

Kádár, Judit Ágnes

Multicultural identity negotiation in recent Canadian mixed-blood narratives : Boyden's Three Day Road

The Central European journal of Canadian studies. 2018, vol. 12-13, iss. [1], pp. 133-144

ISBN 978-80-210-9024-8

ISSN 1213-7715 (print); ISSN 2336-4556 (online)

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/138499>

Access Date: 16. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.



Multicultural Identity Negotiation in Recent Canadian Mixed-Blood Narratives: Boyden's *Three Day Road*

La Négociation de l'identité multiculturelle dans *Three Day Road* de Joseph Boyden

Judit Ágnes Kádár

Abstract

Using the example of Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road* (2005), this paper addresses the “broken taboos and uncomfortable truths” of mixed blood identity in Contemporary Métis writing. I explore identity negotiation and the radical textual undoing of ethnic identity concepts (including stereotypes) reflected in Métis Canadian and US Southwestern Nuevomexicano/a writing and visual arts. Here I present how interracial understanding is challenged by mixed heritage authors and what Boyden's protagonists' identity negotiations in the shifting sites of identity formulation (“journey”) are like. I study the fluctuation between more social identities, ethnic choice and specifically the possibilities for escaping prescribed identity formulations and reconnecting with tribal heritage that manifests the clashing western and Indigenous cosmologies and tackles the problems of ethnic pride, shame and stigma.

Keywords: Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*, Métis writing, ethnicity

Résumé

En se basant sur le cas de *Three Day Road* de Joseph Boyden (2005), le présent article traite des « tabous brisés et des vérités inconfortables » de l'identité métissée dans l'écriture métisse contemporaine. Y sont explorées la négociation identitaire et la défaite textuelle radicale des concepts d'identité ethnique (y compris les stéréotypes), reflétées dans l'écriture et les arts visuels créés par des Métis canadiens et américains du Sud-Ouest (« Nuevomexicano »). Nous définissons comment la compréhension interracial est contestée par les auteurs du patrimoine mixte et ce que sont les négociations identitaires de ses protagonistes dans le cadre des sites mouvants de la formulation de l'identité (« voyage »). Enfin, nous soulignons la fluctuation entre plusieurs identités sociales, le choix ethnique et les possibilités d'échapper aux formulations d'identité prescrites et de renouer avec le patrimoine tribal – un patrimoine qui manifeste le conflit entre les cosmologies occidentales et autochtones et qui aborde les problèmes de la fierté ethnique, de la honte et de la stigmatisation.

Mots-clés : Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*, arts créés par des Métis, ethnicité



This article addresses the problem of mixed ethno-cultural identity presented in the prose writings of a self-proclaimed blended heritage novelist of Anisnaabe and Irish origins, Joseph Boyden (1966-), whose ethnic affiliation has been challenged recently. I believe that being born into a mixed ethno-cultural heritage that incorporates the traits of both the former colonizer and colonized peoples, i.e. that of Euro-Canadian and Indigenous cultures, generates special sensibilities in a man of letters. Even if the primary subject matter or protagonist is not a mixed blood person, the literary text depicts the problems of racism, discrimination, identity turmoil, acculturation challenges, identification, identity negotiation and authenticity. I explore how the widespread pattern of return to Indigeneity is actually tackled in the view of two different personal transformation processes, the Cree Canadian followers of L. M. Silko's *Ceremony* (1977).

