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The Natural World in Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010)**

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SUMMARY

Human beings and the natural world exploration in coexistence with the urban environment is the central issue of this project. For this, the Canadian natural surroundings, Canada's society, culture and literature, throughout the novel *Fauna* (2010) by Alissa York, will provide an accurate vision upon diverse species of animals and their interrelation with human society.

From nowadays Canada, we will develop the study of the physical space and the geographical features of this country. In this sense, the biography of Alissa York, along with her literary production and the analysis of her Canadian nature writing, will constitute a valuable tool for the analysis of *Fauna* (2010).

Additionally, the content and theme of Alissa York's work, as well as, the symbolism and style adopted by the author will be included. Thus, we consider the inclusion of Canadian nature in the urban realm to demonstrate the relevance of this territory upon the global world. Likewise, we will portray the emerging relationship between humankind and the power of nature.

RESUMEN

El tema central de este trabajo es el estudio del ser humano y la exploración de la naturaleza en coexistencia con el medio urbano. Para ello, el entorno natural canadiense, la sociedad, la cultura y la literatura, a través de la novela *Fauna* (2010) de la autora Alissa York, nos aportaran una visión precisa acerca de la diversidad de seres vivos y su interrelación con la sociedad humana.

Dentro de este contexto, realizaremos un estudio, basándonos en el Canadá actual, sobre el espacio físico y las características geográficas del país. En este sentido, la biografía de Alissa York, junto con su producción literaria acerca de la naturaleza canadiense, constituirá una valiosa herramienta para el análisis de su obra.

Por otro lado, se incluyen detalles acerca del contenido, la temática y el simbolismo de *Fauna*, así como el estilo utilizado por la autora. De este modo, consideraremos la naturaleza canadiense y su interacción con la sociedad urbana para demostrar la relevancia de este territorio en el mundo global y, asimismo, analizaremos la relación emergente entre el ser humano y el poder de la naturaleza.

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HUMAN BEINGS AND THE NATURAL WORLD IN ALISSA YORK'S *FAUNA* (2010)

María Cantón González

1. Introduction: Why the Exploration of Canada through *Fauna*?

In the second year of the English Studies degree, the subject *Other Literatures in the English Language*¹ was determinant to consider Canada as a cultural and natural heritage place to learn about. Therefore the reason why this territory appears as a unique and huge land is the main fact which we find out for exploring human life, animal characterization and nature in *Fauna* (2010).

Given the importance of the social sphere, that guide people in the world, this research project evaluates the diverse nature of Toronto's population. Responding to the fact of the diversity of species of animals while recognizing individual peculiarities upon the novel of Alissa York, *Fauna*, we will find the right balance between Canadian life and the voice of nature.

Besides this it can be considered that the development of Canadian society also tells us about the social, cultural and literary issues of this northern part of the American continent. In this case, we have chosen the female and prominent figure of Alissa York because we have found that her novel *Fauna* (2010) depicts fascinating aspects to analyse the Canadian scenery.

The most relevant objectives of this research are to enhance the study of the involvement of Alissa York in the literary industry by her contribution in the narrative genre. Equally the cultural, social and literary tradition of Canada, upon the exploration of nature and society in the work of Alissa York, cover an enormous sort of issues to discover in the Canadian state.

That is, the intertwined relationship between human living condition and nature, through an entire place where the author presents a parallel between the urban world and the rural life of Canada. We find out the fact that being a

¹ Other Literatures in the English Language refers to the compulsory course unit which is usually studied in the second year of English Studies degree. This module concerns not only Canadian literature, but also Indian, Australian, Caribbean, and African literatures under the influence of English Romantics.

Canadian implies to have got a special feeling of nature so the title of the novel *Fauna* catch our attention from the view point of a reader.

In the course of this research, the biography and literary output from Alissa York, as well as, her career as a Canadian nature writer will allow us to learn more about her novel. Moreover, several comments and confessions discussed by the author will let us approach relevant details about her creative writing process.

In this respect, we will encounter enjoyable and tenderness passages in the novel of *Fauna* that, in fact, are related with the kind of geographical and bucolic portrayal of Canada. Precisely, we will see how the plot of *Fauna* is related to this country upon the outstanding downtown of Toronto, nearby the location of Don River Valley, revealed as the place of the world with the best and pleasant way of life.

So then, we realize the reason why Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010) is considered an extraordinary work of literature while examining the beauty of simplicity and the original writing style of the author.

Likewise, this novel let us know further about Canadian literature written in the English language. Thus Alissa York offers a contrast between the cultural wisdom of Canada and the vivid reality perceived by different species of animals and human beings.

The target of this research is to reflect how the presence of nature in literature can change lines of thoughts and ideas by producing emotions on people. Recognizing this general fact about the coexistence of nature and society leads us to conclude that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder while, it exists a special reflection of nowadays Canada towards the voice of nature given by Alissa York.

Eventually, we will briefly conclude with the moral message left by the author. Therefore, considering the context in which this research is developed, it will be useful to observe how the female insight of Alissa York also makes *Fauna* (2010) an emotionally, even intense, contemporary Canadian nature writing. Thus, what is another relevant part of this research is to acquire an insightful notion on the exploration of Canada within social, cultural and literary findings that are to be the essence of our knowledge.

Key words: natural heritage, huge land, human life, animal characterization, civilization, urban world, rural life, geographical, bucolic, vivid reality.

1.1 Canada: Physical Space and Geography.

The main point that catches our attention when we overall talk about Canada comes from its enormous territory, that is, Canadian physical space and geography. Thus for those of us who live far from this country, we find it much more amazing and appealing while, we get the impression of an ideal and enjoyable place.

In this respect, we will start by defining the etymological meaning of the word Canada. The undoubted fact of this term derives from its origin upon an Iroquoian language –referring to a native language spoken in North America- *kanāta* which literally means village.



Fig. I. [Map of Canada]

Source: [<http://trabajodefpb.blogspot.com.es/2015/12/kiribati-canada-los-angeles-estados.html>]

At first sight, it is useful to carry out a preliminary exploration upon the geographical area which surrounds the extended Canadian land. That is to say cities from Whitehorse, Vancouver, Victoria, on the northwest side, to Ottawa - capital of Canada- Toronto, Montreal and Québec on the northeast part of the country.

Undoubtedly when we speak about the American continent, we appreciate that Canada is close to the state of Alaska and, its coastal areas link to the south with the United States of America (USA) and to the north with Greenland.

By far, we have an overall picture of what Canada might just be while, “Canadians are rightly proud of their reputation as members of a decent and civilized nation” (Brulotte 1994: 125) so then; it is relevant for our research to concentrate upon the Canadian territory and populated places.

First of all, the largest province of the area of Canada “Québec that presents an immense surface land of what was New France” (Couture 2015: 1). This province, well-known for its forested and colourful regions, is located at the northern side of St. Lawrence Valley and Gaspé Peninsula as follows:



Fig. II. [Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec, during summer. Photo by Martine Oger]

Source: [<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/quebec/>]

Other important area in Canada belongs to the second-largest province: Ontario where we can find important Canadian cities, such as Toronto and Ottawa. At this point, Ontario further borders the Hudson Bay in the north, the St. Lawrence River in the east and the Manitoba province in the west.

Ontario, often viewed as the most various landscape area of Canada, is “divided into three distinctive regions: Hudson Bay, Canadian Shield and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Lowlands” (Bothwell & Hillmer 2007: 1).

As a contrast to the previous province of Québec, Ontario’s forest cover is not uniform. Despite that a number of its pine trees remains reduced, the southern vegetation of the region is reasonably abundance and fertile.

Moreover, if we concentrate upon the west part of the Canadian land, we encounter the province of Alberta “popular by the Rocky Mountains which form its western boundary with British Columbia” (Stamp 2009: 1).

This province is relatively dry though it includes most of Canada river valleys. Thus, its visitors get astonished and amazed once they have a clear-sighted vision of the boreal forests, rivers and magnificent lakes which dominate the landscape of this territory.

Canada’s spectacular scenery is, in fact, concentrated on the area of Alberta which encapsulates an extraordinary natural world and forest paths similar to the natural ravines locations of the novel *Fauna* by Alissa York.

Therefore and given these natural Canadian areas, it might be interesting to have an overview upon the territory of Toronto. In strong contrast to the commonly natural surroundings of the country, this cosmopolitan city – coexistence of individuals from different countries- reflects both the forest areas and urban atmosphere which appears to be the whole ground of Alissa York’s novel.

Indeed, one implication of this scenery is that Toronto’s ravines and the Don River east of downtown represent the most distinctive feature of the Canadian physical space closer to the natural landscape described in *Fauna*:

The Don Valley has turned out to be a dream come true—all that good cover, and you can climb up into the city whenever you like. Walk the street and watch the people stare through shop windows (. . .) near Toronto, Canada, in Castle Frank, which is a pine-clad hill on the northeast edge of the city. Castle Frank was the name of the subway station at the western end of the viaduct (Alissa York 2010: 68-75).

Nowadays these ravines locations, though suitable for cycling, suffer from pollution, poisonous flowering plants and illegal dumping of garbage. Apart from that, much of the ravines areas, located at Toronto, move from the Don River, into Lake Ontario, to the open space of Rosedale’s neighbourhood.

Whatever the reality might be, Ontario’s capital province: “Toronto represents North America’s fourth largest city” (Careless 2013: 1). A notable characteristic of this Canadian region is the extensive green and botanical spaces very attractive for people of all ages. Thus many visitors have praised “the cleanliness and orderliness of Canadian cities” (Brulotte 1994: 125).

Regarding the geography of Canada, one of the most important geographical features of Toronto, between the southwest of this province and the border of New York State, is Niagara Falls. Here we see a natural 130km spectacle from largest to smallest three waterfalls, the Horseshoes Falls, the American Falls and the Bridal Veil Falls.

With the considerable size of this landscape and the magnificent sound which emerges from its waters, the Canadian author Alissa York has alluded to this natural phenomenon in her novel *Fauna*: “He looks away. They got married in a hurry, you know, never got a chance at a honeymoon until I was eleven months old. Niagara Falls. Classic, right?” (York 2010: 189).



