Milica Lj. Živković[1]
Univerzitet u Nišu
Filozofski fakultet
Departman za anglistiku

Originalni naučni rad
UDK 821.111(=81/=82)(71).09 Kembel M.
821.111(=81/=82)(71).09 Kaleton B.
821.111(=81/=82)(71).09 Marakl L.
Primljen 31. 10. 2013.

POSTCOLONIAL READINGS OF INDIGENOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN CANADA[2]

Postcolonial debates about difference, identity and agency are partly responsible for the popularity of Indigenous life stories in Canada. The other powerful thrust to Indigenous autobiographical writing comes from Native Indian writers whose textual reclamation of identity is an essential part of their larger struggle for political agency in the public sphere. The paper concerns itself with the theme of postcolonial politics and explores the relationship between cultural difference, identity and agency in three contemporary Indigenous life stories, Halfbreed by Maria Campbell, In Search of April Raintree by Beatrice Culleton and Ravensong by Lee Maracle. More specifically, it problematizes the postcolonial/poststructuralist imperative to dismantle the subject and affirm difference; these strategies often prove to be ethically problematic and politically disabling in the context of Indigenous life-writing.

Key Words: postcolonial/poststructuralist strategies, Indigenous autobiography, Canada, identity politics, difference

The over-riding fear is that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate – that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten. (qtd. in HOY 2001: 3)

The opening quote by bell hooks brings about the key concepts of the paper: in most general terms, the paper concerns itself with the theme of postcolonial politics and explores the relationship between cultural

[1] milica.zivkovic61@yahoo.com

[2] Rад је под сличним насловом, „Postcolonial Theory and Indigenous Autobiographical Writing in Canada", у виду усменог саопштења, изложен на научном скупу „Indigenous Perspectives of North America", одржаном у Будимпешти 08-10.03. 2012. године.

difference, identity and agency in three contemporary Indigenous life stories, Halfbreed by Maria Campbell, In Search of April Raintree by Beatrice Culleton and Ravensong by Lee Maracle. More specifically, it problematizes the postcolonial/poststructuralist imperative to resist closure, dismantle the subject and affirm difference. The article aims at showing how these strategies often prove to be ethically problematic and politically disabling in the context of Indigenous life-writing. If our task is not to silence the sites of difference, as bell hooks warns a postcolonial critic, but to critically examine them, we can start with a simple, yet important, observation that Indigenous autobiography is a genre which is formed at a particular stage in postcolonial history with one principal goal - to empower postcolonial Indigenous people so that they might effect a change in the public sphere. A wider historical and legal context is thus of paramount importance for critical readings of these life narratives. Postcolonial and multicultural debates about difference, identity and agency are greatly responsible for the proliferation of Indigenous life stories. In Human Rights and Narrated Lives Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith emphasize an important connection between the popularity of autobiographies and memoirs published since the 1990s in Canada and Australia, on the one hand, and the increased public interest in the issues of human rights, on the other (2004: 1). The first Indigenous voice that reached both white and Aboriginal Canadians was Maria Campbell's: published in 1973, her bestselling life story Halfbreed motivated many Indigenous writers to 'write back' so that autobiographical writing soon became a foundation of Indigenous and an essential part of Canadian literature. Just two years before the publication of Halfbreed, Prime Minister Trudeau declared that "'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' not only constituted an official state policy but was also the essence of Canadian identity. Though there are two official languages, there is no official culture and no ethnic group should take precedence over any other" (WINTER 2001: 177). He made it clear that the old policy of assimilation should be replaced by biculturalism first and soon after by multiculturalism which posited a rather new idea – Canada's identity must be sought in the very difference of the nation's many cultures. The very 'visibility' of Indigenous representations of self/collective determination and sovereignty, however, should not be interpreted straightforwardly as a symptom of a radical challenge to the national narratives of Canada.[3] Records of Indigenous painful histories

[3] Indigenous peoples and their cultural production have always performed the ideological role in the national narratives of Canada. "Native culture," in the words of Anne Whitelaw, "has long functioned to represent Canadian culture both in Canada and abroad, to serve as internationally recognized symbols of Canadian-ness. . . the work of First Nations artists occupy [sic] a problematic place vis-a-vis a distinctly Canadian aesthetic tradition: at times included...at other times remained on the margins

have served two purposes: first, they are an important means of establishing Indigenous identities in contemporary Canadian societies and second, they are an instrument of the wider dissemination of the newly created national myth of multiculturalism. Both of the purposes well demonstrate the centrality of politics to the concern of Indigenous autobiographical narratives.