Boyden's *Three Day Road* (2005) takes a historic incident to draw a parallel with some contemporary concerns and explores how certain "broken taboos and uncomfortable truths" related to mixed ethno-cultural heritage in North America perpetuate in a broader sense the problems of ethnic pride, shame and stigma, what Paula Gunn Allen has called "conflicting blood strains" ("Dear World"). As for Canadian mixed blood writers, what the Cree/Dene Tomson Highway, the Ojibwe Drew Hayden Taylor and Richard Wagamese, the Cherokee/German/Greek/American/Canadian Thomas King and the Dogrib Richard Van Camp share is their Indigenous and Caucasian blood and their sensibility for embodying conflicting ethno-cultural heritages of Aboriginal and Anglo-American nature. Similarly, in the US Southwest, the Laguna, Scottish, Lebanese Paula Gunn Allen, the Laguna Pueblo, Mexican and Anglo-American L.M. Silko, have paved the literary path to writing about the previously stigmatized mixed blood identity, while the Cherokee, Irish and Dutch Wilma Mankiller, the Cherokee/Choctaw/Irish Louis Owens and the currently so popular Joy Harjo of Muskogee, Cherokee, French and Irish roots, seem to have focused on the so called "hybrid potential" (Owens, "Syllogistic" 101), a positive stance of understanding one's multiple ethnic heritage as a source that might replace the earlier stigmatized identity of their protagonists. In fact, regardless of the geographical location or the actual ethnic blend of the author, what they all share is the sensibility for racist discourses as well as the desire to turn the negative, often tragic sense of identity to positive and confident self-understanding as well as the empowering treatment of the literary text.

Boyden scrutinizes ethnic stereotype and discrimination, shame and victimry with regards to First Nations identity in general and Cree identity in the view of intercultural encounters, the context of the First World War respectively. As Joe Wiebe remarks, *Three Day Road* is a rare book that works at different levels for various readers (Wiebe online review essay), it can be read as a war novel, a Bildungsroman,



a book of comradeship, a First Nations' counter narrative to Anglo-Canadian history and even more readings are possible, too.

As for identity negotiation in the communities of shifting sites of identity formulation, i.e. the "journey," Boyden's novel presents us with a contrastive pair of personality developments depicted within the concentric circle of sites. *Three Day Road* is a story of two Cree friends and hunters from Ontario, Xavier Bird and Elijah Weesegeechak/ Whiskeyjack. Xavier was raised by his aunt Niska in the bush, while Elijah ran away from a residential school and were raised with Xavier. The friends join the Canadian army and fight in WW I, actually fighting their own "wars" in different fronts, those of military, racial, physical, mental and spiritual nature. Xavier, the quiet one, clings to his Cree culture and feels the war to be alien ground. Elijah, however, is more adoptive to the white Canadian lifestyle and to war mentality even at a loss of his self. The friends become emotionally separated and their spirits mostly dwell in different worlds. Retuning from war back to his band means for Xavier a reconnection with his heritage and also healing the intolerable wounds of his heart.

Three Day Road is constructed on a less fixed, shifting time and special storyline. The novel has a cyclic storyline starting from the return from war and reconnecting with Indigeneity. But to understand the latter, Boyden takes us back to the childhood of the protagonists, with references to even earlier, Niska's birth when the *wmistikoshiw* (whites) still depended on the Natives. Storytelling is in fact part of the identity negotiation process, as regards to its references to the distance between teller, listener and the archaic tradition, it is a virtual umbilical cord per se. The ending of the narrative is the sweat lodge scene, where Xavier goes through a purifying and healing process and where Niska's vision appears. They both imply a spiritual return to tribal culture and to the comrades' own selves as well. Here the ritual purification and reference to Xavier's future sons (*TDR* 379) reconnects the cyclic storyline to the beginning of the novel, while giving a future prospect to it as well. Besides, the organic pattern of storytelling (Niska and Xavier) with its rolling, embracing and cyclic nature serves as a source of wisdom and healing therapy, too. Laura Groningen and Neta Gordon agree that within the "healing aesthetics" of Boyden's novel, the author's aim is to devictimize, commemorate and destigmatize the Aboriginal soldiers and to "recover marginalized histories" (Gordon #2). In addition, the *windigo* story provides another dimension to comprehend and interpret the actual story of two Cree youngsters going to a European war, and expands its scope with possible allusion to survival of First Nations communities and individuals in modern times.