Fig. III. [Niagara Falls]

Source: [<http://travelblog.viator.com/best-things-to-do-and-see-in-toronto/>]

Following the provinces and landforms of Canada, the geographical evolution of this country makes visible a territory distinct from ours. It demonstrates that much of “Canadian topography is covered by dense forests, multiple lakes and grass paths with some of the ancient known rocks” (Briney 2014: 1) as the Rocky Mountains mentioned above. Within this understanding, it is essential to remember that the term topography derives from the Greek root – τοπος “place” + γραφια “to write, to draw or to describe” which literally means collective features of a region.

Within the previous information about the physical space and geographical locations of Canada, we are given a picture of an ideal and beautiful land. From now on, we are going to discuss the Canadian population status with regards to the political system and public organisms of the country.

1.2 Canadian Society.

With regard to the exploration of Canada, this northern land of the American continent contains elements of light and shade which reflect many social and regional features assembled under the term Canadian life. Currently, it is of interest to observe, with the rapid growth of population and mass migration, how the amount of Canadian residents has gradually increased.

Thus “Canada may be a land of immigrants, but it is also a land of migrants—people who have left one of its great provinces to live in another” (Macleod 1994: 39). According to this view, the study of the social level of this country is a way not only of understanding Canadian society in an insight manner, but also of understanding better individuals’ life.

Therefore this section will reveal us interesting things about day-to-day living through the way people deal with controversial issues as it is political orientation and economic status.

As we are studying the society of Canada, it is expected that we will encounter remarkable humanity features, such as life organization, and key themes such as population social range.

With the passing of time, the vision of life changes and there is an inevitable evolution of human values and modes of understanding each other. As the Canadian author Alice Munro reflects on her writing: “People always hesitate if they are good enough”. It means that both individuals and social groups move from one country to another so they tend to project life complexity by their own perspective.

Canadian living condition is what now appears to be the focus of interest for our research. A bit more specifically and closer to the Canadian society is the kind of civilization which Thristan has incorporated in his discussions:

(. . .) the United States gave their largest immigration quotas to England, Germany, and Ireland while Canada was less restrictive during the post-Second World War era. Consequently, the Canadian government accepted a far more diverse range of immigrants during the period and gained the reputation for broader cultural diversity than its southern neighbour (Thristan Falconer 2014: 336).

Take the discussion of Thristan into consideration, Canada denotes to be a land of opportunities that has received immigrants, first from France and Britain, later from Central Europe and more recently, from the Caribbean and Asia in comparison with its southern neighbour, that is, the United States of America.

Given this extent, we might encounter the way in which Irish or Chinese immigrant communities, among others, have been integrated within Canada's existing population. This particular social issue let us discover the accelerated inclusion of immigrants in the country.

By the year 1944, "the industrial expansion of Canada has been limited by the lower standards of living and particularly by the technical education in the country" (Basil Wright 1944: 143). Thus, between the 18th and 19th century, the state of Canada has experienced an enormous population growth as a result of Great Migration from the British Isles.

Within this notion, there has been a time when the First Nations of Canadian indigenous people spread across Ontario and Vancouver to look for a better life. In the meantime, provinces as Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador have been under the French influence while, English domain has exerted influence over Nova Scotia, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, and St. John Island.

Added to this dominance has been the settlement of the first Europeans from countries like Italy and Greece during the 19th century. About the same time, the largest Germanic ethnic groups used to have unequal economic, political and social conditions in the Canadian society.

Although urbanization tends to be complex in Canada, it is the second largest country behind Russia therefore; it is relevant to point out that Canadian population, influenced by the continuum mass migration, has now around 36,155,487 inhabitants.

With this social context, family structure in Canada is mostly diverse and it is changing due to the fact that the majority of families have fewer members. One implication of this social structure derives in the increase of step-parents and the

growing number of women in the workplace. As a result, the average number of children per married couples is just one.

As a matter of fact, this argument is usually conceived as being generalized and, it considers an object of common knowledge the political orientation of Canada. In the 1980s, “Canada’s constitution was brought home from Britain (. . .) and with it came a new Charter of Rights and Freedoms” (Edwards 2005: 19).

As the occasion requires we are to introduce the political system of the country. Canada is dominated by a constitutional democratic rich state where Queen Elizabeth II is in charge of the executive power. Equally Canada is constituted by a parliamentary government divided in the House of Commons and the Senate.

Moreover, each province has its parliament and regional government but Canadians are conscious that they are in a country dominated by a powerful southern neighbour: United States of America. Then, the population of Canada is to maintain and to struggle for their rights by a proper level of governance autonomy and power.

This Canadian political orientation contributes to the lifetime developments of the population. In all this, the great achievement undertaken by the Canadian government comes from the improvement of people’s present and future living conditions.



Fig. IV. [Canadian Currency]

Source: [<http://www.factfixx.com/2011/08/09/weird-laws-paying-with-coins-in-canada/>]

In terms of population status, money serves as an exchange tool by regulating social transactions. Originally “Canadian money has its roots in the Aboriginal trades for goods and services long before European contact”

(Mcgillivray 2013: 1). Closely to the international system, the monetary system of the country is the Canadian dollar (C\$) essentially and very significant for Canadians.

On the other hand, several public organisms have been awaiting solution in the vastness land of Canada, that for a long period of time, “none are as important as that of the health of people” (British Medical Journal 1912: 47). In the Canadian health care system, primary services include all activities which comprise the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses and injury carried out by medical practitioners and nurses.

Nowadays, this is a matter which raises concern about human social issues as it is the lack of interest and the apathy of those few who still pay little attention to public health organisms.

For instance, “the Cardiac Rehab Centre² at St. Mike’s in downtown Toronto logically, it would offer the most chances to belong” (York 2010: 194). In all this, Canadian provinces and territories have implemented primary health care attention that let individuals obtain an effective and better result in terms of rehabilitation and health insurance. Thus “Canada's national health-insurance is concerned that every resident of Canada receives medical care and hospital treatment” (Dunlop 2006: 1).

Therefore there is little doubt that health and medical care changes have now compensated previous medical services. They have, in fact, spread wide satisfaction among citizens by giving responses to the needs of the community so that people have access to health resources everywhere.

At this point, “the Canadian Medical Association claims that Canada's medical care system compares well with health systems elsewhere in the world. Health-insurance administration costs in Canada were between 5% and 10% of expenses, compared with over 10% in the US”. (Dunlop 2006: 1).

In this Canadian society section, the current field of education is a necessary part of discussion. At this stage, the majority of people are familiar with the idea of education as necessary and useful on a first stage and, even though Canada has

² Toronto Rehab’s Cardiac Centre provides education and support to population who seek to adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle. It takes control through hypertension, diabetes and certain cardiovascular diseases by offering physical therapy and cardiac rehabilitation to its patients.

a decentralized educative system, it results to be a relevant public right for the population.

Under this consideration, Canada is an extraordinary and diverse country where each province is responsible for the basic structures of provincial and territorial education systems. Of course, there are laws, policies and procedures that govern the institutions of each education system and “one would not expect Canadian educational practices to be different from other Western democratic countries. But the political contexts (. . .) usually involve particular ethnic and linguistic social patterns which are increasingly likely to be reflected at school” (Edwards 2005: 23).

In Canada, the process of education selection enables students to choose among three levels of education: elementary, secondary and postsecondary. Overall Canadian schooling offers its students a universal, free elementary and secondary programs designed to provide education to as many people as possible.

Most of Canadian colleges and libraries often ensure that members of the school community make use of different educative services such as computer-based systems. In this sense, the education sector is intended to make the most of population learning opportunities by virtue of their personal and academic development.

1.3 The Cultural Vision of Canada with regard to Language.

Before we start this section, it is significant for our knowledge to keep in mind that, throughout the learning process of human beings, every culture shares a universal pattern. Even if the target is to enhance the process of acquiring a language, the notion of culture becomes of great importance for humanism.

For this reason, to have knowledge of the language and culture of Canada is essential for our research. In response to this statement, culture is undoubtedly associated with civilization, that is, the degree to which members of a particular nation or community share beliefs, customs, social attitudes and behavioural characteristics.

Whatever individuals' identity is “culture can refer to ethnicity, gender, profession (. . .) that is bounded and salient to individuals” (Kim & Gudykunst 1988: 103) and this term of culture not only conceptualize the common culture of

mankind. Thus it also has a broad interpretation when it is placed among the coexistence of different cultural groups.

From this observation, the nature of individuals' interactions in Canada is an important basis if we are to study the cultural vision of the country. As a result, "the province of Toronto represents a key site for immigrant settlement and integration, as its immigrant population is larger than any other Canadian city. Here we consider how Canadian culture and immigrant integration sector are constructed from this particular location" (Allan 2013: 60-61).

When approaching any socio-cultural context distinct from our country, it is crucial to keep in mind that culture defines people's identity. Given this extent, Canada makes visible a picture that results to be a multicultural and multilingual nation.

According to Rumjahn Hoosain and Farideh Salili, "while we can look at multicultural from a societal perspective, we should also look at issues from the individual's point of view, including individual differences" (Hoosain & Salili 2005: 7). This cultural approach does not imply any sort of distant relationships among individuals but, a way of acceptance others.

Precisely, a further complication emerges from huge countries like Canada where certain citizens believe that cultures are unequal when, in fact, they are simply different.

Shortly afterward, measures related to individuals' social integration has led to this northern American territory to promote diversity over dimensions of race, gender or individuals' socio-economic status. Here the cultural vision of Canada denotes the influence exerted in the country by British, French and native customs and traditions.

Besides this organizational dimension, the simultaneous development of new artistic, musicals and way of expression around the country identifies Canada as a well-known country for its national symbolisms. Any description these symbolisms represents those aspects which are part of the country heritage for instance, the Canadian banknotes and the Royal Court of Arms of Canada³.

³ The Royal Arms of Canada were adopted by the proclamation of King George V in 1921. The shield is divided into four quarters, with the first three very similar to those of Great Britain: three lions for England, a lion rampant for Scotland and a harp for Ireland.



Fig. V. [Royal Court of Arms of Canada]

Source: [<http://www.heraldry.ca/misc/coatArmsCanada.htm>]

On the other hand, in “Canada today just about 17% of the population have an Aboriginal language as mother tongue” (Edwards 2005: 25) but, there are problems affecting Aboriginal-language which come from hard-pressed restrictions in education.