As previously stated, Indigenous autobiography is a genre concerned with reconstituting Indigenous identity and registering Indigenous agency. As such, it has an essentially political character. Though "autobiography was not a genre indigenous to Indian cultures" (BRUMBLE 1988: 131), it has been recognized by Indigenous people in multicultural Canada as a form of narrative which is suitable for the task of reclaiming a past that has been devalued, misrepresented and denied. In other words, life-writing has proved an attractive genre for Indigenous authors wishing to re-write historical accounts of colonial invasion, settlement and cross-cultural relationships from individual and communal memories and experience. As Azade Seyhan succinctly explains, these life narratives allow the experience of aggression and oppression subjugated "to official and institutionalized regimes of forgetting to come to word" (2001: 3). Similarly, Himani Bannerji points out the main objective of Indigenous life narratives: "they [marginalized groups] consider these representative acts based on their subjective content as crucially political, which is why they are phrased in terms of gaining a voice and in languages of silence and speaking, of writing and reading, and of volition and freedom" (1995: 21). This goal is advanced through two equally important strategies: firstly, the presentation of Indigenous political will by imagining alternative narratives of the past, counter narratives which, with their different readings of the past, less flattering to the elites, challenge the unified official narratives of Canada; and secondly, the working-through of traumatic experiences resulting from colonial dispossession by giving coherence to a personal (collective) history interrupted by exclusion or marginalization. In Reading Aboriginal Women's Autobiography, Anne Brewster explains the popularity and functions of the Indigenous autobiography in the following terms: "It is often said that history is written by the victors; it might also be said that history is forgotten by the victors. They can afford to forget, while the losers are unable to accept

---

of Canadian cultural production" (1995: 41). Similarly, the stress on the specific and close relationship between land and Indigenous peoples also serves a double purpose, not mutually exclusive: on the one hand, it appears to be an explicit sign of national distinctiveness and on the other hand, it successfully conceals the active and collective forgetting of the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of those lands, in service of a dominant representation. "[S]imultaneous marginality and ubiquity of the Native people in our literature can be explained to some extent, then," writes Margery Fee, "by our desire to naturalize our appropriation of their land" (1987: 24).

what happened and are condemned to brood over it, relive it, and reflect how different it might have been" (1996: 6). To write an autobiography becomes a conscious attempt to recover and name oneself both as an individual and a member of a larger community. For those who have been minoritized in so many ways and on so many grounds, who have suffered from denials, erasures and misrepresentations, to write a personal/communal history is an essential part of their struggles for legitimation and agency. Until recently, these interests were explored in the separate disciplines of literature and politics; however, Schaffer and Smith suggest an interdisciplinary approach which would enable us to treat life narratives as sites where the ethical, political and aesthetic aspects of culture merge (2004: 2). Similarly, Betty Bergland believes that the continuity between the personal, the political and the critical should be in the forefront of a study of Native autobiography since Indigenous autobiographies, as she says, "often serve a representative function, evoking so-called minority literatures, cultures and subjectivities" (1994: 131).

The authors of Halfbreed, In Search of April Raintree and Ravensong, Maria Campbell, Beatrice Culleton and Lee Maracle share not only the same identity categories, as Mètis and as female, but also the same postcolonial experience, as those who are positioned at the border crossings of different histories and languages trying to make sense of their lives and complex histories of displacement and belonging amongst and within indigenous and settler populations. However, the rather ambitious task that I have set for myself allows me to give a rather brief outline of the examined texts and point to only those characteristics they have in common, without entering into the complex problem of identity formation which is specific to each of the narratives. The reading of the texts is therefore organized around the points of intersection in the presentation of First Nations (post)colonial, experience, not to erase the singularity of 'voices' but to highlight the core features of Indigenous life narrative: its representational character and concern with re-writing history. These features, then, provide a starting point for exploring the ways in which Indigenous autobiographical texts reveal the excesses and deficits of contemporary postcolonial/poststructuralist strategies and readings.

