(RE)CONNECTING THROUGH DIVERSITY: CANADIAN PERSPECTIVES

LES RELATIONS DANS LA DIVERSITÉ: PERSPECTIVES CANADIENNES

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SERBIAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES
ASSOCIATION SERBE D'ÉTUDES CANADIENNES

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LES RELATIONS DANS LA DIVERSITÉ: PERSPECTIVES CANADIENNES

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Table of Contents
Table des matières

Introduction. 9
Introduction. 15

Donna Coates
"Killer Canucks": The Role of Aboriginal Epistemology in Joseph Boyden's Great War Novel Three Day Road 23

Jelena Novaković
Le personnage de l'écrivain dans L'Emprise *de Gaétan Brulotte* 43

Jana Javorčíková
Canadian Identity through Literature: On the "Canadianness" of Margaret Atwood's Fiction 53

Vesna Lopičić
The Power of the Ethnic Stereotype: Reconnecting or Disconnecting? 63

Dragan Prole
Philosophy of the Integral Human: McLuhan's Critique of the Guttenberg Era and the Hope in the New Media 75

Irina Perianova
Food and Identity in an Adoptive Country 87

Alpar Lošonc
Global political economy from the Canadian Perspective 101

Predrag Dedeić
Corporate Governance in Canada: Recent Changes and the Best Practice 111

Slobodan S.Pajović, Andrijana Golubović
The Position of Latin America in Canadian foreign policy 115

Darko Simović
Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism 127

Radojka Vukčević
Margaret Atwood's Strange Things*:*
The Power of Words in (Re) Connecting Through Diversity 137

Tanja Cvetković
'How Should I Read These?'
First Nations Voices in Canadian Literature 143

Milena Kostić
Intercultural sensitivity: Serbian Diaspora in Canada 151

Snežana Moretić-Mićić
Identifying Canadian Literature:One Possible Definition 163

Nadežda Stojković
A Personal Attempt at Integrating Cultural Diversity
– The Example of Eva Hoffman 167

Maja Ćuk
(Re)Connecting through Our True Stories:
Immigrant Identities in Silvija Jestrović's Literary Works 175

Vladislava Gordić Petković
Getting at the Kernel of Canadianness:
Douglas Coupland's Souvenir of Canada. 189

Biljana Dojčinović
"Lady Bruton's Timely Plot": Modernism, Imperialism and Canada 195

Marcel Voisin
Pierre Baillargeon, penseur de la liberté. 199

Ljiljana Matić
Daniel Danis, chantre québécois de la nature 205

Katarina Melić
Discours de femmes: Maryse *de Francine Noël* 217

Branka Geratović
Le métaféminisme d'Anne Hébert 223

Jelena Antić
Comment la figure de l'Ange du foyer traverse-t-elle les romans d'Anne Hébert Kamouraska *et* Les Fous de Bassan 231

Delia Georgescu
Au carrefour des temps ou comment conquérir l'Amérique en une nuit . . . 237

Diana Popović
Le problème de l'identité culturelle dans le roman L'Ingratitude *de Ying Chen* 243

Marija Panić
L'espace dans les mondes possibles: la géographie des œuvres de Négovan Rajic 255

Vanja Manić-Matić
Les particularités sémantiques des noms et des verbes en français québécois 263

Introduction

The casual scholar browsing the shelves of Canadian books and articles from the past two decades might easily notice that there is a constant attempt to make "diversity" into something that authentically connects the citizens of Canada. In line with the current fascination with "culturalist" thought and its criticism from the political left and right, the Serbian Association for Canadian Studies (SACS) in cooperation with Megatrend University, Belgrade, organized the Fourth International Conference of Canadian Studies *(Re)connecting Through Diversity: Canadian Perspectives* (Belgrade, 14th-16th April, 2009) with the idea of reexamining Canada's multicultural character manifested in the fields of politics, economy, arts and society. The present volume of conference proceedings thus reflects Canada and Canadianness by a number of disciplines: literature, law, economy, philosophy, sociology, linguistics and history. Essays of Canadian, European and Serbian scholars address many different but interrelated subjects: the First Nations identities, gender, race and minority differences as represented in Canadian fiction, the function of ethnic stereotypes in popular culture, the role of Canada in international politics, the interrelation of food and identity, the meaning of the New Media. One conclusion after reading the present collection might be that, given the important role of immigration, migration, ethnicity, popular culture and cultural diversity for the new global social outlook, the Canadian example could be increasingly important to all of us.

The conference was formally opened by Donna Coates, from the University of Calgary, with the paper "The Role of Aboriginal Education in Joseph Boyden's Great War Novel *Three Day Road*". She focused on the previously neglected or marginalized histories by analyzing the novel that tells the story of two Cree friends who become superb scouts and snipers during the First World War. Boyden's historiographic fiction thoroughly examines the kinds of relationships which existed between leaders and their subordinates (especially aboriginals). According to Coates, this subject was entirely missing from Canadian historiography and Great War literature. The novel is a good example of a literary attempt to (re)connect Aboriginal culture; stories, knowledge, and history are valuable and hence should be integrated into mainstream knowledge. The fact that the paper highlights the problem of integration of a marginalized group through the production of new historical and fictional narratives set one of the important topics of the conference.

The participants of the First Plenary Session, *Canadian Languages, Literatures, Cultures,* demonstrate the peculiarities of different images of I and the Other in Canadian literature and culture. In the presentation "L'image de l'écrivain dans *L'Emprise* de Gaétan Brulotte", Jelena Novaković examines the relationship between I and the Other in contemporary literature of Quebec as manifested in Brullote's *L'Emprise*. The main character is a writer searching for a literary hero, and the writing transforms itself into an investigation of reality and a self-examination of the writer, thus expressing the author's attitudes to literary and artistic problems (the relations between the author and his characters, relations between art and life, writing and practice, literary devices, intertextuality, the function of writing) as well as the issue of a writer's place in society (alterity, marginality, isolation). This literary strategy provides an insight into the situation of the contemporary Canadian novel. Jana Javorčíková's paper "Canadian Identity through Literature: On 'Canadianness' of Margaret Atwood's Fiction" asks how the landscape and location of Canada help to form the Canadian identity, and tries to connect her experience of contemporary Slovakian identity with the traditional and modern symbols of Canada as suggested in Atwood's fiction. It is indicative that Vesna Lopičić puts a question mark at the end of her paper's title "The Power of Ethnic Stereotype: Reconnecting or Disconnecting?" She analyses, in the manner of Roland Barthes' denaturalization, the winter 2008 issue of Montreal-based quarterly magazine *Maisonneuve* that contains a set of eight pages of photographs and texts on Serbia ran by Roger Lemoyne. From her initial interest, Vesna Lopičić got more than saddened, because the title of this series of photos is *Serbia, the Sad South*, which imparts a message that is only further confirmed by the photos selected from his journey through Serbia. This prompted her to deconstruct the power of negative stereotyping presented in the photos and their captions. Dragan Prole's text "Philosophy of the Integral Human: McLuhan's Critique of the Guttenberg Era and the Hope in the New Media" confronts the basic topics of interest of the avant-garde and anti-utopia with Marshal McLuhan's opinion on the connection of alienation and the media. A consideration of two competing theories of the media in the context of the strategy of the avant-garde and anti-utopia seems to be recommended, because they are related to the effects and influence of the new mass media, which are usually being recognized in the problem of foreignness, in regard to alienation. After establishing the limits of his optimistic expectations of the new audio-visual media in making a key contribution to the de-alienation and rebirth of a new type of integral man, the author emphasizes the modernity of McLuhan's ideas about media control by studying new models of perception.

The participants of the Second Plenary Session *Identity, Disciplinarity, Control* were interested in contemporary Canadian culinary culture, economy, politics and law. The first paper "Food And Identity In An Adoptive Country" by Irina Perianova shows that foods and meals are characterized by culture-specificity just like any other social patterns. The symbolism of heritage foods is part of the value system of Canadians living in different Canadian regions; some foods represent national icons and are perceived as part and parcel of national identity

and are important cultural capital in an increasingly multicultural world. Perianova also shows how the idea of authenticity shapes the imagination of culinary adventurers and stresses the role of holiday food, usually eaten with closest friends and family, in the shaping of contemporary ethnic identities. Alpar Lošonc's text "Global Political Economy from a Canadian Perspective" takes as a starting point the work of the influential Canadian political scientist Stephen Gill, from York University. There are two points of interest for this paper: the first refers to the so-called postmodern prince with which Gill describes the structure of governmentality within the structure of international political economy, the second concerns the meanings of the regime of disciplinary neoliberalism as the mechanism of geoeconomically installed power. Lošonc argues that Gill's theory appears to be one of the most important contributions to the understanding of the complex processes of globalization. In the paper "Corporate Governance in Canada: The Recent Changes and The Best Practice", Predrag Dedeić shows the dimensions of an integrated and complicated system of legal and financial instruments for monitoring and creating incentives on the market. The author shows how that system manages to balance the different interests coming from internal and external factors of influence and stresses the recent changes to corporate governance in Canada, as a result of cooperative work between regulators, government, academics and industry participants. Those changes embody: enforcement, financial reporting and market disclosures, audit processes and management accountability. Slobodan Pajović, and Andrijana Golubović co-authored the geo-political analysis "The Place of Latin America in Canadian Foreign Policy". The text argues that the tradition of internationalism in Canadian foreign policy as viewed from the perspective of foreign policy analysis provides the framework within which to understand and accommodate changes in its policy toward Latin America. The authors' conclusion is that Canada's role in inter-American affairs has evolved from that of a distant observer, albeit with some important economic interests, to that of full partnership in the Americas. This position is characterized by a very dynamic political dialogue based on achievement of a certain level of Canadian autonomy (especially from the United States) concerning the policy towards Latin America. Darko Simović's discussion entitled "Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism" outlines the fact that Canada has been an example of an asymmetrical federation since its establishment in 1867. The basic reason behind the asymmetry of Canadian federalism was the famous need to protect the various minority groups, the Francophones within Canada and Anglophones within Quebec. The paper aims at showing all the elements of asymmetry of Canadian federalism, seeing as it allows us to follow its evolution up until today, as well as perceive the directions of its future development. In the end, the author argues that the asymmetry of the federal system still can be the secure road to the survival and preservation of Canada and a way to avoid further attempts of Quebec to secede from Canada.

The participants of the sections *Canadianness* and *Canadian Literature and its Interpretations* further considered the problem of diversity in Canadian literature and culture, and brought valuable insights about the cultural identity of the

Serbian immigrant community. Radojka Vukčević's "The Power of Words in (Re) Connecting Through Diversity" brings together two perspectives on Canadian writing: Margaret Atwood's in her book of essays *Strange Things* and Stephen Henighan's in his book of essays *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Literature*. What is common to both authors is the belief in the power of words which in a "strange" way shows how "words deny the world" and how it is possible, at least metaphorically, to (re)connect Canadian experience through diversity. Tanja Cvetković's paper "'How Should I Read These?' First Nations Voices in Canadian Literature" focuses on First Nations literature in Canada, its classification, assimilation and position within mainstream Canadian writing. It also explores the problem of appropriation of Native voices and the problems of some white writers' and readers' insistence on the Native perspective. Overly simplified identification by the non-Native reader, ignorance of historical or cultural allusions, obliviousness to the presence or properties of Native genres, and the application of irrelevant aesthetic standards are all means of domesticating difference, assimilating Native narratives into the mainstream. Milena Kostić's contribution "Intercultural Sensitivity: Serbian Diaspora in Canada" presents the 'oral histories' research of the first-generation Serbian immigrants to Canada, carried out in Toronto, in July 2008. The paper explores different reasons for Serbian migration to Canada, as well as diverse ways of adjusting to Canadian ways with a particular emphasis on the cultural (Serbian/Canadian) differences. Snežana Moretić-Mićić's paper "Identifying Canadian Literature: One Possible Definition" discusses various attempts to determine a true Canadiana that peaked in the literary criticism circles in the 1970s, not coincidentally alongside an upsurge in Canadian political nationalism. Common themes were identified, such as isolation, wilderness, and the Great White North, and these motifs were seen as true reflections of a uniquely "Canadian" experience. However, as the author agues, not all texts fall so easily into these analytical slots. Many Canadian texts resisted such a simple classification, exposing the failure of imposed homogeneity on a body of diverse work. The sheer variety of works produced by Canadian authors is a testament to their diversity; describing them as simply "Canadian" is too reductive to be truly meaningful. Nadežda Stojković's essay "A Personal Attempt at Integrating Cultural Diversity – the Example of Eva Hoffman" takes Hoffman's autobiographical novel *Lost in Translation* that presents her life in Poland, Canada, and the USA as an exemplary search for personal identity of an immigrant. Canada proves to be the place where she learns to come to terms with a culture inherently different from her original one, and moreover, to integrate both cultures successfully in a coherent and stable self. Maja Ćuk's article "(Re) Connecting through Our True Stories: Immigrant Identities in Silvija Jestrović's Literary Works" deals with literary works written by a young and successful Canadian dramatist Silvija Jestrović. In an attempt to interpret Jestrović's works, the author focuses on the concept of cultural identity, the process of Serbian migration to Canada and the development of their literature there. Jestrović's drama *Not My Story* and her essay "Playwright between Languages" aim at drawing attention to the unfavorable circumstances of immigrant writers and artists in Canada who have to adjust to a foreign cultural milieu by developing new literary

approaches and new identities. Vladislava Gordić-Petković's paper "Getting at the Kernel of Canadianness: Douglas Coupland's *Souvenir of Canada*" interprets Coupland's book as a tribute to all things Canadian, from Native people's reserve to French-language cereal boxes. According to Gordić-Petković, it remains quite unclear whether Coupland, in an attempt to (re)construct Canadianness, tries to cast a bizarre image of Canada as a "*Star Trek* manner parallel-universe country" or simply mocks the national myths of Canada. *Souvenir of Canada* is therefore not a cultural study but a deeply personal account, both sentimental and ironic. Coupland hangs on carefully chosen and slowly processed particles of reality, clinging to his intimate vision of the homeland, and yet his memoirs and souvenirs retrieve cultural facts which usually remain hidden, unknown or are generally acknowledged as irrelevant. Biljana Dojčinović's "Lady Bruton's Timely Plot: Modernism, Imperialism and Canada" tries to point to the meanings of imperialism and colonialism in the time of modernism in order to see how Canada is represented in the novel, and with which artistic and political purpose(s). Seen from the angle of Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, Canada is a utopian story turned into a nightmare. By this paradoxical turn, Canada stands for Europe and European civilization, fatally wounded by its own inability to recognize the danger of Imperial dreams.

The participants of the sections *Ideology / Literature* and *Literature / History / Language* deal mainly with the literature of Quebec from different perspectives and they treat different subjects, such as the writer's engagement, female writing, multiculturalism, migrant writing, identity issues, and problems of language. Marcel Voisin writes about the literary and social engagement of Pierre Baillargeon, novelist and essayist from the 1940s. During his life in France he was under the influence of European humanism and he described himself as "from America and France" (*d'Amérique et de France*) and he acts as a forerunner of the Quiet Revolution in Québec in the 1960s ("Pierre Baillargeon, penseur de la liberté"). The subject of Ljiljana Matić's research is Daniel Danis, the dramatist who confronts the vanishing world of the countryside and the world of technological advancement which celebrates machines rather than human beings. Danis presents human beings as close to nature, with their bodily needs, with their admiration of authentic, brutal force and their aspirations to heaven in search of dreams and archaic values that are lost in our industrial age ("Daniel Danis, chantre québécois de la nature").

The papers of Katarina Melić, Branka Geratović and Jelena Antić are focused on changes in Québec society that occurred in the 1970s during the process of redefining the role of women in political terms, but they also point out difficulties of any attempt to abandon prejudices and to change the mentality of a traditional society. They study the works of female writers from the 1970s that confront the traditional male way of writing. Katarina Melić analyses the Francine Noël novel *Maryse* (1983), in which the author depicts the fate of a woman in Québec and examines the variety of relationships that a woman can establish in society, with men and other women. Through the experience of Maryse, who actively partici-

pates the in transformations at the end of twentieth century and who transforms from an object into a subject, Noël demonstrates the role of language mediation, whose mastering permits this young woman to understand who she is and to participate in society as an equal member ("Discours de femmes: *Maryse* de Francine Noël"). Branka Geratović examines the "metafeminism" of Anne Hébert who easily joins the revival of feminine writing, but who also criticizes the absolutist ideologies of the 1960s and 1970s, when the sexual revolution encouraged experimenting with free love and denigrated fidelity. Jelena Antić analyses the same author from the standpoint of thematology. The latter, in the paper entitled "Comment la figure de 'l'Ange du Foyer' traverse les romans d'Anne Hébert *Kamouraska* et *Les Fous de Bassan*", she examines, through the metaphor of "l'Ange du Foyer" ("the angel of the hearth") present in the two above mentioned novels, the great burden of the clerical and patriarchal society of Québec in the 1960s: although they are trying to transgress the imposed order, Anne Hébert's female characters do not manage to abandon the role of the Angel of the Hearth because they are not ready to forget the stereotypes of a conformist society.

Three presentations deal with migrant writing and the problem of identity in a multicultural society in which immigrants play an important role. These presentations interpret the works of writers who accept the language of their new country but search for inspiration in their childhood memories. In the paper "La Négociation de(s) l'identité(s) dans les romans de Dany Laferrière", Delia Georgesku analyses the relationship between memory and invention of the true self in two novels of Dany Laferrière, Québec writer of Haitian origin, *L'Odeur du café* (1991) and *Je suis un écrivain japonais* (2008). She concludes that he chose to be a Québecois effortlessly (*sans se fatiguer*), that is, to accept the official model of multiculturalism. Diana Popović considers "Le Problème de l'identité culturelle dans le roman *L'Ingratitude* de Ying Chen". Through the personal drama of a young Chinese woman who refuses to accept the model of traditional Chinese feminine life that formed the identity of her parents, the Québecoise of Chinese origin Ying Chen prompts us to consider many different metaphysical problems. Marija Panić's paper "L'Espace dans les mondes possibles: la géographie des oeuvres de Négovan Rajic" takes up the works of the well known Canadian Francophone writer of Serbian origin. She examines, from the standpoint of the theory of possible worlds (Doležel, Pavel, Margolin, Ryan, and Eco), the imaginary lands that appear in Rajic's short stories and novels, and that are a kind of projection of his native country. Lastly, the article by Vanja Manić "Les Particularités sémantiques des noms et des verbes en français québécois" aims to explain certain changes in the variations of French in North America (Acadian French, Louisiana French and Québecois French). She studies two large lexical groups, nouns and verbs, and points out their equivalents in standard French.

Jelena Novaković
Vladimir Gvozden
Slobodan Pajović

Introduction

Comment le Canada relie-t-il ses diversités? Le chercheur qui lit les livres et les articles sur le Canada qui ont été publiés au cours des deux dernières décennies peut remarquer facilement un effort constant pour trouver dans la "diversité" les éléments qui lient les citoyens du Canada. En accord avec la fascination de la pensée moderne par les idées "culturalistes" et avec leurs critiques de la part de la gauche et de la droite politiques, l'Association serbe d'études canadiennes (ASEC), en coopération avec l'Université Megatrend de Belgrade, ont organisé la Quatrième conférence internationale des études canadiennes *Les relations dans la diversité: perspectives canadiennes* (Belgrade, 14-16 avril 2009), avec le but de réexaminer le caractère multiculturel du Canada qui se manifeste dans les domaines politique, économique, artistique et social. Aussi dans ce volume, qui contient les communications lues à cette conférence, le Canada et l'identité canadienne sont-ils considérés du point de vue de différentes disciplines: littérature, droit, économie, philosophie, sociologie, linguistique et histoire. Les communications des chercheurs provenant du Canada, des pays européens et de la Serbie traitent des sujets différents, mais liés entre eux, tels que l'identité des premières nations, les différences de genre, de race et de minorités représentées dans la prose fictionnelle, les fonctions des stéréotypes dans la culture populaire, le rôle du Canada dans la politique internationale, les rapports entre la nourriture et l'identité, l'importance des nouveaux médias. Une des conclusions qui s'imposent après la lecture de ce volume pourrait être que, vu le rôle prépondérant de la migration, de l'immigration, de l'ethnicité, de la culture populaire et de la diversité culturelle dans la création du nouveau paysage social, l'exemple canadien peut servir d'exemple à nous tous.

La conférence fut ouverte par la communication de Donna Coates de l'Université de Calgary, "The Role of Aboriginal Education in Joseph Boyden's Great War Novel *Three Day Road*". Elle examine les histoires négligées ou marginalisées en analysant le roman *Three Day Road* où il s'agit de deux amis de la tribu Cree qui sont devenus de superbes éclaireurs et archers pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Le roman historique de Boyden examine toutes sortes de rapports entre les chefs et leurs subordonnés (surtout des aborigènes) et, selon Coates, ce sujet n'était pas traité dans l'historiographie et la littérature canadiennes sur la Grande Guerre. Ce roman est un bon exemple de la tentative d'intégration des groupes marginalisés dans la société canadienne par la production d'une nouvelle prose historique et fictionnelle, et cette tentative constitue le cadre thématique de cette conférence.

Les participants de la première session plénière, intitulée *Langues, Littératures, Cultures canadiennes,* rendent compte des différentes images du moi et de l'autre dans la littérature et la culture canadiennes. Dans sa communication «L'image de l'écrivain dans *L'Emprise* de Gaétan Brulotte», Jelena Novaković examine le rapport entre le moi et l'autre dans la littérature québécoise contemporaine, en prenant pour objet d'étude la figure de l'écrivain dans le roman de Brulotte. Dans ce roman, dont le héros est un écrivain à la recherche de son personnage, l'écriture se transforme en une exploration de la réalité et en une investigation de soi-même, mais aussi en sujet principal à travers lequel se dessine le rapport de l'auteur aux problèmes littéraires et artistiques (le rapport de l'écrivain à ses personnages, le rapport de l'art et de la vie, de l'écriture et de l'action, les procédés littéraires, l'intertextualité, la fonction de l'écriture) et la position de l'écrivain dans la société (l'altérité, la marginalité, la solitude), pour exprimer, en abyme, une poétique romanesque qui rend compte de la situation du roman canadien contemporain.

La communication de Jana Javorčiková "Canadian Identity through Literature: On 'Canadianness' of Margaret Atwood's Fiction" examine comment le paysage et la position du Canada contribuent à la formation de l'identité canadienne, en essayant de lier sa propre expérience de l'identité slovaque aux symboles traditionnels et modernes du Canada présentés dans les romans et les contes de M. Atwood. Le point d'interrogation que Vesna Lopičić met à la fin du titre de sa communication "The Power of Ethnic Stereotype: Reconnecting or Disconnecting?" est très significatif. Elle analyse, à partir de la conception barthienne du mythe comme d'une image simplifiée, souvent illusoire, que des groupes humains élaborent ou acceptent au sujet d'un individu ou d'un groupe et qui joue un rôle déterminant dans leur appréciation, le numéro du magazine montréalais *Maisonneuve*, publié en hiver 2008, qui contient un dossier avec les textes et les photographies de la Serbie, fait par Roger Lemoyne. Le titre du dossier "La Serbie, triste sud" annonce le message qui est contenu dans les photographies faites lors du voyage de Lemoyne à travers la Serbie et qui se présente comme l'expression d'une stéréotypie négative que l'auteure de l'article se propose de déconstruire par la force de son argumentation. Le texte de Dragan Prole "Philosophy of Integral Human: McLuhan's Critique of the Guttenberg Era and the Hope in the New Media" confronte les thèses fondamentales de l'avant-garde et des anti-utopies aux idées de Marshal McLuhan sur les relations entre l'aliénation et les médias. La considération des deux théories des médias dans le contexte de la stratégie de l'avant-garde et de l'anti-utopie semble judicieuse étant donné que les nouveaux médias de masse ont une grande influence sur l'opinion publique, qu'on reconnaît souvent comme source d'aliénation. Après avoir déterminé les limites des croyances optimistes de McLuhan que les nouveaux médias audio-visuels contribueraient à la création d'un nouveau type de l'homme total, l'auteur souligne la modernité des idées de McLuhan sur le contrôle des médias.

Les participants de la seconde session plénière, intitulée *Identité, Disciplinarité, Contrôle*, s'occupent de la culture culinaire canadienne contemporaine, de l'éco-

nomie, de la politique et du droit. Dans la première communication, "Food And Identity in An Adoptive Country", Irina Perianova montre que la nourriture et les repas, comme tous les autres modèles culturels, sont l'expression des spécificités culturelles. Le symbolisme de la nourriture traditionnelle fait partie du système de valeurs des Canadiens qui vivent dans différentes régions du Canada ; certaines sortes de nourriture se présentent comme des icônes nationales et comme des éléments constitutifs de l'identité nationale. C'est le capital culturel important dans un monde qui est de plus en plus multiculturel. Perianova montre aussi comment l'idée d'authenticité marque l'imagination des aventuriers culinaires et souligne le rôle de la nourriture de fête, qu'on consomme d'habitude avec les amis intimes et les membres de la famille, dans la formation des identités ethniques contemporaines. Le texte d'Alpar Lošonc "Global Political Economy From Canadian Perspective" prend pour le point de départ les conceptions du politologue canadien éminent, Stephen Gill, qui se rapportent à la dynamique de l'économie politique internationale. Le texte examine, d'une part, le soi-disant prince postmoderne par lequel Gill décrit la structure de la gestion dans le cadre de l'économie politique internationale et, d'autre part, le régime du néolibéralisme disciplinaire en tant que mécanisme d'un pouvoir géoéconomiquement installé. Comme le constate Lošonc, la théorie de Gill se présente comme une des plus grandes contributions à la conpréhension des processus complexes de la globalisation. Dans sa communication "Corporate Governance in Canada: The Recent Changes and The Best Practice", Predrag Dedeić rend compte des systèmes compliqués d'instruments légaux et financiers de surveillance et de stimulations du marché. L'auteur montre comment ce système réussit à mettre en équilibre différents intérêts provenant de différents facteurs d'influence intérieurs et extérieurs et souligne l'importance des changements récents de la gestion corporative au Canada, qui sont le résultat d'une coopération entre les corps régulatifs, le gouvernement, l'université et l'industrie. La communication de Slobodan Pajović et Andrijana Golubović"The Place of Latin America in Canadian Foreign Policy" est une analyse géo-politique. Les auteurs considèrent que la tradition de l'internationalisme dans la politique extérieure du Canada offre un cadre approprié à l'intérieur duquel on peut situer les changements de sa politique envers l'Amérique latine. La conclusion en est que, dans les affaires inter-américaines, le rôle du Canada a évolué: du spectateur distancié, ayant pourtant certains intérêts économiques importants, il est devenu le véritable partenaire de l'Amérique latine. Cette position est marquée par un dialogue politique dynamique qui suppose un niveau d'autonomie du Canada (surtout par rapport aux États Unis) dans sa politique envers l'Amérique latine. La communication de Darko Simović, sous le titre "Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism", met en relief le fait que le Canada est l'exemple d'une fédération assimétrique dès sa constitution en 1867. La raison principale de l'assimétrie du fédéralisme canadien est le besoin de protéger les groupes minoritaires, les francophones à l'intérieur du Canada et les anglophones au Québec. L'auteur suit l'évolution du fédéralisme canadien de ses débuts au moment actuel afin de déterminer les directions de son futur développement. Cet examen aboutit à la conclusion que l'assimétrie du système fédéral est une bonne voie pour faire subsister le Canada et pour la préserver des tentatives futures du Québec de faire sécession.