In such situation, the number of students that speak a language other than French or Spanish has increased considerably over recent decades. There has been a considerable insight into the spread of English as the Global Language and, here the most interesting fact goes beyond the notion that English is often the most spoken at home.

While respecting language diversity, we also need to consider that there are ten languages spoken all over Canada. With a great number of speakers, they are: Chinese, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and Ukrainian which have shown the broad and extraordinarily vision of Canada with regards to language.

At this point, the cultural vision of Canada, whether or not at the Canadian state, local areas or national level, has influenced both population attitudes to work and human values in employability selection. Once again, “English Language Teaching (ELT) has its own particular interest in how to improve the results of English teaching” (Cook 2006: 30).

Simultaneously, the insights from this linguistic dimension in the workplace arise from the concern of citizens’ language training so that individuals’ employability increases in the Canadian workforce. “This last point is particularly encouraging, representing the wisdom that culture should not have in mind only

individuals' diversity" (Hoosain & Salili 2005: 7) but also language authenticity, uniquely valuable and relatable well considered in Canada.

Despite this cultural situation, language practice is an oral message and, either for the speaker or listener it has a cultural background. For example, it promotes understanding between members of different communities while, at the same time, there is continuing mass immigration of various languages, into Canada—a country where English is the first and official language besides French.

The task of considering the source of bilingualism—the use of two languages—sets out that English and French are equally functional and expressive languages as they perfectly cover Canadian citizens' communicative functions.

Above all, "culture has been conceptualized in intercultural communication⁴" (Kim & Gudykunst: 1988: 102) and a continuum of cultural differences exist, if we are to consider the diverse people who comprise the levels of society. Apart from that, language and culture become so far intimately bound together and, we would like to end this section with Donn's (1980: pp.19-20) definition that "Language is a product of the culture but simultaneously the culture is shaped by how the language allows us to view it".

1.3.1 Overall Discovery of Canadian Arts.

Until this point, we have analysed the Canadian society followed by the cultural and linguistic panoramic view of the country. In this section, we will bring about new contents by the artistic side of this country that might be unknown for Spanish people.

This has led us to explore some of the major national museums, galleries and artistic centres around different provinces of Canada. While doing this research, we have encountered relevant information derived from the essence of the Canadian cultural vision and its major institutions: the National Ballet School of Canada, the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Canadian Cultural Centre.

⁴ Intercultural communication takes place when two interlocutors identify themselves as members from different cultural groups.

The Canadian Cultural Centre opens this section by focusing on “one of the world’s dance education establishments based in Toronto, that is, the National Ballet School” (Crabb & Cornell 2010: 1). This cultural centre, established in Paris by Canada’s Department of External Affairs, offers its visitors content about Canadian cultural and musical activities in France. It was founded in 1959 and it remains as a prestigious international school in the sphere of Canada’s arts.

Before moving on to the following section, the cultural development of Canada let us focus on its museums & galleries such as Ontario Science Centre or the Canadian Museum of Nature.

This latter Museum of Nature has been designated as a crown corporation in 1990 and it incorporates a collection of natural history, fossils and specimens exhibitions beyond its scientific importance. This national museum illustrates the existence of a wide variety of animals, plants and minerals both in time and space.

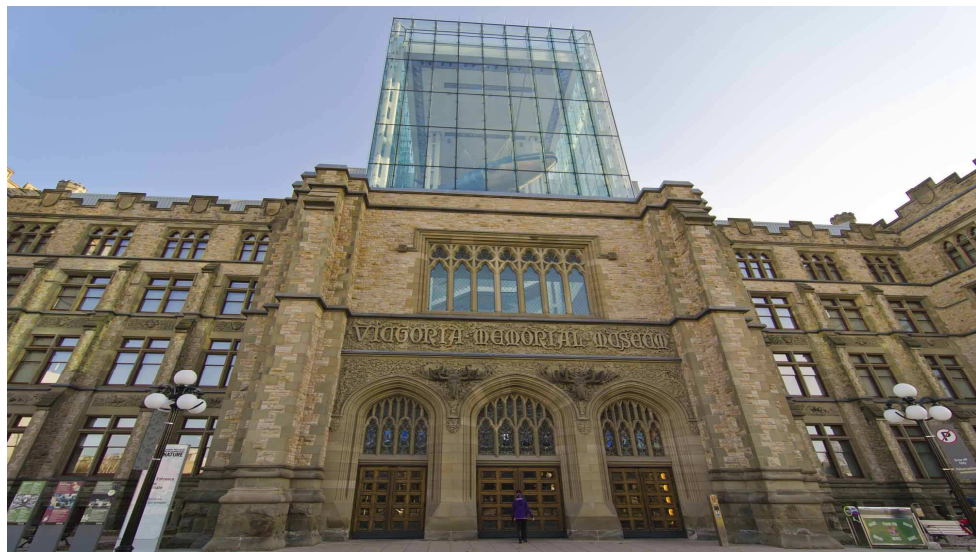


Fig. VI. [Canadian Museum of Nature. Photo by Susan Mcarthur-Letellier]

Source: [<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canadian-museum-of-nature/>]

Moreover, Ontario Science Centre is located in the Don Valley, Toronto, as the Canadian setting portrayed in Alissa York’s *Fauna*. Basically, it sells copies of its exhibitions to other museums and science centres all over Canada.

Thereby, this centre has a great number of engaging scientific and technical exhibitions, as well as, innovative travelling areas for those willing to take risks and experiences.

Hereafter, Canada musical features are presented with their correspondent observations after the reading of Canadian news from *The Star* and *CBC*.⁵ The undoubted fact is that music is a way to express human joy of life and emotions.

As a way of liberation of energy, this term is an improved form of “Toronto’s Massey Hall, home of Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir until 1982” (Maloney & Wardrop 2013: 1).

It is widely acknowledged that memorable events, as the speech of the British politician Winston Churchill, have taken place at this venue where also movies, concerts, theatre and finest orchestras’ performances have been recorded.

Overall observations let us discover that Massey Hall has become the place of numerous musical events per week at the city of Toronto.

In order to acknowledge this artistic side of Canada, it is relevant to focus on the Arts and Letters Club, National Historic Site, also located in Toronto. Until 1985, only male audience access has been permitted in this club. Now it constitutes a meeting place for people of diverse interests to engage in artistic creativity, among cultural figures as the painters J.E.H. Macdonald or Arthur Lismer.

As the music columnist William Littler (2016: 1) remarks in the Canadian newspaper *The Star*:

Borders between musical styles and even art forms are dissolving, as are distinctions between high and popular art (. . .) with the absence of a musical mainstream opening doors to ongoing experimentation (. . .) There has been a long-standing argument in symphonic circles about whether contemporary music should be concentrated in a festival setting for the benefit of its special public or spread through the season to broaden the traditional audience’s experience.

In this respect, music has been transmitted towards an oral tradition among generations. Here, indigenous people bring to the Canadian society their own traditional music and dance usually accompanied by handmade instruments such as drums.

Our intention is to claim that Canadian music defines the country as a multicultural nation where distinct contemporary or traditional musical versions exist side by side. “For a long time, scientists have wondered why all human cultures create and enjoy music” (McDonald 2016: 1) therefore, audiences are

⁵ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of public news from Canada that actively reflect the country cultural identity.

interested in finding points of connection between the music offered by Canada, as the idea of discovering new arts perspectives, and cultures that enrich the artistic basis of the country.

Alternatively, most of Canadian artists cultivate what is known as folk music, that is, traditional music of the common people often related to a particular region. Music is really significant for Canadian people, especially if they are to celebrate Easter holidays, Christmas or funerals.

Throughout the country the most important musical genres are classical music, rock, jazz presented in Vancouver and Montreal, as well as, the instrumental oral blues style. This implies that the industrial music of Canada has advanced considerably all over the world while it has gained an acclaimed public reception.

At the end of this overall discovery of Canadian arts section, we are to consider the following contribution in memory of the pianist David Johnston:

(. . .) for a “youngish” country like Canada to preserve its cultural history, in piano form or otherwise (. . .) Apart from the indigenous people, we have only 400 years of civilization, Johnston says. Remembering our great artists is part of the building of the soul of the country – the poetry of the country (Laura Stone 2016: 1).

Since ancient times, music has developed a close relationship between individuals and the manifestation of an inherent act in the course of life. But what more precisely is this relation? For this answer, “although none of us would describe ourselves as philosophical behaviourists” (Leavens et al. 2008: 192), we assume that music is really valuable for Canadian people who conceive the outside world by the transmission of emotions, feelings and thoughts.

1.4 The Environment in Canada.

Initially, if we are to study the environment in Canada we must be concerned about what we do in favour of our local surroundings. Canadian environmentalists have established that there is absolutely nothing to prevent newcomers coming into the country and doing nothing in benefit for environmental protection.

Most of Canadians view the vast of nature as something to preserve though, “the country is still dependent both materially and symbolically on natural resources (. . .) involving the direct exploitation of the environment for human use” (Hessing 2004: 11).

Unfortunately, the grim reality of this environmental factor has generated increased approaches to the Canadian environment drawn from greenhouse gases’ emission, produced by Canada’s coal and oil industries, to droughts, floods, global warming and climate change as the greatest threats for the country.

While climatology cannot predict individual events or determine whether a particular storm is the direct result of climate change, it does tell us that increasingly severe weather events will occur with growing frequency. In other words, as climate damages continue to accrue, we may never fully “recover” from a specific event or put the disaster “behind us” before the next one arrives (Lisa Szabo-Jones & Paul Huebener 2013: 3-4).



Fig. VII. [The Secrets of Nature in Canada. Photo by Foujia Newsnish]

Source: [<http://www.newsnish.com/tourist-guides/attractive-destination/the-secrets-of-nature-in-canada/>]

As soon as possible, there is a need to cope with this situation so the government of Canada is intended to raise social concern among citizenship. In general, changes in nature are inevitable and if there is no control, environmental phenomenon have to be reduced or prevented. For this reason “Canada has a long tradition of being in favour of environmental policies” (Moffat 2009: 1).

While this seems a simple research into human-world relations, within nurturing environmental practices, something related with Canadian environment

must evaluate the fact of how individuals are affected by green areas' degradation. It occurs that population is able to adapt to climate and habitat change but, species of animals are not about to change in such an easy way.