Postcolonial critics usually emphasize the centrality of the larger tribal, racial, and historical context to these individual stories. As Helen Hoy puts it, Indigenous writers "write self-consciously out of the cultural specificities of their people and, more generally, the colonial history of First Nations in Canada" (2001: 186). Two of the examined texts, Halfbreed and Ravensong at the very beginning reveal their complex engagement with the historical context. Halfbreed begins with Campbell's account of the 1885 Battle at Batoche: her narrative is not only a story about her individual experience of oppression and survival, but also a story about the historical injustices and

harm done to Indian and Métis communities in Canada. That is why she cannot begin her personal story without explaining how public policies divided the Aboriginal community, entire families, thus completely destroying their sense of identity. Lee Maracle also frames and explicates her personal drama directly through this history. Ravensong focuses on one of the earliest threats to the preservation of Native culture in the colonial period: the tall ships that brought European illnesses – smallpox epidemics. It is a history re-enacted in the present and Stacey anticipates the coming flu epidemic with dread. In Search of April Raintree there are no direct references to the colonial history of the First Nations, but the purpose of writing this autobiography is clearly present: in Beatrice Culleton's words, it is to provide students with "access to adequate and accurate knowledge of the Indian, Inuit and Métis people "through books that do justice to the Native people and … give them a voice" (1987: 51).

What postcolonial critics often fail to acknowledge, however, is the engagement of these narratives with the historical events of the more recent past, the particular postcolonial moment in which these texts originated. These particular stages of the postcolonial history of the First Nations are sometimes much more important for the authors than a metaphor of treaty making and homesteading, or flashbacks of the colonial past. In Halfbreed that context is, for example, Métis nationalism. In Search of April Raintree was published just a year after the federal government, for the first time, recognized the Métis in the Constitution Act as one of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.[4] Similarly, one of the main obstacles to the village's cultural and even physical survival in Maracle's Ravensong is the logic of tutelage and control of the Indian Act in the 1950s. Once we situate these texts in such contexts, we can approach them as narratives that do not depend upon abstract conceptions of self, reality, truth and history. Besides, unlike the classic, Western autobiography, with its insistence on a particular individual's distinctiveness, these narratives emphasize the co-dependence of identities - how the individual and her community mutually produce each other in a way that is very different from the process of identity construction in Western society. This is clearly evident in Halfbreed where Maria Campbell puts the narrative itself in a communal context before the story begins. In the preface we read the following words: "I write this for all of you, to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in our country. I want to tell you about the joys and sorrows, the oppressing poverty, the frustrations and the dreams" (Halfbreed: 2). She first speaks as a representative of her people, as "a Halfbreed woman", and then as an

[4] See the article by Sharon Smulders in which the author shows how the knowledge of the historical context could influence our reading and reception of *In Search of April Raintree* (2006: 75-100).

individual with her own, specific sorrows which again are of significance to more people than herself. Then, she continues with the story of a struggle and survival, taking the personal point of view to get the reader more intimately connected with her and her peoples' struggle for recognition and social equality. The history of her community is told and written from individual experience which is here to support and guarantee the truth of her narrative. The narrative, like in the other two texts, has a healing, therapeutic function: writing the story becomes a location for authentic psychological reclamation of a past that has been silenced. The communal and political aspects blend with the individual one because they are all just different sides of the same reality, which becomes quite clear in Campbell's political manifesto at the end of Halfbreed. The tree women writers all perceive themselves as educators passing on knowledge to the younger generation of Indigenous people who do not know much about their community's past or have not had the same life experience. Yet, simultaneously, they acknowledge the intention to educate the non-Indigenous audience suffering from "historical amnesia", in Anne Brewster's words.

Writing an autobiography therefore becomes a means of teaching values and speaking across to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. The didactic function in Indigenous life-writing partly results from the storytelling tradition that is embedded in Indigenous cultures of Canada and partly from its openly political aim. Art and politics are interdependent categories in the Indigenous tradition and the process of personal regeneration requires a commitment to active participation in the public life: the writer is not only a storyteller but an activist, organizer, theorist. The character and function of Indigenous art are different from Euro-American art: it lays "stress on the ordinary, community, usefulness, familiarity, etc.," says Wendy Rose, the other is "special, elite, non utilitarian, self-expressive, solitary, ego-identified, self-validating, innovative, unique and in its highest forms without rules" (qtd. in HOY 2001: 102). Though white critics would certainly refuse to label these autobiographical narratives "theoretical texts", their authors, more or less explicitly, suggest that. The human element which is missing from Western scholars' theoretical discourse is the distinctive and recognizable element of Indigenous theoretical discourse. "What is the point", Maracle asks, "of presenting the human condition in a language separate from the human experience: passion, emotion, and character?" (MARACLE 1990: 11). She suggests that even in Ravensong, Stacey's actions and words, her resistance to violence, destruction, and loss which comes through compassion, and her difficult struggle to identify with the other, and accept personal responsibility, convey potent theoretical messages concerning "colonization and de-colonization" (MARACLE 1990: 13).