One can observe how the two kids grow up in the context of clashing cultures, more specifically the residential school, the urban environment in contrast with Niska's bush land mark the clashing paradigms that in a different setting, i.e. the European war frontline and the army does not significantly change for them. The author signifies



one aspect of those worlds that Xavier finds challenging in spiritual and intellectual terms, while Elijah seems to adjust easily, i.e., to the violence. The *windigo* killer story allegedly denotes violence, too; however, the reader can understand the wisdom behind killing the evil-spirited one in the community, and violence is an essential part of that world, too. A deep sense of humanity is at the bottom of this kind of “mercy killing” for the protection of the community. However, in European and Anglo-Canadian culture, sheer verbal violence through racism and actual physical violence in the first modern warfare of the First World War perpetuate countless examples of inhumanity. The two friends present very different attitude to this fact: while Elijah becomes the chief killer at war, Xavier says: “I will never understand this god, these people” (*TDR* 309) who celebrate love, forgiveness and purity at Christmas and constantly act against their faith. The postcolonial agenda is represented by means of the parallels based on violence: “The sickness of the *windigo* could spread as surely as the invisible sickness of the *wemistikoshiv*” (*TDR* 263). There is another example of violence-focused parallels: the *windigo* killer appears in parallel worlds, and the Huns’ new weapons in the First World War resemble the new “weapons” in Anglo-American and Indian relations, like the ideological genocide of the residential schools.

The particular communities as sites of shifting identity transformations are the condensed and encapsulated venues of clashing paradigms that represent in the novel various challenges for First Nations individuals. The residential school, the small town Canada community with “converted Indians [who] look full of food” (*TDR* 174), “a place of stones and glass called Toronto” (*TDR* 87) and the army on the French frontline, signifying the double frontline (*TDR* 327) where (military and racial) the friends keep fighting on. All these sites of transformation are marked by initial conflict and gradual acculturation, but obviously to various extents in the case of the two Cree youngsters. I believe that the archetypal and critically depicted civilization versus wilderness dichotomy seems to pose alienation and conflict for them, however, it is human beings, but white and Indigenous, who actually surprise or shock Elijah and Xavier with their attitudes that perpetuate the problem of innate racism and personality shortcomings or merits, too.

There are some potential problems and sources of frustration the Cree protagonists face from time to time, namely, problems pertaining to authenticity, identification and validation. What is actually at the bottom of both narratives is the identity crisis of Indigenous persons in conflict with their surroundings as well as themselves. There are some concentric circles of identification, Cree/ Indian/Canadian/Brit in *Three Day Road*. The id fluctuates among these definitions and struggles with especially the negative definitions others attach to the protagonists. *TDR* tackles the primary early childhood frustrations of the residential school and the bush Indian (“heathen”) versus urban Catholic Indian disparity, and then the army experience. All these perpetuate



the basic problem of Indigenous identity and its challenges in modern urban culture in North America. While in the residential school the question is, who can keep any of his Indigenous identity against the cultural genocide practiced by the nuns and authorities. The “bushed Indian goes to town” situation challenges the extent to which one wishes and can keep to his tribal heritage, authenticity and validation are central in every case when Aunt Niska goes to town, Moose Factory, Canada and assimilation is an escape option as well as pressure both at the residential school and in town (“So you are an Indian, then?.....You are pretty short for an Indian, ain’t ya?” *TDR* 35). As for the army, there seems to be less pressure to assimilate, in fact for a while even invisibility bothers Elijah: “They ignore us like we are ghosts floating by” (*TDR* 34). Becoming visible is important for him, being acknowledged and achieving a great reputation as a scout is essential for him and actually he unconsciously decides to enforce the stereotypical Indian image that is traditionally praised for special military skills and attitude.

In the army, nobody is really interested in their tribal affiliation, Native ways of life and thinking, the war situation does not allow for more personal attention than acknowledging the fact that the two guys are different and perhaps racially still inferior, but certain skills make them respectful. In its impact this fact obviously underlines the prototypical racial divides, but at least for periods of time releases some of the frustration the two Cree fellows had had. We could see in the case of all 20th-century wars fought by the US and Canadian armies the same general pattern emerging: ethnic minorities’ contribution is temporarily appreciated and even taken as heroic examples for fellows. However, the fundamental racial divides remain stable during and after the war, as explained by Ronald Takaki (378–428) and on the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website, where the same is discussed regarding the particular race relations that Canadian Aboriginal veterans were affected by (“Postwar Experiences of Aboriginal Soldiers”).

