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YUGOSLAV ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIEN STUDIES
ASSOCIATION YOUGOSLAVE D'ÉTUDES CANADIENNES

Culture and Ideology: Canadian Perspectives

Culture et idéologie: Perspectives canadiennes

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years social sciences and humanities have been going through radical changes not only in methodologies, but in understanding their subjects and disciplinary borders as well. The ideas of inter- and multi-disciplinarity, cross- and inter-sections have been challenging the limits and limitations of previously, as it seemed, strictly defined disciplines, opting for a diverse domain of knowledge about the culture(s) we live in – the cultures we produce and are produced by. The then new critical approaches, feminist and postcolonial studies in the first place, as well as all the connected and derived readings of culture, have brought up to the critical light the issues of power, hegemony, normativity, life-style, the body, sexuality, ecology, producing and/or rethinking the key words and concepts such as gender, subaltern, pleasure, desire, marginality, periphery…

This *theory of everything in human life*, which refers to our complete experience, *culture* in the broadest sense, has been the subject of *cultural studies* which bloomed during the concluding decade of the 20th century. The very idea of the cultural studies is to understand the functioning of culture, in terms of meaning, representation, identity and agency, and is therefore primarily linked to the issues of ideology. The twofold origins of modern cultural studies clearly speak about that. Stemming first and foremost from French structuralism which democratized the subject of investigation as a 'signifying practice' – from fashion and wine to photography and literature, it pointed to the construction of meaning in historical circumstances. The second source of cultural studies is Marxist theory in Britain, interested in recovering and exploring popular and working class culture, leading to understanding culture both as an expression of experience and as an imposition on people's lives. Cultural studies are, therefore, interested in both our awareness and our state of being manipulated by culture. Therefore, they represent an effort to understand and assess the place and meaning of ideology in our lives, as a set of beliefs and ideas which permeate and influence our everyday decisions and appear as, or are hidden behind, the means of representation in the society.

Losing this primary connection to ideological understanding and, consequently, action, is the reason why, at the very opening of his book with an indicative title, *After Theory*, Terry Eagleton states that "the golden age of cultural theory is long past." The critical approach resulting from the 1965–80 period has lost its sharp political end and socially effective orientation, turning into the field which "creates a seamless continuity between the intellect and everyday life." In the situation in which

intellectual matters are no longer "an ivory tower affair," but of much more mundane quality – which means that they rejoin everyday life, there is a great risk of losing the ability to critically rethink them. In another words, there is a danger of losing the ideological distance and awareness within the "reasonably systematic reflection on our guiding assumptions." that is, theory as Eaglton broadly defines it.

Following Eaglton's view of what generations after 'path-breaking figures' usually do – that is, 'trade on the past,' the papers in this volume yet bring out some issues which might have not been tackled so far, or have not been seen in this light before. As *culture* and *ideology* in this case refer to Canada, many of the issues and topics raised appear to be 'estranged' by the very material. The cultural, linguistic, geopolitical and ethnic diversity of Canada, oriented toward mosaic-like synergy, its position of being both West and *other* to the neighboring USA, but also dubbed 'The Last Best West' – all these elements open many possibilities for reading Canada through culture and ideology.

Essays in this collection were presented at the conference entitled *Culture and Ideology: Canadian Perspectives*, organized by Yugoslav Association for Canadian Studies (YACS), the Canadian embassy and the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, from October 19th to 21st, 2007. They cover a wide range of topics ranging from democracy, Franco-Anglophone division, issues of the first nation, globalization and geopolitics, biotechnologies and identity issues, differences of class, race, gender, age, as well as the minorities, all the way to the issues of ideology of urban culture and general concepts of culture and ideology defined by Canadian thinkers. Although papers presented may be subsumed under the disciplines as sociology, history, literary studies, psychology, geography, arts, the overlapping of the approaches and the interconnectedness of the issues investigated speak for the diverse field of cultural studies, Canadian way.

The first part of the collection, *Culture/Ideology/Multiculturalism*, opens up all the major problems which are discussed in the volume – narration, voice, issues of race, ethnicity and immigration. Michelle Gadpaille's text, "Susannah Moodie and the Slave Girl: Footnote to an Ideological Movement," is in a way about the subaltern and the appropriation of the subaltern's voice as it questions the authorship and advances the idea that Moodie had more responsibility in voicing Mary Prince's story but also had a vested interest in silencing her own voice. Radojka Vukčević's text, "The Un-Canadian Storytelling: Historical and Ideological," places the problem of ideology in the center as it is about the borders of historiography as textual practice of troping in the lifestories told about the Blacklist Era in Canada. Lukasz Albanski's paper entitled "Black or White? Towards a Transnational Canada" speaks about the issues concerning the politics of immigration. Administrative restrictions, perception of the land itself, racial issues, transnational challenges in the frame of Canadian multiculturalism and the policy of the state all play often confronted roles in shaping Canada's identity, and also its future. Therefore, these are the elements which should be taken into account in judging both the possible benefits and the impact of immigrants on the transformation of the country.

The second part of the proceedings, *Culture/Politics/Perspectives*, focuses on the figure of George Parkin Grant, a Canadian philosopher, poet and politician, author of the *Lament for a Nation*, a polemic in which he expresses his concerns over the state's future. In the text entitled "George Grant – Public Moralist," John Connor explores Grant's beliefs about Canadian sovereignty as well as his philosophical heritage from Plato all the way to Nietzsche, and especially Heidegger. Grant as the philosopher is also the focus of the text by Cornelius Kampe, where his views on modernity, instrumentalism, economic efficiency and liberalism are discussed. Arguing that the subtitle of the *Lament* could well have been "The Inevitable Disappearance of Canada and the Rise of the American Empire," the author of the text analyzes Grant's *Lament* from the viewpoint of the 21st century and Canadian identity, concluding it in an optimistic, yet far from uncritical tone. The section concludes with Arati Barua's comparison of Grant's and Gandhi's political thought about the modern world and, especially, its technological aspect ("George Grant and M. K. Gandhi on Technology and Modernity: A View Point").

The third section, entitled *Language/Alterity/Ideology*, discusses the issues of Canadian bilingualism, the right to secession according to Canadian constitutional law, as well as the issue of alterity in the case of urban culture and the first nation. Dosya Dubravska, in "A Study of the Phenomenon of Canadian English" discusses the question of identifying the status of the Canadian national variant of the English language and its peculiarities. Canadian English had remained one of the "white spots" in linguistic geography of the English language for a long time, and in defining its status one should be aware of both linguistic and geopolitical factors determining its differences. Darko Simović in the text "The Right to Secession in the Canadian Constitutional System" takes up the analysis of Quebec's secession attempt, which in the present world has more than local importance and meaning. Radka Sedláčková, in the article „Native Canadians in Urban Areas" speaks of the fact that almost half the Aboriginal people in Canada live in cities and towns, which presents special challenges for the survival of their cultures and identities. Marcel Voisin represents Pierre Vadeboncoeur, a committed Quebecois writer and thinker, born in 1920, who initiated the "struggle of the intelligentsia" against the traps of History, and who also pointed out to the perils of globalization in the name of a spirited and cheerful vision of humanity ("Pierre Vadenbocoeur, a Thinker of Freedom"), and Loukia Efthymiou in her article "Sex, Gender and History: The Transparency of the Sexes and Representation of Genders in Francophone History Textbooks for Quebec High Schools (1980–2004)", sets her research to the crossroads of educational history and gender history, reassessing the visibility of genders and treatment of feminine "traces" in history textbooks for the two final high-school grades in Quebec, spanning the 1980–2004 period.

The fourth and the largest section of the collection is entitled *Literature and Ideology*, presenting discussions about the impossibility of innocent, that is, ideologically neutral or disinterested, writing and reading. Tanja Cvetković ("Parodying Myth of the Garden: Rewriting Prairie as Garden in *The Words of My Roaring*")

writes about the work of Robert Kroetsch in the light of his own thoughts about demythologizing and renaming reality, i.e. its remythologizing. JoAnn McCaig's paper, "Literary Shrine on the Prairie: CanLit Grows Up," traces the ways in which the image of the Canadian prairie challenges and even disobeys the ideology of cultural value by deconstructing canonicity, cultural capital, and the ideology of literarary value. Vesna Lopičić ("Who are Götz and Meyer? Albahari's 'Banality of Evil'"), first questions the possible discrepancies between the original and the later meanings of Hanna Arendt's expression 'banality of evil' in order to apply it to the reading of David Albahari's novel. The frightening conclusion about human nature, as revealed by history, becomes the grim outlook in Nina Ančić's "Dystopian Future and Magical Past in Nalo Hopkinson's Novels *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Midnight Robber*." The analysis of these two novels as "speculative fiction from the perspective of a Black person" with the aim of changing the role of a passive reader for that of an active participant brings out the ideological potential of both writing and reading. Vladislava Gordić-Petković in "Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*: A Myth for an Accelerated Culture?" discusses both global and local Canadian sides of Coupland's novels which speak about pop culture in its most upsetting meanings, from pop icons and technology to the school shooting.

The culturally oriented exploration of literature cannot be complete without its gender dimension, which is inextricably connected to ideology. In her study "Family Ideology in Marie-Claire Blais' Novel *La Belle Bête*" Jelena Novaković foregrounds the mother-daughter relationship, in order to show that, through triangular relationships established in a family marked by the father's disappearance and the mother's rigid authority, delineates the collapse of a traditional familial structure under the influence of laicization of Franco-Canadian society.

Tatjana Bijelić, in the paper "Feminist Mother, Silent Daughter: Motherline Discontinuities in Carol Shields' *Unless*" reads out the dynamics of the mother-daughter dyad as presented in the novel published at the beginning of the new millennium. The novel which speaks of the lack of transference of power – the mother loses her strength, while the daughter is portrayed as utterly powerless – is an ideological criticism of the era of proclaimed but not yet really achieved gender equality.

Two papers analyze *La Maison Trestler* by Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska (1984). Ljiljana Matić shows the way how, through the history of the Trestler family, who lived in the 19th century, in a house haunted by memories of tragic events, personal or historic, this novelist treats the identity problem, always present in Quebecois literature, but also questions history and the American myth ("The Problem of Identity and the Complex of Identity in Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska's *La Maison Trestler*"). Katarina Melić examines how Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska, while revealing and narrating Catherine Trestler's rebellion against her father, casts doubts on History that pretends to objectively present the past ("History, Memory and Female Offspring: Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska's *La Maison Trestler*").

Within the literary section, and deeply connected to the gendered readings of literature, we find the segment devoted to Margaret Atwood's works. Milena Kostić in "Disclosed Spaces: Atwood's Reading of the Closet Scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" compares the famous author's reinterpretation of the archetypal scene. Aleksandra Jovanović ("The Heroine Reborn: Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* and John Fowles's *A Maggot*"), compares Atwood's novel to another major work in English language, as parallel fictions about the quest for one's selfhood. Ulla Kriebernegg writes about the female identity in three Atwood's novels ("Female Identity Threatened: A Kristevan Reading of Margret Atwood's Novels *The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing* and *The Robber Bride*") from the perspective of Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection which links language to the development of subjectivity and to the problem of borders of a self. Sergej Macura's text "The Construction of Feminine Identity in *Alias Grace*" explores the narrative reconstruction of both gender and class roles. Atwood's work offers valuable insight into the feminist approach toward globalization and the place of Canada on the map of political and economic power, seen in the light of the relation of the center and periphery (Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić's "Reading Gender and Globalization Issues in and out of M. Atwood Novels").

In the concluding section of the collection, *Art/Ideology/Culture*, problems of technology and art reappear as the question of art's place and destiny in the era of business, as Radmila Nastić shows in the text "Art in the Age of Business." Biljana Radić-Bojanić and Nataša Karanfilović also problematize the understanding and valorization of art in contemporary society by exploring its context of popular culture ("American and Canadian Stereotypes as Reflected in Popular Culture"). The collection concludes with Michael Devine's text "Cultural Markers of Identity: The BoxWhatBox Acting Method in Canada, Finland, Czech Republic, Serbia and Greece." Moving from the problems of art and popular culture toward the artistic practice of 'serious play' and self-understanding which connects Canadian director and author with European, Balkan and Serbian artists, this segment draws the full circle and gives the final touch to the aim of this volume's contributors to understand, analyze and perform the many sides of the culture and ideology in relation to Canada.

Comprising theoretical, critical and artistic views, this volume, hopefully, performs the need to explore, explain and experience both the world we live in and our knowledge about it.

Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić and Jelena Novaković

INTRODUCTION

Au cours des trente dernières années, les sciences humaines et sociales ont connu des changements radicaux, non seulement dans leurs méthodes, mais aussi dans la manière de comprendre leurs sujets et les limites de leurs disciplines. L'idée d'interdisciplinarité et de multidisciplinarité, de trans-section et d'intersection a ébranlé les limites et les limitations des disciplines de prime abord étroitement définies, au profit d'une diversité de connaissances sur la culture (les cultures) dont nous sommes entourés, sur la culture que nous produisons et dont nous sommes les produits. Depuis ce temps-là, de nouvelles approches critiques, en particulier féministes et liées aux études postcoloniales, donc, toutes ces disciplines en rapport avec l'interprétation de la culture, ont jeté une nouvelle lumière sur le point critique du pouvoir, de l'hégémonie, de la normativité, de la manière de vivre, du corps, de la sexualité, de l'écologie, en produisant ou en repensant des mots clés et des concepts tels que le genre, le subalterne, le plaisir, le désir, la marginalité, la périphérie...

Cette *théorie du tout dans la vie humaine*, qui relève de notre expérience globale, de la culture au sens le plus large, est le sujet des études sur la culture, apparues au cours de la dernière décennie du XX^{ème} siècle. L'idée essentielle des études sur la culture est de faire comprendre le rôle de la culture, dans le sens de signification, de représentation, d'identité et de manière d'agir. Aussi est-elle liée d'abord à l'idéologie. La double origine des études modernes sur la culture en est la preuve évidente. Tout d'abord, issues du structuralisme français qui a démocratisé le sujet de recherche en tant que « pratique signifiante », en passant de la mode et du vin à la photographie et la littérature, ces études ont pour objectif de construire un système de pensée dans les circonstances historiques. La seconde source des études sur la culture est la théorie marxiste, née au Royaume Uni, qui se proposait de découvrir et d'explorer la culture de la classe ouvrière et de la culture populaire, dans le but de donner à penser la culture à la fois comme une expression de l'expérience et comme provenant des faits imposés à l'être humain. Pour cette raison, les études sur la culture s'intéressent en même temps à notre conscience et à notre état d'êtres manipulés par la culture. De ce fait, elles représentent un effort pour comprendre et estimer la place et la signification de l'idéologie dans notre vie, considérée comme un ensemble de croyances et d'idées qui influencent nos décisions quotidiennes.

La disparition du lien primaire avec la manière idéologique de penser et, par conséquent d'agir, est la raison pour laquelle, à l'ouverture même de son livre, qui porte

le titre significatif *Après la Théorie*, Terry Eagleton constate que « l'âge d'or de la théorie de la culture est passé ». L'approche critique, apparue entre 1965 et 1980, a perdu sa forme politique et son orientation sociale efficace, pour devenir une discipline « qui crée la plus proche continuité entre l'intellect et la vie quotidienne ». Dans cette situation, où les affaires intellectuelles ne sont plus « celles d'une tour d'ivoire », mais ont plutôt un caractère mondain, ce qui signifie qu'elles relèvent de la vie quotidienne, il y a un grand risque de perdre la possibilité de repenser ces catégories avec un esprit critique. En d'autres termes, le risque est grand de perdre la distance idéologique et la conscience vis-à-vis de « la réflexion systématique sur nos suppositions principales », telle qu'Eagelton définit sa théorie.

En suivant les idées d'Eagleton sur l'activité des générations qui viennent après les pionniers qui ont frayé le chemin, et qui « font trafic du passé », les travaux dans ce volume mettent en lumière des questions qui n'ont pas été abordées jusqu'à présent ou qui n'ont pas été considérées dans cette perspective. Puisque, dans ce cas, la culture et l'idéologie font référence au Canada, beaucoup de questions et de ces sujets semblent étranges par leur matière elle-même. La diversité culturelle, linguistique, géopolitique et ethnique du Canada, orientée vers une synergie qui ressemble à une mosaïque, sa position d'être à la fois Ouest et « autre » par rapport à son voisin, les États-Unis d'Amérique, mais aussi nommé « le dernier et le meilleur Ouest », tous ces éléments ouvrent de multiples champs d'interprétation sur le Canada à travers la culture et l'idéologie.

Les essais publiés dans ce volume ont été présentés à l'occasion de la conférence intitulée *Culture et Idéologie : perspectives canadiennes*, organisée par l'Association yougoslave d'études canadiennes (AYEC), par l'Ambassade du Canada et par la Faculté de philologie de Belgrade, du 19 au 21 octobre 2007. Ils abordent les sujets qui s'inscrivent dans les domaines tels que la démocratie, la division franco-anglophone, les questions liées aux autochtones, la globalisation et la géopolitique, la biotechnologie et l'identité, les différences de classe, de race, de genre, d'âge, de minorité, l'idéologie de la culture urbaine, aussi bien que les concepts généraux définis par les maîtres à penser canadiens. Même si les travaux présents relèvent de disciplines telles que : la sociologie, l'histoire, les études littéraires, la psychologie, la géographie, les arts, la pluralité de leurs approches et le lien entre les faits analysés témoignent de la fertilité des sciences sur la culture, dans le domaine canadien.

La première partie de ce volume, *Culture / Idéologie / Multiculturalisme*, débouche sur le débat de tous les problèmes majeurs qui y sont abordés – la narration, la voix, la race, l'ethnicité et l'immigration. Le texte de Michelle Gadpaille, « Susanna Moodie et la jeune fille slave : note sur un mouvement idéologique », traite des problèmes du subalterne et de l'appropriation de la voix subalterne, parmi lesquels celui de l'autorité et anticipe sur l'idée de Moodie, celle d'avoir plus de responsabilité dans le fait de raconter l'histoire de Mary Prince, mais aussi de donner le pouvoir au silence de sa propre voix. Le texte de Radojka Vukicević, « Un récit peu canadien : récit historique et idéologique« , est centré sur le problème de l'idéologie

car il s'occupe des limites de l'historiographie et de son recours aux tropes dans les histoires évoquant l'époque de la liste noire au Canada. Le texte de Lukascz Albanski, intitulé « Noir ou Blanc ? Vers un Canada transnational », traite de la politique d'immigration. Les restrictions administratives, la perception du pays sur lui-même, les questions de races, les rapports entre les nations dans le cadre du multiculturalisme au Canada et la politique de l'état jouent, très souvent, des rôles contradictoires dans la formation de l'identité et de l'avenir du Canada. Pourtant, ce sont des éléments qui devraient être pris en considération pour pouvoir estimer les bénéfices possibles et l'impact des immigrants dans la transformation du pays.

La seconde partie du volume, *Culture / Politique / Perspectives*, est centrée sur la figure de George Parkin Grant, philosophe, poète et politicien canadien, auteur de *Lamentation pour la nation*, une oeuvre polémique dans laquelle il exprime son opinion sur l'avenir de l'état. Dans son texte intitulé *George Grant, moraliste public*, John Connor examine l'attitude de Grant face à la souveraineté du Canada ainsi que son héritage philosophique, de Platon à Nietzsche, en s'arrêtant surtout à Heidegger. En tant que philosophe, Grant est également l'objet d'étude de Cornelius Kampe, qui examine son attitude face à la modernité, à l'instrumentalisme, à la productivité économique et au libéralisme. En prétendant que le sous-titre de *Lamentation* aurait pu être « L'inévitable disparition du Canada et la montée de l'empire américain », l'auteur du texte analyse *Lamentation* de Grant du point de vue du XXI^{ème} siècle, en prêtant attention à l'identité canadienne et en terminant son analyse par une conclusion optimiste, mais aussi critique. La section se termine par un parallèle, fait par Arti Barua, entre la pensée politique de Grant et celle de Gandhi, entre leurs idées sur le monde moderne et surtout sur son aspect technologique (« Penser la technologie et la modernité : George Grant et M.K. Gandhi »*)*.

La troisième section, intitulée *Langue / Altérité / Idéologie*, porte sur le bilinguisme canadien, le droit à la sécession conformément à la loi constitutionnelle du Canada ainsi que sur le problème de l'altérité dans le cadre de la culture urbaine. Dans son « Étude sur le phénomène de l'anglais canadien », Dosya Dubravska aborde la question de l'identification du statut de la variante nationale de l'anglais et de ses particularités. L'anglais canadien est longtemps resté un des « points clairs » dans la géographie linguistique de la langue anglaise, si bien que, en définissant son statut, on devrait être conscient des facteurs linguistiques et géopolitiques qui déterminent ses différences. Dans son texte « Le droit à la sécession dans le système constitutionnel du Canada« , Darko Simović s'intéresse à la tentative sécessionniste du Québec, qui a, aujourd'hui, une importance qui n'est pas seulement locale. Radka Sedlàčkovà, dans son article « Des Canadiens natifs dans des aires urbaines« , parle du fait que presque la moitié des Aborigènes au Canada habitent des villes, ce qui menace, d'une manière particulière, la conservation de leurs cultures et de leurs identités. Marcel Voisin présente Pierre Vadeboncoeur, écrivain engagé et penseur québécois, né en 1920, qui a livré la « bataille de l'intelligence » contre les pièges de l'Histoire et qui a aussi dénoncé les écueils de la globalisation au nom d'une conception de l'Homme spirituelle et épanouissante (« Pierre Vadeboncoeur, pen-

seur de la liberté »), tandis que, dans son article « Sexe, genre et histoire : visibilité des sexes et représentations des genres dans les manuels d'histoire francophones du secondaire québécois (1980–2004) », Loukia Efthymiou situe sa recherche au croisement de l'histoire de l'éducation et de celle du genre, en étudiant la visibilité des genres et le traitement des « traces » du féminin dans les manuels d'histoire des deux dernières années de l'enseignement secondaire québécois pour la période allant de 1980 à 2004.

La quatrième et la plus longue des sections de ce volume, intitulée *Littérature / Idéologie*, traite de l'impossibilité de l'innocence dans l'écriture, c'est-à-dire d'une écriture et d'une interprétation désintéressées de l'idéologie. Dans sa communication « La parodie du mythe du Jardin : Lire la Prairie dans *The Words of My Roaring* », Tanja Cvetković examine l'oeuvre de Robert Kroesch et ses réflexions sur une réalité démythifiée et renommée. Le texte de JoAnn McCaig « Le temple littéraire dans la prairie : la littérature canadienne en croissance » (*Literary Shrine on the Prairie : Canlit Grows Up)* donne pour la première fois une image de la prairie canadienne qui désobéit à l'idéologie de la valeur culturelle par des canons destructifs, par un capital culturel et par une idéologie de la valeur littéraire. Vesna Lopičić (« Qui sont Goetz et Meyer ? 'La Banalité du mal' de David Albahari »), examine d'abord le décalage possible entre la signification originale et les significations postérieures de l'expression « banalité du mal », employée par Hannah Arendt, pour l'appliquer ensuite à l'interprétation du roman de David Albahari. L'effrayante conclusion sur la nature humaine, révélée par l'histoire, représente un point de vue terrifiant dans le texte de Nina Aničić « L'avenir dystopique et le passé magique dans les romans de Nalo Hopkinson Brown *La ronde des esprits* et *Le vol en pleine nuit* ». En considérant ces deux romans comme « une fiction spéculative du point de vue d'un Noir » et en ayant pour objectif de transformer le lecteur passif en un lecteur actif, elle met en lumière les potentiels idéologiques de l'écriture et de la lecture. Dans son texte « *Génération X* de Douglas Coupland : le mythe d'une culture accélérée », Vladislava Gordić-Petković examine deux aspects canadiens, l'aspect global et l'aspect local, tels qu'ils se présentent dans le roman de Coupland, qui décrit la culture pop, ses icônes et sa technologie jusqu'aux coups de feu dans des écoles.

L'exploration de la littérature du point de vue de la culture ne peut pas être complète si on ne prend pas en considération les questions liées aux études de genre, qui sont inextricablement liées à l'idéologie. En examinant « L'idéologie familiale dans *La Belle Bête* de Marie-Claire Blais », Jelena Novaković met au premier plan les rapports entre la mère et la fille, pour montrer comment, à travers les relations triangulaires qui s'établissent dans une famille marquée par l'absence du père et par le pouvoir d'une mère autoritaire, se dessine l'éclatement de la structure familiale traditionnelle devant la laïcisation de la société canadienne-française.

Dans son texte « Mère féministe, fille silencieuse : la perte du pouvoir de la mère dans *Bonté* de Carol Shields », Tatjana Bijelić examine la relation dynamique mère-fille telle qu'elle apparaît dans un roman publié au début du nouveau millénaire. En

parlant de l'impossibilité de la transmission du pouvoir – la mère perd sa force et sa fille est présentée sans aucun pouvoir – le roman se présente comme une critique idéologique de l'époque de l'égalité proclamée, mais non encore réalisée.

Deux communications analysent *La Maison Trestler* de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska (1984). Ljiljana Matić montre comment, à travers l'histoire de la famille Trestler, qui vivait au XIX^e^ siècle, dans une maison hantée par des souvenirs d'événements tragiques personnels ou historiques, est traité le problème identitaire omniprésent dans la littérature québécoise. Cette romancière remet aussi en question l'histoire et le mythe de l'Amérique (« Le problème identitaire et le complexe identitaire dans *La Maison Trestler* de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska »). Katarina Melić examine surtout comment, au fur et à mesure qu'elle découvre et raconte la révolte de Catherine Trestler contre son père, l'écrivaine met en cause l'Histoire qui prétend représenter le passé avec objectivité (« Histoire, mémoire et filiation féminine : *La Maison Trestler* de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska »).

Un segment de la section littéraire, lié aux études de genre, est consacré aux écrits de Margaret Atwood. Milena Kostić, dans sa communication intitulée « Des espaces découverts : 'closet scène' d'Hamlet de Shakespeare dans l'œuvre de Margaret Atwood », compare la fameuse ré-interprétation de la scène « archétype ». Aleksandra Jovanović (« La nouvelle naissance de l'héroïne : *Alias Grace* de Margaret Atwood et *A Maggot* de John Fowles »), fait un parallèle entre deux romans qui se présentent comme une quête de l'identité. Ulla Kriebernegg examine l'identité de la femme dans les romans d'Atwood (« Identité féminine menacée : l'interprétation kristevienne des romans de Margaret Atwood *The Edible Woman, Surfacing* et *The Robber Bride* »), en empruntant le concept de l'abjection de Julia Kristeva, qui lie le langage au développement de la subjectivité et au problème des limites de l'individu. Dans son texte « La construction de l'identité féminine dans *Alias Grace* », Sergej Macura explore la reconstruction narrative des rôles de genres et de classes sociales, tandis que Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić trouve dans les écrits de M. Atwood un corpus pour examiner les approches féministes à la globalisation et la place du Canada dans le domaine du pouvoir politique et économique, perçu à travers la relation centre-périphérie. (Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić, « Les Romans de M. Atwood et les problèmes de genre et de globalisation »).

La dernière partie du volume, *Art / Idéologie / Culture*, est consacrée aux problèmes concernant la technologie et l'art, telle que la place et le destin de l'art à une époque où le business est roi, examinés dans le texte de Radmila Nastić »L'art à une époque de business ». Biljana Radić-Bojanić et Nataša Karanfilović s'occupent, elles aussi, de la compréhension et de la valorisation de l'art dans la société contemporaine, en explorant le contexte de la culture populaire (« Reflets des stéréotypes américains et canadiens dans la culture populaire »). Le volume se termine par le texte de Michael Devine « Les marqueurs culturels de l'identité : la méthode BoxWhatBox au Canada, en Finlande, en République tchèque, en Serbie et en Grèce ». En s'écartant du problème de la position de l'art et de la culture populaire pour s'occuper de la

pratique artistique d'un « spectacle sérieux » et de la compréhension de soi-même, qui lie l'auteur canadien aux artistes européens, serbes et balkaniques, ce texte offre une clé pour comprendre et pour analyser de multiples facettes de la culture et de l'idéologie au Canada.

En englobant des points de vues théoriques, critiques et artistiques, le volume *Culture et idéologie : perspectives canadiennes* exprime le besoin d'explorer, d'expliquer, de vivre et de comprendre le monde dans lequel nous vivons et d'élargir nos connaissances sur ce monde.

Jelena Novaković et Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić

CULTURE / IDEOLOGY / MULTICULTURALISM
CULTURE / IDÉOLOGIE / MULTICULTURALISME

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SUSANNA MOODIE AND THE SLAVE GIRL: FOOTNOTE TO AN IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

Every decade or so, some scholar makes the discovery that Canada's best-known 19th-century settler writer once helped in the production of a slave narrative. The story in question is *The History of Mary Prince*, brought out by the Anti-Slavery Society in 1831. Susanna Strickland, as she then was, worked with the ex-slave Mary Prince to produce a text that would be influential in the passing of the abolition bill. From Carl Ballstadt in 1971, to Moira Ferguson in 1987, Sandra Pacquet in 1992, and Gillian Whitlock in 1995 and 2000, everyone registers the same surprise that such a Canadian literary figurehead should have played this minor role in one of the great social and political dramas of the century.

It is with indebtedness to work by these previous critics that I once more wade into the topic, armed with the conviction that I have something to add to the discussion. Some scholarship has approached the event from the point of view of Mary Prince, ex-slaves, slavery, abolition and colonialism (Paquet, Ferguson, Blackman); other writers approach from the point of view of Moodie's biography (Ballstadt, Whitlock). I propose to join these perspectives by reopening the question of text ownership and advancing the idea that Moodie had more responsibility for the *Mary Prince* text than has generally been recognized, and that she reveals this in her subsequent writing.

On surveying the available accounts of the moment when the young Susanna Moodie sat with the older Mary Prince to generate the text, it becomes evident that there is some slippage between accounts. The incident took place at the London home of Thomas Pringle, a poet, editor and anti-slavery activist whose household had taken in the fleeing slave. In his paternalistic editorial role, Pringle provides

a "Preface" to *The History of Mary Prince*, assuring the reader that the text is authentically a slave narrative and records a female slave's own words. It is in his interest to guarantee authenticity, since the text must carry the burden of conversion of readers to the side of sympathy for slaves as human beings. Nevertheless, he confesses to some fixing up of the narrative: "It was written out fully, with all the narrator's repetitions and prolixities, and afterwards pruned into the present shape, retaining, as far as was practicable, Mary's exact expressions and peculiar phraseology ... to exclude redundancies and gross grammatical errors" ("Preface," Gates, 251). Clearly, this text has been mediated – by him or by Susanna Moodie, he doesn't say – to suit the textual expectations of the English reading public. No tape recording was or could have been made of the drawing-room proceedings that day in Claremont Square, but it is clear that the written text is at a considerable remove from the oral production.

Each scholar tackles this discrepancy in his or her own way. Whitlock sees Moodie as the "other woman," the "ear and the hand" in relation to Mary Prince (Whitlock, 17; 12); Ferguson sees Prince's as a densely encoded narrative, designed to negotiate between disclosure and propriety; Blackman merely accepts a passive, amanuensis role for Moodie. Along with websites such as Deck's, Blackman takes a very contemporary, politically correct position that gives the ethnic voice the benefit of the doubt. Even the Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. accepts Prince without demur as the "convincing narrator" of the text (Gates, 9). As 21st-century readers, we need at some level to believe that we are hearing Mary Prince's authentic voice reaching down to us over the centuries, even though the evidence suggests that the matter is far from that simple.

There are, however, other accounts of the textual transaction. Moodie's letters, usefully collected by Ballstadt in *Letters of a Lifetime*, and also partially available on the National Archives of Canada website, indicate that Moodie was modest about her role at the time[1]. Letters from around that date also reveal the telling information that Moodie was herself already a convert to the anti-slavery cause. She had been distributing the Society's materials for some time before she sat down with her pen and the fascinating "black Mary." Together with the revelation that Moodie briefly flirted with Methodism at that point in her life, the contemporary evidence suggests that wary readers must see Moodie as a biased witness. She has a vested interest in silencing her own voice, one that overrides normal human self-interest.

Evidence can also be gathered from the other anti-slavery work with which Moodie was involved at around the same time. *Negro Slavery Described by a Negro* was issued as the story of Ashton Warner, but with the name "S. Strickland" in the author's position. With no sheltering preface from the paternalistic Pringle, this story of a male slave from the island of St. Vincent was sold unequivocally as the writing of the white, English author herself. Perhaps the fact that Warner had died

[1] Not yet married, she was Susanna Strickland at the time; however, throughout this article I will refer to her by her more familiar married name.

by the time of publication influenced this decision. In her "Introduction" to *Negro Slavery*, the author mentions his death and gives her reasons for thinking that the book's publication would aid the Anti-Slavery cause:

> Thinking that the same means which had operated so effectually upon my own mind might produce a favorable result in other persons who had been accustomed to view the case in the same careless and prejudiced manner, it occurred to me that *I might publish, with some small advantage to the cause, the following little history*, taken down from the narration of a young negro, who had recently made his escape from slavery in the West Indies, and had come over to England on purpose to establish his claims to freedom. (*Negro Slavery*, 11–12; my emphasis)

At no point in this "Introduction" does the writer claim that the text is in the slave's own words, but only to have told his story honestly: "In writing Ashton's narrative, I have adhered strictly to the simple facts, adopting, wherever it could conveniently be done, his own language, which, for a person in his condition, is remarkably expressive and appropriate" (*Negro Slavery*, 15). Keeping Warner's actual words is presented as the exception rather than the rule, something done only when convenient to the real writer's purpose and style. This marks a considerable advance in honesty over the carefully-worded equivocations in the "Preface" to *Mary Prince,* where Pringle mentions repetitions, prolixities, redundancies, and grammatical errors as having been subject to pruning, while simultaneously claiming that the text retains Mary's exact expressions.

In *Negro Slavery*, in contrast, the discourse of authenticity falls on events and not on voice:

> With a view to render this Sketch of Colonial Slavery more complete, and to enable the reader to compare the details given by Ashton with those recorded by intelligent and conscientious eye-witnesses from England, I have subjoined, as an Appendix, the very important testimonies on this subject of three highly respectable clergymen of the established Church, and of an excellent Wesleyan Missionary – testimonies as yet but partially known to the public, and which comprise a mass of information equally recent and interesting. (*Negro Slavery*, 16)

The differing treatments of authorship in these two contemporaneous publications imply that there must have been some special reason for eliding the role of the amanuensis in the case of *Mary Prince*. There is the possibility that Thomas Pringle was protecting Susanna, as he would any unmarried woman temporarily under his household's care. Soon after (January, 1831), Susanna moved to her own lodgings in Chandos Street London, so it might be tempting to see *Negro Slavery Described by a Negro* as reflecting this more independent stage in her life. In contradiction to this convenient supposition, however, is the fact that Susanna mentions the move to the lodgings and the writing of *Mary Prince* in the same letter. So, independence of domicile cannot be the reason that her name is suddenly deemed suitable to appear on the title page of a politically-engaged piece of writing. It is more likely that the presence of her name on the title page of *Negro Slavery* can be traced to the perceived limited propaganda use of the text. Unlike *Mary Prince*, Ashton Warner's story probably had less publicity value to the Anti-Slavery Society.

Other male slaves had given their histories in print; Prince, on the other hand, was poised to become "the first woman to publish a slave narrative" (Gates, 9). It was a woman's story that the Anti-Slavery movement wanted at that time and that they badly needed to be authentic.

In addition to this evidence from contemporary manuscripts and letters, there is material from Moodie's later oeuvre that can illuminate the old question of authorship. Moodie would return to the issue of the authorship of *The History of Mary Prince* on two occasions in her writing: first, in *Flora Lyndsay* (1854), in a direct reference, and then, obliquely, in the obscure work *Richard Redpath*[2]. This double confession, in fiction, of a deeper and more complicit role for Moodie in the creation of the *Mary Prince* text, constitutes my particular contribution to the debate.

The critic Gillian Whitlock uses the Mary Prince incident as the introduction to a consideration of Moodie as the mothering writer, one writing *Roughing It in the Bush* with a child at her side. However, *Roughing It* is not the only piece of autobiographical writing Moodie penned; *Flora Lyndsay*, in appearance a novel, is a thinly disguised account of Moodie's own decision to emigrate, the prolonged preparations and setbacks and the final odyssey of Moodie, her husband and the baby up to Scotland and thence across the Atlantic. Within this narrative, Moodie embeds another account of the creation of *Mary Prince*. Since this account is both puzzling and crucial, it is worth setting it at some length in context as it occurs in *Flora Lyndsay*.

The scene is a ship's cabin at night: two women passengers are making the most of close quarters by conversing. Flora Lyndsay, the heroine, brings up the subject of slavery with a woman from Jamaica, who has brought a young black servant on board:

> Upon Flora expressing her abhorrence of the whole system [of slavery], Mrs. Dalton proceeded to defend it with no little warmth.
> "Ah, I perceive that you know nothing about it. You are infected with the bigotry and prejudices of the anti-slavery advocates. Negroes are an inferior race" (Moodie, 1854, 123).

Defending the intelligence and spirituality of Africans, Flora is goaded into revealing her own contact with ex-slaves: "I taught a black man from the island of St. Vincent's to read the bible fluently in ten weeks" (Moodie, 1854, 123). After this revelation, Mrs. Dalton assumes that she has a political activist on her hands:

> One would think that you belonged to the Anti-Slavery Society, to hear the warmth with which you argue the case. Do you belong to that odious Society? – for I understand that many pious women make themselves vastly busy in publicly discussing the *black* question (Moodie, 1854, 124).

[2] First published in installments in 1843, it was reissued as part of the volume, *Matrimonial Speculations* in 1854. Whitlock claims that Moodie's letters provide the only extant references in print to her role in the authorship of *The History of Mary Prince* (Whitlock, 27). Presumably, the critic did not have access to Moodie's other works.

It is Mrs. Dalton herself who brings up the question of the *Mary Prince* text, only to cast aspersions on its accuracy:

> By-the-bye, my dear Madam, have you read a tract published lately by this disinterested society, called the History of Mary P------? It is set forth to be an authentic narrative, while I know enough of the West Indies, to pronounce it a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end. . . . It is an imaginary tale got up for party purposes (Moodie, 1854, 124–125).

To Mrs. Dalton, then, all slave narratives of cruelty and injustice are the grossest fabrications, while her own limited experience as a slave-owner on one island privileges her to speak authoritatively about all slave experience – even that taking place on islands as remote from Jamaica as the Bermudas. Having seen her protégé and her cause directly attacked, Moodie's Flora hastens to defend the authenticity of *Mary Prince*: "You are mistaken," said Flora quietly. That narrative is strictly true. I was staying, the winter before last, with her mistress in London, and I wrote it myself from the woman's own lips" (Moodie, 1854, 125).

Crucially, this claim on the part of Flora/Susanna emerges in a situation of self-defense. Neither Moodie nor her fictional alter ego is in the habit of claiming this connection without provocation. Even 23 years later, Moodie still adopts the conventional disguise of the initial letter, "Mary P-------"; some core of privacy is still worth protecting there. Under duress, however, the sentence that emerges from Flora's lips is as remarkable for its forthrightness as for its ambiguity: "I wrote it myself from the woman's own lips." Does Flora claim here to be the author of *Mary P*-----? Or does Flora merely claim to be the accurate transcriber of someone else's spoken words? Arguably, "I wrote it myself from the woman's own lips" can be read either way. The seeker for authentic black voices can see it as testimony to the transcription of just such a voice; however, the doubter can also seize on the clashing agency-claims of the first and second parts of the sentence to elevate Flora to the authorship of *Mary P*--- and, correspondingly, Moodie to the status of author of *The History of Mary Prince*.

Certainly, that is the interpretation seized on by Mrs. Dalton, the Jamaican slave-owner: " – and I have been talking all this time to the author of Mary P----. From this moment, Madam, we must regard ourselves as strangers" (Moodie, 1854, 125). Since Mrs. Dalton does not acknowledge that black slaves have minds and souls, she cannot accept that *Mary Prince* reflects any sort of authorial agency on the part of a black woman. Any creative activity in the text must be that of Flora acting on behalf of the Anti-Slavery society. Without defending Mrs. Dalton's racist position, I affirm, nevertheless, that the line marks a moment when the question of who "wrote" *The History of Mary Prince* becomes a negotiable issue in Moodie's autobiographical memory. Autobiography, as Whitlock theorizes it, involves a "projection of the self" that can demand "negotiations, manoeuvres and display" (Whitlock, 7). In these terms, *Flora Lyndsay* constitutes a tentative display by its author of proprietary rights, but also an internal negotiation of the boundary between the permissible public claim and the urgent inner voice of the subject speaker.

Moodie's return to the subject, after a gap of many years, certainly indicates that the issue of authorship was a quietly ongoing one. Perhaps it rankled; perhaps sitting there in the Ontario bush, she regretted that one of her bigger literary successes was one she could not publicly claim.

One must also recognize that, by the 1850s when *Flora Lyndsay* was being written and published, the publication of slave narratives had become much more common, especially in North America where Moodie now lived. Gates stresses the boom in slave narratives, together with their commercial success: Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* sold 16,000 copies in the two years between 1845 and 1847. It went through nine editions in Britain, alone (Gates, 5). With Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) still unpublished, Moodie's *Mary Prince* narrative of two decades earlier could still have been the main female voice of slavery and might have looked, in retrospect, like an untapped gold mine from the perspective of a cash-strapped Ontario settler. In the United States to the south, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had just appeared (1852), bringing fame and prosperity to its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Moreover, the presence of a ghostwriter or editor behind slave narratives was apparently not a matter for comment among the United States readership. Gates connects this to the oral origin of the slaves' life stories: "The slaves' writings were often direct extensions of their speeches, and many ex-slave narrators confessed that their printed texts were formal revisions of their spoken words organized and promoted by anti-slavery organizations" (Gates, 4). With abolition (of the trade in and the institution of slavery) an established fact in the British Empire, and with American abolitionists publicly ushering slave narratives into print, it must have seemed to Moodie that there was little point in maintaining a pretence that had been ongoing for two decades. Nevertheless, there is the reticence of the elided surname (*P*-----, rather that Prince) and her silence in any medium other than fiction on this subject.

Had Moodie merely maintained silence on the subject, then one could conclude that there was nothing hidden in the issue of authorship – that Prince talked, Moodie transcribed and fixed the spelling and Thomas Pringle adjusted the grammar for intelligibility. However, analysis of Moodie's later work, *Richard Redpath*, reveals a return to the subject in a fictionalized displacement of the question of finding a voice for slavery. In *Richard Redpath*, Moodie transforms the act of textualization into a fictional masquerade of race. This sounds complicated but is quite simple. In this dreadful novel, the Englishman Richard Redpath, finding himself and his brother shipwrecked and penniless in Kingston, Jamaica, decides to turn slave and sell himself at auction to benefit his brother. With paint, rags and an assumed Negro patois, Redpath "becomes" Sambo and is auctioned off to the life of a household slave.

This incident recalls what Whitlock sees as the "adjacency" of Moodie and Prince in the original writing scene of The *History of Mary Prince* (Whitlock, 23). In this

special relationship of the middle-class, proper white Englishwoman with the marginalized black slave, Whitlock stresses Moodie's act of giving voice to the black body (Whitlock, 23). This in essence is what Moodie represents in the Redpath/Sambo masquerade; it thus deserves serious consideration as a displacement of the earlier textual masquerade. By having her character take on the appearance, voice and role of the slave, Moodie embodies the unspeakable earlier event in a more acceptable form: blackface. It is not my intention to claim that Moodie was aware of this fictional account as a re-appropriation of authorship; the displaced nature of the scenario argues against her awareness of this as either confession or claim. It is possible to see this work as a subconscious reworking of that role-reversal in the drawing room of many years previously.

With the evidence from *Flora Lyndsay* and *Richard Redpath*, the question of the extent of Susanna Moodie's role in the creation of *The History of Mary Prince* must be revisited. Thorough textual analysis remains to be done (from both stylistic and discourse perspectives), as well as attention to the topoi and structures of the slave narrative in general. Certainly, Gates' claim that the Prince narrative breaks new ground in the genre by celebrating the "self-transformation" (Gates, 9) of slaves into subjects with speaking voices calls out for qualification in the light of the complicated question of just whose voice is heard in *The History of Mary Prince*.

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THE *UN*-CANADIAN STORYTELLING: HISTORICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL

It is impossible to believe any longer that there is something called an innocent reading of a text. If we attempt it, we will only reveal our own ideological assumptions. If we are not aware of them, there will always be a critic available to point them out. This means that a "critic's reading of a critic's reading is in turn subject to another reading that will expose another set of assumptions, and so on" (Brook, 51). Everything becomes even more complicated if we agree with those authors who believe that there is not even a shared agreement as to what we mean by ideology. Is it a mode of discourse or a lived experience? Does our choice of a definition of ideology betray an ideology? Does the awareness that every act of reading is in some way self-interested allow a relatively new approach to the use of literary texts to study ideology, as some critics believe? The traditional ideological study adheres to the reflection theory of literature and maintains that the faithful representation of a world in literature reflects the historical conditions and resultant ideology of the age that produced it. Produced by the material conditions of a society, a literary text becomes a special kind of commodity in that it speaks not only to but also about the conditions of its own production. A text is produced many times through the acts of reading and writing, which can lead to the assumption that

> [t]he encounter between a text and a reader becomes a way of studying both the ideology of the reader reading it and the world it represents. Beyond the individual, the ways a generation of readers or a society read their texts exposes that generation's or society's ideologies, while the texts a society reads help to shape these ideologies. If we cannot have a direct encounter with a text, we can study how a text has been encountered. That study tells us "something about the text, and our own way of reading that encounter" (Brook, 52).

Antony Giddens' definition of ideology, in fact, refers to the *ideological*, in terms of the capability of dominant groups or classes to make their own sectional interests appear to others as universal, allowing us "to account for the fact that the most subtle form of ideological control is not to force people to accept a set of beliefs but to predetermine ways of seeing the world" (Brook, 52). Does not this also lead to the conclusion that ideology for Brook is an encounter between different ways of seeing a world or ways of reading a text?

That the term *ideology* has a complex history and very different concepts is clear even within Marxist tradition where three divergent definitions can be recognized. Stephen Zelnick reminds that for Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* ideology is illusory and false thinking. The later Marx, in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Philosophy*, makes a distinction between "the material transformation of the economic conditions of production" (Zelnick, 79) and the forms of "legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic" practices "where people become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (Zelnick, 79). Lenin takes ideology as a class-bound system of ideas, a theoretical practice, where a revolutionary proletarian ideology wages a war with a bourgeois one. It is only mature Marx who argues that ideology is inescapable, "a constitutive representation of what otherwise cannot be known in itself" (Zelnick, 80). And, it is Louis Althusser who, in his *For Marx*, further develops the discussion of this positive concept. For Althusser ideology is a system of representations (images, myths, ideas, concepts...) and an organic part of every social totality. This system of representations enables human beings to be aware of the "*lived* relations between men and their world" (Zelnick, 80). In these relations men in fact express *the way* they live the relation between themselves and their conditions of existence, which presupposes both a real relation and an 'imaginary,' 'lived' relation. In ideology "the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation that expresses a *will* (conservative, conformist, reformist, or revolutionary), a hope or nostalgia, rather than describing a reality," Atlhusser finally concludes (Zelnick, 80). This implies that Althusser recommends looking for ideology in literature in fictional forms (meaning point of view, the strategic shape of narrative, the clash of styles), in "those formal meters which give us access to the underlying, preconscious grid that shapes experience as if by reflex" (Zelnick, 81). What must be studied is what seems most reasonable, natural, and obvious, Zelnick concludes, and from this conclusion he derives his own definition of ideology. He says: "ideology is constructed as a permissive narrative, i.e. that allows for the management of contradictions to provide a sense of mastery over experience." (Zelnick, 81) It is a complex discourse extended through a narrative – a way of telling a story. It is through the process of telling a story that ideology "is always at work constructing images of one's own relation to the real. Literary works put this private experience on display as social systems and are, in fact, the most complete representations of these systems available to us" (Zelnick, 81).

Telling a story is ground zero as well for Hayden White to discuss the relations between history, ideology, and narrative. In his illuminating essay, "Storytelling:

Historical and Ideological" (Newman, 58–79), White locates the problem of the ideological content of historical storytelling at the level of the figurative meaning of the discourse, and asks a central question: "if storytelling can be said to endow historical events with figurative meaning by emplotting them in terms of a generic story type, does this mean that historical stories cannot be held to criteria of truthfulness and consistency that we would use for assessing their factual and explanatory contents?" (Newman, 4) White analyses several theories of historical-narrative representation, including the structuralist suspicion that historiography is a kind of storytelling advanced by Braudel and Barthes, and Lucacs's belief that narration is both a means of ideological production and a mode of consciousness, and Carr's and Ricoeur's view of refiguration. He concludes by applying a multiplanar theory of discourse of Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev to the problem of distinguishing between historical and ideological storytelling, between what is called "factual" and what "interpretative."

White is absolutely right when pointing to distinguishing between historical and ideological storytelling in every culture (if possible at all) as a very complex issue. This is true for Canadian culture, as well, and can be examined by Len Scher's book *The* Un-*Canadians: True Stories of the Blacklist Era*. Scher chooses oral history as the medium although, as he says, there already exist a number of important academic and historical books that have examined Canada during the Cold War. He believes oral history to be a powerful medium, for "letting the victims … speak for themselves lends an emotional quality to our picture of those times and brings the experience closer to the reader" (Scher, 11). That is why he invited many different participants to tell their memories of the cold-war era. Most, but not all of them, were victims, and it was not easy to persuade people who were blacklisted or otherwise victimized to tell him their stories. He felt sometimes that he was perceived as an intruder rooting out a painful family secret which had long remained closeted. Some of the interviewed preferred to remain anonymous: they did not want their children to be marked for the political "sins" of their parents. Other victims of McCarthyism in Canada were brave enough to tell their stories, knowing very well that political fashions can change.

Although Len Scher was interested in blacklisting because of his family's story, the impetus for his book came from a CBC Radio program he produced in 1979 called "McCarthyism and the Arts." This was a two-hour special about events in the United States, where witch-hunts were common in the movie, television, and radio industries. Freelance writer Nat Schuster collected some touching interviews, and the program went on to become a finalist in the competition for that year's ASTRA awards and also won a Columbia University-sponsored Armstrong Award. A few days after the broadcast, he spoke with another journalist who was convinced that something like that had never happened in Canada. Scher recognized the power of myth in this answer, and started research provoked also by his family story (his father's case), as was mentioned above. After interviewing a number of people, he concluded:

> We can be proud of many things as Canadians, but we *can't* say we were innocent during the so-called McCarthy era. Canada didn't have a gravel-banging House on Un-American Activities charade or a spectacle like the Hollywood Ten in which noted writers, directors, and actors actually went to jail. Yet, what most Canadians don't know is that the National Film Board also succumbed to pressure from cold-warrior politicians. A number of employees were forced out of the NFB. Others fled, afraid the axe would fall on them next (Scher, 12).

The people Scher interviewed are among Canada's most respected citizens: politicians, university teachers, labour leaders, writers, musicians, producers, and directors. As a result, he named them "Un-Canadians" for, as he says, "If the US Congress was searching for 'Un-Americans,' then these were our 'Un-Canadians.'" He included a chapter about the Canadians who lived through the McCarthy period in the United States – people like folk singer Oscar Brand, whose income went from thousands of dollars a week to zero when he was blacklisted off network radio. As Scher says, overnight, and adds "the memories of those times remained with Brand after he survived the blacklisting and was invited back to Canada to start up a folk music series for CTV called *Let's Sing Out*.

Scher composed this book by collecting oral histories of the many people named by Gouzenko in the espionage case in which he was later convicted. "Lottie," a pseudonym for a woman named by Gouzenko, begins this oral history because, as Scher says, all charges against her were withdrawn by the government and because she had never told her story before. Before listening to Lottie's story, Scher exposes us to his family story in the Introduction and introduces the political, ideological, and social context of the time. Thus, we find out that his father used to meet the Jewish Communists who worked with him in the factory on Sundays at a place called Fletcher's Field in Mount Royal. That was the place where "hundreds of newly arrived Jewish immigrants and their families would congregate to greet each other and reflect on their good fortune at having survived the Holocaust" (Schier, 3). His story is followed by another one about the family's new lodger, Andy, an ex-seaman who could not find maritime work because his union, the Canadian Seaman's Union (CSU), had been destroyed by Hal Banks. Andy became a victim of the DNS list (Do Not Ship headcount that discriminated against left-wingers), the list which was compiled by Hal Banks, and which ordered that everyone on the DNS list should not be allowed to work on a ship in Canadian waters. The DNS list was estimated to contain more then 6,000 names. The tradition of blacklisting seamen had actually begun with the RCMP in 1950 when it conducted security screenings of seamen who worked on the Great Lakes. This was not all: there were others who were "naming names" to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). One of these names was Scher's father. Thanks to that, his application for citizenship was constantly refused by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration although after disappointment with Soviet-style communism, the truth about Stalin's gulags and anti-Semitism, he turned to a Jewish Zionist labour movement called the Farband. The family took the rejection of his application as a mark of shame, though he was finally granted Canadian citizenship on October 16, 1963.

The Canadian Cold War started two years before an American presidential adviser Bernard Baruch used the term in a US congressional debate in 1947 in reference to the growing polarity between the West and the Soviet Union. Igor Grouzenko, a cipher clerk employed by the Soviet military attaché, whose job was to translate messages to Moscow into a special numerical code, and who claimed that he possessed "intimate knowledge of the espionage network, managed to convince the RCMP that spies were being recruited here" (Scher, 7). He had thirteen names, accusing the first Member of Parliament for the Labour Progressive Party (LPP) and dedicated Communist Fred Rose of being a key person on the espionage list. Next, a McGill scientist, Dr. Raymond Boyer, was singled out, and other accusations followed. Twenty-one people were charged and eleven were convicted. A year after the spy trials, in 1947, the RCMP's Special Branch was handed far-ranging responsibilities, including the gathering of intelligence and surveillance. Eventually, keeping track of domestic dissidents and harassing labour unions and peace activists replaced the unsuccessful quest for more spy rings, concludes Scher. The RCMP expanded its investigations into union activity and within five years, had purged the Communist-influenced unions. In a nine-month period alone, October 1950 to June 1951, the *Red hunting* Mounties processed around 54,000 enquiries in the screening of civil servants and private-sector workers. The outcome of this was the vulnerability of the left-wing unions: some of them were expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Trades and Labour Congress. It was especially rough for the Canadian Seamen's Union, which was de-certified by the Canadian Labour Relations Board over its alleged Communist leadership. However, other unions struggled to keep the allegiance of their members despite the raiding of unions.

This is not the end of the story: in Québec, premier Maurice Duplessis made the Left public enemy number one and warned about the great Communist menace. The CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the NDP) was a "disguised ante-chamber of communism," and he even blamed the collapse of a poorly constructed bridge in Trois Rivieres on Communist sabotage, says Scher (9). A French-language weekly, *Le Combat*, the Jewish Cultural Centre, the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, the offices of the *Canadian Tribune* and the National federation of Labour Youth, and numerous private dwellings were raided. Duplessis forbid the press to report labour news while seamen, textile workers, members of other trade unions, teachers felt his wrath (he pronounced a strike by Montreal Catholic teachers illegal and lifted their certification rights). He also lifted the certification rights from two hundred and fifty unions.

However, there was one more way of harassing the Left: the blacklist at the Canada-US border. The RCMP handed their lists of suspected Communists to the Americans. These names were entered in the "look-out book" or "watch list" at customs points. Even Pierre Trudeau found out he was in the "look-out book" in 1954 when he was turned back at the border while driving to New York. Scher believes that "Trudeu's trips to China and Moscow may have been the reason his name came to the attention of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)." This

happened to the hundreds of Canadian labour leaders who were barred entry to the US and thus were unable to either consult with their union executives or attend meetings at international headquarters, which were usually located in an American city. Obviously, there were many reasons for many oral histories to come out of this period. Some have been documented in Merrily Weisberg's book *The Strangest Dream* and one in June Callwood's biography of Woikin, *Emma: The True Story of Canada's Unlikely Spy.* This one, as we mentioned, begins with Lottie's Story. In 1945, after Grouzenko's revelations, she was accused of being part of a spy ring. She fled Montreal, went into hiding in the United States, lived through some harrowing incidents, and eventually was cleared of any wrongdoing. Now retired, she lives quietly under a different name and wants to go on with her life – "I don't want my name to be used, but getting a chance to talk about my experiences has done me good." Lottie begins her story *in medias res*:

> It was at the war's end. I was in Reno getting a divorce. I had to be there for six weeks, so I decided to work for a gambling casino as a change girl. I wanted to be a dealer, but I had to start as a change girl. Stupid me didn't realize that you had to be fingerprinted to get the job. When I got to the police station I couldn't back out, so I had myself fingerprinted. That's where I got caught. I guess the RCMP and the FBI worked together. You could say they "fingered" me. The FBI came knocking at the place where I was staying and I was picked up.

The story goes on to describe her removal into the custody of the San Francisco police where she was questioned almost every day. Her escape was supported by the Canadian embassy and the American Civil Liberties Union, but upon her return home she was followed by lies that she "had made all kinds of revelations to the grand jury and that she had named names" (Scher, 19). Her trial in her own country took just one morning and the case was dismissed – they had no evidence against her. She closes her story by recalling the moment she became interested in the Communist Party. She was sixteen and her girl-friend who was a year older intrigued her by talking to her about Spain, Japan, and China, so she went to a Communist Party meeting: "I found them all so intellectual. It was a real eye-opener for me and I wanted to know more. I don't regret anything that's happened to me because it was all an experience." Lottie concludes: "There haven't been too many people, especially women, who have been through what I have been through and survived" (Scher, 20).

There is one more women whose oral history is as exciting as Lotti's – Lolly Golt's story. Golt, a sixteen-year-old Jewish girl, the first Jewish head perfect at her school, an editor of the high school paper, believed the world could change and would change. Although warned by her mother that they would be padlocked if she continued "reading those books," she wrote a composition based on her research on how the Russians supposedly lived and how they cooperated, and consequently was called to the principal's office. Asked if she believed what she wrote in her paper, she said, "Yes, I do, actually. I think it's an ideal." It was only when the head master asked, "Do you talk to other people about it?" (Scher, 24) that she understood

the full meaning of what was happening. She burst out crying, as she felt unjustly accused to even be suspected of fomenting revolutionary ideas.

In another story, Al Pardy, a poet, remembers his being blacklisted in Canada for going to Cuba with Pierre Trudeau. The trip enabled him to learn how other people regarded the USA. That was a time when he himself disliked the US very strongly, and when he concluded: "Cuba was Communist, and they were exporting their revolution. They're just as bad in their own way, except they are not as powerful. Two hundred and forty million people can do a lot more than ten million" (Scher, 26). Al Pardy's story is followed by a chain of stories. Ruth Budd, a bassist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and one of the so-called Symphony Six, tells her story about the time when her contract was terminated soon after she and five other members of the TSO were denied entry into the US. She was a member of a left-wing group, which she supposed was the reason for the decision. "I remember coming to work one day and passing the women's dressing room and hearing somebody say, 'Well, she must be a Communist, she reads a lot!' The following year our contracts were not renewed. We no longer had jobs." This also happened to the Dutch orchestra, the Concertgebouw, she remembers, and concludes her story:

> I never had any self-doubt, but I really had serious doubts about my own country as it succumbed to pressure from a foreign power. That another nation should have an effect on my making a living in my own country I found quite unacceptable, shocking, and devastating (Scher, 31).

Ted Allan's oral history is quite long, and he starts it with the attempted blacklisting by the RCMP during the early '50s. He was working for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a disk jockey – playing music and talking on the air – and was on the payroll of the CBC. RCMP informed the CBC that he was a Communist. He himself never hid his activities in Spain or his earlier activities as a member of the Young Communist League, and he added: "Neither do I hide it now, as I'm rather proud of those activities in those years. It was a time to be an activist and a left-winger." His boss, Harry Boyle called him and told him that RCMP was there and told them that Allan was a Communist, which meant that he had to lose his job. Allan recalls:

> What happened next could only happen in Canada. Boyle then said, 'Now that you're not on staff, how would you like to do a free-lance program for the CBC?' I was fired and rehired by Harry Boyle, who was a unique man, who didn't allow himself to be intimidated. There were men like Harry Boyle and [producer] Andrew Allan who didn't give a shit about all this.

These stories follow one after the other, each unique, but connected by a common thread – the thread called censorship or McCarthyism, which was applied, in one way or other, in film and music production, in broadcasting, radio, dance and theatre, literature and poetry (They are the stories of Jack McAndrew, Al Purdy, Ted Allan, Noel Moore, John "Mac" Reynolds, Doris Rands, Lou Applebaum, Ray Stevenson, Toby Gordon, Rayan, Carl Dow, Irving Layton, Alex Barris, Jacques Pigeon, Mike

Bosnich, Ross Russell). Each story is characterized and burdened by ideology that is re-produced many times through the acts of telling, reading and writing.

Each story provides a possible encounter between a text and a reader, a possibility of studying the ideology of not only the reader and the world but of the story-teller as well. Each finally brings us back to Anthony Giddens' refined definition of ideology – *ideological* for all these stories, in fact, confirms that ideological control concerns first of all the predetermining of ways of seeing the world. Don't all these stories at the same time more than illustrate Althusser's understanding of ideology as a system of representations and an organic part of every social totality? Through all these systems of representations the tellers of these stories become aware of the lived relations between themselves and the world. How much do they invest their real relations into their imaginary relations that express a *will* (reformist, revolutionary), a hope or nostalgia, rather than, as Althusser would say, describing a reality. In these stories ideology is reflected on all levels by something Zelnick calls "permissive narrative" as a result of the way the stories are told, which allows a sense of mastery over experience. Through the process of telling these stories, ideology keeps constructing images of the narrators' own relations to the real. Above all, these oral histories offer their private experiences for display as social systems, and they do confirm Zelnick's conclusion that only in that way can they be the most complete representations of the systems available to us.

Scher's oral histories in his *The* Un-*Canadians* also point to Hayden White's question of the truthfulness of historical stories – the problem of distinguishing between historical and ideological storytelling, between what he calls "factual" and "interpretative." Can this sensitive edge be defined at all? Is it possible to classify the levels of truthfulness and consistency through investigating the interplays of the relations between history, ideology, and narrative and thus assess their factual and explanatory context? Don't all these texts represent both modes of discourse and a lived experience at the same time? For they certainly depart from the traditional reflection of theory of literature, and get closer to our own awareness that every act of reading, and researching especially, is in some way self-interested.

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BLACK OR WHITE? TOWARDS A TRANSNATIONAL CANADA

The highly developed countries such as Canada have net gains in international migration (Li, 2003). This trend influences the way the receiving society approaches the immigration question and how it assesses the merits of immigration. Prospective immigrants have always been invited to settle in Canada via propaganda and land loans, especially in decades when Canada faced good export markets and strong national demand for workers (Whitaker 1991; Hawkins, 1991; Li, 2003). The immigration debate in Canada has constantly been articulated in two dimensions. The first is largely expressed in terms of possible benefits to Canada, and the second is constructed around integration issues, particularly the impact of immigrants on the transformation of the host society.

Increasingly, the quickly changing and highly demanding global market locates the process of integration in the labor market and emphasizes economic integration as the measure of successful integration. There is intense competition among advanced capitalist countries for well-trained human capital. Therefore, nowadays, much of the debate surrounding immigrant integration in Canada has more to do with the selection of immigrant skill quality than with the volume of immigration (Simmons, 1999; Li, 2003). This does not mean, however, that there are no controversies concerning the current debate. The immigration policy is accused of neo-racism (Simmons, 1998). The increasing focus on highly skilled immigrants, more or less, means that people who have low levels of schooling are less likely to be accepted. On the other hand, there have always been the legal restrictions that define prospective newcomers regarding who might be admitted as legal immigrants and who should be barred from entry.

Canada is undoubtedly connected with people's perception of the land itself. This has derived from the process of creating a society in a new world and settlers' experiences in their efforts to cultivate their new resources. For instance, the Canadian Prairies were an important destination for European settlers from 1880 to 1914. After the closing of the American frontier around the turn of the century, Western Canada was promoted internationally as "the Last Best West." The settlement of Western Canada marked a turning point in the history of Canadian immigration.[1]

Clifford Sifton, Laurier's first minister in charge of immigration, decided to absorb myriads of people from Europe and North America to settle the West. He directly affronted pro-British sentiments by his recruitment of non-British settlers in the hope that they would be able to shift the situation of the prairie agricultural frontier. With the upsurge of immigration, the British-born majority gradually defined the national community in opposition to the newly arriving "aliens" (Whitaker, 1991).

Nativism was reflected in a growing backlash against "strangers within our gates" among various elements of Canadian society. Attempts were made to establish the British origin at the head of a cultural hierarchy in the new land. Racialism thus provided a powerful frame for interpreting and explaining immigrant behavior of all sorts, and for articulating the racial supremacy of Anglo-Saxons (Palmer, 1992; Jacobson, 2003).