When the female protagonists insists on cultural difference, the particularities of Métis communities, they usually do that through comparison with the white man's culture in order to stress the importance of membership in a larger community. Some protagonists achieve this connection belatedly as April Raintree who, only after her sister's death, realizes that identity involves accepting "MY PEOPLE, OUR PEOPLE". Maria and Stacy create positive images of Indigenous people by presenting the white society as unhealthy and irresponsible, incapable of understanding and participating in the kind of community of trust and care. While their communities rely on collective solidarity, connection, and responsibility for dependent others, the duty to respect the customs of one's community, modern Western capitalist culture values individual freedom, free choice and egotism. Exchange, sharing and synchronization are values in Indigenous culture: this culture is a network of norms and rules which demand from its people personal responsibility and substantial belonging. This culture is collective and particular; it rests on the particular values and natural tradition which are so in contrast to the contemporary Western ethos.

To say that the Indigenous cultural tradition depends on a different epistemology does not imply a straightforward affirmation of cultural difference. The authors of the examined narratives do not all subscribe to the politics of difference or accept it as the only legitimate mode of postcolonial narration. As a matter of fact, their texts reveal different possibilities of identity construction and different attitudes to their cultural tradition. Maracle gives precedence to working against racism, and insists upon highlighting cultural differences in her portrayal of her Native protagonist, Stacey. So does Campbell. Throughout her narrative distinctive tribal or Indigenous ways are specified: "They [Germans and Swedes] looked cold and frightening and seldom smiled, unlike my own people who laughed, cried, danced, and fought and shared everything" (Halfbreed: 27). Culleton, on the other hand, does not ascribe any specific cultural characteristics to Mètis. The Mètis identity is not romanticized in any of the texts; besides, the recovery of cultural identity does not involve a simple return to some essence, origin or a ready-made identity in any of the narratives. The project of establishing Indigenous identity which has been persistently denigrated by others is presented as a difficult process which involves making right choices, taking responsibility and fighting for self-determination.

However, when a postcolonial reading starts with an observation that indigenous autobiographies are written out of a specific cultural tradition with different ontology and epistemology, it usually intends to underscore one of many "thou shalt nots" of postcolonial/poststructuralist criticism: the irreducibility of cultural difference. Cultural difference has been viewed

by postcolonial critics as an ontological given in much the same way racial differences had been viewed at the end of the nineteenth century, only with one difference: it was biological determinism then, whereas now it is cultural. For cultural pluralists, as Sonia Kruks puts it, "[t]he demand is not for inclusion within the fold of "universal humankind" on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect "in spite of one's differences". What is demanded is respect for oneself as different." (qtd. in MALIK 2008: 62) Given the long history of colonial dispossession, it is quite understandable why the First Nations of Canada demand to be recognized as culturally differentiated selves whose understandings are distinctive and not easily accessible to outsiders; however, that does not necessarily mean that they want to be contained within the limits of their cultural traditions, or be identified first and only as Indigenous people, reduced to their ethnic identity. In the analyzed stories we can find the evidence to support this contention. Campbell, at the end of her novel wishes "that one day, very soon, people will set aside their differences and come together as one. Maybe not because we love one another, but because we will need each other to survive" (Halfbreed: 184). Though it may sound utopian, this is actually a deeply humanistic vision: we can respect our differences without denying our common humanity. Despite the evident efforts and need to identify the specificities of the Métis culture, Campbell, as well as Culleton and Maracle, cannot conceal their belief in humanism and its values - love, friendship and freedom - that exist together with the particularities of cultural difference. An exchange between human beings, an exchange that draws on human empathy and understanding does not silence or erase difference - it only shows that the insistence on difference is a stage in the process of building and empowering a community. In much the same way, when one of Stacey's white classmates, Polly, commits suicide, Raven gives Stacey a lesson about how to approach loss and death: "Wander around Polly's insides, feel your way through decades, generations of lostness […] discover her spirit, bent, then broken. Re-invent Polly, re-imagine her, hang onto the picture of perfect being letting go, spiraling down into shame. Picture the rootlessness she must feel" (Ravensong: 39). Raven gives Stacey a brief lesson in empathy; she will not be able to deal with death if she does not try to understand life. In order to understand the shame that drove Polly into death, Stacey must "enter" Polly, learn the history of her classmate's family and culture, imagine what Polly felt and how she lost her own self. Humanness appears to be the only common denominator that can transcend race, ethnic and religious divides and bridge the gap between different cultures.