Beyond the interpersonal identification challenges, Elijah formulates his own (ethnic) identity unconsciously and Xavier follows the changes and also defines his own identity in view of that: “Elijah wants to become something he’s not” (*TDR* 86), from “a dirty bush Indian” (*TDR* 297) but smart trapper he can de-stigmatize himself through adapting to Anglo needs, and then through acting out the warrior stereotype. “He says he couldn’t speak in his old voice even if he wanted to now. It’s gone somewhere too far away” (*TDR* 145), collects scalps... Elijah gradually becomes an oversized cartoon-like Indian, whose personality changes can be detected from early childhood traumatic experiences through adolescence up to the embodiment of the merciless killer warrior Indian stereotype, and he had developed his own argument, too: Elijah kills many, saying he is helping those get to the spirits’ world (*TDR* 107), and scalping is necessary to prove the “confirmed kills” he has achieved. The army



peers underline and validate that fearful hero image: “Breech says that it is our Indian blood, that our blood is closer to animal than that of a many” (*TDR* 109). Actually he replaces the stigmatized Indian image with that heroic warrior as well as with a temporary identification with fellow soldiers: “We are an army to be reckoned with suddenly, no longer the colonials, as the Englishmen call us, looking down at us” (*TDR* 242). Here he shifts from double to single minority status, and then with the top number of killings he becomes an achiever doing “Most in our regiment. Most of any Canadian. Or Brit for that matter” (*TDR* 36). This transformation of his image indicates the psychological process of stigma alteration: a fierce killer at war is taken as a strange but heroic character who can best any number that Anglo-Canadians or Brits can, thus emphasizing a military achievement over ethnic features of the same person.

Interestingly, Boyden applies irony in the course of counter racism, for instance, the two Cree friends observe that “Fritz smells differently than an Englishman or a Frenchman or a Canadian” (*TDR* 144–5). Counter racism is essentially based on simplified concepts, too; thus, the English, French and Canadians are disturbingly taken as “the same” by national character. At another case Elijah tells others that Xavier is a “heathen, speaks his own tongue fluently, nothing else” (*TDR* 207), that way serving whites’ craving for the well-known stereotype and protecting his friend. Finally, another incident shows how racism is turned against the very person racist earlier, when Frenchman having raped Niska in church and called her a squaw whore (*TDR* 180–1) as a revengeful fate goes mad and commits suicide, while the local community refuses his Christian burial.

Escaping prescribed identity formulations through the acts and processes of ethnic choice and through reconnecting with Indigeneity (tribal or pan-Indian) is a central issue in the novel. Boyden offers the reader an insight to the spectrum of conscious and unconscious choices regarding one’s ethnic identity and relation to Indigeneity in *Three Day Road*. Actually, the two friends Elijah and Xavier exemplify the very choice, its manifestations and impacts that Native Americans and mixed blood persons make every single day. Elijah is a bit opportunistic, truly adaptable to majority ways and expectations, without any concerns about losing touch with his authentic ethnic origins, and surely fixed on best survival options without ethical considerations. However, as for Xavier, on the one hand ethnic and humanistic concerns do trouble him in the army and he often feels challenged by not fitting white man’s Indian stereotype, on the other hand, he revitalizes himself through tribal spirituality.

Xavier’s name symbolically refers to his role: he is Bird and he feeds Elijah, the always hungry, through mouth feeding (*TDR* 291), for survival, both physical and spiritual. I believe that this bird symbolic status is the embodiment of his role to reconnect with ancestral ties, “the old way” of praying in Cree (e.g. *TDR* 120), though



prayers come hard to him far from home. Remembering means mental and emotional survival in hard times: “I force myself back to Mushkegowuk” (*TDR* 123). He reinforces his own ethnic identification in several ways, for instance, through naming that expresses ethnic pride (*TDR* 117) and keeping his Cree language as a primary medium of communication. He loses his hearing a bit, which indicates his being deaf to alien ways, too, while Elijah functioned sometimes as an interpreter for Xavier (e.g. *TDR* 228, 256, 258). Finally, when he returns home, he physically and spiritually reconnects with the umbilical cord of his ancestral ties with the help of Niska, the facilitator of their transformations, reference point for their ethnic identification and provider of the sweat lodge ceremonial cleansing and healing that cures Xavier.