With regard to this process of adaptation, the novel *Fauna* by Alissa York is the best sample. With a few adaptations, coyotes around town are just a sample of such habitat change. These creatures have gone so far into Toronto that they are even dangerous for human being: "because this city is in trouble. I have one word for you. Coyotes. And if you think I'm joking you better think again (. . .) they are down in the Don Valley and in just about every other park around town digging their dens and having their poor little helpless babies" (York 2010: 36-55).

Canadian society is especially involved in the natural world and the environment and, this involvement is highly relevant to understand the Canadians seek to preserve their state. There is even a Canadian magazine, known as *Women & Environments*, that recognized over the country is in charge of analysing women's relationship with nature.

Certainly, we have developed an extent of what remains a global problem for Canadian population and, it is clear to see how the environment can be altered by natural phenomenon. In all this, the Association for Literature, Environment and Culture in Canada (ALECC)⁶ has also collaborated in benefit for the country natural surroundings.

So then, by acknowledging the problems but also focusing on "the good news is essential and potentially powerful" (Moss 2013: 1). The major environmental aim in Canada comes from the idea of learning about nature conservation and measures to keep the areas clean, including the protection of the land and air quality. Thus, to work with provinces, communities and with people is the main role for a country that looks for prosperity and better future conditions.

In fact, "Canadian development agencies have been widely recognized within the international community for their work on two major concerns: gender and the environment" (Hessing 2004: 17). Therefore Canadian population have a special insight and perception for the local environment and, this tells us about

⁶ ALECC stands for the Association for Literature, Environment and Culture in Canada. This organization is designed for the discussion and analysis of knowledge about the work of nature and environmental writers, ecocritics and ecotheorists in the diverse land of Canada.

two possible revelations: citizens' personality and citizens' identity concerned within the environment in Canada.

Although everything looks new and modern in a state of multiple voices and nationalities, the aim of this section is to remind us that we should preserve the natural world and open spaces in which we live in, if we are to be better individuals.

1.5 Canadian Literature Development.

The generations of human beings are different in some respects and similar in others but, almost all the time they have had an emerging interest in literary compositions. Therefore this section will ensure that Canadian literature remains alive not only in past memories but also in today imagination and creativity.

Literature marks a community by the recreation of far away realities and, every act of writing let readership get into a particular world that is only a minor part of what literature can offer us. Sometimes the more we believe in a particular reality, the more experienced we are so it means that by the analysis of Canadian literature we are going to encounter socio-political influences.

Many of Canada's multicultural and multilingual characteristics, as well as, its rural and natural settings are reflected in the heritage of its literature.

Within this Canadian background, "long before the coming of white explorers and settlers" (Rice & Hayhoe 1994: 56) the presence of First Nations, writing has brought out the importance of migrant and transnational literature produced by authors from different nationalities living in Canada.

Some of their works, either in English or French, have characterized the background of a culture of origin and the one from the receiving country. For instance, "the native Canadian writer Shirley Bruised Head uses all her poetic skill to create an encounter between two ways of life, one immensely old and one relatively new" (Rice & Hayhoe 1994: 56) by the introduction of her tale *An Afternoon in Bright Sunlight* (1987).

In this context, plenty flashes about Canadian life are portrayed in the production of different literary genres. Here we can mainly distinguish two literary periods: early modern literature, from the 17th and 19th century, and contemporary literature from the 20th to 21st century.

Early modern literature

Historically, to read Canadian literature is to enter into the literary study of how diverse culture is. Such remark underlies the Canadian history and culture that has been shaped by First Nations' cultures and immigration patterns while, "as Canadian culture continues to be shaped by a range of languages (. . .) the Canadian voice is not uniform" (New 2012: 1).

In this respect, an approach to the Canadian literature field let us confirm that English is the official language in writing use, but other languages, such as French, are also used.

However, English is considered as the Global language used in communication and this broad term let us find out that "Canadian literature in English begins in the early 17th century with numerous explorers writing narratives of discovery" (New 2012: 1).

By the 19th century, literary panorama changes with the emerging literary texts, as First Nations' tales, that used to pay attention to political organization and issues of social instability and change. Whereas, much of the Canadian literature at this time used to assert the notion of natural order and moral instruction, by the latter years of this century oral transmission of literature received little attention thus it was shaped by other literary ways of expression and genres: poetry, narrative and drama.

Throughout the 19th century, Canada used to be a popular setting for many British novels. One prolific figure on this literary genre was William Henry Giles Kingston well-known for his boy's and British families' adventures novels: *The Log House* (1864) or *Captain Cook: His Life, Voyages, and Discoveries*, (1871).

About the same time, other novelists like Grant Allen moved all around the world, from the United States, England, France and finally, to Jamaica. In his career as a writer, he wrote the bestseller novel *The Woman Who Did* (1895) and *The Evolution of the Idea of God* (1897).

During these early ages of literature development, Canada has given response to many poets, notable novelists, as Grant Allen, and resident authors. Somehow, two literary figures, poet and novelist, that used to be the most acclaimed job occupations of the time.

According to the history of Canadian literature, much of what has been produced deal with English-Canadian or French-Canadian literature. For instance, Jules Verne⁷ spent "192 hours" on the North American continent in 1867, but apart from Niagara Falls saw nothing of Canada (Collet 2006: 1).



Fig. VIII. [Portrait of Jules Verne. Photo by Thildou]

Source: [<http://www.stars-portraits.com/en/portrait-130424.html>]

Whatever the precise data of Jules Verne reveals us, he has always adjusted his own ideas to the tradition of the narrative of action. For Verne, any novel should have a vivid plot that makes the novel interesting but, at the same time, educative so the reader can follow the actions' development till the end of the plot.

In the same way, French authors used to come to Canada as immigrants as Louis Hémon who found inspiration for his most lyrical piece of writing, *Maria Chapdelaine* (1913), in this North American country.

Nevertheless, with *Quarterly of Criticism and Review*⁸, the arrival of new approaches to the Canadian literature establishes an insightful discussion of selected issues such as "The Writer in Isolation", "Recent Canadian Poetry" or "Five Canadian Magazines". Thus in 1959, the first issue of this literary edition

⁷ Jules Verne (1828-1905) was a French writer and pioneer of the science-fiction genre. His most recurrent themes are adventures, nature and the social conflicts of his time, especially noticeable on his imaginative and fantastic novels.

⁸ Canadian Literature n°1, published in 1959, constitutes the first issue in the history of Canadian literature. It discusses general literary problems as well as that of individuals' writers and their work.

was published to assert that Canada has its own distinct literature towards a new appreciation for the nation's cultural basis.

Since the existence of this assertion in the summer of the 20th century, the province of Toronto has demonstrated to be a powerful area of publishing institutions, literary periodicals in Anglo-Canadian literature and major authors as Margaret Atwood. Likewise, Canadian literary community, without further limitation, has provided Canadian literature's position as the venue for any talented writers' critical discussion of Canadian writing as Margaret Laurence or Alice Munro.

Contemporary literature

Current perspectives on contemporary Canadian literature bring out the importance of recognizing and learning about "unique qualities that go into the composition of particular authors and texts" (Fitz 2011: 1). Indeed, after looking back to the early literature of Canada, it is the chance of covering Canadian contemporary literature in many of its writing forms, comments and expressions.

The best engaging of these comments, while getting information about Canadian authors and their published works, tell us about current literary affairs carried out by the *Writer's Trust of Canada*⁹. In this Canadian organization, readers are invited to discuss Canadian literary themes while having an overview upon the cultural history of the country.

In fact, if we look back to the cultural vision of Canada, once again we get to know that diversity and cultural domination is what coexists in this country. For this reason, Canadian writers and their valuable pieces of writing are always essential at every state of the country.

In all this, literature in Canada gives readers a glimpse of the extensive and diverse national perspective subsumed by individuals' identity and culture.

By this notion "the current literary terrain in Canada revealed to us how the globalized geography of Canadian literature has approached certain complexity before it has reached the public domain" (Derksen 2013: 8).

⁹ Writer's Trust of Canada, founded in 1976, by five prominent Canadian authors, Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Graeme Gibson, Margaret Laurence, and David Young, to encourage a flourishing writing community by creating connections between writers and readers.

“Literature in Canada has flourished both in its English and French-speaking tradition” (Fitz 2011: 2) so following this latter period, the subsequent literary section will allow us to explore in detail the best known female authors in Canada.



Fig. IX. [Library of Parliament, Ottawa]

Source: [<http://ttglibrary.com/2011/12/02/bonjour-from-canada/>]

1.5.1 Female Writers in Canada.

As regards the previous subdivision of contemporary Canadian literature, we are to study the female perspectives and valuable writing contributions by Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Lissa Moore, Alissa York and Martha Schabas.

For some of them, literature offers an ideal world and the beauty of simplicity (Alice Munro), for others the identity of women is uncertain in place and position (Margaret Atwood) and beyond the frontiers of female’s view, (Alissa York) there is even a connection between humanity and the forgotten animals that survive in the big cities.

In this sense, these authors evoke our attention with details onto the pleasure of learning more about their writings so “sources of data on the activities of women allow us to perceive the involvement of women in educational and cultural life” (Roy 2010: 1).

The following table I provide a summarized version of earlier Canadian authors from the 20th century till the most contemporary ones. We will find out that these female writers have a more complex cosmivision of the world than men

because of the traces they have left on their careers and particularly, the narrative of Alissa York will show us the importance of the natural outside world with regard to men.

Author	Place of birth	Professional data	Literary production
Alice Munro	Wingham, Ontario 1931	Short-story writer and novelist. She has a mature woman perspective	<i>Something I've been Meaning to Tell You</i> (1974), <i>The View from Castle Rock</i> (2006), <i>Dear Life</i> (2012)
Margaret Atwood	Ottawa, Canada 1939	Poet, novelist, essayist and environmental activist	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985), <i>The Robber Bride</i> (1993), <i>The Year of the Flood</i> (2009)
Lisa Moore	Saint John Terranova, Canada 1964	Stong new voice in Canadian fiction, short-story writer and novelist	<i>Degrees of Nakedness</i> (1995), <i>Alligator</i> (2005), <i>February</i> (2010)
Alissa York	Athabasca, Northern Alberta, Canada 1970	Writer and novelist. She is a high profile figure of Canadian nature writing	<i>Any Given Power</i> (1999), <i>Mercy</i> (2003), <i>Effigy</i> (2007), <i>Fauna</i> (2010), <i>The Naturalist</i> (2016)
Martha Schabas	Toronto, Canada 1980	Writer, novelist and choreographer. She has challenged the notion of being a young and courageous figure in the writing field	<i>Various Positions</i> (2011)

Tab. I. [Canadian Literature and Female Authors of the 20th century]

In this general abstract of Canadian female writers, undoubtedly there are influences everywhere from outside intellectual and artistic forms. Either for a female writer or, for any other woman, they may be sensitive to influences and perceptions.