Though postcolonial theory has drawn our attention to colonial discourse, to cultural imperialism and distorted representation and helped us understand that the textualization of a colonial project is never an "innocent"

representation of cultural difference but a creation of systemic power relations, the current academic fascination with cultural difference - "what Susan Friedman (playing on Barbara Christian's 'race for theory') has called 'the race for race'"(HOY 2001: 14) – can produce "'a kind of difference that does not make a difference of any kind'", and "[...] introduce new forms of domination" (HOY 2001: 5). The words of bell hooks at the beginning of this article underscore the close connection between the reified forms of ethnicity and cultural difference and the increasingly common market infatuation with issues of diversity. Similarly, in his non-fictional work Selling Illusions, Neil Bissoondath, a Canadian writer and sharp critic of multiculturalism as a policy, qualifies the politics of difference as "the simplification of culture" (2002: 72-89). It reduces the complexity of life to matters of ethnicity, which Bissoondath regards not as a liberating stance, but rather as a confining label. Cultural/ethnic difference is reduced to a spectacle or consumable "product". The racial/ethnic Other, stripped of its multiplicity, historicity and dynamism, is turned into a static stereotype. Difference is not accepted but assigned the position of the Other, marginal and insignificant.[5]

The politics of difference has become an integral part of the postmodern view of life, whereas pluralism and heterogeneity tend to be recognised as the only morally acceptable positions; homogeneity, closure, unity, immediately and without an exception, translate as hegemony in postcolonial/poststructuralist discourse, while hybridity, periphery and cosmopolitanism are viewed as the only locus of authenticity and resistance. However, this pluralist stance creates a great problem for postcolonialism and its political agenda: it seems that postcolonial critique, as Hardt and Negri suggest, "'fail[ed] to recognize adequately the contemporary object of critique, that is, they mistake today's real enemy'" [...] This is because today's enemy constitutes itself in 'a new paradigm of power, a postmodern sovereignty'" (qtd. in DEVADAS 2007: 4). With difference as the norm, and the underlying assumption of the postmodern power, the subversive character of this criticism is lost. In this changed context, difference itself becomes an ideological concept deployed to conceal gross economic and social inequalities between the West and the Rest. Therefore, it is my contention that a serious threat to the project of establishing and reinforcing Indigenous identity comes from the automatic application of certain postcolonial/poststructuralist interpretative assumptions to Aboriginal texts and cultures.

[5] In the same book, the author argues that the politics of difference presupposes a kind of ethnic absolutism with a shadow of the ghetto lurking behind it. If the community maintains its closed boundaries in terms of language and cultural traditions, it dooms itself to live outside history and active relations with other communities which can result in serious crises of identity.

It is almost generally believed that postcolonialism should side with poststructuralism because, first, they are both opposed to a discourse that postulates an intrinsic, universal human nature, and second, poststructuralism offers new reading strategies and practices that widen the context indispensable to an adequate understanding of postcolonial texts because it breaks and demolishes two basic tenants of Enlightenment humanism - the power of language to impose an order upon the world and the power of consciousness to arrive at a formulation of self. But the irony becomes mind-boggling when one realizes that these practices devised to oppose Western European hegemony and monocultural thinking are in themselves homogenizing critical practices. As Kumkum Sangari warns us "[A] Eurocentric perspective...is brought to bear upon "Third World" cultural products,"; "a postmodern scepticism is carried everywhere as the only way of seeing; so the cultural products of the rest of the world are seen through the postmodern theoretical and critical frame" (qtd. in HOY 2001: 9). The deconstruction of the old tends to become a universal strategy of reading cultural objects: the culturally and temporally diverse articulations of experience are "safely" contained and tamed within the poststructuralist frame. That is why the automatic application of certain postcolonial/poststructuralist interpretative assumptions to Aboriginal texts and cultures may represent a serious threat to the project of establishing and reinforcing Indigenous identity.