Les participants des sections *L'identité canadienne* et *La littérature canadienne et ses interprétations* examinent le problème de la diversité dans la littérature et la culture canadiennes et, dans se cadre, l'identité culturelle de l'émigration serbe. Dans son article "The Power of Words in (Re) Connecting Through Diversity", Radojka Vukčević fait un parallèle entre deux recueils d'essais: *Strange Things* de Margaret Atwood et *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Literature* de Stephen Henighan. Ce qui (re)lie ces deux auteurs, c'est le pouvoir des mots qui montre d'une manière „étrange" comment „les mots renient le monde" et qui unissent les aspects multiples de l'expérience canadienne. La communication de Tanja Cvetković "'How Should I Read These?' First National Voices in Canadian Literature" est centrée sur la littérature des populations autochtones du Canada, sur sa classification, son assimilation et sa position dans le cadre des principaux courants de la littérature canadienne. L'auteure y examine aussi le problème de l'appropriation de la voix de la population autochtone et le problème que pose l'insistance de certains écrivains et lecteurs allogènes sur la perspective autochtone. L'identification trop facile du lecteur allogène, l'incompréhension des allusions historiques ou culturelles, l'ignorance de la présence ou des propriétés des genres autochtones et l'application des standards esthétiques impropres aboutit à l'assimilation des autochtones. La contribution de Milena Kostić "Intercultural Sensitivity: Serbian Diaspora in Canada" présente les résultats de son exploration des "histoires orales" de la première génération des immigrants serbes au Canada, faite à Toronto, en juillet 2008. Elle examine différentes raisons de la migration serbe au Canada, ainsi que différentes manières d'adaptation aux nouvelles conditions de vie, en mettant l'accent sur les différences culturelles. Dans son article "Identifying Canadian Literature: One Possible definition", Snežana Moretić-Mićić examine différentes tentatives de définir la vraie littérature canadienne qui caractérisent la critique littéraire dans les années 1970, ce qui n'est pas un hasard et ce qui va de pair avec la progression du nationalisme politique canadien. En découvrant les thèmes communs, tels que l'isolation, la sauvagerie et le Grand Nord Blanc, les critiques les considèrent comme des expressions authentiques d'une expérience spécifiquement canadienne. Cependant, comme le constate l'auteure, tous les textes canadiens n'entrent pas si facilement dans les grilles analytiques. Il y en a beaucoup qui résistent à une classification simplificatrice, ce qui produit la fissure dans l'homogénéité imposée à un corpus de différents ouvrages. La variété des ouvrages d'auteurs canadiens est le testament de leur diversité. Les décrire simplement comme "canadiens" est trop réducteur pour être significatif. Dans son texte "Personal Attempt at Integrating Cultural Diversity – the Example of Eva Hoffman", Nadežda Stojković analyse le roman autobiographique *Lost in Translation* d'Eva Hoffman, qui y décrit sa vie en Pologne, au Canada et aux États Unis comme une recherche de l'identité personnelle d'un immigrant. Le Canada se présente comme le pays où elle apprend comment venir à bout avec les différences entre sa culture d'origine et la culture de sa nouvelle patrie, comment intégrer ces deux cultures dans un tout cohérent et stable. L'article de Maja Ćuk "(Re) Connecting through Our True Stories: Immigrant Identities in Silvija Jestrović's Literary Works" examine les oeuvres d'une jeune écrivaine canadienne, Silvija Jestrović, en s'occupant surtout du concept de l'identité culturelle, du processus

de migration des Serbes au Canada et du développement de leur littérature dans ce pays. Dans son drame *Not My Story* et son essai „Playwright between Languages", Silvija Jestrović se propose d'attirer l'attention sur la situation défavorable des écrivains et des artistes migrants au Canada, qui doivent s'adapter à un nouveau milieu culturel, qui leur est étranger, en développant de nouvelles approches littéraires et de nouvelles identités. L'article de Vladislava Gordić-Petković "Getting at the Kernel of Canadianess: Douglas Coupland's *Souvenir of Canada*" considère le livre de Coupland comme une contribution à toutes les causes canadiennes, traitant des thèmes très variés, des réserves indigènes aux écuelles françaises pour céréales. D'après l'auteure de l'article, il n'est pas clair si Coupland, en essayant de (re)contruire l'identité canadienne, s'efforce de créer une image bizarre du Canada en la présentant comme un monde parallèle qui n'est pas sans rappeler celui de *La Guerre des étoiles*, ou se moque simplement des mythes nationaux du Canada. Pourtant, *Souvenir of Canada* n'est pas une étude culturelle, mais un règlement de comptes tout à fait personnel, à la fois sentimental et ironique. Coupland s'en tient à des particules de la réalité, soigneusement choisies et longuement élaborées, en exprimant sa propre vision de la patrie. Ses souvenirs révèlent les faits culturels qui restent d'habitude cachés, inconnus ou considérés comme insignifiants. L'article de Beilana Dojčinović-Nešić "Lady Bruton's Timely Plot: Modernism, Imperialism and Canada" examine les significations de l'impérialisme et du colonialisme à l'époque moderne pour montrer comment le Canada est représenté dans le roman et avec quels objectifs artistiques et politiques. Du point de vue de Virginia Woolf dans *Mrs. Dalloway*, le Canada apparaît comme une utopie transformée en cauchemar. Par ce retournement paradoxal, le Canada reste pour l'Europe et la civilisation européenne fatalement blessé par sa propre incapacité à reconnaître le danger des rêves impérialistes.

Les participants des sections *Idéologie / Littérature* et *Littérature / Histoire / Langue* s'occupent surtout de la littérature québécoise qu'ils considèrent dans plusieurs de ses aspects et en abordant différents thèmes, tels que l'engagement de l'écrivain, l'écriture féminine, le multiculturalisme, l'écriture migrante, le problème de l'identité, le problème linguistique. Marcel Voisin présente l'engagement littéraire et social de Pierre Baillargeon, romancier et essayiste des années 1940: ayant vécu et travaillé en France et nourri d'humanisme européen, Baillargeon se dit «d'Amérique et de France» et apparaît comme un précurseur de la Révolution tranquille au Québec des années soixante ("Pierre Baillargeon, penseur de la liberté"). L'objet d'étude de Ljiljana Matić est Daniel Danis, dramaturge en vogue qui oppose le monde rural sur le point de disparaître à un monde où le progrès technologique glorifie plus les machines que les êtres humains et qui peint l'homme tout proche de la nature, avec ses besoins charnels, son admiration envers la force brute et brutale et ses élans vers les cieux, en quête des valeurs archaïques rêvées et perdues dans notre monde industrialisé ("Daniel Danis, chantre québécois de la nature").

Les communications de Katarina Melić, Branka Geratović et Jelena Antić sont centrées sur les changements qui ont obligés la société québécoise dans les

années 70 à redéfinir la position et le rôle des femmes et de leur rendre possible de prendre la parole, jusqu'alors déniée, mais aussi sur les difficultés qui s'opposent à toute tentative de s'affranchir des préjugés et de changer de mentalité dans une société traditionnelle. Les objets de leurs études sont les écrivaines de cette nouvelle génération qui refusent à se soumettre à l'écriture traditionnelle masculine. Katarina Melić analyse le roman *Maryse* (1983) de Francine Noël, où l'auteure expose la condition féminine au Québec et examine les différentes relations qu'une femme entretient avec la société, les hommes, les autres femmes. A travers l'expérience de Maryse, qui prend part activement aux mutations qui se produisent vers la fin du XX^{e} siècle et d'objet devient sujet, Noël montre comment cette opération se fait par le biais du langage, dont la prise de possession permet à la jeune femme de comprendre qui elle est et de s'intégrer à la société en tant que sujet égal ("Discours de femmes*: Maryse* de Francine Noël"). Branka Geratović examine "Le Métaféminisme d'Anne Hébert", écrivaine qui s'intègre sans la moindre difficulté au renouveau de l'écriture au féminin, mais qui établit une certaine critique des idéologies absolutistes des années 1960 et 1970, où la révolution sexuelle encourageait l'expérimentation de l'amour libre et proclamait l'inutilité de la fidélité, tandis que Jelena Antić aborde le féminisme de cette écrivaine d'un point de vue thématique. Dans son article "Comment la figure de 'l'Ange du Foyer' traverse les romans d'Anne Hébert *Kamouraska* et *Les Fous de Bassan*", elle démontre, en étudiant la métaphore de «l'Ange du Foyer» qui traverse ces deux romans, le lourd poids des contraintes imposées par la société clérico-patriarcale du Québec dans les années soixante: tout en essayant de transgresser l'ordre établi, les personnages féminins d'Anne Hébert n'arrivent pas à se débarrasser de leur rôle de l'Ange du Foyer parce qu'elles-mêmes ne peuvent pas renoncer aux stéréotypes de la société conformiste.

Trois communications sont centrées sur l'écriture migrante et le problème de l'identité dans une société où les immigrés occupent une place prépondérante et qui se veut multiculturelle. Il s'agit des écrivains qui, dans leur entreprise de création littéraire, acceptent la langue de leur nouveau pays, mais puisent dans la mémoire de leur enfance. Dans sa communication "La Négociation de(s) l'identité(s) dans les romans de Dany Laferrière", Delia Georgesku analyse le rapport entre la mémoire et l'invention / la négociation du moi dans deux romans de l'écrivain québécois d'origine haïtienne, Dany Laferrière, *L'Odeur du café* (1991) et *Je suis un écrivain japonais* (2008), pour conclure que cet écrivain opte pour la modalité d'être québécois "sans se fatiguer", c'est-à-dire pour une solution de survie à l'intérieur de la solution officielle du multiculturalisme. Diana Popović examine "Le Problème de l'identité culturelle dans le roman *L'Ingratitude* de Ying Chen", pour montrer comment, à travers le drame personnel d'une jeune fille chinoise qui refuse de s'adapter au modèle féminin imposé par la tradition chinoise qui a formé ses parents, cette auteure québécoise d'origine chinoise nous incite à réfléchir sur de nombreuses questions métaphysiques. Marija Panić s'occupe de Négovan Rajic, écrivain canadien francophone d'origine serbe. Dans sa communication "L'Espace dans les mondes possibles: la géographie des oeuvres de Négovan Rajic", elle aborde du point de vue de la théorie des mondes possibles

(Doležel, Pavel, Margolin, Ryan, Eco) les pays imaginés qui apparaissent dans ses romans et ses contes et qui se présentent comme des projections de son pays natal, pour découvrir les limites jusqu'auxquelles Rajic étend le monde de ses textes.

Enfin, l'article de Vanja Manić "Les Particularités sémantiques des noms et des verbes en français québécois" a pour objectif d'éclairer quelques changements de la variante du français, en Amérique du nord (le français acadien, le français louisianais, le français québécois), en examinant deux grands groupes lexicaux, les noms et les verbes et en trouvant leurs équivalents en français standard.

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"Killer Canucks": The Role of Aboriginal Epistemology in Joseph Boyden's Great War Novel *Three Day Road*

In the last few years, Canadian critics such as Laura Smyth Groening have observed that while Canadian writers have traditionally been "obsessed with history" (2004, 16), "First Nations writers... have been leery of period pieces" (16) perhaps because, as aboriginal writer Tom King observes, "they have not yet discovered ways to make history their own" (1990, xii). Herb Wyile, too, notes that although "the last few decades have seen a proliferation of revisionist historical fiction and historical fiction about previously neglected or marginalized histories" (6), there has been an "absence of historical novels by native writers" (2002, xv). Wyile then posits that one reason for this lack "may be that so much psychic energy has been spent on breaking the dominant culture's association of native people with the past that stressing contemporary existence has been first and foremost a decolonizing literary strategy" (2002, xvi), but "given the dominant culture's continued ignorance concerning the significance of the historical context of land claims, the effect of residential schools on cultural practices and family structures, and the question of self-government, the past is bound to become more prominent as a territory to which native writers turn" (xvii). His prediction has proven accurate, as native writers such as Thomson Highway, Basil H. Johnston, and Richard Wagamese have recently confronted the destructive relationship between aboriginals and the residential schools in drama, memoir, and fiction. In 2005, Metis (Irish, Scots, Cree/Ojibway) writer Joseph Boyden also helped fill in the gaps by producing an award-winning Great War historical novel, *Three Day Road*, which documents the devastating impact of the residential school on individuals and families.[1] Boyden draws attention to "previously neglected or marginalized histories" by telling the story of two Cree friends—Elijah Weesegeechak and Xavier Bird--from Moose Factory, Ontario, who become superb scouts and snipers during the Great War. The friends volunteer in 1915 and fight with the (fictional) Southern Ontario Rifles at some of the Western Front's most atrocious battles such as Vimy and Passchendaele until near war's end in 1918.

[1] In "Pushing Out the Poison," Boyden tells Wyile that some aboriginals who were victims of the residential school experience went on to lead successful lives. Ed Matatawabin, for example, who eventually became chief of the Fort Albany reserve, wrote a novel titled *Hanaway*, which Boyden claims is "just brilliant" (239).

But Boyden's text emphasizes that because of their education and training in the northern Ontario bush, the friends arrived on the battlefield as such resourceful, resilient, and skilled warriors that they help decide the course of the war.

In the "Acknowledgements" to *Three Day Road*, Boyden writes that he wishes to "honour the Native soldiers who fought in the Great War, and in all wars in which they so overwhelmingly volunteered. Your bravery and skill do not go unnoticed" (353). But shortly after, Boyden confessed to Wyile that "his acknowledgements were more wishful thinking than anything" (2007, 223), since aboriginal contributions to war have "gone unnoticed." Although Canadians pay tribute to the sacrifices of the 600,000 women and men who served their country during the Great War (and other wars as well) every Remembrance Day (November Eleventh), we tend to overlook that included in this figure are thousands of treaty Indians who, encouraged by their government, joined the armed forces and went to fight in foreign lands. In part, Canadians can be excused for their collective ignorance, because neither the Indian Department nor any other branch of the Canadian government kept accurate records of aboriginal enlistment figures. Historian L. James Dempsey suggests that "during World War I more than 3,500 Indians enlisted for active service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force," a figure which "represents approximately one-third of the Indian male population age resident in Canada" (1999, 17), but a recent *Globe and Mail* article estimates that the numbers of aboriginal recruits may "have ranged from 4,000-7,500 during the First World War and about 4,000 during the Second World War (2005, "Belgians," A10). Historian Jonathan F. Vance also notes that even though aboriginals were at the time "wards of the government" (1997, 245), they "gave generously to the Canadian Patriotic Fund," and had the "highest enlistment rate of any ethnic community in the country, including English Canadians" (246). (Those from Western Canada, Dempsey observes, also "suffered casualties at a rate greater than that of the non-Indian Canadian soldiers who fought overseas" [84]).

Since many aboriginals lived in remote areas of the country and treaty premises exempted them from conscription, these high enlistment figures—which continued through 1916-18, when non-native enlistment was declining (Dempsey 83)--may seem puzzling. But according to James K. Bartleman, many natives joined up because they wished "to show allegiance to the Crown, to display solidarity with their fellow Canadians, and most importantly, to defend a liberty they did not yet have in Canada…. Their dream was that they would become equal members of Canadian society" (2005, A19).[2] Brock Pitawanakwat adds that aboriginals were eager to enlist because

[2] See Dempsey's comments that aboriginal soldiers not only received little recognition for their contributions to the war effort, they also lost many of the rights they had enjoyed prior to the war (83-4). Boyden's text underscores this mistreatment when "Peggy" tells Xavier and Elijah that, in spite of doing much of the "nasty work," "if [they] return home, [they] will be treated like pieces of shit once more" (265). Boyden also tells Wyile that when "Peggy" got back to his reserve, the Indian agent refused to loan him money to buy horses, claiming that "Peggy" couldn't be trusted (Wyile, 2007, 226).

> [a]t the outbreak of World War I, [they] were socially and economically destitute. The loss of their traditional lifestyle and the decline of the fur trade left many Natives in poverty. Furthermore, the institution of the Federal Reserve Policy left them alienated, divided and unable to communicate with other Indigenous communities…. [M]any enlisted in order to escape from the isolation, the poverty, and the monotony of the reserve. (2004, 1)

Boyden has his own theories about why so many natives should have volunteered to serve in a war thousands of miles from home, in a country his central character Xavier admits he knows nothing about and could scarcely identify on a map (12). He tells Wyile that "a lot of times Native men were basically lied to. Their Indian agent would tell them they had to go, even though this was before conscription" (2007, 223). Boyden also informs Donna Bailey Nurse that the years 1914, '15, and '16 were "a very low, low point for native people. They had been forced onto the reserves not so long before. They had lost everything. They had lost touch with what they were … which often involved a warrior tradition" (2005, 17), a loss the "real-life" heroic sniper figure Francis Pegahmagabow, who makes a cameo appearance in the text, attests to when he tells Xavier that "`There are more Anishnabe than you might guess who wander these battlefields. We all want to be warriors again'" (264). In addition, during an interview with Amy Steele, Boyden further points out that aboriginal men enlisted for the same reason that

> "any young man volunteers to go to war—the excitement, the adventure, the travel. They don't know the real horrors that they're about to face. But … a lot of native men had [also] been kind of emasculated, being put on reserves and told not to speak their own language, practice their own religion (or) culture anymore, and a lot was taken from them. It was a chance,' says Boyden, `to kind of retake something that had been taken away from them." (2005, 19)

Although Boyden asserts that the Ontario Cree were not a "particularly warrior society" (Wyile, 2007, 231), he does suggest that the impulse to be a warrior was so strong that the missionaries who indoctrinated Elijah with Christian and British values during his lengthy stay at the residential school failed to eradicate his desire to fight.

Boyden underscores the importance of the warrior tradition by sending Xavier and Elijah off to war in 1915 and not earlier perhaps because, according to Dempsey, the Indian Department "reluctantly allowed Indians to enlist" in 1914; by 1915, "it sanctioned individual efforts to try and recruit them; by 1917 it had become directly involved in promoting their recruitment" (17). Ironically, as Dempsey also points out, "[i]f before the war it had worked to eradicate the warrior ethic of [western Canadian] Indians, it now tried in the second, third and fourth years of the 'Great War` to promote it" (17). Moreover, by sending the friends off to war together, Boyden was following an established pattern: "as part of the warrior tradition, young boys chose partners, or comrades, with whom they would go to war. They were expected to travel together, and to protect each

other in times of danger (Dempsey, 5). Although journalists at the time depicted men like Elijah and Xavier as "true products of the wilderness" (Vance, 248), the Canadian public chose to believe that the Anglo-Saxon men who volunteered for overseas duty were "healthy" and "vigorous" outdoorsmen who were "in harmony with their natural surroundings" (Vance, 138). Reality did not meet the myth, though, because by 1918, less than a quarter of the men who had served in the CEF were farmers, hunters, fishermen, and lumbermen: the rest were city dwellers and white-collar workers (Vance, 161).[3] In Boyden's novel, then, it is Elijah and Xavier who are the best equipped to deal with the harsh conditions of war, for as indigenous critic Ida Swan observes, although life in the Ontario bush was "not easy," the Northern Cree had "learned to adapt and make life meaningful according to the teachings of nature" (cited in Stiffarm, 1998, 54). Thus while non-native soldiers complain bitterly about the "days of cold, relentless, pelting rain" that lead to water-filled trenches and then often to pneumonia, skin irritations, or trench foot, Xavier and Elijah do little grumbling because they have learned how to live "in cold rain for days on end" and how "to navigate the mud" (183): they also ward off trench foot by wearing moccasins instead of the army-issued heavy thigh-high rubber boots, which nevertheless still "fill with water" (183). In the main, the aboriginal friends "focus [their] energy on staying alive and finding the little comforts" (183).

Boyden's Xavier is also an ideal warrior because he has been raised by his Aunt Niska, a woman who has refused to capitulate to white man's ways, but has instead retreated into the muskeg, where she teaches her nephew how to survive in the "old ways," which aboriginal critics Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey describe as follows:

> Aboriginal children, regarded as the very future of their societies, were considered integral members of the family who learned by listening, watching and carrying out tasks suited to their age, sex, and social standing.... The economic and social survival of indigenous societies depended on the transmission of a vast amount of spiritual and practical knowledge from elders to that young, through an exclusively oral tradition. (1997, 52)

Hence Niska teaches the six-year-old Xavier that the best way to become an excellent shooter, to "find and aim at his targets quickly," is to "keep his eyes open" (75). Like Fournier and Crey, Swan also stresses the extent to which children were involved in the life of the community, but she adds that "[t]hrough observation, participation, experience and practice children learned the skills, beliefs, values and norms of their culture, including the understanding that other life processes in the natural world were essential to their survival" (Swan 51-52).[4] Thus Niska

[3] Boyden, too, ironically seems to uphold the myth, as Xavier observes that his battalion is comprised of "a bunch of farmers and labourers with a couple of bush Indians thrown in" (94).

[4] The Friesens also note that while there was diversity among First Nations people at the time of European contact, there was also "some measure of universality among their ritualistic enactments and religious outlooks" (59).

teaches Xavier to have reverence for the earth and to live in tune with the cycles of nature. Moreover, according to John W. Friesen and Virginia Lyons Friesen, aboriginal children were also taught to live "harmoniously with creatures of the land, sea, and air or, as the Sioux would say, "`all our relations'" (2002, 68), a tenet Niska also imparts to Xavier. The Friesens also write that

> [t]he oral tradition was not only a means by which to transmit cultural knowledge to succeeding generations, it was a way of preserving and interpreting truth for a specific time and place as well as for mediating elaborate ritualistic processes. This was not necessarily an uncomplicated procedure. By participating in ritualistic processes, powerful religious and moral sensitibilities were evoked in the consciousness of the participants. (64-65)

Niska thus teaches Xavier about the importance of the shaking tent, the sweat lodge, how to divine for game, and how a band copes when one of their members goes "windigo"; she also imparts fundamental morals and ethics--that it is wrong to steal; that he must never use "anger in negative ways, for to do that was to enter a spiral near impossible to escape" (83); and that he must kill only for sustenance. She also imparts that aboriginal values incorporate reciprocity and cooperation, and explains that the Cree generously taught the *wemistikoshiw* how to stave off hunger and cold (44-45).

Swan observes as well that "the animals, plants, waters and the sky participated in teaching the people how to read signs accurately as a means of survival" (cited in Stiffarm, 1997, 49); correspondingly, Niska teaches Xavier that all living phenomena is a potential teacher (202), the kind of instruction that helps him become a superb marksman. Xavier wins a shooting competition at army training camp in Ontario, for example, because he views his moving target, a balloon, as a "goose floating on wind currents," and hits it easily (96). Niska also teaches the five-year-old Xavier how to "walk invisibly" when tracking moose, especially at night, a skill he passes onto Elijah. These skills prove invaluable once the friends volunteer for the army. When asked to go out on patrol in the forest near the training camp in Ontario, the friends, who operate in the dark as if they are "owls or wolves" (92), and so quick that the others cannot keep up. Once they reach the battlefront, they are often asked to go as advance scouts onto the battlefield, alone and at night, in order to detect enemy movement, the kind of work which also requires nerves of steel.

Initially, however, upon arrival at the front, Xavier becomes disoriented by "all of the movement surging around him" and temporarily fears that he has lost his sense of direction (13). His confusion is short lived, however, because as Fred Gaffens notes, aboriginal soldiers habitually observed "wind, sun, moon, stars, landmarks, memory of country traversed," to maintain direction (89);[5] accordingly, when the troops become lost after the first battle Elijah and Xavier partici-

[5] For descriptions of other characteristics which rendered Natives such valuable scouts and snipers, see Gaffen's Appendix A (89-90).

pate in, they are the only ones who can guide the men back to their trenches. And after a short time in France, one of their officers, Corporal Thompson, who has closely observed the Native friends' talents, handpicks them to learn "the art of the sniper" (78), but neither requires instruction on how to "blend into [the] surroundings" (79)—a skill crucial to the snipers' success--because they have already perfected the art of concealment by having "buil[t] goose blinds at home" which, "if not well constructed," will cause the geese to "avoid the hunter" (79). In fact, so good is Xavier at constructing his first covered nest that even he cannot spot it from fifty yards away (80). One of their officers, Corporal Thompson, is "amazed by how long [the native soldiers] can lie still, despite the lice and without falling asleep, how [they] can spot movement that he is not able to see" (88). Elijah tells Thompson that the friends are skilled snipers because "`hunting is what [we] have done all our] lives'" (88), and earlier, Xavier had claimed this is the kind of work they are "made for" (79). Thus before long, the native friends have built themselves "a reputation as a [superb] sniping and scouting team" (149).

Although Xavier takes pride in possessing such valuable skills, he nonetheless finds some aspects of military conduct disturbing perhaps because, as Boyden tells Wylie, "conflict with Native people involves a defence of their land or their area"; thus it was quite a "conundrum" for Native persons "to fight in a completely different country for reasons that [they] wouldn't typically fight for" (Wyile, 2007, 231). Correspondingly, taught by his Aunt Niska to kill only for sustenance or survival, Xavier is horrified when the first dead body he encounters is that of a "small boy, naked and bloated in the sun, a great chunk of his head gone" (13). Where is the boy's mother, he queries, and what could this child possibly have to do with the war? (13). He experiences similar feelings of revulsion when he hears that men have suffered "painful deaths" as a result of gas attacks (77); and then is discomfited when he observes how rapidly soldiers return to "normal" behavior after having witnessed numerous violent deaths[6] (77-8). Xavier is also unable to comprehend how "friendly fire" can occur, and finds the practice of officers shooting their own soldiers for the "slightest disobedience" (13), disquieting.[7]

Xavier is further outraged when he and the other men are forced to follow the orders of Lieutenant Breech (who quickly becomes known as Bastard Breech) when some, such as the directive to wear ill-fitting, head-ache inducing gas masks for hours serve no purpose, and others, such as the command to stand at attention all day, much of it in the pouring rain (while Breech remains indoors) without sustenance and struggling under the weight of heavy packs, border on the cruel and sadistic. Xavier's frustration may stem in part from what John W. and

[6] Xavier's comments are reminiscent of Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* (1928. Willowdale, ON: Firefly, 2002). In this novel, after a soldier is killed, the men in his company immediately divide up his portions of food, because as one soldier remarks, "`[He] can't eat anymore'" (48).

[7] In his First World War novel *Broken Ground* (Toronto: McClelland, 1998), Jack Hodgins also highlights the cruelty of the practice, one not carried out on Australian soldiers (100).

Virginia Lyons Friesen describe as the aboriginal approach to work, which "originated in a present-oriented, survival-centered society" (2002, 50): they write that

> When the circumstances of hunting and gathering called for hard work, it was done, but there was no concept of holding a job in order to be "doing something" or as a means of validating one's existence. Work was undertaken to fulfill a specific task or to satisfy a pressing need, nothing more. (50-51)

Even the very notion of having to take orders is foreign to Xavier, for as military historian Jaime Mishibinijima observes, aboriginal leadership styles and military ethos are an "awkward fit": the former reinforces "identity through values-based traditions," the latter through "hierarchy and the promotion of a military identity based on rank and promotion" (2007, 23-4). Although Xavier deems military hierarchy imprudent, on the day in question, once the rain stops and the men "cheer" when they are ordered to "begin marching" (15), Xavier realizes the officers are "crafty as wolves" because this is "not an easy accomplishment. This army orders itself very carefully" (15). From that point on, Xavier determines to figure out how the war works, and hence puts the lie to what military historian C. H. Mantle refers to as "the stereotypical image (and myth) of the soldier as a blind follower, unquestioningly obedient to those set above him" (2006, 7). Moreover, historians Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein write that, upon enlistment,

> A soldier forfeited privacy, dignity, and autonomy. Obey orders was the general principle; ask questions later—or never—was the army's rule. Drill, with sergeants bellowing personal abuse, attempted to turn a soldier into an obedient automaton. (1989, 49)

Soldiers obeyed, suggests Mantle, because "they both feared punishment and had been drilled to follow automatically" (8). Thus although these historians agree that the military demands—and gets--"discipline and obedience," Mantle notes that "such comments negate any sense of individual agency" (2006, 8).