At this point, we realize that there is nothing strange about this idea of being influenced by someone else. For instance, Margaret Atwood is a very strong woman who always leaves an ethical message when she writes and as William Faulkner (2016: 1) says in an interview posted in *The Paris review*:

The artist is of no importance. Only what he creates is important, since there is nothing new to be said (. . .) In my opinion, if I could write all my work again, I am convinced that I would do it better, which is the healthiest condition for an artist. That's why he keeps on working, trying again; he believes each time that this time he will do it.

In some way, it is what Alice Munro does when she looks for the things she wants to write. Thus this Canadian author projects things by the perspective of a woman and she always presents a society with a promise of a better future by a rich exploration of womanhood.

Her visions change from over the years and she has assumed the complexity of life in a simplicity fact. Certainly, in surprising new ways “she finds patterns in the chaos of the everyday (. . .) as a way of connecting time past, present and future (. . .) that leave readers with a renewed appreciation of the “complexity of things — the things within things” (Kakutani 2013: 1).

Described as humble and honest writer by *CBC news*, Lisa Moore is the strong new voice in the Canadian literature so what she has in common with the previous writers is that her talent deserves to be commemorated. Therefore, this is all what she has to say: “All of you have been respectful and smart and passionate and, most importantly to me as a writer, honest. People have been talking about the books exactly the way they feel about them, and that is the most a person could ask for” (More 2013: 1).

For further consideration, “On the other hand, most young writers feel strong doubts about the quality and potential of their skill” (Brown-Haig 1959: 6). After all, anyone at some stage of life is able to write and this may be enough for Martha Schabas as the new emerging generation of writers in Toronto.

As Alice Munro, she writes from the point of view of a woman by virtue of the female body in a very particular social and political level that, naturally, let her remember her late teens' years. Since her literary experience is grounded in female aesthetics features, it is of our interest to pay attention to the world of species of animals through the Canadian nature writing of Alissa York.

The literary compositions of this latter author are beautifully written. They introduce plenty of details that tell us about anything we can find both in the urban and rural life, but it is better to leave all of them for the subsequent sections devoted to Alissa York.

2. Alissa York: The Author and Her Literary Output.

Before we begin with the biographical data of Alissa York, something related to human kind personality and identity comes from the ethical message that Margaret Atwood has left for readers in her poem “This is a Photograph of Me”: If you want to properly know somebody, you would need time and to watch carefully him or her.

High-profile figure from Canadian literature, Alissa York was born in Athabasca, town located in northern Alberta in the western part of Canada, in 1970. Her parents, Australian immigrants, were English teachers by profession. Whereas, York’s father taught high school English, her mother, apart from being a student of creative writing at the University of Alberta, taught at the local elementary school.

In one way or another, Alissa York’s parents have been the human force that has encouraged her in the pursuit of reading to become a writer. Added to her initial effort beyond her passion of writing is Alissa York’s interview about her career:

Does your writing initially come quickly, or is it a slow process? Do first drafts appear looking close to their final shape, or does your work come out of copious notes? (Rob McLennan 2010: 1).

Afterwards, Alissa York has relatively given a straightforwardly interesting response:

With all three novels, I indulged in a good year of research before I ever wrote an entire scene. I take many, many notes, glean them for scene ideas and set up an elaborate cross-referencing system for my files. First drafts are very different from finals — scenes out of order, plenty of repetition — not to mention the fact that I write the initial material in longhand (Alissa York 2010: 1).

Seven years later, in 1977, Alissa York moved with her family to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada where she graduated from high school. Later on, she moved to the city of Toronto and then to the vast Montreal, second largest city in Canada. In this periodical time, Alissa York, though interested in zoology and biology, studied English Literature at the prestigious McGill University and acting at Toronto.



Fig. X. [The Naturalist Alissa York]

Source: [<http://alissayork.com/the-naturalist/>]

She stayed in Montreal, important place of magazine publishing and regional presses establishment, for a while and met her husband Clive Holden whose affinity for the arts led him to become a visual artist, writer and filmmaker. After they got married, they travelled around Canada living in Toronto, Montreal, Victoria and even Vancouver.

During the time they were moving all over the country, Alissa York viewed these travels as a close experience and helpful contribution to her writing career. Meantime, she performed for a theatre company and productions in Whitehorse while she earned a living as a waitress, florist and bookseller.

Nowadays, Alissa York lives in Toronto where she is faculty member at the University of Toronto School. She also teaches at the Banff Centre for the Arts Wired Writing Studio while, she also takes part in a small publisher and multidisciplinary art project.

Given the magnificent professional and traveller life of Alissa York, since 1995 she early knew her devotion to the sphere of literature. The year 1999 was the debut of her short fiction collection *Any Given Power*. This production, about the survival of the individual in the world, was winner of the Journey Prize for the short story “The Back of the Bear’s Mouth”. York’s short fiction work won also Manitoba’s Mary Scorer Award and it was short-listed for the Danuta Gleen Award.

As a Canadian woman, Alissa York quickly grasped the impact of the printed world and public domain with her first novel *Mercy* published by Random House Canada in 2003. In the same year, it was short-listed for the Margaret

Laurence Award for Fiction due to its highly transcendental plot fraught with the guilt and tradition of Catholicism in the town of Mercy.

Following the years 2007 and 2010, the writings of Alissa York illustrate the life style over the rural society and the pleasure of fighting for the nature, by the art of taxidermy, revealed in her novel *Effigy*. Throughout this book, Alissa displays imaginative and innovative descriptions around the solitary life of Dorie. This intriguing story, finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2007, was also long-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

In 2010, Alissa York explores the natural side of Toronto by the relationship between humanity and animal creatures. She wrote the novel *Fauna* where she equally depicts the natural scenery which surrounds the complex urban world. This national bestseller and original work was short-listed Toronto Book Award and in the same year of its publication, 2010, it was listed number three on the Maclean's Best Sellers list.

Somehow, the book, which we have chosen to study, is fascinating and engaging in its shape and content. The author conveys a strong moral message about human life and nature that we will comment in the conclusion. Definitely she has a powerful imagination and creativity in a simply good story that we consider as a kind of Canadian rediscovering land.

2.1 Some Remarks on Alissa York's Canadian Nature Writing.

With the previous introduction of Alissa York and the contextualization of her literary output, we can assert her sympathy for natural illustrations and vivid details. Precisely, an important feature of her writing comes from the evocative, tenderness and beautiful Canadian pictures that she has created by words.

As it has been mentioned in the first section of this research, being a Canadian implies to have got a special feeling for nature. Indeed, the nature writing of Alissa York encapsulates the love of human beings both for species of animals and nature as an integral part of the city.

Particularly in the novel of *Fauna*, every location and every landscape are unique to explore in detail. Within the background of Rudyard Kipling's sympathy for the natural world, the work of Alissa York contains imaginative, exotic and even dangerous settings as it is the wide ravine.

There is a tendency to preserve the foreign features of a text, that is, foreignization and somehow, *The Jungle Book* (1894) by Rudyard Kipling has been the mainstream sample for the Canadian nature writing of Alissa York. In all this, “literature is usually more co-operative than we imagine thus Kipling was one of those Indian artists of intensely personal vision” (Levi 1987: 7).

Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, Kipling was a writer who has always seen the point of his poetry and therefore, we consider that he has been the model of reference for later contemporary writers as Alissa York.



Fig. XI. [Alissa York, author]

Source:

[http://www.openbooktoronto.com/articles/alissa_york_answers_rob_mclennans_questions]

Therefore with the echo from some of *The Jungle Book* passages inside the novel of *Fauna*, it can be seen real admiration of Alissa York for the nature of Toronto.

So then, it is convenient to have an overview about the process of writing of Alissa York. In this respect “when authors discuss about the process of writing, they inevitably explore tensions between art and life, and between art and society” (Johnstone 2014: 1) though this is not the case of Alissa York, the importance of understanding how the author has developed her writing skills is determinant for the following sections of this research.

At the core of every writing process, reading and documentation are essential tools. As a talented writer, this Canadian woman knows how to organise

her ideas and handle them to make the best writing decision. Indeed, Alissa York reveals us the way she deals with the research of her novel on an interview posted on the year of the publication of *Fauna*, 2010.

Within this information, the author discusses peculiar confessions and technical aspects of her writing that are really interesting for our analysis:

This is after months of research in making notes and putting them on index cards that cross-referenced to my files and I'm very obsessive (. . .) so I get all that organized read all that scenes for that character seems printed all up in tiny font coming up in pieces put on the floor move around and then keep it all together take it to the computer (. . .) print that out read it through see what's missing (Alissa York 2010: 1).

As it occurs with writing, the only rule is to go for the specific things rather than general and vague terms. It follows then that the beginning of writing can be frustrating because writers may find troubles to consider how far the meaning of their narration is clear and explicit. It happens that even when the text seems less coherent, the writer tries to find out if sentences are pleasing and if paragraphs are good to say aloud. These are the key things Alissa York has explained:

I try to be more receptive on the intuition and things in the first draft so but before I get there I have to do a lot of intellectual stuff, I have to do the research, I have to be organized and I have to have the ideas (. . .) because leading it being receptive to the story is all important (Alissa York 2010: 1).

In the case of this Canadian author, once she finishes part of her writings composition, she puts the texts aside and read it again after a couple of days to see how they flow and make sense. By this process, Alissa York seems to be an experienced woman and the quality of her writing is in itself the single most important factor of her career.

3. Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010): The Novel.

Praise for Alissa York and her magnificent novel *Fauna* is how we would like to begin this section. This Canadian woman has written just a good story that readers can read in an easy and enjoyable way.

It follows then that the accuracy of the language used by this author reflects the notion that nature is part of humans' life. Nature has power in *Fauna* and it is able to produce emotions on people. So far, the youthful success of this writer has provided readers with an opportunity to remind classical passages as those from *The Jungle Book*.

