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### Abstract

This dissertation redefines the literary “documentary” in light of recent English-Canadian writing. It argues that a common strategy of a group of contemporary Canadian works is the self-conscious transcription of documents into the literary work. This strategy both registers quoted documents as “outside” writings that participate in a monologic discourse of non-fiction, and engages them in dialogue, allowing them to function as the site of contending readings. This study refers to the works it examines under the title “documentary-collage.” The term “collage” draws from the visual arts the sense of fragmentation and radical recontextualization central to a citational gesture that represents the document as a text. The documentary-collage is not “documentary” in the sense that it provides objective evidence of historical events. Rather, it places such evidence in question, foregrounding the role of the document in the construction of historical “realities.”

The Introduction examines the debate on “documentary” issues in Canadian critical writing, and places this debate within a broader theoretical framework. Chapter One engages in a reading of examples of the “found poem,” whose displacement of non-literary texts into a literary context functions as a prototype for the documentary-collage. Each of the following chapters conducts an analysis of a particular literary work, focussing on the implications of its use of documents: Chapter Two is a reading of Robert Kroetsch’s long poem *The Ledger*; Chapter Three, of Michael Ondaatje’s *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*; Chapter Four, of James Reaney’s play *Sticks and Stones*; Chapter Five, of Lionel Kearns’s long poem *Convergences*; Chapter Six, of Joy Kogawa’s novel *Obasan*; and Chapter Seven, of Daphne Marlatt’s *Ana Historic*: a novel.