But as a result of Niska's training, Xavier exercises "individual agency." His behavior is typical, for as the Friesens write, aboriginal children were taught to be independent long before European contact, in what amounted to a kind of "learning on the job" (2002, 33); moreover, First Nations student[s] in pre-colonial times were committed "to a lifetime of learning" (2002, 78). (Indigenous critic Jane Harp also notes that the Ojibway and many other tribes "used the circle for the teaching and learning because it has no beginning and no end" [cited in Stiffarm, 1998, 71]). In his desire to understand how the military operates, Xavier exercises independent initiative and begins by comparing what is familiar—life in the northern Ontario bush—to the unfamiliar environment of war. Initially shocked by the ugliness of the craters at St. Eloi, for example, he realizes that they resemble the "devastated and pocked" tundra he knows, which is "so empty of any vegetation that it's impossible to imagine anything once grew here" (61). He further observes that "the guns in the south [which] cause the sky there to glow and

pulse" resemble the "northern Lights" (90). Most significantly, Xavier attempts to "learn" the sounds of the big and small guns (17) by comparing them to familiar noises in the natural world: for example, some guns—louder than anything [he] thought anything could be"—resemble "thunder or waterfalls" (13); shells rumble "like thunder threatening to bring rain" (78); and "sixty-pounders" "beat[] for days like the biggest drums" (90). These comparisons take Xavier only so far, however—and some prove even injurious, as he discovers when he dives "like an otter" into the trenches when first fired upon (31). Ultimately, because he knows so little about military technology, tactics, or procedures, he realizes he must rely upon the teachings of officers Corporal Thompson and Sergeant McCaan.[8]

Seasoned and knowledgeable from having "been in the trenches since almost the first day" (28), Thompson, like Xavier, "knows all the sounds" of the bombs and shells, but unlike Xavier, Thompson knows how to detect "the most damaging" (26) or the most "deadly accurate and efficient" (26), and then, crucially, how to respond. Corporal Thompson also helps his men become accustomed to working in the dark (28), a skill Xavier already possesses, but he knows nothing about how to avoid temporary blindness when a "flare's up" (29), for example, a tactic Thompson teaches. Among numerous other survival strategies, Thompson also demonstrates how to camouflage faces and other exposed skin by rubbing charcoal on it (61), a practice Xavier jokingly refers to as "a *wemistikowshiw* smudging ceremony" (127). Although Xavier occasionally considers Thompson's decisions "mad," he nevertheless places his trust in the officer because he knows he "must have his reasons" (65), and also because he approves of Thompson's methods of instruction, which resemble Niska's. Thompson stresses the need to rely upon instinct (68), and he often remains silent and expects his men to learn by watching, or to practice what aboriginals term "modeling." Moreover, just as Niska imparted her knowledge without ever resorting to corporal punishment, Thompson treats his men with respect: he is unfailingly polite, refers to them as "gentlemen," never judges them, and allows them to make their own decisions on the battlefront. In so doing, Thompson appears to follow traditional aboriginal practice, for according to the Friesens, "[d]irect confrontation and negative exchanges were generally avoided…. The fact is [that the aboriginal] live-and-let-live philosophy reflects an attitude of non-interference, for to interfere is to be discourteous, threatening, or even insulting" (2002, 55). Thus Xavier rapidly concludes that he should "listen carefully" to Thompson (27), because he "is very much an Indian" (61); he is "quiet," "stays to himself," and he is an "excellent teacher, patient and calm" (79). Most significantly, Thompson also leads by example and often accompanies Xavier and Elijah onto the battlefront, where the three "work well together" (128).

Sergeant McCaan is another fine instructor who offers much useful information about the rituals of war such as the "stand-tos" at dawn and sunset, when "both

[8] Although Priscila Uppal has commented in "2005 Amazon.ca/*Books in Canada* First Novel Award" that the "whites and Christians [in Boyden's text] are essentially destructive and evil" (3), hers is a misreading, for there are several good white men in Boyden's text (*Books in Canada: The Canadian Review of Books* 35.7 [October 2006]: 3-6.)

sides like to attack each other best" (27), and about the pattern of the trenches, when men gather to clean their equipment, repair the trenches, or to collect the dead for the stretcher-bearers (74). McCaan reinforces the importance of knowing how to function in the dark (25) and, like Thompson, he has a firm understanding of the natural world, for he insists his men should "`act like wolves,'" not frightened "`rabbits'" (18). Xavier knows that McCaan's are "perfect words" because they replicate the "law of the bush," which is to "be the hunter and not the hunted" (18). McCaan is also a gentle disciplinarian even when angered (63) and unswervingly sympathetic when his men suffer even the slightest wounds (31). Moreover, during their training in Ontario, McCaan watches the aboriginal friends carefully and without prejudice (62); recognizing they have special talents that will benefit military operations, he obtains permission for them to serve as advance scouts.

At the same time, McCaan is also keenly aware that these missions are dangerous and, like a "worried father" (167), advises the friends to take extra supplies onto the battlefield, because they may not return to safety as soon as they wish (167). He also sounds a precautionary note by telling them not "to go out directly in front of the Canadian line, "for the Canadians have thought up a new strategy called a "creeping barrage" and they "don't want to be caught in front of it when it happens'" (166). (Here, Boyden errs: although Canadians perfected the strategy at Vimy and Courcelette, they did not invent it. The Belgians did.) Eventually, however, McCaan's paternalism takes a terrible toll, for he "carries the burden of each death in his section" (290). Near war's end, and suffering from combat fatigue (290), he hastens his own death by volunteering for a raid that kills him and seriously wounds Thompson (291). After the raid, Xavier is grief stricken because he believes these officers, "the ones who anchored the company" (293-94), made the other cruel and vicious commanders like "Bastard" Breech bearable. Xavier realizes he's come to think of McCaan and Thompson "as [his] relations" (294). Here, Xavier echoes King's phrase, "all my relations," which he defines as "the relationship which humans share with each other, a relationship that is embodied within the idea of community" (xiii). This web of kinship need not consist of blood relations, but may simply be, as Johnson puts it, made up of people who "band together as a family unit for identity, security, and affection" (1988, xiv). Accordingly, Xavier comes to think of these men as his relations because unlike other officers, they never judge their subalterns unfairly, do not expect them to follow orders blindly, and never utter racist remarks. These officers indeed appear to be the aboriginal friends' only "relations," for Xavier receives only one letter from home, and Elijah none. (When the *wemistikoshiw* pronounce Elijah's Cree name—Weesageechak--they make it sound [to Xavier's ears] like a "longer word for bastard, making his name a name without a family" [143]. Elijah is technically not an orphan, however; nor is Xavier. Xavier's mother Rabbit, a "homeguard Indian," is still alive, but he has no contact with her, there is no mention of who his father is, and during the war, becomes under the impression (erroneously) that Niska has died. Elijah's situation mirrors Xavier's: like Xavier, he has no siblings, his mother died when he was a child, and he has never seen his father, who traps for the Hudson's Bay Company.)

Boyden thus draws upon traditional aboriginal epistemology to illustrate how harmonious relationships between officers and their subordinates might have been achieved, and to further highlight the kinds of qualities that might have led to success on the battlefront. He is also the only fiction writer to have produced what might be considered a kind of "military conduct manual." Although Boyden is not the only Canadian writer to depict congenial interactions between superiors and subordinates, for numerous playwrights and novelists have pointed to the kinds of qualities men looked for and admired in their leaders,[9] he is the only one to have provided any serious analysis of "how these qualities were actuated in the context of a hierarchical relationship," a subject which Mantle suggests is almost entirely missing from Canadian historiography, as well (2006, 2). The historian observes that existing studies on leadership have tended to focus on senior figures such as Sir Arthur Currie, the Canadian Corps commander from June 1917 onward, or on a few of his immediate subordinates, or on battalion commanders. He points out, too, that any kind of analysis of leadership at lower levels of command tends to be superficial (3), since Canadian historians have "tended to focus on the attributes and functions expected of a leader, rather than describing how he interacted on a personal level with his superiors, peers, and subordinates" (5).

Most significantly, Mantle notes that when men deemed themselves to have been treated fairly, they were more likely to follow willingly, although when such was not the case, it was possible that they would "soldier less well" (16). Both Elijah and Xavier demonstrate that they are able to "soldier well," in part because McCaan and Thompson have actively encouraged them to play a role in devising strategies and tactics necessary for victory, but also in part because they exercise individual agency. Aware, for example, that the Ross Rifle frequently jams and hence places him and other soldiers in danger, Xavier is pleased when he finds a German Mauser, a much superior weapon, on the battlefield. Moreover, by relying on his aboriginal ability to "read the signs," he deduces that German snipers are successful because the British desire for exactness and orderliness insures that the Hun can easily spot irregularities, whereas the Germans set up their parapets "at odd angles," so they do not give away their soldiers' or sharpshooters' positions (80-81). Xavier also observes that the Germans do not build trenches on flood plains, but erect pillboxes on high ground so they can spot their enemies easily and remain "high and dry" at the same time. And as the war "progresses," both Elijah and Xavier continue to apply skills they have developed in the bush:

[9] In Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed*, and in contemporary novels Timothy Findley's *The Wars*, and Alan Cumyn's *The Sojourner*, as well as in plays such as David French's *Soldier's Heart* and R. H. Thomson's *The Lost Boys*, war is depicted as a degrading experience where powerless soldiers, caught in a war of attrition and led by incompetent, occasionally even cowardly, officers wait among ghastly conditions to be killed: or, while "generals die in bed," ordinary soldiers live and die like animals amongst damp, lice, rats, and disease. By contrast, officers in novels such as Kevin Major's *No Man's Land*, Jack Hodgin's *Broken Ground*, and plays such as Guy Vanderhaeghe's *Dancock's Dance* and Stephen Massicotte's *Mary's Wedding*, officers demonstrate some concern for their subordinates' well being. None of these contemporary works offer any kind of analyses of these relationships, however.

whereas once they learned to think like the animals they were hunting, at war, in combat, they endeavor "to think like the Hun" (104). For example, after one of their mates has been killed by a sniper, Elijah deduces that the Germans have "use[d] the [morning] light to spot [them] and know that all [they] can see of them is covered in shadow" (108). Xavier then debates the logistics, asking questions such as even if they can detect the snipers' positions in the sun, how they will know the "precise" time to fire? After careful examination of Elijah's plan, the latter puts it into practice, and quickly dispatches the "phantom sniper." By putting their heads together in this fashion throughout the novel, the friends also contribute to the success of the fierce battles waged at Vimy and Courcelette. According to Mishibinijima, their behavior is typical, for "the sharing of decision-making through consensus is a common practice in contemporary and traditional Aboriginal leadership. The logical purpose of shared decision-making was rooted in the equality between community members and an acknowledgement that various perspectives and skill sets contribute to good decision-making and survival" (2007, 28).

But Bastard Breech is unwilling to credit the aboriginal friends with good "skill sets." When Elijah attempts to report on their contributions to the victory at Courcelette, for instance, Bastard Breech claims the numbers of kills are "`incredulous'" and refuses to acknowledge them because there was "`no officer there to verify'" (180).[10] When Elijah attempts to defend himself by declaring that he is a "good judge of distance,'" Breech asks, "How many canoe lengths did you say they were from you?'" (180-81). Breech's racist comments are characteristic of the times for, as R. Scott Sheffield writes, Canada was, at the outbreak of war, a "highly racial society" (2007, 60); members of the dominant society "developed varied and sometimes conflicting ideas about racial others," and aboriginals, who were variously depicted as "Indian princesses and lascivious squaws, wise elders and drunk vagabonds" (60), were a "case in point" (60). Military officers drew upon these diverse opinions and

> carried them into their efforts to recruit, train and lead the country's soldiers. What this meant for Aboriginal military service was a shifting contest between conflicting images of the indigene. On the one hand was the favourable impression of Aboriginal men as natural warriors, well prepared for soldiering by their racial attributes and wilderness skills; on the other, the many negative views of a degraded and inferior race. (61)

Thus whereas Thompson and McCaan prudently cultivate the aboriginals' talents, "Bastard" Breech consistently deems Xavier's, in particular, inferior. During the voyage over on the troopship, when a winter gale wounds several horses and Xavier puts them out of their misery by slitting their necks with a knife, Bas-

[10] Boyden tells Wyile that Pegahmagabow, too, was accused of exaggerating his numbers of kills because he did not work with a spotter; he concludes (as do soldiers in his novel) that "Peggy" was an honest man who "had no reason to lie," but was most likely the victim of "jealous officers" ("Pushing" 226).

tard Breech declares Xavier should be "`put up on charges." An unnamed colonel argues, however, that Xavier should be "commend[ed] for valour'" because he "`exhibits the best traits of an officer. The ability of judgment under duress, the will and strength to carry out unpleasant and dangerous duties, decisiveness'" (175-76). After the colonel leaves, Breech hisses that Xavier will "never become an officer" (176), his threat having a basis in historical fact, for Pitawanakwat observes that the Canadian Armed Forces did refuse many Indigenous soldiers a commission, and thus displayed "little respect for their fighting or leadership abilities" (2004, 1). Similarly, Boyden tells Wylie that he suspects that had Peghamagabow been white, he would have received a Distinguished Service Order or a Victoria Cross for his 330 kills (2007, 226). Throughout the novel, although Xavier tries to overcome the perception that he is a "useless bush Indian" (94), he never convinces Breech, who claims that aboriginals excel as scouts only because they have "Indian blood," which is "closer to that of an animal than a man" (92).

While in general, Boyden's text takes a dim view of officers, who are depicted as self-absorbed and lazy (171, 262), Bastard Breech is the worst offender for several reasons, not the least of which is that he concerns himself with trivialities—his appearance, his moustache--but more so because he is condescending, speaking to his men as if they are children; he is also overbearing, demands total obedience, maintains strict control, is unwilling to listen to criticism, and, as I've already pointed out, keeps the men busy for no sound reason. He appears to assume, as Mantle writes of other ineffectual officers, that

> the common soldier would attempt to skirt his duties whenever possible and thus required strict and constant supervision, and by extension, harsh discipline to correct his errant ways should he be negligent. Officers [like Breech] maintained a high degree of separation between themselves and their men, communicating their orders through their NCOs. (2006, 14)

Moreover, while Breech expects his men to reward him with service, discipline, and obedience, he takes no interest in them as individuals or in their well being, either. Unlike Thompson and McCaan, who never raise their voices, Breech either "barks" or "screams" orders at the men (252) and then watches them execute his foolish (and often dangerous) commands with an "odd smile," or a "smirk," or a "sneer" (127). More than once, he sends his men on poorly planned missions, while he himself avoids "front-line activity" (259) as much as possible. Having heard, for example, "reports of increased activity by Fritz" and "wanting to claim a little glory for himself," he orders six men (three too many, Xavier knows) to conduct a trench raid. Predictably, the raid goes wrong and the subordinates pay the price: Elijah is slightly wounded; Thompson is "close to death," and a young private at war for only one week is killed (138-39). When Breech informs the men "only in passing" (303) that Thompson has died, Xavier is shocked by the officer's lack of compassion.

Because Bastard Breech is in command and his orders must not be disobeyed, McCaan and Thompson often find themselves in comprising situations, a situation

which also finds a counterpart in historical fact. According to Desmond Morton, officers like these two "were middle managers, transmitting the often inscrutable and sometimes absurd orders of their superiors; investing them with their own personalities; and convincing soldiers to obey, even at the near-certain cost of their own lives" (1993, 107). Boyden's text addresses, albeit briefly, how McCaan's relationship with his commanding officers plays out. Early in the novel, he is outraged when his men are exposed to friendly fire and "wants to beat" the officer in charge, but he must "hold all his frustration in" (12) because the officer in question is a lieutenant. His difficulties with Breeches' command are more pronounced: after a botched raid, McCaan tries "to take the blame for the raid gone wrong," but everyone knows it was Breech's fault. A few pages later, Breech orders McCaan to move the platoon in a direction he knows is folly, but he dare not protest: Xavier observes that "McCaan's too smart to complain to the officer but his stiff body says how he feels as he listens to the little man" (16); McCaan "grumbles to himself and then, after the little officer has complained, shouts out for us to shoulder our packs: Tiny fucker wants us to march into dangerous land after dark knowing full well we have no goddamn idea where we are. Like fucking virgins into the mouth of a lion" (17). McCaan is correct: the men quickly become lost.

As a result of Bastard Breech's intolerance, over-reliance on authority, lack of compassion for those under his command, and his disdain for aboriginals, Xavier believes he "would make a good teacher at the residential school" (290). This is not the first time Xavier has compared military organization with his residential school experience. While at training camp in Toronto, for example, he notes "how we lined up in rows of soldiers in new uniforms, how we ate and marched together. The barracks were just like the ones in the school of my childhood. We children had lined up just like soldiers to be inspected every morning and evening" (204). Likewise, just as Xavier and other soldiers are threatened with severe punishment for the slightest misdemeanor, children at the residential school are punished for minor offenses. More than once, Sister Magdalene beats Xavier and Elijah until they fall to the ground in pain, all the while chanting that she will "`strike the heathen from thee'" (141). Like Bastard Breech, the nuns offer those under their watch no emotional support: instead of comforting the sad and tearful Elijah when he is clearly grieving over the death of his mother, the nuns grow "angry" and whip him until his body "ache[s] badly" (306). Most destructive, however, is Sister Magdalene's sexual abuse of Elijah. Here, Boyden appears to be creating a link between sexual violence and the overall violence of war, for according to Fournier and Crey, "more forcible sexual assault has been perpetrated on aboriginal children than on the young people of almost any other nation, except during times of war" (116). Moreover, aboriginal critics Rolland D. Chrisjohn and Sherri L. Young estimate that nearly seventy-five percent of all Native children were, at one time or another, attending residential schools. Chrisjohn and Young employ words such as "genocide" (1997, 44) to describe what happened, and stress that "In any intellectually honest appraisal, Indian Residential Schools were genocide' (44). And as Armand Garnet Ruffo concludes, "In no uncertain terms, such violence has been identified as `individual and community dismemberment,' in

which the state apparatus, endorsing the Christian run educational institutions, functions as a kind of cannibalistic force" (2005, 167). Fornier and Crey's assessment that these schools were sites of rape, sexual assault, induced abortion and sexual/psychological abuse has been well documented (27). In the late 1980s, the long-suppressed story of residential schools began to capture attention, and by 1993, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples received 60,000 formal complaints of residential school abuse" (1997, 49).

Both Xavier and his Aunt Niska have spent time in residential schools, but both have been rescued at a young age, before much damage can be done, and taken back to the bush, where they live like their ancestors, existing "on what the land would give and slowly becoming wild like the animals around [them]" (87). Boyden tells Wyile that Xavier's upbringing in the bush helps him get "through the war—not unscathed, by any means, in fact really damaged"—because "he has a grounding in who he is and where he comes from" (2007, 230). Thus Xavier maintains his humanity and has no desire to hurt his German "enemies" (144). He vomits after Xavier kills his first sniper (81), "spends hours" worrying what [he] will do when it is [his] turn to pull his trigger on a man" (105), and although he feels like "an ancestor, an *awawatuk* raider and warrior" when he kills a sniper, he also prays to *Gitchi Manitou* "for many hours on that day and the following day" (207). These prayers help him understand that "what [he does] is for survival" (207). Xavier also thanks the dead whom the men bury in the trench sides if the stretcher-bearers have not yet collected them "for helping to strength the trench line, tell them that even in death they are still helping" (74). Unlike Elijah, who wants only that "`this war will make him into something'" (93)—a military hero or chief of his tribe--Xavier wishes to soldier well so that he (and presumably others of his race) will fit in to the dominant society, no longer be "outsider[s]," but people worthy of "respect" (100).[11] Throughout the war, whenever he feels the need to be "grounded" or to seek guidance from his aboriginal teachings, he builds himself a shaking tent or a sweat.

But as the war grinds on and the Canadians, who are asked to serve as "shock troops" because they have proven to be the only ones to win their battles and as a result are sent to Passchendaele, the site of a horrendously gruesome battle, Xavier becomes increasing depressed by the slaughter and soon reaches the point where "nothing makes sense to [him] anymore, especially the actions of those who move the soldiers about and order them to their deaths" (281). He also becomes increasingly pained by the excesses of Elijah's bloodlust and questions why he and Elijah should be so different. Boyden's comments to Wyile are useful here; he asserts that it is Elijah's lengthy stay at the "insidious" residential school which "feeds into what ends up happening to him and what he ends up doing and, ultimately, into his fate. He isn't grounded in his place or culture, and this

[11] Adrian Hayes claims in *Pegahmagabow: Legendary Warrior, Forgotten Hero*. Huntsville, ON: Fox Meadow, 2003, that "race and colour mattered little in the trenches were men relied upon each other to stay alive from one horrifying battle to the next" (8), Xavier often feels as if he is invisible, a brown "ghost."

ends up being very damaging" (230). In this instance, Boyden would appear to disagree with Mishibinijima, who argues that "[f]or aboriginal people who have a strong hold of their language, traditions, worldviews and social institutions, military life may be too costly" (2007, 29), for it may lead to cultural loss. By contrast, Boyden suggests that it is Xavier's grounding in his place and culture that helps him survive, whereas Elijah's estrangement from native culture destroys him. (One indication of his indoctrination into the white man's way of thinking occurs when, on their way to enlist, Elijah purchases a black suit with a stiff, high white collar, which makes him look like a "preacher" [131]; Xavier, by contrast, expresses his pride in his aboriginal background by selecting a plain red shirt and black trousers, leaving his hair in braids, and wearing moccasins.)

Most tellingly, Xavier recognizes that life in the residential school has taught Elijah "`nothing'" (98). While Xavier refers here to Elijah's lack of skills such as hunting, tracking, and shooting, the comment resonates throughout the text, for two characters who have also attended residential school—Joseph Netmaker and his father—have learned very little, not even how to read and write. As Jerry Wasserman asserts, many aboriginals "came to adulthood possessing neither knowledge of their own language and culture, nor the tools for academic or vocational success, nor even basic socialization and parenting skills" (2005, 4). Their failure to learn may have come about because, as the Friesens argue, "the intent of residential school education was never to fully educate Indian youngsters because if they were too well prepared they would become a threat to dominant society" and hence wish to enter that society's "socio-economic order" (2002, 110). Fournier and Crey, too, argue that aboriginals failed to learn because the instructional methods, which consisted of "strict discipline underscored by physical punishment" (1997, 52-3) differed greatly from those employed by Indigenous people. Harp further insists that young children were devastated "[t]he residential schools systematically discouraged and ridiculed Native languages and practices associated with native culture" (cited in Stiffarm, 1998, 68). She further claims that effects of the residential school system

> also include the loss of Native language, which is a vital link to Native culture. Loss of identity became acute. Psychologically, Native children learned fear, self-hate, humiliation, shame and anger. This suffering manifests itself throughout the First Nations and has a direct impact on alcohol and drug use, suicides, tragic deaths and the general disarray of communities. (cited in Stiffarm, 68)

Although Elijah does not totally lose his capacity to speak Cree, he does learn to speak British "better than the British." While the ability to communicate in the dominant language might seem like a positive acquisition, it results in Elijah's willing occlusion of his own story and gives him a "name without a family." By contrast, neither Xavier nor Niska wish to become proficient in English because they fear the English will possess their names/stories. Xavier "won't give into the army's ways" as easily as Elijah (72), and although he gradually perfects his English, he pretends he knows very little, and when an officer speaks to him, he "look[s] at him

and answer[s] in Cree" (73). But in Elijah's desire to fit into mainstream culture, he also becomes increasingly corrupt. He repeatedly refers to Xavier and Niska as "heathens" and "fucking bush Indians" (151); he makes fun of the smudging ceremony Thompson, McCaan, and Xavier share (127); he tells Bastard Breech that Xavier is "`used to a much more primitive practice of healing'" than the English form of medicine, which he fears (237).. He violates the teachings of indigenous people when he asks Xavier to help him "divine" the shoulder blade of a German to so he can find more of the enemy, and when he builds a sweat lodge, he does so not to seek guidance from the elders, but to disguise his morphine addiction (112). He avails himself of prostitutes and, high on morphine, mounts the "golden crown" of the "leaning virgin" (a statue the Allies symbolically believed protected them from defeat as long as she did not tumble), as a "perfect sniping position." He is "surprised to find he's become hard with the excitement" (165), and after an orgasm, in a darkly comedic moment, enjoys a cigarette. Moreover, Elijah aggrandizes his exploits, but omits the role Xavier has played in their success (31), and is resentful that "Peggy" has more kills than he does (187). Although "Peggy" cautions Elijah to "`think of [him] as his conscience'" (266), his immoral behavior proves he has not developed one. While Xavier longs to return home, Elijah makes the "front" his home as he frequently disobeys orders and goes onto the battlefield, alone and at night, actions for which he could be court-martialed. He demonstrates increasingly that he has no regard for "all my relations," for he callously kills a nest of baby swallows and suffers no remorse when he accidentally kills a child. Xavier, increasingly distressed by Elijah's behavior, realizes that Elijah has "learned to love to kill rather than simply killing to survive" (249), and that he has "learned to take pleasure in killing" (262). The repetition of the word "learning" here returns readers to his residential school education and its many shortcomings, including the ability to control anger (something Niska had cautioned Xavier to do). Although Xavier hates the officers for what they make him do, he does not speak of it, but "just let[s] it fester like trenchfoot" (281), whereas "the blackness of Elijah's anger boils beneath his skin" (312) until it finally erupts. In a fit of rage—a combination of anger and self-loathing--he smashes in the heads of both Bastard Breech and Grey Eyes (the American who introduced him to morphine) with a club. But when he puts the French fighters' suggestion that he "Take the scalp of your enemy as proof. Take a bit of him to feed you" (188) into practice,[12] his actions giving rise to the novel's most quoted lines: "We all fight on two fronts, the one facing the enemy, the one facing what we do to the enemy" (301), Xavier realizes that his friend has

[12] Ironically, in *A Commemorative History of Aboriginal People in the Canadian Military* (Dictionary of History and Heritage, 29 January 2010 pdf version), P. Whitney Lackenbauer, John Moses, R. Scott Sheffield, and Maxime Gohier write that Canadian officials were reluctant to allow aboriginal people to fight from the outbreak of war because, "in the popular literature of the day, `Red Indians' were associated with torture and scalping, practices quite unacceptable under the rules of war laid out in the Geneva Convention." In the novel, it is the French who suggest that Elijah should not only scalp his enemies as proof of his "kills," but also that he should "`Take a bit of [them] to feed you'" (188). The Frenchman in the novel—Niska's lover--also comes off badly: he is self-centered, drinks to excess, mistreats Niska, and fathers several aboriginal children he then abandons.

gone mad. Because he has been cannibalized by life in the residential school which "devoured" his spirit, Elijah becomes a windigo.

The windigo of traditional Cree mythology is a supernatural force that hungers for human flesh and possesses people during times of starvation. According to Ruffo, "aside from the various `Trickster' figures, like Nanabush for the Ojibway or Weesageeechak for the Cree (among other manifestations), no other Aboriginal deity has captured the imagination of western audiences like the Windigo or Weetigo creature" (166). Johnston further explains that the word windigo "may be derived from ween daghoh, which means "solely for self" (1999, 222). It is the ultimate expression of selfishness; it represents the choosing of self with indifference to the suffering and death of others. Everything becomes peripheral to the self. Going windig*o*, however, brings its own punishment because, "having eaten human flesh, the Weendigoes grew in size, so their hunger and craving remained in proportion to their size; thus they were eternally starving" (Johnston, 1999, 247). Not only are windigoes insatiable consumers, afflicted with never-ending hunger, they are gaunt to the point of emaciation (Ruffo 167), and they can contaminate others. (True to form, Elijah does not eat and begins to look skeletal.) This is the windigo's most dangerous trait, for if left ignored, it can infect an entire tribe. This is why Cree mythology stresses that the only "cure" for a windigo is death: this is the culture's means of protecting its boundaries, or preventing a harmful influence from gaining acceptance.[13] Once Xavier realizes that Elijah has gone windigo, he knows that he must kill him in the way that his grandfather and aunt have had to eliminate windigo figures before him. Deeply troubled over Elijah's madness, Xavier recognizes that "sadness was at the heart of the windigo, a sadness so pure that it shriveled the human heart and let something else grow in its place" (242). What has grown in its place—a need to fill "the emptiness inside him [that] cannot be filled up" other than by constant killing—must be eradicated, for as Niska has taught Xavier,"Sometimes one must be sacrificed if all are to survive" (245). It could be argued that, in killing his best friend, Xavier makes a monumental sacrifice for the sake of all people, not only the Cree.