In terms of ethnic identity change, the army and the war provide a cataclysmic incubation ground for personal development, as is presented in the the war novel tradition of Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, Timothy Findley's *The Wars*, Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The friends start their journey with a protective moose hide bag, a medicine bundle that Niska had given them to maintain spiritual protection over them. Dreams and visions as a passage between worlds (e.g. *TDR* 80, 88) help both of them. They “share a space” (*TDR* 39) and their primary confusion in the trenches of the French frontline as well as in their position among military peers. But this shared space stimulates totally divergent reactions in them. Xavier is certainly able to keep the core of his identity intact both in terms of his personality traits and his ethnic identification. Although the war makes both friends ghost like liminal beings, the whole journey to European fronts and back home make Xavier experienced but does not bring any profound alteration of the basic concept of who he is. The whole war experience and living in the army focuses on the problem of escaping by concealing (masking), and Xavier does learn the pragmatics of camouflage as a scout for sure. Nevertheless, Elijah goes far beyond that. A foreshadowing incident is already there in the residential school where he protests against the nuns' habit of cutting students' hair by shaving his own head bald (*TDR* 101). In contrast, he is willing to have his hair cut for the army. As for language, “as a child he was so proud that more than once he claimed that he would never speak the *wemistikoshiw* [white man's] tongue” (*TDR* 98). However, in the European military environment they learn that adopting somewhat to white ways and also using Cree language and skills for their own benefit are necessary survival skills: they grow practically bilingual (and also apply sign language occasionally), and their language choice depends on the situation, they can use Cree as a code language (*TDR* 279) and can also express emotions in a slightly manipulative fashion (e.g. *TDR* 60), as the situation demands.

Elijah is more adaptive in manners, speaks the language, follows what he considers as white morality, including implied racism, and becomes an Indian hunter taking



killing too far. The frame story and fundamental paradox of the *windigo* killers seem to run parallel, especially when Elijah shows symptoms of going mad and taking pleasure in killing (*TDR* 284), even killing a mother and child with a feeling of shame to follow. Escaping prescribed identity formulations is an essential process that the two protagonists experience walking two different paths in life. Elijah escapes one disadvantageous stigmatized image by running into another, that of the warrior Indian, and also by taking morphine, that is, stigma alteration with societally successful but individually essentially disastrous and tragic impact. Meanwhile, Xavier manages to escape the prototypical “dumb *indjun*” (Valaskakis 1) stereotype by becoming a tactful scout and reliable comrade, a sensitive human being whose affection for Elijah, Lisette, Niska and even unknown people in trouble underline the general human features making one person truly good and another a villain, as a victory over racial divides. Moreover, his unfading connection with his tribal culture sustains a model in which a human being can take several social roles, that of a nephew, a Cree youngster, a Canadian soldier at the European frontline, friend, comrade and inheritor of a mythic grand narrative of tribal wisdom and stories. In that sense *Three Day Road* makes a positive statement about the possibility of escaping fixed ethnic identity constructs by developing individual concepts and constructs of one's identity configuration.

The parallel process of radical textual undoing of ethnic identity concepts (including stereotypes) is the underpinning motif running along the narrative. As mentioned earlier, escaping prescribed identity formulations is an essential (unconscious) trait in *TDR* and part of this is achieved through irony and playing out the stereotype, mockery, means of radical textual undoing of ethnic identity concepts posed by the Colonial ideological agenda the protagonists were born into. The Cree protagonists, especially Elijah plays out the Indian stereotype, less in order to identify themselves among peers than for achieving some minor benefits: “I am a Cree Indian from Moose Factory, and I have come to kill Germans” (*TDR* 67). He continues, explaining more specifically how the stereotypical image works and can be manipulated for some personal benefit: “Better to let them know you're an angry warrior than some fucking bush Indian” (*TDR* 68). They present a careful, wise and sensitive distancing from the stereotype for their own security: they decide not to capture goose, for surely Indians would be blamed for it (*TDR* 93) along the negative connotations of the stereotype. However, as for the positive features attributed to Indians, since they are said to make fine scouts, there is a need to recruit more (*TDR* 193), while guys like Elijah are respected for killing, thus their “added value” is on the increase at wartime. These considerations, the re-evaluation of a person based on merits attributed to ethnic affiliation and race shows the confusion of values in the two worlds colliding.



