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## CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ANGLOPHONE ETHNIC LITERATURE

**Keywords:** Ethnic literature; multiculturalism; narrative pattern; cultural identity; aesthetic complexity; autobiographical quest.

**Abstract:** This article is based on the concept of multiculturalism and focuses on ethnic writing in Canadian English. It examines both an earlier text by Frederick Philip Grove in order to probe the beginnings of literary ethnicity in Canada and two more recent novels by Margaret Laurence and Kristjanna Gunnars which give an insight into the various strategies employed in retrieving an ethnic tradition and articulating an ethnic consciousness. For many years literary writers and critics in Canada have made various attempts at defining the Canadian-ness of Canadian literature. The search for an all-encompassing notion of Canadian writing, which initially found its expression in such formulae as: “survival as a unifying symbol” or “Canadian garrison mentality”, has been replaced by a multicultural concept. The Canadian cultural and ethnic mosaic finds its literary expression in a polyphony of voices. Ever since one announced multiculturalism as an official policy, multiculturalism has become an acknowledged fact in many walks of Canadian life. It has served to defuse the Anglo-and Francophone dualism, though with little luck; it has been used to assign to the country a distinct national image different from the American ideology of the melting –pot; and with the slogan “unity with diversity” it has intended to stop the centrifugal forces at work in Canadian society, and to bring about a greater national cohesiveness.