Let me briefly turn to the most common target of postmodern deconstruction – the unified self. In recent years, autobiography as a genre has come under a good deal of scrutiny, mainly as the result of a poststructuralist challenge to the humanist valorisation of man: what started as a challenge to the Cartesian, male, unitary ego of the Enlightenment has soon become the universally accepted axiom of the destruction of self. The autobiographical self as a coherent, unified, essential individual, the originator of its own meaning, is now the thing of the past. Postmodernism, instead, sets out to discern a new subject: pluralistic, multidimensional, multifaceted. The moment the postmodern critic has discerned the subject he must immediately decenter him because the wholeness of being necessarily produces monocentrism which lies at the basis of colonialism, nationalism, totalitarianism and many other -isms. Subjects have replaces selves and individuals, because 'subject' suggests culturally constructed nature of the selfhood - the individual determined by political, ideological or language structures – that can easily be deconstructed. Since self translates as the Cartesian "thinking I", which again translates as hegemony, the first-person realist autobiographical work is especially under attack, because, as many postcolonial critics say, it presents the spurious authority of experience, reduces ethnic minority writing to sociology and reinscribes the unified subject. The postcolonial/poststructuralist reading of a

realist Indigenous autobiography usually ends with a conclusion that identities are elusive, multiple and palimpsestic and the authority and authenticity of personal experience are falsehoods which should be demystified. Is it really possible to equate a painful search for Indigenous identity with what Paul de Man called Romantic search for self-aggrandizement discussing Wordsworth's autobiographical poetry? Likewise, to argue that reality is irreducibly polycentric is simply false because polycentrism is a privilege of the few. For example, how many Indigenous people would consider the violence of colonial dispossession to be a positive experience?

There are numerous examples which show how a postcolonial critic resorts to a number of illegitimate simplifications and reductions in order to decenter the text and by extension the author in order to show that identity is elusive, reality 'irreducibly polycentric' and the authority of personal experience false. Let me give you one. In the analysis of Culleton's In Search of April Raintree Helen Hoy imposes a well-known postmodern master narrative of instability, indeterminacy on a rather coherent text, ignores the historical and legal context of the narrative, turns Culleton's personal experience of racism, foster care, poverty, alcoholism, rape and sibling suicide into a "linguistic event" and arrives at a conclusion that Culleton's discovery of an intrinsic selfhood persistently denigrated by others is "a narrative about unstable (even exchanged) subject positions, positions repeatedly negotiated in response to social and discursive practices" (HOY 2001: 93). The already mentioned essay by Sharon Smulders reveals the deficiency of such a reading: the imposed master narrative dehistoricizes and depoliticizes the novel, turning it to a self-reflexive discourse about discourse, completely ignoring its primary objective - the empowerment of Métis selfhood in postwar Manitoba. Conversely, the strategy of postcolonial critique which reduces the multiplicity and dynamism of the lived experience by turning it into a metaphor, while at the same time deconstructing the unified subject, in effect, neutralizes the potentially subversive energies of the Other. "Indigenous culture is more easily intellectualized (and colonized) when transferred from the danger of lived black experience to the safety of white metaphor, when you can have that "signifying black difference" without the difference of significant blackness, writes Susan Friedman (qtd. in HOY 2001: 15). In the postcolonial discourse, the racialized body is too often turned into a visible abstraction, so the visibility of "people of colour" becomes the camouflage which masks the economic and social inequality that lies at the core of the postcolonial/ postnational age. By evading the criticism of global capitalism and postmodern sovereignty, postcolonial cultural and textual critique is not only ineffectual but may introduce "more subtle versions of 'incorporated disparity' instead of challenging an organisation of discourse that justifies the status quo" (BRYDON 1989: 24). It is both ethically and politically problematic: it depoliticizes the

narratives whose main subject is that of the transformation of the subject back into the individual and of registering of his/her agency. It further marginalises those already marginalised by dominant ideologies and colonialism.