As for ethnic change, another interesting approach is that of assimilation versus integration: while Elijah seems to adopt way more easily in his adolescence to white culture and Xavier says: “I rely on Elijah to help me in their world” (*TDR* 68), However, “their” signifies the distance that separates Xavier from the alien environment. “He teaches us the importance of blending into our surroundings” (*TDR* 94), i.e. symbolic and pragmatic assimilation, which is not necessarily internalized. In addition, the suspended steps of their identification is fostered by the fact that initially they are invisible for officers (*TDR* 183). Besides, the cultural differences do not really disappear with partial acculturation, for instance, Christmas is interpreted from their perspective as the feast of sadness and the fundamental paradox of the celebration on the frontline and the religious ideology while killing continues remains. The two friends separate in their attitude to the distance from non-Native culture. While Elijah hopes that they can return to the bush to Niska, Xavier knows that Elijah has gone too far, the inhumanity in his deeds essentially cuts him from his core ethnic culture and one can see him less and less as a representative of First Nations and increasingly as a fallen villain, a human being who has lost everything. He adopts to cruelty, becomes a borderline personality in psychological sense, like Frenchman, and Elijah’s reversal act of killing and blasphemy at the sculpture of Virgin Mary (*TDR* 203–4) has nothing to do any more with any kind of morality but ultimately pushes him into a vacuum, both cultural and psychological, that he cannot ever escape.

Another exciting aspect of ethnic change in *TDR* is the identity game, the masking they play throughout the story. “Conceal yourself here” (*TDR* 123) is the rule of survival on the frontline, as well as in a more abstract sense among peers, and, in the broader concentric zones of identification, among white folks, wherever, including the residential school back in their childhood (*TDR* 159). Back there and then they believed that the tooth of the lynx gives speed, visions and invisibility (*TDR* 295), a different kind of protection for hunters and warriors than the masks the trickster takes (*TDR* 312). Xavier is the only one who sees through Elijah’s mask, who can fool everyone else. Xavier’s clear vision develops through a number of sour experiences, take his sweetheart, Lisette, who turns out to be a prostitute and Elijah has known it and played that game for Xavier’s sake—he says. Earlier, in a parallel world, Niska has fallen in love with Frenchman, who turns out to be a racist villain raping her. Niska also has to conceal herself when in town to avoid being a target of racist remarks and assault, she needs to change clothes and “fit in” look a young homeguard Indian (*TDR* 177). Then in the European context, charcoal face masking is a survival practice at war (*TDR* 187), hiding in a cellar, covering one another on frontline due to the constant fear of being found and killed further underlines the relevance of hiding and masking. If we enter the game of invisibility, the lethal game of hide and seek, we can read the novel at more levels: one is the actual physical visibility the soldiers try



to avoid (TDR 235–6, 249), the next is the question of visibility as human beings in the context of racial divides in the army: “I am especially proud to note that Acting Corporal Whiskeyjack has been recommended for the MM for unmatched bravery in the face of the enemy” (TDR 255), but Xavier is then invisible and frustrated (TDR 256). There is even a sarcastic game of invisibility at the end of the war: Bird tries to save Elijah but cannot, kills the *windigo* in him, rips off his ID and keeps it in his own pocket. However, when wounded, Bird is mistaken for Elijah with that ID, praised for bravery, returned home as if he was called a “great Fritz killer,” and Xavier plays that role most probably for final return home. His guilt complex is relieved through the sweat lodge ritual, when identities are resettled in home grounds.

