially in the case of Indians, Mexicans or Negroes. Americans were less subject to this punishment, and yet it wasn't because they were any more saintly! (95)

Although the narrative voice in *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet* initially attempts to construct a Métis identity by a means of a "them" and "us" dichotomy, Goulet's nomadic

ability to move between two cultures and to have sympathies for both defers a single-voiced discourse and a binary closure of the text. Instead, the text explodes into a myriad of competing voices, styles, or speech genres such as the voice of the pastoral and the oral tradition, the travel account, the "objective" voice of authority and authenticity based on Goulet's "true-life examples" (8), the voice of Indian mysticism and Métis superstition, the voice of the humorous anecdote and the tall tale, the voice of social justice and ecological preservation, and the discourse of religious "salvationism." In Bakhtin's terminology, Goulet's memoirs are like a "speech of innumerable, shifting others, incorporated into a single speaker's utterance" (*Dialogic* 260). Two or more voices are harnessed into one, while the text resists and inscribes contrary meanings simultaneously. Goulet is aware of the word as an ideological sign determined by the "chronotope" (time-space) in which it is uttered and, hence, that his voice sounds with or is contaminated by other voices and contexts: "Discourse lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 281):

The Sioux [who] camped near us were the same ones who'd taken part in the massacre of Custer in 1876. I'm talking like the Americans, who used that word whenever they lost to the Indians but spoke of great victories when they won. (80)

Affirming the word's temporal orientation, Bakhtin perceives that language as "a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion . . . lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" (*Dialogic* 293). Métis society as a polyglossic society is characterized by a simultaneous presence and interaction of several languages and registers in a single cultural system. Indian and French expressions infiltrate Goulet's text and are even highlighted in italics. Polyglossia and racial liminality, being both "us" and "them," give access to different modes of existence, which can act, along with humour, as tools of mimicry and survival in times of racial tensions: "It wasn't so bad if you could speak French, because then you could pass for a Métis and for once that was a help, even useful!" (100). His function as translator, as well as his Métis identity, saves Goulet's life during the Frog Lake incident (127) and his subsequent captivity.

The result of this multi-voiced, nomadic discourse is, despite an intermittent overpowering tendency towards an authoritative monologue, a textual openness and freedom, which attempts to re-create in literature the "vanishing spaces" of Goulet's childhood and mirrors the contradictory social reality in a time of cultural transition. Furthermore, this textual openness constitutes the major element for the communication with other cultures and future generations:

The dialogic novel, by virtue of its inconclusive nature, is an open structure. Not only does it give the reader maximum scope for interference through interpretation but, as it traverses cultures, it sounds and resounds anew. (Shevtsova 753-54)

Incorporating a polyphony of opposing voices, the text frustrates any simplistic definition of identity, which excludes Otherness, as, now and again, Otherness is realized to be sameness. The demonization of the Indians in his "salvationist" description of the Frog Lake massacre along with its carnivalistic excesses and inversion of social hierarchies, is a case in point. It illustrates the fear of the proximate and explains the insistence on the Otherness of the Indian. Goulet may be pretending to see this excess as madness, its "delirious discourse" (Foucault 188) "the voice of absolute otherness" (Patterson 27). The "cross-dressing" scene during the massacre can be interpreted symbolically as a parodical Indian appropriation of difference (an exchange of positions as defined by Bakhtin's carnival) and to close the gap between Indian self and white Other. Similarly, Sitting Bull's appeal to notions of sameness and racial relatedness in order to gain Métis support after the Sioux had had to flee across the border into Canada ("Right now, our only allies are the Métis, who are also our relatives through their Indian mothers" [84]), is rejected by the white half of Goulet's mixed identity. When Sitting Bull drew his pistol, Goulet, as he was to boast later on, threw the Sioux leader out and "gave him a few kicks in the rear" (86), thereby victimizing and relegating the Indian Other to the ridiculed subaltern fool of a slapstick-comedy. The notion, created by a monologic model of the self, that differences between Indians (especially Sioux) as dehumanized Others and the saintly Métis are absolute, is undercut by Goulet's musings on

what might have happened if he had started farming at the age of twenty-three: "It's even possible I might have gone back to the ways of my ancestors because at one time I fancied taking a Sioux woman for wife" (99). Prairie life is depicted as both a unifying (the physical space as a zone where differences collapse into an identity devoid of binaries) and dividing point, because of the economic competition between the Métis and the Indians on the one hand and the shared nomadic life-style and traditions on the other. The disappearance of the open spaces and the victimization of Native peoples diminishes former differences and the expressed empathy re-connects Métis self and Indian Other:

When I saw the prairie bereft of its immense herds of buffalo and the Indians like lost souls in their solitude and apathy, I myself felt forlorn and so sick with loathing I didn't know what to do or think any more. When I tell you I was disgusted, I mean every word! (192)

On the one hand, the Métis understand themselves as the rightful inheritors of the Indian way of life on the open prairie due to their ancestry and "superiority": "The Métis whom they'd first learned to fear then respect . . . travelled the same way they once did" (17). On the other hand, they see themselves as the proud "precursors of modern civilization" (15). In addition, the "old-time Métis, like the Indians" share "a taboo against taking advantage of a dance to kill prairie chickens" (31), partake in some aspects of Indian mysticism (7), storytelling, and superstition (42). The famous Métis Red River Jig in its origins is even connected to the Indian drum (43). *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet* is, indeed, as Ray Ellenwood says in his Afterword, "the portrait of a man and a society full of ambiguities" (170). It is a prime example of a text that epitomizes Krupat's notion of "dialogic models of the self" (133). The Métis self becomes the site/sight/cite of intersecting boundaries, a hybrid, and is caught as a mediator in a continual (and potentially violent) dialogue between the cultures. Stylistically, the discourse of the Métis self is like the polyphonic novel, "*dialogic through and through*. Dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure; that is, they are juxtaposed contrapuntally" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). Moreover, the notion of a single Métis

identity has to be replaced by a continuum or a proliferation of possible kinds of Métis identities: "Indian Métis" (114), "Métis of Scot descent," "French Métis," "Sioux Métis" (116), and "Métis-Indian" (134).

II "Roamer of the North": Ted Trindell

You have no time to cultivate and stay in one place, because of your way of life. It's the way the woods are, the game. . . . When the game goes away, you move camp. You keep moving camp, follow your game. . . . Now, every month we go and look for welfare, whatever we can get. These days you got it free from the land, so you didn't have to go to no special place as long as you were in game country.

I think I would go back to that, because you had no worries about debts, you eat and that's all you need.

JEAN MORISSET, *Ted Trindell: Métis Witness to the North*

Ted Trindell: Métis Witness to the North (1986) is the memoir of a well-known Métis-Dene, who spent 35 years in the bush of the Liard River country, Northwest Territories, as a trapper, and who, when fur prices dropped in the 1950s, lived for another thirty years in town as a community health worker, Métis Association field worker, and tourist guide. Trindell died in 1981. As the "Shakespeare of the Slavey," he was widely known as a storyteller and Native philosopher. Fluent in Chipewyan, English and French, Trindell was Pierre Elliott Trudeau's interpreter during his trip to the Nahani Indians. Repeatedly, there were attempts to reclaim him as a cultural icon by various groups of the Canadian north: "He became the official image of the genuine northern Métis. Even the Prince of Wales Museum in Yellowknife has used Ted Trindell as the Métis figure for its display on Northern people," whereas the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) used him to "represent a Dene image" (28n.). Terry Cousineau even wrote a ballad of Ted Trindell. Trindell's memoirs were compiled and edited from tapes and correspondence by Jean Morisset, a French Canadian anthropologist and professor of geography at the Université du Québec, and Rose-Marie Pelletier, a political scientist and his wife. Morisset is also the author of *Les chiens s'entre-dévoient: Indiens, blancs et métis dans le*

Grand Nord canadien, a study of the colonial situation in the North in the context of the 1973-74 pipeline projects.

The importance of Trindell's memoirs in the context of a Métis aesthetics and politics of nomadology is that "he spoke the enduring languages of that geography of the mind, which both the education system and the government systems have been fighting against so violently since they have moved up to the North country" (21). His "so subtle, so strong, so seducing, so damn bright and so contradictory," not-always-reliable, "ambiguous," "shrewd," "fighting, double-edged mind" (20) expresses the ambivalent, nomadic Métis universe and the polyphony of voices, which often find expression within a single utterance. French or Indian expressions are usually put in italics. In *Ted Trindell: Métis Witness to the North* code-switching and grammatical idiosyncracies become the dominant mode and mirror a truly hybrid identity, as well as unresolved linguistic tensions and cultural conflict. Code-switching as a textual strategy "explore[s] a borderland between dominating and dominated culture" (Klooss 356). In Trindell's life history non-English languages usually receive no additional typographical weight, but are incorporated on equal terms. Trindell opens the chapter on Native and Christian beliefs, and how he came to believe in both, in the following way:

Moi, quand j'étais jeune ma grand-mère connaissait pas le Great Spirit. She didn't know what that was. Rien q'des superstitions, eh? Croyance occulte, animal or whatever. Witchcraft—it's all over the world—les nègres, Africa, Mexico. (48)

Often Trindell likes to construct a sentence using both French and English: "J'ai jamais réussi à avoir my diploma! But I think I can do some carpenter work for myself, eh!" (120). Sometimes the second part of the sentence repeats or translates the first part into the other language: "And if you got into drifts, you had to break trail and then rebreak trail. Quais on dit faire les chemins—making the road" (97). Trindell's hybrid language is both English and French, and, at the same time, neither of them. His peripatetic voice (like Morisset's) is always on the threshold, between the two. It is double-voiced:

The language is not entirely French and it is not English. What else could it be? Obviously it is Dene. This book speaks in English but it is

not English that speaks through it. There are two languages, Dene and Canadien. C'est le sujet de ce livre. It's so simple.

(Introduction 22)

The authoritative French language Trindell had learnt in school, "Grey Nun's French" or "Missionary French," has been appropriated, subverted, adjusted, and stripped of its background of Catholic self-righteousness and condescension and thereafter transformed into a Dene language along with English. This "patois Métis" represents a subversion of the normalizing French language purism and is a critique of the (ab)use the French made of the Métis in their political dealings with English Canada. Nevertheless, it seems to be used reluctantly "probably because it was 'la langue des vaincus,' whereas English was the language of the victor. It is considered a sub-language, not official" (23). Out of a sense of survival, taking his imagery as usual from nature and his nomadic life-style as a hunter, Trindell proposes a position of mimicry (note the double-voiced punning) and a sense of humour for Native people: "And as I say, you can learn the ways of different animals, how they act, how to outwit them in order to make a living out of it" (47), or to "counteract everything" by playing "the game" (139); "otherwise there's nothing you can do, only smile" (135). To him, "dressing up," that is, playing up, to the image of the archetypal Indian by people who have lost their traditions is "just camouflage," because for Trindell true Indians like his ancestors "never showed off, or sang, 'I'm an Indian'" (41). Trindell's linguistic liminality corresponds to his racial liminality. He is both Métis (his father was a French-speaking Scot with Indian blood) and Dene (his mother was a Slavey Indian). Officially, however, Trindell is a non-treaty Indian and, as such, treated as a white man without any of the privileges of the "citizens plus" treaty Indians. Trindell resented the impossibility of "trac[ing]" (40) his ancestry when the 1921 treaty was signed. The recognition of the Métis as a distinct Native people of Canada in 1983 came too late for him:

We are stuck in between. Renegades. You know Louis Riel. . . . So we're left in between. But we paid our way. I paid my way, so I don't really care.

Besides, when you're treaty, well, you're not a man with any pride at all. The white man thinks that treaty Indians are just living off tax

money, and all that. . . . Sure, when it comes down to paying tax, we are white men, but publicly we are still Indians. We are not ashamed of it. We're proud of what we are. (73-74)

In this passage, Trindell's mixed-blood voice sounds with the voices of Métis, Indian, and white people alike. According to people who knew him, Trindell was "a man of many cultures," a man with "many personalities amongst which he did not seem to be able to make a definite choice" (25). Ted Trindell's multi-voiced discourse, with its striking emphasis on similes, tends towards a monologism (or "unequal dialogism") based on binary oppositions ("that awful big gap," [137]) such as past-present, white-Native, civilized-"primitive" (33), Native fur trapping-white environmentalism, north-south, and victim-victimizer. Simultaneously, however, he continues to affirm the relativity of cultural values and the fundamental sameness of human existence, although the procedures within cultures might be different:

I go out in the bush and shoot a moose, three or four hundred pounds, and money-wise, I'm equal to you: you got the cash, and I got the meat.