The question of creating a new society increasingly put forward the capability of "foreigners" to assimilate into the Canadian community. James S. Woodsworth, author of *Strangers within Our Gates*, concluded that people from Britain, Scandinavia, Germany and America would make the best citizens, whereas the absence of democratic traditions among Eastern and Southern Europeans made them unsuitable. Orientals and Blacks were even less desirable because they were incapable of assimilation (Woodsworth, 1977).

However, not all adjustments to the dominant society were in response to coercive nativism. The non-British immigration was seen as interrelated with social problems which needed to be solved by the reform programs provided by some religious and public institutions.[2] Nonetheless, a significant influence in the shaping of ethnicities was the change in the perceptions of various immigrant groups by the dominant

[1] First of all, the Canadian government established a more effective campaign. The world conditions also seemed to change in ways that favored Canada's recruiters. Moreover, the situation of the prairie agricultural frontier was more attractive as a result of important breakthroughs in farm technology. The agricultural boom stimulated booms in coal, lumber and railway construction that offered the prospect of abundant jobs to international migrants (Whitaker, 1991: 6–7, Friesen, 1984: 249)

[2] The reforms concluded that the immigrants would require guidance if they were to become responsible citizens. The church leaders of three denominations (the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists) accepted the challenge of Christianizing Canada's newest region and assimilating its citizens. Several dozen institutions were established in order to convert "foreigners" into English-speaking Christian citizens who are clean, educated, and loyal to the Dominion and to Great Britain. Another central institution dedicated to the assimilation of immigrants was the public school (Friesen, 1984: 345–346).

society and the stereotyping and labeling which ensued. In fact, particular moments of crisis such as wars and economic depressions have been periods of identity for the larger society and of intensified invention of ethnicity (Conzen et al, 1992). This thesis is exemplified well by the history of German-speaking immigration to Canada. The German settlers were particularly warmly welcomed because of their high agricultural skills. Moreover, they were seen as culturally more suitable for becoming Canadian citizens than immigrants from Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, during the two World Wars and the Great Depression state coercion was exercised against Germans and other ethnic groups believed to be potentially subversive and disloyal (Whitaker, 1991; Palmer 1998). For instance, the victims of nativist hysteria were German-speaking Mennonites, although they were largely known as pacifists (Loewen, 1993). On the other hand, during the interwar years, the Canadian government together with the railway companies aggressively recruited German immigrants, waging a secret war against the Weimar Republic's government. German authorities regarded both railway companies' activities as being illegal since they tried to promote emigration among productive German citizens. Moreover, the emigration propaganda was criticized for not showing Canada as it was, but rather portrayed everything in a very positive way (Grams, 2001). A good example of Canadian propaganda is Justus Schmidel von Seeberg's movie *Canada: seine Bodenschätz und landswirtchaftlichen Mőglichkeiten* (*Canada: its Mineral Resources and Agricultural Possibilities*), sponsored by the CNR.[3]

After World War II Canadian authorities gradually changed their attitude towards immigration and integration issues. Firstly, Canada continued to face a shortage of skilled labor power, gaining especially from draining workers at the expense of the countries of origin. However, the Canadian government was forced to compete for immigrants against Australia's advertisements (Hawkins, 1991). Secondly, Canada was in the process of creating its positive image on the world stage as a helpful middle power. John Peters Humphrey drafted the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for developing the concept of the United Nation's peacekeeping. Thirdly, there was a general movement around the world against the horrors of racism as a result of the war against Nazism (Weinfeld & Wilkinson, 1999). In the end, politicians increasingly perceived members of ethnic minority groups as valuable supporters of their ideas. Some commentators have seen it as an attempt to neutralize real minority demands, especially at a time when national aspirations were awakening in Quebec (Peter, 1981).

In the 1970s the Trudeau government announced its official support for "multiculturalism," within a framework of two official languages, and their successors have echoed this commitment (Whitaker, 1991). The new policy makes a commitment to reform public institutions to recognize and accommodate immigrant ethnicity.

[3] The movie was descriptively simple. A young German immigrant arrives in Winnipeg and immediately receives a job on a farm through an immigration board. After collecting some vital farming experience, he is able to establish himself as an independent farmer.

Moreover, immigrants are allowed to uphold their ethnic identity. The critical principle of multiculturalism is to ensure full participation and full contribution by all the members of society. It does not depend on how close one's ethnic descent is to the historically dominant group. The policy of multiculturalism promotes social cohesion by reinforcing the belief that Canadian public institutions are (more or less) fair, and not systematically biased against particular ethnic, racial, or linguistic groups. This interpretation of multiculturalism's main thrust, both as policy and social movement, is consistent with the view that ethnicity has taken on a symbolic character. Consequently, ethnicity is likely to have an increasingly voluntary and occasional character (Breton, 1978; Kymlicka, 1998).

On the other hand, a new approach to migration accents the attachments migrants maintain to people, traditions and movements located outside the boundaries of the nation-state in which they reside (Portes, 1997; Morawska, 2001; Foner, 2005). More efficient modes of communication and transportation undoubtedly allow migrants to intensify their home-based relationships and interests. As Morton Weinfeld and Lori A. Wilkinson have explained, "the old idea of diaspora is being given new currency as we move into the next century. Immigrants and their descendants may be less and less cut off from their homeland and culture than in previous generations" (Weinfeld & Wilkinson, 1999: 79).

This questions the conventional approach to multiculturalism. The policy of multiculturalism was originally designed as a strategy of building up Canadian citizenship within the borders of the nation-state (Kymlicka, 1998), neglecting the ways in which contemporary immigrants live in transnational communities. Such types of migrant communities consist of, as Alejandro Portes puts it:

> "[d]ense networks across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition. Through these networks, an increasing number of people are able to live dual lives. Participants are often bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both" (Portes, 1997: 812).

Whereas the main significance of conventional multiculturalism derives from its integral contribution to the reconstruction of the symbolic system and to the redistribution of social status among different groups in Canadian society, transnationalism is associated with the maintenance of home ties outside the Canadian state. Early in the twentieth century, transnational activities often inflamed popular opinion that immigrants should transform into productive and loyal citizens to the Dominion and Great Britain (Palmer, 1992). Return migrations thus were viewed as a part of a broader transnational connection. Immigrants were expected to stay once they arrived to demonstrate their commitment to the Dominion. Many migrants did not even care much about building their old state, devoting their attention to their own material needs. A group of political exiles were always treated suspiciously as potential subversive elements, which were ready to spread harmful ideas in Canada (Whitaker, 1991). As a result, in Ewa Morawska's words (2001: 193),

while earlier wave immigrants were closet transnationalists, today they have come out into the open.

Undoubtedly, the impact of transnational communities indicates a compromise in the nation's ability to monopolize loyalty (Ong, 1999). The dynamics of each case of transnational involvement are affected by the host country's laws, policies and relations with the migrant's homeland. Certainly, a host country must confront each case with policies shaping the kind of activities it will tolerate or even support. The transnational challenges to multiculturalism suggest that a real recognition of diversity includes not just a notion of cultural differences, but also immigrants' loyalty and commitment to their homeland opens up new opportunities for their communities of origin. Some sending states are making it easier for emigrants to keep their nationality in order to foster stronger ethnic lobbies working in their homeland national interests as well as to bolster remittances.[4]

The transnational field is also significant for Canada as a host country, since it affects the way immigrants incorporate themselves and alter conventional expectations about their adaptation. A number of scholars have currently emphasized that assimilation and transnationalism are not mutually exclusive, but are often combined (Morawska 2001; Guarnizo et al, 2003; Foner 2005). Thanks to their transnational practices immigrants are often engaged in dialogue with the institutions of the new country, which facilitates their integration into the social and political structures within Canada. Moreover, transnational activism often seeks to reproduce in the country of origin national and local politics, discourses and institutional practices, as well as a respect for the civil rights learned in Canada.

In addition, thanks to Canadian corporations, transnationalism is reinforced by developing marketing initiatives to promote migrants' monetary transfers, long-distance communication, and frequent visits to their countries. By the same token, immigrants will stimulate local demand, increasing profits for mainstream business. Many corporations have discovered that the immigrant market continues to grow, thanks to a steady stream of newcomers and their higher than average birth rate (Li, 2003). Politicians have constantly viewed some ethnic groups as potential supporters of their campaign. Meanwhile, the governments of the sending countries perceive them as a potentially powerful lobby.

The close attention given to the changing makeup of the Canadian population shows that two-thirds of Canada's population growth over the past five years, according to the 2006 census data released in March 2007, is caused by immigrant newcomers. It is projected that by 2030 the country's population growth will be 100%

[4] The economic impact of transnational communities is to be found in the flow of remittances that migrants send to their families and communities in the country of origin. Transnational communities also maintain cultural and social exchanges between sending and receiving contexts, including marriage alliances, religious activities, media and commodity consumption. Sometimes expatriate individuals return to their countries of origin to run as candidates for election. For instance, in 1999 retired University of Montreal professor Vaira Vike-Freiberga became president of Latvia.

dependent on immigration (Statistics Canada, 2007). Understanding contemporary migration as a network-driven process has some significant implications for a broad spectrum of Canadian policies whether they relate to international development, trade, peacekeeping, investment, or security. It is important to figure out how to take full advantage of the influence and resource of Canada's diaspora communities and their communication networks around the world. In addition to migrant populations as transnational communities, many illegal and violent networks also operate transnationally as well.

Moreover, if international migration is taken as a gauge of Canada's relationship with the world, it can be observed how actively diasporic communities contribute to promoting Canada as a major player in the world. By the same token, Canada maintains close ties to the developing world, where many of the future security problems are likely to emerge. For instance, Jennifer Hyndman (2003) has pointed out the role of the Sri Lankan transnational community in helping to define and shape Canadian development cooperative objectives in Sri Lanka.

Current debates across Canada seem to illustrate the significance of immigration to Canada's prosperity (Simmons, 1999; Li, 2003). Even though Canada's commercial relationships and security cooperation with the US are traditionally defined as frameworks for its economic and national security, Canada's global relationships may begin to look different. First, because of the overall greater number of immigrants, in the study of the brain drain and brain gain phenomena within the economic challenges ahead for Canada, Statistics Canada writes:

> [t]here are four times as many university graduates entering Canada from the rest of the world as there are university degree holders of all levels leaving Canada for the US. Second, because of the brain drain to the US and an aging Canadian population, immigration is likely to play a key role in Canada's innovative strategy as knowledge-based industries, which are highly dependent on the quality of human capital available to them, increase Canada's efforts to recruit foreign labor (Statistics Canada, 2000).

As a result, it might be self-evident that a highly educated population with ties and links to different parts of the world naturally will have opinions about world affairs in general and Canada's role in the world in particular.

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CULTURE / POLITICS / PERSPECTIVES
CULTURE / POLITIQUE / PERSPECTIVES

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GEORGE GRANT – PUBLIC MORALIST

George Parkin Grant, philosopher and eclectic academic, and a prominent political gadfly, left an indelible footprint on the Canadian political scene. In 1965, Grant published *Lament for a Nation* being an expression of concern, nay distress for the turn of events in Canadian politics in the early 1960s. He agonized over his perception of a decline in Canadian independence and the increasing influence of the United States. This he saw as a replacement of the conservatism, advanced by John Diefenbaker, by the liberalism of Lester Pearson and epitomized in the 'Camelot atmosphere' of the Kennedy administration.

> *He moves in darkness as it seems to me,*
> *Not of woods only and the shade of trees.*
> *He will not go behind his father's saying,*
> *And he likes having thought of it so well*
> *He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."*
>
> Robert Frost

Lament for a Nation is a polemic written by an individual convinced that Canada was abandoning its potential for fulfilling its promise and distinction from the United States when John G. Diefenbaker was rejected by the Canadian electorate. Moreover, this was a man of great intellectual ability and literary accomplishment – if Athens had its Socrates; France its Voltaire; Scotland a Hume; and England had Ireland's Burke, the much younger Canada had begot its Grant. George Parkin Grant was the epitome of the 'chip off the old block'– he stemmed from what might have passed for the established elite of Canada and there can be no doubt that he saw himself in that vein – his grandfather Rev. George Munro Grant had been principal of Queens Univ. in Ontario; the Rev. George M's son, William Grant

and father of George Parkin Grant, became principal of Upper Canada College and George Parkin Grant, born 1918, ranked amongst the chosen when appointed a Rhodes Scholar in 1939. He began studies in law but interrupted these to engage in war work first as an air raid warden during the London Blitz, and then tried to enlist with the merchant navy.

In war-time, as a professed pacifist, George suffered anguish within himself and amongst his contemporaries. This he endeavored to assuage in rescue work in London's Bermondsey and his effort to become a merchant seaman. The latter effort was quite needless for he was thwarted in the naval endeavor on being diagnosed with tuberculosis. While this would not have brought him relief within himself, it might have disposed of social pressure had the fact been generally known.

After the war, Grant returned to Oxford to write a D.Phil thesis in theology following the 19th century Scots religious philosopher John Oman and relating significant themes from classical philosophers ranging from Descartes, Plato, Aristotle, Calvin and Luther to Marx, Freud and Pascal; before taking up academic appointments at Dalhousie, York, McMaster, and back to Dalhousie universities.

George Grant was a professed practising Christian but not an intolerant one. Whatever his idiosyncrasies, he was given to obesity, chain smoking and dishevelment, George Grant is recognized as a thinker and writer of colossal proportion within the Canadian context. His writings – poetry; reviews; radio and TV scripts; commissioned reports; books are of prodigious volume but none has had the widespread and lasting impact of *Lament for a Nation*.

Thus Grant was a social critic broadcaster and writer at great lengths as philosopher extraordinaire. He was a compassionate humanist Christian and pacifist, believed in conservatism and established moral values in contrast to liberal pragmatism, championed Canadian sovereignty and the nation's British Commonwealth linkages and obligations. The events and circumstance of his life-time in Canada afforded considerable scope for him to expound upon his beliefs.

The 'lament' is an apologia for John Diefenbaker, a distress for the evolution of the U.S. imperium and the "homogenisation' of N. America and the Canadian liberals supporting its advance along with recognizing technology's changes and the business implications arising therefrom – these circumstances he saw epitomized in the Canadian defence dilemma of the early 1960s. It can be argued that some, if not all of the concerns are equally relevant today for the United States, as the world's super power, has financial, political and military potentials of global dimensions.

Lament for a Nation, at twenty-five thousand words, is far from a lengthy tome. It prints out at less than a hundred pages albeit nearly twice as long as Machiavelli's *Prince* or Karl Marx 's *Communist Manifesto*. At every reading it seems to reveal a new perception of its author and the way his mind was working as he penned the opus. The book was written against the social backdrop of the decline and fall of John George Diefenbaker as a political force, sparked by the initiative to station US

nuclear weapons on Canadian soil: and a normative perception of Canada's destiny as a sovereign state in the mid 1960s. With regard to the latter, he is distressed by the overwhelming influence of the United States. Hence the lament that the institutions of his upbringing no longer prevailed and a distress about their replacement – Liberalism.

Grant wrote a new introduction to the 1970 edition – it contains nothing by way of revision of his fundamental views viz: *(a)* Canadian nationalism/sovereignty is dying if not at an end; *(b)* the 'American Empire' aided and abetted by liberalism and its Canadian disciples, e.g. Lestor Pearson and the late C.D. Howe is promoting 'continentalism' though Pierre Eliot Trudeau seems less ardent in the movement than his predecessors; *(c)* the corporations/big business are complicit in the degradation; *(d)* Canadians at large are prepared to accept the material benefits of the trend and lack a 'sense of Moloch' for the nationalist ideal of Canadianism; (*e*) the 'British traditions and respect' have faded – in any case the Brits have already sold out to the Americans, (with an aside swipe at E.P. Taylor who doesn't pronounce 'derby' appropriately).

From the author's introduction to the 1970 edition one very quickly recognizes Grant's academic background as he muses over events since the first edition. He notes, per Plato, recollection is the chief means of wisdom; technology and its requirement invokes a reference to Heidegger's view of "technique as the metaphysic of the age". Locke and Smith, founders of British Liberalism, adopted by the Americans, brought to its "apotheosis and decadence in the thought of Keynes, Moore, and Forster" albeit he warns there are implications of virtue in Marxism; and concludes with a note on pessimism with reference to Voltaire's view of Leibnitz, "It would be the height of pessimism to believe that our society could go on in its present directions without bringing down catastrophe upon itself. To believe the foregoing would be pessimism, for it would imply that the nature of things does not bring forth human excellence." Perhaps this latter should be regarded as an expression of, 'where there is life there is hope'.

Grant's 'logic' is not without precedent – as a student of history, he was well aware of past events such as the Montreal Annexation Manifesto (the *Montreal Annexation Manifesto* was a political document, published in 1849 in Montreal, Quebec, calling for Canada's annexation by the United States.); the 1907 New York Banking Crisis with its impact on the Canadian financial scene; and the outcome of Laurier's promotion of US-Canadian trade reciprocity (In 1896 Wilfred Laurier expressed the view, "the twentieth century belongs to Canada" and must have been chagrinned when the Canadian electorate refused to accept a formula for accomplishing the acquisition in the Reciprocity Election of 1911).

There has always been political mileage to be gained in Canada by being critical of Americans and emphasizing Canadian and US differences. Various efforts have been made to promote better economic relations, e.g. the Auto Pact and the NAFTA, but these have not always been seen to be mutually satisfactory, especially from a

Canadian perspective and most north of the forty-ninth parallel, whether Anglo- or Francophone, tend to support an attitude of 'vive la difference' – albeit in matters of individual relationships the 'attitude' is often forgotten. At base is a perception that the Canadian confederation, founded upon an impression that the victorious Union troops of the Civil War might be directed to an annexation of the Canadas of British North America and an expectation of greater economic opportunity – the impression was false and many believe the second is overdue for fulfillment.

> *"A truly global economy, as opposed to the multinational economy of the recent past, will require concessions of national power... that seemed impossible a few years ago and which even now we can but partly imagine." – Walter Wriston of Citicorp*

Wriston's 1992 line would certainly have annoyed Grant and provoked a response! While there is little doubt that he would have more than sympathised with the Kierans and Granatstein comments on the 'Shamrock Summit' as reported by *Wikipedia* viz:

> The Shamrock Summit was a name given to the 1985 meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and U.S. President Ronald Regand. Held in Quebec City, it was so named because of the Irish background of the two leaders, and because it was held on St. Patrick's Day. Mulroney showed none of the confrontational approach towards the Americans that Pierre Trudeau had long maintained. The most famous event of the summit was when Reagan and Mulroney, who both had Irish heritage, engaged in a duet of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." Commentator Eric Kierans observed that "The general impression you get, is that our prime minister invited his boss home for dinner." Canadian historian Jack Granatstein said that this "public display of sucking up to Reagan may have been the single most demeaning moment in the entire political history of Canada's relations with the United States." As well, at one point during the summit, Reagan is rumoured to have mistakenly referred to Mulroney as "Byron Muldoon". This became Mulroney's regular nickname in *Frank* magazine for the remainder of his term in office. The meeting was prelude to Mulroney's efforts to create far closer links between Canada and the United States culminating in the 1988 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. – (*Wikipedia*)

More recently, the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* –14th Jan. 2008 per Canadian Press reported:

> The U.S. Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports, which has been a leading critic of Canada's softwood lumber policies, said in a statement Sunday it is "closely scrutinizing" the federal government's proposed national community development trust fund. The Washington-based coalition, which represents small and large American lumber producers, although it refused to reveal how many, said it is "deeply concerned" that Canadian authorities will use the fund "to provide relief to the forestry sector during these difficult market conditions.

Many Canadians would view the above as confirmation of George Grant's apprehensions and a violation of the sentiment of Frost's 'stout fences'.

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GEORGE GRANT – PUBLIC MORALIST

Grant as Philosopher

As an intellectual, Grant has a vision and an interpretation of the world – an ontology, and a core system of values which underlies his critique of Canadian Nationalism. We can glean some of this from his biography and his upbringing, his religious convictions, but we must also make reference to the important philosophers and ideas that molded his mature thought.

Grant had an upbringing in the "upper crusts of Canadian Society". His religious convictions and his Platonism drove him to posit a world order, a vision of true reality, founded neither on empirical studies of the world nor a political realist's view of society, but on his intellectual revelations and spiritual transcendence. For Grant, political and moral life had to be founded on "the equality of all souls before God", writes one commentator.[1] The impression that Grant left on serious observers is well captured by words attributed to Paul Roddick: "I felt at the end of his speech that I had never before listened to anyone who seemed to be driven by spiritual, almost mystical, imperatives which profoundly affected his perception of the world around." There is, for him, a true order of the universe for those who have "seen the light" or have been fortunate enough to escape Plato's cave. While it is difficult to access the innermost thought of Grant, we can say a few things about his major philosophical influences. He has a deep and resounding faith in a Christian God but is not trapped in sectarianism. This may, in part, explain his antithesis to liberalism

[1] Christian, William and Sheila Grant (eds). *The George Grant Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997, 58.

and his rejection of secular Humanism. He scorns, for instance, the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, and yet he shares with Russell strong pacifist tendencies and buys into essentially the same moral values derived from the Judeo-Christian tradition.[2] He differs with Russell on the grounds or reasons for adopting these values.

On a positive note, Grant admires Plato's thought and with it, it would appear, a hierarchical conception of society based on some presumed truth of human beings. As he says about himself, "in political philosophy above all (I am) a lover of Plato within Christianity."[3] In respect to the above, he favors conservative politics and respects above all the value of tradition. We should add, here, that embodied in this tradition is respect for persons. Persons are not mere tools, expendable in the pursuit of economic or quasi-esthetic ideals. In his own time he has seen this tradition erode, infiltrated by modernity and the corruption of his cherished values by an extreme pragmatic and instrumentalist mind-set.

"There is no escape from reading Nietzsche," writes Grant, "if one would understand modernity."[4] Nietzsche is, for Grant, both the genius and the devil of the modern world, an expositor of what is assumed in the modern world, and yet what must be totally repudiated.[5] For as Grant writes, "…it was not accidental that Nietzsche should write of 'the merciless extinction' of large masses in the name of justice, or that he should have thought 'eugenical experimentation' necessary to the highest modern justice. And in thinking about these consequences, one should not concentrate alone on their occurrence during the worst German regime … one should relate them to what is happening in the present Western regimes."[6]

Strongly influenced by Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger resumes the examination of modernity in the 20th century. Not surprisingly, Grant regards Martin Heidegger as arguably the greatest philosopher of the century. Heidegger's formative years were spent in Bavaria, in a Catholic community. He was recognized early for his intellectual gifts and was seen as destined for an academic career in the Church. But, his independence of thought made that impossible. What captivates Grant about Heidegger, above all, is the latter's critique of modernity. The core of this critique centers on the mind-set of modern man, which involves moral relativism, instrumentalism and self-centeredness. Such a mind-set drives us to pursue unexamined goals in a scientifically orderly way with an enthusiastic disregard for traditional values. To take an extreme example, Heidegger at one point suggested that the Holocaust and commercial chicken farming were manifestations of such instrumentalist thinking. Sadly, Heidegger's own efforts led him to flirt with the Nazis. Grant's efforts, however, led him to make a positive contribution to raising

[2] Christian et al., 'Pursuit of an Illusion', 323–34.
[3] Christian et al, 294.
[4] Christian et al., 293.
[5] Christian et al., 296.
[6] Christian et al., 296.

our consciousness of who we are as a people. Some would say that he became our Socrates – the gadfly of a Canadian nation.

Grant was also strongly influenced by the French philosopher, Simone Weil. We cannot enter into an exegesis of this inspirational thinker, but just to make one observation. Weil raises for Grant this question: "What is the character of the modern world that has taken modern human beings so far from the divine?" This question troubled Grant for much of his life and is the underlying subterfuge of the *Lament for a Nation*.

Modernity, Instrumentalism, Economic Efficiency and Liberalism

At the core of Grant's rejection of the liberal capitalistec societies is a Heideggerian critique of modernity. Such liberal capitalistic societies, whether in the form they take in the USA or elsewhere in the West, recognize strong individual rights, in particular economic rights. However, what Grant calls the "liberal tradition of justice" is very much at odds with the basic tenets of such 'liberal societies', since contemporary liberal states which, for instance, recognize women's rights to abortion, are subject to a 'creeping tyranny' which he calls, "the triumph of the will." "Will" for Grant is understood as unbridled power over oneself, a self-realization or self-assertion in which "…truth, beauty, and goodness have become subservient to it."[7] Could this explain, in part, Grant's position on the political struggles in Canada between the Liberals, and the Conservatives? At stake, it seems, lie two versions of Canada as we shall go on to suggest.

The Problem of Canada from Grant's *Lament*

The very astute and prescient observer of Canadian national identity, George Parkin Grant brought to our attention as early as 1965, with the publication of *Lament for a Nation,* the very precarious existence of our sovereignty. This book, *Lament for a Nation* could well have been subtitled, "The Inevitable Disappearance of Canada and the Rise of the American Empire". But shocking as its message was, excepting for a certain notoriety and discussion in the popular press, its core message for the most part fell on deaf ears among the political elites.

What did this short book, *Lament for a Nation*, have to say in order to leave a lasting and indelible footprint on the Canadian landscape? George Grant faced up to some political realities which few, if any other, political thinkers dared to confront. Firstly, he saw Canadian identity as based on a political model which essentially captured core elements of the British tradition in political thought, drawn from Locke, Adam Smith et al., but which at the same time linked Canadian identity to an upshot of British conservatism and linked it to thinkers such as Edmund Burke.

[7] Christian et al., 143.

Secondly, George Grant placed the issue of Quebec and French Canadian nationalism outside the circle of the issues on which a sense of national ethos could be found. This clearly is a radical departure from most conventional thought as to the place and role of Quebec in a sovereign and unified Canada. Indeed, Grant has been called the "father of English-speaking Canadian nationalism."[8] This, a most curious phrase, points to the inescapable fact that Canadian identity could not be found in one homogeneous cultural entity. We think that realistically Grant understood and accepted that Quebec is a nation within a nation. He understood that ultimately Quebec fitted within Canada precisely because The Quebec Act of 1774 recognized the rights of the Quebec people, their rights to their language, religion and civil law. This concession which arose within the context of British colonial policy at that time was specifically aimed at securing *pro forma* loyalty to the British crown. It derived not out of respect, nor love of French culture, but in response to a real threat from the continental power of the United States. The argument addressed to Quebec for staying in Confederation was/is that its best hope for the survival as a cultural, linguistic, national entity in a sea of an Anglophone, Protestant-dominated subcontinent was/is within a sovereign Canada. Or as Grant puts it, "If the nation were to survive, it had to be anchored in both English and French-speaking Canada, and *a modus vivendi* had to be established between the two."[9] Political life in Canada, as elsewhere, is driven by pragmatism and ideology, in an uneasy mix.

A Short-Lived Sovereign Nation

Grant saw that our very precarious existence as a nation, Canada, which although nominally an independent country since Confederation in 1867, was very much under the thumb of Great Britain. Since Confederation Canada had aspired to greater independence. This was not to suggest that Canada was suppressed by Great Britain. English-speaking Canada generally spoke fondly of Britain as the motherland and felt a special warmth and pride in the connection. But *de facto*, Canada remained a Dominion – a partially self-ruled colony. All this changed after the First World War. Canada's sacrifices and large contributions to the war effort resulted in Canada's concerns for greater autonomy being taken seriously.[10]

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[8] Potter, Andrew, 'Introduction to the 40th Anniversary Edition', Grant, George, *Lament for a Nation*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000, ix. The phrase 'English-Speaking Justice' was first used by Grant himself as the title for his Josiah Wood Lectures and a book by that title.

[9] Grant, George. *Lament for a Nation* , Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000, 40.

[10] Canada's continued requests for a reappraisal of its constitutional relationship between Britain and itself led to the Lord Balfour declaration regarding the various Dominions in the empire. This document, in part, states: "the Dominions are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the crown …" And, in 1931 the Statute of Westminster granted Canada free legislative power from Great Britain. The period in which Canada enjoyed full political sovereignty, and national independence was, as Grant would have us believe, woefully short. "If World War I freed Canada from British embrace, the imperatives of World War II demanded close military and economic ties between Canada and the United States. In August 1940 the

Grant recognized that the major threat to Canadian sovereignty came in a two-pronged attack. Firstly in the form of a military subservience to American foreign policy, particularly in its defense concerns. And secondly, in the form of economic dominance, a dominance driven by large corporations which were destructive of national institutions, not only in Canada, but also world-wide. The *Lament for a Nation*, written in 1965 specifically addressed Canadian military policy at the height of the Cold War. The Canadian electorate had two choices – one policy as represented by the Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, the other by the Liberal leader Lester Pearson. The real choice was a stark choice between two versions of Canada, (although as is common in politics, the issues were confused by irrelevant character assassinations).

Diefenbaker, who cherished the traditional conservative values and had great respect for the British heritage of Canada stood for an independent Canadian military and foreign policy. The United States, as part of its continental defense policy put pressure on Canada to accept nuclear warheads for the Bomarc missiles and to accept the stationing of American soldiers on Canadian soil. Though initially, and somewhat inconsistently with his own ideals, Diefenbaker was in favor of this continental defense policy, he later backtracked, under pressure from the public and his own party. Subsequently during the Cuban missile crisis, Diefenbaker procrastinated and failed to acquiesce to the placement of the Canadian military on alert. These actions led to a strong rebuke from the Kennedy administration and deteriorating relationships between the two countries.

In the next election the Diefenbaker government was defeated and replaced by the Lester Pearson government and the Liberal Party. Pearson then reversed the Diefenbaker military policy and accepted the nuclear warheads, and these were put in place in late 1963. The Liberal Party's agenda of fuller economic cooperation with the US was also further entrenched by this government. These events constituted for Grant the lament for a nation. To his way of thinking our sovereignty was irretrievably lost.

A uniquely Canadian identity, outside of the Francophone culture of Quebec derives from the British tradition. Our institutions are founded on the British model, albeit as interpreted and amended through the historical contingencies that define the experience of life fostered over a period of time in the 'wilderness' of North America. The destruction of our Canadian identity, as Grant points out, comes from both military and economic dominance. In particular, while the commitment to economic growth of itself is not a bad thing, it becomes problematic where it becomes the sole and overriding consideration, a sacred cow, so to speak. Grant,

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then Prime Minister of Canada, King met with Roosevelt in New York where they agreed on a joint proclamation that committed Canada to "intimate and ongoing military ties with the United States. The wartime economy became highly integrated in the name of wartime production and for many Canadians the country had escaped one empire to plunge into the orbit of another." (Grant, *Lament*, Introduction , Potter xi).

in particular, saw a problem where economic growth is a prerogative of business "…where it operates within the assumption that government action never questions the ultimate authority of business interests to run the economy."[11]

Today, economic policy in a world dominated by international corporations, i.e., in the back yard of the Global Community, extends its scope into virtually every facet of life. Culture, local traditions, even language and religion become victims of its invasive and corruptive power. Some would argue that this is all to the good for it pulls us towards what Martha Nussbaum calls, "the substantive and universal value of justice and right" – in a word, towards world citizenship.[12] It is not our present task to judge whether it does so or not, nor is it to judge the value of global homogenization, but merely to recognize its destructive impact on indigenous cultures. Let us turn to the words of George Grant:

> Capitalism is, after all, a way of life based on the principle that the most important activity is profit-making. That activity led the wealthy in the direction of continentalism. They lost nothing essential to the principle of their lives in losing their country. It is this very fact that has made capitalism the great solvent of all tradition in the modern era. When everything is made relative to profit-making, all traditions of virtue are dissolved, including the aspect of virtue known as love of country."[13]

Certainly Grant foresaw the destructive effects of modernity and globalization on traditional cultures in general, and on Canada in particular, but he had little of substance to say about what constitutes our "unique Canadian identity". If there is a major weakness in the *Lament,* it is here. On this topic, Grant suffers from pure nostalgia, a dream of what never was, nor could be. On Canadian identity we are left with, what seems to me, no more than the vacuous proposition that the essence of our nation should capture all that is good and pure in the "British Conservative Tradition".

But, Are We Not Still a Nation?

But was our identity as Canadians lost? Grant's *Lament* was written in 1965. We are now well into the 21st century. Canada is still here! We have survived tumultuous times, challenges from Quebec separatists, the Mulroney years, etc., and I believe that over the ensuing years we have forged a new identity, quite different from that envisaged by Grant, one in which we differentiate ourselves from our American neighbours and their corporatist society. We are fond of saying that Canadians are very different from Americans. We are a more peace-loving people, we seek no domination over others, we are a mosaic of different ethnicities and races, rather than a melting pot, we provide healthcare and a safety net for our people. Thus, perhaps,

[11] Grant, 46.

[12] Nussbaum, Martha, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." In Joshua Cohen (ed.), *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

[13] Grant, 46–7.

we are warranted in saying that, although the threat to our existence is real and the challenges facing Canada identified by Grant continue to trouble us, we are still a nation and there is a Canadian identity, albeit not the one envisaged by Grant.

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GEORGE GRANT AND M. K. GANDHI ON TECHNOLOGY AND MODERNITY: A VIEW POINT[1]

George Grant was one of Canada's most original thinkers although his writings were often misunderstood. Grant's best books, *Lament for a Nation* and *Technology and Empire*, established him as a great patriot, a nationalist, as well as an idealist philosopher. On reading George Grant's works, I discovered that Grant's views on many topics are similar to those of Mahatma Gandhi. Like Grant, Gandhi also was misunderstood by people vastly and yet he was regarded as the only leader who understood them (Datta, 1953). Similarly, both Gandhi and Grant fought for the „preservation of the 'wisdom of the ancients or the great minds of the past'" (Clarke, 198–199).

As a philosopher of religion, Grant always tried to preserve the „revelation of Christ" but at the same time he had great respect for Hinduism. Gandhi also, despite being a Hindu believer, greatly admired Christianity. He wrote in *Hind Swaraj* about the „mechanization of every aspect of human life, rejection of the virtue of religion, and coercive power" (Ray, 343). Gandhi and Grant both fought against power, which impels human beings, to "dethrone God" (Clarke, 198–199). Both of them fought against the power that exploits Nature and human nature for their own purposes. Both of them were constant pursuers of Truth. Their views regarding the university, college and educational institutions are almost same. Both were the worshippers of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Both focused on the role of philosophy in imparting education. Their views on morality and values and their lament on the loss of old

[1] I am very grateful to Prof. William Christian for his comments and suggestions. For more detailed analysis on a comparative study of George Grant and M.K. Gandhi refer to "George Grant and his *Lament for a Nation* with a Special Reference to M.K. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*: A Comparison" by Arati Barua in the book *M.K.Gandhi and George Grant: Their Philosophical Affinities*. (forthcoming).

values in modern technological society are almost the same. Their reactions towards the professionalism especially of medical practitioners and lawyers are similar. Above all their philosophy of humanism is also the same and which is evident in both – *Lament for a Nation* and *Hind Swaraj*. According to Grant, such a vision of „scientific progress is a Gothic horror. Such a scientific progress replaces 'divine truth with rights based regimes'. Hence this kind of scientific progress is robbing human beings of nobility and is 'thingifying' them instead" (Clarke 198–199).

This similarity of their views made me more curious to know about Grant in details and encouraged me to read books by Grant and on Grant and I got more interested in the philosophy of George Grant. William Christian's *George Grant: A Biography* is a really touching and illuminating biography on Grant's life and philosophy. The more I read Grant's work, the more I found similarity to Gandhi's philosophy. Even Grant himself has referred to Gandhi with great respect in his works. He has compared Gandhi with Jesus Christ (Christian, 1993, 184–185). At another place of the same book it is written, "Mahatma Gandhi's death brought him (Grant) back to the wider world. Sheila (Grant's wife) responded to the assassination by writing a memorial on Gandhi, but George's thoughts turned to more general political reflections" (Christian, 1993, 138). This shows how Grant was affected by Gandhi's death.

Professor Christian confirmed this fact of similarity between Gandhi and Grant. He even talked to Mrs. Grant in this context and wrote that,

> [T]here might be some similarity between Grant's meditations on the relation between the eternal and transitoriness of the political and Gandhi's, but she (Mrs. Grant) emphasizes that she thought that Gandhi's authority was immeasurably greater because he was a saint and her husband most certainly was not" (a personal letter to the author).

Like Gandhiji, George Grant also was a nationalist, and a political and idealistic philosopher. Both fought for their nations in a peaceful and non-violent manner, through their writings to encourage their nationals to protect their own nations from the hands of the enemy of modernism and 'modernity's terrific and terrifying mania for technique' (Clarke, 170–171). This patriotic urge in Gandhiji instigated him to write *Hind Swaraj* in1909 and the same urge made Grant compose his masterpiece *Lament for a Nation* in1965. While one book was written in 1909, the other was written in 1965, but still there are so many similarities. These two masterpieces are still relevant to their nations as well as to others. Gandhi is as relevant today to India and to the whole world as he was at that time; and similarly Grant is also as relevant as he was at that time to his nation as well as to all the North Americans.

The point of Gandhi's moral and political thought in *Hind Swaraj* was provided by what he called "severe condemnation of modern civilization" (Ray, 341). This book has been named a "spiritual classic, and even as the greatest book written in modern times" (Ray, 341). "It was not just the moral inadequacy and extravagant pretensions of modern civilization, but its treacherously deceptive, hypnotic and self-destructive tendency that was the theme of *Hind Swaraj*" (Ray, 342).

In the same way George Grant expressed similar views against modernism and technology in the context of Canada in his book *Lament for a Nation*:

> "…Canadians had simply been seduced. Over the years the independence of Canada had been continually eroded, not so much by the external actions of the Americans, as by the increasing acceptance of the attractiveness of the American vision of modernity". His views on science are expressed in these lines – "George could not unequivocally condemn those who succumbed to the beguiling allure of modernity. He too experienced the exhilaration of freedom and…. Yet it might be possible that the assumptions of the age of progress were false. Modern science led not just to penicillin but to nuclear weapons" (Christian, 1993, 250).

This is, therefore, an interesting issue to examine whether the philosophical foundation on which Gandhi spoke against modernism and technology in his *Hind Swaraj* is also the logical foundation for Grant to speak against modernism and technology in Canada. If that is the case then, there is a possibility that Grant might have been influenced by Gandhi. However, there is a possibility that Grant's views against technology and modernism may be based on an entirely different philosophical standpoint than that of Gandhi.

The study of the philosophy of George Grant is a very new topic of research in India. Probably very few people have worked on Grant and his philosophy in India, especially as far as I know, he was never related to Gandhi before, whereas he should have been studied in this sense long ago as the similarity between their views is so obvious and that is all the more a good reason why Grant should be studied in comparison with Gandhi.

George Grant's Views on Technology and Modernism

Technology

Since the idea of modernism is intricately interwoven with his concept of technology, hence, let us first of all consider George Grant's views on technology. Grant describes modern civilization as "technological" because he believes that the conquest of human and non-human nature is at the heart of modern science (Grant, 1986, 9). This account of technology, modernity and civilization, Grant maintains, is at the core of the fate of western civilization. Using a Spanish proverb – "Take what you want, said God – take it and pay for it" – Grant tries to emphasize that human beings have the enormous capabilities given by the "paradigm of knowledge" to get anything out of Mother Nature but then there is no land of Cockaigne! That is, one has to give to get something. And he thinks it is applicable not only to individuals but also to civilizations (Grant, 1986). This decision, Grant argues, is essentially a voluntary action and we are bound to pay for that "discovery of that paradigm of knowledge." And this "paradigm" also has shaped our thinking about "justice" – justice not in a particular act of this or that act, but in the sense of "what we think justice itself to be" (Grant, 1986). Grant further stated that the

human desire to be perpetually dependant on technology is not merely confined to individual choice but also spread out to our political and social decisions. We even at the societal level tend to take the pretext that their mastery of nature would lead to the eradication of hunger and labor, disease and war and may be we could build the worldwide society of free and equal people. But one has to examine the justice in those hopes about the technological destiny.

In describing modern civilization as "technological," Grant conceptualized the meaning of the word "technology" as he thinks the word is used in North America. The dictionary meaning of the word is the application of knowledge for practical ends. Grant argues that this usage in English of the word "technology" and "technologies" is imprecise to depict the actual meaning of the word *technology*. Grant argues that the usage of the word can be found in its purest form in its European usage where the word *technique* (techniques) stands for the word *technology* ("technological"). In European usage the word *technique* has a whole array of means for making events happen, while *techniques* on the other hand means particular means. Thus the word *technique* describes history and not the creation of history. In contrast, the literal meaning of *technology* is something different, which in Greek stands for the art of systematic study not only to describe history but also to attempt to create history. While Grant's subsequent analyses are based on this distinction, it however involves a serious error in judgment. We can find very frequent use of the words *technique* and *technology* in contemporary economic analyses in which the word *technique* is used for a particular method of making a commodity, while the word *technology* is used to describe the array of techniques to make the same commodity. It seems therefore that Grant went wrong in distinguishing the usage of the words *technology* in English, but that definitional error in judgment is absolutely inconsequential to the core of his analysis of modern civilization (Grant, 1986).

According to Grant, although the purity of meanings may be lost in the English usages of the word *technology*, it however aptly describes "modern reality." Modern reality, according to Grant, is our endless endeavor to create history. Thus he rejected the European usage of the word *technique* because the word is free from thriving to create history. Hence *technology* in its English usage as Grant describes it is at the core of Grant's view of modern civilization. Modern civilization is different from the past because, according to Grant, while in earlier civilizations activities of knowing and activities of making were different and distinguishable, in modern civilizations it is inseparably interwoven. This simplified distinction of modern civilization from the past again is difficult to take as correct but that is again inconsequential in so far as we only consider Grant's view of modernity and modern civilization.

In his *Technology and Justice*, Grant expresses his view that technology is not simply "the whole apparatus of instruments made by man and placed at his disposal for his choice and purposes" (Grant, 1986, 19). But it is also a distinct way of approaching the world. Grant's views on modern life as given in his essay, "Thinking about technology" become clear in the following statement:

> In the novelties of our hourly existing, it is easy enough to recognize how much we have encompassed ourselves within technology. We sweep along superhighways to work in factories, or in the bureaucracy of some corporation; our needs are tended to in supermarkets and health complexes. We can cook, light, heat, refrigerate, be entertained at home through energy, which has been produced and stored in quite new ways. If we have even a slight knowledge of the past we are aware that we can make happen what has never before been possible (Grant, 1986).

William Christian also believes that technology for Grant was not "just a way of making things or even of doing business. It was a way of thinking and it was becoming a way of being" (Christian and Grant, 1998, 78).

Modernism

As argued above, Grant's views on modernism are derived from his conceptualization of the destiny of modern technology and science. By its very nature, modern technology creates the needs for imperialist conquest. The fervent nationalist Grant's objection to modernism and technology stems from the imperialistic characteristic of modernism. The desire to dominate others is inherent in modern technological development. This technological imperialism determines in a way Grant's views on modernism. For George Grant the so-called modernism is nothing but a product of our endless surge for technical progress. He followed Alexander Kojève for whom "The whole world was moving relentlessly towards a universal and homogeneous state." While "such an outcome was desirable" for Kojève "since it was a prelude to a universal peace where war between classes and nations no longer existed," but for Grant "it was not a cause to rejoice." In his *Lament for a Nation* (1965) Grant accepts such an understanding about the impact of technology. Grant pointed out to the geographical position of Canada which was next to the "dynamic center of technology and modernism, [of] the US" and hence Grant feared that this would "lead to an eventual disappearance [of Canada] as an independent country" because both Canadians and Americans shared the same commitment to technology and modernism" (Christian, 2003).

Grant argues that today we have brought the sciences and arts into a new unity "in our will to be master of the earth and beyond." This is in essence the view point of Grant of modern civilization. The usage of "technology" in this sense of co-penetration – describing and creating history – distinguishes modern civilization from the previous civilizations and in this context Grant describes modern civilization as "technological." We must keep this particular meaning of technology and modernism in mind in order to compare Grant and Gandhi on technology and modernism.

Grant saw the danger in modern technological civilizations in its self-defeating characteristics. In his words:

> We are now faced with easily calculable crises (concerning population resources, pollution, etc.) which have been consequent upon the very drive to mastery itself. The political response to these interlocking emergencies has been a call for an even greater mobilization of technol-

> ogy, which illustrates the determining power of our technological representation of reality. More technology is needed to meet the emergencies which technology has produced (Grant, 1986, 16).

The other danger is coming from the fact that the technology on which we depend so much eventually turned into human beings. Thus he writes: "The desire for 'mastery of ourselves' (which generally means the mastery of other people) results in the proliferation of new arts and sciences directed towards human controls, so that we can be shaped to live consonantly with the demands of mass society" (Grant, 1986).

Ethics

Why he opposed to modern technology and its derivative, the so-called modernism? His opposition to modern technology comes from two aspects, namely, the homogeneity aspect of modern technology and secondly, its unsustainability. Clearly in *Technology and Justice* Grant provides a theoretical argument of how modern technology destroys all other possible forms of human existence. He asserts that public and private corporations of such immense size and wealth emerging from modern technology simply don't allow any other form of community to exist. Corporations don't just swallow up other corporations, they obliterate any competing life forms. Technology emerged from a way of looking at life that elevates will power over every other consideration (Grant, 1986, 134–135).

The impact of technology on our life and society is not only overwhelming but also absolutely dehumanizing. He vehemently opposed the monstrous growth of technology in modern times and expressed his deep concern about the danger of the technological development rather more intensely in yet another book, *Technology and Empire*. Grant also believed that science is not only dominating the "non-human nature," but also the domain of human nature. He rejected the view that technology is a matter of choice. "For him, technology was not something of outside of us that we could choose to use for good or ill. We lived in a society in which society (and increasingly a world) in which technology determined all existence" (Christian, 2003).

As our Earth is finite and we live in a finite time and space, limitless technological growth and development is infeasible and unsustainable. The impact of mindless growth of technology and surge for modernism is increasingly felt to be a major constraint on our limited environment and resource base. Our environment is in serious danger for the continuation of life and survival of mankind. Many rare and valuable species of the world already face extinction.[2] Grant sees the necessity of

[2] Grant's *English Speaking Justice* is a condensed book in which he expresses disagreement with a U.S. Supreme Court decision about the ground or reason on which abortion was legalized. The reason was that the fetus is not a person and hence unrestricted abortion was allowed. So when the U.S. Supreme Court had announced its "historic decision in the Roe v. Wade (1973) abortion case," Grant was greatly worried. Regarding John Rawls' theory of justice and the theory of the unborn fetus, he

technology in our life but he also argues for the necessity to deal with it in such a way that it can be freed from its dehumanizing impact on life and society (Grant, 1986, 60). Grant uses the notion "Techno mania," but he did not take it in the sense of pragmatic instrument for meeting our needs, but he believed that we cannot ignore the machines[3].

Basis of Grant's nationalism

George Grant was essentially a political thinker rather than a philosopher in the true sense of the term. He also never intended to be one to propound an alternative theory of modernism but always wanted to be a true Canadian whose heart bleeds for seeing the destruction of Canadian identity. This aspect of his personality should always be kept in mind before one attempts to appreciate his views on technology and modernism. All his life he tried to persuade his readers not to follow the American development path, which according to him was essentially imperialistic in its design. His ultimate objective was to articulate an argument for Canadian nationalism. So in the *Lament for a Nation* we see how he was suffering from a fear that Canada would one day disappear, because increasingly little separated the Canadians from the Americans. Grant played a large part in the Canadian nationalist movement in the 1970s. His hopes for the nationalists to win were due to his deep love for his country which he wanted to survive (Christian, 2003).

In his *Lament for a Nation* Grant expressed his views on the impact of technology on Canada about the disappearance of Canada as a separate state – it is not a question of whether Canada is a state of the Canadians or not, it is not that it does not matter. Similarly, Grant concludes ultimately that what really matters is the soul and the divine and not the material things, finally, God matters. God is always waiting. In Canadian politics, even after 40 years of his writing – *Lament for a Nation* is still in demand, still in press.

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argued throughout that equality was the equality of the souls before God (Christian and Grant, 78).

[3] Since in a precarious moment of his life he was revitalized by modern technology only, and once he was even rejected by the army due to his health problem when he was suffering from tuberculosis. He could renegotiate life with modern machines only. So he was impressed by the usefulness of modern technology but nevertheless he could not ignore the destructive power of technology that led to the holocaust and then to the nuclear bomb – the ultimate destructive weapon. His hostility to this terrible weapon was intensified by the fact that he like Gandhi, was a pacifist. Grant had refused military service in the Second World War, and his refusal to serve in the armed forces was regarded with deep shame by his family.

Grant was quite aware of the possible consequences of the full implication of genetic engineering (which became known after Grant's death only). He wondered – if human beings could remake human beings, by what standard of justice would they do so?

When the Canadian government proposed to allow the American military to test cruise missiles on Canadian soil, (Grant was near the end of his life), he protested vigorously against this diminishment of Canadian sovereignty in the name of his nationalism and his pacifism

He opposed *technology*, as we have argued above, because (i) it creates in itself an ever-increasing demand for technology having destructive consequences on resources, (ii) it tries to control other humans for its own survival and (iii) it is in essence dehumanizing.

Gandhi on machines and technology

Gandhi was not against machines, but his main objection was to the craze for machines (Datta, 115). In fact he was against the machine age. He knew that machines were inevitable. He accepted that machines had come to stay and so machines have place in the society. For him even the human body is also a machine. He calls it "the purest piece of mechanism," but he says that we have to reject it, if necessary, when it becomes a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul. For example, he was in favor of retaining the simple machinery like the "Singer Sewing Machine" but he also wanted those simple machines to be nationalized. But he did not want the complicated machinery to be retained.

He made distinctions between primary and secondary needs of human beings. Accordingly, he made some exceptions to some machines like cars, etc., which he did not consider to satisfy the primary needs of man. But a "needle" for him serves a primary need for all human beings. So Gandhi strongly felt that a machine is good when it serves man, but we should never allow the machines to govern us. He believed that "industrialization might lead to greater production of goods but not necessarily to greater moral progress." Nevertheless, he did not ignore the growing importance of machinery. He said, "Machinery has its place it has come to stay. I am aiming not at the eradication of all machinery but its limitation……" (Christian, 2003). So Gandhi emphasized the limitations of machines, limitation to the craze of human beings for the machines.

Both Gandhi and Grant accepted that technology is inevitable, but we have to deal with it. While Gandhi took an extra-technological (outside) stand, he did not take an anti-technological stand. He advocated an alternative to technology and that means to live a life according to nature. Gandhi believed that if we try, we can do so, we can live on a par with nature by totally giving away technology. Anybody can do it. But Grant gracefully accepts the good effects of technology. For example, medicines, etc. are inevitable and very much acceptable for Grant. He often attributed to Robert Oppenheimer, a nuclear scientist, the words, "When you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it." Grant never denied that science had delivered the goods it promised. "Brilliant scientists have laid before us an account of how things are, and in that account nothing can be said about justice" (Grant, 1986, 60).

Both Gandhi and Grant were great worshippers of "Truth" and "Non-violence" and were primarily concerned with the question of human destiny. Grant himself was a

pacifist, and he considered Gandhi to be a great pacifist. To quote from Christian's biography of Grant:

> [P]resumably the two great pacifists in history were Jesus and Gandhi-one was put to death in a miserable way and one was shot …….You have to be at the highest level of sainthood to think that you carry this through" (Christian, *GG Biography*, 184–185).

Being a devout Hindu, Gandhi was highly influenced by different Indian religious and philosophical systems of Vedanta, Jainism and Buddhism. For M.K. Gandhi the Upanishads and Vedanta are the greatest sources of Indian philosophy, religion and spiritualism. He took the concept of non-violence or *ahimsa* from thr Buddha and Jaina and applied it to all aspects of life. Though the term *Ahimsa* originally meant a negative fact, Gandhi transformed it into a positive and active force. He interpreted the term Ahimsa in a positive sense as a virtue, which expresses love and good will. For him there is no room for cowardice or weakness in *ahimsa*. Rather violence for Gandhi is an expression of fear of an inner sense. For Gandhi religion means to accept God for life. Accepting God means to fill one's heart with love and to allow truth and reason to rule the heart by removing the passion and other ill feelings from the heart. Therefore morality is the essence of religion for Gandhi. True religion and true morality for Gandhi are inseparably bound up with each other.

Both of them had many common interests besides the difference of their time and location. While one was shot dead, the other was retired as an icon, not popular in his own generation but adopted as a pathfinder, a controversial figure to his own nation. But M.K. Gandhi was crowned as the "Mahatma" and by nobody other than Ravindranath Tagore. Gandhiji was also influenced by the modern western thinkers like Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, as well as by Mohammed and the messages of universal brotherhood and love of the Koran and also by the heritage of Christianity and Jesus.

Spiritualism and tha suspension of technological modern civilization were the two important converging points between the two great thinkers – M.K. Gandhi and Grant. Both of them believed in the revival of spirituality. The only difference is that Grant came to spiritualism through intellectual connection, but Gandhi realized the human questions by confronting himself. Grant was very articulated by the philosophy of 17th and 18th centuries. Gandhi had no professional training in philosophy nor in theology whereas Grant had a D. Phil. degree in theology, and that too from Oxford. "As a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, he [Grant] started out in Law and ended up in theology" (Christian, 2003). M.K. Gandhi comes to his conclusion through the trial-and-error method. He was totally unhappy with Hinduism in terms of untouchability. Similarly, Grant also liked his Christianity to be different from the dominant Christianity. For Grant to be a Christian was to be a Christian in his own way, it is freedom of seeking the meaning of the intellectual faculties and to dissociate from orthodox Christianity in the pursuit of spiritualism.

Both Gandhi and Grant talked about the disillusionment with technology and modernity. People experienced how Europe died in giving birth to the "baby of modernism," due to which two wars took place. The idea of good is rooted in controlling our instinct and Gandhi was convinced of the power of non-violence or *ahimsa*. According to Gandhi, we are close to animals in respect to instincts, but to reach divinity one has to go through spirituality, by non-violence. George Grant also emphasized the same point. Humanity seems destined to suffer a holocaust for the Second World War, which appears in retrospect to have been a rehearsal. Nevertheless, Grant was quite optimistic that one day this technological civilization would be ultimately destroyed and that human beings would once more be able to see the Divine more clearly (Westberg, 57).

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LANGUAGE / ALTERITY / IDEOLOGY
LANGUE / ALTÉRITÉ / IDÉOLOGIE

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A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF CANADIAN ENGLISH

Introduction

My paper will, first of all, examine the place of the problem of Canadian English in linguistic studies. Secondly, this paper will analyze the way Canadian English was formed.

Canada now has one of the most liberal immigration policies in the world, and ethnic groups from non-European countries are a growing percentage of the immigrant stream. British Canadians, often called Anglophone or Anglo-Canadians, have been numerically and culturally dominant since Canada became a nation in 1867. The Anglo-Canadians include people with four different ethnic origins: England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. At the time of the 1871 census the Anglo-Canadians represented 60 percent of the population. Those of Irish origin were the most numerous, followed by the English, Scottish, and Welsh. A century later, in 1971, the Anglo-Canadians represented 45 percent of the national population, and the English were the largest single group, followed by the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh.

During the 1980s and 1990s the official number of Anglo-Canadians dropped. Much of the decline is due to changes in the census that encouraged people to register as Canadians. Increasing numbers of individuals with British ancestry claimed Canadian identity when asked about their ethnic origin. Taking this information into account, people of British ancestry were estimated to constitute 44 percent of the population in 2000. In the 2001 census, however, only 20.2 percent of Canadians claimed British ancestry.

The English Canadian population is concentrated in Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta. The Scottish Canadians are most numerous in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island). Most of the Irish live in rural areas of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, and Québec. The Welsh are by far the smallest group among the British Canadians, and they have also settled in the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario.

There are more than 100 different ethnic groups in Canada, and many have maintained their own languages and cultures. Canada has been described as a cultural mosaic where ethnic groups remain distinct. Canada has two founding ethnic groups, the British and the French. British Canadians have traditionally dominated Canada, but French Canadians have maintained their own language and culture in the populous province of Québec.

Canada is known throughout the world as a bilingual country and, according to the popular opinion, Canada is a model democracy. In the more than two centuries since Britain took possession of New France and other French colonies, Canada's society has developed in relative harmony and produced a country where two great language groups – English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians – still manage to live together in relative harmony and prosperity.

The question of identifying the status of the Canadian national variant of the English language and its particular peculiarities arises from the long-lasting history of the research conducted within the linguistic studies. It demands being solved as today the national and territorial variants of the English language have gradually become very influential upon the worldwide English-speaking community. Sometimes these variants even prevail on the position of British English, in spite of the fact that it has given rise to their establishment and development.

The Place of the Problem of Canadian English in Linguistic Studies

Canadian English had remained one of "white spots" in linguistic geography of the English language for a long time. Only in the 1950s and 1960s were several articles published, in which the first attempts to clear up the peculiarities of Canadian English occurred. Within the last years several linguists did the great work as to gather and describe all the linguistic material, which demonstrated the specific character of English not only in different provinces of Canada, but in the whole country as well. The works of Canadian authors, however, have numerous disadvantages, e.g. the absence of differentiating approach to the terms "national" and "literary" language, "dialect" and "variant", the lack of differentiation between synchronic and historic aspects of research. The result is that the status of Canadian English in the macrosystem of the contemporary English language remains unidentified and is still being discussed.

There is a small body of scholarly research that suggests that if there is such a thing as Canadian English, all its unique characteristics are being lost. Some researchers claim that there is no such thing as distinct Canadian English, and argue that the notion of Canadian English is a myth, fabricated to reinforce a fragile Canadian identity; or defend the notion that Canadian English is more than a "network of regionalisms", and that a variety can be distinct by more than its vocabulary.

Other research suggests that the few unique traits of Canadian English are disappearing in favour of American forms. Clarke and Chambers point to the loss of certain lexical items, like *chesterfield* and *serviette*, and the loss of certain phonological traits, like voiceless *wh* of *which* and [yu] in *news* and *student*. Indeed, Woods identifies eight phonological variables as characteristically Canadian, and argues that most of them are disappearing.

Chambers claims it is the speech of the first wave of Loyalists that forms the basis of early Canadian English. Later waves of New England loyalists and Scottish and Irish immigrants in the mid-19th century are thought to have had little effect on the dialect.

The aim of my paper is to look into the problem of the status of Canadian English through clearing up the question of giving the detailed analysis of its lexical and phonetic peculiarities. In order to achieve this aim the following tasks must be performed:

1. Giving the brief outline of the historical events and the development of the English language in Canada in order to show its connection with the historical events and the expansion of Canada by the settlers from other countries;
2. Giving the detailed analysis of the viewpoints of the Canadian and foreign linguists in order to show the common prevailing thoughts as to the problem of distinguishing the status of Canadian English and the contradictions existing in the theory;
3. Performing the detailed analysis of the phonetic system and lexical peculiarities of the Canadian variant of the English language in order to solve the relevant problem of distinguishing its status.

While performing the analysis and accomplishing the work the pieces of literature by the prominent linguists were used. They present the basic theoretical assumptions as to the status and the peculiarities of Canadian English set within the last century. The most significant works in this field belong to A. Avis, M. Orkin, and M. Scargill. Other linguists somehow proceed or doubt their viewpoints as to the given problem.

The features of the English language in Canada began to attract attention of the linguists in the last 15-20 years. Only in the 1950s and 1960s a number of clauses were published in Canada, in which the first attempts were undertaken to reveal

its distinctive features. The basic attention of the Canadian scientists in this period was given to the analysis and description of a material demonstrating specificity of the English language in various areas and provinces of Canada.

The term "Canadian English" has a pedigree dating back to 1857, at which time the Reverend A.G. Geikie referred to it as "a corrupt dialect growing up amongst our population." Geikie's preference was obviously for the British English spoken "at home." In the 1950s and 1960s an awareness of and a concomitant amount of scholarship developed that was dedicated to the subject. In 1962 Gage Publishing of Canada began its *Dictionary of Canadian English* series with *The Beginning Dictionary* in 1962, followed by *The Intermediate Dictionary*, and *The Senior Dictionary* in 1967, *The Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles*, also published by Gage, appeared in the same year.

Walter Avis states in his introductory essay to *The Senior Dictionary* (1967): "That part of Canadian English which is neither British nor American is best illustrated by the Vocabulary, for there are hundreds of words which are native to Canada or which have meanings peculiar to Canada." He goes on to elaborate that much of this new vocabulary is the result of the unique Canadian landscape, flora, fauna, weather, etc.

M. H. Scargill, writing a decade later, structures his book, *A Short History of Canadian English*, around essentially the same idea: that the defining feature of Canadian English is its unique lexicon. He does add a brief chapter on grammar, but as he states the unique vocabulary is "the most obvious and major item to answer the question 'What is Canadian English?'"

M. Scargill gives a list of Canadisms. But among them there are many specific technical words or proper names, very limited regional words, or words that are rare, obsolete or obsolescent. In a review of Scargill's work by the American linguist Raven I. McDavid, Jr., opposition to Scargill's "Canadisms" is founded on the observation that Scargill seems consciously "to ignore the existence of the United States." He argues that in fact "many words cited by Scargill are known in various parts of the United States." McDavid provides a list of several specific examples from Scargill's text. It seems disputable how many of the lexical claims made by Scargill are indeed incontrovertible.

I.K. Chambers in "Canadian English: 250 Years in the Making", *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (1998) shows that in the living language there is a reflection of where the Canadians have been and where they are likely to go next, and what they have considered important on the way.

We have to say that there is a small body of scholarly research that suggests that if there is such a thing as Canadian English, all its unique characteristics are being lost. In fact, Lilies (2000) goes so far as to claim that there is no such thing as distinct Canadian English, and argues that the notion of Canadian English is a myth, fabricated to reinforce a fragile Canadian identity. As evidence, he cites the lack of

phonological and orthographic standardization for Canadian English, the paucity of distinct Canadian vocabulary, and the appearance of regionalisms associated with various parts of the United States.

Sutherland (2000) pointed out that Canadian English is more than a 'network of regionalisms', and that a variety can be distinct by more than its vocabulary.

We can add that orthographic standards tell us little about what makes a spoken variety unique. No other dialect has all the same features.

Woods (1993) identifies eight phonological variables as characteristically Canadian, and argues that most of them are disappearing.

A Brief Outline of the Historical Development of Canadian English

Canada is officially bilingual, with both English and French functioning at the national level. Canada was a battlefield between the English and the French, and the first adumbrations of Canadian bilingualism were discernible.

Canada recognizes both French and English as official languages. At many points in Canadian history, policy makers have struggled to balance bilingualism with individual rights and to ensure equal opportunity for speakers of both languages. A 1988 bill strengthened the 1969 Official Languages Act by guaranteeing the right of more federal employees to work in their language of choice and by guaranteeing the right to trial in either language. This 1988 *Toronto Sun* article recounts the approval of the bill by the Canadian House of Commons.

The study of a status of the Canadian version of the English language in the different historical periods allows suggesting the following periodization of its development.

The first period lasted about two centuries: from the beginning of settlements of the English in Canada before its transformation into a complete colonial formation. In 1497, when John Cabot reached Newfoundland, there was the first English-language contact with Canada. The struggle for domination on the North American continent between the two colonial powers – England and France – was becoming more and more aggravated. Before the settlement of the European colonists Canada was populated by the Indian tribes and Eskimoes, who were still engaged in the basic hunt and fishing. The first who came to Canada were the French. They dated from the 1520s. Then the English and the Portuguese appeared on the territory of Newfoundland. The island of Newfoundland was announced to be in English possession in 1583.

The first English settlement in a continental part of future Canada appeared in 1627, but till 1713 there was almost no English population. After the English-American settlers the new immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland arrived. The early history of Canadian English resembles that of American English. In the early days

of settlement the language used was that of contemporary Britain. As the result there are conservative elements in present-day speech. Innovations, subsequently made in response to the new environment, led to differentiation that eventually produced a distinctive brand of English that is said to sound like American to Britons and like British to Americans.

In the 18th century the number of English settles in Canada increased and those were mainly people from Scotland, Ireland and Wales. During the 1750s thousands of French settlers were dropped from Acadia (modern Nova Scotia), and were replaced by settlers from New England.

In 1763, by the end of the war, which lasted for seven years, the influential French colony in this area passed to England, which created here the *Colony of Quebec*. Within the period of the first ten years of the English possession there were hundreds of immigrants of the English origin located in Quebec.

The language situation in Canada within the first period of the history of Canadian English was characterized by the co-existence of a number of languages – English, French, Portuguese, Indian and Eskimo. The territory was rather rarely populated and the large mobility of the population explained this fact. In the English language dialect features brought from a native land were still appreciable but the dialectisms, concentrated not on the certain territories and being characterized by the constant interconnection, gradually became the fixed units. Generally, the English language gradually strengthened its positions and by the end of the first period occupied *the leading position*.

The situation changed during the second period of the history of Canadian English. It was mainly due to the War for Independence in Northern America (1775–1783). The next major migration of English from USA to Canada followed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. During the War for Independence the first wave of mass immigration consisting mainly of the North American loyalists arrived in Canada.