In conclusion, Boyden’s novel depicts a fundamental aspect of interracial relations and identity development of Indigenous persons who are intensively exposed to the culture of Euro-Canadians, and that is the fluctuation between more social identities and utilizing the “hybrid potential” in post-racial nations in North America. Xavier claims that “I am stuck between these two places” (TDR 372) in a vacuum, that can be resolved by reconnecting with his tribal heritage, through the sweat lodge rebirth ritual facilitated by Niska. Both comrades experience a major identity transformation process of oppositional outcomes and the radical undoing of ethnic stereotypes surrounding them. Similarly to Silko’s *Ceremony*, where Tayo’s journey towards wholeness and health (as Owens illuminates, *Other* 170), the two Cree men also attempt to reach those, but only Xavier can actually achieve both. Rituals and ceremonies of transformation mark those journeys, and the reader can feel the painstaking process and also understand the relevance of the CEREMONY both in a tribal cultural and in a personal psychological sense. I presented how interracial understanding is challenged by a mixed heritage author and what is his protagonists’ identity negotiation in the shifting sites of identity formulation like. The fluctuation between more social identities and ethnic choice seem to be perhaps the most exciting aspects of these characters, and their story also projects the author’s similar experiences deriving from being born mixed blood. In the context of the challenge to prototypical civilized versus barbarous savage and medicine versus genocide dichotomies, the ethnical paradigm of the novel allows the reader to reformulate his reading of history and race relations. The problems of ethnic pride, shame and stigma have been eliminated in various ways, but most successfully through reconnecting with one’s Indigenous heritage, which seems to be a general pattern applying to the authors of such social background and their protagonists as well.



Works cited

- Boyden, Joseph. *Three Day Road*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005.
- Drainie, Bronwyn. "Three Day Road by Joseph Boyden." <http://www.quillandquiere.com/review/three-day-road/> 23.08.2015.
- Findley, Timothy. *The Wars*. Toronto: Penguin, 1977.
- Gordon, Neta. "Time Structures and the Healing Aesthetic of Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*." *Canadian Literature*. Volume 33, Number 1 (2008). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/scl/article/view/11212/11952>. 01.10.2016.
- Gunn Allen, Paula. "Dear World." *Skin and Bones*. Albuquerque, NM: West End Press, 1998.
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website. "Aboriginal Contributions." <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1414152378639/1414152548341#chp7>. 01.10.2016.
- Laroque, Emma. "The Métis in English Canadian literature." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* III, 1 (1983): 85–94. <http://www3.brandonu.ca/library/CJNS/3.1/laroque.pdf>. 01.10.2016.
- Owens, Louis. "The Syllogistic Mixed Blood: How Roland Barthes Saved Me from the *indians*." *Mixing Race, Mixing Culture: Inter-American Literary Dialogues*. Eds. Monika Kamp and D. J. Rosenthal. Austin: Texas UP, 2002. 227–239.
- . *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian novel*. Norman: Oklahoma UP, 1992.
- Roth, Philip. "Defender of Faith." from *Goodbye Columbus* (1959) in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 1989. 2326.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Viking, 1977.
- Takaki, Ronald. "Through a Glass Darkly: Towards the Twenty-First Century—a War for Democracy: Fighting as One People." *A Different Mirror: a History of Multicultural America*. New York: Back Bay Books, 1993.
- Valaskakis, Gail Guthrie. *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2009.
- Wiebe, Joe. "Three Day Road." *Big Feet*. 2005. http://www.joewiebe.com/books/three_day_road.htm. 01.10.2016.



Judit Ágnes Kádár

Multicultural Identity Negotiation in Recent Canadian Mixed-Blood Narratives: Boyden's *Three Day Road*

JUDIT ÁGNES KÁDÁR / has taught American and Canadian studies for almost three decades and now serves the University of Physical Education of Budapest as the director of International Relations. She worked in the United States for Georgia State College and University and for the University of New Mexico as a Fulbrighter. As for research, she studied recent western Canadian fiction, then passage rites in US/Canadian literature. She published *Critical Perspectives on English-Canadian Literature* and *Going Indian: Cultural Appropriation in Recent North American Literature*. She obtained her doctoral degree and habilitation at Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest. Currently she explores mixed blood identity negotiation in *Nuevomexicano* and Métis writing. She is the past head of the Hungarian Network for Canadian Studies (CEACS/HUNCS), and co-chair of the International Committee of the Hungarian Rectors Conference.