In its treatment of aboriginal epistemology and its depiction of aboriginal warriors, Boyden's novel demonstrates, at least to some extent, how the Canadian Expeditionary Forces became one of the finest fighting formations on the Western Front, an area that is entirely understudied. Boyden's text further stresses that aboriginal teaching practices—which served the needs of aboriginal people for thousands of years before the arrival of the white man--should never have been condemned as "heathen" or mere "folklore," but should have been embraced as valid and valuable, and that their essence should have been integrated into mainstream knowledge, including military conduct. His text thus attempts to restore pride in aboriginal people by acknowledging the tremendous contributions they

[13] White men at Moose Factory incarcerate Niska's father for killing a windigo; as a result of his confinement, which results in his estrangement from nature and his family, he dies. (Boyden tells Wyile that he heard a story about the North West Mounted Police incarcerating a man who had killed a windigo.)

made to the securing of peace. It further stresses that it is Xavier, raised in the Ontario bush by his Aunt Niska, who grows into a morally sound, thoughtful human being dedicated to peace; the ending further hints that he will ultimately become a leader of his people. In the shadow of horrific theatres such as Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele, the culture Niska and Xavier represent appears much more civilized than the European powers. Boyden's juxtaposition of the comparatively peaceful society of First Nations people with the imperial bloodlust of the European powers of World War One directly challenges any label of savagery imposed upon aboriginals by Western society. Aboriginal cultures in Canada look especially peaceful when compared to the Western traditions of military irresponsibility that continue to wage extremely dubious/fictitious wars.

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Le personnage de l'écrivain dans *L'Emprise* de Gaétan Brulotte

L'Emprise (1979) de Gaétan Brulotte, qui aurait pu avoir pour titre "Le romancier et son personnage", est un de ces romans publiés au Québec entre 1960 et 1995, qui contiennent un personnage d'écrivain et qui représentent la nouvelle voie dans laquelle s'engage la littérature québécoise après 1960, en sortant de «l'ère de la représentation» pour entrer dans «l'ère de l'écriture». Nous avons déjà examiné les personnages d'écrivains dans les romans de Mairi-Claire Blais, de Négovan Rajić (Novaković 2006) et de Ljubica Milicević (Novaković 2007). Dans *L'Emprise*, ce passage de l'écrivain à l'écriture est représenté par l'expérience du personnage principal, Block, « homme moustachu, à chapeau d'étoffe, élégamment vêtu, avec un impressionnant appareil photographique pendu au cou » (L'Emprise, 11), qui est un écrivain connu dans la ville où il vit, célèbre par ses romans. Le lecteur suit ses efforts pour percer le mystère d'un homme étrange, Barnes, qui attire son attention par son comportement bizarre – il passe ses journées dans la rue à attendre et à observer les gens, en portant une serviette dont on ne connaît pas le contenu - et dont il veut faire "de la chair à fiction", "l'aliment de son prochain livre" (Ibid.), c'est-à-dire le héros de son futur roman. En pensant à lui, il réfléchit sur les possibilités de la littérature. Si on se réfère à la typologie faite par André Belleau, il s'agit du passage du "roman de la parole", dont le personnage principal est un écrivain qui s'engage dans l'aventure de la création littéraire au "roman de l'écriture" (Belleau, 15), préoccupé des questions de poétique et d'esthétique: à travers les aventures de Block et la genèse de son personnage romanesque, se dessinent les problèmes de création littéraire et l'écriture se transforme en sujet principal de son livre.

Par son intérêt presque pathologique pour Barnes, Block se présente comme un "autre", différent des hommes ordinaires. Les traits de son caractère sont en fonction de sa situation d'écrivain. Il ne s'agit plus d'un écrivain omniscient qui sait ce qui se passe dans l'esprit de ses personnages, qui connaît leur passé, leurs pensées, leurs goûts, leur vie, mais d'un écrivain insuffisamment informé, pour lequel son personnage se présente comme un "objet énigmatique qu'il éprouverait un plaisir maniaque à déchiffrer, mais dont il redouterait aussi quelque magnétisme maléfique" (L'Emprise, 18). Il s'agit d'un écrivain qui s'engage dans une

quête presque maniaque pour découvrir la vérité. Ayant à sa disposition deux modes d'observation: à distance, le téléobjectif et, à proximité, la poursuite, il se transforme en guetteur et surveillant qui veut tout savoir sur son personnage et qui utilise tous les moyens pour y parvenir: il "court dans les rues ou reste à l'affût: il cherche partout son personnage d'un regard analytique afin de pouvoir ficher son comportement le plus minutieusement et le plus complètement possible" (18), il cherche les informations pour le posséder à fond et, d'autre part, il "multiplie des précautions dégradantes" (26) pour ne pas être aperçu, voulant observer sans être vu.

L'écriture se transforme en une exploration de la réalité et elle influence le comportement de Block: pour pouvoir suivre son personnage plus facilement, il doit changer son régime alimentaire et ses vêtements. Dans sa quête forcenée de la vérité, Block, en apparence si sage, commence à agir de façon bizarre et devient délibérément délinquant. Il s'approche de Barnes pour se faire apercevoir par lui et pour l'obliger à réagir. Il l'aborde même, il essaie d'établir avec lui un contact qui l'aiderait à mieux le saisir et, plus tard, après l'internement de celui-ci dans un asile d'aliénés, il se présente aux autorités de cette institution pour les persuader de le relâcher, mais il se rend compte qu'il pourrait être interné lui aussi. A force de le poursuivre, il commence à lui ressembler, à s'identifier à lui. Sa quête acharnée, suscitée par son désir de tout savoir sur son mystérieux double, qui reste insaisissable pour lui, s'identifie à la folie de Barnes.

Ses efforts ne sont pas sans rappeler ceux du narrateur d'*À la Recherche du temps perdu* de Proust et encore plus ceux du narrateur du *Portrait d'un inconnu* de Nathalie Sarraute, obsédé par un couple tout à fait ordinaire qui suscite chez lui un intérêt qui prend un aspect névrotique, roman qui se présente comme une parodie des romans de la quête. Certains phénomènes dans *L'Emprise* ne sont pas sans rappeler parfois ce que Nathalie Sarraute appelle "tropismes",[1] tels ces "équivoques tremblements" que Block voit "s'éveiller sur le visage de Barnes" lorsque les jeunes filles gagnent son champ de vision, son "oeil maniaque brillant dans l'entrebâillement de la fente palpébrale et discrètement braqué sur les femmes qui défilent devant lui!" (L'Emprise, 26).

Mais, à la différence du narrateur de Nathalie Sarraute, dont l'oeil microscopique enregistre les mouvements et les gestes imperceptibles de ceux qu'il observe sans aucun impact sur leur vie et en les laissant dans l'ignorance de l'intérêt qu'il leur porte, Block passe de l'observation à l'action qui le conduit finalement à attenter aux droits élémentaires de Barnes, à sa paix et à sa liberté. Il paie deux hommes afin de vider secrètement son appartement pendant son absence et il va inspecter ses objets, en justifiant son acte par les exigences de son travail d'écrivain et de la noblesse de son objectif.

[1] Nathalie Sarraute fait l'objet de plusieurs articles de G. Brulotte, tels: "Tropismes et sous-conversation" ou "Le Gestuaire de Nathalie Sarraute" (voir la bibliographie ci-dessous).

A l'irruption du romancier dans la vie de son personnage s'ajoute le jeu de regards et de miroirs, qui s'établit entre eux et à travers lequel Barnes se présente comme le double de Block et sa quête se transforme en une investigation de soi-même. En faisant des recherches à la bibliothèque pour mieux comprendre le comportement de Barnes, il découvre différentes "stupidités bourrées de préjugés" (L'Emprise, 31) qui lui rendent compte de ses propres résistances aux penchants sexuels de son personnage (qui est un exhibitionniste). D'autre part, il découvre dans l'objet de sa quête ses propres traits: Barnes, lui aussi, est un surveillant qui "scrute la rue, considère la tourbe des citadins, épouille les troupeaux d'autos" (7), qui observe, "telle l'araignée guettant les insectes, comme si le destin quotidien du monde était de servir de pâture à son regard" (10), qui veut observer sans être vu. Ce personnage étrange sembler l'attirer car il voit en lui sa propre projection. En imaginant ce qui se passe au moment où Barnes se laisse aller à ses fantasmes en public, il se voit lui-même dans la rue, à sa place, parmi les passants.[2]

Cette identification de l'écrivain à son héros se poursuit. Block remarque que Barnes écrit quelque chose dans son livre de raison et qu'il a, lui aussi, une inclination pour l'écriture. Il trouve un petit cahier où celui-ci a noté, entre autres, quelques courtes histoires drôles, relatives à l'univers asilaire où il a passé un certain temps et il en retient deux avec l'intention de les incorporer à son futur roman, il apprend que Barnes rédige un roman dont le héros est un "désaxé" (L'Emprise, 79) de son entourage, pour conclure que ce "désaxé", c'est lui-même. C'est ainsi que les rôles s'inversent: le surveillant se transforme en surveillé, le personnage romanesque s'identifie au romancier. En concurrençant Block sur son propre terrain, dans le domaine de l'écriture, Barnes met en question sa place privilégiée et l'oblige à descendre de son "piédestal d'écrivain" (81) et à se ranger dans cette lignée de la désacralisation de l'auteur, entreprise par les écrivains eux-mêmes à partir de la seconde moitié du XIX^{e} siècle et en faisant passer au premier plan l'écriture elle même. L'écrivain se présente comme un guetteur de signes et le roman comme une investigation de la réalité, ce qui nous renvoie encore une fois à Proust et à

[2] Le jeu de miroirs et de doubles se complique. Dans sa quête de la vérité, Block rencontre un autre personnage, qui connaît Barnes et dont il attend de répondre à ces questions. Ce personnage s'appelle Barnabé, ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler Barnabooth de Valéry Larbaud, qui a donné, en combinaison de Bartleby de Melville, Bartlebouth de *La Vie mode d'emploi* de Georges Perec, mais aussi l'inspecteur Barnaby de la série policière *Midsomer Murders*. Il s'agit de ce jeu intertextuel qui caractérise le roman postmoderne et dont on trouve un exemple dans *Le Nom de la rose* d'Umberto Eco, où le nom de l'ex-inquisiteur Guillaume de Baskerville renvoie par métonymie à Sherlock Holmes de Conan Doyle, auteur du roman *Le Chien des Baskerville*, et le nom d'un des moines, le difforme Salvatore, qui va être tué, renvoie, par l'intermédiaire du nom du prix Nobel italien Salvatore Quasimodo, au héros de Victor Hugo, le malformé Quasimodo, union du sublime et du grotesque, qui meurt lui aussi. Avec une vieille bicyclette rouillée et les pinces à pantalon, Barnabé est, tout comme Barnes, un personnage qui sort du cadre du quotidien, un marginal qui habite un sous-sol sordide, à un endroit d'où on a une curieuse vision du monde, qui joue du piano, ce qui le met en contact avec les milieux louches des bars. Il peut inspirer un autre personnage du roman de Block, qui le nomme dans ses notes "le Siffleur" (70).

Nathalie Sarraute. Le roman de l'écrivain se transforme en un roman de l'écriture. A travers les aventures de Block dans son exploration de la réalité se manifeste l'attitude de l'auteur face aux problèmes littéraires et artistiques, tels le rapport de la littérature et de la vie, la fonction de l'objet dans le roman, les procédés romanesques, l'intertextualité, la fonction et les objectifs de l'écriture.

Le premier problème, c'est le rapport entre la littérature et la réalité. *L'Emprise* est aussi une mise en question du réalisme, fondé sur le postulat que l'homme est capable de connaître et de représenter la réalité objective. Ici, la réalité apparaît comme une énigme qu'il faut déchiffrer, comme une suite d'objets herméneutiques qui demandent un effort d'interprétation et de déchiffrement, telle la serviette que Barnes porte constamment et dont Block voudrait connaître le contenu mystérieux. Barnes lui-même se présente comme un être énigmatique dont chacun a sa propre vision qui diffère de celle des autres, si bien que Block a l'impression que ses interlocuteurs et lui même ne parlent pas du même homme et qu'il renonce à faire la différence entre ce qui est vrai de ce qui est faux dans leurs témoignages.

La conscience que la réalité échappe à la connaissance humaine met en question le concept même du réalisme. Nathalie Sarraute parle de la littérature comme d'une "percée des apparences vers une réalité inconnue"[3]. Dans *L'Ere du soupçon*, elle partage les écrivains en "formalistes", qui acceptent les procédés romanesques traditionnels, et "réalistes", qui rejettent la tradition romanesque et cherchent de nouvelles voies (Soupçon, 137-138). Les "réalistes" s'efforcent de découvrir la vérité par leurs propres moyens, ce qui impose aussi de nouvelles formes romanesques. Il ne s'agit donc plus du réalisme tel qu'il a été conçu au XIX^{e} siècle et dont l'objectif a été la reproduction exacte de la réalité, mais d'un nouveau réalisme qui se propose de reproduire la manière dont cette réalité se découvre à l'homme, c'est-à-dire la double réalité que constituent le monde extérieur, qui est instable, changeant, insaisissable et qu'il est par conséquent impossible de présenter d'une manière objective et ces reflets inconstants et souvent illusoires dans la conscience de l'homme, qui est souvent une conscience malheureuse, malade, déformée ou déformante. Il s'agit de présenter un effort subjectif pour accéder à la connaissance de la vérité par une quête méthodique qui tend à pénétrer l'univers par "le petit côté des choses" et que Block appelle "haptisme" (33) ou "hyper-réalisme" (11). Ce procédé consiste à "presser le fruit au maximum et, de détail en détail, de dépouillement en dépouillement, épuiser son objet jusqu'aux limites du possible" (Ibid.) et, dans son cas, il "a fait ses preuves d'une manière éclatante, comme en témoigne son succès" (11). Ce nouveau "réalisme" rend compte aussi des possibilités de l'écriture de saisir la réalité.

De ce point de vue, l'écriture a une fonction cognitive. Par ses histoires, l'écrivain doit "non pas banalement distraire les humains" (Soupçon, 30), mais "leur montrer des échantillons d'existence, leur proposer des points de vue variés sur la vie,

[3] „Rebels in a World of Platitudes", *Times Literary Supplement*, 10.06.1960. Cité dans: J.H. Matthews, 10.

leur livrer le fruit de ses examens consciencieux" (31), "améliorer la compréhension de l'humain et du monde, par-delà les préjugés lesquels sont grands ennemis de la connaissance et du progrès" (Ibid.). A la fonction cognitive se rattache la fonction salvatrice et compensatrice. L'écriture rend possible de surmonter la détresse et de répondre à l'apprentissage d'une réalité jugée nocive en fuyant dans l'imaginaire. Mais elle a aussi des aspects négatifs car elle empêche d'agir, ce qui amène Block à se demander comment concilier l'écrire et le vivre et de trouver la réponse suivante à sa question: en mettant en scène "les jeux ou les situations dont il rêve l'avènement, et cela, en dehors des livres, *dans la réalité*" (83), c'est-à-dire en vivant l'écriture au lieu de faire mine d'écrire la vie.

Aux problèmes des rapports entre la littérature et la vie et des fonctions de l'écriture, se rattache le problème lié à l'objet de l'écriture. Dans le cas de Block, cet objet, Barnes, est un personnage tout à fait marginal, auquel sa gaucherie et son inaptitude à la communication ont valu beaucoup d'humiliations. Une des sources de sa marginalité est son "altérité" que constitue son exhibitionnisme, déviation sexuelle exprimant son désir de se faire valoir aux yeux des autres, qui le méprisent ou l'ignorent, par un "acte radical qui conjuguerait la volonté de puissance à l'affirmation de soi" (Soupçon, 150), par un acte ostentatoire et agressif qui lui rendrait possible de "se sentir grand et fort" en effrayant, en souillant et en bafouant à distance et qui n'est pas sans rappeler les actes de certains personnages de Sartre[4]: "Puisque le monde lui fait mal irrémédiablement, il ne lui reste plus qu'à faire mal à son tour, au risque d'être pris. Comme ça, il aura au moins une petite revanche et en même temps une assurance d'être" (L'Emprise, 150).

Un tel statut du personnage romanesque soulève non seulement des problèmes existentiels et sociales, tels que la place de la marginalité dans le monde moderne ou la liberté individuelle face aux contraintes de la société, mais aussi les problèmes qui concernent le procédé littéraire lui-même. Le personnage de Barnes renvoie à cette esthétique du laid, exprimée par Flaubert, qui voulait écrire "un livre sur rien", et encore plus par Baudelaire qui a réussi à tirer du "mal du siècle" et du sien propre les "fleurs" de la poésie, c'est-à-dire de transformer la laideur du monde réel en une beauté artistique. Dans *L'Emprise,* cette idée est exprimée par la mise en abyme que constitue la citation de Montesquieu, qui écrit dans ses *Cahiers* qu'"il faut toujours prendre un bon sujet" car "l'esprit que vous mettez dans un mauvais sujet est comme l'or que vous mettriez sur l'habit d'un mendiant; au lieu qu'un bon sujet semble vous élever sur ses ailes" (L'Emprise, 28). Pourtant, pour Block, le "bon" sujet n'est pas celui qu'il est possible de traiter d'une manière élevée, mais, au contraire, un sujet "bas", tel un comportement sexuel bizarre avec lequel "on fabrique des romans à deux sous", mais "rarement de grandes oeuvres" (29). Il considère que, "en prenant le chemin inquiétant de la marginalité, inquiétant seulement par manque de familiarité", il "se donne plus de chances de résoudre certains aspects de l'énigme de vivre" (31) et que, au terme de son entreprise, il aura peut-être "la satisfaction d'avoir transformé de la boue en or, d'avoir tiré

[4] Tel Erostrate dans la nouvelle de Sartre, qui tire sur un homme inconnu, après avoir envoyé des lettres où il se vantait de son acte.

une oeuvre d'art d'un sujet apparemment sordide, un peu comme d'une cuisine déprimante on arrive à faire sortir de somptueux festins" (Ibid.).

Ce qui est au premier plan, ce n'est ni l'histoire ni le personnage, mais l'écriture elle-même, comme dans le Nouveau roman dont les représentants rejettent la narration des événements intéressants et émouvants, avec des personnages stables et déterminés une fois pour toutes par une instance narrative omnisciente, au profit des événements banals et des personnages qui se présentent comme une succession d'images dans la conscience d'un observateur insuffisamment informé et peu sûr de lui-même. En remarquant des changements dans le comportement de Barnes, qui se livre à des actes de plus en plus incidents, ce qui entraîne d'abord une surveillance policière et ensuite son internement dans une maison de santé, Block ne sait pas si c'est la conséquence d'une évolution de son personnage ou de l'affinement de sa propre perception.

Pourtant, ici, il s'agit moins de la désintégration du personnage traditionnel qui caractérise le Nouveau roman, que de la présentation d'un personnage marginal, d'un "anti-héros" (14), qui renvoie à l'"antiroman", mot lancé par Sartre dans sa préface au *Portrait d'un Inconnu* de Nathalie Sarraute et défini de manière suivante:

> Les anti-romans conservent l'apparence et les contours du roman, ce sont des ouvrages d'imagination qui nous présentent des personnages fictifs et nous racontent leur histoire. Mais c'est pour mieux décevoir: il s'agit de contester le roman par lui-même, de le détruire sous nos yeux dans le temps qu'on semble l'édifier, d'écrire le roman d'un roman qui ne se fait pas, qui ne peut pas se faire, de créer une fiction qui soit aux grandes oeuvres composées de Dostoïevski et de Meredith ce qu'était aux tableaux de Rembrandt et de Rubens cette toile de Miro, intitulée *Assassinat de la peinture* (Portrait, 7).

Il est à remarquer que, au cours des années quarante et cinquante, les préfixes négatifs ("anti" ou "a") qui désignent cette mise en question de la littérature se multiplient: *Apoèmes* d'Henri Pichette (1947), l'"anti-pièce" que constitue *La Cantatrice chauve* (1950) de Ionesco, l'"alittérature" dont parle Claude Mauriac en la définissant comme une littérature qui se nie elle-même et qui cherche à se détruire en tant que littérature (Mauriac, 9), l'écriture "blanche", "alittéraire", neutre, dont parle Roland Barthes dans *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* (Barthes, 108-109). Il s'agit moins de montrer les faiblesses du genre romanesque que d'examiner ses possibilités. De ce point de vue, on pourrait ranger dans cette catégorie *L'Emprise* aussi, dont le héros se présente comme un détective amateur fasciné par un personnage insignifiant qu'il suit et épie et qui, à la différence des quêteurs traditionnels dont l'aventure se termine par la trouvaille de l'objet recherché, s'identifie à l'objet insaisissable de sa quête, comme si, pour citer encore une fois Sartre, "le policier d'Agatha Christie, sur le point de découvrir le coupable, se muait tout à coup en criminel" (Portrait, 8)[5].

[5] Dans *Les Gommes* de Robbe-Grillet, le détective Wallas finit par tirer sur l'homme dont l'assassinat manqué est l'objet de son enquête.

Dans *L'Emprise*, cette idée d'une "alitérature" qui se présente comme une "écriture blanche", ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler le papier blanc qui provoque le vertige de Mallarmé, est suggérée par la dépêche que reçoit Block et qui contient une feuille avec une note administrative accompagnée d'une vingtaine de feuilles blanches. "Dans ces pages vierges, il y a des dizaines de phrases, des centaines, des milliers peut-être" (L'Emprise, 109), constate-t-il en essayant de les déchiffrer et en subissant ce "vertige".

Le vide du papier blanc, que sa blancheur "défend", comme nous le lisons dans "La Brise marine" de Mallarmé et qui se rattache pour ce poète à l'opposition entre le monde de la relativité dans lequel il se sent plongé et la réalité absolue à laquelle aspire son esprit, exprime l'impuissance créatrice et annonce la crise que traverse Block dans son entreprise romanesque. Cette crise prend parfois la forme du spleen baudelairien, suggéré par l'image d'un ciel lourd et étouffant, par "cet insoutenable abaissement des cieux voûtés" qui "l'étouffent et insinuent en lui un immense vague-à-l'âme lié à une sorte de langueur improductive" (L'Emprise, 59), ou par cet "état jauni du moi", cet "alourdissement général du corps", cette "oppression du souffle", cette "retombée brusque d'énergie" (Ibid.), qui se présente comme l'image de l'inertie, de la narcose intérieure, de la mort spirituelle, de l'ankylose, semblable à l'angoisse décrite par certains écrivains que Block a lus, au "je suis engourdi, je suis de pierre" de Hölderlin, au "je me pétrifie" de Kafka. A ces "moments d'absinthe et d'absence", la conscience "traverse le long tunnel du cafard" et "l'existence se place sous le signe de l'atonie et de la prostration" (60). Ce *taedium vitae*, qui l'oppresse, l'empêche de travailler, mais il éveille en lui la conscience qu'il est nécessaire de se mettre au travail et d'écrire (61).

D'autre part, le vide du papier blanc est la source d'innombrables possibilités qui s'offrent à l'écrivain, ce qui est suggéré par le coup de téléphone de Barnes qui parle à Block de lui-même, de sa souffrance, de ses habitudes, en constatant que, pour lui, tout ce passe comme s'il était "devant du blanc, telle une feuille de papier", que "le blanc incite à la découverte", qu'il est son "remède" et sa "douleur". "Le blanc libère, le blanc enterre". "Le blanc, c'est l'angoisse et la paix, la souffrance nécessaire, le baume indispensable" (L'Emprise, 133). Il invite Block à une entreprise d'interprétation et de création dans laquelle l'écrivain apparaît comme une "araignée" qui "tisse" des textes, qui "trame" des histoires (106).

Mais, l'entreprise créatrice à laquelle invite le papier blanc n'aboutit pas pour Block à la claustration dans le monde abstrait d'une littérature qui s'est éloignée de son objet et du monde réel. Si son écriture ne se modèle pas sur le réel selon la méthode réaliste, elle n'est pas non plus un acte purement esthétique, mais un acte qui renoue avec la réalité. Block se rend compte que, dans le "nid intime" de sa salle de travail, au dernier étage de son immeuble, "emmitouflé et protégé", renonçant aux "agitations communes à la majorité des hommes pour se livrer à son activité professionnelle", il cultive "une inaction germinative propre à accueillir la pulsation de la rêverie et le plaisir de l'écriture" (L'Emprise, 74). Mais, il se rend compte aussi qu'oublier le monde "en essayant de le reconstruire à sa façon,

par le dedans" (Ibid.) ne lui suffit pas. Il veut essayer de "vivre ses fictions ou du moins de faire s'épandre le songe dans la vie réelle**",** mais non à la manière de Nerval, en sombrant dans l'aliénation mentale, mais en cherchant à "faire coïncider l'imaginaire et la réalité" (75), à accomplir l'imaginaire dans le monde réel, à l'aide de son mystérieux personnage, son double. Il ne s'agit pas non plus de créer une réalité autonome, indépendante de la réalité ordinaire, comme pour les représentants du Nouveau roman français, qui rejettent toute référentialité, mais de saisir la réalité pour la modifier, selon sa méthode qu'il qualifie d'*haptiste* (85). "Comment conjoindre justement l'écrire et le vivre (comment *écrivre*, pense-t-il)?". A cette question, il donne la réponse suivante: "En mettant en scène les jeux ou les situations dont il rêve l'avènement, et cela, en dehors des livres, *dans la réalité*" (83).

Cette interpénétration de l'écriture et de la vie, qui renvoie au surréalisme, est une caractéristique de la nouvelle littérature canadienne francophone. La question que se pose Block: Comment "écrivre"? rejoint l'entreprise du héros narrateur du *Salut Galarneau!* (1967) de Jacques Godbout, qui se retire du monde pour "vécrire". Mais, à la différence de celui-ci, qui veut conjuguer le bonheur de vivre et celui d'écrire, Block veut élargir les possibilités de l'écriture par une action concrète. Il établit une relation directe avec celui qui va devenir le personnage de son roman, il provoque des scènes où il a l'occasion de le voir à découvert, en train de se débattre et sa tentative provoque une suite d'infortunes que celui-ci subit et dont il s'estime responsable. Block se présente comme un "voleur d'âme", comme un "pilleur de coeur" qui, dans sa volonté de parvenir à la possession totale de l'objet de son écriture, commet un acte de destruction, qui "saccage" son double et le transforme en sa victime. Il s'agit encore une fois d'une inversion antiromanesque: le détective se transforme en exécuteur du crime et l'observant s'identifie à l'observé.

Comme l'entreprise des écrivains personnages du Nouveau roman, l'entreprise de Block semble aboutir à un échec. Cet échec correspond à celui de son personnage, Barnes, qui perd tout, même son héritage, car sa soeur Berthe réussit à convaincre leur mère de le déshériter et qui n'est pas sans rappeler Antoine Montès, le personnage principal du *Vent* de Claude Simon, qui finit lui aussi par perdre son héritage. A ces deux "déshérités", qui font penser au sujet parlant du poème "El Desdichado" de Gérard de Nerval, se joint Block lui-même, qui, au lieu de devenir "le maître anonyme" de cette histoire, prend la place de son double. Tout indique qu'il finira comme lui. "L'autre est certes arrivé le premier, mais c'était pour mieux lui ouvrir la porte" (L'Emprise, 158).

C'est ainsi que la littérature et la vie s'unissent dans une entreprise de recherche à travers laquelle se dessine non seulement une critique implicite de la société conformiste, mais aussi et surtout l'expérience de l'écrivain et les chemins actuels du roman canadien francophone où, à la différence du Nouveau roman français, qui refuse toute référentialité, la mise en question des structures traditionnelles du récit se joint à une forte conscience politique et sociale et qui est marqué par une pénétration du réel au royaume du fictionnel et l'inverse. Présenté en situation d'écriture, l'écrivain imaginaire devient, comme l'a remarqué Roseline Tremblay,

un "embrayeur de sens qui renouvelle le questionnement sur l'identité collective, sur le rôle de l'écriture et sur l'héroïsation de l'écrivain, questionnement qui est le principal vecteur de communication entre littérature et société" (Tremblay, 33), mais qui concerne aussi la littérature elle-même et ses possibilités, étant donné que la création romanesque se transforme en sujet principal du roman.