Paying attention to the literary side of the novel, we have found out the idea of "narrative inside narrative". Ideally, the author has adapted modes and conventions from British literature which means that she is acquainted with British literary influence. Apart from that, the novel has structure and it is divided into twenty-two chapters therefore, Alissa York has had a previously idea in mind before the inclusion of Rudyard Kipling's text.

In terms of literary reception, the novel of Alissa York is positioned at the heart of human compassion for animals and the natural world which is the setting apt to be found in the plot of *Fauna*. From a personal journey towards Torngat Mountain Canadian National Park, Alissa York tells us about the distant and ideal lands that have become part of her inspirations for the writing of *Fauna*:

The equatorial jungle might seem like a stark opposite to the treeless mountains of Northern Labrador, but I see parallels all the time. Both feature the following (. . .) a palpable sense of nature as a living, breathing entity; a warm welcome by locals who willingly share their knowledge and their homes; an exotic, often overwhelming, 'wilderness' that is simply home to those who know it best. (Alissa York 2012: 1).

3.1 Content, Structure and Style.

Content

The content of *Fauna* illustrates the natural world and the urban civic life of Toronto. The author focuses on the fact that this popular city "that has been called the most multicultural city in the world" (Edwards 2005: 14) is the most suitable place for the succession of narrative events.

Regarding the real outback of the story, Alissa York takes control over two distinctive locations: the city and the nature. She constructs a kind of parallel between these locations while, we easily get immersed into the "focal point of

Fauna, an auto-wrecking yard, located somewhat fantastically in the Don River Valley and managed by Guy, a mechanic who rehabilitates wounded wildlife when he isn't towing cars" (Wagner 2010: 1).

The story opens by the daily routine of the wildlife officer Edal Jones. So far, the author introduces elements from nature as the portrayal of Don River Valley as the major location of the story: "balanced against the railing, she twists to look down on the slate glimmer of the Don River (. . .) Even been to the Don Valley? I mean the lower Don" (York 2010: 6-37).

Following this ideological projection of nature, Edal Jones arrives at Guy Howell's property, Howell Auto Wreckers, where she meets Stephen, Lily and Kate, the veterinarian technician of the story. It is, in fact, at this place where most of characters' action takes place and what is even more relevant, the devotion of characters towards the rehabilitation of animals.

For this reason, the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* describes Howell Auto Wreckers as a sanctuary that serves as a refugee both for species of animals and humans that make a living within the companion of these species.

What happens next is that Stephen finds an URL paper that result to be a day-to-day entry: Coyote Cop's Blog. This finding results to be determinant for making aware the population of Toronto about the risk of coyotes' presence close to the city.

At this point, the author depicts Darius as the responsible character for the the blog. As the narrative goes, the story encompasses different diary entries and, at the same time, we get to know the pleasure of reading which characterizes the cultural background of characters: "His mind is alive with the jungle, the story of a boy raised by wolves. Guy read the entire first chapter, doing the voices and everything, even singing the songs" (York 2010: 36).

For Guy, Stephen, Lily, Edal and even Kate reading is a routine entertainment that enable them to speak freely about what they think in terms of books: "I mean, he gets you feeling all sorry for the animal in one story, but then in the next minute he's chaining up a baby fox or torturing some poor wolf" (York 2010: 76).

This literary side of *Fauna* let us perceive that the past life of Edal remains in connection with the background of books: "There was a time when Letty Jones still read a portion of the books she dragged home. Edal loved to watch her

mother run a finger down a rank of spines until a particular title caught her eye” (York 2010: 39).

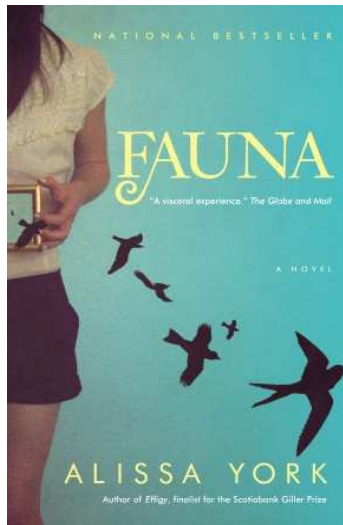


Fig. XII. [Alissa York *Fauna*]

Source: [<http://alissayork.com/fauna/>]

The entire content is viewed as an integrated sketch of the urban and natural side of Toronto. What uniquely distinguishes *Fauna* is the naturalistic portrayal given by Alissa York that keeps the attention of readers from the beginning till the end of the story.

The author has rigorously connected the wild life of animals to the human world of Toronto. She has selected details to give an appropriate structure that we will discuss in the following section.

Structure

Every literary genre, either narrative or poetry, has a pre-established balanced structure. In the case of *Fauna*, there are twenty-two episodes, structured into three main divisions, which provide readers with a continuous and fluent narrative form:

- “The City Book”. It is presented as a weekly entry that represents the strongest and longest part of the book. From Monday to Monday, one week transition is what the author has developed to offer readership a lineal and

personal narrative in its mood. This first division of the story corresponds to chapters: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19 and 22.

- “Ring of Dark Timber”. This is the second division of the story corresponds to the following chapters: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 20. Throughout these chapters, the author focuses on the memories and past life of characters: “There was a time when LettyJones still read a portion of the books she dragged home. Edal love to watch her mother run a finger down a rank of spines until a particular title caught her eye” (York 2010: 39).

At this point, Alissa York knows very well how to catch the attention of readers. Thus she introduces the classic motif of *ubi sunt*, that is, everything will disappear in life: “Everything dies, Edal. Everything and everyone. It wasn't news for Edal. She may have been only seven, but she'd already lost Nana and Grandpa Adam and, before them, the father she'd never met” (York 2010: 41).

- “The Chronicles of Darius” constitutes the third and latter division of the story which corresponds to chapters: 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 21. Particularly in this part of the book, the author recounts events from a character’s view point: Darius that enables readers to get to know details about this secondary figure as follows: “He loves crossing the Don Valley. It’s been the highlight of every subway ride since he arrived in the city five months ago (. . .)” (York 2010: 51-52).

In “The Chronicles of Darius”, Alissa York also establishes connections between each part of the novel. It means that there is a sort of suspense and references to the future: “I’m going by Coyote Cop for now but you can bet one day my real name will be known. In the meantime if any of you are wondering it starts with D” (York 2010: 38).

Fundamentally, *Fauna* is a sample of interlace structure, also common in Old English literature, that introduces elements from the past and future: “She can remember exactly how it felt the first time she sported that blue and gold insignia on her arm—the mixture of pride and relief. And now, only five years on the job she’s been living off a store of sick days, unsure when she’ll feel steady enough to go back” (York 2010: 2).

After this analysis of the structure of *Fauna*, we understand that the author has had a previous idea in mind before writing the novel. It has a good structure and even more, Alissa York has included what is called “book inside a book”.

She is a woman familiar with British literature and other works of literature therefore, she has taken external sources from different literary extracts such as *Ontario Birds* paperback, *Wild Animals I have known* by Ernest Thompson and *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling discussed in the sections 2.1 and 3.

In all this, *Fauna* deserves the label of original and innovative work of Canadian literature which perfectly reflects the memorable background of Toronto's life.

Style

In expressive texts, like prose, aesthetics features are highly relevant so it means that style matters to offer readership a piece of writing that they can read in an easy and direct way.



Fig. XIII. [The novel and its elements]

Source: [<http://espaciolibros.com/la-novela-y-los-elementos-que-la-componen/>]

Under this consideration, Alissa York makes use of creative and artistic narrative devices that let readers approach the story in a close way. Since the beginning of the story, we are immersed into the Canadian scenery and the connection between culture and literature is also strengthened through reading as an entertainment and way of learning.

In this sense, there are multiple allusions to *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling: “Guy read the entire first chapter, doing the voices and everything, even singing the songs. They heard how the child Mowgli evaded the lame tiger, Shere

Khan, and came to live among the Seeonee pack; how he became the pet of Bagheera the panther and Baloo the bear”(York 2010: 36).

Moreover, *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) by Ernest Thompson is another important reference in the plot of *Fauna*:

Standing on her own before Guy’s bedroom bookcase, she chose quickly, going by title alone. The first one jumped out at her from eye level: *Wild Animals I Have Known* (. . .) It wasn’t until the second chapter—“Silverspot: The Story of a Cow”—that Lily understood the meaning of his look (. . .) Silverspot had lived in the Don Valley, just like her. And he wasn’t the only one (Alissa York 2010: 74-75).

At this point, “whether one likes to admit the fact or not, style is an aesthetic matter” (Levi 1987: 15) so, there is no doubt that writers have to make an appropriate use of their imagination. It is precisely what Alissa York has inherited from Rudyard Kipling and Ernest Thompson.

This Canadian writer is very careful in terms of style and language. For one thing, she tells the story as if she is inside the mind of characters and, for other things she introduces dialogues by the first person that denotes her efficiency Canadian prose.

In fact, in one interview about her writing process, Alissa York has confessed the idea of storytelling by “revolving limited omniscient third-person narrative”. By doing so, she has been able to take control of different situations from a character’s view point: “Edal looks north, her gaze swimming against the flow” (York 2010: 6).

Alissa York is able to view with sympathy and tenderness the variety of characters that comprise the story. Such ability is what distinguishes her style from other contemporary authors. Within this information, the gaze of the author reveals us more than a simple look and it is via her gaze that we get to know the identities of characters: “Faye wasn’t mad at him for telling (. . .) As usual she said very little at all” (York 2010: 48).

By the power of her observations, we closely understand the reactions of characters. The excerpt that follows is a sample of the grandeur of the expression of Alissa York to see through others’ eyes: “The angle is all: too wide and he’ll land beyond his quarry, too narrow and he’ll fall short of the mark. He registers a shiver in the grass from on high, contracts a fraction tighter at the crest of his pounce” (York 2010: 90).

In all this, there are graphic descriptions that make visible images that might be unknown by readers as for example: “Howell Auto Wreckers, also known as home. The place always looks its best in the morning- the sun cresting the metres high piles of wrecks along the eastern fence, winking through missing windows and gilding crumpled hoods” (York 2010: 10).