The Loyalists (they were called in such a way by the British, but 'Tories' by the Americans) were those who had backed the British, because partly they hated violence and partly they wanted to protect their investments. They wanted to escape political persecution, and more of them fled after the war for material considerations, when the new American government did not restore their confiscated property. They found themselves unable to stay in the new United States. Some went to England, some to the West Indies, but the majority left for neighbouring Canada, settling first in what is now Nova Scotia, then moving to New Brunswick and farther inland. This was the beginning of separate Canadian English.

From the moment of the victory upon the New France England begins to carry out the policy of assimilation of the French-speaking Canadians. English was announced as the official language, though almost 99% of the native population was French. Prevailing top colonies gave the large territories to aristocracy and trading class,

clergy and officials of the English origin. It aggravated the national contradictions, mixing with the social contradictions. But soon England departed from the policy of open suppression and even sought mutual understanding with the rich part of the French-speaking Canadians. The actuality of the former French laws was preserved; the French language was gradually supposed to be used at the same level with the English language. As a result, the French-speaking Canadians during the war of the North American states for independence did not adjoin them and remained loyal to the English authorities.

The period in the 1820s and 1830s was marked by the significant growth of capitalism in Canada. Already a bit earlier resettlement of loyalists and other settlers from the British Isles had already increased densities of the English population that again revived the hopes of authorities for assimilation of the French-speaking majority of the country. In Quebec the English-speaking Canadians took the leading positions in political and economic life, trade and other spheres whereas the role of the French-speaking Canadians was insignificant. The national relations again became aggravated.

At the beginning of the 19th century a flood of immigrants came to British North America from England, Scotland, and Ireland. Probably a million people migrated from these countries to British North America between 1815 and 1850. By the 1840s, British North America had 1.5 million people: 650,000 in Lower Canada, 450,000 in Upper Canada, and more than 300,000 in Atlantic Canada. English settlers in 1851 reached the number of more than two million.

Thus we can see that the greatest number of those immigrants settled in Upper Canada, which was considered "a good poor man's country", because, immigrants willing to work hard for a generation or more could acquire potentially valuable farmland. Upper Canada became the fastest-growing part of British North America. Atlantic Canada also attracted many immigrants, though fewer went to Newfoundland than to the other colonies.

Immigration made the colonies more British. It also made the indigenous nations minorities in most areas east of the Great Lakes. Land cession treaties gave them small reserves, but the hunting rights and other guarantees made to them in these treaties were rarely respected. Few immigrants went far west or north, and the indigenous nations remained dominant in the vast HBC lands. On the plains, the mounted hunting societies, who did not depend on the fur trade, lived independently on the still-abundant bison. The Red River colony continued, but the additions to its population were chiefly Metis, who were proud of their role as a new people different from both the indigenous peoples and the Europeans. There was little contact with the colonies to the east before mid-century. Then, however, as Upper Canada's farm population grew, some of its leaders began considering the west as a potential space for expansion.

In Lower Canada, immigration caused the English-speaking population to grow in Quebec City, the Ottawa River valley, Montreal, and the Eastern Townships (east of Montreal). French Canadians, however, remained the largest ethnic group in Lower Canada.

About half the immigrants were English, but Irish immigrants became more numerous than English in the 1830s, and particularly after 1845, when famine struck Ireland. Scots immigration increased when tenant farmers in the Scottish Highlands were evicted from their land to allow large-scale sheep farming. The immigrants from Ireland and Scotland included both Catholics and Protestants, and Catholics became a sizable minority in all the English-speaking colonies.

There is a significant growth of industrial and agricultural manufacture, further development of the interior and foreign trade, bank business. The policy of the colonial authorities directed on preservation of feudal institutes and large landed property, caused the increasing resistance of the settlers, aspiring to possession of land on the basis of free property. As a result of disagreement the prevailing part of the population initiated the movement for democratic reforms and self-management. In 1837 the armed revolts took place and all this compelled the great metropolis to concessions and compromise. In 1841 Top and Bottom Canadas were united into one province with the general name Canada. A number of reforms which have distributed the development of capitalism were carried out and, as a result, the system of feudal relations was liquidated and the restrictions in trade are cancelled.

In the middle of the 19th century the industrial revolution started in Canada. The Canadian working class was formed and the working movement arose. The interests of the further economic development of the colony required the political association of the country. Not the last role thus was played also by the aspirations of Great Britain to secure the territories belonging to the colonial possession against territorial claim of the United States. In 1867 the English parliament accepted the British Northern America Act, according to which the federation under the name "Dominion Canada" was created. Four provinces were included into it: New Scotland, New Brunswick, Ontario (former Top Canada) and Quebec (former Bottom Canada).

The Ontario Loyalists were late arrivals, but they dominated the making of modern Canada, and their speech has become the basis for what is called General Canadian, a definition based on urban middle-class speech, not rural variants.

New Canadians brought with them the kind of English that they had learned from their parents, and it bore little similarity to what is now often called Standard British English, or simply Standard English. Since the 14th century the regional dialect ceded in London, the centre of British government, and in nearby Oxford and Cambridge universities, had become associated with British educated and upper-class speakers. However, very few people spoke it. It was not until 1880 that education became compulsory in England, and it is unlikely that most British immigrants to Canada in the early 19th century had received much schooling or had had any opportunity

to acquire a form of British English associated with educated or upper-class people. Those who were educated often objected to the English they heard in Canada. The kind of English introduced to Canada in the early 19th century was by no means standard. It was spoken English, often typical of the region from which the speakers came, such as Ireland, Yorkshire or Devon. When people move to a new land isolated from their homeland, two things happen to their language: first, it escapes the direct influences of changes in grammar or pronunciation that take place in the parent language; and second, in undergoes great changes in vocabulary in order to allow its users to accommodate their speech to their new circumstances.

Immigration made the colonies more British. It also made the indigenous nations minorities in most areas east of the Great Lakes.

During the second period of the history the English language in Canada occupied the leading position, having ensured itself of the function of the sole official language of the multinational country – the colony of Great Britain. If previously the national question here was connected with the contradictions caused by the domination of the Europeans over the natives, in the second period the situation became complicated by the fact that the English-speaking part of the population supplied to itself the domination over the French-speaking part. On the territory of Newfoundland, in seaside provinces and Ontario some local features of English speech are still preserved.

The third period of the Canadian English history (since 1867 till now) lasts under the conditions of existence of the centralized Canadian state, further development of capitalism, consolidation of the English-speaking Canadian nation. The end of construction of the transcontinental railway (1885) provided the possibility for colonization of the western provinces. In Canada the avalanche of the immigrants from Europe rushed greatly. From the country of hunters, woodcutters and fine peasants Canada turned into a country of farmers and hired working, becoming one of the rich points of the world. In parallel to the development of the agriculture the intensification of the processing and mineral industry took place. The foreign capital investments were involved and in Canadian industry American capital more and more restricted that from England (especially in the period of the First World War). The participation of Canada in the Second World War caused large changes in its economy. The country turned into the industrial-agrarian one. Gradually its dependence upon the former metropolis was liquidated; but Canada became the object of expansion of monopolistic capital from the USA.

The struggle of the French-speaking Canadians for the use of their language, economic and political rights proceeded. The problem intensified during the 1970s.

In the 1960s French Canadians began to demand cultural protection from the government because they feared the loss of their language and culture to the dominant Anglophone society. Radical French Canadians urged Québec's secession from Canada and carried out terrorist bombings. In 1963 Prime Minister Lester Pearson

established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to examine how to ensure an equal partnership between British and French Canadians.

The report released by the commission in 1969 emphasized that Canada was both bilingual and multicultural. The commission encouraged the federal government to help members of all of Canada's ethnic groups "participate fully" in Canadian society. The government introduced the Official Languages Act in 1969, which established English and French as the two official languages of Canada. In response to requests by several ethnic groups, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau adopted multiculturalism in 1971 as a government policy. He committed the Canadian government to acknowledge the contributions of all ethnic groups in Canada. The government also signaled that there is no official culture into which every Canadian is expected to assimilate.

Due to the federal law, accepted in 1969, the positions of the French language in Canada were strengthened, but not to an extent satisfying the French-speaking part of the population. In 1976 the French-speaking Canadian separatists came to power in Quebec and set the question of leaving the federation. And in spite of the fact that only 20% of the population of Quebec were against the federation, the question was not closed. The relations between Quebec and federal government have worsened.

Despite the influx of non-European immigrants since the 1970s, the British and French remain the largest ethnic groups in Canada. Official numbers for these ethnic groups are misleading though, since many British and French Canadians began to report "Canadian" as their ethnic origin in the 1980s and 1990s. Many British and French Canadians registered this way in the 1996 census, the first year "Canadian" was included as a suggested choice.

So, the language situation during the third period remains even more complicated. Notwithstanding the fact that English and French are legally proclaimed the official languages of the country, the former one still preserves its dominating position in the sphere of business life. But French has also become considerably stronger, in particular, having expanded the area of official use and having supplied itself with a strong place in the system of education of Quebec. Although the speakers of other languages (German, Ukrainian, etc.) are diffused among the English population, they make up more than one quarter of the population, and it can have an effect for a general language situation. During the third period the differentiation of the English language of Canada from the British and American versions has gone deep, and it is now possible to speak about the special national variant of the English language occurring in Canada.

The Canadian variant differs from British and American ones:

- over its 200 years of existence as a predominantly English-speaking nation, Canada has developed a distinct vocabulary;

- there are specific locally marked elements in the sphere of lexis and also the certain regularity characterizing the word-formational connections between the key word and the Canadism can be observed;
- the largest number of the oppositions is due to the implementation of the macrosystem elements, which are peculiar only to Canadian English;
- the divergences between Canadian and American and Canadian and British variants do not cover the whole system of the language;
- the standard of Canadian English sets up the clear boundaries of variability of Americanisms, Briticisms and General English units

The Canadian variant of the contemporary literary language can be considered as the particular subsystem of the microsystem of the General American language.

Specifically Canadian words are called Canadianisms. They are not very frequent outside Canada, except *shack* 'a hut' and *to fathom out* 'to explain'.

Canadian English has a great deal in common with the English spoken in the rest of North America because of the Loyalists and those who live outside Canada often find it quite difficult to distinguish between the two varieties. But in a crowd, where the Englishman or the Australian could not, the Canadian with a good ear will easily spot the other Canadian among the North Americans. It has much in common with that of the United States while retaining a few features of British pronunciation and spelling. It bears the stamp of American English but it is closer to the British variant now. This is just the middle stage. Canadian English, for all its speakers, is an under-described variety of English. In popular dialectological literature it is often given little acknowledgement as a distinct and homogeneous variety, save for a paragraph or two dedicated to oddities of Canadian spelling and the fading use of British sounding lexical items like *chesterfield, serviette,* and *zed*.

In the national context, the Canadian English phonetic system is, so to speak, on the way to standardization. It may so far be classified as a specific variant of the standard English phonetic system which occupies an intermediate standing between General American and British English with a more domineering presence of General American.

The differences are mainly of vocabulary and pronunciation. There is no distinctive Canadian grammar. Grammatical differences between British and Canadian English are very few, since the major changes that were to affect the grammatical structure of English had taken place in Britain well before the periods of heavy emigration to Canada. The grammatical differences that exist are minor concerning choices in the use of prepositions and verbs, which late-18th century British English had not yet decided. Both "dived" and "dove" are heard as the past tense of "dive" in Canada, but the latter no longer has currency in British English.

An important characteristic of the *vocabulary* is the use of many words and phrases originating in Canada itself: *riding* (a political constituency), *first nations*

(the indigenous people), and *bannock* (a type of pancake). It is in the vocabulary that the English language in Canada has undergone the greatest change, largely because the settlers needed new words to describe new things. Vocabulary may be increased in predictable ways: words are borrowed from other languages; existing words are given new meanings; new compounds are created; people and places give their names to things with which they are associated. Canadian English has used all those ways.

Canadian English also has its own words not found in other variants of English. Like other dialects of English that exist in proximity to Francophone French, loanwords have entered Canadian English, such as the word *serviette*, meaning „napkin"; *poutine*, a dish made with home-made French fries and melted cheese curd topped with gravy; *depanneur*, a corner store (convenience store); *allophone*, someone who speaks a first language other than English or French; *Anglophone*, someone whose first language is English; *Francophone*, someone whose first language is French.

There is no universally accepted standard of *Canadian spelling*. In general, it preserves some British forms (e.g. colour, honour, endeavour, theatre) and many other classes of British/American spelling distinctions, but not all. The largest exception is the use of the American spelling -ize (plagiarize, dramatize, realize) in most cases. Other American spellings prevalent in Canada include aluminium, artefact, jail, curb, program, specialty, tire, and carburettor. Also, several lexical items come from British English or even archaic British English, such as lieutenant (/lEf/-), light standard (lamp-post), and riding (electoral district).

There are a number of reasons why Canadian English has come under assault over the last few decades. The invention of television has had profound effects on Canadian English pronunciation. The massive influx of American television programmes in Canadian homes day in and day out has led to some Americanisation of Canadian pronunciation. Perhaps the greatest effect that American English has had on Canadian English is in regard to spelling. The following section will give a brief history of American English in order to explain why it differs so much from the English spoken throughout the English-speaking world. The main focus of this page, however, is to clarify what is considered by many to be proper Canadian spelling. It is my hope that you will find this page very useful in providing some clarification of Canadian English spelling. Believe it or not, there are thousands of words that differ in spelling from the United States and other English-speaking countries. It is my hope that one day they will all be listed on this page. It is recommended, as mentioned in the 'welcome' page, that you continue to check for updates. In the meantime, I hope that the existing listings are of some use to you.

Canadian English shares a number of *phonological* properties with Standard American English. Among these are syllable-final rhoticity and alveolar flapping. Canadian English can be called rhotic because, like in Standard American and Irish English, the syllable-final *r* is pronounced in words like *car* and *farm*. Interestingly, the English spoken in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, stands out as a rare *r*-dropping

Canadian dialect. Flapping is the process of replacing an intervocalic *t* or *d* with a quick voiced tap of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. In both Canadian and American English, it can only occur if the *t* or *d* is between two vowels, and between two vowels, and as long as the second vowel is not stressed. As a result, the alveolar stops in waiting, wading, seated, seeded, and capital are all flapped. Flapping can also occur if there is an *r* between the first vowel and the alveolar stop, as in words like barter and party. In Canadian English, this feature is age-graded. Woods (1993) shows that older Canadians are less likely than younger ones to replace alveolar stops with flaps.

Conclusion

Like other colonial varieties of English, Canadian English is the result of a language melting pot that resolved into a standard accent. The English spoken in Canada is its homogeneity. Many observers have noted that no Ontario Canadian meeting another Canadian can tell whether he comes from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, or British Columbia – or even Ontario, unless he asks.

Official Canadian English is somewhere between American English and British English. Canadian English is usually defined by the ways in which it differs from what Americans or British observe considering their norm. The British say that Canadian English is very similar to American English. But the Americans say the opposite. American visitors at first think how British the Canadian vocabulary sounds ('*tap*' instead of '*faucet*', '*braces*' – '*suspenders*', '*porridge*' – '*oatmeal*'. The British think how Americanised the Canadians have become (they hear '*gas*', '*truck*' and '*wrench*' for '*petrol*', '*lorry*' and '*spanner*'). The Canadians declaim that it is their own language. If you go to Canada you can see that there are a number of words with meanings that are neither British nor American but peculiarly Canadian.

Some scientists consider it to be the dialect of American English, the others just the variant of it, for the third group it is simply the changed American English of the 18th century, the fourth claim it to be British English, affected by American one or the mixture of both, etc. Some of these conceptions are based on the fact that Canadian English itself is not investigated enough, but mostly these contradictions are the result of the non-synchronic approach not only to Canadian English, but to other analogues of forms of language existence as well. At the best in the analysis only their contemporary state is taken into consideration and in consequence of that the national variant of the language is considered to be something firmly fixed and not likely to change.

So we can say that Canadian English is influenced both by British and American English but it also has some specific features of its own.

In many respects, the spelling of Canadian English is intermediate between British English and American English. However, the spoken language is much closer

to American English than British English. Canadian French also influences it, as Canada has two official languages.

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THE RIGHT TO SECESSION IN THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Québec's Secession Attempt

The patriation of the Constitution of Canada was not only consummated without consent from the province of Quebec, but it also foresaw elements that contradicted its demands and interests. However, that act alone did not induce, but only additionally ignited the existing separatist aspirations of Quebec. Attesting that separatism existed earlier on is the fact that 40.44% of Quebecers supported the independence of their province in the referendum held in 1980. Following these words, it is justifiable to raise the question as to what were the reasons that provoked the Francophone Canadians to seriously initiate the effectuation of their idea of an independent life. As can be expected the answer to this question, as well as a series of others pertaining to Canadian federalism cannot be simple. The reason for this lies in the fact that among Quebecers there are numerous and varying arguments which speak in favour of secession, thus making the task of their systematic display very ungrateful. In this discussing we shall use Lalande's systematization, which is one of the most comprehensive in Canadian literature. In the opinion of this theoretician of Canadian federalism, all reasons for Quebec's dissatisfaction can be classified into three groups: 1) juridico-political, 2) historico-political and 3) socio-political (Lalande, 55-101). In the first multitudinous group of reasons for the dissatisfaction of the Quebecers, the following arguments can be given: 1) the British North American Act, the present Constitution of Canada is in conflict with the true spirit of federalism; 2) BNAA of 1867, and consequently the Canadian federal system,

are now totally obsolete; 3) Canada is endowed with a federal regime which systematically strengthens the power of the central government and thus relegates the provinces, including Quebec, to the role of minor, if not insignificant, partners; 4) Canada is a federal union which was not originally based on the free consent of the contracting parties and which does not guarantee either Quebec, or the other provinces, the right to free choice as to their political future; 5) the federal system subordinates Quebec to the rest of Canada, giving it minority status. The group of historico-political arguments given by Quebecers encompass: 1) federalism is a form of government which was imposed on French Canada by the British conquerors; 2) federalism in Canada does not recognize the existence of two nations and denies Quebecers the right to self-determination; 3) since 1867 federalism has been an instrument of colonialism, directed at both the Quebec and French-Canadian nation. And the last group of socio-political arguments includes: 1) federalism has made French Canadians a sick and unfulfilled people; it is synonymous with linguistic assimilation, cultural decline and psychological insecurity for French Canada; 2) federalism has resulted in administrative inefficiency and in political tensions which are unproductive, costly and exhausting.

As can be observed, the outlined objections of the Quebecers were much too serious for the constitutional framework established in 1982 to remain intact. With the aim of overcoming the constitutional crisis amongst Canadian constitutionalists and politicians an optimal solution was sought that would meet the demands of the Quebecers. According to McRoberts, in that way four approaches to addressing Quebec's concerns had crystallized: 1) radical decentralization of powers to all provinces; 2) asymmetrical federalism; 3) bifurcated federalism; and 4) Quebec sovereignty – with or without an economic association (McRoberts, 25). The most harmless solution for Canada was thorough decentralization of its federal system, which was one of the main ideas of Brian Mulroney's political program which he intended to implement through the Meech Lake Accord and Charlottetown Agreement. However, the failure of these two attempts at constitutional reform only confirmed the survey of the public of the Anglophone provinces, in which 60% of their populations are in favour of greater centralization of the Canadian federation (McRoberts, 26). Once again, the discrepancy between, to a certain extent, the reconcilable political elites that were ready for action, and the citizens who had in the past shown to be the main obstacles to constitutional reforms, had been emphasized. Although the Canadian federal system already had certain elements of asymmetry, another approach to resolving the constitutional crisis involved the establishment of a much higher degree of asymmetry. This solution comprised of the remaining provinces retaining their existing status, while only the powers possessed by the province of Quebec would be expanded in those areas which are of greatest interest to Francophone Canadians. A large number of Canadian constitutionalists had proposed such a solution considering it to be the most adequate and most natural when taking into consideration the nature of Canadian society, because as Peter Hogg warned: "Quebec, with its French language and culture, its civil law, and

its distinctive institutions, is not a province like the others" (Vyver, 5). However, this solution was greatly resisted by the Anglophone provinces, which selfishly and jealously rejected the possibility of a province, even if it was Quebec, to have a distinct status and a greater degree of autonomy in relation to them. Seeing as the idea of a bifurcated federalism was much more radical than the former solution, it also could not find support within Anglophone Canada. According to that solution, whose most passionate proponent was Philip Resnick, Canada was to be transformed into a Canada-Quebec union which would assume a very limited set of powers: foreign policy, defence, international trade, finance, citizenship (McRoberts, 29). In circumstances where its demands were completely ignored and there was an unwillingness for any concessions to be made with the aim of overcoming the constitutional crisis, Quebec felt entrapped by selfish Anglophone interests. In that way, Quebec was left with only one path, the path to sovereignty.

Quebec could effectuate its secessionist intentions in two possible ways: 1) with an amendment to the Canadian Constitution that would acknowledge the secession of this province and 2) a unilateral declaration of sovereignty. The Canadian Constitution, like most federal constitutions, does not have any provisions which deal with the right to secession of federal units. The lack of explicit constitutional provisions in relation to this matter does not mean that the secession of Quebec cannot be effectuated in accordance with existing amendment procedure. The only doubt which appeared within the scope of this question was which procedure was necessary for the adoption of such an amendment, taking into consideration the fact that the Canadian Constitution does not foresee a uniform amendment procedure. Namely, the greater number of constitutional provisions are revised by way of a general amendment procedure which consists of (*a*) resolutions of the Senate and the House of Commons; and (*b*) resolutions of the legislative assemblies of at least two-thirds of the provinces that have, in the aggregate, according to the then latest general census, at least fifty per cent of the population of the provinces. In addition to the general amendment procedure, there is also a special amendment procedure for the revision of five explicitly defined matters for which the agreement of all provinces are necessary for them to be revised (the office of the Queen, the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor of a province; the right of a province to a number of members in the House of Commons not less than the number of Senators by which the province is entitled to be represented at the time Constitution comes into force; the use of the English or the French language; the composition of the Supreme Court of Canada; an amendment to procedure for amending the Constitution). Amongst Canadian theoreticians there was profound disagreement in relation to this matter, because there were convincing arguments from supporters of both these solutions. It is essential to mention that, as with many other sensitive constitutional matters, in this case also the majority of legal theoreticians first opted for the solution most in tune with their personal beliefs and affinities, after which they sought the appropriate legal argumentation in favour of such opinion. Nevertheless, regardless of how much the political determination

and emotions played a role in these theoretical disputes, we shall for the purpose of familiarization, outline the most interesting details from both points of view. We shall begin with the arguments which speak in favour of the implementation of a special amendment procedure, because the supporters of the contrary solution had mostly used arguments that rebutted their opponent's opinions. In the opinion of Patrick Monahan, the secession of Quebec would appear to involve an amendment in relation to at least three of the five matters, for whose amendment the agreement of all provinces is necessary (Monahan, 6). Firstly, the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, who is appointed by the Federal government, would be inapplicable in an independent Quebec. In addition, an even more significant issue is the matter of the language guarantee proclaimed by the Canadian Constitution which would no longer pertain to the Anglophone minority in Quebec. Finally, the constitutional provisions which relate to the Supreme Court of Canada would unavoidably have to undergo certain changes because it was guaranteed to Quebec that its three representatives would be part of its structure. Certain authors argued that even the unanimous vote of all provinces could not secure Quebec its secession because the agreement of the Aboriginal peoples was required, and their interests were directly imperilled. Namely, taking into consideration that they were compactly settled in the northern part of Quebec, with the secession of this province, all of the guaranteed rights would cease as well as all ties between them and the federal government of Canada as the guarantor of the protection of their rights. One of the most significant supporters of the general revision procedure in the secession of the province of Quebec is surely Jose Woehrling. In his opinion, the impertinence of the Lieutenant Governor in a separate province is only a "subsidiary and relatively unimportant aspect of the declaration of sovereignty" (Monahan, 8). It is misleading to characterize the secession of Quebec as an amendment in relation to the Lieutenant Governor, because its cessation in relation to Quebec is only an "incidental effect" of secession, which is the main purpose of a constitutional amendment. A similar argument was heard in relation to the other two subject matters for whose implementation the agreement of all the provinces was necessary, thus we shall not discuss them to avoid repetition.

The above outlined debates remained on a theoretical level, because as can be expected, Quebec took a different approach to effectuating its secessionist aspirations. Namely, it was clear to the Quebecers that which ever amendment procedure be applied, they would not have the support of the Anglophone provinces in effectuating their intentions. Therefore, the only remaining option was for Quebec to realize its intentions by way of unilateral secession, based on its right to self-determination. In the opinion of the most eminent Franco-Canadian political authors (Latouche, Laforest) the legitimacy of such intent, was indisputable, because unilateral patriation of the Constitution by the Anglophone provinces, also meant the infringement of the contract concluded in 1867 between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians when the federation was established, which left the Quebecers with the possibility of determining their own future (Langlois, 22). The fact that the agreements from

Meech Lake and Charlottetown were unsuccessful, only recruited a new group of supporters of an independent Quebec, which with the victory of the Party Québécois at the provincial elections in 1994, created a favourable political climate for the calling of a new referendum. However, although all analysis and political estimates undoubtedly pointed to the fact that the Quebecers shall have a majority in favour of the independence of their province, the referendum that took place on October 30, 1995, was completed ingloriously. This time 49.42% of the citizens of Quebec voted in favour of sovereignty, which means that Canada was on the verge of a break-up. Such a result, opened up a series of new questions, among which the most significant was the question of the legality and constitutionality, and hence the possibility of unilateral secession of Quebec.

The Decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on the Right of Provinces to Secession

The results of the second referendum on the independence of Quebec from 1995 could not, like the former one, leave the Federal Government of Canada at peace. The unconvincing win of the supporters of a mutual life of the Anglophone and Francophone populations within the federal system made the future of Canada extremely uncertain. The arrogance of the Anglophone majority which crudely ignored the justified demands of Quebec for the Canadian federal system to be brought into accord with its binational social structure, only contributed to the rise of this provinces separatist aspiration. As their demands were not met, a growing number of Quebecers saw the only solution to be the independence of their province. Although almost defeated in the referendum, the separatists were not discouraged. Lucien Bouchard, the Premier of Quebec, claimed that they will "wait for winning conditions to call a new referendum." (Martin & Nadeau, 26). However, no state would easily accept the secession of one part of its territory, so there was need to take some measures that would thwart Quebec's separatism. The federal government referred three questions to the Supreme Court requesting its opinion on the constitutionality and legality of unilateral secession from the Canadian federation. The three questions were: 1) Does the Constitution of Canada allow the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally; 2) Does international law allow the unilateral secession of Quebec; and 3) In the event of conflict between domestic and international law, which of the two would take precedence? Even though the Supreme Court of Canada should have the role of an independent and neutral protector of constitutionality and legality, the result of the initiated procedure was known beforehand by all actors on the political scene. As Charles Black so wisely observed a few decades earlier: "The State has been able to transform judicial review itself from a limiting device into a powerful instrument for gaining legitimacy for its actions in the minds of the public" (Kreptul, 56). In that way, when the Supreme Court disclosed its decision on the previously outlined matters in August 1998, no one was taken by surprise. As was expected, the Court declared one-sided secession

illegal, according to both domestic and international law. The only uncertainty was as to the arguments which the Supreme Court would use in support of its decision, and thus they deserve our full attention.

The Constitution of Canada, much like a large number of other federal constitutions, does not speak of the right to secession, which means that the answer should be found elsewhere. However, according to the court, the Constitution cannot be reduced to its written text, it is made up of an entire system of rules and principles which govern the exercise of constitutional authority (Reference re Secession of Quebec). Four basic principles which saturate the entire constitutional system of Canada are: federalism, democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and respect for minorities. The aforementioned principles function in symbiosis, and none of them can be defined if viewed isolated from the others (*ibid*.). Seeing as the right to unilateral secession is based on one of the cited principles, the principle of democracy, we could conclude that this right is in the spirit of Canadian constitutionalism. However, as the Supreme Court reasoned: "Democracy … means more then simple majority rule. Constitutional jurisprudence shows that democracy exists in the larger context of other constitutional values. Since Confederation, the people of the provinces and territories have created close ties of interdependence (economic, social, political and cultural) based on shared values that include federalism, democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and respect for minorities. A democratic decision of Quebecers in favour of secession would put those relationships at risk. The Constitution vouchsafes order and stability, and accordingly secession of a province "under the Constitution" could not be achieved unilaterally, that is, without principled negotiation with other participants in Confederation within the existing constitutional framework" (*ibid*.). Therefore, as can be concluded, the Supreme Court did not deny the right to secession, but the right to unilateral secession, because democratic rights cannot be considered apart from constitutional obligations. In that way, to effectuate its right to secession, Quebec would have to go through three phases: 1) a clear majority of its citizens would need to vote for a clearly formulated question in favour of secession; 2) in that way the federal and provincial governments would be obligated to start negotiations with Quebec; and 3) adoption of a constitutional amendment that would confirm the secession of Quebec. The Supreme Court did not state precisely, but left it up to the politicians to define what will be a "clear" majority on a "clear" question.

The second question, which the Supreme Court of Canada had to answer, was: does international law allow the unilateral secession of Quebec? "A right to secession only arises under the principle of self-determination of people at international law where "a people" is governed as part of a colonial empire; where "a people" is subject to alien subjugation, domination or exploitation; and possibly where "a people" is denied any meaningful exercise of its right to self-determination within the state of which it forms a part. In other circumstances, peoples are expected to achieve self-determination within the framework of their existing state. A state whose government represents the whole of the people or peoples resident within

its territory, on a basis of equality and without discrimination, and respects the principles of self-determination in its internal arrangements, is entitled to maintain its territorial integrity under international law and to have that territorial integrity recognized by other states" (*ibid*.). Seeing that the Quebecers cannot be assigned to any category of "people," which according to international law has the right to self-determination that can lead to secession, it can be said that this Canadian province does not have the right to unilateral secession.

Therefore, based on all of the above, we can conclude that the Supreme Court of Canada clearly denied the right to unilateral secession of the province of Quebec, in accordance with international and domestic law. Seeing as there is no collision between these two laws, the court needed not to answer the third question, hence the question became redundant.

Despite the fact that the decision of the Supreme Court did not surprise anyone, some of the opinions and arguments given in the decision provoked a great number of discussions and bitter reactions from Quebec politicians and constitutionalists. Most objections were directed at the vagueness that pervades throughout the court decision and which brings arbitration and subjectivity into all further attempts of achieving the right to secession. Namely, even though the court did not deny the right to secession, the decision was given as such, that it discouraged any further attempts from secession. "A clear majority vote in Quebec on a clear question in favour of secession would confer democratic legitimacy on the secession initiative which all of the other participants in Confederation would have to recognize" (*ibid*.). Therefore, a majority vote of the citizens of Quebec in favour of secession, will not directly lead to their secession from the federation, but that is a precondition for initiating negotiations with the rest of Canada regarding the implementation of that right. However, the rest of Canada was only obligated to begin negotiations with Quebec, only if a clear majority of its population, voted favourably, on a clear question, as to the independence of this province. Seeing that the Supreme Court did not precisely define the term "clear," a wide array of arbitration and possibilities were left up to the politicians to sabotage all further attempts of secession. In addition, many questions were raised in reference to the second phase of the proceedings, for achieving the right to secession, because of unclear and vague formulations that appeared, and that related to the obligatory negotiations between Quebec and the rest of Canada in case of a successful referendum. Even though the negotiations were marked as an unavoidable phase in the proceedings relating to achieving the right to secession, it remained quite unclear as to what this obligation encompassed.

Let us list only a few dilemmas which are a consequence of the "duty to negotiate": What triggers a duty to negotiate? Who is to be a party to the negotiation? Does a duty to negotiate imply a duty to concede, at least to some extent? Who sets the agenda? How frequently can a duty to negotiate be invoked? What is the relation between negotiation and referendum? Must negotiation be in good faith and how is good faith to be identified? Does the Supreme Court reserve for itself the right to

break a deadlock in negotiation by imposing an outcome if the parties fail to agree? (Usher, 45). At the same time, it was unclear, why the negotiations must take place prior to the adoption of the constitutional amendments that would allow the secession of a province from the federation. There were as many criticisms directed at the boldness of the court in its explicit and clear identification and definition of the unwritten fundamental constitutional principles. Such self-confidence of the judges was defined as legal adventurism, because the principles on which the Constitution of Canada is based can never be defined in their entirety. And any theoretical definition leads to their impoverishment and possible misunderstanding.

Less then two years later, in 2000, the federal parliament adopted the Clarity Act, based on the opinions of the Supreme Court on the right to secession. However, as absurd as it may seem, instead of clarifying the vague terms set by the Supreme Court relating to the "clear majority" and "clear question," they left them open. The only difference, in comparison with the court's decision is that the law stipulates who shall be competent to determine what is the "clear majority" and "clear question." The law appoints the House of Commons, giving it 30 days from the day the referendum is called by the provincial government, to establish whether the question is clear, meaning that the population could in answering this question clearly express their will as to whether their province should no longer be part of Canada. In addition, the Act gives two types of questions to illustrate what should not to be asked, as the public would not be able express their will clearly: (*a*) a referendum question that merely focuses on a mandate to negotiate without soliciting a direct expression of the will of the population of that province on whether the province should cease to be part of Canada; or (*b*) a referendum question that envisages other possibilities in addition to the secession of the province from Canada, such as economic or political arrangements with Canada, that obscure a direct expression of the will of the population of that province on whether the province should cease to be part of Canada (Canada, Clarity Act 2000, c. 26). In favour of establishing a "clear majority" the House of Commons shall take into account the following: (*a*) the size of the majority of valid votes cast in favour of the secessionist option; (*b*) the percentage of eligible voters voting in the referendum; and (*c*) any other matters or circumstances it considers to be relevant (*ibid*.). In that way, there is much room for arbitration of the House of Commons, which means that the fate of the proceedings for the secession of a province lies in the hands of the Anglophone majority of the House of Commons. If the federal parliament should decide that the referendum question is unclear, or that a clear majority did not vote in favour of secession, then there is no obligation for initiating negotiations with the province which aims at independence, which will directly result in an unsuccessful attempt at secession.

In conclusion, we can note that with this Act, Canada was classified as one of the very few countries, which foresaw the right to secession within their legal system. Andrei Kreptul classified Canada into the group of countries which have a quasi-constitutional right to secession, in view of the fact that this right was not foreseen

by the constitution itself (Kreptul, 48). In addition, guided by modern theories on secession, Canada formed the right to secession in such a way that it practically made it impossible for a province to break away from the federation. This approach strives toward discouraging minority group from pursuing their separatist notions, making it clear to them that it is unfeasible within the frameworks of the existing legal system.

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NATIVE CANADIANS IN URBAN AREAS

We tend to lump all Aboriginal peoples together rather than realizing the enormous diversity among them. We have to realize that they do not make up a single-minded, monolithic entity, speaking with one voice.

Aboriginal people are of many national traditions. Their languages, belief systems and opinions differ from one another, although they have a lot in common as well. Their experience of life in Canada is also different. This experience differs by age, region and by location. A major difference is between those living on reserves and those living in cities.

The number of native people that have had city experience is quite crucial. Still, the perception non-Aboriginals have of Native Canadians is that of people living on reserves or at least in rural areas. However, almost half of Aboriginal people in Canada live in cities and towns. Canadians and their governments seem to believe that Aboriginal people were not meant for city life, or that if they do come to the city they should live like "ordinary" Canadians. But these urban Natives do not discard their cultures. Aboriginal cultural identity is not a single element. It is a complex of features that together shape how a person thinks about herself or himself as an Aboriginal person. But it is a feeling about oneself, a state of emotional and spiritual being, rooted in Aboriginal experiences. As one young Indian put it: "You're not a true Indian unless you…follow the culture, then you're an Indian. It's not a status thing. It is not a piece of paper. It's a spiritual thing, an emotional thing, a mental thing, a physical thing."[1]

[1] www.indigenous.bc.ca/v4/Vol4, Ch7s4tos1.3, 5.

The culture they have been raised in is deeply rooted inside them and shapes every aspect of being, no matter where they happen to be living. A lot of people who come into the urban setting are unable to live in the modern world without their traditional values, which is in contrast to views of Aboriginal culture as either incompatible with or irrelevant in an urban environment shared by the non-Aboriginal population.

However, the assault on the Aboriginal cultures does not originate only in the cities. It is part of the colonial legacy of Canada. Yet urban areas present special challenges for the survival of Aboriginal cultures. These challenges come in part because many of the traditional sources of Aboriginal culture such as contact with the land, elders, Aboriginal languages, and spiritual ceremonies are difficult to maintain in the city environment. Moreover, Aboriginal people are exposed to perceptions that cities are not where Aboriginal cultures belong and can flourish:

> Aboriginal culture in the cities is threatened in much the same way as Canadian culture is threatened by American culture. Our culture is at the heart of our people, and without awareness of aboriginal history, traditions and ceremonies, we are not whole people, and our communities lose their strength.[2]

Only about 18 percent of urban Aboriginal people aged 15 and over reported being able to speak an Aboriginal language. In the urban schools attended by Aboriginal children, there is little opportunity to learn, study or even play with classmates in Aboriginal languages. School curricula rarely include the history of Aboriginal peoples:

> In public schools we could not learn about our heritage, culture or history. Also public schools direct us to take the French language instead of our own languages. We disagree with that because without our languages our identity is at risk of becoming extinct instead of distinct.[3]

Language is viewed as a gift of the Creator and is almost universally considered a central part of the experience of identity. The key to identity and retention of the culture is one's ancestral language. Two years ago, a successful project was launched by a group of linguists and language teachers. This project aims at preserving the Native peoples' languages. This is an internet program and it is called FirstVoices. Each recording contains alphabet, dictionary and a book of phrases. Language preservation is the key element in building strong communities.

Another cornerstone of Aboriginal cultural identity is land or ancestral territory. It is on the land that families grow together, where children learn the language and traditions of their ancestors. The ancient songs, dances and stories are about the relationship to each other, to the land and animals. It is important for urban people to identify with an ancestral place because of the associated ritual, ceremony, traditions, as well as the people who remain there, the sense of belonging, the bond to an ancestral community, and the accessibility of family, community and elders.

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[2] Long and Dickason, 321.

[3] www.indigenous.bc.ca/v4Vol4Ch7s1tos1.3, 10.

So who actually are urban Aboriginal people? Some 320,000 self-identified Aboriginal people live in the cities. The number becomes much higher once we take into account every Native who has had some kind of experience with a city. Aboriginal people come to the city for various reasons. Very often it is a new opportunity such as education, a job, or a chance to improve their lives that they look for. Many women leave their community because of abuse. What is quite surprising is that women outnumber men in the urban population. Part of the reason for the predominance of women among urban Aboriginal residents lies in their reasons for moving to non-reserve locations, which tend to be related to housing and family considerations rather than economic factors. Other research suggests that women are more likely to move to urban areas as heads of families and require different kinds of services than men, who are more likely to migrate as 'unattached' individuals.

These people coming into the city are often disillusioned for the city does not always keep its promise of a better life. Aboriginal people are disadvantaged in comparison to their non-Aboriginal neighbors. They are less likely to have jobs, and are more likely to be poor. Aboriginal population is generally less well educated than non-Aboriginal residents. Even though the percentage of the urban Aboriginal population holding a university degree is two to four times higher than the reserve and rural population, it amounts to only about four percent, compared to 13 percent of non-Aboriginal urban residents. A significant gap remains with regard to high school or trades certificates, which are held by 13 percent of the urban Aboriginal population and almost 19 percent of non-Aboriginal residents. Only among holders of post-secondary non-university certificates and diplomas does the difference narrow, to 15 percent of Aboriginal residents and 16 percent of non-Aboriginal residents.

Another serious aspect of city lives of the Natives is poverty. The incidence of poverty is very high among Aboriginal people residing in urban areas. Thirty-five percent received less than $10,000 per year in income from all sources, compared to 26 percent of the non-Aboriginal population.[4]

Once they are in the city they come to face an enormous struggle to maintain their culture and identity, let alone to pass them on to their children. City life, with its numerous cultures and lifestyles, does not necessarily appreciate theirs. They have to deal with the impacts of racism that occurs in the communities. Events of racism diminish their self-esteem, confidence and lead many of them to question their identity and self-worth. They experience racism every day in the stores and everywhere else on the streets: "To me, it is clear that the racism so evident in Canada will not be easily eradicated. Elements of racism are intertwined in history, in the history books. It is found in school curriculum."[5]

For Aboriginal culture to survive in cities, thriving communities are needed, with culture-based institutions to serve and support them. Friendship centers have been

[4] www.indigenous.bc.ca/v4Vol4Ch6, 1–2.
[5] www.indigenous.bc.ca/v4Vol4Ch7, 8.

formed in the cities to help Aboriginal people find support and acceptance in the city. In some cities, Aboriginal people have opened their own schools with their main goal being cultural survival. In addition to the subjects set by provincial curriculum, they teach Aboriginal languages, history and traditions. Elders are normally involved because they maintain an important connection for youth in the absence of the extended family.

Aboriginal people in urban areas do not receive the same level of services and benefits from the federal government as Aboriginal people living on reserves. The federal government usually takes the position that, once they have left their reserves or settlements, Aboriginal people are no longer a federal responsibility.

The migration of Aboriginal people to urban centers is a relatively recent phenomenon. The urbanization of Aboriginal people raises significant policy issues. Yet the issues of rural, land-based First Nations have dominated the public debate and allocation of financial resources since the beginning of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments. Some urban Aboriginal people feel caught between two worlds. They are physically and socially removed from their Aboriginal communities and unrecognized in their urban neighborhoods. The issues confronting urban Aboriginal people – governance, access to culturally appropriate services, cultural identity and intercultural relationships – have been neglected by Canadian governments and Aboriginal authorities in the past.

In urban Aboriginal cultural identity family plays a significant role. "The respect that is given you is again the family…it's like you're carrying more than just a name, it's a whole history of your family, its accomplishments, respectability, background history…And you can't get away from that."[6] The family is also regarded as the natural setting for cultural teaching. Aboriginal cultures place great emphasis on family life and obligations within the family. Although some urban Aboriginal people lose contact with their families, for many of them the birth of children means an impetus to reclaim their cultural identity.

Aboriginal people in the cities interact quite closely with the larger society. The stress of the unwelcoming city, confusion, the experience of racism and the inability to find employment push some into crime. Urban institutions are often in conflict with Aboriginal cultural values.

The source of the problem of Aboriginal peoples in the cities has changed over time. A common theme in the literature on aboriginal urbanization before the 1980s was that Aboriginal culture presents a major barrier to successful adjustment to urban society. The differences between reserve and urban cultures seem to underlie the dislocation of urban Indians. Natives living on reserves live to a large extend in culturally homogenous environment as opposed to that of urban Indians. Work in the city is time-oriented, separate from personal life and it is the main source of status and satisfaction. On reserves, other principles work. Work is task-oriented and it

[6] www.indigenous.bc.ca/v4Vol4Ch7, 7.

does not confer status. Ties with kin and to the land result in a deep attachment to place and may interfere with geographic mobility for Indians living on reserves. While in the cities the situation is quite different. People are forced to live in nuclear families and occupational specialization is required; and this results in a weak attachment to place and encourage economic and geographic mobility.

In order to make cities places where Aboriginal cultures are welcomed and enhanced, sustained effort will be required. Aboriginal people must get involved in identifying and putting into place appropriate initiatives. To change long-standing views about the relationship between Aboriginal cultures and urban places, it will be needed to introduce cultural programming, building urban Aboriginal communities, supporting urban self-government, and improving the representation of Aboriginal people in urban areas.

Urban self-government arrangements are also essential tools for formulating new relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. As Aboriginal people living in cities become more involved in government decision making, acquire a greater ability to effect change in areas with a direct impact on their lives, and gain the capacity to institute fundamental, forward looking reforms, old stereotypes will disappear. Whatever form urban self-government takes, it must go forward in an orderly and reasonable manner while meeting the needs and expectations of urban Aboriginal people. A vital part of this process will be for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments to support education and healing among urban residents to ensure their meaningful participation in governance initiatives and to provide information about choices, options and decisions on governance.[7]

Another issue that should be dealt with is the way Aboriginal people are represented in urban landscape. Contemporary urban landscape offers little to evaluate Aboriginal cultures, affirm their relevance to contemporary life. There is little recognition that most cities are on Aboriginal peoples' traditional territories or that urban development may affect sites that are important for spiritual or historic reasons. There are few streets, parks, or buildings named after significant Aboriginal people. Aboriginal heroes do not often appear in monuments dedicated to their memory. Making Aboriginal people and cultures visible in urban landscapes would be a sign that they have a valued place in contemporary urban areas.[8]

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PIERRE VADEBONCŒUR, PENSEUR DE LA LIBERTÉ

Brève présentation

Ce remarquable essayiste québécois est né à Strathmore le 28 juillet 1920. Licencié en droit de l'Université de Montréal en 1943, il se tourne vers le syndicalisme : il sera conseiller syndical pendant un quart de siècle (1950–1975). Marqué à la fois par le christianisme et le socialisme, il participe aux luttes ouvrières qui engendrent ses premiers essais.

Il multiplie dès 1940 les interventions dans la presse. Beaucoup d'articles seront réunis en volumes. Les revues *Cité Libre, Parti Pris, Liberté, Socialisme, Maintenant, L'Action nationale, l'Inconscient, Couac,* et les journaux *Le Jour* et *Le Devoir* notamment, accueillent ses réflexions. Malgré son radicalisme, l'œuvre est finalement reconnue. Il reçoit le Prix Liberté en 1970, le Prix Ludge-Duvernay en 1971, le fameux Prix David en 1976 et le Grand Prix Littéraire de Montréal en 1979.

Il est le type même de l'écrivain engagé. Dans une conférence à Liège en Belgique, il déclarait en 1988 : « Personne au Canada n'a vécu aussi intensément que nous, Québécois nationalistes, Québécois indépendantistes, de 1970 à 1980 en particulier. (…) Nous étions engagés totalement… » Il est remarquable que cette volonté révolutionnaire s'exprime dans une langue classique d'une grande pureté, avec des formules frappantes. Le polémiste est aussi un écrivain au sens plein du terme, amoureux de l'esthétique[1].

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[1] Parmi beaucoup de documents, on trouvera une présentation intéressante dans « Un Homme libre : Pierre Vadeboncoeur », Montréal, Leméac, 1974, 136 pages. (Articles de André Major, François Ricard, François Hébert et Réjean Baudouin, Robert Vigneault, Yvon Rivard et trois inédits de Vade-

Libre parcours

L'œuvre de Pierre Vadeboncœur est extrêmement abondante et se poursuit encore. Il est donc impossible d'en montrer toutes les facettes dans le cadre de cette communication. Je me limiterai à quelques volumes qui me paraissent essentiels pour expliquer son combat ainsi que pour cerner à la fois sa personnalité généreuse et son œuvre diversifiée.

La première œuvre marquante paraît en 1963. C'est *La Ligne du risque*, Recueil de six articles parus depuis 1945. Ce livre lui assure sa réputation d'essayiste. L'essai qui donne le titre avait paru l'année précédente dans un numéro spécial de *Situations*.

L'excellent essayiste et critique Maurice Blain écrit : « Sauf quelques essais de Jean Le Moyne, je ne connais rien d'aussi important, d'aussi irrécusable que ces pages pénétrantes et terribles sur notre destin spirituel. » Et il évoque un « coup de tonnerre dans un midi radieux ». Pierre Vadeboncœur y redécouvre ses racines et s'inscrit dans la ligne du *Refus global* de Borduas en qui il voit un prophète de ce qui sera « la révolution tranquille » de 1960[2].

Le « risque », c'est d'instaurer une culture enfin dynamique et progressiste contre la chape de plomb de l'idéalisme fade qui imprègne la tradition confite en cléricalisme et passivité. La « ligne » serait celle d'une troisième voie à l'encontre de « la ligne de front » qui oppose alors l'Est et l'Ouest : « La paix n'existe pas, il faut donc l'inventer. » Il souhaite qu'un « syndicalisme mystique s'oppose à la bureaucratie, que « l'âme » d'un peuple se lève contre la médiocrité et l'insignifiance. Un idéal révolutionnaire doit secouer la torpeur du Québec : « À l'époque où tout était immobile pour nous, nous pouvions durer par l'immobilité, mais nous ne le pourrons désormais que par le mouvement. » Il s'oppose ainsi au poids énorme de la tradition incarnée, par exemple, par le célèbre livre de Lionel Groulx, *Notre Maître, le passé*.

Contestant par ailleurs la société de consommation, il oppose la joie au bonheur et l'on retrouvera souvent ce thème, notamment dans *Un Amour libre, Musique* et *Les deux Royaumes*. Il ne cessera plus désormais de dénoncer « l'American way of life ».

En 1965, paraît *L'Autorité du peuple* où l'essayiste commence à dénoncer une dégénérescence de la « révolution tranquille » dont la responsabilité revient à la bourgeoisie qui trahit l'Évangile autant que l'esprit révolutionnaire, c'est-à-dire pour lui, l'esprit tout court. Le bourgeois, c'est « la défaite de l'être par l'avoir ». La vraie révolution, celle de la fraternité et de la solidarité, ne peut être accomplie

boncoeur). Ainsi que dans *Études littéraires (*Revue de l'Université Laval, Automne 1996), numéro intitulé : « Pierre Vadeboncoeur, interprète de la culture ».

[2] Le *Refus global* est un manifeste collectif mené par le peintre Paul-Émile Borduas, paru le 9 août 1948, en plein régime de Duplessis. Le peintre perdra aussitôt son poste de professeur et sera condamné à l'exil, à New York puis à Paris. Il décède en 1960.

que par le prolétaire. Donc, pour le Québec, il existe une équation : indépendance signifie socialisme et vice-versa.

Esprit libre, marqué par l'Évangile comme par le marxisme, Vadeboncœur s'insurge contre l'égoïsme et l'inertie dans un style militant qui allie la vision politique et le devoir spirituel. L'accueil de ce livre reprenant sept essais fut des plus discrets, sauf dans les milieux étudiants et de gauche.

Rassemblant seize textes écrits entre 1963 et 1968, *Lettres et colères*, paru en 1969, fait songer à Péguy par l'inspiration et la plume acérée. Sont notamment dénoncés les dangers de l'hégémonie américaine, l'évolution politique de Pierre-Eliott Trudeau, l'essoufflement de la « révolution tranquille » et la fin de *Cité libre* durement ressentie. Pour l'essayiste, il y a plus d'esprit évangélique dans la révolution cubaine que dans l'assemblée des évêques des USA qui exploite cyniquement le Tiers-Monde. Pour Robert Vigneault, il s'agit d'un « pur qui crie casse-cou à la majorité silencieuse ».

Vadeboncœur, avec sa passion de l'équité, dénonce l'hypocrisie de la démocratie libérale où les politiciens sont les marionnettes des financiers qui nous conduisent aux catastrophes écologiques, morales, voire nucléaires.

Déçu par tant de manipulations et d'injustices, Vadeboncœur inaugure une autre veine de son œuvre : l'essai lyrique et personnel, empreint du culte de l'esprit et de celui de la beauté. *Un Amour libre*, paru en 1970, suit avec passion l'évolution de son fils Daniel, en poétisant l'enfance, « illustration vivante de ce par quoi l'humain est ineffable». Réaction d'esthète contre la « vulgarité du monde ». Pour lui, comme pour Borduas, « l'incohérence de la fantaisie est la signature de la liberté. »

Mais dès 1972, Pierre Vadeboncœur est repris par l'actualité. Méditant sur le passé, il interroge un présent tumultueux dans *Indépendances* : guerre du Vietnam, révolte des jeunes en 68, répression policière à Montréal en 1971–72, etc. Il s'y montre fasciné par l'esprit de rupture qu'incarne la dissidence anarchisante des jeunes dont l'indépendantisme québécois pourrait s'inspirer afin de rompre avec l'Histoire.

Car il veut livrer une « bataille de l'intelligence » contre les pièges de l'Histoire, ainsi qu'il l'affirme dans *Un Génocide en douce*, publié en 1976. Ce recueil de cinquante-huit textes « provoqués par l'événement », qui s'échelonnent de 1964 à 1976, suit l'ascension du P.Q. (Parti Québécois, indépendantiste) et veut consolider la fragile naissance d'une conscience politique libérée du passé.

Se souvenant du *Portrait du colonisé* d'Albert Memmi, il trace le « portrait du décomposé » pour révéler ce que signifie « appartenir à une race irréversiblement prolétarisée» par ce qu'il appelle « la farce de l'ordre ». Contre l'orthodoxie paralysante, il lance « le risque de penser ». Il souhaite une sorte de socialisme à visage humain, car « la révolution est la dignité ou elle n'est rien ».

« Il y a une théorie de la rationalisation de la politique qui est au fond une théorie de l'abolition de la politique. » C'est celle du gouvernement Bourassa « au service

de l'impérialisme américain ». D'où une sorte de « génocide » qui se manifeste par « le consentement sans réserve de l'État provincial (le Québec) à l'invasion économico-politique de la puissance américaine ; l'acquiescement de la population à l'esprit de consommation et de liquidation générale qui l'accompagne. »

L'espoir cependant persiste dans *Chaque Jour, l'indépendance*, paru deux ans plus tard, recueil de trente-six articles publiés dans *Le Jour*, journal fondé par le P.Q., où s'exprime la possibilité d'une victoire de ses idées, car le gouvernement du charismatique René Lévesque est comme « une seconde révolution tranquille ». Mais plus que jamais, l'essayiste s'affirme en conscience vigilante d'un avenir digne du Québec.

La veine évangélique revient en force avec *Les deux Royaumes* (1978). L'âme demeure un concept utile et une valeur dominante. Vadeboncœur oppose le monde intérieur, intime, et le monde extérieur, soit la matière et l'esprit. Ainsi l'œil intérieur est « l'œil saint » alors que sévit le voyeurisme des médias. La conciliation des deux mondes pourrait venir de l'art qui exprime l'homme accompli, récusant la domination et la possession au profit d'une transcendance intime. On songe à la célèbre phrase d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry : « L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux. »

En 1980, le titre ironique et cruel *To be or not to be, that is the question* nous ramène à l'actualité politique en étudiant d'un bout à l'autre le devoir de citoyenneté, le pouvoir souverain du peuple qu'il faut exercer sous peine de mort politique. Il s'agit d'un avertissement amer à la veille du référendum sur l'indépendance, car le P.Q. est déjà usé par le pouvoir. Cet ensemble d'une trentaine d'articles (1978–1980) est dédié à Gaston Miron, le poète emblématique de la « québécitude », de l'aspiration à l'indépendance. Le style transcende les répétitions de l'argumentation et André Belleau pourra évoquer « tant de bonheur de dire sur tant de malheur d'être ».

Le moraliste s'affirme dans *Trois Essais sur l'insignifiance*, paru en 1983. Dans le premier, « La Parabole du néant », il s'interroge sur la culture et affirme : « Je crois que c'est le culte de l'âme », celui qui engendre une «joie». C'est un appel à la dignité et à la noblesse humaines contre l'avènement de la race des consommateurs. Dans « Panthéon de porcelaine », il fait le procès de la société médiatique et « l'académisme de la modernité américaine », car il faut apprendre à «mesurer le prix de l'esprit». Et dans « Les Coups de feu de l'arbitraire », il dénonce l'absence d'un projet réel de civilisation, « l'homme définitivement extériorisé », « la corruption de l'homme par ses intérêts » et il cite un extrait du *Journal* de Julien Green à New York en 1933 : « L'âme américaine attend toujours confusément la fin de la pensée. »

Avec *L'Absence. Essai à la deuxième personne* (1985), le moraliste poursuit son analyse au long d'une vingtaine de textes sur l'art, la littérature et l'amour où l'absence est comme une présence multipliée. La réflexion sur la culture contemporaine rappelle celle de *Trois essais sur l'insignifiance*. Le ton est ici plus souvent lyrique, car il exprime une expérience intime, nimbée de poésie, proche de la confidence : «Il y a une sorte de mystique en moi.» La « joie », concept essentiel de son art de

vivre, permet de « distinguer le sens ultime de ce qui est beau». Bachelard parlerait de «promotion d'être ».

En 1987, Pierre Vadeboncoeur, toujours lucide, publie *Essais inactuels*, textes parus dans *Liberté* de 1979 à 1986, certains autres dans *Dires* et quelques inédits. Apparaît ici la critique littéraire avec Proust, Du Bos, Hugo, Borduas, Simone Weil et Rimbaud. Il analyse aussi l'art, la lecture, la tragédie, le regard intérieur et il évoque Notre-Dame de Paris, Vinci, etc. Il fait l'éloge de la solitude, opposée à l'emprise moderne qui atomise la liberté, « loi paradoxale de la liberté génératrice d'esclavage ». Et il conclut : « Il faut être absolument inactuel (…) pour être absolument moderne. »

« Depuis un certain nombre d'années, j'écris surtout sur l'amour et les arts », avoue-t-il dans *Le Bonheur excessif* (1998), car la politique le déçoit profondément. Il y a mis trop de lui-même, trop d'espérance… À propos de l'amour, il énonce : « Je ne connais pas d'autre sujet qui par lui-même se remplisse pour ainsi dire de bonheur. » Il le relie à la « joie » et même à la mystique : la « rencontre de quelqu'un » est comme un « pari sur l'éternité «. « Telle est peut-être une des définitions de la grâce. » Quant à la femme, il lui crie : « Vous êtes un diamant de bonheur ! »

Pierre Vadeboncoeur revient plus longuement à Rimbaud en 2003 avec *Le Pas de l'aventurier*. Audacieux, il essaie de répondre à la question lancinante : pourquoi le poète de génie a-t-il renoncé à la création ? Pourquoi s'est-il jeté à corps perdu dans la réalité ? Il tente diverses hypothèses, mais il est impossible de préciser ici cet ensemble subtil et diversifié entre « le caractère cynique » du personnage ou sa facilité d'écriture qui l'aurait dégoûté de l'artifice qui consiste à « faire de la littérature ». Il découvre « l'ironie antilittéraire d'une sorte d'ultra-littérature » qui serait le cri de Rimbaud[3]. Comment Rimbaud a-t-il pu *mépriser* la poésie ? Gaston Miron ne s'est-il pas « traité d'imposteur » ?

Avec *Essai sur la croyance et l'incroyance* en 2005, l'essayiste confirme son évolution vers une métaphysique idéaliste soutenue par l'éthique et l'esthétique. Il manifeste une intuition qui lui révélerait l'existence de la face voilée des choses, une sorte de «dieu caché». Sans la définir, il évoque une « Personnalité » qui règnerait sur « l'invisible ». Lucide, il reconnaît la faiblesse d'un essai qui est « comme un poème ». S'il ne cesse de dénoncer avec raison le matérialisme vulgaire, il omet de le distinguer du matérialisme philosophique qui a ses lettres de noblesse. Et il tombe dans le travers de la majuscule, qui est vraiment une sacralisation trop facile !

Cependant, toujours généreux et lucide, il reconnaît l'utilité et la valeur du doute, notamment dans son combat constant contre l'emprise de la technoscience et des idolâtries contemporaines.

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[3] Voir la dernière page d'*Une Saison en enfer*, où le poète écrit : «J'ai cru acquérir des pouvoirs surnaturels. Eh bien ! Je dois enterrer mon imagination et mes souvenirs. Une belle gloire d'artiste et de conteur emportée !»

Parmi celles-ci, « l'argent (qui) est irresponsable » au sens fort, « impénétrable à ce qui est humain », écrit-il dans *L'Injustice en armes*, publié en 2006, livre qui «est un commentaire continu sur l'argent». Mais cette analyse est surtout politique et dénonce une fois encore l'impérialisme des USA transformés en un État « fasciste » » par la CIA, qui manifeste la même « intention hégémonique » que le nazisme et pratique «le terrorisme en grand». La guerre contre le terrorisme, telle qu'elle est menée, est un paradoxe et une dangereuse absurdité.

Vadeboncoeur se montre donc très radical et dénonce en plus un décervelage généralisé et une affligeante démagogie. Il s'appuie sur « quelques grandes voix aux États-Unis : Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, *Harper's Magazine*, *Dissent*, etc ». Sa source française est *Le Monde diplomatique*. Humanisme et démocratie restent donc ses valeurs essentielles.

Pour conclure

La critique est en général d'accord pour souligner la qualité de la pensée, comme celle du style, de cet essayiste prolifique, ainsi que la cohérence de son engagement moral, social et politique.

La veine du pamphlétaire suscite bien sûr quelques réserves, d'autant que la visée de l'indépendance n'a pas abouti. Il est clair qu'une telle production, souvent au départ de type journalistique, entraîne fatalement des répétitions, des raccourcis et parfois un manque de recul.

L'œuvre présente donc essentiellement deux faces. L'une carrément politique, radicalement démocrate, opposée au néo-libéralisme de source américaine et à la mondialisation d'une pensée unique. L'autre, lyrique, esthétique et parfois autobiographique, renoue avec la spiritualité de son éducation chrétienne, notamment par le truchement de l'art. À partir de 1970, les deux veines s'entremêlent, la seconde tendant à devenir de plus en plus importante au fur à mesure que s'installe la déception politique.

Sans conteste, Pierre Vadeboncoeur occupe une place majeure dans l'essai québécois. Il est à la fois un produit et un acteur de la libération de la pensée québécoise, si longtemps engluée dans le passéisme. Il a vécu intensément et profondément l'esprit de la « révolution tranquille ». Il a partagé les espoirs d'une autonomie tant culturelle que politique. Sa critique ne manque ni d'esprit ni d'humour : « Depuis longtemps, la démocratie est une assez bonne comédie. » Et il n'a pas encore dit son dernier mot.

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SEXE, GENRE ET HISTOIRE : VISIBILITÉ DES SEXES ET REPRÉSENTATION DES GENRES DANS LES MANUELS D'HISTOIRE FRANCOPHONES DU SECONDAIRE QUÉBÉCOIS (1980–2004)

Le manuel scolaire en tant que champ d'investigation de représentations des femmes, d'abord, des genres, ensuite, a une histoire vieille de plus de trente-cinq ans. Les premières études concernaient pour la plupart les livres de lecture de l'enseignement primaire. L'histoire enseignée dans le secondaire a moins attiré l'attention des chercheurs. Plus particulièrement, au Québec, qui joue depuis les années 1970, au sein de la Francophonie, un rôle de pionnier dans des questions concernant l'égalité des sexes, un vide historiographique est à remarquer dans ce domaine ;[1] vide qui surprend encore plus aujourd'hui, compte tenu du foisonnement de travaux sur les femmes et le genre d'une part, de l'importance des mutations pédagogiques en cours dans cette province d'autre part.

C'est précisément ce vide que cherche à combler la présente étude effectuée dans le cadre d'une bourse de recherche du gouvernement canadien : elle porte sur l'examen des manuels d'histoire francophones des deux dernières classes du secondaire québécois pour la période allant de 1980 à 2004.

A. Présentation de la recherche

Pourquoi avoir ciblé la recherche sur des manuels si récents du « second cycle » du secondaire ? Tout d'abord parce qu' ils se prêtent plus facilement que ceux de

[1] V. Bouchard, Cloutier, Hamel, 149–182. A partir de 1988 l'intérêt des chercheuses se déplace vers des sujets concernant l'enseignement supérieur.

l'école primaire à l'analyse, étant plus étoffés, plus éloignés aussi des stéréotypes, trop voyants parfois, que les ouvrages enseignés aux enfants. En second lieu, car ils s'adressent à des élèves qui sous peu seront des citoyens à part entière. Dans cette perspective, les manuels d'histoire sont destinés à jouer plus qu'à tout autre moment de leur vie un rôle d'éveilleur à une citoyenneté active. Cette mission civique des ouvrages en question, considérée à travers le prisme de la catégorie d'analyse du genre, ne saurait être dénuée de sens et d'enjeu. C'est justement cette conviction qui a dicté les limites temporelles de la recherche : en examinant un passé qui n'est pas encore révolu, notre étude vise surtout à « interroger » un avenir en train de s'inventer.

Ce travail prend appui sur un échantillon de dix-sept ouvrages, constitué à la Didacthèque de l'Université de Laval, une des bibliothèques les mieux fournies du Québec en matériel pédagogique. Il comprend des livres édités avant la publication des programmes encore en vigueur aujourd'hui ;[2] les manuels de quatrième année parus entre 1984 et 1995 et approuvés par le Ministère de l'éducation,[3] leurs rééditions et les documents qui les accompagnent ; un manuel de cinquième publié en 1999 et le matériel pédagogique connexe ;[4] enfin un manuel anglophone portant sur la matière de quatrième année, traduit en français en 1995 et réédité en 2001.

La démarche méthodologique adoptée est à la fois qualitative et quantitative. Il s'agit de récolter dans ces ouvrages toutes les « notations *genrées* »[5] et d'examiner la place faite à chacun des deux sexes dans l'histoire scolaire. Comparative enfin, l'analyse vise à mettre en valeur, tant les évolutions advenues durant la période étudiée, que les lignes de force communes et les disparités entre manuels.

L'étude est structurée autour de deux axes : l'examen des sources, d'une part, et, d'autre part, la proposition de relecture d'une période historique fondée sur les apports des spécialistes de l'histoire du genre et de l'histoire des femmes.