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Canadian Identity through Literature: On the "Canadianness" of Margaret Atwood's Fiction

Canada and Slovakia seemingly cannot be more different. Size-wise, Canada is two hundred times larger than Slovakia. Ethnically, it is a heterogeneous, multicultural country with many immigrants. Politically, it is a well-developed democracy that has never suffered from communist oppression. On the other hand, there are surprising similarities between these two countries. Both of them have a relatively short history (spanning just over one hundred years) as sovereign nations. Both of them have been shaded by a bigger, better-developed neighbor – the USA or the Czech Republic, which resulted in their "inferiority complex". Neither of them has been involved in some great pan-national major war occurring on their territory (except for the partial involvement of Slovakia in the Slovak National Uprising in 1944 and the Riel Rebellions in 1869 and 1885 in Canada) that would help the nation to unite. What is more, both struggle to define their identity in some easily graspable, understandable manner – in the way the Americans are often characterized as "optimistic go-getters", the French, the "charismatic connoisseurs" or the Germans, as the "meticulous pedantic" Germans.

This stream of thought brings up the question why it is so easy to define the national identity of some nations and so difficult with regards to some others. What historical or political event has caused the fact that both Canada and Slovakia are without such an easily definable national trait? One of the well-recognized Canadian authors, Margaret Atwood, in her famous feminist novel *The Robber Bride* (1993) and also in a wide range of her other novels, including the earlier – *Surfacing* (1972) or the recent ones – *Oryx and Crake* (2003), gives some answers that might help the readers from new democracies or countries with a similar absence of identity understand the issue of identity, its essence, or lack thereof, better.

Margaret Eleanor Atwood was born in 1939 in Canada. She authored many books of poems (the most recent include *Eating Fire: Selected Poems, 1965-1995* (1998) and *The Door* (2007); short stories, novels, such as her first novel *The Edible Woman* (1969); *Surfacing* (1972); *Lady Oracle* (1976); *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985); *Cat's Eye* (1988), *The Robber Bride* (1993), a finalist for the 1994 Governor General's Award); *Alias Grace* (1996, winner of the 1996 Giller Prize, finalist for

the 1996 Booker Prize and the 1996 Governor General's Award); *The Blind Assassin* (2000, winner of the 2000 Booker Prize and finalist for the 2000 Governor General's Award); *Oryx and Crake* (2003, finalist for the 2003 Booker Prize and the 2003 Governor General's Award); *The Penelopiad* (2005, longlisted for the 2007 IMPAC Award) and the recent *The Year of the Flood* (2009). She also edited many anthologies (for example *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English*, 1995) and wrote critical essays. The most notable of her critical works are *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972); *Second Words: Selected Critical Prose* (1982); *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (1995); *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* (2002); *Moving Targets: Writing with Intent, 1982-2004* (2004); *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose – 1983-2005* (2005) and the most recent one *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth* (2008).

The Robber Bride is a novel set in present-day Toronto (or, rather, Toronto at the dawn of the 1980s). However, the main story also revolves around stories from the past of the main protagonists – Roz, Charis, Tony and Zenia. These women, once roommates at McClung university hall, now in their late forties, share parts of their lives, parts of a common past, miseries, losses and gains. While Roz, Charis and Tony are givers, Zenia is the taker – she invades their lives with plausible stories about her past (once she is a lost child, other times an underage prostitute, pimped by her own mother) and their past – for example, she pretends to know Roz's father, a mysterious smuggler and possibly a Nazi collaborator. Zenia abuses their charity, hospitality and pity, but before they know it she leaves with the man of their dreams and leaves them in emotional tatters. The story actually starts with Zenia's fake funeral, which, however, does not bring the three friends peace because Zenia is a phenomenon far above life and death that can invade their most intimate spheres even from the afterlife. She mirrors their own fears and worries, her power dwells over them. At the end of the story, however, Zenia really dies, leaving Roz, Charis and Tony alone with their fears.

Scholars agree there are many "typical" Atwoodian topics. The formation of one's personal identity, the self understanding and self actualization of modern women, gender discrimination, political oppression, patriarchal superiority, the deformed relationship of twentieth century man toward nature and a more and more urgent call for its conservation [...] represent the most frequent topics Atwood explores in her fiction (Otrísalová, 243). Most of these topics are indeed clearly identifiable in the novel *The Robber Bride*. However, in spite of the fact that Atwood is recognized as one of the foremost Canadian authors, *The Robber Bride* quite surprisingly lacks a clearly definable Canadian gist. The novel, especially during the first reading, lacks any material that could be called the Canadian identity. One is almost tempted to ask, if this is a Canadian novel, what makes it Canadian?

The novel is remarkable for the fact that, at first sight, there are seemingly very few notes on Canada. One briefly learns that the novel is set in Toronto, in the time span of approximately fifty years, beginning in Canada during and shortly

after The Second World War until an unspecified "present" when the protagonists are in their forties. Any further notes or paraphernalia of Canada or Toronto are scant: the reader only occasionally learns about the Queen and Bloor Streets or the University Avenue. Readers also infrequently learn about some quite irrelevant details of Toronto, but few of them are favorable, for example how dangerous it is to leave a car even at a guarded parking lot or not to donate to the begging homeless people (Atwood, 123) or, that a young woman in a nightgown, outside in the dark, in downtown Toronto, would be "...heavily at risk" (Atwood, 152).

Sometimes, the author's notes on Canada change from serious to humorous. For example, Roz, the famous joker, calls the Toronto tap water "Eau de Swimming Pool" (Atwood, 243). Roz in the same fashion comments on the Canadian weather: "Two months of swelter and ten of freeze-your-buns-off" (Atwood, 457). Other times, Atwood sounds critical: "Toronto is so puritanical!" complains Zenia when in the 1960s she is suspected by her landlord of not being married. Another time, Zenia, quite contradictorily claims, "Canada is such a – such a *gentle* place," but Roz suspiciously analyses *gentle* as *boring* and she further muses about this unexpected Canadian quality: "Maybe they could export a little *boring*" (Atwood, 470). Nevertheless, the novel is so introspective, so set in the minds of the main characters, that a substantial part of it could actually be set in any cosmopolitan city, such as New York, Stockholm or Amsterdam.

Atwood in this novel masterfully oscillates between fact and fiction. In spite of the aforementioned "real" details of Canada, the central part of the plot revolves around a fictitious coffee bar called "Toxique." The name is symptomatic: not only is it a smoky underworld bar where the waiters occasionally wear eye shadow or punk hairstyles, it is also the place where "toxic" memories of the three protagonists have their say and where the central character, Zenia (Xenia, the barbarian, as the etymology of the name suggests), emerges. We assume Atwood chose the name on purpose: "Toxic" seems to be stand for Canada as many people who live there have their toxic pasts, connected with war, forced immigration, crime, or personal ghosts, such as child abuse, corporal punishment or childhoods as unwanted immigrants in a new country.

Perhaps as a result of their pasts, almost all of the main characters have very negative attitudes toward Canada, and, however various their ancestry is, they feel they are outsiders there. Roz, now a rich entrepreneur and a child of *nouveau riche* parents with a dark past (her father most likely got rich as a smuggler of confiscated Jewish property during the war) hates Canada and Toronto as an unsanitary, dangerous, almost toxic den. She still does not feel at one with the rich Canadians, even though, as she thought, "by now [...], she is *us*... [but] knows very well what it's like to be *them*" (Atwood, 127). Even as a child, Roz was an outsider who never felt truly Canadian: "Roz was not Catholic enough, now she isn't Jewish enough. She's an oddity, a hybrid, a strange half-person. Her clothes, although expensive, are subtly not right. Her accent is not right either. Her enthusiasms are not right, nor her skills. [...] Added to that, she's too big; also too loud, too clumsy,

too eager to please. She has no smoothness, no boredom, no class. She finds herself in a foreign country. She's an immigrant, a displaced person" (Atwood, 440). Similarly, Roz feels, "There are many boats in her ancestral past [...] Everyone she's descended from got kicked out of somewhere else, for being too poor or too politically uncouth or for having the wrong profile or accent or hair colour" (Atwood, 390). Even her name was subject to several alternations: it was changed from Rozalind to Roz, from Grunwald to Greenwood.

Tony is an academic misfit who teaches history at Toronto University and is interested in the unwomanly subject of wars. She also does not feel comfortable in the place where she lives; she is afraid of Toronto as potentially dangerous. That is why she chose to live in a house resembling a medieval fortress and, in her own words, she would be most happy if it was encircled by a water trap and accompanied by a chain bridge. Even that does not soothe her. After her privacy has been invaded by Zenia, she feels that even "her house is no protection for her, really. Houses are too fragile" (Atwood, 243), claims Tony.

Charis, formerly Karen, a meditative sleepwalker and a post-hippie, is physically afraid of the city; she even lives on the island, as that is the only place from which she can enjoy the town. Only her home gives her some comfort: "Here she is, back at her house, her fragile but steady house, her flimsy house that is still standing, her house with the lush flowers, her house with cracked walls, her house with the cool peaceful bed" (Atwood, 366). Karen/Charis' house gives her some emotional protection against the world outside where she feels to be an outsider, too. One of the reasons why she has not fit in since she was a child was perhaps the absence of her father. She denies it, saying "she did not miss him because how could you miss someone you never even knew?" (Atwood, 297). However, her father, just like Godot, is present by his absence and what she actually misses is family integrity. Her mother suffered from "bad nerves" and often beat her daughter. Later, after her mother attempted suicide, Karen/Charis ended up as an unwanted burden at her relatives', where she "stayed out of the way as much as possible" (Atwood, 299). The only happy moments, when she felt she belongs somewhere were on her Grandmother's farm. Karen/Charis still yearns for the peace of mind she had experienced there: "There on she stood for a long time, breathing in and breathing in, the scent of trees and dogs and night flowers and water, because this was the best thing, it was what she wanted, to be outside in the night by herself. She wasn't sick any longer" (Atwood, 310).

These three women, however, also serve Atwood as a metaphor of the 1980s Canadian. They symbolize the Canadian identity as a denial or as treasure denied or never fully enjoyed. None of them can feel integrity or content with their place and time; none encounters a sense of belonging because they are multiply displaced – physically, emotionally, and even ethnically.

Roz, for example, is physically bigger and often feels an outsider among her teenage peers. Later she feels she does not belong to the upper class where she got to

thanks to her father. After Zenia invaded her life and her husband Mitch committed suicide, Roz feels she failed in her life: "Superwoman she's not, and *failed* is the key word" (Atwood, 492).

Tony is a physical misfit – undersized emotional misfit – she is dysfunctional in the emotional sphere and is only loved by another misfit and impractical scholar, West. She is also disliked in the world of academia. What is more, she feels she can at any time be exiled by Zenia who knows about a minor academic fraud she manipulated Tony into during their school years.

Charis with her appearance as an aging hippie, wearing extravagant 1970s clothes (flowing Indian muslins, long gathered skirts, flowered shawls, scarves draped around her (Atwood, 53) in the late 1980s is a natural outsider. What is more, in comparison with her friend and employer Shanita, she feels a racial outsider too: "[She] is stuck with being white. A white rabbit. Being white is getting more and more exhausting. There are so many bad waves attached to it. [...] In her next life, she's going to be a mixture, a blend, a vigorous hybrid, like Shanita. No one will have anything on her" (Atwood, 73). Ironically, she is a mixture, as she notes in some other place: "She herself is a part Scotch, part English, part Mennonite and part of whatever her father was" (Atwood, 318).

Even a set of minor characters occasionally suffer from the same sense of unbelonging or "misfitness" as the main ones. Charis' mother, for example, feels she was born to the wrong house and the wrong family. When thinking about her own mother, she notes, "She was never like a real mother" (Atwood, 306).

Atwood, however, does not only limit herself to showing fragmented, beaten or misfit examples of modern Canadian women. She also shows metaphorical opposites of the main characters: people who feel perfectly comfortable with the time and place they live in. One example is Charis' Grandmother, a strong, independent widowed farmer and faith healer. She is a powerful woman who is perfectly at one with nature, with herself, with people, with animals to the point that she allows pigs and other animals to trod around the house and even lick plates. When being questioned about it, her laconic but self-confident explanation is: "Less germs on their tongues than on a human's" (Atwood, 305). She has a very original life philosophy as well, "there's clean inside and clean outside" [...] "Clean inside is better but [some people] never could tell the difference..." (Atwood, 306).

Charis' Grandmother is in full control of her life. She does not subdue or conform to the common social codes. She is not afraid to speak her mind very directly or to set her own, however bizarre, rules. Also, she is a woman of few words and in this manner she tells her labile and hysterical daughter: "If you're leaving [your daughter] with me, you're leaving her with *me*" (Atwood, 305), which means she would bring up Charis her way, regardless of Charis mother's uptight manners or to what is commonly believed to be proper for a teenage girl in post-war Canada.

Charis' grandmother is not afraid to break the strictest social rules – she even wants to be in control of her own remains after her death; that is why she has bought her own gravestone while she is still alive (Atwood, 319). What is more, she is not afraid of death; she takes it as an inevitable part of life. As Charis remembers, "...grandmother went out at dawn with her.22 rifle and shot woodchucks; also rabbits, which she made into stews. She killed chickens when they were too old to lay or just when she wanted a chicken; she chopped their heads off with an axe, on the wooden chopping block, and they ran silently around the barnyard with their necks fountaining blood and grey smoke of their life rising up from them and the rainbow of light around them fading and then going out "(Atwood, 319). This rather cruel, bloody and certainly un-womanlike, un-romantic way of ending the lives of living creatures proves Grandmother to be very realistic when it comes to emotions concerning death. In the same fashion, Grandmother is perfectly comfortable with time flow. She does not meticulously distinguish between past, present and the future. "She often spoke of the Grandfather as if he were still alive" (Atwood, 313), remembers Charis. Grandmother is also in control of religion. She does not practice any conventional confession; rather she respects her own way of worship, partly Christian, partly pagan, partly personal.

Grandmother's husband was metaphorically crushed by time – by a tractor he was not accustomed to (he was a Mennonite, avoiding technical advances). He did not fit in to new times coming and, as Grandmother says, "Damn thing rolled on him" (Atwood, 311). On the other hand, Grandmother is perfectly comfortable with time shifting. For example, she tells Charis: "You must be living ahead of yourself" (Atwood, 323) as if it was the most natural thing one can do. Indeed, Charis perceives time just in the same way. When comforting Roz, after Zenia walked away with her husband, Charis says, "You've never liked easy things". Atwood, the omniscient narrator, however adds Charis' stream of thoughts: "By *never*, she means *not for the past four thousand years*. Which is about how old Roz feels" (Atwood, 496). For Grandma, time does not have to pass linearly, but past and present can overlap. She understands it differently from others, for example Roz, who complains that time does not flow backwards: "*Tell me, God – why don't we get rehearsals?"* (Atwood, 497).

The character of Grandmother serves Atwood as a metaphor of how one can approach his or her identity, handle past, present and future and face things one cannot change. Grandmother, perhaps ignorant of her condition of being an outsider is very confident and does not really care about other people. Perhaps that is what Atwood has in mind when identity is being discussed – one has to understand and come to terms with who they are. That should also be a way to approach one's self as well as one's "Canadian-ness", with pride and dignity.

Zenia is another of Atwood's metaphors of identity. At the beginning of the novel, Atwood makes Zenia's identity clear: "A bomb killed a Canadian" (Atwood, 9). Later however, her identity becomes more and more obscure, for Zenia's identity is a symbolic metamorphosis – no one (including the pricey Hungarian detec-

tive Roz hired) seems to know her real story, her true past. When she needs to, she claims to be a daughter of an exiled White Russian who died in Paris of TB, a quarter-Jewish child saved from the Nazi's (Atwood, 461), or, alternatively, a descendent of a Rumanian gypsy stoned to death (Atwood, 361). All her stories would be in another context suspicious; however, as she put on all these identities in Canada, a former destination of many war or oppression refugees, they seem perfectly plausible. Thus Atwood shows us a contrast of two types of women – those who painfully struggle with who they are and those like Zenia, a woman who painlessly puts on false identities just like theatrical costumes.

Zenia, similarly to Charis' Grandmother, is also strong and powerful; she also sets her own, however benign, rules. For example, she completely ignores good manners when seeing Roz' children for the first time (unfortunately, a time when they were seven and just decided to cut their own hair): "Are those yours? Did they fall in the food processor?" asks Zenia, and Roz feels it is "something [she] might have said herself, or thought at least, and Roz doesn't know whether to laugh or to cry" (Atwood, 456). Men say about Zenia that "she has balls" (Atwood, 471), which indicates her tough, fierce and often self-centered character.

Unlike Charis' Grandmother, Zenia plays hard but does not play fair; she rather takes than asks for what she needs. Also, she manipulates the truth: when confronted with the previous false versions of her life, she told Tony and Charis, she simply says, "I'm afraid I told some awful – I didn't always tell the truth, when I was younger. I think I was emotionally disturbed. [...] so I made a different past for myself – it was better to be a White Russian. Denial, I guess you could call it. [...] with Karen – with Charis – I must have been having some kind of a nervous breakdown. I needed to be mothered; my shrink says it was because my own mother was taken away. [...] It wasn't a good thing – it was terrible; I suppose to tell those stories. I owe both of them an apology. But I didn't think I could've told them the real story, what really happened to me. They wouldn't have understood it" (Atwood, 464-465). Zenia here proves herself a superb psychologist who can make people believe her stories and do what she needs them to. Atwood gives only rare explanations of Zenia's unfair character. She writes, "The Zenias of this world have studied the situation and turned it to their own advantaged; they haven't let themselves be mauled into male fantasies, they've done it themselves" (Atwood, 501). Thus, Zenia is a construct, a predator who happens to be a good-looking woman.

What is Atwood telling us by showing us these three very different Canadian women? Roz, Tony and Charis, in spite of their different backgrounds (immigrant vs. native), ethnicity (WASP vs. Jewish), social rank (top Canadian vs. academic vs. alternative lifestyle), upbringing (middle class prim and proper vs. troubled in a family of an alcoholic), represent common Canadian women at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. Interestingly, most of them are troubled by their appearance, social rank and emotions. On top of it, none of them feel at one with the time and place they live in. They are exiled from their own country,

from Canada; they are exiles of the world as none of them feel comfortable with their personal identities, to say nothing of their national identities.

"Identity as we now know it derives mainly from the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s; dictionary definitions have not caught up, failing to capture the word's current meanings in everyday and social science contexts. An analysis yields the following summary statement. As we use it now, an "identity" refers to either (a) a social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviors, or (b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential (or (a) and (b) at once). In the latter sense, "identity" is modern formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that implicitly links these to social categories" (Fearon, 1999).

The novel *The Robber Bride* is preoccupied with the topic of identity; however, it is personal more than national identity. Atwood is rather skeptical when thinking about national identity with a capital "N". To the question of national identity, Atwood gives an unexpectedly ironic answer: "Maybe that's what people mean by a national identity. The hired help in outfits. The backdrops. The props" (Atwood, 112). There are many other of Atwood's sarcastic observations on what is truly Canadian. For example, when Roz muses on the modern Canadian art she has bought to give her receptionist's area a touch of bohemian upscale life, she notes: "...those stupid coloured squares, it looks like a tablecloth, thought the thing cost a mint. A corporate tax write-off, fortunately. Canadian Art" (Atwood, 113).

In *The Robber Bride*, however, Atwood explores the theme of personal identity in much greater detail. The novel, in fact, is a reversed, negative metaphor of one's identity, or rather, lack thereof. Atwood quite sarcastically notes that the outward paraphernalia of identity, such as Austrian folk costumes and dirndls are just "props" (Atwood, 112) and do not help restore one's identity. However, Atwood is not exclusively negative; she also gives some hints, some instructions on how to restore one's identity and a certain sense of belonging: "That's what I need. Return to my roots. Her weedy and suspect roots, her entangled roots", notes Roz when musing on how to find her integrity and how to belong again (Atwood, 373). What Atwood tells the reader here is to come to terms with one's self, one's ancestral, religious past, with one's name, time and place. Then, one can feel one truly belongs. That is also the legacy of her earlier novel *The Surfacing* and many other of Atwood's novels.

The Robber Bride offers several variants of identity: Identity as metamorphosis (Zenia), Identity as an earth woman (Charis' Grandmother), identity as a troubled woman (Charis, Tony, Roz), that boil down to the grand topic of a "Canadian Identity". What Atwood is perhaps trying to suggest is that identity is in the eye of beholder or, rather, the carrier of it. Identity is not something that is given, donated or imposed on somebody. Identity is the attitude toward oneself, one's times and space. Roz, Charis and Tony first do not feel this attitude. Politically they are Canadians (for the most part they were born in Canada); emotionally,

they are not. Zenia, on the other hand, is Canadian as much as she wants to or as much as it pleases her. Her identity is her choice; however, once she chooses it, she is perfectly at ease with it. She is almost a Dionysian hedonist or Nietzschean Übermensch, she is very self-assured and comfortable with who she is even though nobody else (including the reader) is.

Several famous Canadian writers, including Margaret Atwood herself, speculated on the theoretical aspects of the issue of the Canadian mentality and identity. Earlier in her life, Atwood called this Canadian identity "survival" – meaning, that survival has been a key word in the Canadian mentality since the early settlers' times. Atwood's teacher, philosopher Northrop Fry, referred to this attitude as a "garrison mind" or "siege mentality". Many scholars agree that the Canadian identity is something that needs to be reinvented or reconstructed. Robert Kroetsch, for example, notes "We haven't got an identity until somebody tells our story. The fiction makes us real" (Kroetsch, 63). Another scholar who writes on the topic of identity, Tanja Cvetković, agrees that it is the "Canadian story which could express the Canadian identity" (Cvetković, 84).

What could readers, coming from so-called new democracies, gain by reading Atwood's fiction? I believe Atwood's fiction helps us to come to terms with our own troubled history and identity better. Slovakia became independent from the Czech Republic in 1993. Before then, it was a common state of two nations, Czechs and Slovaks. However, most people were not aware of the difference between these two completely different nations and called them "Czechoslovaks". This title was often reduced to "Czecho", as many people thought "Slovakia" is just some kind of suffix without any meaning. Slovakia was shaded by the "Big Brother," the Czech Republic, economically, politically, culturally and nationally. We, just like the Canadians, as A. Malcolm notes, have suffered from an enormous inferiority complex (Malcolm, 78).

After 1993, however, Slovakia became a politically independent state without a clearly defined identity. Our identity only derived from "not being with the Czechs anymore", from negation and denial. Slowly we started to became "as Slovak as possible, under the circumstances"[1] [1] but before we could slip into this vague Slovak identity, the idea of pan-Europeanism got its reception. Reading Atwood's fiction, however, helps us to understand who we are better. If identity is a positive, strong attitude, stemming from unity with time and space, then being Slovak, means attaining this feeling (Zelenková, 2008). That might solve or simplify all the problems with any minority, and their often politicized attitudes toward being Slovak and having a "Slovak identity".

[1] Allusion to Peter Gzowski's 1970's radio show "This Country in the Morning" organized a contest in finishing the simile "As Canadian as..." in response to the American saying "As American as apple pie"; In <http://www.salon.com/letters/1999/05/18/.html>.

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The Power of the Ethnic Stereotype: Reconnecting or Disconnecting?

A copy of the Winter 2008 issue of *Maisonneuve* has recently been sent to me by a friend from Canada. He believed I would be interested in the central feature of the journal, a set of eight pages of photographs and texts on Serbia ran by a friend of his, Roger Lemoyne. I was, naturally, more than interested to see the current coverage of my country in Canada, but leafing through these pages I got more than saddened. The title Mr. Lemoyne gave to his series of photos is *Serbia, the Sad South*. However catchy, this phrase was not chosen only for its alliterative effect. It immediately imparts a message that is only further confirmed by the photos selected from his journey through Serbia. The text of about 600 words and the captions under the photographs do not dispel the impression left after viewing the photos. My unanswered question remains: Was Mr. Lemoyne aware of the power of the stereotype when he offered these photos to the public? For that reason the purpose of this presentation is to revisit the problem of stereotypical representation of a nation in view of the immense power ethnic stereotypes have in dis/connecting people.

Starting with the standard almost randomly selected definitions of a stereotype as "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing" (*The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English*), or as "a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing" (*English Collins Dictionary),* to the stereotype as "a conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image" (*American Heritage Dictionary*), one comes to the definition of an ethnic stereotype. Logically, it comprises all the above mentioned elements which now apply to an ethnic group. Therefore, an ethnic stereotype is a fixed, generalized usually very simplified and conventional image or conception of an ethnic group which becomes a wide-spread formula in representing that ethnicity. Gordon Marshall reminds us that the concept was developed by the North American journalist Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion* (1922) to mean the fixed, narrow 'pictures in our head,' generally resistant to easy change.

Widely used before and after Lippmann, a stereotype is characterized, besides its narrowness and rigidness, by the pejorative connotations that it often conveys.

Psychology teaches us that mental images, however ungrounded, have an immense power in shaping our attitudes and behavior. In view of that, stereotypes can have a negative effect on social relationships through the prejudices that they may create. Ethnic stereotypes in particular can determine the perception of an ethnic group ascribing to each member of the group alleged characteristics. It is true that stereotypes can also be positive. For example, we in Serbia believe that all Argentinean women are beautiful or that all Italians dress most fashionably. It is also true stereotypes can be both positive and negative for the same ethnic group. For instance, Canadians are commonly imagined as extremely polite but most people would agree they are uncommonly boring. The impression I got during a dinner party for eight was that two of them were very uncivil while another three were very stimulating company so that altogether my experience proves Canadians to be far from boring on the average. This does not correspond to the stereotype but the effort it takes to break a stereotype is inversely proportional to the effort it takes to make it.

Nobody needs to be convinced of the negative stereotyping recently haunting the image of Serbia and its people. Unfortunate events in that part of the world of the last two decades displaced or overshadowed an earlier image of Yugoslavia as the leader of the third world countries in terms of liberty, human rights and progressive ideas, especially in comparison to the other countries of the Eastern Bloc before the 1980s. This representation of the people definitely was not deeply rooted because Yugoslavia as a political state and its people as Yugoslavs had such a short history, the country being constituted in 1918. That may have been the reason why the myth of Yugoslavia as the only pro-Western country behind the iron curtain was so quickly dispelled. Diana Johnston, a press officer for the Green Group in the European Parliament from 1990 to 1996, offers another opinion involving the power of the media. Working in the media field, she was aware of the power of the dominant ideology to impose certain interpretations on international news. Yet, she was herself surprised to witness not only the violent fragmentation of Yugoslavia but also the ideological bias that framed the news in that period. She says that the attitude of the German propaganda was most unexpected since only a few years earlier they talked about the need to put an end to enemy stereotypes clearly with the goal of altering the image of Nazi Germany.[1] All of a sudden, that stereotype was attributed to the Serbs and instead of the language of mediation and reconciliation, hate language was back.

Stereotype instigates prejudice. More emphatically, psychologist James Jones claims: "Stereotypes are thought by many to be the engine that drives prejudice…

[1] Diana Johnston explains in 1999: "The current campaign to demonize the Serbs began in July 1991 with a virulent barrage of articles in the German media, led by the influential conservative newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ). In almost daily columns, FAZ editor Johann Georg Reismuller justified the freshly, and illegally, declared "independence" of Slovenia and Croatia by describing the "Yugo-Serbs" as essentially Oriental "militarist Bolsheviks" who have "no place in the European Community." Nineteen months after German reunification, and for the first time since Hitler's defeat in 1945, German media resounded with condemnation of an entire ethnic group reminiscent of the pre-war propaganda against the Jews."