Postcolonial theory operates with a political program and apparently serves progressive, decolonizing political aims: it questions the authority of colonial discourse by giving a voice to those who have been previously marginalized. The aim of the article is not to dismiss these postcolonial readings altogether but to problematize their imperative of detecting polyphony in every single narrative.

Цитирана литература

BANNERJI, Himani. Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism. Toronto, Women's Press, 1995.

BERGLAND, Betty. "Postmodernism and the Autobiographical Subject: Reconstructing the "Other", 130-166. In Ashley, Kathleen. Gilmore, Leigh. Peters, Gerald. (eds.): Autobiography and Postmodernism. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

BISSOONDATH, Neil. Selling Illusions. The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada. Toronto, Penguin Books, 2002.

BREWSTER, Anne. Reading Aboriginal Women's Autobiography. Sidney, Sidney University Press, 1996.

BRUMBLE, H. David, III. American Indian Autobiography. Berkley, University of California Press, 1988.

BRYDON, Diana. "New Approaches to the New Literatures in English". Westerly, Vol. 34 No. 3. (September 1989): 23-30.

CULLETON, Beatrice. "Images of Native People and their Effects." School Libraries in Canada 7 (Spring 1987): 47–52.

DEVADAS, Vijay. Prentice, Chris. "Postcolonial Politics." Borderlands. E-Journal. Volume 6 number 2, 2007.<http://www.borderlands.net.au/issues/vol6no2.html. > 01.09. 2012.

FEE, Marjery. "Romantic Nationalism and the Image of Native People in Contemporary English-Canadian Literature", 15-33. In King, Thomas. Calver, Cheryl. Hoy, Helen (eds.): The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives. Toronto, ECW Press, 1987.

HOY, Helen. How Should I Read These? Native Women Writers in Canada. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2001.

MALIK, Kenan. Strange Fruit. Why Both Sides Are Wrong in the Race Debate. Oxford, Oneworld, 2008.

MARACLE, Lee. Oratory: Coming to Theory. North Vancouver, British. Columbia, Gallerie, 1990.

SEYHAN, Azade. Writing Outside the Nation. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001.

SCHAFFER, Kay and Smith Sidonie. Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

SMULDERS, Sharon. "What is the proper word for people like you?": The Question of Métis Identity in In Search of April Raintree. English Studies in Canada. 32.4 (2006): 75-100. <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/ESC/article/download/.../7211> 29.09. 2012.

WINTER, Elke. "National Unity versus Multiculturalism? Rethinking the Logic of Inclusion in Germany and Canada", International Journal of Canadian Studies, No. 24, (2001): 171-195.

WHITELAW, Anne. "Land Spirit Power: First Nations Cultural Production and Canadian Nationhood", International Journal of Canadian Studies, No. 12, (Fall 1995): 31-49.

Извори

CAMPBELL, Maria. Halfbreed. Toronto, Goodread Biographies, 1973.

CULLETON, Beatrice. In Search of April Raintree. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, Pemmican Publications. Inc., 1983.

MARACLE, Lee. Ravensong: A Novel. Vancouver, Press Gang Publishers, 1993.

Милица Љ. Живковић

ПОСТКОЛОНИЈАЛНА ЧИТАЊА АУТОБИОГРАФСКИХ ТЕКСТОВА АБОРИЏИНА У КАНАДИ

Резиме

Постколонијалне расправе о културној разлици и идентитету су делимично заслужне за популарност абориџинских аутобиографских прича. Други подстицај аутобиографском писму долази од стране аутора абориџинског порекла који потврђивање културног идентитета у тексту

виде као важан део политичке акције и борбе за место и улогу у јавном животу. У ширем смислу, рад се бави темом постколонијалне политике и испитује међусобни однос између културне разлике, идентитета и деловања на примеру савремених абориџинских аутобиографских текстова: Мелескиња Марије Кембел, У потрази за Ејприл Рејнтри Беатрис Калетон и Песма гаврана Ли Маракл. У ужем смислу, у чланку се проблематизују постколонијална, читања која деконструсање субјекта и афирмисање културне разлике сматрају својим императивома. Рад има за циљ да укаже на етички и политички проблематичан ефекат оваквих стратегија у контексту абориџинског аутобиографског писма.

Кључне речи: постколонијалијалне/постструктуралистичке стратегије, абориџинска аутобиографија, Канада, политика идентитета, културна разлика