B. Exploitation des sources : étude du texte et du paratexte

Dans une histoire scolaire dont la rédaction demeure à la fin du XX^{e} siècle une affaire d'hommes,[6] les femmes sont-elles visibles au même titre que le sexe masculin ?

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[2] À savoir, avant 1982 pour la quatrième année et 1988 pour la cinquième année.

[3] À partir de la fin des années 1970 le Ministère de l'Education du Québec se réserve le contrôle sur l'achat des manuels des cours obligatoires en contraignant les éditeurs à les soumettre à son approbation. Ce sont ces manuels qui sont agréés par les Commissions scolaires. (Aubin, 367).

[4] Ce manuel n'est pas soumis au processus d'approbation, le cours d'histoire de cinquième étant optionnel.

[5] Des notations du masculin (« Charles De Gaulle ») et du féminin (« Marie Curie ») certes, mais aussi des notations neutres au premier regard mais masquant en réalité l'un des deux sexes (« le gouvernement » au 19^{e} siècle) ; des notations se référant aux deux sexes mais énoncées au masculin (« les Français ») ; des notations neutres enfin englobant les deux sexes (« la population »).

[6] La majorité des membres des équipes rédactionnelles sont de sexe masculin (13 hommes/4 femmes) tandis que les historiennes sont rarement chargées de la direction de la rédaction.

L'examen du contenu des manuels révèle une présence féminine plus que discrète, dans une perspective quantitative tout d'abord. Des 37 453 notations sexuées repérées, 17 638 se réfèrent exclusivement aux hommes (47,09%), pour seulement 2 869 aux femmes, soit 7,66%. Si, de surcroît, aux notations du masculin, on ajoute celles qui, sous une apparence neutre dissimulent des hommes, le taux de la visibilité du masculin dans les manuels s'élève à 62,91%. Les notations communes enfin ne dépassent pas 29,43% de l'ensemble des notations de notre échantillon.

Tableau 1 : **Notations sexuées**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	1 371 6,53%	9 191 43,80%	3 106 14,80%	3 982 18,97%	5 0,023%	3 329 15,86%
Documents écrits	1 068 8,58%	6 448 51,81%	1 754 14,09%	1 505 12,09%	– –	1 669 13,41%
Documents visuels	188 12,91%	935 64,21%	279 19,16%	47 3,22%	7 0,48	– –
Activités	182 11,06%	757 46,01%	344 20,91%	152 9,24%	– –	210 12,76%
Titres et Sous-titres	60 6,49%	307 33,22%	198 21,42%	242 26,19%	– –	117 12,66%
Total	**2 869 7,66%**	**17 638 47,09%**	**5 681 15,16%**	**5 926 15,82%**	**12 0,032**	**5 345 14,27%**

Cette visibilité féminine décevante varie suivant la « localisation » des notations dans les manuels. D'après le tableau 1, on constate qu'elle est davantage restreinte dans les parties « texte » et « titres » (6,553% et 6,49% respectivement). En revanche, elle est plus importante dans la partie documentaire des manuels (8,58% et 13,39%), partie souvent marginalisée en classe faute de temps.

Or, toutes ces données concernent l'ensemble des manuels examinés et ne permettent de saisir, ni les évolutions opérées ni les différents regards portés sur les faits historiques. Dans cette perspective, un examen plus détaillé de notre échantillon, en fonction de la date de publication et de la maison d'édition, s'avère indispensable.

La comparaison du manuel de Allard avec ceux de Charpentier révèle qu'en l'espace de six ans (1980–1985) la représentation du sexe féminin passe de 2,46% à 7,7%. Dans la réédition de 1990 ce pourcentage n'atteint cependant que 8,865%. Pour ce qui est du sexe masculin, un recul de sa représentation est à constater. Mais le mouvement de cette régression est discontinu : en effet, le taux de la présence du masculin baisse de 27,1% de 1980 à 1985, mais augmente de 1,35% de 1985 à 1990.[7]

[7] Mêmes constatations pour les manuels de Cardin : dans l'ouvrage de 1984, la visibilité du féminin s'élève à 8,86% et dans la réédition de 1994, à 10,74%, ce qui correspond à une hausse de 1,88% ;

Tableau 2 : **Allard, 1980, 4e secondaire**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/ 2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	47	1 254	183	487	–	213
Documents écrits	30	569	35	89	–	22
Documents visuels	1	68	3	2	–	–
Activités	–	66	12	18	–	2
Titres et Sous-titres	–	25	8	25	–	1
Total	**78 2,46%**	**1 982 62,72%**	**241 7,62%**	**621 19,65%**	**– –**	**238 7,53%**

Tableau 3 : **Charpentier, 1985, 4e secondaire**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/ 2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	245	1 314	602	548	1	758
Documents écrits	157	1 040	333	183	–	328
Documents visuels	37	164	61	5	–	–
Activités	25	93	93	8	–	36
Titres et Sous-titres	14	40	52	38	–	36
Total	**478 7,69%**	**2 651 42,68%**	**1 141 18,37%**	**782 12,59%**	**1 0,016%**	**1 158 18,64%**

Tableau 4 : **Charpentier 1990, 4e secondaire**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/ 2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	299	1 403	643	638	1	657
Documents écrits	189	1 045	384	227	–	311
Documents visuels	49	190	55	6	–	–
Activités	29	102	89	14	–	39
Titres et Sous-titres	16	44	52	51	–	37
Total	**582 8,85%**	**2 784 42,37%**	**1 223 18,61%**	**936 14,24%**	**1 0,015%**	**1 044 15,89%**

En ce qui concerne les ouvrages de cinquième, un premier examen des notations repérées démontre que – tout comme pour les manuels de quatrième – de 1981 à 1999, la représentation du masculin régresse et la visibilité du féminin se renforce.

quant à la place occupée par le masculin, elle n'est point non plus réduite de manière continue.

De même, les femmes et leur histoire sont marginalisées davantage dans le « texte » que dans la partie documentaire. Dans l'ensemble cependant, la présence féminine reste bien limitée.

Tableau 5 : **Lagassé, 1981, 5e secondaire**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/ 2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	3	339	86	160	–	53
Documents écrits	2	106	33	45	–	18
Documents visuels	4	33	6	2	–	–
Activités	–	–	13	22	–	–
Titres et Sous-titres	–	62	8	4	–	–
Total	**9 0,90%**	**540 54,05%**	**146 14,61%**	**233 23,32**	**– –**	**71 7,10%**

Tableau 6 : **Bouvier, 1999, 5e secondaire**

%	Féminin	Masculin	Neutre/ 2 sexes	Neutre/ Masculin	Neutre/ Féminin	Au masculin
Texte	48	570	170	465	–	118
Documents écrits	31	192	50	30	–	23
Documents visuels	12	68	20	3	–	–
Activités	5	24	10	16	–	2
Titres et Sous-titres	4	15	11	60	–	–
Total	**100 5,13%**	**869 44,63%**	**261 13,40%**	**574 29,48**	**– –**	**143 7,34%**

Comment interpréter ces données qui révèlent finalement sur une durée de vingt ans une évolution, en partie, discontinue ? Leur lecture impose deux remarques. Tout d'abord, ce sont les initiatives gouvernementales de 1982 et de 1988 qui se trouvent à l'origine de l'évolution manifeste opérée vers une vision davantage sexuée de l'histoire scolaire. La deuxième remarque concerne les manuels de quatrième publiés après 1982 : après avoir comparé les taux de représentativité des deux genres, on constate que l'espace occupé exclusivement par le féminin se réduit pratiquement dans les rééditions des années 1990. C'est que, faute de nouvelles directives officielles entre 1982 et 1995, les équipes rédactionnelles se sont contentées d'un simple travail de mise au point du texte initial, sans aucune intention de réviser sérieusement leur optique théorique, qui seule aurait permis d'amplifier la visibilité des femmes ; et ceci malgré l'apport de la recherche à la

restitution d'un passé « genré », malgré aussi une mouvance idéologique favorable à l'égalité civile et politique des sexes.

Dans l'intention toutefois d'affiner ces constatations et d'examiner dans quelle mesure l'enseignement de l'histoire sociale, inauguré essentiellement par les programmes de 1982, a contribué au renforcement de la présence du sexe féminin, nous avons procédé à un examen des notations sexuées dans les chapitres des manuels de quatrième privilégiant l'aspect social de l'histoire.[8]

Tableau 7 : **Notations féminines et neutres/féminines**

	Allard 1980	**Cardin 1984**	**Cardin 1994**	**Charpentier 1985**	**Charpentier 1990**	**Roy 1995**
1.1	43 6,25%	37 7,28%	40 8,90%	35 5,62%	34 5,86%	44 7,65%
2.2	– –	113 19,78%	99 18,40%	56 9,57%	57 8,75	34 9,88%
6.1	– –	94 23,55%	111 25,57%	113 16,23%	131 17,46%	76 25,08%
7.1	– –	101 25%	114 27,4%	92 14,58%	101 14,20%	48 19,04
7.3	13 2,13%	39 7,41%	116 14,64%	60 10,67	99 15,13%	44 6,94%
Total	**56 4,31%**	**384 15,94%**	**480 18,25%**	**356 11,49**	**422 12,61**	**246 11,66%**

Tableau 8 : **Notations masculines et neutres/masculines**

	Allard 1980	**Cardin 1984**	**Cardin 1994**	**Charpentier 1985**	**Charpentier 1990**	**Roy 1995**
1.1	522 75,87%	222 43,70%	245 54,56%	383 61,57%	399 68,79%	297 51,65%
2.2	- -	300 52,53%	313 58,17%	355 60,68%	395 60,67%	211 61,33%
6.1	- -	201 50,37%	220 50,69%	347 49,85%	381 50,8%	105 34,65%
7.1	- -	232 57,42%	242 58,17%	454 71,94%	420 59,07	160 62,49%
7.3	501 82,13%	247 46,95%	334 42,17%	204 36,29%	240 36,69	245 38,64%
Total	**1023 78,81%**	**1202 49,91%**	**1354 51,50%**	**1743 56,29%**	**1835 54,84%**	**1018 48,29%**

[8] L'« Organisation socioculturelle des Iroquoîens (*sic*) et des Algonkiens » (1.1), le « Rôle de l'Eglise », les « Aspects de la vie quotidienne » en Nouvelle France (2.2), les « Conditions de vie » au XX^{e} siècle (6.1), la « Participation du Québec à l'effort de guerre » (7.1), les « Principales transformations du Québec » contemporain, les « Débats depuis la Révolution tranquille » (7.3).

Les tableaux ci-dessus révèlent un quasi dédoublement du nombre des notations féminines dans les chapitres en question, ainsi qu'une certaine réduction de l'espace occupé par le sexe masculin. Ces données ne font que confirmer notre hypothèse initiale : alors qu'histoire sociale et histoire des femmes sont en principe étroitement liées dans les manuels, le politique résiste à l'enregistrement des traces féminines.

Or, dans des travaux scientifiques novateurs des dernières décennies prenant en considération la composante sexuée de l'histoire, les divisions traditionnelles (social/politique, privé/public) s'estompent progressivement et le paysage historique se recompose. Les manuels examinés, ne fût-ce que les plus récents, tiennent-ils compte de cette nouvelle approche historique ? Nous avons constaté que l'étude de l'histoire du sexe féminin ne se limite pas toujours aux seuls chapitres indiqués par les programmes ; des références sont repérées également dans d'autres unités : leur longueur varie toutefois d'un ouvrage à l'autre suivant leur date d'édition et le contenu des chapitres.

Quoiqu'il en soit, l'analyse qualitative de ces notations a démontré que les ouvrages en question ne respectent pas l'optique du genre en histoire : la dissymétrie dans l'articulation des rapports de force entre les deux sexes n'est pas mise en valeur. En outre le saupoudrage des références féminines dans des chapitres riches en notations du masculin, notamment quand il s'agit d'histoire politique, assure certes l'insertion des femmes dans le récit historique, mais fait aussi souvent l'impasse sur une étude plus approfondie de l'histoire de la moitié de la population québécoise au cours de cette période.

Dans le souci d'une analyse exhaustive de notre matériel, nous avons procédé, dans un dernier temps, à l'étude des documents visuels repérés dans les manuels examinés : partie intégrante de « l'inconscient historique », ceux-ci rendent plus aisée l'inculcation des stéréotypes sexuels. Nous avons constaté que le nombre des représentations iconiques traditionnelles de mères, d'épouses et de femmes-allégories diminue au profit de l'image des femmes actives, engagées à part entière dans le processus historique :[9] elles travaillent, s'émancipent, font la guerre et évoluent sur la scène publique, surtout au XX^{e} siècle. Elles affirment aussi leur volonté de conquérir le savoir, qui est une autre forme de pouvoir. Elles désirent améliorer leur condition : elles immigrent. À l'évidence donc, en comparaison avec le texte où l'action féminine est souvent marginalisée, l'iconographie accorde aux femmes/sujets d'histoire une place beaucoup plus importante.

Ainsi, il apparaît clairement qu'après 1984 les équipes s'efforcent de réserver dans les manuels un espace plus considérable aux femmes. Il en résulte souvent un texte qui semble souligner l'exceptionnalité de la présence féminine dans le récit historique. Soit les notations du féminin revêtent un caractère de note, accolée ar-

[9] 87,81% chez Charpentier, 86,7% chez Bouvier, 77,28% chez Newman, 75% chez Cardin, 66,67% chez Lagassé et 65,63% chez les Roy. Souvent, il s'agit de femmes anonymes ; la prédominance toutefois de l'anonymat n'en exclue pas les femmes célèbres : Jeanne Mance, Marie Curie…

tificiellement au texte ; soit il y a une tendance à la compartimentation, favorisée il est vrai par les programmes officiels, mais n'en comportant pas moins le risque de la discontinuité, de la dislocation de l'action historique : les femmes sont convoquées à des moments très précis d'une Histoire qui continue d'être centrée sur les activités politiques et économiques des hommes et, de ce fait, découpée suivant une périodisation propre à un temps énoncé au masculin. Par contre les notations du féminin sont plus nombreuses dans la partie documentaire. Éventuellement, cette visibilité complémentaire, tacitement respectueuse de l'ordre établi, ne dérange pas trop.

La « rupture épistémologique » en histoire, provoquée par l'optique du genre, n'est donc pas encore suffisamment perceptible dans l'histoire scolaire : le sexe féminin continue à apparaître comme un intrus dans le texte et, dans une moindre mesure, dans le paratexte des manuels des deux dernières classes du secondaire québécois. Il n'en est pas moins vrai cependant qu'il est désormais de plus en plus visible (malgré l'invocation des impératifs de la concision).

C. Proposition de relecture possible de l'histoire enseignée : la France entre les deux guerres

L'analyse quantitative et qualitative du contenu des manuels examinés a mis en évidence que l'histoire enseignée au Québec n'est point encore une histoire totale, telle qu'elle est conçue dans l'historiographie féministe : à savoir une histoire qui procède à une reconstitution bisexuée du passé. L'ambition de la dernière partie de cette recherche, est de repérer certains des vides laissés dans le récit historique et de mettre ainsi en œuvre, à travers un exemple précis, une histoire qui englobe histoire des femmes et histoire du genre.

Dans l'unité du manuel de cinquième portant sur l'entre-deux-guerres, Félix Bouvier retrace entre autres la situation socioéconomique de la France (F. Bouvier 1999, 67–74).[10] Son approche historique marginalise les acteurs et surtout les actrices de cette période par des procédés d'abstraction et des expressions neutres dissimulant en réalité une dimension sexuée.[11] Toutefois, malgré l'effort manifeste de neutraliser le genre des agents, la conjugaison de plusieurs notations du masculin repérées dans le texte et le paratexte[12] conduit forcément à la conclusion erronée que le sexe féminin est complètement absent de l'histoire de la France des années 1920 et 1930. Un travail cependant qui tient compte de la variable du genre révèle des traces du féminin dans le domaine de la politique, du travail, de la syndicalisation.

[10] Dans le programme de 1988, ce chapitre renvoie à l'indication laconique : « Décrire sommairement l'escalade qui a conduit à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale » (Gouvernement du Québec, 47). La comparaison avec l'ouvrage de Lagassé s'avéra impossible à cause de la structure différente de ce dernier.

[11] Par exemple : « la syndicalisation progresse », « de nombreuses manifestations ont lieu »… (Cf. Varikas, 10).

[12] Groupes de personnes énoncés au masculin « universel » : « paysans », « ouvriers » ; documents visuels représentant exclusivement des hommes : politiques, manifestants, grévistes.

Certes « la syndicalisation progresse » dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres, mais ce progrès se traduit de manière différente pour les femmes. Tout d'abord l'année 1920 est importante pour l'histoire du syndicalisme (féminin) dans la mesure où la loi du 12 mars donne aux femmes la liberté d'adhérer à un syndicat sans l'autorisation maritale. Malgré une certaine progression du taux de syndicalisation du sexe féminin, le nombre des syndiquées reste plutôt réduit jusqu'à l'avènement du Front populaire. Cette faible représentation rend conséquemment l'influence féminine peu efficace dans les organisations mixtes (Cf. Bard 2001, 74). Dans ce contexte, il n'est point étonnant qu'au début des années 1930, la défense du travail féminin et de l'égalité des salaires ne constitue pas une priorité pour le mouvement syndical français dirigé par des hommes.

D'ailleurs c'est le moment où « la crise économique se fait véritablement sentir en France », comme le note Bouvier. Elle est vécue cependant de manière différente par les deux sexes. Certes, le « pouvoir d'achat des agriculteurs » diminue et « le taux de chômage se met à grimper ». Mais l'auteur omet de se référer à l'attaque menée par l'Eglise, les syndicats, les hommes politiques contre le travail féminin. On lui reproche l'augmentation du chômage masculin et la baisse de la natalité. Toujours est-il que, contrairement à d'autres pays, les gouvernements successifs de cette période n'optent pas pour une politique agressive contre les travailleuses, la structure encore rurale de l'Hexagone aidant. N'empêche que les Françaises, déjà moins rémunérées que les hommes, paient plus chèrement leur part de tribut à la crise : les jeunes filles voient se fermer, discrètement devant elles, les portes des concours administratifs ; en 1935, les décrets Laval privent de certaines indemnités les femmes fonctionnaires mariées à un fonctionnaire.

La baisse du pouvoir d'achat déclenche de nombreuses grèves. Toutes ces manifestations culmineront en 1936. Bien que la participation des femmes à ce mouvement mixte soit décisive, les manifestantes sont complètement absentes du manuel de cinquième : éternelles secondes, elles sont dissimulées derrière l'expression « ouvriers en grève ». C'est peut-être que le traditionnel partage des tâches, même sur le lieu des grèves, les empêche d'être perçues comme des individus sociaux et les enferme dans un rapport aux hommes de type naturel (Cf. Montreynaud, 262).

Les grèves aboutissent aux accords de Matignon. Si Bouvier centre son propos sur l'augmentation des salaires, la reconnaissance de la liberté syndicale et l'obligation des patrons de négocier des conventions collectives de travail, rien n'est précisé sur l'officialisation de l'inégalité entre salaires féminin et masculin. De l'avis général, les femmes se laissent éblouir par l'augmentation de leurs bas salaires.

Rien non plus sur l'apport le plus important de ce mouvement pour les femmes : l'éveil de la conscience collective. Elles se syndicalisent pourtant en masse en l'espace de quelques mois. En revanche, leur présence sur la scène politique reste discrète (Cf. Desanti, 242). Ainsi la « crise politique profonde où la légitimité du régime

est remise en cause », mentionnée dans le manuel, ne concerne en effet qu'un petit nombre d'entre elles. Ces années sont par contre marquées par une grande activité féminine et féministe en faveur de la paix, de manière que le pacifisme devient pour des femmes privées de citoyenneté un champ privilégié d'engagement civique (Cf. Bard 1995, 310–313).

En ce qui concerne enfin l'élection du Front populaire, l'auteur se limite à une affirmation d'ordre général : elle « déclenche de grands espoirs parmi la population ». Il se dispense ainsi de noter que cette élection a contribué dans un certain sens à la promotion de l'égalité des sexes. En juin 1936 trois Françaises importantes sont nommées sous-secrétaires d'Etat : Irène Joliot-Curie, physicienne et prix Nobel de chimie 1935, Suzanne Lacore, enseignante et Cécile Brunschvicg, féministe et présidente de « L'Union française pour le suffrage des femmes ». Leur nomination, véritable « coup d'éclat », pourrait être considérée comme un premier pas vers la reconnaissance des femmes en tant que sujets politiques.

On voit bien que le chapitre consacré au contexte socioéconomique de la France de l'entre-deux-guerres constitue un exemple adéquat pour mettre en relief le fait que dans l'histoire enseignée, l'action des individus est encore largement mesurée à l'aune des structures du pouvoir interprétées au masculin. Or, les femmes, par la force des choses, ne sont pas toujours concernées par cet aspect de l'histoire et pour cette raison elles restent souvent invisibles.

A l'issue de la présente recherche qui s'étend sur une durée de vingt-cinq ans, il est devenu évident qu'au Québec francophone l'histoire scolaire tient désormais davantage compte du passé sexué de l'humanité : visibilité féminine en progression, étude des temps forts de l'histoire des femmes. Cette évolution, toutefois, n'en demeure pas moins, au total, limitée et hésitante. L'approche dichotomique de l'histoire des sexes contribue largement à exclure les femmes de larges pans du récit historique des manuels. De surcroît, étant donné que l'histoire enseignée véhicule un savoir énoncé surtout au « masculin/universel », elle implique souvent, de manière sournoise, le non-être historique, car non-être politique, des femmes.

Ces constats ont donc un poids « politique » incontestable : ils sont révélateurs du véritable enjeu de l'écriture d'une histoire scolaire réellement universelle. Une telle approche historique permettra de développer chez les élèves la « conscience de genre » inextricablement liée à l'élaboration d'identités de citoyenneté sexuée. Elle contribuera ainsi à la redéfinition des rapports de sexes au pouvoir politique et conduira progressivement à un nouveau partage de ce pouvoir entre les citoyens et les citoyennes de demain, afin que ces dernières soient traitées en « co-souveraines » de la Cité. En effet une donne plus égalitaire entre hommes et femmes constitue indiscutablement un impératif de démocratie élargie.

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LITERATURE / IDEOLOGY
LITTÉRATURE / IDÉOLOGIE

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PARODYING THE GARDEN MYTH: REWRITING PRAIRIE AS GARDEN IN *THE WORDS OF MY ROARING*

The garden myth in Canadian fiction, especially in the early prairie Canadian fiction was represented in terms of what might be called "pastoral" imagery and by a more or less explicit moral assumption that nature is regenerative and man and his artificial creations are trivial and corrupt. Cases in point could be the fictions of Ralph Connor, Nellie McClung and Arthur Stringer. They were all presenting the West in terms of a garden awaiting cultivation. The garden motif in their descriptions is reminiscent of the "Garden of the World" myth earlier attached to the American plains, and probably grew out of it. Equally important was the connection between the garden myth and the spirit of empire, with its tendency to impose the culture of the dominant Ontario-British minority of the West. The prairie writers needed a way of seeing the land in relation to man before it could take on meaningful shape and acquire significant detail. Sometimes the old way of perceptions was imprisoning and required the re-examination of old interpretations, myths and stories.

While discussing the use of myth in his essays and interviews, the Canadian writer Robert Kroetsch emphasizes the difference between the generative use of myth and the use of the inherited motifs, archetypes. As an example of the use of inherited motifs and archetypes, Kroetsch cites Jung's view of an archetype, which is, as he says, "determined in regard to its content, in other words that it is a kind of unconscious idea. [...] The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a *facultas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given *a priori*" (Neuman et al., 106). Kroetsch thinks that Jung's interpretation of archetypes represents an intellectualized approach to literature. He rejects this interpretation because in that way people are cut off from the energy of story and narrative. However, when mythological stories and fragments generate new meanings, they become the source

of power, energy, rebirth and renewal. The generative use of myth and mythological fragments could be found in Robert Kroetsch's *Out West Triptych*: *The Words of My Roaring* (1966)*, The Studhorse Man* (1969)*, Gone Indian* (1973).

However, if myth, serving a particular social structure and system, becomes a close system, it is necessary to "unname" it according to Robert Kroetsch. In his book *Mythologies* Roland Barthes studied the misuse of myth. Barthes notices that a story or myth, or the message they convey, could be turned into a lie which could then be perpetuated. In Barthes' book *Mythologies*, a case in point is a French soldier who, while saluting the French flag, glorifies French colonialism and bourgeois ideology (Barthes, 125). This is the example of the misuse of myth which starts representing a lie. Barhtes' idea to solve this problem is to decipher myth which could be done by analyzing one idea in different forms. Similarly, Robert Kreotsch advocates the deconstruction of myth. Otherwise, he thinks, myth becomes a trap. According to Kroetsch, you could surrender to myth and get lost, or you could tell a story and find a way out.

Thus, myth is easily turned into ideology when mythological consciousness stops producing forms like mythological stories, characters, rituals, etc., by way of which reality is created anew and when it starts assuming the possibility of supporting one interpretation, it starts operating primarily with connotations. Or when ideology regresses to the level of mythological consciousness then it becomes destructive and dangerous because mythological consciousness assumes functions not inherent to it.

Robert Kroetsch insists on demythologizing and renaming reality, i.e. remythologizing. The relationship between language and reality is very important for Robert Kroetsch and he believes like Heidegger that things are created through words and language. In order to remove the layers of inherited meanings, everything should be unnamed and uninvented. As a follower of Heidegger, Kroetsch does not stop at the point of deconstruction and unnaming. After unnaming and silence, he renames creating a new story and myth: "The unnaming allows the naming." (Kroetsch, 1989, 32) Kroetsch is more interested in the process of creation than in the process of deconstruction. Mythological consciousness becomes generative when it constructs reality in a new original way assuming a creative role in the development of every culture, but it becomes regressive if it starts producing attitudes which destroy the complexity and diversity.

In his poetics Kroetsch opposes the mythological view of the world to the historical view of the world. When defining his attitude to history, he refers to Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought:* "Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally authentic experience of what they say, without the Greek word. The rootlessness of Western thought begins with this translation" (Kroetsch, 1989, 58). Although he uses the terms such as "uninventing" and "unnaming", which derive from Derridean philosophy, Kroetsch cites Heidegger, because, unlike Derrida, Lyotard and other deconstructionists who express their incredulity towards

metanarratives, Kroetsch believes in story, and as a postmodernist, he is engaged by way of unnaming and uninventing towards a close definition of his personal and national identity and experience. History is a meta-story which Kroetsch rejects (for Kroetsch it is the history of Eastern Canada, the USA and Great Britain, which is not applicable to the living prairie surroundings of Western Canada) because it represents the imposed interpretation of Canadian reality:

> History as I knew it did not account for the world I lived in. Present here in this landscape, I was taking my first lesson in the idea of absence. […] Perhaps for that reason I was constantly aware that we both, and at once, record and invent these new places called Alberta and Saskatchewan (Kroetsch, 1989, 1–2; 5).

While creating prairie reality and history anew through local particular story and myth, Kroetsch also creates the meta-narratives about Canadian nation, which he doesn't resist because he thinks that it is the task of the Canadian writer "to give names to his experience, to be the namer. I now suspect [he says] that on the contrary, it is his task to un-name" (Kroetsch, 1989, 58). Thus he thinks the search for identity is not so much that of knowing one's identity "as it is that of how to relate that newly evolving identity to its inherited or 'given' names. And the first technique might be simply to hold those names in suspension, to let the identity speak itself out of a willed namelessness." (Kroetsch, 1989, 51) In that way Kroetsch's small isolated stories, identities, palimpsests and fragments become a new and authentic way of connecting to Canadian environment in all its complexity.

In the *Out West* novels Robert Kroetsch has chosen the important stories which, according to him, represent the key for the creation and the development of tradition in the Canadian West encompassing the history of the West. Thus in *The Words of My Roaring,* Robert Kroetsch represents Canada by his story about the fall of the Eastern establishment during the electoral campaign in Alberta. By representing the elections in Alberta during the Depression period in 1935, Robert Kroetsch represents the end of the conservative influence of the Eastern establishment on Western Canada whose representative John Backstrom wins the elections using his creativity by way of words, promising rain to his voters, and not by using the traditional rhetoric of the politicians. The electoral campaign could be easily associated to the stories of the crowning of the king and the myth of fertility and creation. Apart from this myth, there are mythological fragments related to the myth of Demeter, Persephone, and Pluto in *The Words of My Roaring*, while the central myth is the myth of the garden.

One of the basic mythical patterns in the novel is the biblical one. The years of drought in the prairies resemble the desert in the Old Testament. The Alberta people were well prepared for the appeal of the "Bible Bill," William Aberhart, when he rose with his Social Credit Party to proclaim the coming of the apocalypse in which "the whore of Babylon" (*WMR* 36), the Eastern banking interests, would be driven out. This coincidence of mythic consciousness and specific event in the 1935 election may have been what attracted Kroetsch to present his view of the West. The main

hero, John Backstrom, is forced involuntarily to assume the role of the Messiah by the demands of the people. His opponent, Doctor Murdoch, may be almost a father to Johnny, but he is also identified with the Eastern Babylonian oppressors. Like the Babylonians he keeps a lush garden, and his daughter Helen Persephone is like a goddess of love in that garden. Even as the rain falls at the end of the novel, as John Backstrom promises in his campaign, we know that the moment of renewal is illusory and that what Kroetsch chronicles is actually the fall of the West.

The character of Doctor Murdoch is based on the values of the politics and philosophy of the Canadian East. He promises to his voters tranquillity, higher prices, richness that exists in the eastern part of Canada, although the atmosphere in the Western part of Canada is quite different. Doctor Murdoch wants to preserve the existing status quo and faith in the existing political machinery which the East supports. Murdoch's speeches suggest that such a political machinery is connected to a certain type of language, which is re-examined by Backstrom and other Westerners. Murdoch's political speeches are reserved, mild in relation to Backstrom's metaphors and everyday comparisons based on his past experience. Doctor Murdoch's language is grounded in a notion of determinism imported from Ontario: "Let me say," the Doc said, "that the situation is a serious one." […] So serious that only maturity can serve our needs. Only experience, only a close familiarity with the long and painful past, can guide our decisions" (*WMR* 5). Murdoch attempts to impose upon the West a codified political and ontological myth that bears no relation to the deliberately unformed prairie consciousness. In this sense, he sold his listeners out by supporting a worn-out Ontario-based notion of reality.

Backstrom's political speeches, as well as the speeches of William Applecart, the leader of his political party, are stronger, more convincing, with strong biblical metaphors and comparisons. In his caricature of the actual political leader William Aberhart as the politician Applecart, "Kroetsch expresses that rhetorical compound of biblical revelation and judgement which serves as historical commentary in the oral tradition of the prairies" (Peter Thomas, 46). Johnnie Backstrom follows Applecart and he sees the threat from the east through apocalyptic images. He experiences Toronto as "the whore" (*WMR* 36) "connecting Satan and all hell with the dirty Eastern millionaires, the financial racketeers. He was the voice of the prairies speaking" (*WMR* 37). Applecart's name pointedly suggests his parodied alignment with a new Edenic genesis of politics and voice. This voice is clearly redemptive and generative: it announces the birth of a New Prairie Jerusalem founded in the re-creation of Western experience through the mythologizing power of what is told. Applecart, and later Johnnie, come to be aligned with an apocalyptic form of rebirth rooted in a deeply symbolic conception of the prairie transformed by dream into art. "I won't swear to that," Johnnie reveals, but "it's a god's truth, you have to dream" (*WMR* 53). This statement recalls Kroetsch's interest in what he calls "the dream of origins" connected with the prairies, where "the small town and farm are no longer real places, they are dreamed places" (Enright and Cooley, 36).

The apocalyptic dream vision is born from endings as beginnings. In destroying the old order of politics and story, Backstrom announces the creation of a new order of prophecy and myth. As the demythologizer who undermines the system that threatens to define him, Backstrom becomes a remythologizer who undertakes the task of making speech. In a typical Kroetschean inversion, the man who represents the end comes to embody the beginning, while the man who represents the beginning comes to embody death and stasis. Backstrom identifies the inversion motif when he says that: "I'm a great one for paradox. My reading of the Bible, I suppose, dying to be born and all that" (*WMR* 53).

This inverted perspective allows us to understand the symbolism of Murdoch's association with Eden. In Kroetsch's world, the story of Eden means the old beginning, connected with inherited story, stasis, closure. Murdoch's East is this Eden, and Johnnie goes there on "a harvest excursion" (*WMR* 56). But "the big one thing I learned back there," he realizes, "was undertaking" (*WMR* 59). "The green lush old Eden" of the East becomes a paradoxical garden of death where "for a minute" Johnnie "really felt good" until he remembered "the blinding sun outside, […] that was empty glare of sky" (*WMR* 58). This corrupted Eden with "the smell of clover rich and sweet, scenting the whole air" and "grass falling heavy and green when the sickle hit it" (*WMR* 58) is in fact a wasteland from which Johnnie wants to escape and which is clearly related to Murdoch whose lush fenced prairie garden prompts Johnnie to conclude that "the Hanging Garden of Babylon must have looked a lot like Murdoch's backyard" (*WMR* 156). This backyard, "a little bit of the East" (*WMR* 158), is significantly separated from the prairie farmers whose life is characterized by drought. Similarly, Murdoch is separated from the people he represents in the campaign as he dwells in an artificially sustained Eden cut off from change. Murdoch's garden where Backstrom meets Helen Persephone, "green and lush" where "roses bloom and cherries blossom," where Murdoch "made plums and apricots and crab apples hang so heavy on the branches they had to be propped up – and nobody else could keep a cactus alive" (*WMR* 60), is an Edenic oasis in the middle of the land devastated by drought in the Canadian West. The garden which smells "a little bit of the East" (*WMR* 158) must be sacrificed to Backstrom's erotic regenerative energy, orgies and the western principle of death (Thomas, 42). Backstrom takes what is under himself and ends "the most terrible courting" (*WMR* 142) metaphorically defeating old Murdoch who "dreaded winter. He dreaded the first fall of snow" (*WMR* 158), because only winter could destroy his green and lush garden. Backstrom usurps the green and lush garden with Murdoch's daughter Helen Persephone "seven nights in a row" (*WMR* 157) parodying the creation myth.

The love affair between Backstrom and Helen Persephone could be easily associated to the myths of Pluto, Demeter and Persephone, while Backstrom's sexuality parodies Pluto's power. Helen Persephone's very name points to her connection to the hidden powers of the Greek goddess of the same name, Hades', i.e. Pluto's lover. Helen's name is ambiguous: she is both a wife and a lover. She is associated to Backstrom's wedded wife Elaine. Unlike Elaine Burkhardt who believes John

and his preaching that the rain will fall and that he will win the elections, Helen Persephone is reserved.

Helen becomes the garden of Eden for Backstrom. At one point Backstrom concludes that she is the embodiment of both his love and life:

> She was the garden, the forest of my soul; a forest tangled and scented. A forest wild. She was the turf and torment of my raucous love. My own wife, that bundle of consistencies, is all straight hair at one end, a twist or two at the other. H.P. was the paradox of my dreams (*WMR* 208).

Like Persephone, who spends half of the year in Pluto's invisible world as his lover, Helen Persephone spends secretly her nights with Backstrom. To Backstrom's question: "What if it doesn't rain?" she shortly replies "Make love to me?" (*WMR* 163) Thus Helen Persephone supports Backstrom, for if the act of rainmaking doesn't work out (this act is inevitably connected to Backstrom's political victory), then Helen's love should ensure Backstrom's victory. At the literal level, the usurpation of Murdoch's garden and the seduction of his daughter signifies the decline of his political power. At the metaphorical mythical level, the acts of lovemaking and rainmaking are closely connected to the creation myth which is, according to James Fraser, related to the ruler's political power (Frejzer, 1). Since Backstrom corrupts Murdoch's garden and his daughter, he disturbs natural harmony and fertility and parodies the creation myth. The final coupling in "the middle of Doc's sunken pool" (*WMR* 166), "damned near drowning" (*WMR* 167) represents physical unity completed by the ceremony of water. "Patience and water" (*WMR* 160) are, according to Murdoch, the only way of preserving the garden, and Backstrom with his physical activity violates the purpose of both the garden and water, because his physical sexual energy should result in political victory and not in Helen Persephone's fertility.

In the *Words of My Roaring,* Doc Murdoch's lush garden or Helen Persephone as the embodiment of garden are represented through parody. Johnnie himself approaches the election as though it were the end of the world and he himself was uncertain of "election." Even as the rain falls at the end of the novel, we know that the moment of renewal is illusory and what Kroetsch represents is the fall of the West as seen by the people from Ontario. The idea of an Eden-like place within prairie surroundings remains an ironic image of human illusions and one of the poles of prairie imagination. Kroetsch in his *Alberta* describes prairie people as "locked between dream and nightmare" (*A,* 57), and the dream is as real and as essential as the nightmare. The myth of the garden in the prairie fiction remains within a dream of the West and reflects a certain very real and enduring qualities of the prairie mind.

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"LITERARY SHRINE ON THE PRAIRIES: CANLIT GROWS UP"

The first part of the title of my paper, "Literary Shrine on the Prairie", is a play on the title of a very sentimental series of books, and popular TV series of pioneer family life in the late 19th century, by Laura Ingalls Wilder, called *Little House on the Prairie*. The second part of my title, "Canlit grows up", should be amended to "Canlit grows sideways", because as I discovered in the writing of this paper, the prairies present a special case in terms of understanding canonicity, cultural capital, and the ideology of literarary value. If we think of a shrine as a structure, a house, then this paper traces the ways in which the Canadian prairie challenges and even disobeys the ideology of cultural value by deconstructing the notion of the literary shrine. My touchstone will be a short story by Prairie writer Sharon Butala. In this 1988 story called "The Prize" the narrator announces:

> When I was an obscure, barely published writer filled with dreams of glory, I had made a solitary pilgrimage around the prairie provinces to the few small towns and farms where writers of talent had once lived: to the homestead of the Icelandic poet, Stephan Stephansson in Alberta, to Margaret Laurence's family home in Manitoba, and in Saskatchewan I had searched for what had been the farm where Sinclair Ross was raised (44).

In this paper, my search moves sideways. I don't visit the Stephansson house, but I do begin with the Laurence house in Manitoba and then move West to Ross' Horizon and then to the place where Butala's narrator ends up, and from there to the place where Butala herself ends up. By the time I get to the Rockies, the notion of the literary shrine has pretty much fallen apart.

What attracts pilgrims to a literary shrine in the first place? Butala's narrator in "The Prize" asks himself why he wanted to visit these literary shrines on the prairies. He says "Was it only that I wanted to be close to the intimate, personal lives of writ-

ers who had achieved what I only aspired to? Not exactly that – I was searching for something I hadn't been able to name even to myself. Although I don't know why this happened, nor any reason for it, I was in the grip of the conviction that I had been chosen for greatness"(45). In pursuit of this dream of greatness, Butala's narrator finds himself in "the village written about by an American writer who had lived there during his childhood" (45).

As a point of departure, and as a place to begin my discussion, I'd like to describe the shrine to the Brontë sisters in England, which I visited in the eighties as part of my own undergraduate training. It is located in the village of Haworth in Yorkshire. The parsonage where the family lived and died is perfectly preserved, as are Charlotte's tiny shoes, and the very couch that Emily died on! There's the gloomy churchyard, the wild moors….and attached to the perfectly preserved buildings, a museum housing manuscripts, relics, juvenalia….and an auditorium where scholars can lecture on the profound significance of the novels, and where a famous writer like Margaret Drabble can discourse about the importance of Charlotte Brontë to her own work. Haworth Parsonage is the gold standard of literary shrines.

Back in Canada, things are different. Margaret Laurence House is in Neepawa, the author's birthplace and hometown, inspiration for the fictional town of Manawaka in which she sets her novels. At first blush, Margaret Laurence House appears to obey the model: the home is preserved as a provincial heritage site, and has been since the author's death in 1987. Yet in some ways this monument is at odds with the way in which the author herself disobeys literary tradition. In *The Vernacular Muse,* Dennis Cooley points out how in her first Manawaka novel, *The Stone Angel,* Laurence opens with a lengthy and carefully detailed set piece describing the graveyard in which the stone angel stands, and in so doing she very deliberately "opposes what is foreign to what is native, what is imposed to what is discovered, what is artificial and refined to what is natural and forthright" (25), an opposition which, Cooley suggests, infuses all of her work.

Laurence's shrine, then, presents a brown imperturbable face, and is recognizably a veneration. Yet ironically, it venerates an author whose project was iconoclasm. Her central character in *The Diviners,* Morag, marries the patriarch, the colonial master, Brook Skelton – he is her English professor, the arbiter of all that literature means and is. Yet Morag leaves this sterile, patriarchal marriage for the uncertainties of an off and on liaison with the native, with the metis vagabond, namely Jules Tonnerre. Laurence's contemporary Sinclair Ross praised her deployment of the character of Jules Tonnerre…admiring "the hard, strong wild streak [in him], contrasting with the pathetic compromises to survive" (239). In short, as with the graveyard, Laurence's work privileges, values that which is untamed, native, wild, limitless….as the prairies themselves.

In researching this paper, I was able to find only one book, published in 1984, on the topic of Canadian literary shrines, by the pop culture gadfly John Robert Columbo. Columbo even then feels compelled to justify the existence of his book *Literary*

landmarks of Canada, by saying: "There is no shortage of sites…but perhaps there is a shortage of vision. There is no absence of authors but there might be an absence of mind, a disinclination on the part of Canadians to imagine….the country is not an imaginative whole; the land and its peoples are too diverse, unmanageable….."(11). In researching this paper, however, I found not a disinclination to imagine, but rather a willingness to imagine – not an imaginative whole perhaps, but rather a detail that suggests wholeness – that marks the fiction of prairie writers like Laurence, Ross, and Butala.

In reference to her own so-called prairie realism, and in response to questions about how closely the fictional town of Manawaka resembles the actual town of Neepawa, Laurence said: "In almost every way… Manawaka is not so much any one prairie town as an amalgam of many prairie towns. Most of all, I like to think it is simply itself, a town of the mind, my own private world" (Columbo 219).

The imagination of Sinclair Ross appears to work in a similar way. His best known novel is *As For Me and My House,* the tale of a loveless prairie marriage between two frustrated artists withering away in the heat and dust of the fictional town of Horizon in the Dirty Thirties, the years of the Depression which so marked Ross and others of his generation. I remember being so thrilled when, on a Saskatchewan road trip, I "discovered" the town of Horizon. It was a ghost town. One crumbling elevator, a couple of abandoned homesteads. I took pictures of the crumbling grain elevator and sent them to my friend Lorna Crozier, whose Mrs. Bentley poems in "A Saving Grace" re-imagine Ross' narrator. Much later, I discovered that several other critics, like Robert Thacker and Dallas Harrison, have assayed the search for the "real" Horizon. But Ross' biographer, David Stouck, believes that Ross wasn't particularly concerned about any actual place. He says that "Ross claimed never to have seen the actual town of Horizon" (307n1) but merely that he found its name and its presence on the map suggestive. Like Laurence's Manawaka, Ross' false fronted town of Horizon was primarily a creation of the mind, an imagined space where his artistry was given play.

So it seems that on the prairies we find ourselves in a space where landscape shifts, where the horizon slips away….where, as the joke goes, a farmer can watch his dog run away….for three days. How then, do we construct a literary shrine in such a landscape? One way that comes to mind is the Stegner House, in Eastend, in Southwest Saskatchewan. The American-born author Wallace Stegner spent ten years here, and his novel *Wolf Willow* reflects his experience of the landscape. (Does this sound familiar? It should. This is the house "discovered" by Sharon Butala's author/narrator in "The Prize". The Stegner house is the place Butala's narrator chooses to inhabit, in search of inspiration and greatness). However, when Stegner himself recalls his childhood adventures, he remembers not buildings but landscape, and "days of indolence and adventure where space was as flexible as the mind's cunning and where time did not exist….the uninterrupted prairie" (Columbo 234–5). The prairies provide a vastness that both dwarfs and liberates.

Enshrinement is impossible arrogance in this landscape. Thus, the Stegner house, instead of being a museum to the great man, is administered by the Eastend Arts Council as a creative retreat. The house and garden are rented to writers and artists most weeks of the year, for a very low fee. In short, rather than a mausoleum, or a museum, the Stegner House is an incubator, a place where the literary past feeds and nurtures the literary present and future.

Just slightly west of Eastend and Stegner's house lies one of the most unusual literary shrines Canada knows…..It's A Place called Old Man on his Back. Odd to think that this descriptor refers to the physical appearance of a place…but also suggests that the Old Man of inherited literary tradition has gone to his ancestors. Old Man on His Back is a vast tract of virgin prairie, part of which was donated to the Nature Conservancy by Butala and her husband Peter, who died this past summer. Sharon Butala's book about life on this tract of prairie, called *The Perfection of the Morning,* was one of the most surprising success stories in Canadian publishing. It's not a novel, nor is it really a memoir….it's almost unclassifiable, but is subtitled "an apprenticeship in nature" and here is the way the author elaborates on what she means by this apprenticeship: "I would find myself falling into a reverie as I walked, sounds in the already silent yard muffled by the falling snow, the vistas blurred and narrowed by it, nobody around for miles, and I would have this sense of having moved into another world."

"It was a world where things were what they seemed to be; where they were clear and simple and made a kind of sense so elemental that I didn't have to learn them and I didn't have to think at all with my mind. I thought instead with my bones and my muscles, with some deeply human place in my gut" (53).

In these words, I find an echo of Dennis Cooley's assertion about Laurence's opening to *The Stone Angel*, of its Jungian undercurrents. This appears to be where Butala takes us….to some place beyond literature, beyond tradition, beyond anything as solid and tangible as a book or a shrine to the person who produced that book. Likewise, with the success of *The Perfection of the Morning,* Sharon Butala has gone from being known as an author of fiction to a "visionary".

And on it goes. Saskatchewan visual artist Shelley Sopher finds stories in the teepee rings that mark Old Man on His Back. What she says of the teepee rings she so lovingly traces in her photographic artwork is true of a great deal of prairie art, in my view: she says "Teepee rings don't stand out. If you don't know what you're looking for, you wouldn't notice them. Even if you do know, it takes a while for your eye to become adjusted" (qtd in Matejko np). Yet, as one critic has said of Sopher's work, "In some images a tiny and seemingly insignificant moment is immortalized….From this microcosm of a fleeting moment, Sopher's installation transports us in one glance to the passage of years" (Matejko np).

From Saskatchewan, my literary tour now moves West into Alberta, home of the Stephansson house, preserved in honour of the Icelandic poet and homesteader, but rather than stopping there I'll head south, nearly to the American border, where

Chief Mountain looms above the rolling ranchlands. This mountain is itself, but also a literary landmark in hilarious and peacemaking novels about life among the modern blackfoot in Southern Alberta, written by a man who is neither Blackfoot or Albertan, but an American/Canadian man of Sioux/Greek descent. I'm speaking of Thomas King, and of his novels *Medicine River* and *Green Grass Running Water*. This borderland also provides the setting for Guy Vanderheaghe's *The Last Crossing,* which pits a Brook Skelton-like patriarch, an arrogant aristocratic Brit, against prairie elemental, the wilderness embodied in a hunted bear. In Vanderheaghe's novel, the hunted turns the tables, becomes the hunter; in short, the bear wins, in a beautiful swirl of colonizer's blood.

And it's certainly Vanderheaghe I thought of when, one day last spring, my partner Stephen and I stumbled across another landmark…..namely McDougall Church on the western edge of the foothills edging the Blackfoot reserve. It's a tiny clapboard structure, brave little steeple braced against the roaring winds from the mountains. The Reverend for whom the church is named died in a January blizzard in 1883. While Stephen took photographs, I picked up fast food wrappers, stuffed them into a green garbage bag, while keeping an eye on the idling minivan in the parking lot parked next to our car – teen couple, drugs, sex, who knows? And in that moment I observed that *There's then, and there's now, and there's whatever is to come next*. This place is beyond enshrinement. I began to hope that Guy Vanderheaghe has this church caught in his mind's eye this very minute, is just as we speak weaving it into his next tale of the west.

Because the upshot is, and here I conclude by returning to Butala's "The Prize", the narrator (male) confesses that his aim is literary fame, greatness. And he hopes to find that greatness by inhabiting the home of a previous great. But what happens to this writer is that his project goes sideways. The slick urban voice with its "driving, energy-filled narrative"(61) that marked his first novel just doesn't seem to work in this prairie place. What comes through instead is "a calm, meditative voice that I didn't recognize and was becoming harder and harder to break free of" (61). For some readers, "The Prize" is frustrating because it doesn't go where it said it was going to go. It purports to describe an author's struggle to achieve greatness. Instead, the author struggles to find a voice, and in the meantime, gets distracted by his interactions with the locals to the extent that by the time the story ends, the focus is no longer on the writer and writing but on something else entirely, the mystifying prejudices of the townsfolk and stolid endurance of an elderly Hutterite man who sells the narrator fresh chickens – in other words, the life that surrounds the artist. But that's precisely the point. The story goes sideways, it does not do what is expected, it subverts cultural canonical expectations. The only prize that matters, ultimately, is the journey – from the real through the imagination back to something very solidly real.

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WHO ARE GÖTZ AND MEYER? – ALBAHARI'S "BANALITY OF EVIL"[1]

Let me begin with a joke:

> Two men enter a restaurant and ask the waiter:
> Do you serve Jews?
> We certainly do, sir, the waiter answers.
> Bring us two well-done, then.

Most of us laugh at such jokes which probably confirms that the dark side of human nature is maybe darker than the superficial black humour of this bad joke would indicate. The fact we can all laugh at suchlike jokes brings to mind Arendt's "banality of evil" as many have understood it. My intention here is: 1) to discuss the phrase and its reception; 2) to analyze its possible truthfulness with regard to human nature, and 3) to show the stand David Albahari takes concerning the human capacity for evil-doing in his novel *Götz and Meyer*.

I believe Hannah Arendt has often regretted having coined the phrase "the banality of evil." She ended her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in these words, and even used it in the subtitle: *A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Let me remind that Otto Adolf Eichmann headed the Gestapo's office for Jewish affairs and was directly responsible for carrying out the orders of his superior Reinhard Heydrich, who was an outspoken anti-Semite (Levi, 1). In 1960 Eichmann was tracked down in Argentina and kidnapped by Israeli intelligence to be tried in Jerusalem and sentenced to capital punishment. Hannah Arendt, who had by that time had her reputation

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as a philosopher well established, attended part of the trial in the capacity of the New Yorker reporter. The follow-up was the publication of the book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in 1963 which ever since has been arousing a heated debate, mostly because of the phrase "the banality of evil."

Arendt's observation about Eichmann projects a picture of a person eager to pursue and improve his career, unmotivated by ideological reasons. According to her views, he had an ordinary and common personality, which was confirmed by the reports of six psychologists. They could not diagnose any mental illness or psychological damage, no trace of hatred or abnormal personality, he was even more "normal" than an average person. He was charged with carrying out the Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe, and he conscientiously did his job. He behaved as dutiful citizen who obeyed law and order, as a harried bureaucrat who followed orders from above, and even as a responsible administrator who did his part of the important job that had to be done, as stated by his superiors, for the sake of the white race. Hannah Arendt suggested that his banal personality discredits the idea that all Nazi criminals were psychopathic or fundamentally different from ordinary people. In her epilogue she claims:

> The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied – as had been said at Nuremberg over and over again by the defendants and their counsels – that this new type of criminal, who is in actual fact hostis generis humani, commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong (Arendt, 249).

In short, Eichmann killed five million people and remained his old normal self. Arendt jumped to the conclusion that he symbolized the banality of evil which made many of her readers jump to the conclusion that "we all do share the same common propensities eventually leading to ultimate criminality" (Friedlander, 72). In other words, that in each one of us there is squatting a little Eichmann (Zerzan), waiting for the right moment to manifest himself.

Whatever Hannah Arendt originally meant when she used the phrase, she afterwards went to great lengths to prove she never held any doctrine or thesis behind it. As early as 1963 she makes a distinction between "commonplace" and "banal" and clearly states that evil is not common to everybody. In 1972 at a conference in Toronto, Arendt emphatically defends her view:

> [Y]ou say that I said there is an Eichmann in each one of us. Oh no! There is none in you and none in me! This doesn't mean that there are not quite a number of Eichmanns. But they look really quite different. I always hated this notion of 'Eichmann in each one of us.' This is simply not true. This would be as untrue as the opposite, that Eichmann is in nobody (qutd. in Melvy, 308).

She later takes pains to develop a theory according to which the faculty of thinking works to avoid evildoing. By the concept of "thinking" she means the Socratic approach whereby thinking is a silent dialogue between me and myself. In other words, to preserve his personal integrity, to be consistent with oneself, one needs to come to agreement with himself, otherwise he turns into his own adversary. The two-in-one dialogue of me and myself in the process of examining the events around us proves that a person is capable of thinking. In Kantian terms, man needs philosophy, the exercise of reason as the faculty of thought, precisely to prevent evil.

Arendt claims that the faculty of thinking is accessible to everyone and that the inability to think is not stupidity. It is rather an indication of shallowness, which also characterised Eichmann. She reaches the conclusion that "the more superficial someone is, the more likely will he be to yield to evil." She creates a memorable picture: "It can overgrow and lay waste the whole world precisely because it spreads like a fungus on the surface" (qutd. in Melvy, 309).

However convincing and impressive the ideas and images Arendt creates as the source of evil, I believe with some of her critics that her views on the nature of evil are exclusive of the options which seem to be equally valid as the inability to think. Contrary to her perception that only Good could be radical, meaning rooted in the depths of psyche, there are views that Evil can be as radical, or as Rosenbaum says, "conscious, willful, knowing evil" (Rosenbaum). There were too many of "Hitler's willing executioners," Goldhagen noted in his book to be accounted for simply by the inability to think.

The film *Human Remains* by Jay Rosenblatt illustrates the banality of evil by creating intimate portraits of the five notorious dictators of 20th century. Yet, the ordinariness of their mundane private lives and some of their humane characteristics only bring to the surface the problem of the immense complexity of human nature when one considers the effects of their public and political lives. Whether it is Hitler or Stalin, their public crimes are unthinkable. An ordinary person shrinks back from a full exposure and realisation of these atrocities. They are treated as unimaginable, inconceivable, uncanny. What may be hiding behind this paralysis of comprehension is maybe correctly hinted at by Freud in his essay "The Uncanny" (Freud). He starts from the question in what circumstances the familiar can become uncanny and frightening and accepts Schelling's idea that it is something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light. Freud concludes: "This uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (Freud, 4). Therefore, when a layman is faced with the perpetrators of the Holocaust crimes, for example, he shrinks away from them because he "sees in them the working of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in remote corners of his own being" (Freud, 5). Man shudders at the apprehension of a little Eichmann in himself and self-protectively disbelieves the possibility of such inhuman crimes. Freud clearly believed in the

banality of evil which Arendt herself disclaimed. I am also of the opinion that each man possesses a latent capacity for evildoing which is fortunately seldom expressed in a radical way.

David Albahari, on the other hand, starts from the victim position. The narrator of his novel *Götz and Meyer*[2] is indirectly victimised through the extermination of his entire family. His mother and father survive the Belgrade pogrom of the Jews in WW2 owing to luck and some precaution, but besides them, there are only six relatives who escaped the concentration camp. The remaining 61 died in front of the firing squads if they were men or in the gas truck if they were women or children. The narrator is nameless for the reader and well-nigh nameless for himself since he experiences a serious crisis of identity in which having a name simply is not enough to know who you are. Driven by that question, Who am I?, he searches his own past and the past of his executed relatives. Now that his parents are both dead, he is left with only one senile uncle in an old people's home in Belgrade while the other five live in Australia, Israel, America and Argentina. Since they do not reply to his letters pleading for information, the narrator turns to the old man in a desperate attempt to at least comprehend the reasons of what was unavoidable. He was "a wrinkled apple at the end of a dry branch on a withered tree" (29)[3] that stood for the bare and barren family tree definitely dying out. His mother's and his father's families, including himself who never married, did not leave a single living child, so he needs to understand whether this was inevitable. But first, in order to learn about his dead relatives, he visits his old uncle.

Albahari is a great master of plot and narrative structure so every significant scene has its double repeated later on in the novel. The scene in the old people's home in Belgrade is an anticipation of his imagined visit to the old people's home in the Alps where Götz and Meyer are supposedly spending their last days. His uncle has diabetes and therefore should not eat sweets. However, to entice him to speak about long-forgotten relatives, the narrator gives him chocolates which are forbidden. In his few visits, he gradually learns the names he craves for one by one and lists them together in a string that to his ears becomes music: Daniel, Isak, Jakov; Bukica, Estera, Sara; Solomon, Rafael, Haim; Rašela, Rifka, Klara (104). Although he is genuinely moved reciting these dear names of the unknown cousins, although there is deep pathos in the scene when he laughs with his students only to hide tears, he nevertheless takes one part of his uncle's life with every sweet bait. Likewise, at the beginning of the novel Albahari describes Götz or Meyer giving chocolates to

[2] It may be interesting that Jean-Paul Sartre wrote a play *The Devil and the Good Lord* (1951) which concerns the moral choices of its characters, warlord Goetz, clergyman Heinrich, communist leader Nasti and others during the German Peasants' War. The first act follows Goetz' transformation from a vicious war criminal to a „good" person of noble deeds, as during a siege of town Worms, he decides not to massacre its citizens. Sartre shows Goetz' transformation as a way to gain even more power, and to use „good" to enslave people. The enslavement in *Götz and Meyer* takes its extreme form as total annihilation all for the good of the Arian race.

[3] All references to the text of the novel are marked by the relevant page number in parenthesis following the quotes.

starving camp children minutes before boarding them onto the gas truck. He says they loved children so much and showed real tenderness ruffling their hair and giving them sweets but that did not stop them from turning the gas on and killing them. They were executioners, indeed Hitler's willing executioners, and the question is how much they differ from the narrator himself. He also knew that if he continued with the chocolates he would hasten the uncle's end and become just like Götz and Meyer, but he did not stop right away. A few more visits were rewarded with a few more names and the uncle was soon found dead in his bed.

The moral issues of motivation and responsibility are here inescapable. It may seem that the narrator's motive is honourable and his humanity beyond doubt. It was so important for him to learn about his family that all means were acceptable and a sign of his morality is perhaps the uneasiness he felt treating his uncle with chocolates. On the other hand, Götz and Meyer could also say that they were sincerely fond of the children whom they fed chocolates, that it was not a farce, and that they killed them only because it was their assignment. If not them, somebody else would have done it. Yet, whatever the rationalisation, the fact remains that in both cases the outcome was the same – death. Whether it was the life of an old man exchanged for valuable knowledge or the death of 5000 people as an indication of one's disciplined and conscientious approach to the military job, in both cases the perpetrators abdicated their autonomy of choice and thus proved blind to moral issues.

Albahari does not blame only Götz, Meyer, or the narrator for moral shortsightedness. He takes care to mention a couple of times that the extermination of the Jews in Belgrade went on in full sight of the whole city. Truckloads of Jewish women and children were driven through the heart of the city and then unloaded and buried at a nearby cemetery but the city "was closing its eyes shamelessly to the scenes of their precipitous fall" (145). The Belgrade citizens did not react when the Jews were registered, dispossessed and killed. This sort of indifference has been noted among the non-Jewish people of all European nations during WW2 and Albahari's narrator tries to find some justification for it. He says that "in times of war, it is best, if you are not a direct participant, to know as little as possible, because this is at least a tiny victory over a reality that is the same for everyone, regardless of political conviction" (16). It may be seen as a self-protective mechanism which almost equals escapism while on the other hand it is very easy to identify it as cowardice and selfishness. There are very few examples of active participation in the fate of the Jews or of attempts to sabotage the Nazis and help the Jews. As Albahari says, "Silence can kill" (19). Clearly ethical issues are subordinate to existential issues even when one's life is not directly jeopardised by a morally correct choice.

Therefore, the phrase "Good Germans" could be applied not only to those members of the German nation who did not support the regime but did not resist it either. It can be used more generically "to people in any country who observe reprehensible things taking place – whether done by a government or by another powerful institution – but remain silent, neither raising objections nor taking steps to change the course of events" (Good Germans, *Wikipedia*). Albahari is critical of all those who

passively witnessed the human catastrophe taking place in public. He is equally reproachful of those victim Jews who accepted any role in what Primo Levi called "The Gray Zone" (Levi, 29), from the lowest ranks of prisoners in charge of some minor responsibilities to the top of the ladder where the Judenrat was, the Jewish self-administration set up in each camp. They all consciously or subconsciously hoped to prolong their own lives by cooperating with the Nazi officials and very often inflicting unnecessary pain on the prisoners. Previously normal people begin to manifest abnormal behaviour and the likeness of their victimisers, taken to be evil beforehand. For this reason Raul Hilberg, a great historian of the Holocaust asks: "Wouldn't you be happier if I had been able to show you that all the perpetrators were crazy?" (Bauman, 82)

The problem is, nobody can prove the abnormality of the perpetrators while a potential abnormal "willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority" (Milgram) can be experimentally proved. This is what Milgram did when he designed an experiment in which a normal average person was made to inflict presumably excessive pain on another perfectly innocent subject simply because he was given orders from an authority, in this case the scientist in charge. If he wavered hearing the screams of the subject, a succession of verbal prods given by the experimenter was usually enough. They were: 1) Please continue; 2) The experiment requires that you continue; 3) It is absolutely necessary that you continue; 4) You have no other choice, you must go on. And he did until he gave the subject a 450-volt shock three times in succession, after which the experiment was halted. Whatever the theory that interprets the psychological mechanism of achieving such high obedience levels, the fact that over 60% of people are ready to inflict fatal voltages is a telling comment on the potential for evil doing as part of the dark side of human nature. As W. H. Auden said: "Evil is unspectacular and always human, and shares our bed and eats at our own table." A Little Eichmann, a Götz or Meyer lurks in each one of us.

Finally, Albahari will not spare his narrator either. He is distraught with ignorance, anger, guilt, and self-disgust in his role of a helpless victim but gradually the reader realises that he begins to assume the role of the victimiser as well. It happens not only with his old uncle, but also with the postman, the curator in the museum, and even with his students. While he organises a visit to the camp for them to learn about the significance of remembering, he in fact manipulates them by giving them the names of his executed relatives so that he feels among his folk. It is such a precious sweet feeling for him, craved for and unrepeatable that he does not adequately notice the confusion and fear among his students. Albahari takes special care to mention many times in the story how the faces of Götz and Meyer refuse to be seen by his narrator. On the first page of the novel he admits that "having never seen them" (1), he can only imagine them. Yet, whenever he imagines or dreams of them, they have no faces. Their faces are empty, but shadows move across his face so that gradually the idea emerges that his face could be substituted for their faces. The more he learns about Götz and Meyer, the more he realises he could as-

sume their role. The narrator becomes aware that "Götz actually could be Meyer, and Meyer, indeed, could be Götz" (115). When he looks at his student in class, two naughty boys at the back look like Götz and Meyer, when he rides with them on the bus, he again sees Götz and Meyer among his students. The face of the bus driver reminds him of Götz or Meyer, so he inevitably comes to the conclusion that "anyone could have been Götz. Anyone could have been Meyer" (65). Each one of them seems to be an ordinary average man, not unlike Eichmann as Hannah Arendt saw him. In an imagined conversation he had with Götz and Meyer who are now part of his everyday life, they ask him a rhetorical question: "…is there anyone who knows, who genuinely knows that he wouldn't act precisely the same way in our place?" (91) The narrator cannot work out an answer, but when he tries to conjure up Götz and Meyer by looking in the mirror, he fills the voids of their faces with his own (68). In the end, he avoids looking in the mirror, afraid of who or what he may see there (165).

This takes us back to Freud's definition of the uncanny. It is something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light. When the narrator looks in the mirror and sees himself in Götz and Meyer since their faces are fused, it is so distressing that he would rather not look. It was relatively easy for him while he was searching for his enemies on the outside but, as Cervantes says, "our greatest foes, and whom we must chiefly combat, are within," and an ordinary man finds it so repulsive that he rejects the whole idea. Acknowledging and accepting wickedness as a potential part of human nature is a serious epistemological problem for man, and Albahari's narrator is no exception. Evil has to be in somebody else and likewise responsibility for evil doing always in the domain of other people. However, Albahari with no exception, whenever he mentions Götz and Meyer, always says Götz or Meyer. The two of them are interchangeable just as the narrator is interchangeable with any one of them. Which in the end leaves us with the banality of evil.

I could conclude with another joke about the plight of the Jews since there are so many of them, which again is a telling sign that the ideology that created the Holocaust perhaps does not belong to the past. Instead, I will point out to another disturbing example of how popular culture propagates unacceptable ideas among the young. The 2005 album of the band Nine Horses titled *Snow Borne Sorrow* features the song "The Banality of Evil." These lyrics are repeated a few times in the song:

> Benevolent mother
> Smother the child
> The benefactors are in denial

with a variation: "The perpetrators are in denial." Even if essentially mankind is flawed, the ideology which popularises cultural values should not make evil common and acceptable. Otherwise, the question: Who are Götz and Meyer? becomes irrelevant.