Stereotypes are prejudicial because they involve generalization" (201). Apart from the affective component implying an unfavorable attitude toward an ethnic group, prejudice also has a behavioral component leading to discriminatory behaviors. In the case of Yugoslavia it resulted in the breaking up of the country, a total embargo on Serbia and a stigmatization of the people as blood-thirsty savages. Far from connecting, the ethnic stereotype was created and disseminated with the above effects in view, showing its full power in disconnecting people. Sociologist Milton Kleg explains this phenomenon: "When tied to prejudiced attitudes, stereotypes help create a number of behaviors ranging from avoidance to violence. Our review of stereotypes indicates that one's perceived reality is not reality itself, but is a mixture of fact and fiction (155)." Although stereotypes are rarely accurate representations, Serbia fell victim to (intended) errors and that sort of erroneous thinking and dishonest representation of its people brought into effect serious lasting consequences.

Putting aside the past and the political dynamics of ethnic identity representation, one has to agree with Sharonah Fredericko who puts the problem in a nut-shell: "Journalism is of course, not always a faithful reflection of the life: it does, however, faithfully reflect cultural and political tendencies of the society in which it is published". She is absolutely right in stressing that the power of the pen can surpass any other since the pen shapes public opinion. Starting with the interest of certain ideology makers, the media often reinforce and perpetuate the stereotypes however unfair they may be, strongly influencing and misguiding the public. The times of the "Serb Terror" are hopefully behind us[2], yet impartial or even benevolent representations of Serbia are burdened with bias.

To return to the set of photos on Serbia in *Maisonneuve*. The first is a double-page spread shot from the window of a disused power plant in the suburbs of Leskovac, showing an almost defunct textile factory. Every detail in this photo is depressive: the interior of the room resembles a torture room, with the only visible wall completely overgrown with dark brown mould. The room is clearly damp and the air stale, all sort of junk has carelessly been discarded on the two tables, the drawer pulled out and stacked under the table, while on the tables there are, curiously, instruments that belong to a laboratory – an old fashioned sterilizer, a pair of fine scales in a small glass case and a test-tube holder. If the room is really part of a power plant, these objects definitely do not belong there. Yet, there they are, in the darkened dirty room, the light coming into it through the fly stained sloppily hung curtain. Behind the curtain and the window one can see the chimney of the textile factory soaring uselessly into the sky. The sky is bright blue although it is

[2] Diana Jihnston also reminds us how the German media resounded with condemnation of an entire ethnic group reminiscent of the pre-war propaganda against the Jews: "The point is developed by Wolfgang Fohrr, "Entscheidung in Jugoslawien," in Wolfgang Schneider, ed., *Bet Andruch Mord: Die deutsche Propaganda und der Balkankrieg* (Hamburg: Konkret, 1997). A sort of climax was reached with the July 8, 1991, cover of the influential weekly *Der Spiegel*, depicting Yugoslavia as a "prison of people" with the title "Serb terror."

late afternoon judging by the long shadows. Yet, the dominant atmosphere is that of oppression and despair. Everything is unkempt and forlorn so that the viewer immediately confirms his image of Serbia as a miserable place. Miloš Marjanović from the Faculty of Law in Novi Sad explains the mechanism of prejudice: "The prejudiced way of thinking precedes reasoning" (436). This seems to be more than true since what almost escaped even my eye was a neat white house, somebody's home right next to the factory. Whoever sees this photograph will not notice the normal life going on, overwhelmed by the heavy atmosphere of the room and the threatening factory chimney. The prejudice that is fathered by the stereotype precludes reasoning and even correct perception.

Likewise in the next double-page spread there is a photo of the huge Trepca industrial complex, where one can see an abandoned factory under an overcast sky. The barbed-wire fence, transmission line pylons, two tall chimneys and some buildings seemingly chaotically piled together create an impression of misused technological benefits. The yard is overgrown with bushes and bamboo reeds and there is not a single person in view. The dull light again contributes to the effect of abandonment, negligence, even destructive use of civilization assets. One gets the feeling that the people who were supposed to manage this complex for the production of metals and refined minerals did a very bad job of it. Not everybody will read the caption saying that this factory is in Kosovska Mitrovica and that it lies mostly unused now that Kosovo has separated from Serbia. And nobody, I fear not even the photographer, will notice a range of hills in the background, one of them dominating the sky line. It is Zvečan, with its famous fortress at the top. One can learn from the net that "the Fortress of Zvečan, located in the north-west of the city of Kosovska Mitrovica, in Kosovo, is an enormous Serbian old castle and one of the oldest fortresses in South Eastern Europe[3]." This cultural treasure, greatly revered by the Serbian people, might change the image of Serbs as "harsh, primitive, miserable, poor peasants or workers" (*Slavic eastern European and Russian Stereotypes*) which they share with other Slavic people of east Europe and

[3] Another internet source explains in more detail: "The medieval town of Zvecan is located in the vicinity of the mouth of the Sitnica in the Ibar, near Kosovska Mitrovica. It is located on the rocky cone hill and by its position it dominates over the valley in which important caravan routes crossed. It is not known when it was built. It was mentioned for the first time in connection with the border clashes between Serbs and Byzantines on Kosovo Polje (Kosovo Field) between 1091 and 1094. There is also an inscription that Stefan Nemanja, after the victory over the Byzantines in 1170, ordered that a prayer for the successful outcome of the battle be held in the church of St. Djordje at Zvecan. By the end of the 14th century, Serbian rulers frequently changed at Zvecan. From mid-15th century the Turkish army occupied it occasionally until the 18th century when the fort was deserted. The base of the Zvecan Fort is adjusted to the terrain and has an irregular stretched shape. On the highest spot, i.e. the Upper Town, there are remains of the church of St. Djordje, cistern and the main octagonal tower. There are several buildings of unclear use in the Lower Town. The ramparts of this part of fort are fortified by massive towers and the main entrance to the town was on the western side. Minor archeological excavations and conservation works were carried out in the 1957-1960 period." (http://www.kosovo.net/kosovo.html).

Russia. With more information about the history of the nation, the stereotype may be broken but as it is, the reader will most likely endorse the claims that the Serbs got what they deserved[4].

If you begin to wonder about the people who live in such desolate environments, the remaining photographs give ample answer. After the first two pictures without any people in them, there comes a full blown photo of a single man. It is a white very mean looking man with a dark complexion due to exposure, short dark hair and dark eyes, unshaven for probably a week. What is most noticeable about him are the deep furrows round his eyes and mouth and on his forehead. His lips are not thin but pressed so tight that they look thin and the glance in his eyes seems to be suspicious. He may be identified with one of those alleged throat-cutters, mean-looking and scheming, especially if one is exposed to that sort of propaganda[5]. How easy it is to mistake real tragedy for nastiness. The caption reads:

> Kragujevac, Serbia. This Serb man fled his home in Kosovo in 1999 after NATO drove Serbian forces out. He lives with over 100 other Kosovo Serbs in an old supermarket converted into a refugee centre. With the declaration of Kosovo independence from Serbia, his hopes of returning home have vanished" (Lemoyne, 32).

This explains the tight lips, the furrow-like lines on his face, the somber eye he gives to the camera. Tragedy is written all over his face and if one knows anything about Kragujevac, the town he was taken to after being displaced, then his dark looks become understandable. The blue jacket he is wearing could suggest that he is a worker but that is highly unlikely because the economy of Kragujevac was absolutely dependent on the "Zastava" factory which manufactured the Yugo cars. This industrial complex collapsed just like the famous electronic industry of Niš due to the crisis in the 80s and 90s. The citizens of Kragujevac are mainly unemployed and with a great number of Kosovo refugees relocated there, the situation got only worse. Living and dying in the old supermarket will be the fate of this unfortunate man and many others like him. Mr. Lemoyne deserves praise for bringing this issue up, however it is uncertain how many Canadian readers

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4 The BBC quoted UN officials as saying that "the Serbs got what they deserved." Patrick Moore, RFE/RL, Inc. But this is only one of many instances when the same phrasing was repeated. http://www.b-info.com/places/Bulgaria/news/94-05/may02.rfe.

5 An extreme example of prejudiced reporting is the article in The FrontPageMagazine.com by Stephen Schwartz: "The real shocker here will be known to few Americans. The Serbian Radical Party is the most extreme anti-Muslim party in Yugoslavia. Its creator, Vojislav Seselj, is a former Yugoslav dissident - once a poster boy for the human rights profession and a guest lecturer at a leading American university. Seselj, who was homosexually raped while imprisoned in Belgrade, was driven insane by that experience, and became the most violent of all the Serb throat-cutter politicians. Seselj and SRS are directly responsible for the martyrdom of thousands of Muslim children, women, old people, and other innocents in the Balkans. Seselj and SRS enjoy substantial support from Kosovo Serbs."

will take a look at the caption. Stereotypes seldom provoke social sympathy. To the contrary, they are most often unsympathetic.

Another photo also shows a refugee from the same centre in Kragujevac but the man is now from Sarajevo. He is a Bosnian Serb by the name of Vlado who "claimed that it was not safe for him to return home" (Lemoyne, 35), having fled the city in early 1996. He is sitting in a corner of what looks like a bathroom, but is clearly his living space now, because there is an electric stove with a pot of soup and a dish of fried potatoes on it. The tiled wall behind him was once white but now it is incredibly filthy just like the window pane to his left. It is so smudged that one cannot figure the scene outside. Or, besides being dirty, it is probably hazed with condensation since Vlado is sitting inside with his heavy coat on. If there is any heating, it is not working properly. He is thin, balding, and worried, again with lips pressed tight. One gets the idea that he is only physically there while mentally he is in his home in Sarajevo or somewhere else in the past. His world has collapsed along with his country and the only way he can restore the idea of order is probably by keeping his treasure, the stove, in mint condition. It is surprising how immaculately white the stove is, clean and shining, clearly polished as carefully as the dishes that stand on it. This is humanity reduced to the basics, the world contracted to mere survival. Yet, I fear a sympathetic attitude to this man's misery will fail to form simply because he will be set against the generally accepted negative stereotype of the Serb. As Marjanović explains: "If the ascribed characteristics are desirable, then we speak about positive stereotypes accompanied by positive feelings of sympathy and readiness to do some actions benevolent for a given group, while it is the opposite with the negative sterotypes"(434). The lack of social sympathy will definitely not contribute to the possible reconnecting of different social groups.

There is another photograph in *Maisonneuve* representing Serbian men at work. The two of them are railway workers sitting in the office of a small station on the line that goes from Belgrade to Istanbul. We in Serbia are familiar with such offices in which literally nothing has changed for about fifty years: the same brown tables worn out by the elbows, the same broken wooden chairs, maybe the same paint on the walls. Generations of men have worked there but it looks as if the same coffee cup, along with the folded newspapers, has been lying there all this time. One man is idly sitting at this table, looking at nothing in particular, maybe waiting for his shift, while the other is leafing through some charts. Curious-looking plants are withering in this room without windows as if to confirm the impression that time has stopped here. The effect the photo produces is gloomy but realistic. Railroad offices in the interior of Serbia are all replicas of this one which can be explained by the relative poverty of the country further increased through international sanctions after the wars. The railroad system, now falling apart, was frequently used in the past by the Orient Express trains connecting the West with the East in terms of physical contact. However, even then the real connection with the Balkan people and their different cultures was seldom established by a Western traveler. The railway gave rise to a whole genre,

as Vesna Golsworthy interpreted it in her study *Inevnting Ruritania*, but the genre did not break the stereotype. Quite the contrary, it created and strengthened it by describing the Balkans as dangerous, hazardous, threatening, even evil and murderous. The popular prose, like Graham Green's *Stamboul Train*, depicts Serbia as dirty, muddy, sludgy backwaters with rural wasteland and urban dilapidation. The imperialism of the Western imagination creates a false picture[6] of the Balkans as impenetrable, immensely complex and destabilizing to the European order. Golsworthy quotes Sara Mills who uses the term "the strategy of distancing" to explain how the description of a people as feudal or medieval can create an emotional distance. Likewise, though Mr. Lemoyne is most likely unaware of it, his photograph showing the two men as if frozen in the past produces a distancing effect. It is difficult to relate to them since they do not seem to belong to our age, let alone to Europe or Canada. Therefore, besides being a part of the stereotypical representation of idle, slovenly Serbs, the image further distances the reader by showing them as the Balkan Other, for good reason removed from the trends of the modern globalised world.

The remaining three photographs show women. In the first one, a young pretty dark-haired woman is selling cheese at a dairy market in Niš. She is appropriately wearing white trousers with a white tea-shirt and an apron. Incongruously, she put on a white leather jacket imitating snake skin and she is heavily rouged, while her nails are also painted red. Mr. Lemoyne took care to zoom her right to the forefront of the photo while behind her there are empty white tables of the market with a single man. Unlike the girl, the man is a typical Serb. Big-bellied, dark-faced with a moustache and with his hands crossed at the back, he disapprovingly looks at what is going on. Although it seems that the girl was supposed to dominate the photo, the heaviness of the man behind her draws one's attention. The young woman affecting modernity is counterbalanced by the middle-aged frowning man, who stands for her background, as a father to a daughter. The impression one gets is of contrasts caught in a limbo, the values of the past weighing the present away from the future, which is all further stressed by the empty market. Coming myself form the city of Niš and shopping regularly at that green market, I know it is empty only towards the end of the opening hours. Otherwise, it is a bustling place which our foreign guests usually like to visit since there you can really see the cross-section of our population, men and women selling and buying, bargaining, laughing, quarreling, like in all markets of the world. Yet, this one is empty, with three plastic bottles of milk to be sold, a bucket of home-made cheese and a wreath of garlic. The image of Serbia as a desolate and forlorn place going counter to progressive trends is put forward again.[7]

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[6] Graham Green, for example, has never visited the Balkans.

[7] A few excerpts from a creative brief *Branding Serbia as a Travel Destination* by a government agency will suffice to illustrate the current image of Serbia: "Serbia has an image problem. A negative international image has driven away visitors. Emerging from a decade of wars and economic sanctions, Serbia's image abroad is one of a corrupt, unpleasant, and potentially dangerous place. Reduced trade and investment, in part due to Serbia's negative image, has resulted in low wages and

In the second photograph there are three women at the hairdresser's. The place is ancient and shabby, and as Mr. Lemoyne explains in his caption, it is "near an industrial area that is almost completely shut down" (LeMoyne, 35). The walls are painted light green and the room is cluttered with all sorts of stuff one can see at the salon of an elderly hair dresser in Serbia. She is giving one customer a haircut while the other two are waiting. What is usually a very friendly environment, a place where women feel free to relax and chat, in this photo looks cold because of the green walls and the neon light and also dirty with all the cut hair lying around on the worn-out tiles of the floor. Besides, the waiting customers foregrounded in the photo are both holding cigarettes in the manner of seasoned smokers, and a black ash-tray is visibly placed on the counter. Therefore, what is commonly a more than pleasant place, regardless of its state-of-the-art or old-fashioned image, here looks somber. None of the women are smiling or talking, the cigarettes seem to occupy their attention more than the interaction with the people in the room. In other words, another stereotype of Serbia is being exemplified in the picture: Serbs as heavy smokers. Indeed, the statistics prove that, as Tanjug reported in May 2008:

Research has shown that one in every two Serbian males and one in every three females smoke, while results of a global study into tobacco use by young people show that an exceptionally high percentage of schoolchildren (smokers and non-smokers alike) in Serbia are exposed to smoke at home and in public places.

> According to the research, over 54.7 percent of schoolchildren in Serbia between the ages of 13 and 15 have tried smoking, 16.3 percent smoke on a regular basis, while almost a third tried their first cigarette before the age of 10. (*Serbia to mark World No Tobacco Day*).

Serbia has adopted legal regulations just like all of Europe intending to fight the habit, so smoking is not allowed in any public office. Yet, as a rule, people smoke in all places unless they are explicitly asked to refrain from it. What is even worse, the WHO statistics in 2004 showed that "Female smokers are most prevalent in the guano covered Pacific isle of Nauru, at 64.7% (more than men, at 56.8%), followed by Serbia & Montenegro - 51.8%, and the Lebanon - 46.9%." This evidence is irrefutable and there is no reason to believe that the number of smokers has drastically dropped after 2004. Even so, the question that bothers me is whether this is the most representative image of Serbia. Will photographs like these attract a foreigner to come and explore the country and learn the truth about it?

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high unemployment." … "Every day, Serbia is savaged in the international press. A quick search of news wires typically reveals headlines about war crimes, nationalism, crime, and other negative subjects. Although Serbia has made great progress in achieving stability, little positive news makes it into the international press."… "Most associated Serbia with wars and ethnic conflict. They thought it was unsafe to come here." … "They expected it to be grey and depressing." Source: http://compete.rs/files/CBriefSerbiaBrand1.doc

The last photo shows a young girl of 12 by the name of Jelena. She is also a refugee from Kosovo, living with her mother and sister in one room in a motel converted into a refugee centre in a little town of Bela Palanka. She is wearing a pair of light blue clean slacks and a bluish sweater with a big application in front showing a strangely spotted head of a horse. It is brown, white and yellow. When a Serb looks at the picture, he will definitely see a Gipsy girl because of her dark brown complexion, pitch-black hair, dark eyes and big probably golden earrings in her ears. Yet, I believe when a Canadian looks at this photo, he will see a girl suffering severely from vitiligo. Her hands, the areas around her mouth and the eyes are affected by the disease leaving the depigmented skin purplish and in stark contrast with her natural brown. Again, the photograph being taken in Serbia of a Serbian citizen, one can subliminally conclude that Serbia is a strange country. The spotted girl is sporting the spotted horse on her shirt. How strange. The tragic history of this poor girl, victimized twice in her 12 years of life, once by historical circumstances and then by a health condition, is easily overshadowed by her unusual appearance. The individual is subordinated to the general in an ethnic stereotyping. "Stereotypes focus upon and thereby exaggerate differences between groups" (5). For many foreigners she will be different first because of her skin condition, then because she is a Serb, and the ensuing social distancing and stereotyping will be in proportion to the so exaggerated difference while, after all, she is only a girl. She can also become a source of further confusion because the caption does not mention her being a Gipsy, and a Canadian reader of *Maisonneuve* may come to believe that she is ethnically Serbian. For the sake of truth, the girl in question is visibly different for many Serbs as well because she is a Gipsy and marked by disease, which can also result in distancing. Yet, although she is not a typical Gipsy, she may be by some regarded as a typical Serb precisely because of her physical weirdness. As Marjanović explains: "the prejudices are an unthoughtful judgment or a false deduction rather than an incomplete induction since they reject opposite or new experiences as untypical cases or exceptions that confirm the rule" (436). She must be seen first as a Serb because her photo is part of the series *Serbia: the Sad South*, so that her untypical case only confirms the rule that people in Serbia are strange, to say the least.

Instead of a conclusion, I would just like to say that my wish is to be able to see in a forthcoming issue of *Maisonneuve* a series of photos that would aim at changing a negative stereotype, entitled *Serbia, The Serene South*.

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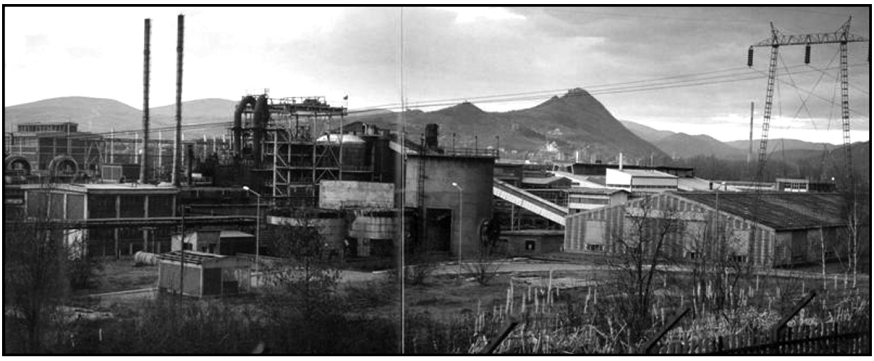
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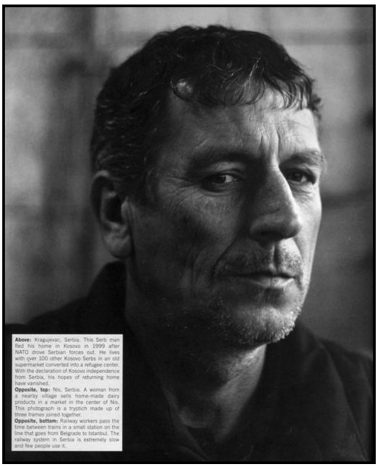
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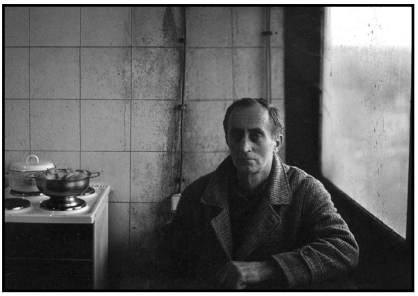
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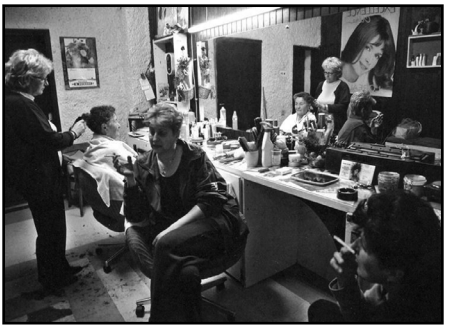

STUDIO
Serbia, the Sad South
Photographs and text by ROGER LEMOINE


Above: Kragujevac, Serbia. This Serb man fled his home in Kosovo in 1999 after NATO drove Serbian forces out. He lives with over 200 other Kosovo Serbs in an old supermarket converted into a refugee center. With the declaration of Kosovo independence from Serbia, his hopes of returning home have faded.
Opposite, top: Niš, Serbia. A woman from a nearby village sells home-made dairy products in a market in the center of Niš. This photograph is a tryptich made up of three frames joined together.
Opposite, bottom: Railway workers pass the time between trains in a small station on the line that goes from Belgrade to Istanbul. The railway system in Serbia is extremely slow and few people use it.











Above: Petr Pellerin, Serbia. Twelve-year-old Petr was born in Prague. His father is an electrician at a hotel. She has been there since 1999, when her family fled Kosovo. Petr remembers nothing of his former home, since the Yugoslav civil war. There are almost two hundred people living there, sometimes 6 or 7 people in a room. Petr's mother is a teacher of Czech Roma culture. 1999, Jarkovac refugee camp, a vast disused bar shelter whitewashed.

Opposite page, top: Hrtkovci, Serbia. Maria Nikolić is a refugee in Serbia since fleeing Croatia in early 1994. He claimed that it was not safe for her to return home. He was the only Serb living in the village. 1999, Hrtkovci, inside the supply with refugees from Kosovo.

Opposite page, bottom: Leskovac, Serbia. Dragana Stanković is a refugee in Serbia since in a section of Leskovac. They live near an industrial area that is almost completely shut down. Dragana's children have nowhere to play other places to socialize. Like many Serbs they are heavy smokers.

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Philosophy of the Integral Human: McLuhan's Critique of the Guttenberg Era and the Hope in the New Media

It is not a coincidence that the formulation that made McLuhan famous – media is message – came from his interpretations of cubism.[1] Like the avant-garde, cubism insisted on the displacement of attention from the seen to seeing which, as a consequence, held a *coup* in which form became content. As cubism used the capacities of the painting media in an attempt to create its content, so did McLuhan cease to relate the effect of the media form to its content. Accentuating that familiarity, Groys has rightfully questioned the relevancy of this thesis, on which depended the survival or demise of the theoretical autonomy of media research:

> Cubism has made the medium a message. Because of that, McLuhan, while writing his book after the emergence of cubism, could have thought that the media has essentially always been a message. (Groys, 2000, 96)

In other words, can the logic of the avant-garde be historically universalized? Can its key thesis be applied to ages from which it has distanced itself, building its identity in normativity and exclusiveness by means of cut and halt? It appears that the answer to this question is ambivalent. From one side, McLuhan has theoretically proven why we cannot count on the same effect if we read the same text or if we observe its performance on stage. Behind those deceivingly naive questions on the difference between the effects the text has when we read it and when we hear it, comes McLuhan's idea of the superiority of the media when compared to the concept. That superiority is based on the thesis of the advantages of the audiovisual sphere over the logosphere. In other words, on the power of media to change the "patterns of attention", which no concept has allegedly been able to do:

> The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance. The serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with

[1] "Cubism, by seizing on instant total awareness, suddenly announced that *the medium is the message*... Is that not what has happened in physics as in painting, poetry and communication?" (McLuhan, 1998, 13)

> impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception. (McLuhan, 1998, 18)

If Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* or some of Husserl's papers appeared on the extensive list of the literature used, the book *Understanding Media* might have looked different. Conceptualization according to those two philosophers is shown as a productive corrective which does not remain solely on the plain of abstraction, but is also capable of initiating a shift from one standpoint to the other. However, in his defense, McLuhan could offer his determination of the artist, as a man of integral consciousness whose work might not have anything to do with art. The key to the doors of avant-garde was connected to the media's profound self-awareness, and that has given McLuhan the right to, by analogy, extend the term 'artist' into the sphere of humanist sciences, that is, everywhere the media determination of our senses, and correlation to knowledge is taken into account.

However, the sign of a developed awareness of the connection between knowledge and the media by which it is transferred can be found in ancient times. McLuhan could find his predecessors in Plato or Augustine, in the fundamental differences between speech and the letter from *Phaedrus*, or in the confrontation of *legere in silentio* and *clara lectio*. His *differentia specifica* is contained in the attempt to establish the reflection of the media in a systematic way, which includes the possibility of recognizing the dominant morphing effect of media in certain historical circumstances.

Literally speaking, Groys rightly claims that McLuhan gives the past an avant-garde paradigm, since for one Aristotle or Michelangelo their own media were not messages but had the status of *organon*. When Heraclitus says "If you are not listening to me, but to the logos", he is speaking from a perspective opposed to McLuhan's, since he insists on the superiority of the conceptual sphere over the media. He is completely indifferent as to how his message will be received: it is irrelevant whether we will hear it directly from him or if we will read it, just as long as the message he is passing on is comprehended. Indeed, for most thinkers and artists before the avant-garde, the medium was an *organon*, and not a message.

However, if we persist in the claim that the thesis 'media is message' can be applied exclusively to the period after the avant-garde, we put ourselves in danger of overlooking the fact that the avant-garde was initiated by the new media:

> Perhaps the great revolution produced by photography was in the traditional arts. The painter could no longer depict a world that had been much photographed. He turned, instead, to reveal the inner process of creativity in expressionism and in abstract art. (McLuhan, 1998, 194)

Without a strictly determined media configuration, the essential insight of the avant-garde would be virtually impossible. From that point, it seems justified enough to switch theses and to cast aside the option that it is unjustified to uni-

versalize the standpoint of cubism in favor of investigating the media's conditioning of every opinion, even the one which recognizes the significance of the media's "condition of possibility". In short, the fact that the avant-garde discovered that 'media is message' does not mean that it is illegitimate to investigate the "message" which the media has reshaped in previous historical ages.

On the other hand, putting McLuhan's idea into action required a significant degree of historical awareness. It requires both a profound awareness of human historicity and a conceptual system which can be confronted with the demand of the interrelation of historical continuities and discontinuities. If we consider the fact that the avant-garde relation towards tradition can be reduced to historicism, that is, to the logic by which each era has its own counter-point in itself, then we are faced with the challenge which comes out of the fact that the theory of media must at the same time be something of a philosophy of history. It is certain that to such a challenge one cannot respond by using means of historicism, since its logic insists on the uniqueness and unrepeatability of each historical and cultural constellation, while McLuhan explicitly refers to the mediation which occurs between the old and the new media, and writes remarkable pages on the character of recycling via which the role of the new media, amongst others, consists of reshaping the function of the old media. The fact is, the theatre has survived in spite of the movies, and the museum has not been torn down in spite of the demands of the avant-garde and the new constitution of archives, proves McLuhan right.

