

Where Are the Voices Coming From?

Canadian Culture and the Legacies of History

This collection of essays focuses on Canadian history and its legacies as represented in novels and films in English and French, produced in Canada mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. The approach is both cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, aiming at articulating Canadian differences through a comparison of anglophone and francophone cultures, illustrated by works treating some of the different groups which make up Canadian society – English-Canadian, Québécois, Acadian, Native, and ethnic minorities. The emphasis is on the problematic representation of Canadianness, which is closely bound up with constructions of history and its legacies – dispossession, criminality, nomadism, Gothicism, the Maritime. The English/French language difference is emblematic of Canadian difference; the two-part arrangement, with one section on Literature and the other on Film, sets up the pattern of relationships between the two forms of cultural representation that these essays explore. Essays in the Literature section are on single texts by such writers as: Margaret Atwood, Tomson Highway, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Anne Michaels, and Alice Munro; Gabrielle Roy, Anne Hébert, Antonine Maillet, Bernard Assiniwi, and Régine Robin. The Film section with its mirror structure both supplements and amplifies this dialogue, extending notions of Canadianness with its emphasis on voices from Quebec and Acadia traditionally 'othered' in Canadian history. Filmmakers treated include: Phillip Borsos, Atom Egoyan, Ted Kotcheff, Mort Ransen, and Vincent Ward; Denys Arcand, Gilles Carle, Alanis Obomsawin, Léa Pool, and Jacques Savoie.

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109,50 €

102,34 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9789042016231
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-90-420-1623-1
Verlag: Brill
Erscheinungstermin: 01.01.2004
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2004
Serie: Cross/Cultures
Produktform: Gebunden
Gewicht: 626 g
Seiten: 266
Format (B x H): 155 x 230 mm