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DYSTOPIAN FUTURE AND MYTHICAL PAST IN NALO HOPKINSON'S NOVELS *BROWN GIRL IN THE RING* AND *MIDNIGHT ROBBER*

The idea of imaginary worlds and societies stems from Plato. The word 'utopia' is Thomas More's invention and has a spatial connotation[1]; it is both ou-topia (non-space) and eu-topia (good-place). More presents an ideal world with a perfect social structure, which inspired many authors from different fields and perspectives. The utopia of a classless world, the imaginary world without discrimination has produced various grand narratives and critiques through which world has been explained from a historical perspective and as a changeable process for the future.[2] The main significance is that, without the ability to imagine a different world, mainly utopian, society would not change. "The loss of utopia would be a disaster since it is essential for social change."[3] On the other hand, there is always a possibility that, for some, the meaning of utopia can signify the opposite: dystopia. The turn from positive to negative visions of the world was caused mainly by major world changes and historical events, starting with the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Totalitarian political regimes, world wars, the arrival of capitalism, hierarchical and patriarchal societies gave a fertile background for many dystopias. The basic meaning of dystopia, therefore, began to present the worlds in the (near) future; often the authors made use of science fiction features (especially they made use of technology) in order to present a believable world which turned out as a disaster. The purpose is to warn readers in the present about the future as well as to criticize the present situation.

1 Baeten, 144.
2 Baeten, 143–145.
3 Beaten, 144.

Nalo Hopkinson says that she writes speculative fiction seen from the perspective of a Black person. Both novels *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Midnight Robber*, which will be the topic of this paper, are speculative fiction about imagining and re-imagining possible futures built into a dystopian story and mixed with the conventions of science fiction, fantasy, Caribbean folklore and mythology. As Linda Hutcheon[4] suggests, the invention of an alternate reality is best for self-reflection (although she does not include science fiction in the list), which is one of the main issues in dystopias. I will try to show how these features mingle and reveal the possible future. More's *Utopia* has been described as a form of philosophical dialogue, which addresses the reader as intelligent person.[5] The attention and focus of the reader is in a dystopia. It wants to persuade the reader to change roles from listener to active participant in order to build a better society and the world through different strategies and techniques. One of them is to present a disastrous world set in the near future that nobody would like to live in. However, Hopkinson follows this pattern only partially.

Alcena Madeline Davis Rogan[6] claims that the capitalist hegemony of multinational corporations over all forms of political and economic enterprise caused the division of culture. "Third world" culture was therefore always positioned after the "white" one, as happened in economic, political and other issues. Rogan tries to justify her statement with examples from Nalo Hopkinson's novel *Brown Girl in the Ring*. However, I do not agree with the author that Hopkinson tries to bring out the points about racial exploitation and women rights issues concerning abortion in the way Rogan claims. Rogan says, for example, that black women did not join the abortion rights movement because they had compulsory sterilization in the past under white colonization. Although Nalo Hopkinson briefly includes these issues in her novels, I claim that they are not her biggest concern and she does not stress primarily these.

The novel *Brown Girl in the Ring* is set in an economically collapsed, desolate suburban Toronto ghetto, Burn, 11 years after the Riots. This place has been abandoned by the government and the rest of the world, even by the representatives of law and order. People who can afford to live somewhere else have left. The postcolonial, postindustrial, and posturban[7] Burn residents are uneducated immigrants without any social security. Puppet governments control the profits from drug trafficking and the human organs trade, which symbolically represent "the Ring". There is also no health care, so Gros-Jeanne, Ti-Jeanne's grandmother, combines nursing practice with traditional herbal healing knowledge to heal people. Some people think that she is weird because she believes in spiritual powers and because she practises rituals. Hopkinson "treats spirit-calling the way other science fiction writers treat

[4] Jablon, 139–65.
[5] Fitting, 141–58.
[6] Rogan, 153–154.
[7] Wood.

nanotechnology or virtual reality."[8] In this novel Toronto is presented as a city of crime, vandalism, violence, gangs, prostitution and poverty. Ti-Jeanne[9] depicts Toronto and its buildings. People live in cramped squatted houses, but Ti-Jeanne's grandma uses the Toronto Crematorium Chapel for her rituals, which means that the original function of the building has been changed in accordance with the needs of the Burn community[10], which is a positive alternative use of space, compared to the desolate outside world.

The setting in her other novel *Midnight Robber* is the planet of Toussaint. It is colonized by people from the Caribbean. They have their own belief system, habits and celebrations. The planet gives the impression that it is a harmonious place monitored by good Granny Nanny, who is a protector and a moral authority. The science fiction technology elements, such as an information database, earbugs, a teleporting device that Tan-Tan uses to escape with her father from prison (it is possible to travel through dimensions in this novel), and android nurses are something common in this novel. On the other hand, New Half-Way Tree as a second setting in the novel is a rural wilderness, and creatures from Caribbean mythology (gully hens, guinea lizards, mako jumbies, rolling calf, etc.) present a counterpart to the sci-fi planet from the previous setting. The rural wilderness as the alternate second setting in *Midnight Robber* does not offer shelter to its inhabitants as well, especially the newcomers, like Tan-Tan and her father. From one perspective, the settings in the novels are opposite, since one presents a utopian place of order and security and the other a dangerous, dirty and hopeless town, in which the signs of "civilization and order" are bodies hanging on trees as a warning against disobedience, and where people who revolt are punished by being left alone in a small tin box. But as the plots unravel, none of the settings is a utopian vision of the world; both are at the same time dystopian for some inhabitants. Fear is a logical consequence produced by the repressive, manipulative situations in which the characters find themselves trapped. In order to maintain hierarchical order and a totalitarian regime, people must be scared. In *Brown Girl in the Ring* the characters do not dare walk freely in the Toronto streets because they could be murdered or intimidated by drug-dealers or gangs. Ironically, segregation means security.[11] On the other hand, the younger immigrant generation becomes scared of their own traditions, too; these become "exotic and frightening, forbidden and dangerous."[12] So, they are alienated in both settings of the novel: the wild and the urban. For dystopia as a genre, setting is very important. Settings should be, on one hand, believable, realistic places (either urban or wild), and, on the other, purposely exaggerated. The readers should still find parallels with the real world to make the story more plausible, and the exag-

[8] Jonas.
[9] The name Ti-Jean is the French equivalent of »Everyman«, Ti-Jeanne is then »Everywoman« (Interview).
[10] Reid.
[11] Reid.
[12] Wood.

gerated items should be effective in terms of inviting readers to action or at least a wish to change something in their lives or in the world.

Drawing attention to the female roles in the societies is often one theme in 'feminist' dystopias. Female roles in western culture are presented as daughters, wives and mothers and were once widely acceptable. Seeing women as mere "birth machines" is common in many dystopias in order to criticize the attitude towards the female population of the world. In such dystopias women are often repressed and unequal to men. In *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan compares her body, after having been raped by her own father, to the soil which has been planted by the seed. She does not perceive herself as a person. Her father had a high position on the planet of Toussaint; he was a distinguished, honourable and powerful person. He again abuses power in Half-Way Tree by disgraceful violence over the small and weak victim, his daughter Tan-Tan, and others. He gets a "sense of mastery by abusing others."[13] A wish to gain and abuse power against the weaker ones is one of the leading dystopian features, that occurs in both novels. On the planet of Toussaint women are housewives and mothers, and Antonio's role as a man is to bring money to the house, which was a traditional western concept of separating female and male roles. But in *Brown Girl in the Ring,* Granny Nanny who is a knowledgeable spiritual authority, and who is able to monitor the characters more than ordinary people, is female. In the novel this theme occurs without the stereotyped female/male role divisions. Women in the novel survive and live without male help. The males are either losers (Ti-Jeanne's boyfriend, who is a drug addict) or heartless exploiters (like Rudy). Gros-Jeanne (Ti-Jeanne's grandma) takes care of her family and other people. She abandons all her previous men (Rudy as well). Gros-Jeanne is a mamba (a female spiritual leader), a position signals authority and gives her power in the community.[14] But she makes a mistake because she insistently wants to teach her daughter about the spirits and their folklore. Consequently, her daughter runs away and leaves the child because she is more interested in an urban lifestyle than in a strict Caribbean upbringing and tradition. The same kind of obedience is expected by the grandmother from her granddaughter and nearly causes resentment in a similar way. Grandmother fails to keep the family together. Mi-Jeanne wanders around the suburbs, dirty and homeless after she left her little girl long ago. Grandmother Gros-Jeanne tries to teach her granddaughter the traditions, mythology, medicine, and rituals, but this makes her granddaughter feeling insecure, sceptical and scared. Mi-Jeanne, a young single mother, for example, resents the responsibility of taking care of her baby. She escapes from the responsibility and from a position of caring, loving nurturing (single) mother. Her daughter Ti-Jeanne also sees her child as a burden, and she is often disturbed when the baby is hungry or cries. The maternal role is connected to the female one and develops the theme about female position in a certain society in both novels. Mothers are not ideal, and they often struggle in themselves because of their children. No matter how hopeless the family saga looks throughout the novel,

[13] Anatol 2006.
[14] Wood.

Hopkinson surprises us at the end of the novel with the (almost) happy outcome: after the family secrets are revealed, Ti-Jeanne loves her baby, without following the western concept, but her love celebrates more the spiritual appeasement with the past. Similarly, in *Midnight Robber* similarly Tan-Tan's mother prefers to have a good time with her lover than to pay attention to her child; luckily her daughter has enough attention from Nursie. A caring and protective mother is, despite the role expectations, not well performed. Questions of maternity and female freedom arise. Parents have power over their children, which can be comforting but also terrifying. Tan-Tan is raped by her father, her mother can't really manage her, and she is often too tired or indifferent towards her. Later in the novel she gets more care and love from douens, a kind of bird that who can speak, Chichibud, his wife Benta and their daughter Abitefa.[15] Tan-Tan, however, despite the fact that her baby is a product of her father's rape, overcomes this obstacle and loves her child (as in *Brown Girl in the Ring* as well), even if she has hated it throughout her pregnancy. Similarly to Ti-Jeanne, she starts loving her child after her fight is over and she finds her appeasement. In both novels the mothers do not love and care for their children because of Western values, but they find their own reasons for it.

Questions of displacement, minorities, and exile are raised in both novels. The question of how people from the edges live, those without power and wealth, is also a constant in dystopias, and especially their struggle to survive, and the strategies they use to create alternative lives. In *Brown Girl in the Ring* three generations of women who immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean struggle to survive and combine their new Canadian life with their cultural heritage. They become distanced from their root culture, language, history and society, but all of them use different ways to retain their cultural heritage, together with western, urban life.[16] Gros-Jeanne says she serves the spirits, for instance, whereas Ti-Jeanne wants them to serve her. The novel can be seen as a Bildungsroman of multiple generations. Gros-Jeanne's is very attached to the traditions, her daughter resists them, and finally the granddaughter becomes closer to them again. The grandmother helps other people because she has a sense of community from her Caribbean model of hybridity, which combines all resources: social, cultural, and spiritual. Service is the central value of communal life.[17] Hybridity was a strategy of survival and resistance amongst the enslaved people in the Carribean.[18] Michelle Reid tries to show in her article that Canada, which has adopted multiculturalism as an official government policy, does not pay enough attention to the standards of living and opportunities of immigrants. Further, she associates the theme of inclusion and exclusion of minority groups with being in the ring, which is taken from the title of Hopkinson's novel:

[15] Douens, according to Trinidadian myth, are the souls of children who died before they were baptized. They live in the forests, coming out occasionally in search of playmates, and appear as any other child except that their feet are turned backward. (http://www.caribbeantales.ca/ct_newsletter/archives/your_story/1/the_douen).

[16] Reid.

[17] Wood.

[18] Reid.

> The Burn in *Brown Girl in the Ring* represents exactly the ghettoization, hatred, discrimination, and violence that Canada's multicultural policy is designed to combat. Hopkinson's near-future Toronto is formed by the fragmentation and collapse of this government ideal.[19]

Ti-Jeanne is caught between two different places: the one here (Canada) and the remembrance of there (the Caribbean), which are personified by her grandmother who makes a living with her nurse's training and her knowledge of Caribbean remedies, and Tony who is aligned with the consumerism of destructive Canadian culture.[20] People who move and struggle for their lives in new environments come across obstacles and barriers; these new places can be either a modern urban jungle or a wild jungle; for the newcomers, it is both hard to adapt to modern life and to forget their cultural past.

In many different ways Hopkinson includes Caribbean mythology and beliefs. Gros-Jeanne in *Brown Girl in the Ring* explains to Ti-Jeanne not only about herbs but also about the past, their family, traditions, beliefs and spirits. Ti-Jeanne sometimes feels uncomfortable and sceptical, and she tries to ignore her visions, but Gros-Jeanne wants to teach her to understand them and learn from them. She explains to her granddaughter about Caribbean religions, like obeah, Santeria, Prince of Cemetery and Legbara. There is also a duppy (a spirit kept in a jug), which has omnipotent powers as long as you feed it with blood. The appearance of La Diablesse and Soucuyant is also important when speaking about the mythological part of the novel. She is wrinkled old woman with shark-like teeth in an old fashioned dress and with a hoof instead of a second leg (sometimes seen as a red fireball) who takes children's souls to extend their lives. The spirit beliefs and a wish to become immortal are strongly connected to mythology, too. There are also counter actions for those who know how to make use of them; for example, Ti-Jeanne must put the curtains back so that sunshine enters the room, or strew rice or salt on the floor. The creature who wants to take her baby will start picking every grain up, and in meantime the baby will be saved. Ti-Jeannes's possession by Prince of Cemetery makes her and Tony invisible, which saves them from Rudy and his crew, who try to find Tony who would have to kill someone in order to bring a human heart for Minister Uttley.

As has been shown in the discussion of maternal roles in the novels, there is also an example of how Hopkinson offers in both novels somehow an escape, or solutions for the desperate situations of the characters, which is not typical of dystopian writing. In *Midnight Robber,* Tan-Tan is desperate because the baby is growing inside her body; she seeks an abortion, which is not an easy task in Half-Way Tree. She sees it as the only solution for her problem. Before, her wish was to run away from her drunk and aggressive father with her friend Melonhead, a scenario that stayed a theory because she was raped before they escaped. Her solution becomes a retreat into the masking role of Robber Queen after the rape trauma. Her personality splits,

[19] Reid, 297.
[20] Wood.

which is indicated by her inner monologues, in which Tan-Tan and the Robber Queen exchange narrative voices. She feels brave when she is the Robber Queen; she makes great speeches about her noble family, which solace her. In the other novel there is also a suggestion of how to defeat the evil forces; for example the little children, who are killed in order to feed the duppy so that Rudy can maintain his omnipotent power, find a way to save themselves from such an undesired destiny. They use a projector dubbed on six waves, which gives the impression that there is a crowd much more numerous than in reality, which scares the intruders and saves their lives. The unravelling of the plot also suggests that there is a way out no matter how desolate the situation might be. Hopkinson offers the idea that it is important to know and understand the past for the future, which is a very dystopian idea; the future is always projected from the past, referred to it, and dependent on it.

The connection of two different poles, mythology and science fiction built into the dystopian novels is an interesting combination, which is scarce among other authors. The exploration of the past cultural history and the future (the elements of dystopia and magic [mythical] in the novels) shows how sci-fi and fantasy together can examine the results of humanity's efforts to understand, explain and manipulate our environments, explains Hopkinson herself. It is common in dystopian plots to end pessimistically but not in these two Hopkinson novels. The endings of the novels, with optimistic conclusions, offer suggestions for instead of mere criticism about contemporary societies and lives. An idea in both novels is that community should work together; only when people help each other and care about others can everyone survive and live well together. I believe she does not mean only the survival of the African diaspora, but of communities in general because she uses in her both novels a cruel "real" world with believable characters and situations. In these novels evil is defeated by survival strategies arising from the protagonists' positions as single black mothers in exploitative capitalist worlds. Ti-Jeanne and Tan-Tan both have the ability to join cognitions of mythology and western urban life habits; their strength to adapt, their bravery and their understanding of mythology and new life situations help them to overcome obstacles in the cruel, violent and hopeless worlds. Their roles as trickster figures can provide a suggestion for contemporary human beings, because they don't win only because of supernatural powers but because of their ability to adapt in the right way (Rudy also has the supernatural powers, but he loses because he wants to keep power for himself). In *Midnight Robber* "science is married to folk traditions."[21] Hopkinson gathers sci-fi elements and achieves cohesion via a Caribbean cultural and mythological dynamics, not via sci-fi, which is a unique decision. Supernatural elements coexist with electronic technology and cyberspace. But the feeling of moral responsibility and the fabular pattern persist: evil people either die, or change, or regret their pasts. Hopkinson builds on opposites not only by blending sci-fi elements with the past and mythology, but she also mentions slavery in her own way; not as Black vs. White, or Caribbean vs. European. Her attempt goes beyond racial prejudice and

[21] Collier, 449.

stereotypes about mothers or abortion questions. All these questions are important but not in isolation from the rest of the situations and connections which have been mentioned. However, obeah (black magic) retains an important role in both novels, and it is are stronger than humans. Hopkinson "treats spirits the way other science fiction writers treat technology or virtual reality".

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DOUGLAS COUPLAND'S "GENERATION X": A MYTH FOR AN ACCELERATED CULTURE?

Douglas Coupland's breakthrough novel *Generation X*, published in 1991, provided a convenient label for those born up to the early 1970s, and marked the beginning of a prolific literary career. With the continuous flow of essays and columns, semi-autobiographical fiction, moral parables and existential allegories which promptly reacted to the daily changes in the media, culture and economy, Coupland has become a devoted chronicler of an age which he defines as "accelerated." His eleven novels examine the issues and values of perplexed and bewildered protagonists who unanimously reject the disoriented world, its moral crisis and depressing perspectives. Despite innumerable impediments and permanent confusion, Coupland's characters find the necessary strength and motivation to build a spiritual shelter within the realms of pop culture and technology and create a creed which inserts the whole set of Christian beliefs in miracles, epiphanies and the advent of universal goodness into the fleeting images of the accelerated media age.

The fascination with popular culture continues after Coupland's firstling *Generation X* in witty and thrilling accounts of weird family histories and bizarre fairy tales which suggest that the consumers' world might well be on the brink of a severe self-evaluation if not of total disaster. The writer seems willing to tackle broader themes than generational angst or compulsive consumption. Considered as his most mature writing so far, Coupland's novel *The Girlfriend in a Coma* presents a modern Briar Rose within a world approaching apocalypse, whereas *Microserfs*, the fictionalized diary widely known as a study of "geekonomics" and "geekology", deals with a group of employees at Microsoft. *Hey, Nostradamus* was inspired by the Columbine high school shooting and, if we trust the author, triggered by a sentence saying: 'Well, you're from Canada, you don't have high school shoot-

ings'. The novel offered a polylogue of conflicting voices which question both true beliefs and false miracles in the environment of unthinkable violence and religious radicalism, its characters being immersed in a sequence of bizarre and implausible events which bear a distant resemblance to the holy secrets of baptism, matrimony and communion. Coupland's later novels are influenced by the gradual darkening of his vision: his pessimism started to show in *The Girlfriend in a Coma*, and probably reached its peak in *Hey, Nostradamus*.

Accelerated Culture

Coupland's novels deal with the phenomena of the so called "accelerated culture": rapid material changes in everyday life, accompanied by belated and usually lame spiritual insights. The writer is equally focused upon pop icons, high school shootings, and the scars of the '80s such as the fallout of yuppies and recession. Coupland is also interested in technology as a substitute for the divine, so that two of his novels present lives and opinions of Silicon Valley computer experts (*Microserfs*) and the offspring of the Google age (*JPod*). In his non-fiction writing, Coupland serves snapshots of Canadian cityscapes and American idols, whereas his novels offer fictional accounts inspired by real-life events and images.

Coupland's characters share their creator's awareness that the world changes much faster than human perspectives of it. Thus they are forced to make various adjustments – adjustment being a flagrant misnomer for shunning from one's responsibilities or immersing oneself in heavy drinking, medication, vandalizing or a no-future job. Lost and confused but never desperate, underemployed and overeducated, Coupland's twenty-somethings find their mantras in pop songs and seek salvation in awkward possessions. Charming and sensitive Claire of *Generation X* goes to incredible lengths to get racks of antlers: she has dozens of them, lying tangled in the room adjoining the kitchen, "the room that technically *ought* to have been the dining room instead of an ossuary that scares the daylights out of repairpersons come to fix the appliances" (Coupland 1991: 85). Claire even places ads in the local paper, presenting herself as an artist, and "nine times out of ten the respondent is a woman named Verna, hair in curlers, chewing nicotine gum", a woman who wants to get rid of the things left behind her ex.

Failing to fall in love easily, Coupland's characters indulge in endless contemplation of their anomie, mostly seeking refuge in platonic friendships, cartoon heroes, and funny memories. Families and relatives are usually estranged or on bad terms. Abe, one of the Silicon Valley programmers from *Microserfs*, claims to have come from "one of those 'zero kidney' families" – the family which made the agreement that if its member needed a kidney, they would react with: "Well, sorry... Been nice knowing you" (Coupland 1995: 190). Although jaded and cynical, this young man earnestly mourns the lost values. Rereading his favourite Tint:in books, Abe notices that the Boy Detective's life lacks "religion, parents, politics, relationship,

communion with nature, class, love, death, birth" (Coupland 1995: 191), and admits that he is curious about this either invisible or non-existent content.

The recurrent pattern of "the family of friends", borrowed from sitcoms and soap operas, serves the purpose of creating safe surroundings for the unstable young men and women. Coupland has suggested on various occasions that inspiration for some of his novels might have come from teenage soap operas of the eighties such as "Melrose Place." The self-confessed computer nerds of *Microserfs* call themselves addicts of the series: "We like to pretend our geek house is actually *Melrose Place*" (Coupland 1995: 65). Shopping malls and pop music have been attached to the ideological framework of Coupland's novels almost naturally. Such cultural background of the characters ranging from the not-quite-fabulous threesome in *Generation X* to the star-crossed teenage spouses in *Hey, Nostradamus!* might make them look two-dimensional and devoid of depth. However, Coupland's protagonists are not necessarily shallow or small-minded. They show some signs of progress or change, in spite of the fact that they never manage to change at the rate the accelerated world requires. *Hey, Nostradamus!* shows how painful and ineffective changes can be. Little before her tragic demise in the shooting in a Vancouver high-school cafeteria, pregnant and secretly married Cheryl Anway writes on her school binder the words "GOD IS NOWHERE GOD IS NOW HERE", and thus anarchy and faith are put together with a little help coming from unreliable linguistic signs, language being only one battlefield of many. In their post-trauma or post-mortem quest for truth, the departed Cheryl, her loving husband Jason, Jason's religious father Reg and Jason's hopelessly loyal girlfriend Heather tell stories of paranoia, angst or religious zeal, desperately trying to untangle their lives. Misguided and shattered, they cope with their tragic losses the only way they can.

Although engaged in in-depth analysis of profound crises and urgent problems, Coupland has often been accused of creating cartoon-like characters and a story-line that is all over the place. His critics forget that the growth of the character which the traditional novel calls for is somewhat impeded in the works of fiction which tend to be slowed by minute reflection, endless and often pointless discussions and disputes in the manner of either Raymond Carver or Quentin Tarantino, in the books and movies which, similar to *Generation X*, abound in static first-person narrative reports of the immobile reality.

Estranged and bizarre characters either float from one cheap thrill and weird hobby to another, or stay immobile, unwilling to take risks. What we find in Coupland's books is a genuine "technology" of character casting which is difficult to define. It is not easy to decide whether his protagonists suffer from inarticulateness, disillusionment and disenchantment, or emotional numbness.

Canadian or Personal? Experience Going Global

It is not a mere coincidence that the very beginning of *Generation X* describes a Canadian experience: "Back in the late 1970s, when I was fifteen years old, I spent every penny I then had in the bank to fly across the continent in a 747 jet to Brandon, Manitoba, deep in the Canadian prairies, to witness a total eclipse of the sun" (Coupland 1991: 3). Andy experienced a mood of "darkness and inevitability and fascination" (Coupland 1991: 3) that he had never really been able to shake completely. What he had felt in the Canadian prairies he still felt one and a half decades later, in Palm Springs, California, waiting for the morning sun to explode. Thus a universal experience which takes place in Canada became a governing metaphor and the setting tone for the whole novel.

However, the Canadian touch in Coupland's book was not immediately recognized. His provocative first novel about three dispossessed young people was published by New York's St. Martin's Press after the manuscript had been turned down by Canadian publishers. The first reviews displayed ambivalent feelings about Coupland's writing, and he was both hailed as a spokesman for a generation and sneered upon. With typographical inventions such as comic-book-style illustrations and margin definitions, *Generation X* with its intriguing subtitle *Tales For an Accelerated Culture* started selling rapidly. The book was called "a modern-day *Catcher in the Rye*", and its effects were described as those of "a New Age J.D. Salinger on smart drugs." Coupland became something of a cult figure, called upon for comment on social issues by TV networks and national magazines.

The subsequent success of *Generation X* both in America and Europe indicates that the experiences Coupland records are global, appealing to a wide audience who share his fears and expectations. While the '50s brought the Beats and the '60s the hippies, the '90s, according to Coupland, reveal the Generation X as a global metaphor of the identity crisis. Coupland registers some common changes as if they were an exclusive hallmark of this generation. For instance: "When you're 27 or 28, your body starts emitting the Sheraton enzyme. You can no longer sleep on people's floors." In a witty and playful manner, the writer stresses the imminence of change, but is not ready to admit that maturity always proves beneficial: the need to feel comfortable means that the feeling of adventure is irretrievably lost.

Being a "rough guide" for a universally fringe culture, Coupland's first novel was viewed as the opposite of conventional Canadian writing. While there is a Canadian dimension to *Generation X* and all of Coupland's subsequent fiction such as the story and the setting (for instance, Coupland's cast in *JPod* is nominally employed as video-game designers at a Vancouver firm, and the novel even develops a subplot about the people-smuggling ring between Vancouver and China), the prevalent impression of his critics is that his books confirm that in contemporary society regional and national identity have become blurred. Coupland indicates that there is a voice which many within post-colonial society share. His observations of life in the late twentieth century indicate that all post-colonial societies have merged,

sharing the same mind-set. One of Coupland's famous margin definitions which entered the dictionaries proves his point: *McJob* became listed as "a low-pay, low-prestige, low-dignity, low-benefit, no-future job in the service sector." Such a job is a miserable perspective in Canada and elsewhere.

Although covering issues such as globalisation, media saturation, fast food, human trafficking, food genetics and drug culture, Coupland finds relief in the fact that modern day societies have been sharing the same frame of reference. His personal experience of living abroad (in Japan) made him realize that the Japanese, Chinese and Americans have much more to share nowadays than their predecessors at the beginning of 20th century; at least they can talk about the widespread trade names such as Mitsubishi, Madonna or McDonalds. Still, common topics cannot guarantee the raise of intimacy level. Curiously enough, Coupland's first novel ends with a purely statistic chapter named "Numbers", offering numbers of dead lakes in Canada (14,000), of commercials American children see by age eighteen (350,000) or chances that an American has been on TV (1 in 4). The final chapter implicitly comments on the fear of bonding by comparing the percentage of men and women married: according to *American Demographics*, in 1970 only 19 percent of men aged 25-29 never married, whereas in 1987 the number rose to 42; and while there were 72% women between 20 and 24 married in 1960, in 1984 there were only 43% of that status. After having heard the Xter tale of generation losses and personal gains, these figures seem more ominous.

Coupland is dealing with his Canadian experience in a number of his non-fictional books. *City of Glass*, *Souvenir of Canada*, *Souvenir of Canada 2* were written with the intention to reflect both the author's growing up as a Canadian and some obscure Canadian cultural matters. In *Souvenir of Canada* and its sequel *Souvenir of Canada 2* Coupland lists unique Canadian artifacts and cultural ephemera such as the Trans-Canada Highway or French-language cereal boxes (Capitaine Crounche). Coupland's getting at the kernel of Canadianness can be termed both cynical and sentimental, but the critics were harsh with what they considered factual inaccuracies and a vision of Canada which seemed to them much too Anglo-European.

Cultural Margin

Although resembling the traditional realistic novels with its division into chapters, *Generation X* uses a variety of graphic and visual elements required by a shorter attention span of the pop-culture consumer of books. Short statements and Lichtenstein-esque drawings in the page margins both attract the reader's attention and offer her or him a new insight, showing statistics on Generation X and its vocabulary. Chapter headings that read like post-Dadaist slogans enhance the novel's humorously surreal quality. Coupland's minimalist literary style is often chillingly cool, yet it is fresh, knowledgeable and consistent.

Some of the most famous margin definitions are:

> *Historical Underdosing:*
> To live in a period of time when nothing seems to happen. Major symptoms include addiction to newspapers, magazines, and TV news broadcasts.
>
> *Historical Overdosing:*
> To live in a period of time when too much seems to happen. Major symptoms include addiction to newspapers, magazines, and TV news broadcasts.
>
> *Successophobia:*
> The fear that if one is successful, then one's personal needs will be forgotten and one will no longer have one's childish needs catered to.
>
> *Divorce Assumption:*
> The belief that if a marriage doesn't work out, then there is no problem because partners can simply seek a divorce.
>
> *Bambification:*
> The mental conversion of flesh and blood living creatures into cartoon characters possessing bourgeois Judeo-Christian attitudes and morals.
>
> *Mental Ground Zero:*
> The location where one visualizes oneself during the dropping of the atomic bomb; frequently a shopping mall.
>
> *Celebrity Schadenfreude:*
> Lurid thrills derived from talking about celebrity deaths.
>
> *Poorchondria:*
> Hypochondria derived from not having medical insurance.

Coupland's characters are suffering from what he terms "Option Paralysis", another phenomenon listed on the margins of *Generation X*: "the tendency, when given unlimited choice, to make none." The issue of choice reflects indifference and listlessness characteristic of both a generation and a social group. *Generation X* tells the story of a so-called "new lost generation" or "baby busters" – the demographic group born just after the baby boom. According to Coupland, this generation is "lost out in the genetic lottery", since the baby boomers became yuppies and embarked on a decade of greed – the 1980s – that resulted in a crippling recession. His heroes have come of age in an increasingly technological and materialistic society and, as a consequence, turned out to be emotionally alienated. Disillusioned by yuppiedom and the materialism, restriction and artificiality it represents, too old to accept the notion of shopping malls as vital structures, yet too progressive and sophisticated to regress to sheer hippie-ism, they have rejected their past and their future and have chosen to explore the many possibilities complete freedom offers.

The black comedy's three protagonists – Dag, Claire and Andy – have left their urban existences and moved to the desert retirement community of Palm Springs, California, where they take low-paying service-industry "McJobs." "We live small lives on the periphery; we are marginalized and there's a great deal in which we choose not to participate. We wanted silence and we have that silence now" (Coupland 1991: 11). This is how the narrator Andy describes their condition in the chapter called "Our parents had more". He also notes that there is "no middle class" in Palm Springs, "and in that sense the place is medieval": the place is "a quiet sanctuary from the bulk of middle class life" (Coupland 1991: 12). The absence of the middle class Andy insists on indicates both their choices and their past life: "We had compulsions that made us confuse shopping with creativity, to take downers and assume that merely renting a video on a Saturday night was enough" (Coupland 1991: 12). The Xsters had obviously tried to go with the flow and failed.

Generation X introduces us into an enclave that has discarded consumerism without any clear idea what to embrace in return. The three friends trade their irony-tinged views of the world and reveal themselves to be idealistic yet hypocritical, jaded and cynical. Coupland carefully defines the boundaries of each character's struggles: Andy, the narrator and voice of romantic reason, is vaguely depressed about mediocrity and compromise in middle-class life; Claire, desirable in her individualistic and confident power, is obsessed with a gorgeous, two-faced yuppie who is not worth her love; and Dag, a Holden Caulfield figure, is adolescent in his pointless and careless vandalizing. Their strong, platonic friendship is reinforced by stories they tell each other about ominous and absurd events in the outside world, as well as in the past and future.

Inspired by the meetings of the Alcoholics Anonymous, Andy instigates a "policy of storytelling" (Coupland 1991: 13). "It's simple: we come up with stories and we tell them to each other. The only rule is that we're not allowed to interrupt, just like in AA, and at the end we're not allowed to criticize (...) A clause like this was the only way we could feel secure with each other" (Coupland 1991: 14). In an attempt to make sense of life, the protagonists of *Generation X* tell each other stories, which provide entertainment but also serve as a commentary on contemporary consumerist society. For members of the X Generation, it seems to be extremely difficult if not impossible to talk about love, loneliness or fear without worrying about sounding corny, and that is where seemingly dispassionate and detached stories come in rescue.

Yet their stories are not impersonal. Andy, Dag and Claire tell each other stories of their escapes from or immersion in the horrible and faded culture they left behind when they dropped out. These stories often reveal significant life experiences heavy with moral conclusions. Andy, for example, remembers the time when he lived in Japan, and his boss, Mr. Takamichi, took him aside and asked him to describe the most valuable thing he owned. "Try and explain the concept of sophomoric minimalism to an octogenarian Japanese publishing magnate," Andy says. "So I said,

quite truthfully (and, it dawned on me, quite refreshingly), that I owned no thing of any value" (Coupland 1991: 65). Mr. Takamichi then proudly showed Andy his most valuable possession: a semi-pornographic photo he took of Marilyn Monroe, "essentially only a cheesy paparazzi shot" (Coupland 1991: 65). This and other vividly described tales contain elements of surrealistic humour combined with harsh realism, and serve as a safety net for the characters' chosen yet fragile lifestyle.

At once social commentary and social model, Coupland posits *Generation X* as a reaction against the excesses of the previous decade, and also shows a possible way out of this consumerist wasteland. There is the sense that, viewed a certain way, all modern existence is just too absurd for words. But beyond this veneer of cynicism, there are three extraordinary characters that have seen the dark side of consumerism, and experience mild despair. It is this despair that ultimately redeems Andy, Claire and Dag. *Generation X* is a readable and valid account of a generation that envisions a completely new, genuine genre of bohemianism.

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L'IDÉOLOGIE FAMILIALE DANS *LA BELLE BÊTE* DE MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

Ce travail se propose d'examiner l'idéologie familiale dans le roman *La Belle Bête* de Marie-Claire Blais, en mettant au premier plan les rapports entre la mère et la fille. Comme on l'a déjà constaté, le rapport mère-fille est une « relation à trois »[1], à travers laquelle se construit un réseau de fils qui englobe non seulement la mère et la fille, mais aussi le père et les relations familiales dans leur totalité. Pour bien comprendre cette relation, il ne suffit pas de la considérer isolément, mais il faut la placer dans le contexte des rapports entre tous les membres d'une famille, en tenant compte de la hiérarchie de dépendance qui s'établit entre les parents et les enfants, l'essentiel du pouvoir étant entre les mains des parents, dont le comportement détermine le vécu de l'enfant.

Dans les romans de Marie-Claire Blais, on trouve deux principaux types de mère, marqués par le manque de tendresse envers leurs enfants : une mère soumise à la procréation et écrasée par le travail quoditien qui l'empêche de s'occuper suffisamment de ses enfants (*Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuelle* et *Manuscrits de Pauline Archange*) et une mère – poupée narcissique, incapable d'établir une communion profonde avec ses enfants (*Tête Blanche*, *La Belle Bête*). La mère Louise, un des principaux personnages de *La Belle Bête*, pourrait être rangée dans la catégorie des « mères supérieures » qui sont « plus femmes que mères » et dont la fille apparaît comme le tiers exclu (*Bête*, 390). Elle se présente d'abord dans la supériorité que lui accorde sa beauté. Les études psychologiques et psychanalytiques ont montré que la beauté de la mère a un rôle important dans les rapports qu'elle peut entretenir avec sa fille, aussi bien que dans l'accomplissement de la féminité de la fille, si la mère

[1] Caroline Eliacheff – Nathalie Heinich, *Mères-filles une relation à trois*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2002.

n'abuse pas de sa supériorité. Sa beauté cristallise le sentiment que la fille a de sa grandeur, qui y est incarnée. D'autre part, la fille trouve, dans le regard maternel, le sentiment de sa propre beauté (que ce soit une beauté réelle ou le produit de l'amour maternel) et rêve de lui devenir semblable (Eliacheff, 162–4).

Mais, la beauté de Louise n'est qu'extérieure, c'est seulement une enveloppe qui cache le vide de l'âme et de l'esprit, donc une infériorité fondamentale, qui sera agravée par sa maladie qui va lui ôter sa seule qualité. « Belle poupée, elle flottait dans les regards contemplatifs des autres, sans se douter qu'elle serait bientôt abandonnée et flétrie » (*Bête*, 37). C'est une mère narcissique et superficielle. Peu intelligente, amoureuse de sa propre beauté, elle ne fait que chercher les reflets de cette beauté dans le regard des autres, ce qui la rend incapable d'établir de bons rapports avec sa fille. Sans en être consciente, elle abuse du pouvoir qui lui est conféré par la nature.

L'incapacité maternelle de Louise est renforcée par la laideur d'Isabelle-Marie, qui ne lui ressemble pas et qui se présente comme une mal nommée, car, comme par ironie, son nom désigne la beauté : « Isabelle, Isa qui est belle ! », lui dit son mari aveugle, Michael (51, 84). Étant laide, elle ne rencontre pas, dans le regard maternel, le sentiment de sa propre beauté. Elle pourrait se consoler de ce manque objectif si sa mère montrait plus d'affection pour elle et si elle relativisait ce défaut en mettant en valeur ses autres qualités. Mais, Louise évite de la regarder, en lui rappelant sans cesse sa laideur, ce qui établit entre elles un écart irréductible. C'est sa mère elle-même qui lui inflige la peine, en détournant son regard d'elle. Isabelle-Marie est non seulement laide, mais elle se rend compte que la chose la plus importante pour Louise est justement la beauté dont elle est privée et que sa disgrâce rebute sa mère. A la disgrâce de la nature, qui ne lui a pas accordé la beauté, se joint la disgrâce de sa mère, qui ne l'aime pas suffisamment pour l'aider à dépasser ce défaut et c'est cette double disgrâce qui devient le facteur déterminant dans le développement de sa personnalité, où le mal l'emporte sur le bien.

Le manque de soutien de Louise face à l'infériorité de sa fille va jusqu'à la négligence systématique. Elle ne lui impose pas sa supériorité en l'anéantissant psychiquement, mais en s'en distanciant, en la rejetant du cercle de ses sentiments maternels et en concentrant toute son affection sur son fils Patrice qui lui, au contraire de sa soeur, est une incarnation de la beauté. Mais, chez Patrice aussi, il y a un décalage, ou plutôt un contraste entre le paraître et l'être. La beauté de son visage et de son corps n'est qu'une beauté extérieure, qui cache la bêtise et le vide intérieur. Marie-Claire Blais évoque ce contraste d'une manière lapidaire, mais frappante, qui lui est propre : le « visage d'idiot » de Patrice est « pourtant si éblouissant qu'il [fait] croire au génie » (11). A la pensée de Louise : « Patrice… Le Superbe ! », s'oppose celle d'Isabelle-Marie : « Patrice, l'Idiot » (12). Louise adore Patrice à cause de sa beauté, qui l'empêche de se rendre compte de son infériorité intellectuelle. Encore une fois, l'expression est brutale dans sa briéveté : « Sa beauté extraordinaire suffisait à la combler. Mais Patrice était un idiot » (13). La passion de Louise pour son fils « durait depuis la naissance de ce corps fait pour annoncer un esprit qui ne l'habitait

pas » (15). Celui-ci ne manifeste que langueur, sans se rendre compte ni de l'amour de sa mère ni de la jalousie de sa soeur.

Au manque d'amour maternel pour sa fille s'ajoute donc l'inégalité du traitement. Louise privilégie systématiquement son fils, avec lequel elle établit un rapport à la fois oedipien et narcissique, une sorte d'inceste platonique, tandis qu'elle impose à sa fille les travaux les plus durs à la ferme. Elle prépare à Patrice des mets délicats, l'aide à soigner son corps, l'initie à la vanité en le plaçant devant les miroirs. Pendant que Patrice joue « sa vie de fainéant » et que Louise vit son caprice, Isabelle-Marie travaille péniblement toute la journée, exposée au soleil destructeur qui la brûle : « Isabelle-Marie, abandonnée aux femmes de la ferme, partageait leurs rudes travaux, s'usait les doigts, grise de sueur, les cheveux épars sur les joues, la bouche » (17). Elle se transforme en une nouvelle Cendrillon, qui souffre d'un traitement inéquitable, victime d'une mère insensible, mais cette Cendrillon est laide, incurablement malheureuse et incapable de s'inventer une bonne mère, incarnée par la bonne fée qui procure le bonheur par le biais de sa magie.

Ici, c'est cette inégalité de traitement lié à la beauté physique qui est la raison principale de la place privilégiée du fils dans le coeur de la mère, alors que dans *L'Amant* de M. Duras, cette raison était plutôt liée à la différence de sexe. Le rapport pathologique entre la mère et la fille n'est fondé ni sur la jalousie de la mère, comme dans Cendrillon ou dans Blanche-Neige, puisque la fille est laide, ni sur l'impossibilité de la fille de s'affranchir de la dépendance de sa mère, comme dans *La Pianiste* d'Elfriede Jelinek, puisque Louise ne s'intéresse pas à sa fille. Le rapport pathologique entre la mère et la fille est fondé sur l'indifférence et l'injustice de la mère chez laquelle le sentiment esthétique l'emporte sur l'amour maternel.

Ce manque de lien avec sa mère affranchit Isabelle-Marie, dès son enfance, de son influence. Traitée comme un être de moindre valeur, damnée par sa laideur, elle se renferme dans une haine féroce pour son idiot de frère et dans un mépris absolu pour sa mère superficielle, dans une « passion de damné » (123) dont la cause est surtout le fait que Louise ne sait pas faire le juste partage entre ses enfants. C'est le sentiment d'injustice qui rend Isabelle-Marie insensible et méchante : « Si, simplement, Louise eût osé aimer sa fille, Isabelle-Marie eût grandi sans méchanceté. Elle était devenue cynique en refoulant la passion qui la sous-tendait. La perversité était, chez elle, une seconde nature comme chez ces êtres doubles qui ont une vie, le jour, et une autre, plus effrayante, la nuit » (77).

De ce point de vue, Louise apparaît, pour employer l'expression de Caroline Eliancheff et Nathalie Heinich, comme une « mère extrême », c'est-à-dire comme une mère qui suscite chez sa fille des affects extrêmement forts (Eliancheff, 159). Ces affects se transforment en actes destructeurs : Isabelle-Marie prive Patrice de nourriture, ensuite elle plonge sa tête dans l'eau bouillante, ce qui déforme son visage et, enfin, elle met le feu à la ferme.

On peut comparer *La Belle Bête* à *La Disgrâce* de Nicole Avril[2], dont le personnage principal est aussi une fille mal nommée, Isabelle, que sa mère et son entourage rappellent sans cesse à sa laideur. Elle aussi reproche à sa mère, moins de l'avoir faite laide, que de ne pas avoir assez d'amour pour la considérer comme belle. Mais, tandis que, dans *La Belle Bête*, la Beauté incarnée par le fils cadet est l'élément usurpateur de l'amour maternel, dans *La Disgrâce* c'est la fille aînée, Alice qui, en plus de la négligeance maternelle, doit faire face à la jalousie car la mère d'Isabelle séduit le jeune homme qu'elle aime secrètement et qui tombe ensuite amoureux de la belle Alice. Dans les deux cas, l'infortune de la fille disgrâciée voue celle-ci au mal. Ce mal prend des dimentions monstrueuses dans *La Belle-Bête*, où Isabelle-Marie atteint physiquement son frère, en l'enlaidissant et en provoquant indirectement sa mort, tandis que, dans *La Disgrâce*, le mal reste dans le domaine de la vie intérieure. Isabelle gâche la relation amoureuse de sa soeur, ce qui plonge celle-ci dans un silence et dans une isolation mentale, elle provoque donc, en quelque sorte, la mort dans son âme, en anéantissant son élan vital et en la mettant sous son pouvoir.

Le rapport de distance et d'incompréhension entre la mère et la fille se répète dans le rapport entre Isabelle-Marie et sa fille Anne, mais avec une modification importante. A la différence de Louise, qui est plus femme que mère, Anne est mère et femme à la fois, mais sans rivalité avec sa fille, que la nature a disgrâciée de la même façon qu'elle-même. Il n'y a plus de contraste entre la beauté de la mère et la laideur de la fille car la fille ressemble à sa mère et reproduit sa laideur, mais le culte de la beauté, auquel la famille semble soumise, perturbe leurs rapports dès le début car la mère voit dans sa fille l'image de son propre malheur. « Malgré son égarement et sa dureté, Isabelle-Marie aimait sa fille. Elle la berçait […]. Mais elle songeait à ce que serait plus tard cette enfant, une laideronne dont on se détourne » (*Bête*,122).

Dans les deux cas, il s'agit d'un triangle sentimental incomplet, qui exclut non seulement la fille, mais aussi le père, qui est mort (dans le cas d'Isabelle-Marie), ou qui quitte la famille (dans le cas d'Anne), qui est donc absent, ou devient absent, remplacé dans le coeur de Louise par le fils avec lequel celle-ci établit un rapport incestueux en suscitant dans le coeur d'Isabelle-Marie un mal inguérissable.

Cette absence paternelle est un trait caractéristique de l'univers familial de Marie-Claire Blais, qui exprime la désintégration de l'idéologie familiale traditionnelle, où le père était le pilier de la famille et la mère tenait le rôle de la gardienne du foyer, pleine d'amour pour ses enfants. Dans les romans de cette auteure, le père est soit une figure qui manque, soit une figure insignifiante, souvent incapable d'accomplir son rôle de chef de famille. Il abuse du pouvoir que lui confère sa position paternelle ou il s'enfuit de la réalité dans le monde de l'alcool ou des rêves. Dans *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuelle*, le père apparaît comme un fantoche qui terrorise pourtant sa famille, dans *Tête-Blanche* comme un ivrogne dont on ignore presque l'existence, dans *Manuscrits de Pauline Archange* comme un pauvre, «

[2] Nicole Avril, *La Disgrâce*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1981.

plus catholique que Saint-Joseph », et dans *Le Jour est noir*, le père de Roxane est un mélancolique qui ne peut que transmettre son dégoût de la vie à sa fille et qui apparaît comme un homme du brouillard.

Dans *La Belle-Bête*, on apprend que le père d'Isabelle-Marie est mort quand elle avait dix ans et il ne se présente aux lecteurs que tel qu'il existe dans ses souvenirs : « Très loin, dans son enfance, elle apercevait son père, l'âpre paysan, le maître du pain. Lorsqu'il labourait le ventre vierge de la terre, il pénétrait le coeur de Dieu. En lui, la candeur de l'âme se mêlait à l'instinct comme la bonne vigne fleurissait son teint » (*Bête*, 46). Il était l'esclave de la terre, comme c'était bien le cas dans le roman québécois traditionnel – elle se rappelle « les bottes énormes de son père qui sentaient le blé et la glaise » (Ibid.) – mais il semblait dépasser son destin par ses rêveries et par une transfiguration poétique de la réalité insatisfaisante. Ses rêveries expriment son refus de se soumettre aux conventions sociales sans rejeter le rôle qui lui est imposé par la tradition. Il ne s'agit plus d'un père autoritaire et violent. Isabelle-Marie s'en rappelle comme d'un « brave rêveur » qui s'était passioné pour sa femme Louise parce qu'il était ébloui par sa beauté et par son charme et « qui parlait de ses terres comme de filles élues de Dieu, en poète pur » (24). Idéalisé dans la mémoire de sa fille, qui imagine lui ressembler, il apparaît moins comme un homme guidé par le principe de la réalité, et qui soumet sa famille à son autorité, que comme un homme au comportement esthétique, soumis au principe du plaisir et au culte de la beauté, incarnée dans sa femme Louise. On remarque encore une fois une inversion par rapport aux romans de la terre où la fille reproduisait les habitudes de sa mère et le fils reprenait le rôle de son père, qui était l'incarnation de la force virile : c'est le père qui a un penchant à la rêverie, c'est la fille qui hérite du penchant de son père, sans reproduire la beauté maternelle et c'est le fils qui hérite de la beauté de sa mère.

Disparu trop tôt, le père d'Isabelle-Marie cède la place à celui qui devrait tenir le rôle de son substitut, au dandy Lanz, que Louise épouse plusieurs années après sa mort. Sans s'occuper de rien d'autre, sauf de lui-même et de « son monde de poupées » (44), Lanz passe la plus grande partie de la journée à soigner son corps, à cultiver son apparence et à adorer sa belle épouse. Son rire est « le rire figé et gracieux des marionnettes », son élégance va « jusqu'à son rire » (46). Louise est pour lui « une aimable vieille poupée » qu'il possède et qui a, de son côté, son adorateur en lui, tous les deux étant « aussi vains l'un que l'autre » (39), deux poupées qui « se rencontraient, s'unissaient sans avoir besoin de se connaître » (46).

Ayant épousé Louise, Lanz accepte le rôle du substitut du père, mais sa position paternelle et sa supériorité d'âge ne lui suffisent pas pour tenir ce rôle. Les enfants ne le reconnaissent pas, car il n'apparaît pas comme l'incarnation de la force paternelle et virile, mais seulement comme le reflet de la beauté de sa femme, comme « la réplique mâle de ce mannequin de chair qu'était Louise ! » (104). « Entre Lanz, alléché par ses maquillages réussis, et Patrice qui l'approuvait en tout sans comprendre, Louise vivait repue, et c'est tout ce qu'elle exigeait » (36). Lanz suscite

le mépris d'Isabelle-Marie et la jalousie de Patrice. Il n'est qu'un intrus qui détruit la symbiose narcissique de Louise et son fils, en privant celui-ci de l'amour de sa mère, sans que celle-ci en soit consciente. Il perturbe donc les rapports familiaux existants, sans donner l'impression de pouvoir assurer la protection à sa nouvelle famille.

Entre le beau-père et les enfants s'établit un rapport de mépris, de jalousie et de haine. Jaloux de son amour pour son fils, Lanz s'efforce d'éloigner Louise de celui-ci, qui souffre de son côté de se sentir abandonné sans pouvoir comprendre les raisons de son infortune. La jalousie et la haine entre le beau-père et le beau-fils explose dans un échange de coups, qui se termine par la victoire de Lanz. N'étant pas reconnu maître, Lanz se transforme en bourreau qui essaie de se faire une autorité en fouettant son beau-fils et en épanchant sur lui sa colère jalouse : « Aveuglé, possédant enfin cet enfant tant chéri de Louise, Lanz fouettait à son tour. Après plusieurs coups, il soupira, haussa les épaules : 'Je suis votre père, Patrice, ne l'oubliez pas. Je le remplace auprès de vous » (66). Mais cette confirmation de sa force paternelle n'est que passagère. Patrice, tel un nouvel Oedipe, finit par le tuer, en se précipitant sur lui avec son cheval, et par renouer la relation narcissique avec sa mère.

Dans *La Belle Bête*, les rapports familiaux sont fondés sur le principe de la beauté, auquel tout est soumis : Louise, son fils Patrice, son second mari, aussi bien que le mari d'Isabelle-Marie, Michael. Seule Isabelle-Marie est exclue de ce cercle narcissique à travers lequel se dessine l'impossibilité de dépasser le dualisme de la belle apparence, d'une part, et de la frustration et du vide intérieur d'autre part. « Isabelle-Marie voyait la mère et le fils, resplendissant de santé, et elle se sentait devenir laide au même rythme que Patrice gagnait sa beauté d'adolescent » (21–22).

Comme l'a constaté Freud dans *Le Malaise dans la culture*, « la jouissance puisée dans la beauté a du point de vue sensitif un caractère particulier, doucement enivrant » et bien qu'il ne soit pas évident qu'elle « apporte un profit » et qu'elle constitue une « nécessité culturelle », on ne saurait « en concevoir l'absence dans la culture »[3]. Si on accepte la division que fait Freud entre les personnes principalement érotiques, qui privilégient les relations de sentiments à d'autres personnes, les personnes d'action, qui exercent leur force sur le monde extérieur, et les personnes narcissiques qui inclinent plutôt à se suffire à elles-mêmes, les membres de la famille présentée dans *La Belle Bête* appartiennent à cette dernière catégorie. Ils cherchent leurs satisfactions essentielles dans un jeu de miroirs et de regards où la beauté de l'un se reflète dans les yeux de l'autre (*Malaise*, 27). Patrice est un Narcisse qui se contemple dans le miroir ou à la surface du lac, le miroir et le lac étant deux motifs dominants de ce roman. « Suis-je un miroir ou suis-je Patrice ? », se demande-t-il (*Bête*, 148). Penché sur lui-même, il découvre un sens à sa beauté en la transformant en but principal de sa vie, en son dieu. La beauté de Patrice se reflète dans les yeux de Louise, en provoquant chez elle une adoration aveugle. Mais, enlaidi par la méchanceté de sa soeur, il perd son amour : « frissonnante de Honte », Louise

[3] Sigmund Freud, *Le Malaise dans la culture* (1930), Paris, PUF, p. 26.

ne peut plus aimer, comme autrefois, « son propre visage à travers le beau visage de son fils » et elle refuse « de s'y reconnaître » (150). En essayant de retrouver son beau visage d'autrefois dans l'eau, Patrice se perd dans sa profondeur où il retrouve enfin son âme. La beauté de Louise se reflète dans les yeux de Lanz dont l'apparence de marionette correspond à la sienne propre. « A quarante ans, Louise était encore une poupée, vide, soucieuse à l'excès de son corps, de sa minceur. La beauté de Patrice n'était pour elle qu'un reflet de la sienne » (24). La beauté de Michael se reflète dans les yeux d'Isabelle-Marie, mais cette fois le jeu de miroir provoque moins l'admiration que l'angoisse, car la laideur exclut Isabelle-Marie de ce monde de reflets narcissiques. Le reflet de son visage dans le miroir la remplit d'horreur et de haine : « Isabelle-Marie, assise devant un miroir, avait l'air de ricaner au fond de son corps. A la voir, troublante et brusque, on eût dit une sorcière sans gencives » (75). Sa mère refuse de la regarder, son frère en semble incapable, le regard de Lanz lui confirme sa laideur, et Michael, qui ne peut pas la voir, est le seul qui puisse la considérer comme belle. « Seul un aveugle pouvait la 'voir' belle. Elle résolut donc de jouer à être belle pour lui » (49). Elle essaie d'entrer dans cette sphère de beauté par la force de sa volonté, en disant sans cesse à son mari aveugle qu'elle est belle. « Je serais sans doute belle à force de le vouloir », pense-t-elle (60). Ses mensonges lui procurent la joie d'être femme et la délivrent de sa jalousie, mais cette joie n'est que provisoire, car Michael retrouve la vue et, horrifié par sa laideur, la quitte.

A l'opposé de la famille telle qu'elle est présentée dans les romans du terroir, où le bonheur était assuré par la soumission des enfants à l'autorité paternelle, dans *la Belle Bête*, où il s'agit aussi d'un monde rural, la famille se désagrège et il n'est plus possible de remédier au malheur qu'entraîne la perturbation de la hiérarchie de dépendance entre les parents et les enfants par un retour à la tradition. A travers les rapports familiaux, qui ne sont plus fondés sur les valeurs traditionnelles, incarnés dans l'instance paternelle, mais sur le principe esthétique, incarné dans la beauté de la mère, se dessine l'éclatement de la structure familiale traditionnelle devant la laïcisation de la société canadienne-française, mais aussi, dans une forme exagérée, le vide d'une culture « narcissique » dominée par la contradiction entre la beauté extérieure et la frustration intérieure et par l'impossibilité d'atteindre à une plénitude authentique de l'existence, contradiction dont parle Christopher Lasch dans *La Culture du narcissisme*.

La famille est incomplète et désunie, marquée par l'absence du père ou par sa dévalorisation, aussi bien que par l'incompétence de la mère dont la relation avec sa fille prend un caractère extrême, marquée donc par le boulversement du rapport supériorité/infériorité. Imprégnée d'injustice et de mépris, la relation mère-fille ne peut pas surmonter les difficultés auxquelles elle se confronte car c'est une relation à deux, donc une relation mutilée où le père est remplacé par le fils et d'où la fille est au fond exclue.

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LE PROBLÈME IDENTITAIRE ET LE COMPLEXE IDENTITAIRE DANS *LA MAISON TRESTLER DE MADELEINE OUELLETTE-MICHALSKA*

Dans son huitième roman, *La Maison Trestler ou le 8e Jour d'Amérique* (publié en 1984, réédité en 1995), Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska met en question l'histoire et le mythe de l'Amérique en écrivant une saga familiale. Mais, à travers le récit de l'histoire de la famille Trestler, qui vivait au XIXe siècle dans une maison hantée de souvenirs, d'intrigues, d'événements tragiques personnels ou historiques, la romancière traite en fait du problème identitaire omniprésent dans la littérature québécoise.

Le propriétaire de la maison est un mercenaire dans le régiment de Hesse-Hanau venu lutter contre la révolution américaine et dont le navire arriva trop tard, une fois la guerre terminée. Décidé à faire fortune dans le Nouveau Monde, le jeune soldat devient vendeur ambulant et fait fortune peu à peu, en gravissant progressivement l'échelle sociale. Pour mieux s'intégrer dans son nouveau pays, il francise son nom, devient un fortuné marchand de fourrures puis député au Parlement du Québec. Il épouse d'abord une Française qui ne lui donne que des filles. Devenu veuf, il épouse une Allemande, en secondes noces, qui, elle, lui donne deux fils tant désirés. Sa fille cadette, la rebelle Catherine, épouse contre la volonté de son père Éléazar Hayst, dont le nom révèle son origine belge. D'autre part, le mari de la romancière qui écrit l'histoire de la maison Trestler est un Juif polonais. *Le passé et le présent s'entremêlent, on retrouve aussi bien des héros du XIXe siècle que des personnages de notre époque qui vivent au Canada, plus précisément au Québec, en entrant au contact avec des Canadiens anglophones, des Québécois francophones, des immigrants venus des quatre coins du monde ; et la romancière-journaliste se rend en France, tandis que le diplomate français, dont l'épouse est une Hongroise, vient*

en visite officielle au Québec. Tous ces rapports montrent l'importance de l'identité et révèlent tous les complexes qui en découlent.

Dans notre essai, nous nous proposons de regarder de plus près comment le problème identitaire se manifeste dans le roman de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska et d'analyser les conflits provoqués par les complexes des personnages.

Il ne faut pas oublier que l'histoire, la culture et l'identité du Québec sont marqués, non seulement par la langue française, mais aussi par la tradition et la culture chrétienne. Le respect et la promotion de cette identité remet en cause la pratique actuelle des « accommodements raisonnables », vu le fait que les Québécois gardent jalousement le souvenir du peuple chrétien venu s'installer dans le Nouveau Monde, la langue rapportée de la Mère Patrie et de l'histoire glorieuse basée sur le pouvoir et les droits de la personne. Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska est une Québécoise « pure laine » fière d'être originaire de la *douce France*, mais elle est de même une habitante engagée et entreprenante du continent nord-américain. L'épigraphe au début de son roman sur la maison Trestler symbolise bien sa double identité et témoigne de son désir de communiquer ses expériences aux autres citoyens de son pays : « Le futur est en avant et en arrière et vers les côtés ». Cette pensée de Clarice Lispector explique bien la fascination de la romancière québécoise pour la maison Trestler.[1] Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska a décidé de consacrer un roman à cette envoûtante maison, classée entre 1969 et 1976 « bâtiment patrimonial », à la suite d'un reportage d'Hélène-Andrée Bizier publié dans *Perspectives*. Cette maison historique a été érigée entre 1798 et 1806 par le riche marchand Jean-Joseph Trestler, stratégiquement localisée au confluent du lac des Deux Montagnes et de la rivière des Outaouais et connue comme la splendide demeure de Vaudreuil-Dorion. De nos jours, la majestueuse maison Trestler possède une architecture d'inspiration française, avec de grandes portes-fenêtres au rez-de-chaussée et des chambres à coucher situées sous la mansarde. Ses murs gardent encore aujourd'hui de nombreux souvenirs de cette époque. Fière de ses origines françaises, la romancière imagine les personnages qui ont habité ce lieu depuis la fin du XVIII^{e} siècle et parle du problème identitaire de cet Allemand devenu riche marchand de fourrures et membre au Parlement du Québec, ainsi que des problèmes de ses enfants face à ce père autoritaire, de la haute société de l'époque, des coutumes et des habitudes dans le milieu patriarcal. Mais, elle s'intéresse surtout à la fille cadette de Trestler, à travers laquelle, elle finit par s'identifier. Pratiquement dans tous ses livres, la romancière traite les problèmes identitaires en parlant de l'Histoire, mais en se penchant surtout sur l'histoire de l'être humain en général et sur les événements qui décident de sa destinée. Dans son roman *Le plat de lentilles*, l'écrivaine reconnaît ses sujets de prédilections :

[1] Voir aussi nos essais sur le rapport entre le passé français et le mythe américain et sur la présence des étrangers au Québec dans *La maison Trestler* dans notre livre *Ponts et lignes de démarcation*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1998.

> Les livres relatent toujours l'histoire de l'homme. Ils racontent ses rêves, ses guerres, ses conquêtes, ses exploits. Son salut ou sa perte. L'homme est seul à se sauver parce que lui seul dispose du temps et de l'espace. (Ouellette-Michalska, 1979)

Vu la complexité des intérêts de la romancière dans son huitième roman, c'est à juste titre qu'Aurélien Boivin pose qu'il n'est pas facile de résumer *La maison Trestler*, car c'est « à la fois [l'histoire] d'une femme et DES FEMMES, d'un individu et d'une collectivité, d'une existence et d'une époque ». (Boivin, 2006) Pour notre part, nous sommes libres d'affirmer que ce roman de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska représente aussi un ouvrage typique de l'identité québécoise, car il est le produit d'une culture ancestrale basée sur l'histoire et la langue française jalousement sauvegardée sur le continent nord-américain. En effet, la première idée qui vient à l'esprit quand on s'interroge sur l'identité du Québec est la langue. Car, plus qu'un moyen de communication, elle est surtout un facteur important de structuration de la pensée, d'échanges interpersonnels, de créativité, de culture partagée et donc d'identité personnelle et sociale. Au sens social – par opposition à la culture personnelle (humaniste et/ou scientifique) – la culture est cet ensemble de valeurs, de normes, de symboles, d'institutions et d'artefacts qui caractérisent un groupe ou un peuple. Il est clair qu'elle comprend de multiples aspects, notamment :

- la langue (éducation, travail, par exemple) ;
- les institutions (y compris le mariage) ;
- les valeurs (dont la liberté, la justice sociale, l'égalité homme–femme) ;
- le paysage architectural (configuration des villes et villages, structures des édifices, symboles) ;
- l'ensemble artistique (sculpture, peinture, musique, danse, littérature, etc.) ;
- la toponymie (noms des rues, des lacs, des cours d'eau, etc.) ;
- les rythmes du temps (années, semaines, fêtes, anniversaires, etc.).

Dans *La maison Trestler*, on trouve des exemples pour chacun de ces aspects de la culture québécoise et la romancière les met en scène grâce à son imagination créatrice, en offrant une histoire personnelle, celle de la famille Trestler et surtout celle de Catherine, comme l'exemple d'une culture collective.

> Pour qu'une culture soit partagée, pour qu'elle devienne culture commune et identitaire, deux exigence s'imposent : 1) de la part de chaque citoyen : une certaine connaissance de l'histoire et des traditions du pays ; une familiarité avec la littérature, les arts en général ; l'appréciation des héros et des leaders anciens et contemporains (artistes, politiciens, gens d'affaire) ; une estime de ses institutions fondamentales ; 2) de la part des communautés et des gouvernements : le respect, la protection et la promotion des divers éléments énumérés. Bref, il faut une compréhension et un projet de société communs, en sorte qu'il y ait un imaginaire partagé qui permette de se rassembler et de fêter ensemble avec des mots, des rites et des symboles capables de l'exprimer. (Durand, 2007)

Le Québec est réputé par son ouverture envers les immigrants qui apportent dans leurs bagages mentaux le souvenir de leurs histoires, cultures et mœurs grâce auxquels ils enrichissent la culture et la littérature de leur pays d'adoption. Mais pour que les habitants de cette province canadienne puissent vivre en harmonie avec leurs voisins, il faut qu'ils se connaissent mutuellement. Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska y apporte son obole en s'inspirant pour son roman des événements historiques, tout en effaçant adroitement les frontières de la réalité et de la fiction, mélangeant l'imagination et l'étincelle créatrice de « l'ouvrier littéraire » avec les souvenirs et les rêveries d'une jeune fille d'autrefois, avec ses propres souvenirs et projets d'avenir. Sur trois cents pages l'ouvrage naît comme une création autonome, car « l'œuvre littéraire commence justement là où elle transforme son modèle ». (Barthes, 1964 : 248–249)

Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska écrit d'une manière moderne, mais dans la meilleure tradition du roman français. Sous les yeux du lecteur – qui est lui-même pris dans le piège des rêves, des souvenirs d'enfance et des rappels de livres lus auparavant – des rangs serrés sont entrecoupés par des blancs plus fins, coupant les phrases en paragraphes plus courts, tandis que des blancs plus épais indiquent des coupures au fil de la narration où le passé, le présent et l'avenir s'entremêlent comme trois mèches dans une natte de chevelure féminine. Il nous semble donc bien à propos de comparer le style de l'écrivaine québécoise avec le style poétique et symbolique d'Alain Fournier ; la présentation visuelle de son œuvre avec *L'Amant* de Marguerite Duras ; et l'entrecroisement des souvenirs de la romancière avec les pensées de son héroïne – au courant de la conscience du type joycien.