That all put aside, McLuhan has another ace up his sleeve: the high degree of understanding of human historicism. It is demonstrated in the comprehension that the media does not simply add itself onto that which we are. What we call the means of communication, are not means at all. Unlike the naive belief in the possibility of our direct communication with content, McLuhan has demonstrated the constitutive role of the media through which all content is shaped. Since it is not the same if we hear a statement out loud or read it in a book or receive it form the television screen, the media factor obtains the status once reserved for the transcendent dimension of awareness: "the media of communication are not mere catalysts but have their own physics and chemistry which enter into every moment of social alchemy and change" (McLuhan, 1967, 40).

Metaphorical speech about physics or chemistry is completely compatible with the avant-garde ideas that the artistic media possess their own time and space. Kant's transcendent intuitions have therefore finally been given a foundation upon which they cease to be plain forms, given historically shaped content. If we no longer observe the media as an auxiliary means of social communication, but we start to see the dynamic and active constituent which contributes to the structure of our intuitions' space and time, it will become clear why the sensation of space and time is fundamentally different in the case of the shamans in the caves of Altamira, in the monastery surroundings of a mediaeval monk and with a contemporary internet user.

If we recall that even the post-Kantian philosophy emphasized that the character and the reaches of the cognitive powers cannot be examined *sub specie aeternitatis*, and that the objects of cognizance can be accepted as stiff, rigid and timeless, McLuhan's contribution to that tendency consists of highlighting the shift from one state of consciousness to the other. Quoting Blake's poem Jerusalem: "If Perceptive Organs vary, Objects of Perception seem to, vary" (McLuhan, 1998, 46), McLuhan is implying that the actualization of the theory of media leads to the founding of a certain phenomenology of the features of media consciousness. Its determining accent is rightfully placed on the moments of overcoming and the mutual confrontation of the old media form with the new one: "We become extremely conscious of cultural models and bias when moving from one dominant form of awareness to another" (McLuhan, 1962, 73).

Even though McLuhan's basic idea implies such conduct, the reader of *Understanding Media* whose expectation from his theory of media goes towards a systematic phenomenology of consciousness, must remain disappointed. Instead of the phenomenological, the author decides to introduce the mosaic approach whose strategy is closer to the cubist poly-perspectivism than to the one demonstrated by systematic-historical study. From McLuhan's perspective, complying with the unity of the systematic and historical would mean accepting the historical anachronism, the linear approach completely foreign to the modern age: "linear exposition is abandoned in favour of what he calls 'the mosaic approach'; and by means of techniques which are closely copied from those of Dada movement" (Miller, 1971, 130).

Hegel could write the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in that way, since the turn of the 19th century was marked by the dominance of the printed media, while the integral character of the electronic age requires a totally new approach. Based on that fact, we can pay respect to McLuhan for consequently applying his own assumptions, since the articulation of his theoretical opinions remained faithful to the media self-awareness of his own time, but at the same time we can question to what extent the integral, mythical time characteristic for the electronic age can communicate with historical phenomena. Even if we forget the fact that the phenomenology of the media consciousness cannot function alone, that is, without philosophical-historical support,[2] we can hardly agree to the possibility that the task McLuhan has set for himself can be extracted from the perspective of a historicized modern awareness. After all, his avant-garde role-models would never decide to take this step, since they have simply disqualified the relevance of the past in favor of the present moment.

Unlike them, McLuhan needs the past to understand his own time. He is forced into that by his insight into the fact that the new media are destroying the old selfhood, but that they cannot annul it completely, which in other words means

[2] Rosenberg has on that sense rightfully criticized McLuhan that with him the "Drama of history is reduced to a charade whose profound intent is metamorphosis of a man via media" (Rosenberg, 1969, 197).

that the avant-garde breakup with the past is not completely possible, without leaving it fictive and declarational. That means that the breakthrough of the historical consciousness of the media is not correlative to their own historicalness. However, the insight into that correlation is not possible solely through the use of the logic of global and integral thinking that McLuhan is representing, but only through the support of an analysis of its genesis. "If McLuhan was right, scholars at Sorbonne would still be writing their theses in Latin." (Debre, 2000, 48)

Truth be told, perhaps the acceptance of this genesis would represent a step which would significantly bring McLuhan closer to the dystopically structured, or the confronting wing of media theory. The very thesis he insists on is that the actual content of man and society is based on their historical genesis, and that the new media through the absolutizing of the present moment in human existence are introducing an accent on the present and superficial, by which we are generally alienated from our own being. McLuhan would refute such argumentation for two reasons. For him, the emanation of the historical as the key segment of humanity is the product of Guttenberg's workshop, which means it is usurping the rights to universality. On the other hand, by giving a humanizing role to the old media, and by reducing the new media to the causes of alienation and dehumanization rather represents an act of resentment[3] by the antiquated historical shapes of media consciousness and immature sentimentality, than a serious theory of media. From his perspective, dystopia is not readable as a dark prognosis of a malignant political propaganda which with the help of the new media is destroying spirituality and humanness, but is more of a resigned farewell of a literary world in demise.

Because of that, the avant-garde's pledge of faithfulness to our own time will remain legitimate for McLuhan as well:

> today we start to take into account that the new media are not just mechanical toys whose quality is to generate a world of illusion, since they are creating a new language of an unspeakable expressive power. (McLuhan, 1969, 102)

The distinctiveness of that calling also includes the tendency to attribute alienation, if there is any point mentioning it, to the past which is best left behind. If today's media are not creating the world of illusion, as McLuhan's opponents are claiming, the question arises whether they ever did? In other words, was it ever appropriate to accuse the media of alienation?

[3] If we agree to point out that if we agree with Kostelanetz that every medium: "creates a public whose love for it is larger than the interest for its content" (Kostelanec, 1971, 27), then the discontent of a man, whose ties become repressed and are made meaningless by the new media, becomes understandable. To illustrate the issue, it is sufficient to recall the aggressive attitude of the renaissance collector of calligraphic books towards the emergence of the impersonal printed books. Since he was convinced that the contents of a higher spirituality must be transferred by a luxuriously equipped book, made of the finest sheepskin and ink, for him, the emergence of the printed book was identical with a breakdown of spirituality, and not with its massing and individuation, to which they consequently led.

The idiom of incomparability does not emerge accidentally in McLuhan's defense of the new media. Their "underground" activity consists of the configuration of newly appropriate expressions, implying the reconfiguration of the mutual balance of forces between the human senses. A similar role was held by the media in the past; however, that always resulted in a misplaced constellation. In the background of the view that the new media is incomparable, lies a hidden warning that we cannot interpret them with the criteria we have inherited from the old media. If we generalize that warning, we could come to the conclusion that it is pointless to connect the media with the idea of human alienation. In every age there was a dominance of a certain media, which was then followed by the age of a new media, followed by the noisy protest of the old media for being given a subordinate role. In that aspect, McLuhan's historicism is unrelenting.

That means that it is inevitably wrong to mourn because the current changes in which the new media are destroying the old selfhood, since it is exactly that selfhood that we must shed in order to be harmonized with our own historical moment. The most unacceptable form of consciousness of an avant-garde theoretician of media should be denounced as an inert presence of an outlived form of consciousness which was created by a once dominant media: "Our most impressive words and thoughts betray us by referring to the previously existent, not to the present". (McLuhan, 1967, 51)

Self-consciousness for McLuhan implies an understanding of the media forms of our awareness. If so, then we have no reason to give more advantage to some historical features of the spirit than others, since they are all equally brought to the surface via the dominant media. If we accept that there is no point in accusing the media of the construction of the alien, then it is the media-oriented search for the relationship between freedom and alienation that was doomed from the start, and the meaning of alienation is reduced to the inability of the inert forms of media consciousness to survive in the new circumstances. However, when we move further away from this basic level, and pay more attention to McLuhan's actual interpretations of creative ages of media history, we will come to different conclusions.

The *differentia specifica* of the media's channeling of our senses is in the constitution of a certain ratio, that is, a disproportion between sense ratios:

> But the price we pay for the special technological tools … is that these massive *extensions* of sense constitute *closed* systems. Our private senses are not closed systems but endlessly translated into each other in that experience which we call con-sciousness … Our technologies, like our private senses, now demand an interplay and ratio that makes *rational* co-existence possible. (McLuhan, 1962, 5)

The difference between the open and closed, natural and artificial was made with the intent of examining the effect, and not the meaning. The key orientation in that examination is based more on the insight that our senses do not have a time-

less structure which is able to expand its limitations with media accessories. On the contrary, the artificial and hermetic character of the media extension testifies to the fact that the media simply contribute to the sense-ratio disharmony. Some media favor some senses to others, which directly affects human self-understanding. Because of that, the reciprocity of senses recommended itself to McLuhan as a reliable means of understanding the media.

In accordance to this, the modern age is transfused with the spirit of Gutenberg's discovery. Modern man is a typographic man, and his distinctiveness is in the domination of the eye over the other senses. Unlike the synthetic sense of hearing which dominated the tribal world, the eye is neutral and cold, so it engenders remote reflection and individuation, but also gives the opportunity for suppressing emotions in communication. McLuhan is convinced that, if on the basis of sense ratios we ask the question about the media construction of the foreign, we would again be led to the astounding answer that modern man is alienated to an extreme. The epoch which covered itself in the ideas of freedom and enlightenment has in fact been based on the media's intensification of alienation. Condemning man to continuous visualization and to the segregation of emotional contents from the awareness of the material world, the typographic human found the ideal type in Descartes' solitary meditating individual. His relationship with the community is primarily asocial, while his freedom seeks self-isolation over association and true social interaction. Often, it is established for the sake of the preservation of a unique achievement of the typographic age: points of self-reflection, around which two major products of modernity are constituted: egoism and nationalism.

Unlike the former global participation which consisted of a turbulent vicissitude between action and reaction, the civil community has constituted itself upon assimilation and decency: "The typographic logic created *the outsider,* the alienated man …" (McLuhan, 1962, 212). By placing the visual sphere at the forefront, Gutenberg's discovery only worsened the conflict of the heart and the mind, so the culprits for the confrontation between the sensual and the spiritual should no longer be sought only in Platonism or Christianity, but also in the alienated consciousness whose communication with others is mostly based on a distant encounter with the printed media: letters, books, magazines. The centuries-long age of the reign of visualization was also the age of the submission of other senses. If the commonly quoted analogue by which modern man is a visual Narcissus can be seen as appropriate, then its meaning should no longer be connected with the satirical pose of the power of self-enamored hyper-egoism, but with a diagnosis of numbness, with the consequences of the cultivation of specific sensations. McLuhan's neurological preamble for the theory of media states that the numbness of the nervous system irrefutably represents his answer to the bombardment of a single sense.

Narrations which warn of the danger of mass alienation, upon which the machinery of dehumanization is powered by the inhumane structure of capitalism, or simply the insularity of the narrow-mindedness of every "ism", get some unexpected competition in that manner – the visual world. The faith in its noble effects

overlooked the possibility of an opposite effect. An expert of visualization is not a person who managed to make the closest possible connection to the world,[4] but is only the first to successfully stand the narcosis. Undoubtedly, we would rightfully refuse to equate the state caused by unemployment or inhumane treatment at the workplace with the deformations of consciousness caused by the systematic suppression of the non-visual sphere. However, it is equally true that experience has taught us with different forms of alienation, that it becomes most prominent in those places where it is not even seen at first. If we add to that the claims of the end of the literary world which were coming from all around, then the enormous interest in McLuhan's opinions can be recognized in their optimism. Unlike the dystopian protest for the sake of the preservation of humanity embodied in the printed media, for McLuhan, the news of the end of Guttenberg's reign is regarded as a blessing.

McLuhan's understanding of the modern man as alienated implies that the shift from the visual to the languages of other senses in Gutenberg's era was not conducted properly. Although his theory of the media is based on the assumption that "the definition of the dominant media includes the fact that it is inevitable" (Ludes, 2003, 30), the dominance of the leading media does not necessarily mean dictatorship. Basing that rationality for him is equal to the harmonized senses, the sense ratio which does not exist by itself since the days of tribal man, the response to the challenges of the media is not in a disappointed protest, but in the display of models upon which the corrupted balance can be restored. If in the attempt to find the appropriate model, we turn for help from modern phenomenology and neurology, we will come to new formulations of an old insight: "Reflection and acceptance thus form a double fold of cognition and affection, dynamically recovering one another in linking one to another, to the point that cognitive reflection and affective openness cease to be opposed to one another in the process of becoming aware, but form a non-duality" (Depraz, 2003, 42).

The close connection between reflection and affection on which the contemporary author insists is simply an echo of the familiar request for unique spontaneousness and receptiveness in which there will be no place left for hierarchy, for the decisive dominance of reflection over the senses. What was a provocative burst with Nietzsche, directed against the dominance of the spirit over the senses, in the thesis of the great mind of the body, has become almost self-understood to modern thought. However, the kinship of Nietzsche's thinking with his philosophical predecessors is in the assumption that there is a unity of the senses, in a firm interaction and complementarities between certain senses. It implies that between certain senses, a productive cooperation has already been established, which gives Kant the right to speak in the singular of sense diversity, and Hegel of sense spontaneity, while not being forced to specify what sense they are referring to. Further-

[4] It is interesting that a thinker such as Jacques Attali recently reached for an argument typical for McLuhan's understanding of the media: "Western cognizance has been trying for twenty-five centuries to see the world. It does not understand that the world is not to be seen, but heard." (Attali, 2007, 7).

more, Merleau-Ponty will say that the cineaste perception is no exception, but a rule of the transversal character of our senses: "The senses are translated into each other without the need of a translator" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 271).

Unlike the philosophers, McLuhan insisted on the opinion that the unity of senses in the modern world is fictional. The sense ratios always assume a media-created imbalance among the senses. A philosopher is then no longer just an expert for transcendence, but also a therapist of the senses, ready to favor the creation of perceptive codes which will compensate for repressed sense experiences and in that way contribute to the establishment of a true unique sense. Being that the 20th century philosophy managed to cast away the hierarchy of the spirit and the senses, the only thing left was to technically cancel out the existing hierarchy between the senses themselves. The end of that hierarchy will mark the end of the media production of alienation.

McLuhan's "media optimism" is based on the belief that after Gutenberg's age came Marconi's age, which meant that sight was no longer dominant. If we admit the deficiencies of Guttenberg's age, the term audio-visual will speak on behalf of the new media's capacity to contribute to the establishment of a disturbed balance. The profound experiences, the revival of the lost senses and the recovery of the power of imagination and fantasy have been pointed out as a valuable arsenal of the effect of television. Unlike Enzensberger, who will recognize the zero medium in television, the "Buddhist machine" into which a man plugs himself to "unplug himself" (Enzensberger, 1994, 85), the apparatus of the magical effect whose function is reduced to the encouragement of self-loss and self-oblivion, a voluntary exile into the void, McLuhan would recognize the renaissance of the integral awareness in its effects. After the distanced homogeneity of writing, comes the era of intensive participation, a more direct relationship with the world, in which discontinuity and heterogeneity are dominant. McLuhan's understanding of the television media implies the realization of the long-standing dream of the avant-garde about the breakdown of the distance that separates us from the profound experience of reality, on "the absence of the control by the mind". (Breton, 1963, 37) Moreover, the television performs a remarkable educational function, which is not related to the broadcasting of educational shows, but to the school of spontaneousness, for the practice of "total involvement": "It is the total involvement in all-inclusive *nowness* that occurs in young lives via TV's mosaic image. This change of attitude has nothing to do with programming in any way, and would be the same if the programs consisted entirely of the highest cultural content" (McLuhan, 1998, 335).

Four decades after the publication of McLuhan's works, we are witnesses of a vast list of literature which presents the enormous capacities of television, but also other audiovisual media to generate alienation. McLuhan's promise of an integral presence, but also new sociality, is most commonly deformed in a disintegrated absence, into a new asocial man whose distinctiveness consists of a lonesome consummation of cultural phenomena. Participation in the present is reduced to

its simulation in the comfort of one's home, which one need not leave anymore to watch a film or listen to a concert, which inevitably includes an encounter with other human beings: "The message of the medium has become the message of the incapacity of an individual". (Groys, 2000, 98)

The culture of doubt in the honesty and truthfulness of the media's contents has in the meantime become a self implicit characteristic of education. The dystopic mood of the contemporary viewer has been impregnated with doubt, since the modern sensibility, stripped of the trust in the future, does not wish to sacrifice its present on the altar of "global information". The ongoing battle between the printed and electronic media has not yet been decided, although we are witnesses of the penetration of books and newspapers into areas where McLuhan would not expect them. The mixing of the mosaic and linear in books and magazines distributed by internet signals the possibility of a reconciliation between Guttenberg's and Marconi's worlds. Apart from that, with an accent on integral, simultaneous time, we can still not explain the fact that the History Channel remains one of the most popular programs on the air. Even more confusing is why the everyday confrontation with the new media's messages is reduced to the desperate protest of the elite culture, whose programs are being broadcast in the worst possible air-times. However, the question is how much we would even pay attention to these questions if not for the contradictory, but very lucid observations made by McLuhan. Among them, particularly those referring to modern times, are those on media control, the necessity of basing the inherited reason of critique not only on academic, literary argumentation but also on other models. In other words, McLuhan was right when he claimed that the limits of our social reaction to the media are appropriate only in regards to the press, since we are not able to immanently approach the new media and do not have direct access to their messages. In that aspect, his views coincide with Waldenfels': "a different view does not match different descriptions to different interpretations" (Waldenfels, 1999, 153-154).

However, to gain a different view we firstly must cast aside the superficial opposites which McLuhan was so fond of: visual vs. organic, organic vs. mechanical, individual vs. tribe, and to never lose from our sight that mans' relations to the world can always be indirect, even when he is experiencing it in indirect way,[5] - and that we can rightfully expect the future to bring productive steps towards the realization of the idea of the necessity of "protection from media showers". When successful, media analysis is nothing more than a form of normalization, (Waldenfels, 2008, 229) social support against new forms of media-initiated poverty.

Unless we ask the very burning question about the responsibility of the media theoreticians, then we approach the point in which McLuhan's observations on media control meet the opinions of his opponents. Regardless of the different propositions regarding the man of the future, they equally represent the argument of the responsibility of the media theoretician in that he is supposed to miti-

[5] It is not a coincidence that Plesner's second anthropological law is titled in Hegel's spirit, the *law of mediated spontaneousness.*

gate the negative effects of the media and to assert the positive ones. In McLuhan's poeticized version that argument appears like this: "The artist is the historian of the future because he uses the unnoticed possibilities of the present". (McLuhan, 1967, 17) Pointing out unmarked possibilities is a welcome exercise in itself, and will be greeted with equal warmth, regardless if it is a futuristically, avant-garde theoretician of the media, or a dystopic critic of the media whose culture is trying to protect us from the traps of the past.

When discussing what both theories overlooked, what catches the eye is their tendency towards the description of alienation in the negative sense, neglecting the question of affirmative estrangement, media-affiliated transformation of selfhood in the direction of humanization, and not alienation. If we could pay more attention towards that kind of strategy, the future models of media control would have a better chance of success. Especially when they manage to outmatch the existing arguments on the untouchableness of the self via dynamically structured experiences, which enrich the individual, pointing him to new experiential possibilities. With that, a more intensive degree of cooperation with philosophy is recommended, to a degree even larger that what McLuhan originally suggested, regardless of the fact that that cooperation risks "referral to that which already existed" even when the media produce it. The structures of alienation are something "old", with which we cannot do battle by simply turning towards the new.

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Food and Identity in an Adoptive Country

Introduction

Food and eating are related to the construction of a social, psychological and linguistic reality and are one of the most important culture-specific social patterns. Cultures can almost be identified by what they eat and how they eat it. As M. Visser writes: "We are eating cultural history and value as well as family memories." (Visser, 30) Consequently, it is not surprising that food observations are the first ones new Canadians make when describing differences between Canada and their home countries. Furthermore, the first taste of a country, as it were, stays with the people forever. Moses Znaimer who immigrated to Canada as a small child from a DP camp has never forgotten his first taste of Coke – cold, dark, effervescent and sweet given to him by soldiers coming by the camp "mess". The drink was at first somewhat of a mystery to his parents, who thought it might have been Russian kvass, or dark beer, or iced tea. Only in Montreal did they all realize what it had been – and what it had come to mean for the little boy – his first taste of Canada (Reader's Digest). In fact, coca cola is an emblematic drink and a symbol of American-ness. According to Penny Van Esterik, it has such a representational significance for the American soldiers that everywhere they go coca cola factories are set up, so that Americans could have free access to this symbolic drink (lectures at York University, Sept. 2007).

Consequently, some foods represent national icons and are perceived as part and parcel of national identity. Cf. this quotation from Jack Goody's seminal book: "The continuity of borsch may provide some thread of living to those passing through the years following the October Revolution, just as hamburger clearly states to many an American that he is home and dry. Oatmeal may have bridged the gap between Catholic freedom and Puritan restraint." (Goody, 152) The affection for some core foods, which might be termed *vertical bonding*, incorporates a sense of belonging, representing an essential part of one's social identity, an affiliation with a certain community, past or present. Thus, food consumption creates identities: "We consume according to who we are or what want to be" (Benwell and Stokoe, 167). Significantly, the above-mentioned sentimental feeling is not always tied to the taste of food, which is fairly relative. In fact, for those without

a tradition of eating certain foods the taste is often "acquired", e.g. cheese for the Chinese. Moreover, modern taste is very different from that of five hundred years ago, and according to W. Mead, "scarcely one of the favourite dishes served at [medieval] feasts would now be found eatable." (1931:53)

As other social patterns, foods and meals are characterized by culture-specificity. The formatting of food and the sequencing of different components of food often clashes: in Bulgaria, for example, dinner should start with salads prepared from fresh vegetables in the summer, or pickles in the winter, and these starters go with *rakia* – a strong alcoholic drink made from plums or grapes. Salads are followed by a main course washed down with wine or beer. Rakia tastes and is distilled in a very similar fashion to the Italian grappa, yet unlike Bulgaria, where it marks the start of a meal, Italian grappa is drunk at its end, as a digestive. In traditional Bulgarian salads, fruits and vegetables are never mixed[1], unlike in many other cuisines.

Heritage foods for 'old' Canadians – a brief outline

By the end of the eighteenth century, the dominant groups in Canada were the British (particularly English and Scots), French, and American Loyalists. The cuisine that developed during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century reflected these influences. There were strong overtones of French cuisine in Quebec; British influences in English-speaking Canada, and a strong import of culinary culture from the United States. While there were many ethnic groups in Canada by the end of World War II, British-American cookery dominated. At the same time, Canada is well-known for some culinary bestsellers which vary from region to region and depend on its specific geography and staples: game in Quebec (deer, boar, caribou pate are quite common), seafood and dishes along the Atlantic and Pacific coast. Throughout Canada, there is an emphasis on cranberry (e.g. in cereals and cakes) and on maple syrup in a variety of foods – from scrambled eggs doused with maple syrup to bacon glazing. Other maple products are popular as well, reflecting the significance of the maple tree, whose leaf adorns the flag of Canada. Many families enjoy a visit in early spring to a maple sugar "shack," the special rustic building where sap from maple trees is boiled in a large open pan to make maple syrup. It should, of course, be noted that much of the regional dishes, such as maple syrup and wild rice, are influenced by the First Nations cuisine. (Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture)

Given the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural heritage of Canadians, family favorites are strongly influenced by the family background, especially in relation to holiday celebrations. The regional varieties of food are the expression of real or mythical heritage. In many cases, however, an iconic food, such as the famous or infamous Quebec staple *poutine,* does not go back a long time. Cf. the following definition:

[1] In the rapidly globalizing world marked by inter-penetration of customs and accepted practices, this tradition is changing.

Poutine – 1. a dish of French fries topped with cheese curds and a sauce usu. gravy; 2. a potato dumpling 3. a pudding or pie (Canadian Fr.) (CCOD). Many believe that the word *poutine* "sums up the place called Quebec better even than Celine, referendum, tabernac, and authentic poutine is trés difficult to find outside the province."(DCQ) There are several opinions as to the origin of this dish. According to one of them, the story behind the French fries topped with cheese curds and gravy concoction is "that Fernand Lachance, a snack bar owner in Warwick, Quebec, when asked by a customer in 1957 to combine fries and cheese in a bag, told him it would be a "maudite poutine" (a hell of a mess), but the combination and the word stuck." (Barber, 116)

Tea, on the other hand, is an iconic *English* drink, and often means comfort. The tradition has continued in Canada. Cf.: " …Mrs Honey said, What is the matter, girl, and Mary stood up and said, Please Mrs Honey, it's just that Grace is crying about her dead mother, and Mrs Honey said Very well then, you may take her down to the kitchen for a cup of tea, but don't be too long about it."(Attwood, 188)

The symbolism of heritage foods is part of the value system of Canadians living in different Canadian regions. For example, *pâté à la râpure* (or rappie pie in English) is a traditional Acadian dish with its roots in the frugality of French women. After the British victory in Nova Scotia in the late eighteenth century, times were extremely hard, but the women were able to cultivate potatoes—and the men liked their white shirts starched. The women made starch by grating potatoes, squeezing out the starch, and boiling the white shirts in the extract. Since they could not waste the potato gratings, they put them into a pan with lobster or fish and baked this mixture. The result was a gelatinous, translucent mixture flavored with seafood, called *râpure.* Today the tradition continues and, although the starch is still squeezed out to give *râpure* its distinct character, it is seldom used for stiffening white shirts. (Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture) Another regional icon seems to be *butter tart*: "Butter tart is like croissant is to France, and as the doughnut is to America the butter tart is to English Canada" (DCQ). There are many varieties of butter tarts – Presbyterian, Catholic, Jewish (Ibid). Other well-known Canadian foods are *perogies, varenyki, holubtsi, pemmican; peameal/Canadian bacon*. In general, many food terms in Canadian English have been borrowed from other languages: "panzerotto" from Italian; "holubtsi" (a version of sarmi), varenyki (dough dumplings), kubasa (garlic sausage) from Ukrainian; perogi (dough dumplings) from Polish; "pemmican" (dried meat beaten into small pieces, often with berries) - from Cree (Barber, 113; CCOD). The meaning of some other food terms has changed: the specific Canadian meaning of the word *tea*, for example, is "afternoon or early evening social gathering in a church hall." (CCOD)

Food, ethnicity, multi-culturalism

Before World War II the very word "ethnic food" was not used. The few ethnic recipes in cookery books and home journals were highly modified and the foreign cooking techniques adapted to the existing traditions. We are facing a very different situation now. In the 1970s, under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau,

Canada adopted a policy of multiculturalism. *It then became the fashion to share ethnicity, and the easiest way was through cookery.* The foods that ethnic groups had eaten in the privacy of their homes became de rigueur. Coming primarily from politically troubled parts of the world, approximately 175,000 immigrants annually enter Canada. Of these, about half were located in Ontario, the majority moving into the Toronto area. Immediately after World War II came the Italians, Eastern Europeans, British war brides, and many others. In the 1970s, after Canada's newly entrenched multicultural policy, immigrants streamed in from Hong Kong, Vietnam, Somalia, Ethiopia, Croatia, Serbia, India, Sri Lanka, the Middle East, and other countries. (Ontario Historical Society) This national diversity accounts for the culinary changes in the food of 'old' Canadians and 'new' (first generation) Canadians alike: 'new' Canadians are now very much a part of the culinary scene. Even though the new immigrants are not compelled to eat different food, changes in their eating patterns are inevitable because they have to conform to other changes in the character of daily life.[2] While as late as the 1920s and 50s, new immigrants "were taught" the country's values perceived as superior to their own. As evidenced in numerous articles in the Canadian Home Journal, currently, 'old' Canadians often learn to live with and often even *encroach on other people's culinary past*. The very concept of ethnic food has changed and the very word 'ethnic' is now not quite politically correct because it implies otherness and strangeness. 'Exotic' seems to be the preferred term now. Thus, Penny Van Esterik, a famous nutritional anthropologist and an expert on foodways and food systems, used the word 'ethnic' in her papers in the 80s, but she avoids the term now and prefers to talk about *exotic* foods (see her later-day papers; also personal communication). By the same token, the response to my questionnaire shows what at the time of our grandmothers was regarded as *ethnic* food – e.g. Italian pasta or pizza, is now internalized as *mainstream Canadian* food both by old and new Canadians alike. This is evidenced by the fact that young first generation Canadian respondents sometimes described pizza as "the best Canadian food ever." Yet, it is well-known that pizza did not penetrate Canadian culinary space until after World War II. One of the 1st advertisement of '*pizza pies'* which I found in CHJ goes back to February 1954: "A new idea has lately been sweeping a good part of this continent. Along with wiener-in-roll and the hamburger-in-bun, the casual party and the better-class lunch-bar in many places will now offer a pizza pie." In 1955 'pizza pies' turned into pizzas: "Italy sent us the original pizzas. On this side of the Atlantic, the idea has spread rapidly; it has been given a wide welcome and countless interpretations."(CHJ, Sept. 1955)

Compared to past traditions, the most important new trends are that currently, not only are Canadian cuisines differ geographically, depending on the regional staples – from Acadian lobster to Quebec poutine and tourtier - but across ethnic divides, with recipes cutting across the board world-wide and featuring Italian, Central European, Balkan, Jewish, and other influences. "The Great Canadian Feast Cookbook" published in 2002, for example, features recipes from coast to coast from real Canadian

[2] For a description of the changes in the historical patterns of eating see, for example, S. Mintz (1985); Goody (1982).

kitchens. Depending on the contributors' heritage, the main course recipes range from wood-fired bison with baby onions in Saskatoon sauce to pelmeni (Siberian meat dumplings) and seven-vegetable couscous. As already noted, this kind of culinary multiculturalism and diversity had no place in early cookery books.