Another important feature of the style of Alissa York comes from the use of italics. In terms of narrative techniques, italics are a very recurrent motif which previous writers, as William Faulkner, have also illustrated in his composition *As I Lay Dying* (1930).

This feature constitutes what is called stream of consciousness and by its use, Alissa York describes us what is on the mind of characters, they express what they think in a straightforward and direct speech: “Lily recites her levels of protection in her head. *Camouflage, dog, bear spray, knife. Camouflage, dog, bear spray, knife*” (York 2010: 202).

Added to that is the following example: “Guy offered advice and more: the heating pad tucked under one end of their carrier-den; the bed of paper towels instead of the flannel pyjama top Stephen had in mind. *The lint can plug up their noses when they’re little like that*” (York 2010: 62).

In general, the narrative of *Fauna* is based on an easy and colloquial style. Apart from that, there is also evidence of what is known as code alternation, that is, change of register from formal to informal: “Just wait until your father gets home. He headed for the back of the store. If you speak, speak clearly, Stephen. Own your words. Ohm, he chanted loudly over his shoulder. Ohhhhhmm” (York 2010: 122).

The use of slang terminology is also part of the style adopted by the author. In the course of the story, there are passages with rude and obscene comments that elevate the speech of characters:

It means you may believe you can alter another person’s experience in this life, but that experience is something he or she has created. This girl today (. . .) Yes it is. You think she asked for it. Like she’s some kind of fucking freak who wanted to get wailed on. Like she hoped those assholes would be waiting for her when she went to unlock her bike (Alissa York 2010: 123-124).

Nevertheless, there are other passages in which Alissa York depicts very visual and sensorial images from the natural world: “As she enters the trees, the

night grows fresher, more easily understood. Moving without sound through the closing flowers, the damp, receptive moss, she doesn't get wind of the human until she's almost upon him" (York 2010: 308).

Given the organization of the story and the style carried out by Alissa York, we may conclude from this section that *Fauna* constitutes an original, memorable and innovative work of literature.

3.2 Relevant Themes, Symbolism and Imagery.

In this section we keep on with the study of *Fauna* by the analysis of its relevant themes, symbolism and imagery.

Relevant themes

- Sense of loneliness is the earliest theme that readers can find in *Fauna*. It tends to intensify characters' feelings of spiritual calm and peace. "It was only later, she was alone in the live evidence room, that the strangled feeling became more than she could bear" (York 2010: 5-6).

The author knows the inner mind of characters and she usually anticipates what they think: "At Langley, she changes her mind: she won't go east, but west instead, through the city's concrete heart" (York 2010: 5).

In certain passages, she opts to focus on one particular character as in the case of Lily: "It really was nothing. No one here but a girl and her dog, the pair of them blissfully alone" (York 2010: 204).

- The voice of nature is the most significant theme. As Annable Lyon says on the preface of *Fauna*: "whether she's adopting the voice of a homeless ten, a yuppie vet or a famished coyote, York writes with a spare, unsentimental fluency that connect strangers, enemies, species".

As we have seen in the section 3.1, the voice of nature acquires a high relevance in the narrative of Alissa York. She is able to adopt either the gaze of human beings or, species of animals in order to observe both the natural and urban world of Toronto.

Therefore, she makes scenes credible by the presence of wild creatures and the existence of nature: "There was a ravine not too far from there where people

sometimes camped. It had a highway running through it, but it had a river and a forest too. The Don Valley has turned out to be a dream come true—all that good cover, and you can climb up into the city whenever you like” (York 2010: 68).

With the introduction of this theme, Alissa York’s narrative illustrates a very naturalistic side that let us move around Toronto’s city as if we were walking down the street: “The long bank of the Don Valley drops away. Giving gravity its head, she splays her legs wide and coasts, gathering speed” (York 2010: 6).



Fig. XIV. [Bridge over Don River]

Source: [<http://www.fslocal.com/blog/youve-gotta-check-don-valley-trail/>]

- Another relevant theme in *Fauna* is the coexistence between the natural world and the urban life. This topic is noticeable both at the world level and the content of the story:

The river has been straightened here, forced into the lesser form of a canal. The lit-up parkway follows one unnatural bank, the railway and Bayview Avenue the other (. . .) the Don begins to meander as a river should. Left then right, in wide, lazy turns. The roads keep their distance. Darkness opens like a rift between them, home to marshland, grassland, woods. Given half a chance, the land would revert, clawing back through time, tearing holes in the city’s thin coat (Alissa York 2010: 6).

The air is sweet, car fumes a distant second to the scent storm of an advancing spring. The valley's looking good, trees filling in nicely, undergrowth rising up to hide a winter's worth of trash. All around him, weeds re doubling their number stretching their thin green skins (Alissa York 2010: 26)

- In contraposition with the previous themes, the reminiscence and past background of characters represent the most tender and sorrowful topic of the novel. Obviously as a fictional product, Alissa York shows us the memories and past life of characters to create the necessary atmosphere of the story.

Indeed, the central female character of the story, Edal, is the finest sample of this fiction. Particularly in the division of the story “Ring of Dark Timber”, it is her lament and melancholic state for the death of her grandparents what makes us feel sorry for her: “It wasn’t news to Edal. She may have been only seven, but she’d already lost Nana and Grandpa Adam and, before them, the father she’d never met” (York 2010: 106).

- Once again, the quality of Alissa York’s narrative demonstrates her admiration towards human affection and love for species of animals. “A fundamental aspect of human social understanding hides an emotional relation—the case of love” (Barresi & Moore 2008: 41) which is precisely the latter theme of *Fauna*.

In the course of the story, Alissa York displays the coexistence of species of animals and human beings in every single chapter by the illustration of tenderness and emotive scenes as follows: “Days like today—when the dogs are all getting better, and the humans are getting along—she can’t believe how much she loves her job” (York 2010: 185).

Afterwards the exploration of these major themes, we are to consider the symbolism of *Fauna* in order to understand the story as clearly and effectively as possible.

Symbolism

Before we approach the importance of symbolism in the novel of Alissa York, we are to introduce the definition of this term in the sphere of literature.

Originally from France, symbolism consists on a poetic movement developed throughout the 19th century. Within the originality and the innovation which characterizes the narrative of Alissa York, the purpose of symbolism is to give meanings to particular ideas and qualities that readers perceive through indirect suggestion and evocation.

In many occasions, symbolic meanings are attributed to facts and actions that are applied to individuals. In a similar way, someone's words can even encapsulate important symbolic values. Here the voice of a naturalist of Alissa York resides as her distinctive value as a writer.

In *Fauna*, the author tells us common things that occur in life for instance, the love that Lily feels for her dog Billy. This feeling is, in fact, a symbol of protection and security and several times the personality of this character is reflected upon the relationship she maintains with her dog: "She'd never dreamt she'd be allowed to keep him, but it turned out the sight of a naked, emaciated dog could touch even a rotten heart (. . .) Closing her eyes, she works her hands into Billy's neck ruff, feeling for ticks" (York 2010: 257).

The authentic and unique illustration of the cover of the book *Fauna* also encapsulates a symbolic interpretation. By simply having a look at its colour, title and image, we may guess what the story is going to be about.



Fig. XV. [Alissa York *Fauna*]

Source: [<http://alissayork.com/fauna/>]

In particular, the image of the girl holding the frame and the birds all around the cover have a strong and direct connection with the character of Lily. From different areas of Toronto's city, she rescues many birds, though some of them are dead, as a symbol that animals deserve to be equally treated either in the city or in the forest.

The value of colour in *Fauna* is part of the symbolism used by Alissa York. In this sense, the author combines narrative events with the names of animals

associated with colour: “Blue has no trouble keeping up with the starting speed, his steps light, almost jaunty. He keeps his nose to the pane with ease, egged on by Joanne and her zip-lock bag of marrow bone treats” (York 2010: 71).

Colour also symbolizes the portrait of characters with a sense of beauty and harmony:

First, there is her skin. The colour of caramel sauce, it glows against the ice cream white of her T-shirt, the black of her high-cut runner’s shorts. Then there’s the hair, far longer than Edal could ever grow hers, not a full blue-black but not what anyone would call brown either. Dark, most people would say. Long, dark hair (Alissa York 2010: 232).

Whether we realize or not symbolism plays an important role in the plot of *Fauna*. This research shows us that readers associate symbols to meanings and meanings to particular ideas which are as important as the subsequent imagery section.

Imagery

At this stage, the analysis of the images of Alissa York’s novel seems to be not an easy one so we need to rely solely on the interpretation and the significance which images have on the story.

The imagery of *Fauna* is wholly identified with the values of the Canadian scenery and the inclusion of species of animals in Toronto’s life. Indeed, the author leaves the best treasures towards the coexistence of the natural world within the urban setting.

In this sense, nature is an integral part of the city as the following passage illustrates: “Given half a chance, the land would revert, clawing back through time, tearing holes in the city’s thin coat” (York 2010: 6).

For this reason, the combination of nature and city is the most valuable image find in *Fauna*. As Alissa York says “the role of the writer is to write the best books she can” which means that imagery are depicted in an original and understandable manner by excluding most of what can lead to a wrong interpretation.

Therefore profoundly and moving are the allusions of the author to the framework of the city. She is sympathetic towards the natural world of Toronto so it is understandable that she enjoys the telling of the story.

Within this background, Alissa York calls the attention of readers by the power of very visual and sensorial imagery: “At the crest of the hill, she enters a disturbing scene. The trees stand lonely, surrounded by oddly shaped stones—some her own height, many taller. She hastens her pace. The smell of death runs deeper here, laced with a poisonous strain” (York 2010: 308).

As the previous passage has shown, the narrative of Alissa York is full of vivid details which let readers jump into the beautiful portrait of nature. Following this latter statement, bold readers are aware of how the words and expressions of Alissa York convey the meaning of the story in a precise and direct way.