La preuve de l'affirmation de Sartre que « l'homme n'est jamais un individu » (Sartre, 1983 : 7), mais plutôt un universel unique formé et universalisé par son époque, qui est retotalisée par l'homme lorsqu'il apparaît dans son temps comme une particularité, peut bien être la conscience de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska que sa vocation est d'être écrivain et de changer la réalité. La romancière se décide à changer la réalité justement en rappelant à ses compatriotes leur passé, incarné cette fois-ci par la maison Trestler et par la vie des personnes/personnages qui y habitaient. En effet, la réalité québécoise est inséparable de son passé, imprégné des souvenirs de l'origine française et européenne, mais la présence du voisin américain laisse aussi une marque inhabituelle sur l'identité des habitants de la Province des Neiges. Très souvent mécontent de la réalité et désirant éviter « de vraies émotions », le romancier opte pour des émotions en forme de « rêves éveillés » et – d'après Otto Fenichel, auteur de *La Théorie des névroses* – c'est justement grâce à l'art que les personnes douées trouvent leur « chemin vers l'objectivité » (Fenichel, 1961 : 378). Donc, en art, tout est possible, mais il paraît que Proust fût le précurseur de Sartre lorsqu'il a déclaré : « L'art plonge si avant ses racines dans la vie sociale que, dans la fiction particulière dont on revêt une réalité sentimentale très générale, les mœurs, les goûts d'une époque ou d'une classe ont souvent une grande part. » (Proust, 1892).

Nous tenons à souligner que *La maison Trestler ou Le 8e jour d'Amérique* apparaît en 1984 et représente, par sa forme, « le roman de la parole », rédigé à la première personne et centré sur un narrateur qui est un écrivain possible, comme le définit André Belleau dans son étude sur la représentation de l'écrivain. Nous reprendrons la constatation d'Aurélien Boivin, à savoir qu'il s'agit en effet de l'histoire « d'une femme et des femmes, d'un individu et d'une collectivité, d'une existence et d'une époque ». Le roman est plus qu'une saga familiale : il représente un mélange de souvenirs d'enfance de l'auteure et de son héroïne Catherine – à laquelle elle finit par s'identifier. C'est aussi le fruit du voyage au travers de la réalité actuelle à la recherche du passé et d'une attente perpétuelle de tout ce que l'avenir va apporter. Le roman possède une forme moderne où le souvenir, la fiction, le rêve et la rêverie s'entrecroisent et où l'actualité politique est étroitement liée à des faits anciens. La narratrice se documente sur Trestler, venu d'Allemagne et devenu riche marchand de fourrures et – en même temps – elle traite le problème des gens venus s'installer au Québec, tout en examinant ses propres racines à elle. Pour un critique littéraire, c'est le signe incontestable que les liens entre la Vieille Europe et le Nouveau Monde ne sont pas rompus et que les histoires des aïeux venus de très loin passionnent toujours autant leurs parents de la troisième ou de la quatrième génération.

Le lien palpable entre les générations d'autrefois et la génération de nos jours, c'est la maison. La maison symbolise l'âtre, le foyer, le refuge du monde extérieur, où vivent et travaillent les membres d'une famille, liés par le sang, le respect du *pater familias* et des valeurs incarnant leur dépendance à une classe sociale. Jean-Joseph Trestler respectait les valeurs qu'on lui a apprises dans son ancienne patrie, symbolisées par les trois K dans sa langue maternelle : *Kirche, Kinder, Küche* (*Église, Enfants, Cuisine*). Le mariage est pour lui une institution primordiale servant à prolonger la lignée, le nom de la famille, l'accumulation des biens et l'ascension sur l'échelle sociale. Donc, en arrivant au Canada, il apporte et essaye d'y transplanter son concept de « culture » tout en s'efforçant à s'assimiler dans la société bourgeoise de son nouveau pays. C'est à juste titre que Marc-Adélard Tremblay, dans son livre sur l'identité québécoise en péril, souligne la notion anthropologique de la culture et explique qu'elle désigne le mode de vie tout entier d'un groupe, lequel se traduit par des relations particulières de l'homme/de la femme dans leur environnement naturel, des systèmes d'organisation économique et sociale et des configurations de valeurs et attitudes particulières. Évidemment, chaque ethnie possède une manière propre d'être et – dans un milieu naturel donné – définit les stratégies à utiliser pour la transmission de son style de vie à ses descendants et oriente les actions collectives en vue du maintien de son intégrité. « Chaque culture particulière est unique à la fois par les institutions et les structures qu'elle met en place et par les vécus de ceux qui les incarnent dans la quotidienneté » (Tremblay, 1983 : 26). Donc, le système de croyances, la langue, le système de parenté, les règles du mariage, les systèmes d'autorité et de hiérarchisation sociale, les valeurs qui sont conçues en vue de la conservation du patrimoine de l'ethnie, les modes de contrôle de l'expression affective ainsi que les types de châtiments, les systèmes

de pensée et la vision du monde, tous ces éléments de culture jouent un rôle important dans la présentation de vie des membres de la famille Trestler. La romancière peint la vie quotidienne de cette maisonnée, mais elle est très consciente de la particularité de la vie décrite. D'ailleurs, dès ses débuts littéraires, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska insiste sur l'importance de l'identité culturelle malgré le fait que les personnes/personnages appartiennent au même groupe ethnique ou social. Déjà dans ses premières nouvelles l'écrivaine *in spe* disait que « dans l'uniformité de circonstances identiques, chaque expérience prend une dimension singulière et tragique » (Ouellette-Michalska, 1968).

Nous prenons la liberté d'affirmer qu'en effet, la vie de Jean-Joseph Trestler a pris une dimension tragique, car la richesse accumulée et la position sociale acquise ne lui ont pas assurées le bonheur personnel. Cet homme entreprenant et décidé à réussir s'est enrichi peu à peu et – désireux de respecter les us et les coutumes québécoises – a fondé son foyer avec une douce Française, Marguerite Noël, « futile, fragile » (Ouellette-Michalska, 1984 : 46),[2] mais la naissance des quatre filles était un mauvais départ pour un ancien militaire. Au fur et à mesure que sa vie professionnelle allait croissante, sa vie privée n'était qu'une suite de malheurs : son épouse meurt, ainsi que ses deux filles du premier lit. Devenu plus prudent, il se remarie avec une Allemande, Marie-Anne Curtius, une femme robuste, taciturne et simple, mais qui lui donne deux fils tant désirés, qui seront héritiers des affaires de leur père.

La différence entre les deux épouses de J. J. Trestler est frappante : la première aimait tendrement son époux et ses filles, leur racontait des événements historiques de la France et rêvait souvent du passé. L'autre, plus terre à terre, se préoccupait de « son homme » et de ses fils, son ménage représentant son unique univers :

> Elle n'a jamais touché à aucun de ces livres. Toute sa vie, une seule histoire l'a passionnée. La sienne. La sienne, composée de jours égaux, uniformes, doublant ceux, brusquement interrompus, de l'époux Jean-Joseph. (45)

Il va sans dire que les filles du premier lit s'entendaient mal avec la marâtre, ce qui est surtout vrai chez Catherine, la rebelle. Elle voit son père comme un homme chiche, ne s'occupant que de ses affaires, n'aimant pas ses filles, mais qui éprouvait une passion charnelle – coupable dans les yeux de sa fille – pour sa seconde femme. Sévère avec ses enfants, Trestler est très aimable avec son épouse au corps robuste et c'est lui-même qui met des braises dans le chauffe-lit pour tempérer l'humidité des draps. Malgré la fortune cachée dans les coffres, Trestler, en bon Allemand, est économe et les chambres à coucher n'étaient pas chauffées. L'atmosphère glaciale de la maison reflète la froideur des rapports entre les membres de la famille. Le père y règne en vrai *pater familias* et les membres mâles passent toujours avant les femmes :

[2] Pour les citations du roman, nous nous servirons de la première édition de 1984 et mettrons la page entre parenthèses pour ne pas alourdir le texte.

> Madame Trestler apporte le hachis de pommes de terre et distribue les tranches de porc fumé que le chef de famille découpe avec la précision d'un chirurgien. Sa fourchette se dirige vers les fils, servis par rang d'âge, avant de passer aux filles. (37)

Monsieur Trestler avait apporté de son pays natal les habitudes respectées dans toutes les familles qui se croyaient « avoir des manières ». On ne parlait pas pendant les repas et c'était le chef de la famille qui disait le peu de mots nécessaires. Personne ne l'interrompait et personne ne s'introduisait dans la conversation sans être interpellé. Lors du dîner, Catherine observe les mains puissantes du père posées sur la nappe, elle regrette que ces mains ne l'aient jamais touchée et souffre de savoir que le père ne l'a jamais aimée.

Par maints détails dans le roman nous voyons qu'à l'époque les filles étaient plutôt supportées dans la famille, qu'on leur disait ce qu'il fallait et ce qu'il ne fallait pas faire ou dire, mais que personne ne se préoccupait de les aimer, de les comprendre ou de leur donner de l'éducation. Elles n'étaient bonnes qu'à être mariées et par ce nœud d'aider leurs pères à faire encore « une bonne affaire ». Le rôle des fils était beaucoup plus important :

> Les fils Trestler honoraient leur père. Ils connaissent les traits marquants de l'histoire de France, d'Allemagne et d'Angleterre. Cela s'étale sur trois pays, deux continents, plusieurs siècles. Cela rejoint la langue, les livres, la mémoire. Cela dicte les gestes qui s'accomplissent à cette table, commandent les événements qui se déroulent dans cette maison. Cela exige le retrait des filles, les femmes qui vivront ailleurs, porteront un autre nom, formeront une autre famille. (39)

Mais, si les relations sont compréhensibles pour les membres de la famille Trestler, les autres personnages du roman ne les comprennent pas. C'est le cas avec Stefan, époux de la romancière (dans le roman et dans la réalité), un Juif d'origine polonaise qui porte « un nom en ski, un nom à particule inconnu en Amérique ». (51). Il méprise les hommes d'affaires et la bourgeoisie et « ce blessé de guerre [qui] avait quatre ans lorsque son père parti pour le front dès le début des hostilités » (50) hait les Allemands et ne voit en Trestler qu'un « boche ». Stefan n'apprécie pas ses propres racines et c'est pourquoi il ne comprend pas cette sorte d'idolâtrie pour une maison. Pourtant, pour des Québécois, cette maison de style français a la signification symbolique du foyer et Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska/la romancière du livre avoue sa fascination pour la maison Trestler qui remonte à l'enfance.

L'identité culturelle québécoise est liée à son attachement étroit à la terre des ancêtres, nourri de la plus tendre enfance des histoires de sa mère et à son goût pour le style français à la limite de l'obsession. Elle représente pour Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska, d'après son propre aveu, sa « raison d'être ». D'où sa fascination pour la maison Trestler, preuve palpable et évidente de l'histoire même du pays et de cette région en particulier. Les habitants et les propriétaires de la maison tenaient aussi à leurs racines et étaient fiers de leur passé. C'est pourquoi l'on remarque sur le bâtiment les traces d'ajustements, d'une rapide anglicisation et d'une francisation obstinément renouvelée. Deux hommes d'affaires – symbolisant le mythe

américain du *self made man* – avaient transformé cette belle maison de style XVIII[e] siècle en une maison de chasse prétentieuse, mi-ferme, mi-auberge anglaise et elle a porté à tour de rôle le titre de « château » et du « manor » suivant le fait que le propriétaire était francophone ou anglophone. Dans le hall, une pièce haute dont le mur d'appui, en grès de Potsdam, constitue l'épine dorsale de la maison ; (19) dans la salle à manger, une cheminée en pierre des champs occupe presque tout le mur du fond ; l'âtre se trouve au centre et le mobilier est en bois de pin. (37) Dans le salon vert garni d'un rideau de cretonne fermant l'accès à la galerie se trouve une table baroque, ce marbre victorien taillé en ovale, tandis que sur le mur on voit l'Enfant Jésus de Prague (42).

La maison étant de style français (62), le propriétaire actuel envisage d'ôter les balustrades de style Tudor, trop massives pour le style français (63). Le rez-de-chaussée s'achève avec une voûte, au-delà de laquelle se trouve un couloir longeant une pièce humide et déserte, couverte de plusieurs couche d'émail, qui occupe la place de l'ancien magasin, tandis qu'à son extrémité on aperçoit un étroit escalier sans rampe qui grimpe à l'étage des chambres. (64) Il y avait sept ou huit chambres mansardées, de chaque côté du couloir et au bout, une porte de secours en cas d'incendie servant peut-être à entrer des provisions au grenier. (68-69) On montait dans des lits à quenouilles à l'aide de trois marches alors que les courtines étaient de serge de Caen. (84). Parmi le mobilier on pouvait remarquer un fauteuil Empire, (108) et parmi les bibelots un cendrier de porcelaine hongroise. (66). Le tout témoigne de la culture québécoise, soit de l'influence européenne et française et porte le sceau de l'aisance bourgeoise du marchand de fourrures.

On a l'impression qu'au dessus de la majestueuse maison planait encore le parfum des temps passés, chaque objet témoignant de l'origine, du goût, des habitudes de vie d'anciens habitants. Il est donc tout naturel que cet endroit ait inspiré la romancière et éveillé son imagination. Les liens du passé, des souvenirs, des rêves, des rêveries et des productions de l'imagination et des fictions créatrices avec le présent, ainsi que les liens entre les anciens locataires et les propriétaires actuels de la maison Trestler ou les ressemblances quant aux destins de l'héroïne et de son auteure – sont plus que des ressemblances dues au hasard. Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska elle-même en est consciente et admet que son œuvre est le fruit du vécu et du désiré, qui, à un certain moment ont jailli de sa plume et sont devenus une part de la réalité et l'héritage de l'avenir. On dirait que la romancière cherche à percer sa propre identité culturelle à travers l'histoire des personnages historiques dont la vie est devenue légendaire dans la région de Vaudreuil et dont la destinée est devenue la source d'inspiration pour une création littéraire. L'écrivaine en est très consciente et les questions qu'elle se posent ne sont que des questions rhétoriques :

> Pourquoi ai-je moi-même souhaité percer le mystère de Catherine Trestler, celui de son père, D'Éva, de Benjamin, de Monsieur B. ? Le mystère n'insiste que d'être imaginé. Un roman de trois cents pages m'apprendra peut-être que nous sommes le visage d'une seule et même personne. Un être sans âge qui endosse, dans la traversée de l'espace et du temps, un ensemble de vies et de morts lui apportant la plénitude d'existence qu'une seule vie et une seule mort

> ne sauraient satisfaire. L'ombre de Catherine qui rôde dans cette pièce est plus que l'ombre de Catherine. (108)

Au commencement Catherine Trestler faisait vraiment partie d'un cauchemar de la romancière, qui la voyait en rêve ; l'héroïne devient le double de sa créatrice. C'est ainsi que l'intention consciente de la romancière de réunir des documents à l'imagination créatrice, ainsi qu'un geste dû au hasard par lequel elle superposait les dossiers contenant les données sur la visite d'un diplomate français et ceux sur la famille Trestler – en rêve, quand le contrôle de la conscience faiblit, le subconscient se réveille – cède la place aux mélanges imprévisibles de la conscience de la romancière et celle de son héroïne. De plus, l'écrivaine avait fait don de sa personnalité à la sœur aînée de Catherine, les pronoms « elle » et « je » se fondant en « nous », c'est ainsi que finalement l'auteure elle-même ne sait plus au juste où se trouve la frontière entre le passé et l'avenir, entre les souvenirs et l'histoire du roman. Madeleine Ouellette, célèbre romancière québécoise, la journaliste du roman et les deux filles Trestler sont toutes marquées par la position traditionnelle de la société patriarcale québécoise : enfants silencieux et en retrait, des filles sans larmes, à deux siècles de distance, elles partagent la même sagesse de camoufler leurs sentiments et l'art de s'adapter aux contraintes des bonnes manières et des apparences.

La romancière accentue même cet échange d'identité et cet enchevêtrement des destinées de l'héroïne du XIX^{e} siècle et de celle d'une écrivaine moderne et engagée :

> Sur la page, le flou de la mémoire. Au-delà, un paysage où le regard invente mille issues possibles. La vieille maison se superpose de plus en plus souvent à la maison Trestler. À la fin, je ne sais plus qui raconte ses rêves et ses pleurs. Qui succombe à l'attrait de plaisir et à l'horreur du sang. Qui, de Catherine ou moi, tire la fiction du réel, ou extrait le réel de l'imaginaire. (93)

Mais, lorsque la romancière – parlant d'elle-même – utilise le pronom « elle », elle nous fait découvrir le fil d'Ariane liant le passé au mythe nord-américain du succès et à la persévérance de la femme actuelle qui tient à sa carrière. D'origine paysanne et issue d'une famille pauvre mais fière de ses origines, grâce à l'écriture, la romancière s'est enrichie, et fréquente souvent les dignitaires et les personnes occupant une place importante dans la société. Cependant elle parle avec un certain mépris des bourgeois qui ne respectent pas les valeurs traditionnelles et feignent de se comporter d'après les us et coutumes seulement pour en tirer un profit personnel :

> C'est bien connu, les bourgeois ont toujours eu la conscience étroite, ils s'accommodent de la morale individuelle conventionnelle pour mieux refuser la morale sociale et politique. (Ouellette-Michalska, 1968)

Pourtant, du moins en apparence, la famille bourgeoise représente un système social en miniature qui reflète plus ou moins bien le système culturel global. Marc-Adélard Tremblay pose que les personnalités se développent, en plus ou moins parfaite harmonie, avec les prémisses culturelles sur lesquelles elles re-

posent. C'est pourquoi les cadres sociaux et les valeurs culturelles d'un groupe « constituent des éléments importants dans la fixation des traits de la personnalité individuelle et du tempérament national ». (Tremblay, 1983 : 80) Si nous partons de la prémisse que la famille Trestler représente le modèle de la famille traditionnelle québécoise francophone, nous pouvons analyser les liaisons fonctionnelles de la société québécoise de l'époque et la continuité culturelle. Le système de parenté d'une civilisation remplit essentiellement les mêmes fonctions, selon des modèles particuliers d'autorité. Il faut se rappeler le fait que tout système de parenté est fondé sur trois relations fondamentales : a) une relation d'alliance ou d'affinité entre l'époux et l'épouse ; b) une relation de filiation entre les parents et les enfants ; et c) une relation de consanguinité entre les enfants (Lévi-Strauss, 1958). Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska rejoint Lévi-Strauss lorsqu'elle parle de la liaison spirituelle et charnelle entre Jean-Joseph Trestler et Marie-Anne Curtius ; lorsqu'elle parle des relations entre les parents et les enfants, où les fils ont une place privilégiée par rapport aux filles ; et lorsqu'elle parle du besoin de marier les filles dans les familles mieux placées sur l'échelle sociale que la famille dont elles sont issues. Mais, la romancière, à l'instar de son héroïne Catherine, accuse cette position inférieure de la femme dans la famille traditionnelle québécoise francophone. Déjà dans son roman *Le plat de lentilles* l'écrivaine constatait avec amertume :

> Être femme, c'est justement servir à faire passer le temps.
> Donner au père le fils qui lui assure l'éternité. (Ouellette-Michalska, 1979)

Catherine et son auteure sont toutes les deux des enfants sensibles, assoiffées d'amour et elle accepte mal le rôle que la société traditionnelle leur a prescrit. Lorsque la romancière s'identifie avec Catherine, on dirait qu'elle écrit pour résoudre ses propres conflits émotionnels et qu'elle aurait opté pour des émotions en forme de « rêves éveillés » pour éviter de « vraies » émotions. Grâce à l'art, elle a évité la maladie ou bien, comme le pose Otto Fenichel, elle a trouvé « son chemin vers l'objectivité ».

D'autre part, la remarque de Marthe Robert nous paraît importante à propos de la possibilité de s'identifier aux autres personnes :

> Tout romancier est forcément conduit soit à s'engager envers le monde s'il tient surtout du Bâtard oeudipien, soit à créer délibérément un 'autre' monde, ce qui revient à défier le vrai, si c'est l'Enfant trouvé qui parle le plus fort en lui. (Robert, 1981 : 77)

Catherine Trestler elle aussi a l'air d'un Enfant trouvé, puisque son père ne l'aime pas : « Elle voudrait être aimée par cette main qui approche [du moutardier], touche, se dirige vers les fils. » (37) Dans son amour pour le père il y a quelque chose d'incestueux : « Père viendra. Lorsque je l'apercevrai, je m'enroulerai à ses pieds en retenant un cri. Il posera ses lèvres sur mes joues et m'entourera de ses bras. Quand je serai grande, je l'épouserai, et nous ne nous quitterons plus. » (53) Le père lui, tient la place d'une idole :

> Mon père est plus puissant que le soleil. Debout, il dépasse l'orme géant de l'entrée. S'il le voulait, il n'aurait qu'à me hisser au bout de ses bras pour me permettre de décrocher la lune. Je lui offrirai aussi les étoiles. […] Pour cet homme je ferai n'importe quoi. S'il m'aime, je serai capable de vivre un siècle. (54)

La déception de sa fille est immense lorsqu'elle découvre que son père ne l'aimera jamais. La constatation de Catherine ressemble à un cri de détresse : « J'ai inutilement parfumé mes joues. Il ne me permettra pas de l'embrasser. » (55) Elle connaît bien sa place dans la famille : une demoiselle Trestler doit avoir de la retenue, de la distinction et de bonnes manières.

En famille, le père se comporte en despote et n'attend qu'à être obéi, mais, dans la société J. J. Trestler respecte les us et coutumes de la haute classe sociale et redevient un « homme de mode ». Dur en affaires, froid et réservé avec sa famille, en visite, il devient léger. Il feint d'aimer lire devant l'hôtesse de la maison, en disant : « L'histoire de ce pays m'intéresse. J'aime en connaître les faits et péripéties. » (100) Dans la société, il en profite pour rappeler des souvenirs de sa vie de garnison, ce qui intéresse tout le monde. Catherine en profite pour conclure : « Il a toujours le verbe rude et l'argument massif, mais il se montre jovial et plein d'esprit. Si j'avais ce père tous les jours, cela me serait facile de l'aimer. »

La guerre cachée entre le père et la fille termine mal. Cet homme rude, qui cependant, disait aimer la musique et à Noël « répétait de vieux refrains allemands » (101) ne pouvait pas pardonner à sa fille d'avoir bravé son autorité et d'avoir décidé d'épouser un de ses employés contre son autorisation et sa volonté. Sachant que traditionnellement la fille de bonne famille devait entrer en mariage vierge, Catherine passe la nuit avec Éléazar pour mettre le père devant le fait accompli : ne pouvant plus la marier à un bourgeois riche car elle s'est déshonorée et a déshonoré sa famille – le père consent que sa fille épouse un simple employé, mais ne participe pas à leurs noces et bannit la rebelle du foyer familial en ne lui donnant que cinq shilling en héritage. Vu le fait que la femme n'avait pas de droit juridique à l'époque, Catherine doit se faire représenter par son époux pour exiger la part de l'héritage qui lui est dû du côté maternel, puisqu'elle n'a pas pu obtenir la tendresse et le pardon de son père. Le procès a fait un scandale et les deux hommes, en bons marchands, font une transaction : ne pouvant pas supporter sa fille rebelle comme voisine, le père lui rachète les terres héritées « dans la seigneurie de Vaudreuil, entre le Chemin du Roy et la Rivière des Outaouais » (289) et conclut l'affaire non pas avec la femme de son sang, mais avec son époux, qui représente son épouse mineure devant les autorités. En 1812, la volonté de femme, le nom de femme et le prénom choisi par sa mère ne sont pas reconnus par les termes de la loi. Le père Trestler a cédé, mais il ne s'est pas rendu : en bannissant sa fille du foyer paternel, le père a rompu les liens de parenté, voire de sang avec celle qui a choisi de ne pas respecter sa volonté et qui a osé agir de son propre chef. Il a même refusé de voir son petit-fils, « un garçon fort et robuste comme il les aime et dont il serait fier » (290). Mais, on dirait que la nature s'est vengée de ce *pater familias* qui n'a jamais su aimer sa fille du premier lit : les fils qu'il avait eus avec Marie-Anne Curtius n'ont pas eu de progéniture et

la lignée de ce mercenaire allemand, devenu une personne notable dans la société montréalaise, s'est prolongée uniquement grâce aux enfants de sa fille rejetée. Les enfants et les petits-enfants de Catherine et d'Éléazar, sont imprégnés des valeurs traditionnelles québécoises. Toutefois, il faut souligner le fait qu'ils étaient issus d'une liaison atypique pour l'époque dont parle le roman *La maison Trestler* de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska : Catherine et son époux ont créé une liaison tout aussi charnelle que spirituelle, ils s'aimaient tendrement et se respectaient. C'est pourquoi – à la différence de la majestueuse demeure de Jean-Joseph Trestler, dans laquelle régnaient les règles d'obéissance et de soumission à la volonté du chef de famille et où les biens matériels avaient le dessus sur les émotions – les Hayst avaient vécu heureux et protégés dans leur monde à eux, derrière les murs de leur foyer qui les séparaient du monde extérieur et ils tenaient sincèrement à leurs liens de consanguinité. Tout en se souvenant de leurs racines européennes, les descendants de J. J. Trestler étaient devenus de vrais Québécois qui tenaient à leur identité forgée au Nouveau Monde.

La romancière s'est inspirée de l'histoire d'une famille pour nous montrer en quoi consiste l'identité québécoise. Elle s'est identifiée avec la rebelle Catherine Trestler et elle a choisi de se mettre du côté de la jeune fille, qui avait osé braver les préjugés de sa classe sociale et les usages respectés dans la famille traditionnelle. La femme engagée de nos jours croit au progrès apporté par les personnes qui osent se confronter aux autorités familiales, sociales et étatiques et elle en donne des preuves dans plusieurs de ses ouvrages : « Pour le révolutionnaire, c'est toujours le même éternel conflit entre la morale individuelle et la morale collective » (Ouellette-Michalska, 1968). Mais, il ne faut pas oublier non plus que l'individu est profondément marqué par la mémoire collective, influencé par la morale de l'époque dans laquelle il vit et par le milieu dans lequel il a grandi. C'est pourquoi le rôle de la femme dans la formation de l'identité québécoise est beaucoup plus important que les hommes ne veulent l'avouer. Les Québécois sont fiers de leur origine française et les noms des rues de Vaudreuil, Valois ou Galt en témoignent assez. Grâce aux mères, les enfants apprennent l'histoire de leur ancienne patrie : ils connaissent tout sur la bataille de Saint-Cloud ou sur les exploits de Charlemagne, de Saint-Louis, de François I^{er} ; la tragique destinée de Marie-Antoinette les touchent et ils admirent Versailles ou le château de Chambord. Dès leur enfance, les enfants savent situer Paris sur la carte, capitale de la France ; Rome, ville sainte ; et l'Angleterre, d'où vient le malheur.

Mais, on dirait que l'Europe aussi bien que la France ne font pas grand cas de leurs liens avec ceux qui sont partis en quête d'une vie meilleure et d'un avenir plus heureux. Comme si les nœuds qui reliaient l'Ancien et le Nouveau Monde, à force d'être lâches, s'étaient dénoués – ce qui fait naître chez les descendants des immigrés au Nord du continent américain un sentiment d'abandon et provoque chez eux un complexe identitaire :

> Nous sommes des bâtards du Nouveau Monde en transit entre deux continents. Ni Français, ni Canadiens, ni Américains, mais, alors, quoi ? – 'Québécois, et ça suffit.' – 'Kébé quoi ?

> – 'Qué-bé-cois, c'est ça, oui, ça vient de Québec, mot de deux syllabes qui signifie, en Indien, une ville haut perchée.' » (67)

Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska remarque, plutôt amèrement, qu'après trois siècles d'absence, ses compatriotes épèlent au tout venant le mot Qué-bé-cois, comme si en le répétant ils essayaient de se convaincre eux-mêmes, aussi bien qu'autrui, de leur propre existence. Avec résignation, elle conclut qu'ils ne font qu'étaler des théories, car ils écrivent avec une encre blanche pour des archives invisibles ; et ils ne font pas de lois, ils ne mènent pas de guerres et n'élisent pas de gouvernements. Elle constatent ironiquement que « depuis le traité de Paris, il n'y a eu que le Beaujolais et la grammaire pour [les] relier à la France ». (67)

En tant qu'écrivaine engagée, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska ne peut pas ne pas mentionner les événements de la vie politique et elle nous présente ses vues – plutôt sombres – sur les rapports entre la France et le Québec. Elle est consciente du fait que la France a besoin d'alliés puissants et non pas de cousins plaintifs et revanchards puisque dans ce coin du monde il n'y avait pas d'or des Incas et des Mayas. Aux yeux de la métropole, le Québec n'était qu'une terre maudite, une erreur, une fausse Amérique, une toundra aride qui mettait la France au désespoir. Ayant perdu ses illusions sur la Mère Patrie, la romancière conclut :

> Le Québec n'était pas un problème universel. Il était le résidu d'une mémoire coloniale, le caillou trouant le bas blanc du président qui avait dû stopper ce reflux de consanguinité qui lui plaquait l'outre-Atlantique sur les bras quand tant de points chauds le sollicitaient. […] Il ne pouvait s'embarrasser des six millions d'habitants qui peuplaient les rives de Saint-Laurent. Chibougamau, Natashquant, Artabaska, la baie de Ha-Ha étaient des onomatopées, non des districts électoraux. (34-35)

Mais, à l'occasion de voyages d'affaires en France, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska devient consciente de son complexe identitaire et conclut à contrecœur qu'elle ne sera jamais « des leurs », quoi qu'elle dise, quoi qu'elle fasse. On lui fait remarquer qu'elle a ou qu'elle n'a pas d'accent et on s'efforce de deviner si elle est originaire du midi ou du nord. Consciente du complexe de « l'étrangère maniant la langue à la perfection », mais que le milieu rejette, la romancière se défend par l'ironie et se comporte de manière semblable à celle « d'un Américain à Paris ». À Montréal, les gens s'efforçaient d'imiter l'emphase métropolitaine, mais à Paris, elle rougissait d'un rien. La Québécoise avait honte de transporter sa petite république de neige, son slip en nylon rose et son attaché case en similicuir dans un pays où les faux ont du style, et la petitesse de la grandeur.

Le contraste entre ce qui était su des histoires qui se rapportaient de génération en génération, des événements évoqués dans des livres et ce que quelqu'un du Québec avait pu voir dans la France actuelle en vivant au contact des habitants de la Ville lumière – est pareil au contraste existant dans les œuvres littéraires. La première réaction de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska devant le conflit du passé et du présent est une profonde déception :

> Hors des livres, il m'était parfois apparu que les Français étaient des acteurs qui se prenaient pour des personnages. Cela m'eût été une piètre consolation. Derniers héritiers d'une langue morte, nous avions été floués par l'histoire. Ici, il n'y avait pas de généalogies, mais des générations. Pas de territoires, mais des terres. Pas de pays, mais des paysages. (32)

L'incompréhension des Français pour les Québécois est surtout visible par la réaction de Monsieur B., un diplomate envoyé par Paris en visite officielle. En atterrissant à l'aérodrome de Mirabel, devant « l'étendue sauvage étalée à la lisière d'une forêt du Nouveau Monde » (23), le Français la croit tirée de l'une des plus belles pages de Chateaubriand et éprouve la vanité des entreprises humaines, vu le fait que le Québec, cette Belle Province lui fait sentir la précarité de la culture et ses patientes édifications. « Il ignore que le réel s'y montre conforme à l'imaginaire » car tant de froid et de blancheur le désoriente : il ne voit qu'une carte postale d'un jour d'hiver en Amérique dans ce décor glacial et les mots qu'on lui adressent « résonnent à ses oreilles irréels, archaïques » (21). Venu de la métropole, Monsieur B. ne comprend pas l'enthousiasme des gens venus l'accueillir et « il croit contempler quelque tableau naïf tiré de ces musées ambulants qui suivaient autrefois les foires de province ». (21) En se préparant pour sa visite officielle, il a bien appris les faits historiques, mais pour lui, cela prend la forme d'un conte de fée. La distance spirituelle est soulignée par le commencement traditionnel des contes « Il était une fois un peuple élu… » et le besoin des Québécois de sauvegarder leur langue dans un entourage anglophone, lorsqu'ils s'obstinent à appeler le maïs « le blé d'inde », pour le diplomate français, cela fait d'eux des « racistes jusque dans un champ de céréales » (23). L'incompréhension pour l'identité québécoise est visible dans plusieurs domaines. Dans « ce pays à double langue et à double face », il se sent observer par un monstre bicéphale dont la tête se dissocie au-delà de l'apparente unification du corps. Il voit les Québécois comme des racistes jusque dans un dictionnaire : « En vocabulaire, tout était litote. En histoire, tout était lapsus. » (23) Le banc de neige que l'Académie française s'entête à appeler congère est une preuve de plus que « toute cette terre, et la langue qui en découle, est figée dans l'étau de la congélation ». (28) Dans le froid canadien, il se sentait plus Français qu'à Montmartre ou à Saint-Cloud, tout en pensant que ce pays avait « trop de géographie et pas assez d'histoire » (24) et qu'au Canada « l'on pratiquait l'hospitalité plutôt que la sociabilité ». (29) Mais, en bon diplomate, Monsieur B. se comporte en ex-colonialiste devenu indifférent à ses habitants qui continuent à l'idolâtrer, sans toutefois dire ouvertement ce qu'il pense :

> Puis au dîner d'adieu […] il porte un toast à leur parenté spirituelle et charnelle. Il ne peut enfreindre ou nier la loi du sang. Mais il les quitte sans appuyer leurs prétentions autonomistes. Cette descendance bâtarde peut l'aimer. Elle ne peut le contraindre, ni l'élire. (31)

En cherchant les liens qui puissent relier les carences politiques et linguistiques aux écarts de températures, Monsieur B. a beau répéter les phrases de politesse : « Nous constituons une grande famille. Je vous apporte le salut paternel de la France. » (31) Pour lui et pour ses compatriotes, les Québécois resteront une « descendance bâtarde » et *Le Figaro* écrira lors de sa visite au Canada qu'il n'y a jamais eu de

Royaume du Québec et que les Québécois sont des personnages en quête d'auteur. Consciente de son complexe identitaire, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska affirme par la bouche de la journaliste du roman que les Québécois considèrent les Français comme leurs pires ennemis ; comme des parents et souligne que c'est encore plus traître, puisqu'« ils viennent jouer au monarque après [les] avoir abandonnés ». (31) Elle remarque clairement, lors de son voyage à la mère patrie, que le Parisien qui l'a apostrophé dédaignait l'amour filial et elle énumère les différences de position du Québec :

> Pour le ramener à de meilleurs sentiments, j'entrepris de lui raconter l'Ancien Testament, l'ivresse de Noé, l'irrespect des fils, le plat de lentilles d'Essaü et Jacob. Le recours à l'Histoire Sainte l'indifférait. J'invoquai alors des motifs plus raisonnables. L'œuf de Colomb : à l'hotizontale, parlez et multipliez-vous, eau qui roule n'amasse pas mousse, seules les prières ont des oreilles. Il me coupa la parole, ne pouvant pas rater l'occasion de m'exposer la quadrature du cercle, les grandes orgues raciniennes, le cogito cartésien, la Petite Madeleine proustienne, tout ce qui vous fait une belle gueule. Au bout du compte, personne ne sut qui de nous deux l'emporta. (24)

En Québécoise de souche, Madeleine Ouellette tient beaucoup à son identité, l'ironie et l'amertume qui émergent parfois des pages de son roman ne peuvent pas masquer son orgueil d'appartenir à cette race courageuse qui s'était installée le long du Saint-Laurent. Le fait que les Québécois soient fiers de leurs origines se vérifie tous les jours et cela jusqu'au détail visible sur les plaques d'immatriculation, où figure la phrase « Je me souviens ». Cette phrase manifeste leur volonté de ne pas oublier leurs racines. La romancière insiste sur l'importance de la mémoire lors qu'il s'agit du besoin de manifester sa dépendance :

> La remonté du temps conduit toujours au piège de la réminiscence. Il faudrait pourtant savoir oublier. Il faudrait savoir s'épargner les blessures de la mémoire, détourner ces flux et reflux d'images qui grouillent dans les replis d'une conscience distraite et en menacent la tranquillité. (26)

Pourtant, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska s'est laissée inspirer par une image, par la photo de l'ancienne Maison Trestler, ce témoin de l'histoire d'un homme désireux de réussir dans le Nouveau Monde pour nous communiquer sa propre vision sur le passé et le présent des descendants européens, devenus Américains, mais fiers de leur culture apportée dans leurs bagages mentaux. En mélangeant adroitement les faits historiques, les liens politiques et linguistiques et les projets pour un avenir prospère de maintes nations vivant ensemble au Québec – la romancière donne libre cours à son imagination créatrice et nous présente sa vision de l'identité québécoise, aussi bien que le complexe identitaire des habitants de la Belle Province. C'est elle qui parle à travers la narratrice du roman :

> La visite de Monsieur B. ne changerait rien. Nous resterions les missionnaires de la francophonie. Nous continuerions de rouler le rocher de Sisyphe, heureux de nous consacrer à un destin sublime, opiniâtres dans notre refus des week-end, shopping et parking du pays mère qui ambitionnait de parler anglais, la langue de l'Amérique. (62–63)

Il est bien connu que c'est au XIX^e^ siècle que commence la lutte pour « le bon parler français » et la chasse aux anglicismes. En 1867, la littérature « canadienne » est encore considérée comme une littérature marginale de la langue française et la littérature québécoise n'est mondialement reconnue qu'après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Depuis, nous assistons à la lutte des écrivains québécois pour présenter leurs valeurs traditionnelles dans la langue de leurs ancêtres, tout en respectant le fait que la langue est une matière vivante et par ce fait même sujette aux changements. Si l'histoire s'est propagée grâce aux femmes, ces gardiennes du foyer et des coutumes traditionnelles, il ne faut pas être surpris que le patrimoine national soit sauvegardé et popularisé grâce aux efforts de femmes engagées, telles Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska ou Judith Debuc, qui est devenue Éva de *La maison Trestler*. D'autre part, la maison symbolise le foyer et la famille dans la tradition québécoise et c'est à la maison qu'il faut lier les valeurs typiques pour l'identité ethnique québécoise. Donc, le choix de la célèbre romancière québécoise de prendre une ancienne maison pour le personnage principal de son histoire sur la formation de la notion identitaire québécoise nous paraît tout à fait naturel et justifié. Dans son roman de trois cents pages, elle met en lumière toutes les valeurs traditionnelles rapportées de la Mère Patrie et montre comment ces valeurs trouvent leur place dans la société québécoise contemporaine. Le succès que le roman de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska a connu dès sa parution en 1984, ainsi que lors de sa réédition en 1995 montre bien que la romancière a bien su choisir la thématique de son livre. Le mélange du passé, du présent et de l'avenir, des souvenirs et des projets, de la politique et de l'histoire d'amour, est une combinaison de l'histoire de ce pays entre les deux continents, entre plusieurs cultures et avec l'idée de créer une identité qui lui est propre, tout en restant ouverte aux influences d'autres cultures qui se joignent à elle grâce aux immigrés qui viennent toujours pour s'installer au Québec dans l'espoir d'y fonder leur foyer. C'est pourquoi nous croyons pouvoir affirmer que tout commence et se termine par une maison. La maison symbolise le désir de s'enraciner dans un endroit ; elle porte le sceau des goûts et des habitudes de ses habitants ; elle cache les secrets des relations entre les époux et entre leur progéniture ; elle est le témoin des malheurs et des heures heureuses de ses habitants. C'est pourquoi elle rayonne l'identité de ses propriétaires et envoie un message du passé vers l'avenir. Lorsqu'elle devient le monument du patrimoine national, comme c'est le cas avec la maison Trestler, elle devient le symbole d'un temps et de la culture d'un peuple dans un espace. Lorsqu'elle devient l'inspiration d'une écrivaine, la maison devient le symbole palpable de l'identité d'une ethnie. C'est pourquoi le huitième roman de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska est devenu un ouvrage important de la littérature québécoise et appartient au trésor de l'identité culturelle québécoise, liant les faits du passé avec les espérances de l'avenir.

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HISTOIRE, MÉMOIRE ET FILIATION FÉMININE : *« LA MAISON TRESTLER »* DE MADELEINE OUELLETTE-MICHALSKA

Le roman *La Maison Trestler* de Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska, représente l'histoire d'une journaliste et écrivaine québécoise qui s'engage, à travers son écriture, dans un processus de clarification personnelle et idéologique au cours duquel elle arrive à situer son récit à la conjonction de l'Histoire, du féminisme et du nationalisme. Ce texte postmoderne reconstruit l'histoire de la maison Trestler – construite au 18e siècle tout en déconstruisant le roman historique tel qu'il a été conçu au 19e siècle. La narratrice de ce roman remet en cause l'Histoire du Québec des 18e et 19e siècle.

Des théoriciens tels que Paul Veyne, Linda Hutcheon, Michel de Certeau, Kibédi-Varga, Hayden White et d'autres ont mis en cause la légitimation de l'Histoire, et notamment son statut totalisant, véridique, scientifique et incontestable. Dans toute historiographie, il y a une part incontestable de littérature, de fiction ajoutée aux textes historiques : « to write history is equally to narrate, to represent by means of selection and interpretation. » (Hutcheon, 73). Le romancier écrit en se servant de ses pensées et de son imagination, tout comme l'historien, qui ne peut raconter l'Histoire dans sa totalité et doit, en ayant au préalable fait un processus de sélection, combler les lacunes qu'il rencontre en chemin, à l'aide de son imagination. S'il y a mélange de fiction et de réalité dans les récits historiques, si on les traite comme narration, le statut scientifique de l'Histoire est détruit automatiquement. L'Histoire avec un H majuscule n'existe pas, il n'y a que des histoires.

Selon Janet Paterson, le récit historique est limité et incomplet, car il est impossible de décrire une totalité évènementielle. L'historiographie postmoderne rejette la no-

tion d'objectivité. C'est l'idée de sélectivité qui est mise en valeur, comme le note P. Veyne : « comme le roman, l'histoire trie, simplifie, organise, fait tenir un siècle en une page. » (Veyne, 14). Une sélection doit être faite par rapport à ce qui est raconté dans les textes historiques. Si l'Histoire n'est qu'une réponse à nos interrogations, il est clair que l'historien ne peut se poser toutes les questions ni donner toutes les réponses. Le choix de l'historien est libre et subjectif – il choisit les faits qu'il trouve pertinents pour les interpréter à sa façon et les relater ensuite. L'historiographie postmoderne n'essaie pas de relater l'unique vérité. Dans *La Maison Trestler*, la narratrice nous invite à nous méfier de l'objectivité de l'Histoire :

> Au rayon d'histoire à la bibliothèque, leur [les Indiens] participation à la guerre de 1812 tenait en quelques lignes. Signé par des Québécois, le récit louait le Québec et de Salaberry. Ecrit par des Canadiens anglais, il célébrait les prouesses anglo-saxonnes. Et je doutais qu'une version américaine eût pu m'apprendre autre chose que la légende accréditée par l' histoire américaine. (Ouellette-Michalska, 268)

La narratrice en démontant la soi-disante notion d'objectivité historique révèle à son public que tout document historique est subjectif, insistant ainsi sur l'idée de limitation de l'Histoire.

La notion de vérité/fiction est reprise par Kibédi-Varga qui affirme qu'il y a dans toute historiographie « une part incontournable de littérature » (Kibedi-Varga, 19). Il y a donc de la fiction ajoutée aux textes historiques pour créer un roman historique. En somme, l'Histoire est avant tout une narration. En la traitant ainsi, on détruit automatiquement le statut scientifique de l'Histoire – ce que fait Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska dans *La Maison Trestler* :

> L'Histoire avec un grand H, c'était d'abord un genre littéraire doté d'un style, de règles, de procédés d'écriture. C'était, de toutes les histoires possibles, celle que l'on choisissait à des fins qui ne se révélaient que plus tard. Et dans ce dévoilement, le temps aussi faisait son œuvre. (Ouellette-Michalska, 239)

Dans cet extrait, la narratrice nous montre que les livres d'histoire se basent sur la mémoire que peut déformer le temps. On ne peut se fier à la mémoire des individus pour obtenir des témoignages fiables. Il est évident que dans ce passage, la journaliste/narratrice critique sévèrement le statut scientifique de l'Histoire et le réduit à un genre littéraire. La narration de la journaliste/narratrice n'est pas moins objective que les documents historiques. Autrement dit, la narration de la narratrice est tout aussi subjective que les récits historiques.

L'historiographie postmoderne n'essaie pas seulement de déconstruire le mythe de l'Histoire, ni son statut totalisant ; elle essaie aussi de valoriser l'Histoire. Cette dernière est mise en valeur par le biais d'une réécriture. L'Historiographie postmoderne reconstitue, réécrit l'Histoire en modifiant certains événements auxquels a été accordé un statut et en ajoutant des éléments imaginaires. Il y a donc une création d'un aspect romanesque lorsqu'on réécrit l'Histoire. Dans *La Maison Trestler*, la narratrice révèle qu'elle juxtapose la fiction à l'histoire et suggère que les historiens effectuent les mêmes mélanges entre ces registres :

> Comme romancière, ces détails de la chronique m'apparaissent secondaires. Il faut avant tout rendre la fiction cohérente, faire en sorte que l'histoire inventée se superpose à l'histoire vécue. Chroniqueurs et historiens ne procèdent pas autrement, et on les croit sur parole. (Ouellette-Michalska, 155)

Il y a toujours une part de fiction ajoutée à l'histoire vécue, et une véritable tentation de réécrire l'Histoire. Marie Vautier soutient l'idée que le roman québécois postmoderne « ne veut pas autant afficher ce rejet de la part de l'Histoire qu'il veut développer sa propre façon de mythifier le passé » (Vautier, 50). On veut remédier à l'évacuation hors de l'Histoire de tout un peuple. Cette réécriture change le sens de ce qui a été écrit comme le remarque Kibédi-Varga « la réécriture postmoderne modifie radicalement la nature de ce qui s'insère (comme réflexion, motivation, commentaire, confession) entre les événements » (Kibedi-Varga, 18). Cette réécriture, trait essentiel de l'historiographie postmoderne, invite le lecteur à se poser des questions sur le statut totalisant de l'Histoire.

Dans *La Maison Trestler*, la composante historique est mise en place de sorte qu'à l'exception du mystérieux Monsieur B. (qu'il est toutefois possible de retracer), les noms, les dates, les lieux, les détails, les documents et les événements historiques sont notés de façon précise, ce qui a pour effet de créér l'effet de réel dont parle Barthes. L'Histoire elle-même est valorisée au niveau du récit puisqu'elle fait l'objet d'intérêt à la fois des personnages féminins :

> Cette femme adorait l'histoire de la France. Les jours de mauvais temps, elle profitait de l'allègement de sa besogne pour nous raconter des passages. A huit ans, je connaissais des dates, des faits, des épisodes. Je pouvais réciter certaines tirades. Je pouvais reproduire la voix des grands hommes qui commandèrent le destin des peuples. (Ouellette-Michalska, 26)

et des personnages masculins :

> Les fils Trestler honorent leur père. Ils connaissent les traits marquants de l'histoire de la France, d'Allemagne et d'Angleterre. Cela s'étale sur trois pays, deux continents, plusieurs siècles. Cela rejoint la langue, les livres, la mémoire. (Ouellette-Michalska, 39)

Dans son récit, la narratrice prend souvent la parole pour remettre en question certains lieux communs associés à l'Histoire. Si elle s'inspire de ce savoir pour écrire des romans, elle n'en problématise pas moins les données. Elle vise souvent la question de la vérité et de la complétude du discours historiques en s'attaquant aux notions liées de vraisemblance et d'authenticité. Par exemple, lorsqu'elle parle de la défaite des Américains au profit des Canadiens en 1775, elle cite une phrase tirée d'un manuel d'histoire : « Pris de panique, les assaillants font demi-tour et s'enfuient à toutes jambes par la route d'où ils sont venus. » (Ouellette-Michalska, 132). Elle constate qu'il s'agit moins, en fait, d'authenticité que d'effet de style : « Les choses ne concordaient que par ces effets de style qui les rendaient plausibles » (Ouellette-Michalska, 132).

Faisant écho à la pensée de Paul Veyne, la narratrice s'attaque aussi à la notion d'objectivité historique en affirmant que tout récit n'est que la projection d'un

point de vue subjectif, particulier et idéologique qui gouverne tout récit historique. Le texte remet en question l'Histoire avec une majuscule. Il exprime à plusieurs niveaux une incrédulité vis-à-vis du grand récit qui, en privilégiant certaines représentations, en bloque ou en annule d'autres. L'Histoire est démystifiée parce qu'elle acquiert progressivement le statut d'une histoire. En détruisant les frontières entre les discours réels et fictifs, en mélangeant le passé et le présent, le texte neutralise la distinction entre le récit *fictif* et le récit historique : les deux sont soumis aux contraintes de la narration et les deux peuvent dire leur part de vérité. L'Histoire – mémoires des batailles, des guerres, des traités, des ambitions politiques et des luttes pour le pouvoir – ne s'adresse pas à la femme. Elle se limite à la mémoire collective, et c'est la raison pour laquelle la narratrice se sent contrainte d'écrire sa version à elle de l'Histoire.

Adoptant une voix féministe et contestataire, la narratrice met en évidence ce que le discours de l'Histoire passe sous silence. Elle situe le non-dit au niveau des parts de vie qui sont systématiquement gommées dans les manuels d'histoire : « tout ce qui, de la vie quotidienne est biffé par l'histoire » (Ouellette-Michalska, 208). Quant au processus de l'exclusion, la narratrice le situe au niveau du grand silence qui est fait sur la question du rôle de la femme dans l'Histoire : « j'essayais d'imaginer ces femmes qui préparaient le repos des guerriers. On ne nous livrait rien de leur vie » (Ouellette-Michalska, 164). Les récits historiques racontés par la femme, ne mentionnent pas la femme parce qu'elle est « hors de l'histoire » (Ouellette-Michalska, 205). L'expérience de la femme, quotidienne et faisant partie du cycle de la nature, est biffée par l'histoire. La narratrice, tout comme son personnage, conteste le passé patriarcal et ses discours religieux et historiques, car ils ne laissent aucune place à la femme. Ainsi, Catherine Trestler, refusant de se plier aux désirs du père concernant son mariage, remet en question non seulement cette décision, mais également l'autorité paternelle. Désirant être maîtresse de ses actions, Catherine s'arroge son propre pouvoir . Refusant l'impuissance, elle ne veut pas de même être exclue du domaine du savoir qui, selon la tradition, est réservé au père et à ses fils.

En essayant d'échapper à une atmosphère étouffante, Catherine puise ses forces dans son désir de femme éveillée et dans son imagination. Même avant d'avoir rencontré l'homme qui deviendra à la fois son ami et son amant, elle s'ouvre à la sexualité en ouvrant symboliquement la fenêtre de sa chambre. Elle se prépare à marier un employé de son père, mésalliance qui va inciter celui-ci à la déshériter. Elle défie son père en faisant passer l'amour et la joie avant le sens du devoir et de la responsabilité. Par le pouvoir de l'amour et de sa détermination, une jeune fille de 16 ans triomphe de son père, bourgeois réputé et député. La lutte entre Catherine et son père se situe aussi au niveau de l'avoir puisqu'elle intente un procès à son père pour récupérer la part d'héritage maternel dont il voulait la priver. La portée symbolique est claire : au sein d'un système social qui accorde l'avoir pratique à l'homme, Catherine réclame et obtient les biens qui lui reviennent. En lui faisant récupérer l'héritage maternel, la narratrice inscrit dans l'Histoire la vraie mère de Catherine, Marguerite Noël dans le récit, et en restaurant l'héritage maternel

qui avait été tenu illégalement par le père, et en témoignant de la fin de la lignée masculine des Trestler.

On fait donc le procès de l'Histoire – un fait significatif est que le père est contextuellement lié à l'Histoire – dans sa jeunesse, il était mercenaire puis, adulte, il siège comme député au Parlement – à titre d'actant – mais également au niveau de la parole puisque le père est le seul dans la famille à pouvoir raconter des événements historiques : « Jean-Jacques Trestler parle. Personne ne l'interrompt » (Ouellette-Michalska, 38).

La narratrice/journaliste/écrivaine, qui est aussi personnage dans l'histoire qu'elle raconte, se décide subitement, à la suite de la lecture d'un article de magazine, à retracer la chronique de la famille de Jean-Joseph Trestler, jeune mercenaire allemand, établi au Canada à la fin du XVIII siècle, et à déchiffrer l'énigme de sa maison, construite à Vaudreuil, petite localité située au Bas-Canada. La chronique des Trestler s'entrelace, dès les premières pages du roman, avec le récit autobiographique de la narratrice qui, en choisissant de suivre la destinée de Catherine, la fille cadette des Trestler, découvre des analogies troublantes entre sa propre existence, celle de son personnage féminin, et l'existence de toutes les femmes qui ont laissé des empreintes douloureuses et ineffaçables sur leurs corps.

Le roman se construit autour de ce récit premier, qui est entrecoupé de plusieurs autres récits secondaires, rattachés thématiquement au récit central. Un de ces récits se structure autour de la visite que Monsieur B., Premier Ministre de France, effectue au Canada. La narratrice reconstitue les étapes de la visite ministérielle à partir de reportages télévisés et d'articles parus dans les journaux français et canadiens. Un autre récit secondaire lui est fourni par le couple Eva et Benjamin, les propriétaires de la maison Trestler, qui mettent à la disposition de la narratrice les archives de la famille du marchand allemand. La narratrice y figure comme personnage qui parle à la première personne. Le roman contient aussi un récit historique, celui des guerres de 1775 et de 1812–1813 contre les Américains ; ce récit constitue l'arrière-fond sur lequel se profile les autres histoires et, en même temps, il facilite la compréhension des relations complexes qui s'instaurent entre les individus et l'époque à laquelle ils appartiennent.

La narratrice amorce donc simultanément plusieurs récits qu'elle situe dans des espaces et des temps différents, ce qui ne l'empêche pas de les imbriquer de façon originale. La perception de la réalité varie selon le point de vue de l'observateur, elle est discontinue et les résultats sont saisis à travers plusieurs récits qui remplacent le récit traditionnel, linéaire et cohérent. A part ces récits, qui tombent dans le domaine de l'énoncé, il y en a un autre, qui occupe une place toute particulière et qui appartient au plan de l'énonciation : le récit de l'écriture du roman *La Maison Trestler*.

Le fil conducteur qui relie les récits secondaires au récit premier est la quête de l'origine, dimension essentielle du roman, qui est mise en relief par le biais de

l'écriture romanesque. C'est justement par l'acte de l'écriture que la femme cesse d'être a-signifiante et crée son propre langage, à l'aide duquel elle trouve et définit son identité. Cette quête va conduire le lecteur vers le non-dit, vers l'inexprimable. La quête de l'origine amène la narratrice de *La Maison Trestler* vers une prise de conscience difficile du non-dit qui marque l'histoire des femmes et celle de la collectivité à laquelle elles appartiennent. Tout au long du roman, l'origine s'associe donc au non-dit, que ce soit sur le plan personnel ou collectif. Les personnages, surtout féminins, poursuivent passionnément cette quête, en essayant de dévoiler ce que l'Homme ou l'Histoire a toujours caché aux yeux des femmes.

L'histoire de Catherine Trestler, racontée et revécue par la narratrice qui, peu à peu, arrive à se confondre avec ses personnages. La narratrice dit par ailleurs que Madeleine et Catherine Trestler lui ressemblent. Catherine Trestler, qui a perdu sa mère à l'âge d'un an et demi, cherche l'amour paternel, mais se heurte continuellement à « la froide indifférence » (Ouellette-Michalska, 37) de son père. L'affectivité, de même que la parole, lui sont interdites. La vie dans *La Maison Trestler*, espace d'ennui et de répétition dans l'absence, détermine la révolte de Catherine contre l'autorité paternelle. Elle nourrit depuis longtemps le désir de franchir les frontières de l'espace clos de sa famille et de s'en évader pour construire son bonheur, sans être obligée de se plier aux contraintes imposées par l'instance sociale. Comme toute femme rebelle, Catherine ne se contente pas de rester à la frontière du naturel et du culturel, d'être sexe[1] et fiction[2], comme les femmes qui ont déjà traversé leur corps, silencieuses et soumises à l'homme. Après s'être détachée de l'univers dominé par le regard régulateur du père, Catherine commence l'exploration de son corps. Elle sent se réveiller en elle une mémoire ancestrale, qui avait inscrit la préhistoire des femmes dans sa chair. Cette mémoire lui permet d'explorer son être en profondeur, de raviver les traces que les autres femmes y ont laissées.

Ce type de mémoire facilite le glissement sur l'axe temporel et permet la fusion de Catherine, jeune femme du XIXe siècle, avec la narratrice-écrivaine qui, un siècle plus tard, est en train d'écrire le roman de la famille de Catherine : « A la fin, je ne sais plus qui parle, qui a parlé. Je ne sais plus qui raconte ses rêves et ses peurs... Qui, de Catherine ou moi, tire la fiction du réel, ou extrait le réel de l'imaginaire » (Ouellette-Michalska, 93). À mesure qu'elle avance dans l'écriture de son roman, la narratrice revit douloureusement les événements qui ont marqué sa vie et celle de son héroïne, car la parole est toujours douloureuse pour une femme qui n'en a pas eu l'habitude.

A l'encontre de Catherine et de la narratrice, qui retrace sa propre vie au fur et à mesure qu'elle découvre celle de son personnage féminin, Monsieur B., Premier Ministre de France en visite au Canada, éveille un autre type de mémoire, la mémoire collective institutionnalisée, pour mieux cacher les lacunes et les injustices

[1] Dans le monde de l'homme, la femme n'existe que par sa fonction de reproduction.
[2] Dans ce même monde, la vie de la femme est une fiction du fait qu'elle n'a pas d'existence dans le monde social.

de l'Histoire. La narratrice se situe dans une position critique vis-à-vis de Monsieur B. qui, par ses discours officiels, semble partager, avec les foules enthousiastes qui l'accueillent chaleureusement, la version « dite » de l'Histoire, qu'on peut retrouver dans n'importe quel manuel. Les discours de Monsieur B. laissent paraître le non-dit collectif, dont la narratrice se fait l'écho, ce qui lui permet de réévaluer les données de l'identité nationale canadienne. La narratrice saisit, dès le debut, la signification profonde de la visite ministérielle française, dont le but declaré est l'amélioration des rapports officiels franco-canadiens. Elle a l'intuition du but caché de la visite des français, qui est la recherche de leur origine sur le plan collectif : « Dans l'infini besoin de ressaisir l'origine et de combler la perte, ils [les Français] rabattaient de ce côté-ci de l'Atlantique les détournements de l'histoire » (Ouellette-Michalska, 28). Le parti pris nationaliste de la narratrice s'affirme dès les premières lignes du roman: dans une conversation avec son mari Stefan, elle lui réplique avec amertume : « Ils viennent jouer au monarque après nous avoir abandonnés » (Ouellette-Michalska, 31). Bien qu'il soit appelé à jouer un rôle politique précis, Monsieur B., par ses discours qui cachent plus qu'ils ne révèlent les injustices de l'Histoire, offre à la narratrice l'occasion de saisir ainsi ce qui a été délibérément tû pour assurer la crédibilité de cette fiction :

> Il ignore que le réel s'y montre conforme à l'imaginaire. Il ne se sait pas mêlé à l'un de ces récits à tiroirs où l'intrigue se fragmente en de multiples péripéties orientés vers un dénouement imposé par les contingences extérieures plutôt que par la vérité des personnages ou la logique des situations. (Ouellette-Michalska, 20)

Dans sa quête de l'origine collective, la narratrice, qui affirme sa solidarité avec son peuple et son appartenance à la terre natale, interroge l'Histoire en tant que récit objectif qui s'appuie sur la mémoire collective institutionnalisée. Elle se demande par ailleurs si l'histoire ne fonctionnerait pas comme n'importe quel autre récit, dont la signification dépend essentiellement de l'intention de celui qui crée le message. Ainsi, elle constate que dans la plupart des livres d'histoire, « la guerre se laissait regarder comme une gravure d'époque ou une photographie. On s'y trouvait pour la pose, conforme à l'image que l'on souhaitait léguer à la postérité » (Ouellette-Michalska, 132). Le non-dit collectif se laisse aussi révéler à travers la révolte du personnage féminin, Catherine, porte-parole des milliers de femmes qui ont dû accepter la mentalité patriarcale selon laquelle « Discuter de guerre et de politique appartient aux hommes. Aux femmes, il suffit de régner à la cuisine » (Ouellette-Michalska, 142).

La narratrice s'attaque à la mémoire institutionnalisée, qui exclut la femme du discours, et propose à sa place la mémoire corporelle comme moyen de saisir l'âme d'une époque. A la différence des historiens, qui consignent les événements selon une chronologie très stricte, cette femme écrivaine se laisse envahir par des sensations multiples, qui réveillent en elle une mémoire d'un type particulier, une mémoire corporelle, à l'aide de laquelle elle reconstitue une époque à partir du vécu et non pas de documents vides de toute chaleur humaine. Deux thématiques majeures du roman, le féminisme et le nationalisme, se révèlent donc inséparables. En tant que

québécoise et féministe, la narratrice est deux fois aliénée car elle appartient à une nation qui a été abandonnée par le pays/mère (la France) et maltraitée par le pays conquérant (l'Angleterre) et parce que son sexe a été oppressé à tous les niveaux de l'ordre patriarcal au pouvoir. Le récit que la narratrice est en train d'écrire se trouve justement à cette conjonction thématique extrêmement mobile, ce qui lui permet d'éviter l'apparition de structures romanesques figées. L'écriture devient l'instrument à l'aide duquel le sujet d'énonciation révèle le non-dit, ou plutôt les non-dits, pluriels et fragmentaires. La narratrice, qui se trouve au carrefour de ces deux thématiques, souligne constamment l'importance de la langue dans l'expérience individuelle et collective. Ainsi, l'image de son père s'associe-t-elle au parler oral et pratique, tandis que la mère, par sa passion pour l'histoire de la France, incarne l'écrit, qui a tendance à se tenir à l'écart du langage quotidien.

L'histoire de l'écriture de *La Maison Trestler*, qui devient finalement l'histoire de la quête du non-dit dans l'histoire des femmes et dans celle de toute une collectivité, génère tous les autres récits du roman ; l'écriture, appelée à capter la voix de la mémoire corporelle, superpose des événements distanciés de plus d'un siècle dans l'effort de saisir ce qu'il y a d'authentique dans un individu ou dans une collectivité.

En traduisant le rapport fusionnel entre la narratrice et l'héroïne de son roman, l'écriture exprime aussi le désir de rapprocher le côté biologique du côté culturel des femmes. Ce côté culturel constitue une dimension essentielle du non-dit féminin, ignoré pendant longtemps, et qui, à cause de cette ignorance même, a été parfois remplacé par le côté biologique :

> Enfant, elle [Catherine] s'était dit qu'elle aimerait se trouver un jour dans la peau d'un écrivain. Or, curieusement, l'extravagance de ce désir a cessé de l'étonner depuis qu'un enfant se forme dans son ventre. Elle comprend maintenant mieux comment on peut décider de l'absorber et de l'aimer comme la sienne. (Ouellette-Michalska, 196).

Par son écriture, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska réussit à subvertir l'ordre établi, en contestant les conventions, le conformisme, les idées reçues de la culture officielle et en signalant les oblitérations et les non-dits. Le métalangage qu'elle crée est très approprié pour indiquer aux femmes la voie sinueuse et imprévisible qu'elles doivent suivre pour se défaire de la tradition ancestrale qui les a tenues à l'écart du « dit » de l'histoire et de la culture.

L'acte d'écrire, déclenché par l'éveil de la mémoire corporelle, permet à la narratrice et, implicitement à l'auteure de ce roman, de toucher à deux veines thématiques du non-dit, le féminisme et le nationalisme, ce qui permet à la femme de définir son identité et de trouver sa place dans l'Histoire en tant qu'être autonome et signifiant, s'inscrivant ainsi dans le passé du Québec.