So you work like an Indian. You are only working for your living. The white man's way, you get the money, you accumulate the money, but you spend it buying grub. It's the same thing, only different ways. That's all. (104)

Eventually, expecting the end of his life, all differences and identity-constituting borders collapse into notions of essential sameness. In his confessional, "salvationist," voice, Trindell maintains that "we're all the same. We see, we smell, we hear, we like, we dislike" (162). In accordance with Trindell's geographical position at the northern periphery of Canada, his contribution as a witness to the Métis wars of resistance is, compared with Goulet, small, but nevertheless revisionist (73, 129).

The "memoirs" of the Métis trappers and voyageurs Louis Goulet and Ted Trindell are collective or collaborative texts of a highly ambivalent nature. In the light of the inquiries above, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the "multiaccentuality" of discourse and his attack on the notion of a separable self, free of external influ-

ences, lends itself to the (auto-)biographical genre and becomes especially illuminating for the interpretation of texts written by peoples of mixed ancestry. Despite, at times, pronounced tendencies towards racial stereotyping and a "salvationist" monologism or point of view as a means of border maintenance, Goulet and Trindell resist simplistic definitions of identity, which would consistently exclude Otherness, and each acknowledges diversity within his own voice (being, after all, racially and culturally both "them" and "us"). A double consciousness, shifting loyalties, ambivalent socialization patterns, "novelistic" qualities, and an ironic vision are the ontological effects of the conflicting forces behind the experience of ethnic liminality. Attempts towards cultural mediation or transcendence, which would collapse differences between competing voices and argue for a fundamental sameness (a position Trindell seems to adhere to in his later stage of spiritual re-awakening) are just as much rejected by the double-voiced discourse as are models of the self uniquely based on an exclusion of all other voices.

The "novelistic" life histories of these Métis trappers and traders are not only prime examples of "dialogic models of the self," but more importantly, one might argue, initiators of a new genre or, at least, another aspect in a series of "lost and found traditions" (Coe 12). It seems appropriate to use the term peripatetic or nomadic for this genre due to its cultural, historic, linguistic, and literary context. In this peripatetic genre the Métis self is clearly an ideological construct and a location of uncertainty and shifting alliances in race relationships. Nomadology, as a deconstructive poetics of categories such as Otherness and sameness, is closely linked to an itinerant and restless life-style, the valorization of open spaces as a "zone of contact" where discourse can be dialogized (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 346), to a regional consciousness, to a position of ex-centric liminality—"In and Out Off and On," in Trindell's words (69)—and to a tradition of "border-jumping" between racial, linguistic, and political (the international boundary) categories. The episodic structure of the life histories of Métis trappers and traders, like that of contemporary texts such as Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973), reflects the work ethic and the rhythm of the Métis voyageur tradition, where periods of

hard work alternate with times of money-spending and pleasure, times of isolation (trapping) with times of coming together. An essential element of the nomadic and the marginal are minor, extra-literary forms ("einfache Formen"), especially the anecdote. In *Marvellous Possessions*, Stephen Greenblatt calls the anecdote—in contrast to "the *grand récit* of totalizing, integrated, progressive history, a history that knows where it is going"—a form which was "appropriate for voyagers who thought that they knew where they were going and ended up in a place whose existence they had never imagined" (2). The above definition of Métis literary nomadology comes close to Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's understanding of schizophrenia. Massumi explains that for Deleuze and Guattari, schizophrenia, rather than being an illness, is a continual, polyvocal process of becoming, "a breakaway into an unstable equilibrium of continuing self-invention" (Massumi 92). "Anarchy" and "nomad thought" are synonyms of this process:

Nomad thought replaces the closed equation of representation, $x = x = \text{not } y$ ($I = I = \text{not you}$) with an open equation: $\dots + y + z + a + \dots$ [. . .]. It synthesizes a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging. . . . The space of nomad thought is qualitatively different from state space. . . . Nomad space is "smooth," or open-ended. (Massumi 6)

The peripatetic genre, rooted in the experience of "travels through forbidden geography" (Morisset 15), modifies Edward Sapir's view of the relationship between language and society, namely that we "see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation" (Sapir 69). In contrast to Sapir, the nomadic both as a "state of mind" and an experienced reality shapes Métis language habits. The open space of the Métis landscape represents "a fusion with a minimal difference between the container and the contained. The self becomes incarnate with a physical form" (Caviola 129). As the texts and the lives of contemporary Métis writers suggest, the "novelistic" nomadic genre is not limited to the past, but is very much alive today.

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