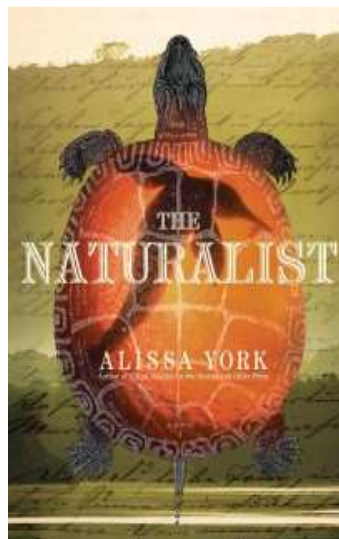


Fig. XVI. [Alissa York *The Naturalist*]

Source: [<http://alissayork.com/the-naturalist/>]

As a Canadian woman, Alissa York is in constant awareness of the natural world around her. Whatever else we might analyse from her novel, it will make it more interesting and carefully drawn into the full range of discoveries as her new work: *The Naturalist*.

The complexity and tenderness side of the latest novel by Alissa York allows it to function as a hive of symbols and metaphors. In some way, readers are able to encounter a panoramic view both of nature and life towards the great rainforest of Amazonia.

According to Albert Einstein we should “Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better”. Within this connection between nature and life, we have learned that the contact with nature is part of the life form of human beings so we should pay more attention to the world around us.

As detailed below, the subsequent section will analyse the co-existence of the country of Canada and the novel *Fauna* by the reflection of human beings in nature.

4. The Coexistence of Nowadays Canada and *Fauna*.

The purpose of this final section is to review the current relationship between the natural scenery and the urban environment in the country of Canada. What matters is that long time ago, “many people sought their future in the vast wilderness of lakes and forests” (Hodgins 1976: 18), they used to walk through the woods, through bushes and branches, but nowadays they are coming back to urban areas and big cities.

As it is portrayed in *Fauna*, it is quite common to find people and species of animals that try to make a living far from their usual habitat. “Today they enjoy relative solitude—only two cyclists and a small pack of lunchtime runners between the Queen and Dundas Street spans—leaving Stephen free to take stock of the burgeoning world” (York 2010: 26).

Somehow, the daily routine of the characters depicted by Alissa York is relatively similar to the ordinary life of people in Canada. This routine is always described beneath the city interactions of Toronto as in this passage: “She doesn’t bother to take a close look. Day-timers pass Billy and her on the footpath—runners and cyclists, people who keep their dogs on leads. She looks through them until she’s safely by” (York 2010: 24).

Alissa York enjoys the telling of the story and she is familiar with the Canadian society and environment. We have the opportunity of exploring the relationship between the nature and the city by an experienced Canadian woman.

Moreover, we encounter that Alissa York integrates animals in the urban life as if they were part of the population of Toronto. The author does not make any distinction between human beings and non-human beings. This is, precisely,

the most valuable coexistence which we have found out between nowadays Canada and *Fauna*.

Indeed, this coexistence is also related with the theme of human affection and the love for animals discussed in the section 3.2. In the course of the story, dogs and birds are always with Lily, Stephen and Guy as if they were members of their family: “Today’s dog is Tiger, a Staffordshire terrier mix with a striped coat and a tendency to snap and piddle when approached. He lunged repeatedly at Stephen’s feet the first time they went out together (. . .)” (York 2010: 25).

What we acquire from this meaningful relationship is that everyone has the freedom to choose their life companion independently if it is human or non-human. “Of course, we know that humans are political, but we still often assume that our political actions come from thinking about beliefs and desires” (Gopnick 2016: 1).

Even in the big cities, human beings can learn from non-human beings minds and in this way, they should also have sympathy for the creatures living both at the urban areas and the green spaces of Toronto such as Withrow Park. This setting is the one filled with plants and animals in which the central character of *Fauna* closely explores the figure of a pigeon:

Edal’s walking around Withrow Park when she spots the pigeon. It must have taken the wheel head-on; its insides have been pushed out in a smeary skirt around its feet. Rock dove —the most variable plumage of any species. This one is caramel-coloured, softening in places to a dusty, speckled pink. Iridescence floats across its flattened shoulders, loops tight around its twisted neck (Alissa York 2010: 222-223).

By this latter statement, “Valley Animal Shelter” mentioned in *Fauna* can be identified with the Wild at Heart Refugee Centre in northern Ontario. Thus, “it is a fantastic experience to be a witness to animal sightings and to be able to do small things for our environment to ensure healthy surroundings and healthy wildlife” (Jouppi 2015: 1).

As we do not actually know what we may encounter through the path of life, the coexistence of nowadays Canada and *Fauna* section bring about the notion that either human beings or species of animals respond to the environment in which they live in, though animals cannot express themselves orally, they find ways of expression through actions.



Fig. XVII. [Find Nature in Toronto]

Source: [<http://goCanada.about.com/od/canadiancities1/ss/Where-To-Find-Nature-in-Toronto-Great-Escapes-in-the-City.htm>]

As a result, *Fauna* is the sort of novel that can change the way we see the world. Alissa York has portrayed every location vivid in its details and every action vivid in its sensitivity. Thus, the most outstanding feature of this amazing novel is that the author makes visible an image in which human beings, species of animals and the natural world remain in connection with the urban realm.

5. Conclusion.

Until recently, there has been little research on how the relationship between individuals and nature has been developed into the growing land of Canada. In this context, our research project demonstrates that nature is an integral part of the urban scenery located in this northern American country.

We have firstly explored Canada with regard to its physical space, geography and society. Then, we have continued with the analysis of language diversity within the cultural vision of the Canadian country.

Regarding the environment of this country, we have taken into account that the most remarkable issue is to preserve the green spaces and the vast nature of the territory. Through the Canadian literature development and the female writers study in the Canada sections, we have examined the evolution of early literary genres till the best known and most contemporary authors.

In this sense, we have found out that it is the narrative of Alissa York what makes her such a good writer. In a natural way the author makes the relationship between human beings and the natural world of Canada evident for readers.

For this reason, the analysis of the novel of *Fauna* (2010) lets us point out the power and the voice given to the nature by the author. On equal grounds the personification of the Don River Valley makes clear that Alissa York is familiar and sympathetic towards the natural environment that surrounds the city of Toronto as it can be clearly seen in her novel.

In all this, we encounter in *Fauna* that nature is a beautiful creation present in the world and it is full of life and colour. It is an ideal space for the coexistence of individuals and for the diversity of every kind of species.

This work has been a challenge and it has provided us with plenty of interesting material targeted at a research never carried out before. In any case, the exploration and the background of Canada have been relevant to understand that, in the fictional world of *Fauna* and in the real world, the species of animals should be treated with respect and dignity.

Our final purpose has been to introduce an innovative and insightful study of nature as a form of life that enables readers to widen their knowledge upon Canada. This has been our aim, to analyse the background of Alisa York's *Fauna* to better understand nature and human beings in Canada.

Conclusión.

Hasta hace poco tiempo, las investigaciones llevadas a cabo en torno a la relación entre los individuos y la naturaleza en Canadá habían sido relativamente escasas. En este contexto, este proyecto de trabajo fin de grado viene a demostrar que la naturaleza no sólo es parte integral de Canadá, sino que también está imbricada en su paisaje urbano. Primeramente, hemos explorado Canadá atendiendo a su espacio físico, geográfico y social. Acto seguido hemos centrado nuestro estudio en el análisis de la diversidad del lenguaje atendiendo al ámbito cultural del Canadá actual.

En relación con el medio ambiente de este país, hemos destacado que el aspecto más significativo es que el ser humano debe conservar los espacios verdes y la naturaleza. Asimismo, el desarrollo literario canadiense y las escritoras de Canadá nos ha permitido conocer de manera más detallada la evolución de los primeros géneros literarios, hasta las figuras más conocidas y contemporáneas de la literatura.

De este modo, hemos descubierto que es la cercanía en la presentación de la naturaleza uno de los rasgos más importantes en la narrativa de Alissa York. Es su naturalidad ante dicha presentación lo que la caracteriza y la hace ser una escritora excepcional. De manera espontánea, la autora transmite a los lectores la relación directa que hay entre el ser humano y la naturaleza canadiense.

Por esta razón, el análisis de la novela *Fauna* nos permite destacar el poder y la voz otorgada a la naturaleza por parte de la autora. Concretamente la personificación del valle del río Don muestra la familiaridad y simpatía de Alissa York por la naturaleza que rodea la ciudad de Toronto y es precisamente lo que queda reflejado en su novela. En este sentido, en *Fauna* encontramos que la naturaleza es una bella creación del mundo, llena de vida y color, como espacio idóneo para la convivencia de los individuos en contacto con las especies animales.

Ha sido todo un reto llevar a cabo esta investigación y por ello la exploración y el contexto previo de Canadá han sido claves para entender que, tanto en el mundo de *Fauna* como en el mundo real, los animales merecen ser tratados y respetados con dignidad.

Finalmente, con este proyecto de fin de carrera pretendemos retratar un estudio novedoso y revelador de la naturaleza como una forma de vida que permita a los lectores ampliar sus conocimientos sobre Canadá.

6. Acknowledgements.

Somewhere between September 2015 and June 2016, I began to realize the degree of difficulty that a final research project entails. Because of that I started to develop and organize my own ideas.

Human Beings and The Natural World in Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010) is full of sensibility and sentimentalism and I can say that I have felt very pleased while writing it. Even more I have thought of myself flying around the scenery and the natural landscapes of Canada. All in all what I can say is that I have been moved by this marvellous novel from Alissa York.

As always, many thanks to my beloved parents for their support and encouragement during the writing of this final research project. They are exceptional and thanks to their nobleness and good-heart, I am what I am today.

Special thanks to José Carlos Redondo Olmedilla, who has shared his knowledge and comments with me, for his helpful feedback and orientation on each step of this research. Despite the minor troubles I have encountered, his advice has always clarified my ideas in a straightforward manner.

Time has been a clock that has never stopped and I would like to end this final research with the following excerpt, under the title of *How to Fly*, which I composed and that is my homage to Canada and Women writers:

Nothing can stop her female inspiration and handwriting except when the darkness from the night comes. She is sleepy, her eyes are half closed and the sound of the clock at midnight means that it is time to take a rest, until the arrival of a new day comes with beams of light. She knows that she will return tomorrow to her desk to take her pencil and start writing without the limit of the clock. Tomorrow minutes and hours will be eternal as her flying into the world of writing.

Only when her flying will have vanished in the plenitude of the sky and, the light of the memory will have gone it will be the end of her writing. The pencil will remain on her desk around great pieces of writing which will keep the talent of a magnificent female writer (María Cantón González).

At the end, time is a battle that shows a reality where only the best ones will arrive at the end of time.

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