S'il est réconfortant de croire que l'Histoire garantit l'immortalité et représente une certaine compensation par rapport à la brièveté de la vie, les mots, eux, ne peuvent arrêter la marche du temps, la mort des gens, des objets. La Maison Trestler meurt

avec la mort de Jean-Jacques Trestler, avec l'échec du projet de conservation de la maison, la fin de la longue liaison amoureuse de la narratrice, la mort d'Eta Carinae, la plus grande étoile dans l'univers de la Voie Lactée. La narratrice voit un signe positif dans tous ces signes de déclin et de ruine. C'est comme si le temps patriarcal était terminé, le pouvoir narratif arrivait à sa fin et le discours du pouvoir n'avait pas réussi à conquérir le temps. La narratrice en est bien consciente et accepte toutes les incertitudes que cela implique :

> Eta Carinae me rassurait. Elle me replaçait dans l'orbite des temps immémoriaux, des espaces illimités. Elle inaugurait un cycle qui anéantissait la mémoire. J'oubliais le départ de Stefan, la chute de la maison Trestler, l'angoisse d'Eva et Benjamin […]
> J'oubliais Catherine, la mort du père. […] Il n'y avait pas d'histoire possible, mais des récits, des anecdotes, des épisodes. […]
> Chaque minute de vie nous plongeait au cœur d'une fiction grandiose qui pouvait nous anéantir ou nous transfigurer. Eta Carinae, c'était le futur déjà commencé. C'était le double de Catherine, la fusion du temps vécu et du temps rêvé. […]
> Le huitième jour commençait. (Ouellette-Michalska, 298-299)

En guise de conclusion, je voudrais noter que la narration /écriture s'arrêtent le huitième jour, que le livre contient huit chapitres. Selon la Bible, au-delà du 7^{e} jour, vient le 8^{e} qui marque la vie des justes et la condamnation des impies. Le 8^{e} jour, succédant aux 6 jours de la création et au sabbat, est le symbole de la résurrection, de la transfiguration et annonce l'ère future et éternelle. Si le chiffre 7 est surtout le chiffre de l'Ancien Testament, le 8 correspond au Nouveau. Il annonce la béatitude du siècle futur dans un autre monde.

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FEMINIST MOTHER, SILENT DAUGHTER: MOTHERLINE DISCONTINUITIES IN CAROL SHIELDS' *UNLESS*

If we agree that stories about mothers and daughters are told not only to empower the primary mother-daughter dyad but also to recognise, emphasise, and maintain a collective female tradition,[1] we must be confused when we come across some rather discouraging stories and their messages, especially if they belong to the beginning of the new millennium. What I specifically have in mind is the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship in Carol Shields' last novel, written in 2002, in which there is no transference of power between mother and daughter because the mother loses her previous strength and aspirations while the daughter is portrayed as utterly powerless. According to Lorna Irvine, the transference of power is a relational phase in which daughter grows stronger, and mother weakens, or, on the other hand, a phase in which "the mother remains all powerful" and "the daughter agonizes over her own impotence."[2] Since the empowerment of the female identity and tradition undoubtedly depends on the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship, this paper will try to give an illustration of an ideologically powerless mother-daughter dyad in the era of gender equality, in which "our job is not yet done," so that we "must continue to use our interpretative skills to turn inside out the disorienting signs of our times."[3] Here the phrase "disorienting signs of our times" connects us somehow to what Adrienne Rich wrote several decades ago:

> Until a strong line of love, confirmation, and example stretches from mother to daughter, from woman to woman across the generations, women will still be wandering in the wilderness.[4]

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1 O'Reilly and Abbey (eds.), 2000.
2 Irvine, 243.
3 Gubar, 1711.
4 Rich, 249.

When we read a novel like *Unless*, the first thing that pops up is that women today are still wandering in the wilderness of one-way communication or no communication at all. Since motherlines, or the lines that connect mothers and their daughters, seem disrupted again, there is a serious need to point at individual cases of motherline disruptions in literature written by women. On the other hand, there is a growing need for the recognition of intercultural motherline network, in which invisible motherlines in one culture influence visible motherlines in the other, and vice versa.

In order to become visible, motherlines should be kept alive and cherished by daughters. That is what Simone de Beauvoir, Adrienne Rich, and Virginia Woolf implanted in us after having understood that there had been few mothers in Shakespeare and Victorian literature who gave birth to daughters. We have learnt that in fiction, non-fiction, and metafiction daughters were given fathers and rarely mothers, and that umbilical cords of motherlines were either broken or invisible. However, there are many biological, ideological and literary mothers who loom large against different traditions that have tried to ensure their exclusion from daughters' lives. Tapping into the sources of female creativity, we have witnessed anxieties of influence and authorship, essential and existential female tragedies, and the fear of non-belonging. We have read Nancy Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering,* and traced the transition from mother-hate to mother-love, and some of us continue to be immersed in more or less rewarding studies of female development. It was Lorna Irvine who not only summarized psychological journey phases in daughters' quest for mothers, but who also recognized, among many others, a seriousness with which Canadian fiction treats that quest. Unlike English or American mainstream traditions, which in the past tended to exclude female voices from literary canons, the Canadian literary world has always been peopled by an equal number of men and women. Although in her essay on mothers and daughters in English-Canadian fiction Irvine stresses the influence of contemporary women's movement on the direction of Canadian literary canon, she also suggests that in Canada exists "a cultural tolerance for women's perspectives" simply because of the fact that many major Canadian writers are women whose works are "devoted to studies of female characters."[5]

Looking back at the very beginnings of Canadian fiction writing, one becomes aware that the first novel on the territory of Canada was written by a woman.[6] And one also gets to know that the author, Frances Brooke, with her depictions of Canadian issues and landscapes, along with her strong female character Emily, represents a tangible literary mother, or a starting point from which boldly and progressively depart lots of her female descendants. Besides nineteenth-century women writers who followed Brooke's example and made their own female characters assertive and creative, the Frances Brooke motherline encompasses a great majority of con-

[5] Irvine, 250.
[6] Hammill, 2003.

temporary women writers whose works abound in presentations of mother-daughter relationships in a Canadian context. If we add to the same setting "a woman writer who is writing about a woman writer who is writing,"[7] we get a Carol Shields, Margaret Atwood, or Alice Munro. Whether they stick to a purely literary character, or extend their characters' interests beyond women who wield pens, these authors continually tackle a broad range of creative and intellectual endeavours made by Canadian women. In most of their novels there is a connection between artistic creativity and matrilineality, and whenever the connection is strong, there are visible motherlines, usually preserved by daughters who collect their mothers' stories and convey their messages. There are daughters like Atwood's Elaine Risley and Joan Foster who in the course of their own psychological journeying help their mothers' self-realisations understood in the light of Carl Jung's often quoted statement that 'every daughter contains her mother, and every mother her daughter.'[8] There are also daughters who think collectively and save a whole generation before them from utter oblivion. But whoever they save or represent, daughters are in general feminists who at one point in their lives recognize their female ancestors' sufferings within patriarchal society. It is daughters who start or keep on fighting for certain rights and space on behalf of their mothers. It is the daughters who criticize their mothers' and grandmothers' submissiveness and passivity, and who at the same time remember mutual animosities and unconditional love. It *is* daughters who speak and write, and who occupy central positions in a majority of novels, but there are also exceptions that are illustrative of constant changes not only in our perception of mother-daughter relations, but also in feminist thinking.

Carol Shields' *Unless* highlights a speaking mother and a daughter who refuses to speak. Reta Winters, the speaking mother is also a mother who writes and worries about the outcome of her eldest daughter's sudden isolation from the world and its opportunities. The other two Reta's daughters live ordinary lives, and remain secondary in her ideological struggle, probably because it is Norah who is "the most literary, the most mercurial of the three."[9] An artistic personality that enjoys reading, a girl who prefers observing life to full participation in it, and whose bedroom is symbolically positioned at the end of the hall, Norah is a true reflection of her mother. That is why Reta dramatizes Norah's decision to become homeless and motherless by saying that "it iced [her] heart to see [her daughter's] unreadable immobility."[10] When Norah was still at home her meditative character wasn't questioned at all. She was often deep in thoughts but thoroughly in control of her "soldierly" life. Throughout the novel, Reta tries to understand what compels Norah to abandon all she had only to continue her life of peaceful sitting at a street corner, waiting for a few coins form passers-by. Going to a local library and talking to friends and experts, she wants to know more about the essence of goodness, and

[7] Shields, 137.
[8] Jung, 188.
[9] Shields, 58.
[10] Shields, 17.

goodness seems to be just a word written over a cardboard that hangs around her daughter's bent neck.

Trying to rationalize Norah's voluntary escape into silence and passivity, Reta resorts to feminist ideology imposed on her by her friend and colleague, Danielle Westerman, who she considers a feminist survivor and a re-inventor of feminism. An old lady, who was at her peak around the establishment of the women's liberation movement, believes that "Norah has simply succumbed to the traditional refuge of women without power."[11] Having sorted out major ideas and events from the last century at the beginning of the 21st century, Reta embarks on writing letters to some intellectual men whose obvious misogynist ideas influenced the course of today's literary world, and consequently forced her daughter Norah to idealize male power and choose goodness over greatness. Aware of the perpetuation of female exclusion from the mainstream canon, Reta first writes to a magazine editor, attacking the magazine's recurrent references to the so-called 'Great Minds of the Western Intellectual World.' Here she claims that her "only hope is that her daughter will not pick up a copy of this magazine… and understand, as [Reta has] for the first time, how casually and completely she is shut out of the universe."[12] With a similar zest, she writes to different male authors, warning them of Norah's project of self-extinction based on her understanding that she isn't fully human, because 'the great minds' regularly overlook the women's part of the world's population. Reta is positive that Norah sees the current world order as "an endless series of obstacles… and locked doors," where nothing helps her develop. She finds examples of her own exclusion through her contact with a book editor, who thinks that she as an author should use initials in order to hide her gender, and that her novel wouldn't be complete and universal unless she replaces her main female character with a male one.

Considering her and her daughter's position in society at the beginning of the new millennium, Reta Winters can't help concluding that nothing much has changed in the last forty years. Not even for Danielle Winterson, who holds twenty-seven honorary degrees, and is still not included in the canon, which might mean that her influence stretches only over a small number of alert individuals who are female. When male authors are pressed to admit who their female influences are, as is the case with a man writer appearing on a radio show,[13] they resort to 19th-century literature but fail to mention any names. With this in mind, Reta supports one of her friends who says that "men aren't interested in women's lives,"[14] and she becomes even more protective of her and her daughter's connection. Their motherline seems to be at risk, which also reflects on Norah's grandmother Lois who has become silent herself, and whose "posture is as defeated as Norah's."[15]

[11] Shields, 70.
[12] Shields, 91.
[13] Shields, 67–8.
[14] Shields, 78.
[15] Shields, 155.

The question that remains unanswered until the very end of the novel is what makes an unproblematic young woman leave her loving and supportive family only to embrace silence and isolation while living in the open and sleeping in a shelter for the homeless. I suggest that the same question or problem, together with its offered resolution, might serve as an illustration of how Canadian or Western daughters react to the sufferings of daughters who originate from other cultures. The main traumatic event which slowly shapes itself throughout the novel is an unsuccessful interaction between two women, one Canadian and the other Saudi Arabian, who meet by coincidence in the middle of Toronto. Seeing the Saudi woman burning after she has set herself alight, Norah rushes to stifle the flames and her fingers sink "into the woman's melting flesh." Because of her failure to help the woman, Norah keeps on feeling both physically and psychologically injured, and the pain makes her retreat from a life that offers nothing but injustice. In that way the Saudi woman's self-immolation, its outcome, and also what has led to it, together with the fact that the woman has never been identified, lead to Norah's identity crisis, and trigger her own self-effacement.

A woman's decision to become effaced and invisible is probably one of the greatest dangers for the continuity of motherlines, especially if that decision is made by daughters, who are expected to be less silent and more outspoken than their mothers. It is true that in the end Norah does come back home, but the silence in her, her weak attempts to find out if she fits in the world, and her mother's second-wave feminist critique of the male-tailored society, lead sadly to Danielle Westerman's theory of inversion, in which women "claim [their] existence by ceasing to exist."[16] That is, in fact, the inversion that signals a long step backwards from where Norah's mother stood in the sixties and seventies. And the male-tailored society of Reta Winters is not the same as the male-tailored world of her daughter. Norah's world and the world of her peers offers a possibility of "enmeshment of their own lives in a global system."[17] This, of course, does not raise the question whether women should or shouldn't resist any kind of globalization, but warns them against taking things for granted and being passive. One of the most dramatic earlier literary examples of a long step backwards is surely the existence of the nameless feminist mother in Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale* (1985)[18] in which daughters' inability, or unwillingness, to perpetuate their mothers' fight for gender equality leads to a complete loss of female identity. Although the feminist mother in Shields' *Unless* hasn't lost her name, she does lose her surname, and Reta Summers becomes Reta Winters. Apart from being funny, this symbolic change denotes a certain degradation, which combined with the picture of a mute, hibernating daughter might as well signify an uncertain future of motherlines.

[16] Shields, 71.
[17] Friedman, p. 1704.
[18] Atwood, 1990.

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DISCLOSED SPACES: ATWOOD'S READING OF THE CLOSET SCENE IN SHAKESPEARE'S "HAMLET"

Herstory is a neologism coined in the late 1960s as part of a feminist critique of conventional historiography. In feminist discourse the term refers to history (ironically restated as "his story") written from the feminist perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or told from a woman's point of view.

The word has been used in feminist literature since its inception. The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Robin Morgan with coining the term in her 1970 book, *Sisterhood is Powerful*. At present, "herstory" is considered an "economical way" to describe feminist efforts against a male-centered canon. In other words, the purpose of this movement is to emphasize that women's lives, deeds, and participation in human affairs have been neglected or undervalued in standard histories.

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminists saw the study of history as a male-dominated intellectual enterprise and presented "herstory" as a means of compensation. The term, intended to be both serious and comic, became a rallying cry used on T-shirts and buttons as well as in universities; the notions of herstory prompted changes in school curricula and led to general acknowledgements of earlier historians' sexism, both unintentional and overt.

These concerns are apparent in the compilation of Atwood's short stories under the title *Good Bones* (1992). Here, Atwood goes straight to the heart of the matter. If there is any author who can be said to have persistently influenced cultural representations in the English-speaking world, we would probably agree that it is William Shakespeare. And if one of his works had to stand for the canon of "English" literature, it would likely be *Hamlet*. Atwood´s story from this compilation,

Gertrude Talks Back, engages the very centre of that canon, and through Gertrude she rewrites a canonical text from the feminine point of view.[1]

The essence of Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* rests on the revelation of the meaninglessness behind meaning, chaos and mystery behind order, enigma and uncertainty behind certainty. Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, upon his leaving Wittenberg, the place of learning, books and provided answers, experiences a series of shocks and discovers that people are not what they seem to be, ie., their genuine self is swallowed by the roles they play – the obedient servants of the system. He is disillusioned with the political reality of strife, ambition and crime that he perceives in Elsinore, after realizing that his father was murdered by his own brother and that his mother remarried the murderer of her late husband. Therefore, Hamlet detects a choice – to suffer or to oppose – or, in other words, to conform to the official version of the truth and himself wear a mask of an obedient citizen or to remain loyal to his inner authority and avenge the death of his father. This choice turns into a probing question, best summarized by Maynard Mack in his essay *The World of Hamlet*: how to take action in a corrupt world without being contaminated? It goes without saying that by adopting the methods of his father's murderer, he would not be better than the criminal himself, and definitely would betray his genuine nature.

Therefore, although the Ghost of his late father demands revenge, Hamlet delays action. There are various interpretations of Hamlet's procrastination. The interpretation that is most widely accepted is based on the idea that he is a man of contemplation, not man of action. However, this would be an easy way out of the problem. Ian Watt gives a political interpretation of the play and sees Hamlet as a young man who wants to preserve his inner freedom, but is, at the same time, trapped in the mechanism of politics and is finally crashed by it. This is a quite satisfactory reading; nevertheless, it does not pay attention to Hamlet's relationship with his mother, the relationship that was most intriguing to Atwood.

The interpretation that widely influenced Atwood's thinking was probably the psychoanalytic one presented by Ernest Jones in his essay *Hamlet and Oedipus,* dating from 1949, in which Hamlet's procrastination is seen as a result of him suffering from the Oedipal complex.[2] Jones states that Hamlet had erotic desires towards his mother since his childhood and therefore considered his father a rival in the struggle of obtaining affection from Gertrude. Therefore, when his hidden wish, to have father out of his way, became real, he could not punish the man who made his deepest wish come true. In other words, Hamlet perceived Claudius as his

[1] This was just a beginning of the quest for Atwood. The quest resulted in *The Penelopiad*, one of the first books to be published in the Canongate Myth Series in 2005, a book series in which ancient myths are rewritten by contemporary authors. The story takes an alternative view of the story of Odysseus by focusing on Odysseus' wife, Penelope, and her twelve hanged maids. Most of the novel follows Penelope's struggle when Odysseus takes twenty years to return from Troy.

[2] Jones' interpretation also influenced Zeffirelli's filmed version of *Hamlet* (1990) starring Mel Gibson as Hamlet and Glenn Close as Gertrude.

double and in killing him, Hamlet would definitely destroy an aspect of himself, claims Jones, and concludes:

> His paralysis arises, however, not from physical or moral cowardice, but from that intellectual cowardice, that reluctance to dare the exploration of his inmost soul, which Hamlet shares with the rest of the human race. 'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all' (Jones, 1949, 62).

What lies at the bottom of these disparate readings is precisely the ambiguity of the Shakespearean text. Whereas its main sources, 12th-century Saxo Grammaticus' Historiae Danicae and 16th-century Belleforest´s *Histoires Tragiques*, give a clear account of Gertrude´s knowledge of the plot against the elder Hamlet and her adultery before his death, these matters are rather obscure in Shakespeare´s play. Besides, Gertrude remains relatively inarticulate. Even though she is capital to the motivation of others, especially her son, she has few lines for a major character; Gertrude is constructed by others rather than by herself.

These ambiguities are the foundation for Atwood´s rewriting of the Closet scene (*Hamlet* 3.4). It should be noted, first of all, that Atwood passes over two of the main moments of this scene in Shakespeare´s text, the accidental murder of Polonius and the apparition of the Ghost, as not being relevant for her purposes, and she focuses instead on the confrontation between Hamlet and Gertrude. Atwood´s story, however, does not present an explicit dialogue between both; on the contrary, it is a one-sided dialogue, Gertrude´s voice being the only one we hear. Thus, the tables are turned and Gertrude speaks for herself.

Hamlet´s voice may not be heard, but it is nevertheless there. The new Gertrude does not produce one continuous speech, but rather a number of utterances separated by pauses, thereby announcing that this is in fact an exchange, part of which has been left out. The elided section would correspond to Hamlet´s words, that is, to the original text of Shakespeare´s play. Moreover, a closer look to the story will lead us to identify each of Gertrude´s utterances as a response to Hamlet´s accusations in the original text.

Putting both texts side by side would then serve to reconstruct the whole "dialogue," i.e. the connections between Shakespeare's and Atwood's texts. The story opens with a reference to the name of the implied listener, Hamlet, which together with the very title of the story serves the purpose of placing it in its literary context:

> I always thought it was a mistake, calling you Hamlet. I mean, what kind of a name is that for a young boy? It was your father´s idea. Nothing would do but that you had to be called after him. Selfish. The other kids at school used to tease the life out of you. The nicknames! And those terrible jokes about pork. I wanted to call you George (*Good Bones* ,15).

This first move would represent a response to Hamlet´s words below and a challenge of their implicit accusation, since by naming Gertrude as "the Queen, your husband´s brother´s wife" Hamlet is accusing her of the unspeakable crime of incest:

> GERTRUDE: Have you forgot me?
> HAMLET: No, by the rood, not so. You are the Queen, your husband´s brother´s wife, And, would it were not so, you are my mother (*Hamlet* 3.4.13–15).

In portraying Hamlet, Atwood desacralizes him through humour, dismisses Gertrude's guilt and, correspondingly, rejects his (male) construction of her. Atwood perceives Hamlet as a youngster who moves awkardly ("That´ll be the third [mirror] you´ve broken"), and a student of uncleanly habits who lives in a "slum pigpen" and does not bring laundry home often enough. Even his sombre clothing, so inseparable from the character´s psychological portrait, is parodied through his black socks, which now read simply as one of the many fashions young people are tempted into in contemporary society. Furthermore, Hamlet´s very reason of being in Shakespeare´s play, his heartfelt wish to take revenge on Claudius, is deflated in Atwood, and their antagonism transformed into the average friction between a grown-up stepson and a newly-acquired stepfather: "By the way, darling, I wish you wouldn´t call your stepdad the bloat king. He does have a slight weight-problem, and it hurts his feelings" (*Good Bones*, 16).

If this new Hamlet has become an unremarkable contemporary young man, he nevertheless retains the faithfulness to "the law of the Father" that marks him in Shakespeare´s play. The de-sacralization of the son aims as well at the figure, quite literally in this scene, standing behind him; the father´s naming his son makes him an imprint and recreates the same flaw: the male principle (the elder Hamlet´s "holier-than-thou principle," in Atwood's rendering below) that constrains women´s actions and would particularly control their sexuality. Gertrude clearly states as much in accepting Hamlet´s muted challenge to compare both husbands:

> Look here upon this picture, and on this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
> See what a grace was seated on this brow,
> Hyperion´s curls, the front of Jove himself,
> An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
> A combination and a form indeed
> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man.
> This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
> Here is your husband, like a mildw´d ear
> Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
> Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
> And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes? (*Hamlet* 3.4.53–67)

Whereas in Shakespeare´s play she responded in no way, here she vindicates Claudius and disparages the elder Hamlet:

> Yes, I´ve seen those pictures, thank you very much. I know your father was handsomer than Claudius. High brow, aquiline nose and so on, looked great in uniform. But handsome isn´t everything, especially in a man, and far be it from me to speak ill of the dead, but I think it´s about time I pointed out to you that your Dad wasn´t a whole lot of fun. Noble, sure, I grant you. But Claudius, well, he likes a drink now and then. He appreciates a decent meal. He enjoys a laugh, know what I mean? You don´t always have to be tiptoeing around because of some holier-than-thou principle or something (*Good Bones*, 15–16).

As a result, in Atwood´s story Hamlet´s remaining defining trait (like his father´s before him) is his prudishness. Gertrude´s accusation that he lacks a sexual drive challenges his own of giving way to her animal instincts in 3.4.88-96. This statement validates Gertrude´s lustful nature, the aspect that Hamlet could not cope up with, thus making Gertrude´s acknowledgment of guilt utterly irrelevant:

> GERTRUDE: O Hamlet, speak no more,
> Thou turn´st my eyes into my very soul,
> And there I see such black and grained spots
> As will not leave their tinct.
> HAMLET: Nay, but to live
> In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
> Stew´d in corruption, honeying and making love
> Over the nasty sty!
> GERTRUDE: O speak to me no more.
> These words like daggers enter my ears.
> No more, sweet Hamlet.
>
> The rank sweat of a what? My bed is certainy not enseamed,
> whatever that may be.
> A nasty sty, indeed!
> . . .
> Go get yourself someone more down-to-earth. Have a nice roll in the hay.
> Then you can talk to me about nasty sties (*Good Bones* 16–17).

As a matter of fact, the canonical interpretation of guilt as being central to Gertrude´s behaviour is explicitly dismissed earlier in the story with the statement "I am not wringing my hands. I am drying my nails," which gives a parody of Hamlet´s declared intention of wringing her heart in 3.4.34-35 ("Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down, / And let me wring your heart"). This statement reveals the purpose of the mirror Hamlet sets up before her:

> Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not budge.
> You go not till I set you up a glass
> Where you may see the inmost part of you. (*Hamlet* 3.4.17–19)

Gertrude´s scolding "Darling, please stop fidgeting with my mirror" in Atwood's rewriting implies that the "inmost part" of her that he sees and would have her see is not at all her inmost part. Her rejection of the male gaze thus comes to forestall his unwelcome intrusion, his unwanted meddling in her private affairs. Atwood's choice of the Closet scene is therefore no mere coincidence. Instead, her rendering

comes to clarify and highlight what in Shakespeare's play is taken for granted, that the closet encodes Gertrude's body. The control she now displays gives her back her power.

Another such mirror is rejected in Ophelia. It will be remembered that Hamlet´s mistreatment of Ophelia is commonly understood as being caused by Ophelia´s taking on or participating of Gertrude´s inherently lustful nature. But Ophelia is erased in Atwood´s story; she is simply referred to as "that pasty-faced what´s-her-name":

> And let me tell you, everyone sweats at a time like that, as you´d find out very soon if you ever gave it a try. A real girlfriend would do you a heap of good. Not like that pasty-faced what´s-her-name, all trussed up like a prize turkey in those touch-me-not corsets of hers. Borderline. Any little shock could push her right over the edge (*Good Bones*, 17).

Actually, the statement "Go get yourself someone more down-to-earth" that Gertrude utters earlier can be seen as Atwood´s rebuke to Hamlet´s message to Ophelia in 3.1.121 ("Get thee to a nunnery"). Neither is Ophelia here an innocent victim; Atwood's interpretation of Ophelia makes clear that the she is willingly shaped by the patriarchal order.

All the same, Gertrude is guilty of some crime here too. Atwood´s Gertrude may not confess to pangs of conscience, but she does own up to the murder of her first husband, the elder Hamlet:

> Oh! You think what? You think Claudius murdered your Dad?
> Well, no wonder you´ve been so rude to him at the dinner table!
> If I´d known that, I could have put you straight in no time flat.
> It wasnt´Claudius, darling.
> It was me (*Good Bones,* 18).

In that sense, yes, she is guilty. Atwood works on the dark areas of the Shakespearean text in order to re-inscribe her own Gertrude: one that takes responsibility for her actions and that unambiguously asserts her right to choose. Therefore, she refuses to be victimized.

It must be noted, however, that Atwood rewrites Gertrude by building on the standard reading of the character. Unlike some feminist critics, she does not vindicate Gertrude by recasting her as a humble, soft, dependent woman. On the contrary, she writes a non-canonical revision of the canonical reading of the text. She simply forces us to re-consider the very values that lie at the heart of that reading. In a way, she asserts Gertrude´s right to be lustful, and denying Hamlet the power to pass judgment on her.

Finally, we should bear in mind that Atwood's ideas concerning the mother-son (female-male) relationship in *Hamlet* correspond to the ideas presented in Ted Hughes' archetypal study of Shakespeare called *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (1993). Hughes perceived the 'tragic error' in rejecting female principle by

the rational, puritan, male mind. The division of the loved and loathed woman in one body is the core of Hughes' Tragic Equation. Hughes points out that:

> [m]ale rationality is separated from nature, is therefore insecure, is therefore autocratically jealous of power and fearful of what he suppresses: i.e. in so far as he fights against her maternal control, fears her reproductive mystery, and is jealous of her solidarity with the natural world. Within her own mind, woman alternates between the Aphrodite of her menstrual cycle and the Persephone of her negative half. She lives the psycho-biological totality of that cyclic alternation which is inseparable from the organic cycle and vital sympathies of the natural world… (Hughes, 1993, 517)

According to Hughes, and, in my opinion, both Shakespeare and Atwood, the way to bridge the female-male gap can best be summarized by quoting the conclusion from *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*: "In this sense, Shakespeare's Tragic Equation is a process that man has to live and suffer, and that woman has to suffer and redeem him from (reuniting him to the natural world and to total life and being)." (Hughes, 1993, 517)

And indeed she does!

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THE HEROINE REBORN: JOHN FOWLES'S *A MAGGOT* AND MARGARET ATWOOD'S *ALIAS GRACE*

The quest for selfoood is, according to K.G. Jung, the most significant and trying of all human endevours. In Jung's typology the ego searches for his hidden half – the shadow – and only after getting to know its image, which is hidden in the unconsciousness, the self can become complete. On its road to meet with his shadow the ego comes across many obstacles. Thus, the life of human psyche is seen as the path towards wholeness – the union of two poles of psyche.

Joseph Campbell presents the same road by using mythological imagery. To notice the link with mythology is crucial in the studies of both theoreticians, as they believe that mythology prefigures all dealings of human psyche (Campbell, 49–238).

If the ego accomplishes his tasks and finally reaches the end of the road of trials, it triumphs in its own rebirth as Self. In both *A Maggot* and *Alias Grace* the heroines face many impediments on their respective roads. They have to cope with predominantly hostile environment – to stumble and fall, and fail to understand, as Jung would have it. Their struggle constitutes the main theme of both novels.

On many levels of analyses the two novels: *A Maggot* by John Fowles and *Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood are remarkably alike. They problematize in much the same way issues of gender, class, ideology, or, on a more general level, identity shaping. The point of intersection of the two narratives is the main heroine, her personality and narrative status in the story.

Both novels deal with the crime that happened in the past. In *A Maggot* a Lord and his servant disappeared under mysterious circumstances, while in *Alias Grace* a man of some social importance was killed together with his mistress. Grace Marks

is sentenced to life imprisonment because of the alleged killing and Rebecca Lee is one of the suspects in a murder case. In both novels the heroines are in disgrace partly because of their links with the diseased, partly on account of their social positions and sex.

The main part of both novels is the heroines' account of the past. They are being investigated by men, Dr. Simon Jordan, a psychiatrist, and Mr. Ayscough, a lawyer, respectively. The male protagonists are trying to uncover the truth about the crimes by waking parts of the heroines' minds which lie dormant, as neither of them remembers the crime. Through their narration they are searching for the truth of the events or of what they believe the truth is.

Both heroines used to have wretched lives. They were born into troubled families and experienced extreme poverty. As a consequence, they belonged to socially marginalized groups whose population lived on the border of crime and social disapproval. Their living conditions habituated them to serving other people's needs – Rebecca Lee was a prostitute while Grace Marks spent her time in service from the age of twelve. These facts mark their discourses in the dialogues with their investigators.

Rebecca and Grace are both trying to reconstruct their past through their narrations. Their respective discourses speak of their ideological, race, gender and social features. Through their narratives they actually establish their identity and reshape the identity of the man they are giving their accounts to. I would argue here that the process of transformation is crucial for both heroines and their male counterparts.

In both books minds of the protagonists are engaged in a game of wits in which the male protagonists, who are otherwise socially superior, show signs of weakness and doubt. What causes that weakness and confusion of otherwise favored persons?

The major part of both narratives consists of a dialogue between the investigators and "so to speak" witnesses. Their dialogue embodies a range of mutually opposing voices thus revealing different, even antagonistic worldviews, or ideologies. The differences between the participants of the dialogues are perceived as differences in their language. Rebecca sums this up in her saying: "Thee hast thy alphabet, and I mine" (Fowles, 317). Thus the dialogic form features the mental confrontation between its participants.

The most important confrontation takes place on the psychological level. In *Alias Grace* the psychological level immediately strikes the reader due to the fact that the investigator is a psychiatrist. In *A Maggot* the psychological confrontation is incorporated in the more obvious social, class and gender confrontation of the characters. The following examples illustrate the suppressed but constant battle between the characters, which is accommodated in their discourse:

> Q /lawyer/: Watch thy tongue. None of thy thouing and theeing.
> A /Rebecca/: It is our manner. I must.
> Q: A fig for thy must (*A Maggot*, 301).
>
> xxx
>
> A: We mean no disrespect. All are brothers and sisters in Christ.
> Q: Enough! ... Thou are a most notorious whore. I am not thy new modesty's fool I see thy whorish insolence still proud in thy eyes (*A Maggot*, 301).
>
> xxx
>
> A: I am no harlot now. And thee knows it… Christ is my master and mistress now…
> Q: I know I'll have thee whipped… (*A Maggot*, 301).

The battle of wits could be compared to a chess game. The chessboard along with the chess pieces, positions on the board and game itself have long been put in service of explaining psychological relations and processes in human mind. John Irwin described the chessboard in terms of human psyche. As Irwin explains, "the chess game serves as a metaphor of all decision making and analyses" (Irwin, 104–114).

Irwin starts from the physical structure of the chess game. If two players face each other the right hand of each player is directly opposed to his opponent's left and diagonally opposed to his opponent's right. The same goes for the other pair of hands. On the other hand, kings and queens face each other along the file. So, the diagram showing sameness and difference points to quite the opposite relationship. The first is the face-to-face opposition of a human being, the second is its mirror image.

Further, the mirror image of a right hand is reflected like a left. The reflected part of any body necessarily means the reversal into the opposite, that is, the reflected right as left, for instance. The opposing poles are joined by a mirror hinge like in the case of Peter Pan and his shadow. The chess game metaphor shows the bodies vital connection with his mirrored images – his shadow. Irwin comments: "…the material structure of a chess game (…) physically represents the non-physical battle of wits as the struggle of each player with his mirror image" (Irwin, 112).

The mirror-maze situation is best presented in *Through the Looking-Glass* where Alice finds herself among the mirror images and in the middle of a chess game. The body is so split in halves (right/left) and doubled simultaneously. In such a way the intersection of four pairs of opposites – right-left; direct/diagonal, same/different; king/queen forms a maze. Irwin explains:

> …if the physical structure of chess is an embodiment of the game's analytic method, then to the extent that this method is a representation of self-identity as something constituted by the differential opposition between the self and its specular (mentally self-reflective) double, it is not surprising that the game's structure involves a network of intersecting bipolar oppositions: a mirrored proliferation, a multiplicative unfolding, of that basic mirror-fold structure which

> displays self as Other, same-as different… in which self-consciousness comes into existence not as a single, isolated mirror fold of the self upon itself but rather bas a complex, simultaneously given network in which the self finds itself located, or more precisely, caught as in a net"(Irwin, 118–9).

The chessboard, the maze, the intersections, the mirror reflections, the splitting and doubling process along the human and time continuum constitute the imagery which represent the human soul in its incessant motion.

Irwin's likening of the chess game to human's psyche coincides with Jung's study of the unconscious. The notion of a chessboard as a labyrinth of black and white squares evokes Jung's description of soul as a labyrinth in which the ego is always striving with its shadow. Ego is white, ego is master, ego is light. Black, slave and darkness plays roles of mirror reflections in these dichotomies. However sides are easily reversed as a result of mirror multiplication and no position is secure – in numerous intersections the master endlessly exchange places with its own slave. In cases of both Rebecca Lee and Grace Marks the master/slave opposition deserves a closer observation.

As the narrative s of both heroines are about the mysteries that happened in their past the narrating process leads both the heroines and their "opponents" through a mental labyrinth – the heroines lull in their, often confused memories, while their listeners delve into a dark side of their souls. As they proceed on their ways their narrations tell of the trials on their roads. In their stories they are reflected as if in the mirrors. While the heroines are telling about their pasts they are seeing themselves as Others – the heroines of their own stories. Apart from being thus split, they are immediately doubled, as they are united with their reflections – their images in the "opponent's" minds. This, we witness in the opponent's discourse. In this way the effect which resembles the structure of a chess game, or a body among the mirrors produces that incessant splitting-doubling process or, in psychological terms, a master-slave situation – the Self reflected in the Other, and the Other seeing itself as a whole with the Self.

Influenced by Grace's story Dr Jordan sees himself as the Other in his dreams: "Simon is dreaming of a corridor. It's the attic passage away of his house, his old house, the house of his childhood; the big house they had before his father's failure and death" (*Alias Grace*, 159).

This description of Jordan's state of mind looks like a page torn from a psychoanalyst's notebook. The patient looks deeply into his Self thinking in terms of corridor, childhood traumas, the inexplicable fear and the unconscious desire. All of these images are the landmarks of psychoanalysis. However, in Simon's dream the roles are reversed. From the psychiatrist he becomes a patient – the inferior mind, or slave. Let us consider the rest of his dream: "The maids slept up here. It was a secret world. One as a boy he wasn't supposed to explore, but did, creeping silent as a spy in his stocking feet. Listening at half-open doors. What did they talk about when they thought no one could here" (*Alias Grace*, 159).

Secrecy, mystery and frustrated sexuality are clearly present in Simon's dream as the signs of his immature self and want of psychological growth. Simon sees himself as in a mirror, as a result to a mirror-like situation in reality, his reflection in Grace's story. So, the splitting and doubling instances are interwoven and construct a maze, which, as every maze should, challenges the questers.

Contrary to the case of Dr Jordan and Grace, the lawyer in *A Maggot* tries to marginalize his opponent on the grounds of class and gender alleged inferiority. However, Rebecca refuses to accept the inferior position she has been allotted. She protests: "… thee'd have me mirror of my sex, that thine has made. I will not suit… Thy world is not my world…" (*A Maggot*, 426–7).

Instead of showing power the lawyer reveals incompetence in his dealings with Rebecca. He fails to score points either in social or professional sphere. As he cannot understand her, he remains confused and has to admit that the mystery of the murder case is far beyond him. Unable to deal with his social prejudices from master, he becomes her slave. His futile shouts, "Thou art a liar woman. Thou art a liar" (*A Maggot*, 429) don't produce the desirable effect. She is not afraid of him. Fowles comments: "Neither soft nor hard words could break her, reveal the enigma she hid: what really happened." (*A Maggot*, 429)

In the case of Grace and Jordan the confrontation has a slightly different tone. Although Jordan is not trying to establish his authority in any brutal sense, Atwood suggests that he is aware who the boss should be. His failure to rise up to his own expectations is the main source of tension in the later phase of the Grace/Jordan relationship. Jordan's claim on a privileged position in their relationship is based on his social and legal status. However, she deconstructs his stereotyped vision from the start by constantly surprising him by her composure and being opposite to whatever he could have predicted. From a privileged person in their relationship he becomes inferior. From analyzing her thoughts he himself becomes a subject of psychoanalysis. As a result of this unconscious process he feels mystified and upset. His uneasiness emanates from his awareness of his own Other. As long as he continues his sessions with Grace he extends the incessant game of mental reflections – he is unaware reflected in Grace's attitude because of the simple fact that he is a silent listener of Grace's troubled history and a witness to her quest for freedom, the quest itself being a game of reflections. Jordan serves as a second mirror for Grace and her image of a narrator and weaver of the story.

Thus, the heroine struggles along her road of trials. She weaves her story as she weaves the quilt, which is part of her duties in her repentant prisoner life. The two processes are comparable on many levels of analysis. The former reveals Grace as an artist who weaves and narrates with the same artistic zeal. The latter points to the psychological undertones of Graces narration. Grace is, thus, presented as an ivory tower, or the woman weaving her real or imaginary freedom undergoing difficult ordeals? Perhaps she is both – a repentant prisoner trying to get salvation trough art? Whoever Grace might be Atwood suggest that in the end she deserves

her freedom as a result of a long and painful passage along the road of trial, ordeals and impediments of many sorts. Grace is reborn and free to greet her freedom as a person and artist – to write her happy ending. The tapestries and quilts are completed, while the re-born Grace writes a conventional 19th century ending to her story

In *A Maggot* the heroine's redemption and new life is symbolized by her crucial role in creating a new ideology – Shakerism, a dissenters' worldview and a metaphor of social revolt. Rebecca is presented as a literary version of the historical founder of Shaker religion, Ann Lee – the name of her daughter in the novel.

The mother/daughter segment of the story prefigures the myth of the goddess Demeter whose life by giving birth to Persephone comes full cycle. ".. to be pursued, robbed, raped, to fail to understand, to rage and grieve, but then to get everything back and be born again" (Jung, 123). In Persephone Demeter becomes Kora[1] again (Jung, 113–155). The same is true for Rebecca and her daughter Ann Lee, whose freshness in both existential and ideological terms is celebrated in the book by the New Ideology.

The culmination of the long dialogue with the lawyer features Rebecca's triumph. To his: "I give thee what thou must take… A prophecy. Thou'lt be hanged yet" she simply retorts."Thee's need also, master Ayscough. I give thee more love" (*A Maggot*, 439).

In the above extract the reader is aware of the lawyer's frustration in the face of Rebecca's generosity. Rebecca's answer reveals her as deeply imbued in her new faith – to his cruel remark she retorts: "I give you more love".

Through the process of growth and transformation the heroines problematize the issues of power and might in both social and individual sphere. As they write their new identities in the struggle for selfhood, they abandon their prejudiced environment peeling it off their previous selves like a mask. The rigid world stays behind – in the face of Ayscough and Dr. Jordan. If we stay true to chess/maze metaphors, we could say that the heroes remained stuck in the net of numerous mirror intersections.

Both Jung and Campbell identified the search for selfhood with securing better possibilities in life. It so happened to Rebecca Lee and Grace Marks. As a result of threir accomplishments they are allowed to write their own closures and triumph.

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FEMALE IDENTITY THREATENED: A KRISTEVEAN READING OF MARGRET ATWOOD'S NOVELS *THE EDIBLE WOMAN, SURFACING* AND *THE ROBBER BRIDE*

Introduction

> *Love, you must choose*
> *Between two immortalities:*
> *One of earth lake trees*
> *Feathers of a nameless bird*
> *The other of a world of glass,*
> *Hard marble, carven wood.*
>
> (Atwood, *Double Persephone*, 13)

Margaret Atwood's novels *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), and *The Robber Bride* (1993) are novels of individuation. Although they were written over a period of roughly thirty years and differ considerably in style and tone, the central theme remained the same: the novels deal with the formation of a female identity.

The female protagonists in Atwood's novels are often split between two domains: the expectations of the hegemonic patriarchal society – which would demand their adherence to a traditional feminine, passive role, or self-realization – which would require the overthrowing of stereotypical concepts. However, the binary oppositions the characters are torn between are not equally strong. On the contrary, as Jacques Derrida observed, one is usually dominant, and includes the other in its field of

operations (cf. Hall, 235). This insight is vital for the female characters in Atwood's novels. During their exhausting search for a female subjectivity the protagonists' inner conflicts manifest themselves in severe identity crises. These conflicts constitute a central theme that can be found in many of Margaret Atwood's novels.

This article looks at the various manifestations of personal and political 'colonialization' and analyzes the protagonists' struggles to come to terms with their (self-imposed?) roles as victims. The complex subject-matter of identity formation certainly cannot be treated without also considering the closely related phenomenon of language. All three novels contain numerous passages referring to language – which points at the interconnectedness of language and subjectivity and supports the postmodern feminist notion that language shapes the unconscious and is a medium through which the symbolic order is internalized (cf. Özdemir, 58).

In the books that are subject to analysis in this article, the entry of the characters into the "symbolic" – as opposed to the "semiotic" (Kristeva, 1984) – is especially significant. This article attempts an analysis of Atwood's novels on the basis of Julia Kristeva's theory of 'abjection' (Kristeva, 1982). Just like Atwood, Kristeva is concerned with marginality both in terms of femininity and nationhood, the latter constituting an aspect of major importance in *Surfacing*. The phenomenon of abjection, however, is central to all three novels. It has been developed by Julia Kristeva in her essay *Powers of Horror* (1982) and links language to the development of identity, providing a powerful lens through which Atwood's novels can be read.

"Neatly severing the body from the head": *The Edible Woman*

In *The Edible Woman*, the protagonist Marian MacAlpin realizes that none of the female role models available are desirable for her. She fights for self-determination and her own self-created version of a female identity.

Referring to the title, Atwood deals with eating on two levels: consuming in the literal sense, and devouring in the figurative sense. The pivotal metaphor is that of a cake in the shape of a woman. The protagonist, the 'edible woman', allows herself to be absorbed, that is to be possessed and assimilated by the patriarchal value system. On realizing the danger of being completely consumed, Marian struggles to free herself from social constraints. This struggle, however, is not without problems, because it involves unpleasant implications, the most obvious of which develops into a severe eating disorder that can only be overcome after Marian manages to empower herself and thus end her victimization.

To reach this insight, however, is very difficult and burdensome for her. When, after trying to imagine what her future life as her boyfriend Peter's wife would be like, Marian nearly panics. She realizes that she is totally other-directed and dependent, fitting in a pre-fabricated mold: "Somewhere in front of me a self was waiting, preformed" (*EW*, 21). Marian's lack of identity and her other-directedness is a result of

her inability to delimit herself from others. In other words, the permeability of her ego-boundaries does not allow her to differentiate between *I* and *other* – subject and object. This differentiation, however, is a precondition for identity development and subjectivity, a lack of which causes the feeling Julia Kristeva calls abjection.

Kristeva explains this inability to distinguish between subject and object on the basis of the works of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. She argues that a child first experiences abjection at the point of separation from the mother. The child has to break away from the symbiotic relationship in order to see her as *m/other*. It is about to take up a position in the symbolic order. Yet, as a precondition, a clear borderline between subject and object, self and other has to be established. Kristeva argues that the acquisition of identity in the symbolic order only becomes possible through the delimitation from what is considered 'improper' and 'unclean'. As Elizabeth Gross maintains, Kristeva is

> [f]ascinated by the ways in which 'proper' sociality and subjectivity are based on the expulsion or exclusion of the improper, the unclean, and the disorderly elements of its corporeal existence that must be separated from its 'clean and proper' self. […] The subject must disavow part of itself in order to gain a stable self, and this form of refusal marks whatever identity it acquires as provisional, and open to breakdown and instability. (Gross, 86)

In *The Edible Woman*, Marian undergoes a parallel development. At several points in the novel Marian feels a lack of clear borders. She is afraid that she is dissolving, "coming apart layer by layer like a piece of cardboard on a gutter puddle" (*EW*, 218). Staring at one colleague's bracelet, "concentrating on it as though she was drawing its hard gold circle around herself, a fixed barrier between herself and that liquid amorphous other" (*EW*, 167).

When looking at her female colleagues from work, the "office virgins" (*EW*, 232), as she calls them, abjection is foreshadowed. Contemplating the permeability of their and her own body boundaries, Marian observes them:

> She examined the women's bodies with interest, critically, as though she had never seen them before.[…] What peculiar creatures they were; and the continual flux between the outside and the inside, taking things in, giving them out, chewing, words, potato-chips, burps, grease, hair, babies, milk, excrement, cookies, vomit, coffee, tomato juice, blood, tea, sweat, liquor, tears, and garbage… (*EW*, 167)

Marian is horrified to realize that she herself belongs to these women and that the same processes are going on inside her own body, which causes nausea. The most threatening force, however, is Marian's boyfriend Peter whose marriage proposal is one of the pivotal scenes in the novel. When Peter proposes to her, she hysterically runs away. From this moment on her extreme food loathing starts, and Marian's body and mind virtually separate. This is also underlined on a textual level by the shift of narrative perspective from the first to the third person. The narrative grammatically 'objectifies her'. Parallelly, her eating disorders reach a peak; her body simply refuses certain foods and tolerates less and less variety each day until she cannot eat

anything any more. Finally, Marian's body revolts: "Her body had cut itself off. The food circle had dwindled to a point, a black dot, closing everything outside" (*EW*, 257). Yet, she knows that any argument with her body is futile: "[s]he faced each day with the forlorn hope that her body might change its mind" (*EW*, 178).

Here, the division becomes obvious. Body and mind have separated, and Marian can no longer perceive of herself as a single entity. Her refusal to eat grows out of the feeling that she herself is being consumed. In psycho-feminist theory, food loathing also plays an important role. Kristeva considers it a crucial phase in a person's identity development:

> Food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection.[…] Along with sight-clouding dizziness, *nausea* makes me balk at that milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. "I" want none of that element, sign of their desire; "I" do not want to listen, "I" do not assimilate it, "I" expel it. But since the food is not an "other" for "me," who am only in their desire, I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish myself. […] it is thus that *they* see that "I" am in the process of becoming an other at the expense of my own death. During that course in which "I" become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit. (Kristeva, 1982, 3)

Abjection takes hold of Marian during her fight for individuality and independence. Eating becomes impossible during her struggle for self-determination. By refusing food and eating, she violently delimits herself and thrusts aside everything that endangers her unified sense of self. The peak of Marian's crisis, however, is reached at her engagement party. She is hardly able to recognize herself in a mirror, another of Atwood's favorite and recurring images. The more objectified she becomes, the more distorted is her reflection in the bathtub water, symbolizing her narcissistic crisis: "It was a moment before she recognized, in the bulging and distorted forms, her own waterlogged body" (*EW*, 219). Marian feels as if she were disintegrating: "She was afraid of losing her shape, spreading out, not being able to contain herself any longer […]" (*EW*, 219). Her ego boundaries have turned completely permeable.

Short after her engagement party Marian again meets Duncan, a young man who attracts her enormously as he is Peter's complete opposite. Duncan, representing chaos and anti-bourgeois values, serves as a catalyst for Marian's epiphany. The pivotal scene is their unsuccessful attempt to make love, which is experienced by her as "an attempt to unite with death itself, a union which annihilates meaning and reveals the absurdity not only of death but also of life" (McLay, 136). Marian "was tense with impatience and with another emotion that she recognized as the cold energy of terror. […] The knowledge was an icy desolation worse than fear. No effort of will could be worth anything here" (*EW*, 254). Duncan tries again: "He put his arm around her. 'No,' he said, 'you have to unbend. Assuming the foetal position won't be of any help at all,'" (*EW*, 254). This allusion to birth and the regression to a pre-verbal stage symbolize a new beginning that is to follow shortly afterwards: When a few hours later Duncan and Marian go for a walk in a Toronto ravine, the

maze-like setting symbolizing an underworld the immersion into which Marian is finally able to break free of her past: "'We're escaping! Come on!' Under her arm a seam split. She had a vision of the red dress disintegrating in mid-air, falling in little scraps behind her in the snow, like feathers" (*EW*, 260).

Having cast off the tight red dress she had worn for her engagement party, another symbol of Marian's victimization, she feels free and is suddenly able to find her own way in the maze. Marian is not dependent on her guide Duncan anymore and literally knows a way out: "Now she knew where she was" (*EW*, 265). This indicates her steps towards re-orientation and self-determination.

Coming back to her apartment, she feels that something is going to change, and in order to avoid a verbal argument with her lawyer-friend she does something more subversive: "What she needed was something that avoided words" (*EW*, 267). She bakes a cake in the form of a woman – an edible, consumable, woman. She designs it as her double, but Peter, when presented with it, cannot understand the symbol and is shocked, leaving immediately, without even touching the cake.

After a long period of food loathing, Marian suddenly feels very hungry and eats the cake, which can be seen as an attempt to incorporate the aspects of femininity that she had been rejecting. She cuts it apart, "neatly severing the body from the head" (*EW*, 273). No longer identifying with the consumable victim, she is able to eat again.

The regaining of the protagonist's individuality is expressed on a grammatical level: The narration shifts back to the first person singular. The 'I' can be resumed: "I was thinking of myself in the first person singular again" (*EW*, 278), Marian states.

At the end Duncan enjoys the rest of the cake and welcomes Marian back to reality: "[Y]ou're back to so-called reality, you're a consumer" (*EW*, 281), he states. Marian is still wondering how to go on from there. Regarding the ending, which has been much discussed, one has to take into account that the novel was written in a decade when the women's movement had only just started. It is often argued that *The Edible Woman* lacks closure, but if one chooses to draw parallels between Marian's finally unified self and the ending of Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963), an optimistic interpretation of the ending may be justified.

"This above all, to refuse to be a victim": *Surfacing*

An optimistic reading of the ending is also possible with Atwood's second novel, *Surfacing* (1972). In *Surfacing*, "the fight for autonomy is extended beyond sexual politics as Atwood addresses Canada's struggle to escape cultural domination by America" (Tolan, 36). Among Atwood's favorite metaphors – apart from food and eating – we find boundaries and maps, spatial metaphors, and it is the *invasion of space* Atwood is concerned with here.

She applies these images to explore the theme of threatened personal identities, but also uses them to express her concern about the Canadian-American relationship that she elaborated on in *Survival* (1972), where she argued that "possibly the symbol for America is the Frontier, […] a line that is always expanding, taking in or 'conquering' ever-fresh virgin territory" (*Survival*, 31–32).

The violation of borders and the exploitation of nature and Canada and its victimization becomes a central, operative theme. Therefore, the novel has been associated with eco-feminism, reading the aggression against nature as an almost physical aggression against the female body (cf. Mies and Shiva, qtd. in Tolan, 42). It deals with the young female narrator's journey, a kind of *rite de passage*, to a remote place in the Quebec lake territory, the place where she grew up. Together with the couple David and Anna and her lover Joe, she plans to spend a few days in the wilderness, in her father's little cabin. The reason for the trip is that she had learned that her father, a botanist, had mysteriously disappeared from the cabin at the lake and is presumed dead. Step by step the quest for her father becomes a quest for her own identity. Her mystical experiences in the wilderness reveal her past and, connected to it, her psychic crisis.

More than in *The Edible Woman*, the function or rather *mal-function* of language plays a central role, and is closely linked to Kristeva's theory of abjection.

When the protagonist approaches the place of her childhood, she is suddenly completely lost, also geographically. She no longer feels at home, and nothing seems familiar to her: "Nothing is the same, I don't know the way anymore" (*S*, 15). Reaching and crossing the Canadian-U.S. border means entering an area that is seemingly unfamiliar to her. The geographical frontier parallels an internal frontier but also points at her doubled existence: "Now we're on my home ground, foreign territory" (*S*, 14).

The 'unknown' is a threatening category to the narrator. The uncanny feeling that seizes her signifies the re-encounter with her suppressed memory – she feels estranged and lost. At this moment she is more concerned about her lost sense of direction than about her identity. Again, Kristeva's theory of abjection parallels the state of the narrator. In Kristeva's words:

> Instead of sounding himself as to his "being" the abject does so concerning his place – "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?" … He is in short a stray. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object attracting him represents for him, but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. And the more he strays, the more he is saved. (Kristeva, 1982, 8)

The narrator is actually on a journey that saves her, it is an inner rite of passage, a search for the authentic self at the end of which she breaks through to a new identity (Heller, 40). In *Surfacing*, this new identity is closely related to language: Naming things, thereby accepting the laws of the symbolic order is problematized. The widening separation in the novel between self and other, but also the splitting

of the narrator's psyche is paralleled by her reflections on language. We find in Atwood's novels a 'language of rationality' that is based on a logical structure and in Eleonora Rao's words "reflects a supposedly objective reality" (Rao, xxi), but that is often not sufficient to describe the narrator's experience. It has to go beyond the language of the symbolic order and moves towards a more poetic language, in which less grammatical rigidity or punctuation is used, the 'other language' that is not restrictive but open and more associative.

The narrator has to go back to the semiotic. Only by rejecting the repression of the unconscious, by going back to a pre-verbal realm and acknowledging that there is something important hiding there can she strike a balance between the 'two languages'.

Going back, the narrator reveals to the reader an abortion she had had. She presents it as something that made her unhappy, connected to a feeling of guilt, but also of victimization, something she was forced to do. The bodily sense of fragmentation she experienced at this very moment is then reinforced by the death of her mother. The separation from her makes the narrator feel that she is 'locked into her head', and a complete emotional numbness befalls her that she suffers from. "I rehearsed emotions, naming them, joy, peace, guilt, release, love and hate, react, relate; what to feel was like what to wear, you watched the others and memorized it. But the only thing there was the fear that it wasn't alive" (*S*, 132).

During her quest in the wilderness when she searches for her missing father who might have drowned, the narrator dives into the water. This dive is symbolically charged and prepares an epiphany. The lake signifies a transgression to the subconscious that is later in the novel repeated. As a consequence, the narrator surfaces with a changed vision of her life. She sees something in the water, but cannot recognize herself: "My other shape was in the water, not my reflection, but my shadow" (*S*, 165).

As abjection is described by Kristeva as a "pre-condition of narcissism" (Kristeva, 1982, 13), or narcissistic crisis (Kristeva, 1982, 14), she cannot yet see her reflection, because narcissism requires a difference between signifier and signified. However, an *abject character* cannot experience *narcissism* because it does not have a signifier. So the narrator has to overcome this crisis before she can develop any further. The vision she had, the shape she saw underneath her, can be read as seeing the body of her father, but also alludes to an abortion that seems to have traumatized her. Aborting her child, she reproaches herself with having caused death and consequently excludes herself. In Kristeva's words: "It is no longer *I* who expel. 'I' is expelled. The border has become an object. How can I be without border?" (Kristeva, 1982, 3–4).

The vision under water triggers for the narrator a metamorphosis that involves an immersion into the semiotic, and as a first step, she needs to give up language: "Language divides us into fragments. I wanted to be whole" (*S*, 172), and "First I had to immerse

myself in the other language" (*S*, 185). She looks at a pictogram her mother left her, seeing a "woman with a round moon stomach" (*S*, 185). The image reminds her of a fertility goddess, and the narrator knows she wants to get pregnant again. Making love to Joe in the free nature she accomplishes this, thereby incorporating the formerly abject part, getting back in touch with her body. To fully do so, she turns the mirror in the cottage around: "I must stop being in the mirror. […] Not to see myself but to see. I reverse the mirror so it's toward the wall, it no longer traps me" (*S*, 205). This will enable her to go back to a stage before the mirror stage, before language. She has to 'un-learn' culture. She then immerses herself into the water of the lake, symbolizing the pre-human, animalistic, standing for 'the other language'. This ritual is visualized in the novel by the use of a highly poetic and unstructured language in opposition to the language of the symbolic that she describes as "talk in numbers, the voice of reason" (*S*, 216). The language the narrator immerses herself here is characterized by the absence of punctuation and linearity and a poetic flux:

> In one of the languages there are no nouns, only verbs held for a longer moment.
>
> The animals have no need for speech, why talk
> when you are a word
>
> I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning
>
> I break out into the bright sun and crumple,
> head against the ground
>
> I am not an animal or a tree, I am a thing in which
> the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place
>
> (*S*, 212–213)

The rigid distinctions between self and nature are dissolved. She moves into the space between which Kristeva calls *chora* (Kristeva, 1982, 13), and abandons all rationality. This language represents the semiotic. Her mother appears, standing there, a ghost-like figure, and she also sees her father in a mystical way during this shamanistic ritual that dissolves all subjectivity. In her imagination, she reanimates her parents who talk to her 'in the other language'. Seeing her parents as the opposite principles *man-woman*, she integrates them and unites them, finally achieving a sense of identity. She knows how to feel and has a name again – symbolizing that she has re-gained a self: "When I go to the fence the footprints are there, side by side, in the mud. […] But the prints are too small, they have toes; I place my feet in them and find that they are my own" (*S*, 219). Her experience has enabled her to strike a balance between the binary oppositions that seemed irreconcilable: "From now on I have to live in the usual way, defining them by their absence, and love by its failures, power by its loss, its renunciation" (*S*, 221).

This means she can from then on differentiate between the signifier and the signified – she has overcome the split of head and body and accepted and thus established her ego-boundaries.

The ending can, like in *The Edible Woman*, be read in an optimistic way, as the protagonist says: "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing" (*S*, 222).

Surfacing is one of Margaret Atwood's most straightforward proclamations of her rejection the dichotomy oppressor-oppressed. She is interested in the power-politics of victor and victim, vehemently rejecting the binary opposition male / female. In both *The Edible Woman* and *Surfacing,* Atwood stresses the post-structuralist notion of *difference*, a concept that could bring about a new way of interrelation of the sexes. While in *Surfacing* and *The Edible Woman* the dichotomy male-female is among the main obstacles the protagonists have to overcome in their struggle for a stable female identity, the focus of Atwood's eighth novel, *The Robber Bride*, shifts towards the dichotomy 'good-bad'.

The Robber Bride: Incorporating the Other - RoZ, KarEN, and AntonIA

The three main female characters Tony, Charis, and Roz all share an obsessive relationship towards a fourth woman, the beautiful and mysterious vampire-like villainess Zenia, the robber bride of the title, who serves as a projection screen of the three friends' personal conflicts. She seems to have no personal history of her own but merely exists through the three women's perspectives of her. A recycled version of Grimm's 'The Robber Bridegroom' (hence the title), Zenia as 'the other woman' appeals to her victims' secret identities, seducing their spouses, manipulating and cruelly confronting them with their weaknesses and vulnerable spots. Like the abject, she does not respect any physical or psychological borders. Zenia is not only the 'other', but also the 'double' of each of the three characters who finally have to come to terms with their problems, embodied by Zenia.

The central idea of incorporating suppressed personality aspect remains the same in *The Robber Bride*, and Atwood uses recurring topoi and imagery, such as water, mirrors and boundaries. A new issue she adds in *The Robber Bride* is World War Two. The main characters Tony, Charis and Roz all grew up without father figures due to the war and developed their individual strategies to cope with their difficult relationships to their mothers which involved suppressing rebellious parts of themselves in order to be 'acceptable'. Thus, each of the three women developed a dual personality the more aggressive half of which is kept under seclusion.

Antonia, or Tony, calls her 'other' part Ynot, a reversal of the name. Karen develops a double called Charis, and Rosalind grows up to become Roz. Interestingly enough, the haunting femme fatale that appears is called Zenia – a name consisting of the ending letters of each of her victims' names' last syllable: the *Z* from Roz, the *en* from Karen and the *ia* from Antonia. She is the stranger who mysteriously reappears after actually having been presumed dead. Zenia is feared by each of the three women friends, and it not accidental that her name and the associations

linked to it bear some resemblance with 'xenophobia': Zenia is the object of fear. As Tony remarks:

> [e]ven the name Zenia may not exist, as Tony knows from looking. She's attempted to trace its meaning – […] *Zillah*, Hebrew, a shadow; *Zenobia*, the third-century warrior queen of Palmyra in Syria, […]; *Xeno*, Greek, a stranger, as in xenophobic; […] Of such hints and portents, Zenia devised herself. As for the truth about her, it lies out of reach, because – according to the records – she was never even born. (*RB*, 461)

Unable to grasp the meaning of this threatening 'other' woman, Charis also ponders about her attitude towards Zenia:

> She needs to do this, because although she has often thought about Zenia in relation to herself, or to Billy, or even to Tony and Roz, she has never truly considered the Zenia-ness of Zenia. She has no object, nothing belonging to Zenia, to focus on, so she stares out the window, into the darkness, towards the lake. (*RB*, 451)

Although Charis actually wishes for an object like a voodoo-puppet, the object can also be interpreted in Kristevean terms: there is no 'other', and this is why Charis cannot make out her own self. The abject embodied by Zenia lies somewhere out there, threatening the women's identities. A man-eater, she takes away the three women's loved ones. In her role as a Gothic villain or vampire she havocs their lives. In her femme fatale role, she attracts and repels the three women, and it is exactly her lawlessness and rebellious nature that draws the three women towards her. Zenia embodies subversion and revolution, thereby reminding the three friends of their own rebellious aspects that they had to repress in order to be acceptable and not to risk any expulsion from the symbolic order. Zenia epitomizes these split-off parts and returns, making them painfully aware of their victim positions. In this role, however, Zenia also acts as a liberating power. She is a trickster that can play all roles because she represents a threat to the women's identities until they finally manage to kill and incorporate her. When she finally dies, each of the women has to figure out for herself in how far Zenia's message is helpful. That at the end of the story she is still an ambiguous, enigmatic figure supports the idea that she has more than only one meaning. There is no universally applicable meaning to be derived from her appearance.

This post-modern notion is a recurring theme Tony is especially preoccupied with. A war-historian, she is aware of the created-ness of history, thus also doubting her own narratives: "History is a construct. […] any point of entry is possible and all choices are arbitrary" (*RB*, 4).

Zenia reinforces Tony's insecurity and lack of personal history that can be trusted. Zenia haunts Tony's memory, and when she reappears, Tony feels that "[e]verything has been called into question" (*RB*, 35).

She thinks of Zenia: "Zenia dead is less of a threat, and doesn't have to be shoved away, shoved back in to the spidery corner where Tony keeps her shadows" (*RB*, 10). Zenia, the Jungian shadow, represents the neglected other, the abject aspects.

The symptoms she suffers from when being confronted with these aspects resemble those of Marian in *The Edible Woman*: She feels that her body is splitting apart.

Charis shows similar characteristics of lacking body boundaries. A rape victim, she suffered a severe trauma and experienced a body-mind split when she was a child. Her psychic fragmentation has not yet healed, and her ego-boundaries lack stability:

> "She herself is so penetrable, sharp edges stick into her, she bruises easily, her inner skin is puffy and soft, like marshmallows. […] Charis is a screen door, an open one at that, and everything blows right through" (*RB*, 212).

That Charis' identity is not stable is symbolized by her clumsiness; she frequently bumps into things, but this is not due to poor coordination: "It was just because she wasn't sure where the edges of her body ended and the rest of the world began" (*RB*, 63). In Kristeva's words, her identity is threatened by the abject:

> The one by whom the abject exists is thus a *deject* [...] [who] never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines – for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject – constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a *stray*. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object attracting him represents for him, but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. (Kristeva, 1982, 8)

This feeling of being a deject, and the lack of a demarcation line is also felt by Roz, whose "relative racial stability, provided by her Irish Catholic mother, is shattered by the return of her Jewish father and her two 'uncles' with their multiple passports" (Tolan, 211):

> 'Me. I'm a Hungarian, he's a Pole,' says Uncle Joe. 'I'm a Yugoslav, he's a Dutchman. This other passport says I'm Spanish. Your father now, he's half German. The other half, that's the Jew.'
> This is a shock to Roz (*RB*, 334).

Roz does not fit in any of these categories and feels displaced, even labeled so: "She finds herself in a foreign country. She's an immigrant, a displaced person" (*RB*, 344). Especially in suburban Canada, where, as Tolan states, "whiteness is the only signifier of selfhood, with all possible alternatives considered as 'other'" (Tolan, 212), Roz feels lost, a stray, totally displaced. Yet, she learns to adapt by copying her peers:

> Soon, she has bulldozed a place for herself in the group: she is the joker. At the same time, she imitates. She picks up their accents, their intonations, their vocabulary; she adds layers of language to herself, sticking them on like posters on a fence, one glued over the top of the next, covering the bare boards (*RB*, 345–346).

Yet, she remains the 'odd one out': "[w]hereas once Roz was not Catholic enough, now she isn't Jewish enough. She's an oddity, a hybrid, a strange half-person" (*RB*,

344). Roz, like the other characters, has to learn to incorporate the 'other' aspects Zenia stands for.

At the end of the story, Zenia becomes a tangible object for all three women. As Fiona Tolan puts it: "In the relationship between the women, a three-fold process occurs by which Zenia 'consumes' the secret selves of each of the three friends, reflects that self back to them, and finally, has them recognise themselves in her" (Tolan, 206). Margaret Atwood herself confirms this in an interview with Hilde Staels:

> She is an aspect of each of the three women. If this were not so, she would never have been able to get into their lives. Because, as Tony says: such people don't come into your life unless you invite them and if you invite somebody into your life it has to be for a reason (Staels, 208).

The three women finally manage to kill Zenia, incorporating and accepting her 'otherness' as aspects of themselves. The abject is no longer a threatening category. As far as identity development is concerned, the ending is similar to that of *Surfacing* and *The Edible Woman*. The protagonists have gained a sense of subjectivity and wholeness which enables them to start anew.

Conclusion

The Edible Woman, *Surfacing*, and *The Robber Bride* deal with personal and political colonialization and the post-modern notion that identity is something fluid, indeterminable. Especially in the age of globalization, it becomes increasingly difficult to come to terms with the complexity and multiplicity of sources that shape identity. In Zygmunt Bauman's terms, "Identity seekers invariably face the daunting task of 'squaring the circle'" (Bauman, 10). It is true that this unsettling perception has in the 21st century become widely accepted as an aspect of the human condition. Margaret Atwood's protagonists strive to reach self-determination within what Baumann calls "liquid modernity" (Tolan, 12).

Employing a post-modernist aesthetics, Margaret Atwood's novels include borderline experiences that involve the protagonists' dealing with the powers of the unconscious and abjection. The terrifying encounters with their split-off parts the protagonists in *The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing*, and *The Robber Bride* need to cope with, require a dissolution of their seemingly stable selves, a questioning of the symbolic order, and an immersion into a pre-verbal stage (in Kristeva's term, the semiotic chora). The acceptance of the semiotic, often expressed through ungrammatical language or on a metaphoric level by Atwood's frequent use of imagery related to water and wilderness, evokes epiphanies that enable the characters to resume control over their lives. While *The Edible Woman* and *Surfacing* contain numerous references to bodily splits and psychical disorders bordering on madness, Atwood in *The Robber Bride* develops the dichotomy 'self-other' a bit further and externalizes the threatening aspects by projecting them on a trickster figure. Zenia,

who not only represents anti-bourgeois values but embodies threat and danger, victimizes the three women using their own weaknesses until they are able to recognize their own responsibilities in creating her. Unlike the characters in Atwood's first two novels, Peter (*The Edible Woman*) or David (*Surfacing*) who stand for the dichotomy 'American' - 'Canadian', Zenia as the epitomization of the abject rather represents global threats and evils of the 20th century, be it as a victim of persecution, child abuse, cancer, racism, or AIDS.

In order to come to terms with their female identities, all of Atwood's female protagonists have to acknowledge that they have to confront oppression and the mechanisms at work that victimize them. As Margaret Atwood writes in *Survival,* they need to strive at "Position Four: To be a creative non-victim" (*Survival*, 38). For Atwood, this attitude is also of vital importance for Canada. Her writing is characterized by a "growing transnational engagement" (Howells, 165) with Canada no longer being a hideout. The theme of survival and the search for female identity are still central problems in her novels. The lack of definite closure which is also a common feature in her novels encourages active involvement and participation on the reader's part in the process of ascribing meaning to the texts. This is what Atwood aims at; she sees in it a precondition for a responsible life in society.

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININE IDENTITY IN *ALIAS GRACE*

Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* is a fine example of the body of narrative that leaves the reader not slightly confused even after the reading of the entire text despite its seemingly linear structure and relative simplicity of the heroine's storytelling. The rough outline of the novel's plot is the following:

> *Alias Grace* is the fictionalized account of Grace Marks, a notorious 19th-century Canadian woman convicted as an accessory in the murder of her employer, Thomas Kinnear, and his housekeeper/mistress, Nancy Montgomery. Kinnear's manservant, James McDermott, ultimately is hanged for the crime, but nobody knows what to do with Grace. Shuttled back and forth between prison and the insane asylum, Grace is a mystery to the authorities. They just can't get a handle on her sanity, and none of the doctors, lawyers or clergy drawn into the case can definitively tell whether she's a cold-blooded killer or just a victim of circumstance.[1]

It is not the task of this paper to firmly establish Grace's guilt or to exculpate her in any legal respect, especially having in mind the fact that some authors who abundantly empahasised her wickedness and insanity (like 19th-century authoress Susanna Moodie) were much historically closer to the convict than any of Atwood's readers (including herself) can ever expect to be. However, historical distance, accompanied by more recent developments in psychology and narrative techniques, may favour a more objective research into Grace's psyche and personal plight than the world of very uptight Victorian morality in which she had to grow up and live.

Before we take up the task of what agents, both of familial and historical origin, shaped the personality of Grace Marks, it would be useful to sketch some of the dichotomies underlying the novel on different levels and in different modes of literary expression, ranging from the chronological to the thematic spheres. The

[1] Wiley.

following paragraphs do not have a fixed axiological order, and are not to be taken as the sole coordinates for reading the novel in terms of Grace Marks's identity and its formation; they illustrate a number of obstacles we have to be aware of and the polarities that may pose a hidden trap for the reader, if considered one-sidedly.

When we begin reading the novel, we become aware of Grace's noticeably associative expression, in the first appearance of her narrative voice, comparing peonies in front of her place of imprisonment with those in the "front garden at Mr. Kinnear's, that first day, only those were white."[2] On the very next page, she presents the crucial traumatic event of her life in a brief flash: "…I see Nancy, on her knees, […] She's lifting up her face, she's holding out her hands to me for mercy."[3] This way of storytelling is slightly reminiscent of Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury*, with, of course, a lower level of uncontrollability on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, one must never lose the track of repressive narrative that pervades the novel, visible in man-imposed sequences of Grace's story, and the inevitable shifts in her veracity: "I can remember what I said when arrested, and what Mr. McKenzie the lawyer said I should say, and what I did not say even to him…"[4] She changed her testimony during the trial, and the novel's narrative exposed in her talks to Dr Jordan may be seen as yet another way, much less constrictive, of questioning Grace as to what really happened in Kinnear's house on that tragic day.

Another discrepancy occurs between Grace's actual life experience, what she really *lived* through, and her narrative *post festum*, during almost three decades of confinement, when she was left with almost nothing but memories of life's hardships and misfortunes, including the double murder at the Kinnear estate as the hub of her retrospective suffer. When she gives utterance to her past life, it is much too late for her to enjoy the fabled position of the storyteller and the only keeper of the ultimate secret, and Grace rather tries to alleviate her anguish through her narrative. Speaking in terms of narratology, she makes a plot of her life's story when her life is just a bad example for the entire society that surrounds and abhors her at the same time, when she has spent an almost indefinite amount of time being disciplined in prison.

A number of epigraphs in the novel, from the introductory ones to those at the end of the novel, serve at least two purposes: to give the reader a clearer picture of the public opinion of the time, and to contrast the common frame of thinking and behaviour with Atwood's rendition (through Grace's account) of the events depicted. It is subject to doubt how articulated the public opinion must have been, knowing that newspapers often thrive on propaganda-prone material, and by the same token, Grace's experience, which remains all but hidden from our view, appearing as an occasional implicit comment: "How can I be all of these different things at once?"[5]

[2] Atwood, 5.
[3] Atwood, 6.
[4] Atwood, 342.
[5] Atwood, 25.

That she has a very well-preserved common sense is evident from this and many other examples, and it offers us sufficient (narrative) proof that the public opinion may take a wrong, even a hysterically biased path.

The official medicine of the disciplinary, behavioral kind is found as the basic psychiatric model, epitomised in the person of Dr Bannerling, who concludes one of his paragraphs written to Dr Jordan with an adherence to the hard-boiled tradition of "physical restraint,[…] restricted diet, […] the taint of insanity is in the blood, and cannot be removed with a little soft soap and flannel."[6] Dr Jordan's humanistic efforts lead to an unprecedented length of Grace's confession (if we may use that word in a less than literal sense), which, taken together, spans almost 400 pages of the novel, other narrative strands inerweaving with it simultaneously.

The state of prisons and asylums of the time was not very promising for the inmates – the bodies remained the only possession of the persons serving their sentence in jail, and "discipline produced subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies,"[7] making the whole of their personality virtual property of the state whose laws they had violated. Another sharply drawn distinction, related to the ninteteenth century, springs to mind:

> The binary logic underlying the notion that criminals were responsible for their actions while lunatics were not, led to a philosophical impasse. Criminal lunatic women further exacerbated this predicament because Victorian sexual ideology undermined the moral agency of females. In attempting to restore social order, Victorian reformers employed methods of social classification. However, this process invariably failed to capture the complexities of human experience. In transgressing categorical divides, female criminal lunatics exposed the limitations of science and the broader project of achieving social order and control.[8]

The hope that prisoners could reform and improve by listening to chapters read from the Bible at breakfast stands in violent contrast with the measures that the guards resorted to daily, like "Threatening to knock convict's brains out," which was punished with "24 lashes; cat-o'-nine-tails", and the less striking violation of the rules – "Laughing and talking," which resulted in "6 lashes; cat-o'-nine-tails."[9] The reality of such prisons was far from hoped-for ideals, which Reverend Verringer affirms when mentioning to Dr Jordan: "[Warden Smith's son was] abusing the female prisoners also, in ways you may well imagine, and I am afraid there is no doubt about it; a full enquiry was held."[10]

All these binary extremes have to be taken into account (and possibilities of many other dichotomies also exist) when addressing the complex texture of Grace Marks's narrative, her own shifting point of view, and the repressive instances that expected her to tell them the story they wanted to hear, from the coarsest prison guards to the

[6] Atwood, 80–81.
[7] Foucault, 138.
[8] Kendall.
[9] Atwood, 11.
[10] Atwood, 90.

most benevolent persons, like the Governor's family. These discrepances, especially their mean interpretive values, contribute to the formation of what Linda Hutcheon terms "irony's edge", and in some cases, like with the mesmerism of Grace in the later stages of the novel, the text probes to the utmost depths of the then psychology, heralding Freud's treatment of the unconscious.

For the purposes of this paper, we have tried to single out several factors that form Grace Marks's identity, given in approximate chronological order, which mostly corresponds to her predominantly *ab ovo* narrative, although some of these influences exist parallelly with one another and do not occur in stages.

Grace's mother suffered from the first moments her daughter could remember, way back in their native Ireland; pure oral storytelling adds to to the seriousness of the situation by concealing certain details a child could not understand clearly:

> She'd begun life under Aunt Pauline's thumb and continued the same way, only my father's thumb was added to it. Aunt Pauline was always telling her to stand up to my father, and my father would tell her to stand up to Aunt Pauline, and between the two of them they squashed her flat. She was a timid creature, hesitating and weak and delicate, which used to anger me. I wanted her to be stronger, so I would not have to be so strong myself.[11]

Due to extreme poverty, the entire family goes to Canada, but Grace's mother dies aboard the ship that carried them across the Atlantic; the child experiences a sort of shock, we could even say trauma, when she retells the event by saying that she had the notion ot was not really her mother under the sheet, but some other woman. Grace must have been so attached to her mother that she could not bear the fact that her only protectress had passed away. To her mind, her mother was always there, even after her death. Another important detail is that Grace thinks her mother's spirit is still on earth because they did not open a window at her death, and her spirit will remain in the bottom of the ship for ever and ever. Grace begins to lose faith in her father completely when he sells his wife's china cups and shoes, especially when he accuses Grace of eating him out of house and home; she finds a servant's job before age thirteen and slowly roughs her way to independence.

Mary Whitney is a happier part of Grace's story, as she "never refused a friend in need."[12] They met at the new place of Grace's employment, and Mary quickly assumed the role of another protectress, promising to defend Grace from any possible aggression on the part of her father, declaring that she would teach her about life, Grace being "as ignorant as an egg, but as bright as a new penny."[13] Later on, Mary's pregnancy passes unnoticed by Grace, and she even excuses herself by saying that she is ill. Cruelly enough, a pregnant and unmarried maidservant at that time was an illness of society, a sort of human stain, especially with the child's father of unknown identity. Grace narrates: "I was very distressed on her behalf, and also

[11] Atwood, 120.
[12] Atwood, 169.
[13] Atwood, 172.

on mine, for she was the truest and indeed the only friend I had in the world."[14] The horrible circumstances of Mary's death contributed to Grace's additional anxiety, and she even heard Mary's voice saying: "*Let me in*," then "*Let me out*," because she again did not open a window. Her trauma was so so overwhelming, coupled with the physical exertion, that she fainted and for a day she thought she was Mary and that Grace was dead.

Nancy Montgomery enters into Grace's life soon after Mary's burial, and seems "very good-natured," laughing and joking much as Mary Whitney has done. Being lonely for some female company at Mr Kinnear's estate, she persuades Grace to join them for fair wages, with the advantage of working for a liberal master. Nancy resembling Mary, and Grace being depressed after Mary's death, she decides to go to her new employer. Even in prison, she can remember every detail of the house she saw on the very first day, which sometimes happens in cases of traumatic experience – their memory centres on cyclically repeated stimuli, often with a deeper unconscious meaning. When she says: "We did not go down into the cellar at that time,"[15] she may be heralding the later events of her narrative, and it is interesting to note that the noun 'cell' resembles 'cellar' very much, especially because the corpses were dragged into the cellar after the acts of murder, and Grace spent decades in a cell for that reason. Nancy relatively soon becomes slightly hostile towards Grace, which one day manifests in a tense conversation, given in indirect speech:

> And when I would say about a thing, that this was not the way it was done at Mrs. Alderman Parkinson, Nancy replied sharply that she did not care, as I was not at Mrs. Alderman Parkinson's now. She didn't like to be reminded that I'd once worked in such a grand house, and mixed with better than her. But I have thought since that the reason for all her fussing was that she did not wish to leave me by myself in Mr. Kinnear's room alone, in case he should come into it.[16]

Grace loses additional respect for Nancy when the servant James McDermott declares that Nancy had a baby by a young layabout earlier, after which Mr Kinnear took her in. The shock to Grace's nerves repeats when she learns that Nancy is pregnant, and almost disbelives that it can be happening once again in her immediate vicinity. Leaving the particulars of the crime apart, and having in mind several different and at times contradictory versions, we may conclude that Grace had an experience with three crucially important women in her life so far: her mother, then Mary Whitney (her good surrogate mother), and by way of resembling Mary at first sight, Nancy Montgomery (her evil surrogate mother, if by 'mother' we may imply a role model). She experienced an almost identic trauma with the first two women, who left her without notice, in utter physical pain; when she met Nancy, she clung to the motherly image she represented, but she soon realised Nancy was far from that paragon. The impulsiveness of James McDermott and a very complicated situation of a nervous pregnant maidservant who conceived a child with her landlord led the

[14] Atwood, 201.
[15] Atwood, 247.
[16] Atwood, 257–258.

action to a catastrophe, and the heroine to imprisonment during the best years of her life. It is only natural that after such a series of shocks Grace could not remember all the events accurately, and that the truth could never be revealed, which gave rise to various manipulations and acts of hostility directed against her.

The disciplinary institutions, like the prison and the asylum, have a very limited mental range that they impose on the inmates or patients respectively; from the very first day of her dwelling there, Grace was nothing more but governmental property, trained to say "Yes, Sir, yes, Ma'am" and obey orders without hesitation. On the other hand, her case of a woman, a convict and a lunatic at once was so baffling that it was her who seemed to be the mistress of knowledge, not the state institutions. Foucault's statement: "In the order of criminal justice, knowledge was the absolute privilege of the prosecution"[17] does not apply to Grace Marks, in that the prosecution was certain only of what Grace was thought to have done, and not even Dr Jordan could catch up all the ropes of her story except by listening to what she chose to tell him, and nothing more. He was intelligent enough to conclude, after a long, rambling brain-racking: "What he wants is what she refuses to tell; what she chooses perhaps not even to know. Knowledge of guilt, or else of innocence: either could be concealed."[18] However, there is a difference between physicians like Dr Bannerling and Dr Jordan, and there is a striking dissimilarity between the world of prison and that of the Governor's house and his amiable daughters, all of which factors make up Grace's identity additionally, we should never forget, over a very long period of time. When she mentions "better ships" on page 134, during the narrative of her late mother, or the fact that Dr Jordan does not have "side-whiskers, as they have begun to wear them now" on page 41, those pieces of information could have reached her only through a more permissive source, like the above-mentioned girls. Just as Grace's truest expression is associative, not linear, her conscious search for a sister may be understood as an unconscious search for a mother, for a much-needed support in life. Perhaps her ego never lets her state this desire openly, but we can justly suppose that Mary Whitney was more of a sister to her – a teacher and a mother besides.

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[17] Foucault, 35.
[18] Atwood, 374.

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READING GENDER AND GLOBALIZATION ISSUES IN AND OUT OF M. ATWOOD NOVELS[1]

In the text published in 2005 in the journal *Globalizaton*, entitled "The Feminist Desire for a Primordial Place, Or Why Feminist Philosophers Avoid the Issue of Globalization," Jennifer Eagan from California State University claims that, with only a few exceptions, Western feminist philosophers miss the big picture and let others do the "heavy lifting involved in generating theory that can help us address the problems of oppression, distributive justice, and insufficient democratic practices as they are unified under a system that can be named globalization'."

On the other side of this odd silence of feminist philosophers, Eagan argues, there is a considerable amount of work on globalization done by feminist theorists from a social scientific perspective. In fact, Eagan's major concern is that, lacking systematic philosophical approach feminists could stay stuck in one of the backstreets of both theory and practice. Before concentrating on the very relation between feminists and globalization, Eagan offers a brief review of the notion of globalization and its meanings. These range from Derrida's view on mondialization as an inherent contradiction, to the detailed images of Barber's McWorld:

> a busy portrait of onrushing economic, technological, and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity that mesmerize peoples everywhere with fast music, fast computers, and fast food – MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's – pressing nations into one homogenous global theme park, one McWorld tied together by communications, information, entertainment, and commerce (Barber: 4).

[1] This paper is part of the Project 148015 financed by the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia.

In that broad range, globalization is seen as process which brings both negative and positive effects, as well as a philosophical problem which reflects a dialectic between identity and difference – because, according to Jameson, globalization is a communicational force that reflects cultural diversity on one side and economic homogeneity on the other.

The process of homogenization and annulling differences is what Eagan sees as an attack on the key concept of feminism – that is, *difference*. This is the reason why she seems puzzled at the fact that globalization has not been tackled as a complex philosophical problem among the theorists of the approach. Eagan names Martha Nussbaum and Gayatri Spivak as two thinkers who have questioned various issues connected to globalization, but none of them has produced a "sustained treatment" of it yet. According to Eagan, Martha Nussbaum does not address globalization as a primary cause of the suffering of the developing women that she seeks to defend. In another vein, Spivak's work is also important but not sufficiently oriented toward globalization. She has provided feminist theorists with some very useful notions of voice and instructions on how voices become displaced by the very people who are trying to give voice to the marginalized. Eagan underlines Spivak's advice in constructing a theory that does not only address global issues, but that can be heard globally, citing her warning to Western theorists:

> There is an impulse among literary critics and other kinds of intellectuals to save the masses, speak for the masses, describe the masses. On the other hand, how about attempting to speak in such a way that the masses will not regard as bullshit (Spivak 1990: 56).

This seems like a good place to rethink some of the elements of Eagan's text. Her insights seem worth taking into consideration, and her brief overview of the approaches toward the notion of globalization is a *must* for every talk about the issue – therefore its paraphrase here. Even more interesting, however, is her usage of literature, in the context of which the quote from Spivak is very indicative. In a text which speaks of the lack of philosophical treatment of the globalization problem, she quotes exactly the part in which Spivak turns to the literary critics in the first place. It is no wonder, of course, that two pages later, in the part subtitled as "A Retreat to Nature and Immanence" she uses a literary work, Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* (1972), to illustrate her point. There is not much surprise in the fact that a literary work is used as an illustration for an abstract thesis, as it has been noted for centuries that art is a fusion of the abstract and the concrete. Nevertheless, this turning to literature is very characteristic of, at least, modern theory, especially feminist theory, by which literary language actually becomes "a privileged discourse" on many problems. At the beginning of the chapter Eagan says that in order to illustrate desire for a return to a primordial past and its ultimate failure, she offers a fictional depiction of such a failure. What Eagan names *nature* and *immanence* could be described in the vocabulary of the social sciences as part of sustainability. Investigating this problem, Canadian professor of political economy Gordon Laxer quotes James O'Connor's argument that, if capitalism were truly

sustainable, it would be able to accomplish four things: 1) maintain capital accumulation globally; 2) provide basic needs for the human kind; 3) manage a system of accumulation without rebellion and 4) achieve these things while respecting natural resource limits (see: Laxer).

Eagan begins her brief argument by explaining the desire of the main character of Atwood's novel to return to Canadian wilderness where she had been in her childhood because she is looking for an experience where, "she can become a part of nature and a defender of nature against what she perceives as an American hoard of developers, hunters, and interlopers" (Eagan). This conflict of two concepts of life is here depicted in geopolitical terms, as American/Canadian difference. It also underlines the sociological fact which Laxer in his research has designated as the "semiperipherality" of Canada, borrowing the concept from Immanuel Wallerstein.

> The condition of semi-peripherality, whether defined as primarily social, cultural, economic or spatial, can be understood as having both the consciousness of subordination and the means of resistance – unlike the core which may lack the consciousness, and the periphery which may lack the required means. Being in the contradictory position of the semi-periphery distances actors and observers from the taken-for-granted assumptions of the centre, while still being close enough to have an insider understanding of those assumptions and the state capacity to do something about them. In short, the semi-periphery is a provocative environment from which to study both the dynamics of closer global integration and resistance to globalism (Laxer).

Laxer describes the position of Canada as that of a semi-peripherality, which gives this country the critical position toward the center's assumptions and opens the possibility of reading this scene and the novel as a whole, in these sociological terms, as a fictional treatment of the issues of power, love and resistance.

Having shown that the search of Atwood's character for the *state of nature* is futile, dangerous and impossible, Eagan moves further to Judith Butler's deconstruction of the idea of the "originality of gender," pointing out that if such an original could be claimed, it would have a homogenizing effect on women's identity. And the need to critically rethink globalization in feminist terms is only a step away: "If the negative side of globalization is precisely the homogenizing effect of culture, feminist philosophy is well versed in this" (Eagan).

Actually, immanent to this question of globalization is the question of identity/identities. This is the reason why Atwood's novel fits so well into this philosophical argument, in which sociological models offer ready and handy terminology. Eagan sees the possibility to go beyond these obstacles in Luce Irigaray's text, *Democracy Begins Between Two* (2000), which she also reads in terms of identity. She claims that, instead of retreating to 'tribal' identities based on race, religion, and nationality, Irigaray argues that, if we are to realize our goal of peaceful coexistence and of sustaining human life on the planet, we need to construct a way toward a civil community that respects and fosters difference. Via Irigaray and her thoughts on East-West differences of thought, Eagan arrives to the sustainability and universalism of rights and justice, without reducing individual identity to a single frame.

Could there be a better metaphor of this struggle for becoming a subject than Atwood's novels? The title of the already-mentioned *Surfacing*, points out that becoming is coming up to the surface, not diving itself. One needs to dive deeply in order to see, but one also needs to come out, to the surface, up to the decision that we never see clearly defined:

> I re-enter my own time. / But I bring with me from the distant past five nights ago the time-traveller, the primaeval one who will have to learnt, shape of a goldfish now in my belly, undergoing its watery changes…It might be the first one, the first true human; it must be born, allowed (Atwood, 185).

The novel ends in the position of liminality between two worlds and two kinds of knowledge, caught in a triple sustained movement. The first one is that of the main character: "I tense forward, towards the demands and questions, though my feet do not move yet." The second one is that of her friend Joe: "His voice is annoyed: he won't wait much longer. But right now he waits." And the third one is that of the surrounding nature: "The lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing" (Atwood, 186).

So the concluding scene consists of suspended movements, moments of in-betweenness which offer insights of both worlds, the one of questions and demands and the other in which one can feel: "I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning" (Atwood, 175).

Nomadic life in nature and urban, sedentary life are also posed as oppositions in Atwood's novel *The Cat's Eye*. Elaine Risley's early childhood is a safely stored happy memory in the moment when she is exposed to the temptations of growing up. However, this novel is much more a story of becoming a subject, surfacing amidst pressures of hostile others, than the story of "a retreat to nature and immanence." It could neatly illustrate the inner side of the argument of globalization, the search and struggle for the identity of one's own. Which comes pretty close to what Irigaray sees as cosmopolitanism – civil community which respects difference. Only, as in *Surfacing*, we never really get there, just know the desire for it.

So, no matter how possible and even comfortable it seems to think of these novels in terms of power, sustainability, homogeneity, there are a few things which should be observed – the work of art never takes us there; it only induces our awareness of a problem, never solves it. Margaret Atwood may be well known as a feminist, her implicit poetics may employ feminist attitudes, they may also fit well into the concepts of anti-globalism or semiperipherality, but these never exhaust them, never fully explain the moments of suspended movements and ambiguity. Therefore, using literary work as illustration in a philosophical text is nothing else than the metaphorization of a problem. Once done, it falls (or rises) beyond abstract language and opens toward multiple meanings. In another words, in this case, Eagan gives us a way to further think about the problem in terms of literature or, to be more precise, in terms of literary criticism. Which, to paraphrase Spivak from the above

quote, should really speak to the masses in terms of the individual voices which make up the masses. Could there be any other more appropriate de-homogenizing discourse than that of a literary work of art?

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ART / IDEOLOGY / CULTURE
ART / IDÉOLOGIE / CULTURE

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"ART IN THE AGE OF BUSINESS"

The title refers to Rick Salutin's article published in his 1991 *Living in a Dark Age*, Salutin's text was concerned with the status of arts and artists in an increasingly materialistic society controlled by local and global capital. Without wishing to deny the importance of economic factors, Salutin warned that preserving the arts by converting them to business terms was almost as good as destroying them. Artists, according to Salutin, create things that have meaning or beauty for themselves and others. Among such things Salutin included the potential vigor of contemporary Canadian thatre as the society's consciousness. He reminded the reader of Sartre's view that the theatre is the most political art form because it takes place in the most social situation. However, he thought that the social and political potential of Canadian theatre lied almost dormant. One exception was the so-called occasional theatre, or documentary dramaturgy, such as Salutin's own participation in the Toronto Passe Muraille's *The Farm Show*, with *1937: The Farmer's Revolt* (Salutin, 1991, 279). Twenty years later Salutin's concern is even more significant than it was in 1985 when he first published his article on art and theatre, while the models of Canadian theatre's artistic and political engagement have proliferated, culminating in deeply ethical work of such authors as Judith Thompson and Jason Sherman, and in the increased interest in social issues in the plays of George F.Walker.

Throughout his life and work Salutin has persevered both in activism and in artistic commitment represented variously in his books: the plays *1837* (1976) and *Les Canadiens* (1977), the novels *A Man of Little Faith* (1988), *The Age of Improvisation* (1995) and *Womanizer* (2002), and the documentary prose *Waiting for Democracy* (1989) and *Living in a Dark Age* (1991). In an article "National Cultures in the Age of Globalization" (1999) he proclaimed economic globalization capitalist and corporate, subjugating "all human values and social possibilities to economic cal-

culation and the profit advantage of a few huge players, growing even fewer." The concentration of power, according to Salutin, is on such a level 'that makes feudal accumulations of power look shabby and decentralized' (Salutin, 1999). Globalization in this sense, continues Salutin, is a "terribly serious threat to the cohesion of societies and the welfare of individuals," comparable to that in Europe before the First World War. He himself took an active part in fighting against the economic globalization of Canada in the wake of the 1988 election and the introduction of the Free Trade Agreement with the USA, recorded in his *Waiting for Democracy*, *A Citizen's Journal* in 1989. In the Introduction to *Living in the Dark Age*, Salutin described the year 1989 as a perfect end to a decade that put emphasis on the brutal struggle of each against all, and "special deals for the (already) rich and/or mighty" (Salutin, 1991, 1), ironically marking the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, and the year of the collapse of the Soviet system.

Without lamenting the fall of the mentioned regime, he still expresses his sadness about the failure of many of the enterprises founded on human hopes and dreams. He thinks the poetry of these enterprises has still not died: it reminds us of goals, and it makes us restless. Salutin therefore encourages art, especially literature, containing "poetic vision that once set major human upheavals, maybe the only thing that can sustain people in the face of history's betrayals and disappointments" (Salutin, 1991, 1). Such a vision results in one long (virtual) poem whose central imagery expresses the idea that "human race is one, that all people deserve the same chance to be happy and fulfilled (Salutin, 1991, 1)." "Everything is poetry that helps sustain humanity's dreams of its better self," writes Salutin (Salutin, 1991, 3). True, Salutin reminds us, poetry and beauty also live outside the art and literature: Canadians created a little "poetry" of that kind embodied in their railroad meant to bridge space so that people could feel connected and build a new society together; the broadcasting system to communicate with each other; the network of social services to give everyone the right to a minimally decent life. Even the mere existence of Canada, continues Salutin, that has always defied economic and geographical logic, expresses *a will to be based in certain values* (Salutin, 1991, 4). It is these "certain values" that he expects art and literature to embody.

Against the dangers of globalization Salutin puts the importance of culture – "that which makes sense of people's lives in relation to their community and the history of their community" (Salutin, 1991, 4). Culture matters to human existence more than purely economic "factors." His opinion has been that Canadian culture is particularly threatened in the present age of globalization since it could be said that it lacks the kind of glue which characterized most national societies, from language to cuisine. What gives Canada a sense of a cohesive society are rather institutions like the railroad, CBC, network of social programs, and the special roles of artists in Canada. Many Canadian writers and artists feel responsible not just for expressing themselves but for expressing the meaning of Canada. The special Canadian contribution used to be Canadian plays, but more recently it is popular culture, especially popular music and satire. Neil Young and Leonard Cohen have become

globally significant artists, though they lived in the United States and were shaped by the encounter with American popular culture.

How will it all end, asks Rick Salutin? The situation is dire, but audience and readers should not be caused to despair. In everything he did or wrote about Canada he has faced the problem of ending, but the most satisfactory answer was given in his play about the 1837 Canadian revolution. While just before the hanging of one of the rebels, Matthews, proclaims "we lost," the other, Lount, replies "No! We haven't won yet" (Salutin, 1976, 264). Salutin has frequently dramatized the question of ending, as in his 1995 novel *The Age of improvisation, A Political Novel of the Future*. It is about politics and theatre, what they have in common in an age that has witnessed collapse of political ideologies and parties, and an imagined dissolution of national institutions in Canada restructured for free trade. The novel is set in the year 2000 – the time without scripts, the beginning of a new millennium. A famous actor goes into politics and becomes the prime minister. His only strategy is improvisation, or collective creation. Salutin reverses his earlier statement on ending to "we have not lost, we just have not won yet," but it to "we have not won, we just have not lost yet" (Salutin, 1995, 156).

The novel is one long monologue of the hero, actor-prime minister, who calls a referendum on the question "Do you believe our human solidarity is the basis for our behavior toward each other?" When the result is the majority of "yes," he resigns to everybody's surprise, having lost his only daughter to a modern illness, and decides to "change the script" of his life. After paying visit to places of failed revolutions and socialisms, he return home, is offered a place in the new government and leading roles in major American and Canadian theatres, but declines them all. His ultimate silent dialogue with his dead daughter is about class, that forgotten thing. He contemplates on how he has never been at ease among the elite, nor has enjoyed being part of the grid – the media control of politics. Instead he desires pure performance, playing with and for the friends, as he did in childhood, as young Stanislavski made plays at the country estate. He craves for authentic and spontaneous articulation. "pre-public, primal, animal," of joy, grief, fear, satisfaction, a new kind of "publicness" (as he calls it), which is not public utterance, like speeches in Parliament. "The publicness he felt he would return to now, because he had no choice, was not about ideology or mission; it was about what you simply are and cannot be other than" (Salutin, 1995, 244).

Rick Salutin invested much of his own aesthetics and politics in this novel, as well as his own disillusionment with democracy. "In my life as an actor," says the main character, "I've often faced what I thought of as the problem of the ending: how to acknowledge the inherently tragic nature of experience" (Salutin, 1995, 191). In the 1999 article on national cultures in the age of globalization Salutin repeated his concern for what he calls the "challenge of how to be honest about how dire things are, yet not cause your audience or readers to despair" (Salutin, 1999). Time and again he has endeavored to deal with this paradox in his books.

Rick Salutin's concerns are not unique among major intellectuals and artists. The Modern Language Association of America hosted a number of significant contemporary authors discussing the role of intellectuals in the twenty-first century (Stanton, 2006). Julia Kristeva almost echoed Rick Salutin in her address "Thinking in Dark Times," where she discussed a new possibility of connecting one's thought with one's being in the world through affective, political, and ethical transference. She sees her practice as a psychoanalyst, her novel writing, and her work in the social domain as an extension of a mode of thinking: thought as act (Kristeva, 2006, 14). Kristeva developed a new conception of the human in order to deal with the current crisis of civilization, based in what she calls "the desire for meaning" (Kristeva, 2006, 14). With reference to the riots in Parisian suburbs a couple of years ago, she describes the dissatisfaction of the young people as the "malady of ideality" – the need for an ideal to contribute to the construction of psychic life. When betrayed, the ideal "easily turns itself into the opposite: disappointment, boredom, depression, even destructive rage, vandalism…" (Kristeva, 18). Socially and politically marginalized people seek consolation in retrograde religions, which requires new modes of understanding religion on the part of the new humanists. In a similar way did Rick Salutin explain renewed attachment to religion in our time. Quoting Paul Scott he wrote: "Hit a man in the face long enough, and he turns to his racial memory and his tribal gods – for the disintegration of the cultural environment of the victim is […] the cause of the degradation. "You might say," Salutin wrote, "that modern global economics has revived national culture and ethnicity along with religion" (Salutin, 1999).

Ratna Kapur's paper in the MLA series was entitled "Dark Times for Liberal Intellectual Thought." Liberal thought is based on the assumption that humanity advances progressively, toward greater freedom, prosperity, equality, and rationality, but recent ventures in freedom, democracy and rights have produced death, destruction, and chaos, writes Kapur. The author recommends Barbara Kingsolver's novel *The Poisonwood Bible* as a social allegory helpful in understanding the present anti-intellectualism. Like the Prince women in this novel, the liberal intellectual tradition must turn the gaze back on itself and ask how it has been implicated in the mess we are in.

Ariel Dorfman, the famous Chilean writer, pointed out that the artist has the obligation to remain skeptical, rebellious and vigilant. "The only right we do not have is the right to remain silent" (Dorfman, 2006, 40). Truth should be insisted upon. "One true word is worth ten thousand lies" (47). Care for the word, he suggests, "care above all for the contaminated words, the words that had been deviated and abused and misappropriated by power, the words that we would have to nurse and heal and rescue if our children were ever to speak freely in a free land, and fearless" (47).

Finally, I would like to conclude with the ideas of Professor Robert Scholes expressed in the 2004 MLA Presidential Address, "The Humanities in a Posthumanist World," in which he dealt with the situation of literature and literary studies in

the last couple of decades. There are currently two chief enemies both writers and literary scholars have to deal with: pragmatism and fundamentalism, said Robert Scholes. What they share is a rejection of dialectic, of an attempt to reach the truth with the aid of reason. They are frequently allied in this world for which we must prepare our students. Our case is dire, says Scholes: "Those who lack all conviction have joined forces with those who are full of passionate intensity" (Scholes, 2005, 731). The words of William Butler Yeats come to us because we are humanists. They are tools that literature has given us to cope with the world. We draw strength and insight from those words and from the other texts that are parts of our cultural equipment, to paraphrase Scholes. We must show that what we have to teach is useful to the students, but not in the narrow utilitarian sense. Instead, we must show that the works of art are tools for thinking and feeling, ways of understanding the world and its people.

Rick Salutin himself has become a teacher – Instructor in a course in Canadian Studies at the University of Toronto, "Culture and the Media in Canada," in which he explores the "encounter between culture and mass communication in Canadian society," including major institutions affecting culture, and "focusing on particular instances and case studies in the arts and media" (Copied from the U. of Toronto's Course Program). His engagement in Canadian arts and culture is thus complete.

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AMERICAN AND CANADIAN STEREOTYPES AS REFLECTED IN POPULAR CULTURE

In today's world a multitude of media is an ever-present feature of most people's day-to-day routine. Our modern lives are dominated by mass media which can radically shape and filter the original event or experience being depicted. Such cultural conditions have incited many a creative artist to bring our media-saturated contemporary society under severe scrutiny. For example, Don DeLillo's *White Noise* presents characters who are bombarded with the *white noise* of television. Indeed, every aspect of our lives is swamped with flickering TV and video images.

Heated debates about the role of the media in society and of popular culture in general have been taking place in a number of academic disciplines. The academic disciplines include sociology, media studies and cultural studies, where scholars have tended to take either side of the pessimistic-optimistic divide. The exponents of the pessimistic camp, comprising the Marxist-based views of the Frankfurt School (Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer), as well as the postmodern pessimist Jean Baudrillard, fiercely criticise the products of popular culture as being: devoid of artistic merit, devalued through the process of commodification, and intellectually damaging. They paralyse powers of criticism thus turning individuals into the masses – passive recipients and victims of the media and media-disseminated ideology. Baudrillard singles out signs and images used on TV as particularly detrimental to individuals' perception and knowledge of the world because television programmes create an illusionary world, a hyper-reality with a sinister potential to substitute the real world of sensations. In the darkest scenario, hyper-real – more real than real – takes over and actual lived experience becomes less *true* than the *truth* offered to audiences by images on TV screens.

The advocates of the optimistic camp, on the other hand, can be associated with a whole range of perspectives, including interactionism, pluralism, cultural relativism and postmodernism (in its optimistic guise). What all of them have in common is the shift of *agency* and reevaluation of the popular cultural product. Furthermore, that mass production could be both liberating and dominating at the same time was emphasised even by the German thinker Walter Benjamin, who wrote at the same time as the members of the Frankfurt School. The optimistic view credits the audiences and consumers of popular culture with far greater judging abilities than the pessimistic view allows them. Rather than being unthinking victims of ideology, individuals are seen as highly creative agents with power, freedom and choice to put all cultural products to a variety of inventive practices and uses. Consequently, the line between high and low culture becomes blurred as the merit of their respective products is no longer in what they are but in how they are used. This also means that popular culture does not necessarily hamper critical thought about society but can actually encourage it.[1]

The creations of Michael Moore, Trey Parker and Matt Stone fall under the category of popular culture and therefore could be deemed by some to be cheap, unintellectual and without any artistic value. However, it is our opinion that their work demonstrates the optimistic viewpoint that any product of popular culture can be used in a highly creative way. In addition, apart from being a source of fun and entertainment, film is seen by many as an appropriate instrument for transferring cultural facts. With insider knowledge of popular culture production (the film industry in particular) and the power of the media, the three filmmakers criticise in a playfully humorous fashion an uncritical consumption of mass-media products. For these filmmakers stereotypes and stereotyping function as a sugar coating, disguising the product and making it easier for the consumer to swallow. This paper relies on the motion picture *Canadian Bacon* (1995) by Michael Moore and the cartoon *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* (1999) by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, for the investigation of American and Canadian stereotypes as seen by Americans and Canadians themselves. Counting on active and creative audiences, the three filmmakers present gullible characters who are brazenly manipulated by the media. Both films are based on the exaggeration and satire of American propaganda, mass media and mass mob hysteria, which subsequently evolve into an armed conflict with the Canadians.

In the exposure of human failings and vices and in their comment on society, both films resort to the oldest possible vehicle of criticism – satire. Satire works through humour and the comic effect is achieved mostly by means of exaggeration. When it takes human nature and society as its objects, exaggeration leads to the creation of types or caricatures. In other words, by reducing human beings to one or two dominant characteristics, it results in stereotypical conception of man and society. In the two films analysed in this paper, stereotypes serve several purposes. At the

[1] The major source for the debate on popular culture is Kidd, 98–111.

surface level, they are a source of humour and make films enjoyable to a certain extent. However, a deeper analysis reveals that stereotypes bring to the forefront issues, traits, attitudes and habits that are the objects of critique. Both films, therefore, operate as social satires and both exhibit the serious purpose of satire – to expose the vices and follies of mankind. The ultimate aim detected in these films is to tear all stereotypes down and, as it might be expected of satirical works, to make society better through laughter.

Displacement of responsibility emerges as an object of criticism and satire in both films, and is also presented as a dominant phenomenon in American society. In *Canadian Bacon*, the US government are looking for an external enemy to take the blame for the fall of the economy and people loosing jobs. After the cold war with Russia has ended, weapon factories are closing down, people are getting laid off, and the popularity of the US administration and president is falling. Something needs to be done. "All other presidents had Russians to blame. What do I got?" wails the American president in despair. The machinery of American propaganda is unleashed and, operating through the media, it quickly turns the unsuspecting neighbouring nation, Canadians, into a sly enemy. In *South Park*, the parents of children who start swearing profusely do not take the blame for the lack of control over their kids, but look for the guilty party elsewhere and find it in the Canadian actors Terrance and Phillip. The blame is not put on the parents themselves or on the school system or the control of violent films with foul language, but on another nation who have nothing to do with these children swearing.[2] In both films, the con-

[2] Displacement of responsibility figures as a major theme also in the "Butt Out" episode of *South Park,* where the boys are caught smoking and their parents find the guilty party in the local tobacco company (Johnson-Woods; Anderson). Also, the song "Blame Canada" from *Bigger, Longer and Uncut*, which won the 2000 Academy Award for Best Original Song, has displacement of responsibility as its punch line. Here are the lyrics:

Sheila: Times have changed
Our kids are getting worse
They won't obey their parents
They just want to fart and curse!
Sharon: Should we blame the government?
Liane: Or blame society?
Dads: Or should we blame the images on TV?
Sheila: No, blame Canada
Everyone: Blame Canada
Sheila: With all their beady little eyes
And flapping heads so full of lies
Everyone: Blame Canada
Blame Canada
Sheila: We need to form a full assault
Everyone: It's Canada's fault!
Sharon: Don't blame me
For my son Stan
He saw the damn cartoon
And now he's off to join the Klan!
Liane: And my boy Eric once
Had my picture on his shelf

flicts get out of hand and lead to war, which means that both films in their portrayal of frenzied warmongering also have a strong anti-war message. These conflicts are further aggravated by the fact that one nation's knowledge of another is grounded in widespread stereotypes, not on facts.

Stereotypes can be interpreted as simplifications achieved through reduction. They serve as intellectual shorthand, a synecdoche, where a part stands for the whole and accordingly the knowledge of a concept is not complete or rounded. Despite the conspicuous lack of details, stereotypes can be beneficial in assisting a society in identifying important parts of their culture since stereotypes tend to cluster around the most prominent cultural aspects. Being the easiest place to start the process of learning about a society and defining one's place in it or in relation to it, social stereotypes help develop consciousness and help develop identity. Nevertheless, they are a two-way street: externally and internally imposed, serving both good and bad purposes, and influenced by education and economic prosperity. It is when they take on a life of their own that stereotypes become dangerous commodities. Social representations, frames and stereotypes have a normative power, establishing judgements of value and stereotypes can also produce constraining and ill-advised behaviours. *Canadian Bacon* and *South Park* provide ample evidence of the Janus-faced nature of stereotypes.

But now when I see him he tells me to fuck myself!
Sheila: Well, blame Canada
Everyone: Blame Canada
Sheila: It seems that everything's gone wrong
Since Canada came along
Everyone: Blame Canada
Blame Canada
Copy Guy: They're not even a real country anyway
Mrs. McCormick: My son could've been a doctor or a lawyer rich and true,
Instead he burned up like a piggy on the barbecue
Everyone: Should we blame the matches?
Should we blame the fire?
Or the doctors who allowed him to expire?
Sheila: heck no!
Everyone: Blame Canada
Blame Canada
Sheila: With all their hockey hullabaloo
Liane: And that bitch Anne Murray too
Everyone: Blame Canada
Shame on Canada
For...
The smut we must stop
The trash we must bash
The Laughter and fun
Must all be undone
We must blame them and cause a fuss
Before somebody thinks of blaming uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuus!!!!

The first image of Canada and Canadians in *Canadian Bacon* is presented at a hockey-game. Canadians are depicted as a hockey-loving nation in flannel-shirts who use no bad language and do not litter. In other words, they are a clean, decent, well-behaved nation in sharp contrast to loud, aggressive, scruffy-looking Americans who are yelling during the Canadian national anthem and making fun of the Canadian flag. The scene reaches its climax when the group of Americans manages to provoke this peaceful nation into a conflict by insulting their beer, which is yet another common stereotype of Canadians.

The Canadian Royal Mounted Police keep appearing throughout the film and reinforce the stereotype of the peaceful Canadian. Canada is portrayed as virtually having no crime. The serious offenders, locked up in prison, include a man who put regular gas into an unleaded tank, a man who was in too many bad moods, and the worst criminal resembles a typical American capitalist. "Canadians ain't got a care in the world," concludes one of the Americans. Out of sheer boredom, the prison guard lets the gas offender out of his cell and plays cards with him whereas the capitalist is always kept in check and an electric baton is used on him.

The films also satirize the stereotypical view of Canadian English and have American characters mock the way Canadians pronounce *about* (as *aboot*) and use *eh?*. In addition, language is used to emphasise Canadian alleged allegiance to Britain. While a group of Americans are scattering garbage they brought to Canada from their country, two Mounties are debating whether it is good English to end a sentence with a preposition, and finally one of them says to the Americans, 'in preferred Queen's English', "Go back thee from whence thou came."

The first image of Americans in *Canadian Bacon* is an auction of weapons where everyone is frantically buying anything on sale. A rocket launcher, for example, can be purchased for 25 dollars. They are represented as a gun-loving and aggressive nation, but also an unbelievably naïve one, all of which is opposite to American stereotypical perceptions of themselves as self-righteous, freedom-loving, democratic, and liberators of other nations ("Let's go liberate Canada," says Deputy Honey enthusiastically). Neither did the American fight for democracy, which they take special pride in, escape the satirical scrutiny of the three filmmakers. It is, perhaps, most strikingly exposed in the scene from *South Park* where Sheila Broflovski, mother of one of the boys who took up swearing, before the execution of the two Canadian entertainers in a circus-like atmosphere, exclaims excitedly: "Today is a great day for democracy." Her exclamation, in fact the entire *Mothers against Canada* campaign, is welcomed by passionate cheering.

Intentional misinterpretation of facts being used to justify the course of action (which is war on Canada) is targeted by both films. The Canadian system of welfare, social protection and the health system are seen as sources of danger because they are too socialistic and therefore a threat to American society. When paranoia gets well under way, the misinterpretation gets even more bizarre. The simple geographically conditioned fact that 98 % of Canadian population lives within a hundred miles of

American border is perceived by Americans as Canadian amassing at the border with the intention of attacking the US. Moreover, Americans are stunned at the discovery that Canada is the second-largest country in the world and shares with the US the longest undefended border. The red maple leaf of the Canadian flag is, then, seen oozing blood-like syrup across the whole length of the border. The deliberate misinterpretation of facts walks hand in hand with another well-known stereotype of Americans. Namely, they are notorious for their ignorance about other countries, peoples and cultures, so that in the minds of American characters the capital of Canada is invariably Toronto.

Distorted interpretations and ignorance are disseminated by way of television, which misleads the population and serves to increase the contrived tension. The American population in both *Canadian Bacon* and *South Park* is genuinely shocked at the knowledge that Canada poses a serious threat to the United States. The amazement is rooted in yet another stereotype – that Americans do not acknowledge a distinct Canadian identity or sovereignty. "If you can call Canada foreign" … "or a country." "It is practically a 51st state." The full power of propaganda and its manipulation of a gullible society are revealed against the background of these statements, which appear in both films. "The American people will buy whatever we tell them to," the advisor says reassuringly to the American President. As a result, the "51st state" is turned into a redoubtable enemy.

In conclusion, it can be said that in both films stereotypes contribute to the humorous satirical effect which in turn has the serious philosophical purpose of revealing unpalatable truths about society. By means of hyperbole, the issues such as manipulative power of authorities and the gullibility of common people, ignorance, warmongering, prejudice, and racism are made more formidable. The creators of *Canadian Bacon* and *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* deployed both stereotypes and popular culture products for subversive purposes thus endowing them with the power to function as eye-openers for all that have been misled and manipulated.

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CULTURAL MARKERS OF IDENTITY: THE BOXWHATBOX ACTING METHOD IN CANADA, CZECH REPUBLIC, FINLAND, ROMANIA AND SERBIA

It is at best difficult to discern what may be regarded as definitive cultural traits in peoples or nations without descending to essentialism. This is perhaps doubly true in dealing with a culture such as that of English Canada, not only because it splits effortlessly into distinct sub-societies based on the widening divides of rural-urban, east-west, north-south, and aboriginal-settler, but because the official policy of multiculturalism which has been in place since the early 1970s has transformed the Anglo-Saxon and Christian foundation of English-Canadian society into a laboratory experiment where the subjects – its people – are subject to an accelerative pattern of constant change and increasing intra-cultural friction.

My intent with this paper is therefore not to portray Canadians as a whole but to identify, in the particular subjects with whom I work, patterns of behaviour which lead to observations on some aspects of "Canadianness". The comparative agents in this series of observations are people from other cultures who are more or less found in the same social strata and inhabiting similar micro-communities as the subject Canadians. The methodological template I will apply is the context supplied by the BoxWhatBox performance workshop that I have developed over the past five years. In each of the cultures I will allude to, BoxWhatBox has taken place with students or actors in conditions ranging from one day workshops to full-scale rehearsal processes which have led to production.

The nature of BoxWhatBox lends itself to rapid diagnostic evaluation of participants. It is a physically demanding process focused on the idea of *serious play*[1], a term coined by Prof. Hannu Heikkinen of Jyväskylä University in Finland. The central tenet of BoxWhatBox is that the ability to play is fundamental to our ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Without the ability to shift one's perceptions of an idea, a situation, a person, or oneself, a person is left rigid in outlook and brittle in capacity – a mechanism on the verge of breaking at any point. This is catastrophic for actors, of course, who, as the shape-shifters of our society, must take on the perceptions and physical expression of characters who may be utterly foreign to them. It is equally damaging for any person who wishes to present themselves in a way that is not perceived as strange or threatening within that person's macro- and micro-cell communities – which is to say, all of us. Strangers and Strangerhood exist as a means of socio-cultural demarcation in every society. Personal enfranchisement depends on a person's ability to persuade others of the intrinsic *insiderness* of their being.

Actors, oddly, often lose the ability to play. Their lives become more complicated and thus more serious, because concentration is increasingly required on tasks that are not fun, or even enjoyable. Injuries accumulate to the body and the psyche, leaving scar tissue which restricts flexibility. The actor's experience is, of course, a metaphor for the experience of all of us, just as play is a metaphor for our daily lives. We are all, in a fundamental sense, players. Those who choose to opt out of playing remain in the game, diminished in status and capacity. Those who decide to play the game in one mood and with a singular approach quickly lose their utility to the other players, and thus their identity as a needed part of the core; they become strangers. Those who retain their ability to play, on the other hand, remain youthful in outlook and demeanour. They focus more on the challenges which lie ahead rather than on past occurrences. To be an adult is a daunting thing. It is a death sentence, in fact. However, in the way that actors are counseled never to "play the ending" nor should any person play the end of their existence before they have fulfilled their lives to the utmost. This is only possible when a person acquires the skills to assess group and individual responsibilities – the expected orthodoxy – in any given situation and to respond in a manner whereby all of his or her personal traits that are most valuable can be expressed. "Valuable" can be taken to mean, in this context, those qualities which are critical to a person's self-definition, and which are regarded as useful in a wider social milieu, thereby ensuring that person's continued survival.

BoxWhatBox was developed to assist individuals in honing their playing skills. These skills already exist within each of us. The knowledge each of us possesses must be ordered and refined so that it can be brought to bear quickly on demand. Players are given a series of responsibilities in games and exercises involving tasks

[1] Heikkinen, Hannu. "Perhealbumi – Ideasta Esitykseen" in *Draamakasvatus – opetusa, taidetta, tutkimista!* Jyväskylä: Minerva, 2005. pp. 100–119.

as an individual, as part of a pair, and part of a larger group. There are three core components of BoxWhatBox training: neutralisation/demechanisation; rhythm; and non-linear text and image creation. Underlining these components are the foundation principles of Power, Control, and Joy. These principles foster optimal expressive ability in an individual when present in combined or balanced form. An individual who relies on Power may achieve much but will eventually fall to a sharper sword. One who relies on excessive self-control and Control of others must, when all of their many lines have begun to tangle, slowly asphyxiate. A person who refuses to discipline their joy is a tyrant who will succumb to the displeasure of the multitude. Similarly, one who denies their power will surely lose it, and those who are unwilling or unable to assert control will lose themselves in chaos. The last example, the person who denies joy, is the saddest and most pitied creature in existence.

It is with these principles that I will note some brief observations from my work in Canada, Serbia, Finland, and the Czech Republic. While many of the games and exercises in the Non-Linear Text and Image Creation component of BoxWhatBox are created for each workshop and the particular players who participate in it, the exercises in the Demechanisation phase tend to be quite similar. Many have been taken from the work of Augusto Boal, whose work with the Theatre of the Oppressed in the 1970s was a seminal development in the applied and devised theatre movements.[2] The most important game, Ball Basic, was created by me nearly twenty years ago to encompass every principle of professional acting an actor needs to know, in the context of a set of physical metaphors. Using Ball Basic and two other Neutralisation/Demechanisation and Rhythm games as a comparative template, some intriguing differences may be noted in the response of player groups from different cultures.[3]

Stick Knots

The object of Stick Knots is for a group to create a series of entwining knots until no player can move without dropping a stick. It begins in a circle in which each player holds a stick by one finger in each hand, which is connected to the finger of another player. An individual starts the game by walking forward into the circle and other players soon follow, ducking under or over the sticks as openings appear. Players are not allowed to speak or communicate verbally.

[2] BoxWhatBox is not devised or applied theatre, although many of its games and exercises fit in equally well in those contexts and some, in fact, have been borrowed from them. What distinguishes BWB is that it was originally formulated as a tool for professional theatre performance, and while its scope has expanded to the fields of applied and devised theatre, its focus remains on the creation of art and artists. Performances which evolve out of BWB may be political in nature but they are not meant to be community-building in orientation.

[3] It should be stressed that these are not control groups. Too many factors are in play to create a satisfactory scientific study comparing the groups; these notes are observational in nature.

The primary objective of the exercise is to foster non-verbal communication and sensitivity, or "True Contact". Players often regard this as an exercise in ensemble building. It is that, but as a directive such a term is unactable. Players must develop True Contact – real listening, targeted generation – in order to evolve into an ensemble.

The Finnish Drama in Education students with whom I worked in 2004 had been together for two years as a class. Eleven women and one man, they functioned effectively in the game, twining and untwining on the first pass, a very unusual level of success for the exercise. A second Finnish group was also very successful. Each individual seemed to understand his or her individual responsibility as a receiver as well as a generator of energy. In contrast, Serbian actors – who had been together at least as long – functioned erratically. More typical of stick exercises, the players in Užice struggled with the rhythm of the game. On the first pass they moved too quickly and confidently and a stick was soon dropped. On the second pass the lesson was not learned; once again the rhythm of movement was dysfunctional, communication was sacrificed to individual concentration, and the sticks dropped rapidly once more. A palpable frustration set in. They could not play the game without trying to talk their way through it, issuing orders or reactions to each other. Resentment permeated the room in the form of blaming glares. The sticks fell again.

Canadian players fell somewhere in between these benchmarks. Acadia University Theatre Studies students also spend a great deal of time together as units. Their lack of physical contact, in both their training and daily interaction was glaringly exposed by this exercise. If one could extend this observation, one might state that Canadians, as a rule, avoid physical contact. This relative lack of intimacy does not explain the mediocre performance in the knots game – by the third pass they were effectively twined but could not untwine – after all, Serbs are far more physical in their daily expression than Canadians, and Finns, at least from a distance, appear similar to Canadians in this regard. The lack of physical ease with each other combined, I think, with a general inability to listen receptively. The Serbs did not see the point in working together; the Canadians desired to work together but lacked unifying skills; the Finns worked as a collective whole.

Horse and Kniget

This game is a variation on the traditional "piggyback" games found in may cultures. In BoxWhatBox it takes place in two phases. In the first, players "mount" a partner by circling their legs around the partner's waist. The Horse and Kniget (the pronunciation is borrowed from Monty Python) must then run about furiously, yelling at the other Horse and Kniget pairs. As a warm-up, this first phase is useful. Players must shed inhibitions about physical contact and raising of voices. The exercise is demanding and most often punctuated by shrieks of pure joy. There is far more to the exercise, however. It tests a player's aggression level and their ability

to compete, qualities which are fundamental to good acting. I will state simply here that aggression is a positive human quality and that competition is why we are here, and the dinosaurs are not. I have no patience for those who equate aggression with violence or competition with anti-social behaviour. We must be aggressive (used wisely, of course); we must compete.

In this phase of Horse and Kniget the performance of the various groups was telling. The Serbs were a different group, save for one individual, than the group from Užice. They did not know each other as well. One would have thought that this might present an inhibiting factor but such was not the case. From the first moments of the exercise the actors flew at each other, yelling and gesticulating with great mock ferocity. It took a considerable effort, in fact, to get them to stop. The joy of release was evident in the group. Women were as aggressive as men; the players were required to exchange horse and rider duties to ensure no one took, or were placed in, a passive position.

The Canadian students had been members of the same class, taught by me, for two years. They were markedly more uncertain about the exercise, and doubts were expressed in the form of repeated questions. BoxWhatBox is consistent in its ethos that principles and ways of playing are best learned by playing, rather than by trying to explain everything beforehand. Players must learn what works. The Horse and Kniget exercise adds the tasks of precision and economy to those of competition and release. Riders must mount in a biomechanically efficient manner in the minimum amount of time allotted to a transition. Knigets must stay aloft, and maintain their energy and balance. Shouts must be vocalized in a safe manner. Horse and Rider must communicate effectively with each other.

The Canadians were excellent at communicating distress, and less efficient at communicating aggression. The shouts were not as loud, nor as frequent; the gesticulations were half-hearted. It could be observed that the group did not appear to believe in fist-shaking and energetic aggression as a means of communication, even in jest. This was not something that was questioned by the Serbs, or the Bulgarian acting students with whom I worked in 2007. This group, made up of 15- to 19-year-olds, had been together for more than a year and was small, tightly knit group made up of two males and five females. Their response would fall in the median range between that of the Canadians and Serbs. While the males and two females gave full vent to their competitive instincts, two young women were clearly ill at ease with the physical indignity of the exercise. They did manage to shout and gesticulate, but in a manner similar to that of the Canadian group. The Bulgarians as a group were inferior in discipline and precision to both other groups, a fact that could be explained by their relative youth, but for their response to the second phase of the exercise.

The second phase requires riders to mount their horse on the shoulders. “Spotters” are used for the mount and dismount process and to supervise during the “tour” taken by Horse and Kniget, but the horse and rider are alone to do their jobs during

the exercise. At the end of the tour, just when they are convinced the worst has been undertaken, the rider is asked to roll backward down the spine of the horse, so that their head is inches off the floor and they are staring at the world upside down. After a minute or so, with or without assistance, they are asked to roll back up.

The object of this phase is to demonstrate, especially to the young women, that all people are stronger than they believe they are. The metaphor is a physical one but this credo extends to the emotional and spiritual sphere as well. It is a lesson that many people repeat to themselves but that few truly heed, and so it bears open repetition in a public arena. The Bulgarian youths were surprisingly good at this aspect of the exercise. The Serbs were almost virtuosic in rolling up and down the spines of their partners and in taking on a heavy load. The Canadians performed because they were told to, and did as well as might be expected with evidence of such nervousness.

Ball Basic

Ball Basic is the key to all BoxWhatBox training. It incorporates all principles of acting. A group of people stand around in a circle and attempt to keep a soft, palm-sized rubber ball in the air, sending it to a destined person across the circle. With some minor additions (a player cannot touch the ball twice with their hands consecutively; when the ball touches the floor the game begins again), that sums up the game. A few of these principles bear mentioning, because it is in the adherence or disengagement from these principles that groups distinguish themselves.

Simplicity is the essence of Ball Basic. A player must find the most efficient, consistent way of delivering intention (sending the ball to a chosen target) by making True Contact (receiving the ball and sending the ball in a manner which demonstrates listening and generation). They must demonstrate Positive Anticipation, the ability to instinctively decide what is necessary to keep the ball in the air. This involves taking note of special qualities of the surrounding environment and of each individual, and knowing when a player requires assistance or when to let another assist them. Players who intervene when it is not necessary demonstrate Hero Syndrome; players who back out of moments which call for their initiative are performing Alphonse and Gaston (the two French waiters of lore who invite each other to pass through a doorway). When the ball drops, it must be picked up with a minimum of Commentary, which can encompass everything from an apology (not needed), a self-critical grimace (a waste of focus), to blaming others through a glare or muttered imprecation (destructive). The Ball in the Air is a business as well as an art. When a player makes a mistake, and the ball drops, their task is to pick it up, or if it rolls to another, to let that person pick it up. Nothing more. Then they are expected to Make the Adjustment, that is, to learn from their own work and that of their partners what is effective and what is not, and to apply it.

The Ball Basic game distinguishes players from each other in moments. I have cast plays from the Ball Basic game. It is that revealing. It is the simplest and most difficult actor training game in the world, next to standing still.

At Concordia University in 1989 I developed the Ball Basic game with a group of talented first year acting students. To this day they remain the group I associate most with Ball Basic, although their record – 125 consecutive touches – was eclipsed in 2007. The group was together virtually all of every working day, and they worked with me in an ensemble class three times a week. The relationship therefore was extremely close between myself and the students – but less so between the students themselves, as might be expected. The group featured a surprisingly wide age range for a first year class, from eighteen to twenty-four, and was riven with immature ego-driven displays and other forms of discord. Over the course of a school year, however, this group formed a solid sense of togetherness which took into account the strengths and weaknesses of each individual. Players who had near phobic responses to the ball because they "didn't play sports" or who were insecure about their coordination skills soon realised that they had to play in order for the group to succeed – one of the secret rules of Basic is that if someone has not touched the ball in a sequence, the game does not count. Gradually they learned to block out the multiple distractions students in North American society face – the "tabula rasa" or Creative State of Mind written of by Stanislavski. There is nothing more fundamental to acting then being able to wipe away your own experience and take up residence in another being. The ability to clear one's mind and focus on a task has clear parallels and utility with the quotidian experience of non-actors, as well.

At the other end of the spectrum was a group of young professional actors with whom I worked in 2003 in Romania. They knew each other well and mostly liked each other. The circumstances of their working lives militated against any unity, however. For the first two weeks of rehearsal they were being shipped in from an outlying chalet to rehearsal. For the last three weeks they took up residence on the stage and on the floors of the dressing rooms at the theatre, because promised housing had not come through. The Director of the Company was a manipulator who ruled by gossip and innuendo, was having a relationship with one of the actors, and was rarely present in the city where they worked. The group clearly felt like abandoned children, and when it came time to play Ball Basic, they behaved like it. The ball flew everywhere. Instead of being picked up, it would be kicked. Players would try trick spins or use the back of their hands to hit the ball. Some of the women simply backed off in the face of such anarchy. No one could assert control, not even me. They would listen patiently to me, try it for one or two touches, and then hell would again break loose. After several days of this it began to dawn on me that I was the one not "making the adjustment". The group was under duress every moment of their waking lives, making little money in an old drafty theatre in a city with no tradition of attendance for the performing arts. All were away from home, trying to fulfill their dreams and put their training in practice. Shouting and brow-beating was commonplace on the part of the Director and guest directors.

These individuals had ceased to be individuals. The last thing they needed was to confine themselves in one more environment, no matter how much fun was promised. They needed the anarchy.

BoxWhatBox has proven an effective tool in fostering creative expression in twelve countries to date. What it demonstrates to me is that a universal vocabulary of expression exists, and can be refined, while always paying heed to the distinctiveness of each culture in which it takes place. There is no intent to impose a set of rules or precepts upon anyone. The purpose is to help individuals understand that the more they come out to play in the big sandbox of the world, the more they will demonstrate who they are and who they wish to be.

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