Food in Canada: first observations by 'new' Canadians

Eva Hoffman, the author of the famous book "Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language" first published in 1989, observed in an interview in 2000: "I think every immigrant becomes a kind of amateur anthropologist – you notice things about the culture of the world that you come into that people … who are very embedded in it simply don't notice. At first people notice surface things and very gradually, the inner life of the culture." (Birnbaum) Cf. the following example, where the hero is an Englishman visiting the USA: -"I went into a fast food place and ate a burger with fries and a salad. I even had a glass of milk *because I saw that other grown-up people were doing this*." (Vine, 44) (My italics – IP). Moving to a different country exposes people to what they at first regard as unusual food practices, sequences and formats. Food in Canada often seems 'strange' to new Canadians, compared to the 'old' country. (Perianova, 2008)

Pierre Bourdieu's differentiation between an *inherited* capital and an *acquired* capital (1984) undoubtedly applies to food and meals which should surely be viewed in terms of the acculturation process. In the multicultural setting of Canada, the acquisition of this cultural capital becomes especially important. However, this possibility is often doubted. The film *Hold the Ketchup* directed by Albert Kish in 1977 features many dialogues with new immigrants of different ethnicities. They had all brought their food traditions to Canada: for example, the Japanese would only use an odd number of components in sushi or maki because shi is an unlucky number (4 means death and is therefore a taboo); for the Hungarians all components had to be authentic – canned fruit or substitutes were an abomination. One of the comments made by a Portuguese immigrant was: "*We can dress as a Canadian but we can never eat like a Canadian*." The statement echoes Margaret Mead's recommendation with regard to acquiring an American identity: "Being American is a matter of abstention from former ways, foreign food, foreign ideas, foreign vices." (Quoted by Van Esterik 1982: 208)

Canadian national food

Not surprisingly, everything is in a flux: 30 years after the film *Hold the Ketchup* was made, buying a live chicken for food may prove an insurmountable obstacle, and the impossibility of changing the patterns of eating and the meals often seems an overstatement. Yet, when I asked Canadians about Canadian national dishes, in many cases I was at first greeted by silence. By and large, there was a clash between the answers given by Anglophone 'old' Canadians, Francophone 'old' Canadians

and 'new' Canadians'. The French Canadians did not think the idea of Canadian (or rather French Canadian cuisine) strange, and mentioned *poutine, tourtier* and other distinctive French Canadian foods. The Anglophones polled often failed to come up with any dish they might regard as Canadian. Exchange students during ethnic evenings in other countries apparently face excruciating problems trying to decide on a Canadian national dish and often come up with a version of the North-American staple – hamburger with French-fries and Mexican condiments (personal communication at York University). At the same time, many 'old' Canadians reported differences in the taste of simple everyday products: some commented on the different taste of milk in other countries, others reported a different taste of hamburgers - in Australia, for example, according to a student a common spice was rosemary which she found unpalatable. On the other hand, 'new' Canadians either thought Canada so multicultural and globalized that the very idea of an authentic Canadian cuisine was a contradiction in terms, or mentioned either *holiday foods,* such as turkey for Thanksgiving, or *global foods*, such as *pasta and pizza* (which are, of course, fairly recent acquisitions in Canada).[3]

The difficulty of tasting *authentic Canadian food* is mirrored in the following quotation: "Visitors to Toronto who are interested in tasting authentic Canadian cuisine may find the search like rummaging through the clothes dryer for a missing sock – you know it has to be there, but it isn't in the obvious place."(DCQ, 151) At the same time, cookery books with the word "Canadian" abound. In a Chapters bookstore in Toronto in September 2007, I counted no fewer than *47 cookery books* which featured this word. The word "Canadian" apparently has different meanings for different people.

Bonding

One of the most important functions of food is ***bonding***. It is manifested by 1) eating the same foods, 2) eating together. In most cases new Canadians try to negotiate their new Canadian identity through food as part of vaster social patterns.

All Canadians polled, both old and new, apart from 4 vegetarians, mentioned traditional turkey on Thanksgiving; while the vegetarians preferred tofurkey and other token turkey dishes. Christmas as a religious holiday got a mixed bag

[3] The respondents were 'old' and 'new' Canadians: 26 'old' Canadians with ages ranging from 21 to 66 (approximately) – 10 Francophones; 16 Anglophones, including 2 Jewish Canadians, and 14 persons of different background – Greek, English, Dutch, German, Portuguese or mixed, but of traditionally Christian affiliation. The 36 'new' Canadian respondents, (1st generation Canadians) with ages ranging from 18 to 70, included 19 East Europeans - Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians -, 1 Portuguese, 2 Turks, 2 Afghani, 7 middle-Eastern immigrants - Egyptians, Lebanese, Iranian; 2 Sikh, 3 East Africans from Somali and Ethiopia. Comparative data on previous food habits comes from the memories of older informants, recipes and articles published in Canadian magazines and government statistics (ISTAT), as well as works of fiction by Canadian writers.

of common denominator foods and the same applied to Easter – in both cases because of the difference in religion. Barbecues in the beginning of summer on Canada Day were also mentioned by both 'new' Canadians and 'old' Canadians.

Bonding through holiday food (holiday commensality) has existed in all cultures and communities. Thus, a unique feature of the Pacific Coast First Nations (Haida, Tsimshian, Nootka, Coast Salish, Kwakiutl, and Bella Coola) people was the *potlatch*, an elaborate feast publicly declaring and legitimizing a change in state—birth, marriage, death, or inheritance of rights. The chief who gave the potlatch provided enormous quantities of food, served in intricately carved containers, and guests invited from other tribes were expected to consume food until they could eat no more. During the feast the chief gave away his possessions, and the more generous he was, the more powerful he was thought to be. Potlatches today are held for the same reasons as in the past, and the potlatch ceremonies—singing, drumming, dancing, and speech-making—all reaffirm the community's cultural identity. (Stewart, 1993) Bonding was of utmost important for early settlers. The first social club in Canada, *the Order of Good Cheer*, was formed by Samuel de Champlain to help the early settlers cope with the long, cold winters of their new land. Food was an important part of this socialization, with inhabitants taking turns planning the menus, preparing the food and organizing the entertainment. (Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture)

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner in Canada

Tastes and foods are obviously not a fixture in any culture. For the old Canadians, whose parents and grandparents were born in Canada, food and meals throughout the centuries represent a long story of gradually changing taste and culinary encroachment on the food of the other, for the new, or 1st generation Canadians, *it is their passage* to becoming *really* Canadian, a switch to a new structuring, sequencing and formatting of different meals and to a different symbolism of foods. "Foods may be a measure of acculturation, a 'status symbol', a means of consciousness raising, and a marker of festivity." (Van Esterik, 1982: 220)

It would seem that *breakfast* is subject to cultural conditioning the most because the breakfast menu seldom varies. Of all the meals, as indicated by the answers to my questionnaire, the most uniform choice of foods is for breakfast, the most common items being cereals followed by toast, jam, juice and coffee or tea. All new Canadians mentioned cereals for breakfast, especially for their children, but quite a few immigrants also mentioned other foods - hot porridge and porridge-type foods (*kashas*), cheese toasts, eggs, bacon, ham, sausages and other items. While the younger new Canadians nearly always eat cereals for breakfast, the older new Canadians, especially of Middle Eastern descent, sometimes say they 'hate' cereals and prefer a traditional breakfast. Overall, *the first step to becoming Canadian food-wise seems to be a change in breakfast patterns* which is marked by embracing cereals perceived as traditional Canadian and at the same time global food.

For *lunch,* working old Canadians and new Canadians alike, mentioned lunch boxes as well as sandwiches with different fillings. Despite globalization trends, the duration of the lunch is very different in different countries. As it has been repeatedly noted, unlike USA and Canada, where lunch means sandwiches, often on the run, at the counter, or in a lunchbox at the office, in such countries as Spain or Latin America, lunch may take hours. Lunch boxes often *become a means of differentiation*. New immigrants go to language classes where they all bring their lunch boxes. The food looks and smells different – from the beginning of the language course to the end – to the surprise and even shock of the classmates of other ethnicities (personal communications). But when the immigrants' children go to school, their parents change the contents of their lunchboxes and give them something similar to the "mainstream" food, so that they do not look different from the other kids. This was confirmed in all of my interviews with new Canadians of different ethnicity - Lebanese, Egyptian, Indian, Sikh, Afghani, Somali, among others. In *Mela's Lunch*, a short film directed by S. Varughese and based on a story by N. Singh Ghal, the children at an ordinary Canadian public school were disgusted by Mela's traditional colorful Indian lunch and described it as "gross". The little girl, Mela, did not want to be ostracized and the next day she refused her mother's offer of a traditional family curry. The kids' change of attitude to Mela was evidenced by their offers of food. However, at the end of the film the little girl reaffirmed her Indian-ness by bringing a traditional lunch to school once again - as a clear-cut identity statement.

Dinners are the most filling meal of the day and also the most diverse – traditional for middle-Eastern Canadians, Indians, Africans; and international, traditional or ethnic for East Europeans. Old Canadians mostly mention take-out or restaurant food – Greek, Asian, and the like. Cooked dinners seem to be mostly typical of the food of 'new' Canadians of Middle Eastern and African origin while a change of diet - TV dinners, pre-cooked food, and frozen pizzas - are typical of many 'old' Canadian and 'new' Canadians of East European descent. By and large, TV dinners and fast food restaurants have changed the food rituals in the developed market-oriented countries such as Canada.

New tendencies

a) An erosion of family meals

The current attitude to family meals is very different compared to the pre-war years. Cf. for example the following real-life story which epitomizes some recent changes: Young parents - middle-class, PhD students - 'old' Canadians had no time to cook for their children and mostly bought TV dinners, take-outs and frozen foods. Once, on a Sunday, the mother decided to cook for the children and prepared a lot of nice things – pasta, salads, and so on. The little son was admiring his mother's cooking and enjoying the tasting experience. After everything was ready he said: "-And now, mummy, will you put everything in the boxes, so that we could eat." Packaged food was the norm and the internalized ritual for this

6-year-old Canadian boy (personal communication in Toronto). This grotesque story illustrating the overwhelming importance of packaged foods seems to prove that portable foods, rather than sit-down meals, have become a dominant pattern in North America. Snacks at the desk, before the television set, between meals are a new symbol of eating. In this way, the family meal itself in North America and Australia is becoming something of a myth. Because of the emergence of frozen pre-cooked food and the invention of the microwave oven, food at home also becomes portable and even a dinner table is no longer a must since separately packaged containers are often eaten near the TV. Dining rooms are no longer even a part of new houses designed in many western countries. If they are, the walls are often torn down to provide more space in the living room area. (Coveney, 124)

The idea that food is what you buy, not what you forage for, hunt or fish (as in their former places of residence) is a revelation for many new Canadians. For example, a child-minder from Montreal told me that her new husband, a recent arrival to Canada from Moldova, at first used to catch catfish in a lake close to their summer cottage (something he had often done in his home town of Tiraspol in Moldova). He would then fry the fish and the family would eat it. After some time, however, it was decided that they would rather have the next batch the husband caught live in a small pond in their residence in Montreal as pets. This story undoubtedly illustrates the internalization of a new approach to what should be regarded as food.

b) Less fat, fewer calories, more raw food

All old Canadians, in their 40-ies and 50-ies and above, noted that their childhood foods were more fatty; they had fewer salads, often the vegetables were mostly cooked (especially for the Jews of European descent, because raw vegetables were perceived as food for the peasants only); pork had been more of a staple for both Anglo and French Canadians alike; cheese and macaroni were very prominent on the menu. Yet a combination of cheese and macaroni was far from traditional as late as 1931, when Canadians were urged to try it as a new dish: Cf. "Cheese makes macaroni better" (CHJ, Feb.1931). In fact, cheese was not at all common on the menu of Canadians before World War II. See this description in an article in CHJ, June 1931: "Cheese is so tasty. Canadians are *beginning to follow* (My italics – IP) in the footsteps of their European cousins in the adoption of cheese in the everyday menu." Not surprisingly, almost every Canadian polled expected their parents to answer my questions in a very different way.

c) Brand diversity

Almost invariably, new Canadians have to deal with a greater diversity of food brands compared to what they were used to. While in some countries (such as the former socialist countries, some African and Asian countries) the generic terms were all-important because there was little, if any, competition, in Canada, brands are all-important. Cf. the following story: a 'new' Canadian, a teacher from Romania who spoke fluent French, wanted to buy milk at her corner store in

Montreal but the grocer failed to understand her request. The woman was forced to explain that she meant "white liquid produced by cows". Immediately the grocer said: "-Oh, you mean Parmalat." (Personal communication) New Canadians often have to read up on brands to be able to shop because the grocers are not used to dealing with requests which can have dozens of answers.

d) *Food as entertainment*

Fun foods and public foods, such as cinema foods or street foods "tied" to a certain space are part of eatertainment. They are well-established and a part of the ordinary global eating scene. Thus, popcorn is a typical cinema food, while hotdogs, pizzas and other, mostly finger foods, are traditional 'street foods'.

Authenticity, on the other hand, is very important for culinary adventurers. Sometimes it would seem that the difference between 'make-believe' and 'authentic' mirrors that between real and virtual travel. Other people's foods become a cherished acquired capital and a sign of sophistication. Culinary tourism has a turned into a buzz word. I was amazed to discover online that many people who did not know anything about Bulgaria wanted to take part in Bulgarian meet groups in Canada because they were interested in a new culinary experience, i.e. – Bulgarian food. This quest for the authentic is quite wide-spread and sometimes leads to a dispute: it is felt that the versions, or incarnations of the food on offer in North America (whether Chinese, Thai, Japanese or Russian) have as much to do with what the people eat in these countries as *American pirozhki* to *русские пирожки*. Also, there is a cultural reappraisal of food: commonplace core foods in the old country suddenly turn into traditional, authentic and holiday foods on the soil of the new country. (Van Esterik, 2006) Even though they are "generalized", and the local accents may be lost, these items have turned into heritage foods, which meet the craving for nostalgia foods, especially salient on holidays.

Holiday foods (food as memory, honoring the 'culinary past')

According to my study, holiday foods are significantly different for different ethnic groups. Whenever possible, they are eaten together with family or friends. Unlike the usual meals, festive meals were defined by respondents as ritualistic and elaborate. The national holidays requiring special foods mentioned are Thanksgiving, symbolized by the turkey with all the trimmings; some French Canadian specialties, ham for Easter, barbecues for family holidays and the beginning of spring. Significantly, new Canadians often listed more national holidays than old Canadians, and were eager to eat what they perceived as traditional foods – maple syrup, turkey, and the like. For family holidays, on the other hand, the demarcation lines were always clearer - new Canadians either had traditional Russian or Bulgarian food, or European/international staples; while old Canadians mentioned old family recipes going back to their heritage food, or their own signature foods. The preparation of festive foods often involves trips

to markets where special foods can be bought – such as Mennonite organic foods markets, or other special markets which offer special national icon foods going back to the nostalgic memory of the past - Russian/Greek/Portuguese and so on.

Food, fluid identities, nesting

In my view, this holiday reversal to a previous identity or its layer is in line with the description of fluid or multiple identities, a popular feature of post-modernist theories. This reversal often calls for a spiraling of taste icons: what passed for Bulgarian, if for some reasons was unobtainable, was Greek, Serb, or Turkish. Under similar circumstances, the Russians often made do with Ukrainian or Georgian. Hence, we may talk about *nesting* - the folding doll syndrome exemplified by food substitution. The latter is common for all groups living together or in close proximity - *tsatsiki*, instead of Bulgarian *tarator, whey* instead of the traditional *kvass* and kvass-based Russian dishes, such as the Canadian version of *okroshka* soup. In general, food substitution is one of the ways to negotiate multiple identities. Melding traditions together is very typical of immigrant groups. For example, in the Ukraine, women make *pysanky* (eggs decorated with ritualistic symbols) according to their local traditions, but in Canada, they drew designs from many regions of the Ukraine. Northern and Southern Italian foods such as pasta and polenta, likewise, are simply 'Italian' in Canada. The food sold in the so-called 'European' delis in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and other North American cities mostly comes from Russia, but there are also products from the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. The further away in terms of space, the less distinguishable are the neighborhood divisions: despite the fact that Bulgarian *sarmi* (stuffed vine leaves, or stuffed cabbage leaves) are not quite the same as Romanian, Turkish or Greek[4]. Bulgarians, Romanians and Serbs in Canada often have a penchant for Greek restaurants, which are more wide-spread than other Balkan restaurants and which they visit as a source of nostalgia food.

Conclusion. Deep Fried Curried Perogies

Sometimes bonding through food becomes very difficult: because of mixed marriages and multiple affiliations people find it difficult to work out identity-related issues. They no longer know who they are. A concern about this loss of identity is symbolized by the title of an autobiographic play performed during the Winnipeg Fringe Fest Theatre. The scene of *Deep Fried Curried Perogies* is laid in

[4] A similar view is expressed by Alexander Kiossev (2003) who presents an expanded definition of the Balkan identity: "Every Bulgarian, Greek or Serb who has spent a long time elsewhere in Europe knows that if he or she craves a dear old *manja*... he had best go to a Greek restaurant or a Turkish shop. The meals may have unfamiliar names – *tsatsiki, souvlaki* but the taste will be much like that of *snezhanka and shish-kabob*." Other examples listed in Kiossev's paper are *mousaka, kababcheta, slivovitsa, shopska salad, grozdanka*.

Edmonton – described as Edmontchuk to stress one of the character's Ukrainian roots. The writer Michelle Todd (half Filipino, half Jamaican) has an Anglo-Ukrainian boyfriend. They are going to have a baby. Thinking about the future she is worried about her baby's cultural identity, often manifested through food: -"What shall I serve the kid for ethnic lunches at school? Deep-fried curried perogies?" However, in the end, Todd proudly declares her *Canadian* identity. And this seems an appropriate conclusion to this essay.

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Global Political Economy from the Canadian Perspective

The recent decades have witnessed unprecedented transformations driven by the restructuring of capital on the global level. In accordance with some considerations we enter into a market society or into a neoliberal market civilization associated with the expansion of market-based norms and affirmation of the transnational power of capital. The fact that the public provision of welfare no longer appears as a vital program for the political stability has been connected to the renewed affirmation of the norms of market dependence. As part of the victorious ideology of neoliberalism, the inference is drawn that the state ought to and indeed does exist primarily if not only for the protection of property. However, in keeping with neoliberalism, property is not conceived as extant independent of the state. The standard naïve dichotomy between market and government is completely false; there is no pre-governmental state of nature called the market, into which the government intrudes. The opposition between the state and the non-state was absolutely inadequate to characterize this shift, the new modes of governing the economy were subordinated to the norms of structural competitiveness, personal "economic" pursuits, management of "human resources", but these transformations did not necessarily render the economy less governable. As Stephen Gill pointed out:

> Thus what is crucial for neoliberals is the strong protection of liberty and property rights, with particular emphasis on the power of the state to protect capital from expropriation and seizure, or what is called in American jurisprudence "takings", through nationalization or socialization of the means of production. (Gill, 2002, 56)

Actually, according to the neoliberal rhetoric, the suggested purpose is not the elimination of state as in the framework of a primitive laissez-faire doctrine, but the construction of state as the main serving vehicle in establishing a market society. In this context, a new buzzword has emerged, *governance*, that has undoubtedly referred to the shifting status of state in the international domain. We should, in fact, bear in mind that we are faced with various, so to say, similar terms. But, having in mind certain ideological intentions concerning the conjuncture of the term "governance" we can exactly situate what is at stake here.

The question is the following: if the fundamental policy problem is whose interests and preferences are to count in a world context, who will determine these interests and preferences on the world level? Who has the capacities and the legitimacy to engage in steering the globalized world?

The individual state is obviously always open to disarticulation and disruption by forces beyond the state, but due to the expansive globalization processes, the status of a state is outstandingly transformed. This produces continuous discursive struggles for a definition in which the state shapes forces of globalization and these forces shape the form of a state. Actually, the meanings of governance appear to be in the field of discursive conflicts. *On the one hand* there is a neoliberal interpretation of this phrase depicting it as the technical allocation of resources and encompassing, planetary control as well as coordination amongst existing agents in the world. In line with this, governance articulates (neo)liberalism that seeks to create new market agents and institutions whose purpose and ends are shaped by strong economic imperatives. Governance includes interrelations and the interactions amongst legal, economic and political processes are predicated on the conception of these spheres as essentially separate. As a matter of fact, governance in this sense is emptied of all meanings of power, and asymmetrical positions; it includes only the accommodation process of parties led by the ahistorical market rationality.

On the other hand, there is another type of analysis that casts a doubting glance at those who ignore the power structure in global economy and makes efforts to deconstruct the neoliberal belief. We should especially note two Canadian scholars, the members of York school, who definitively have shaped the critical debates on globalization and global political economy. Robert Cox's and Stephen Gill's intellectual achievements have helped the discourse of political economy to return on the international scene. They have conceptualized the global political economy as the interaction between ideas, material capabilities and institutions, especially at the level of world order. These theorists have investigated the problem of political and ideological hegemony and elaborated a number of concepts and assumptions that have greatly advanced the analysis of the global arena. Treating globalization as a broad process of restructuration of state and society, political economy and culture, they offer various acute observations on the interdependences amongst politics, economy and culture. I would like to denote this phenomenon as *transnational nexus,* the structural coupling amongst politics, economy and culture on a transnational level.

The analysis of international relations was for a long time dominated by the orientation called "realism". In fact, the international system is viewed as a terrain of turbulence amongst competing actors in the global arena. Due to the anarchic tendencies, international politics is irreversibly determined by power-based aspirations of the individual states without chances for cooperation amongst them. The neorealist approach adds a new aspect: it puts emphasis on the differentiation of power and the crucial influence of the great powers. Yet, the main postulates are the same: the states are the exclusive actors in the global scene and

international relations are constant without any modality of structural changes. In addition, neorealism is associated with positivist methodological postulates that are intended to identify the causal relations within the objective world that is separated from subjective projects.

The other rival interpretation of international relations in the context of global political economy leads us to the early triumphalistic globalization theories that ascribe demiurgic functions to the globalization. They promote virtuous circles, absolutized convergence amongst the tendencies in a civil society, democracy and the unfettered market.

For Cox and Gill, global governance exists precisely in that social space wherein the state is controlled, wherein the state-apparatus responds to outside forces and creates solutions to problems with external impacts, and wherein economy is controlled, and economic power is determined. The outcome of state power depends on the dynamic balance of forces engaged in actions both within and beyond the individual state. Thus, there is the impact of the behavior and choices upon the structure and array of one's opportunity set, that is, upon the scope of one's choice (Kalb 2005, 176-204). The politico-economic nexus is the key social process in which the social construction of reality takes place. In their critical analysis, Cox and Gill treat governance as a multifaceted nexus through which the social construction of reality is effectuated. *One* central concept is power, namely, the power in government, in economy, the determination and exercise of power in each, the mutual interaction and especially the mutual definition of economic and political power. *Another* central concept is the "system of ideas and knowledge", which provides a part of the basis on which policy in governance is made. The system of ideas, the models of dissemination of knowledge govern the articulation of reality that influences policy, and the system of ideas is itself an object of control, as social actors attempt to make an impact on leadership selection and policy through controlling the comprehensive *definition of reality*. These authors assume that beliefs are a function of power; they are weighted by power structure, and *vice versa*: the power is in part a function of belief. Belief and knowledge-patterns are the product of individual orientations weighted by power structures, the processes through which preferences and power structures are formed. Cox and Gill have explored the emergent structural features of transnational relations, the impact of social forms, the institutional logics of particular patterns of global organizations, and so forth. They are interested in the analysis of the genesis of structural aspects in international relations; they do not take the configuration of institutional power in the global system for granted, and make an effort to highlight the non-linear dynamics of transnational structures.

* * *

Gramscian transnational historical materialism has spawned a network of scholars working in ways that address some of the questions raised and posed in Gramscian terms as well as original historical analyses. First, in the 1980s,

Cox elaborated in the ground-breaking articles a critical interpretation of the term "hegemony" and situated it within the framework of reinterpreted historical materialism (Cox, 1981, 1983). That is, the main source of the concept as I use it is found in Antonio Gramsci´s account of hegemony (Cox, 1996, 1983; Gill, 1993, 1995; Alastair Davidson expresses a critique concerning the different use of Gramsci in international relations [Davidson, 2008, 68]). Hegemony is an old word, and we could trace it back to the political terminology of ancient Greeks (Fontana, 2008, 84), but recently the ideas concerning hegemony refashioned by Gramsci encompass contemporary discourses. Originally, hegemony means supremacy, leadership of a state, or a social group, over other actors of society. Hegemony provides non-reductive conceptual tools for the analysis of power and its differentiation within a society. In short, it refers to the exercising of power in relation to the equals in the interest of those who practice power. Gramsci´s intention was to articulate the complex arrangements among plural social forces within capitalism (Jessop, 1990, 51; 2001, 43; Gill, 1990, 18). Hegemony includes the mobilization of consent of the dominated groups by the ruling class on the basis of its intellectual and political leadership. The leadership of a dominant class of course does not sacrifice its long-term interest, but the exercise of power is in accordance with the collective will, it is articulated within the horizon of a national-popular outlook. Hegemony is mediated through a complex system of ideological apparatuses throughout the entire society. Organic intellectuals of the dominant social groups articulate and disseminate these intellectual and moral ideas, transforming them into the "common sense" of a wider society.

Neogramscians like Cox and Gill explicate the hegemony at the international level precisely taking into account the domination of some ideas and forms of knowledge, but they emphasize that domination is not a sufficient condition for hegemony and shed light on the consensual order in the international system. Their contribution comprises the highlighting of genesis of hegemony, it includes the explanation of the role of private bodies like the Trilateral Commission. These bodies are the privileged sites of transnational strategies within which the ideological articulation of global strategies operates. Moreover, their strategies must be understood not only in terms of ideas as intersubjective meanings but in terms of the materialization of these strategies in specific organizations and forces. At the highest point of the global class structure we find the "transnational managerial class" situated in the framework of the Trilateral Commission, the World Bank and IMF, and the OECD. Gill thinks of the transnational stratum as composed not just of the actual managers and technicians in production, but also as the 'managers and technicians' entrusted with the reproduction of the normative structures of a capitalist society. These structures (education and the media, and so on) ensure that the mass of the population is resigned to its dual role of, on the one hand, subservient producers and, on the other, passive consumers (Van der Pijl, 2001, 384; on the victory of neoliberalism see Josifidis, Lošonc, 2007; Lošonc 2004, 2006).

As Gill has argued, neogramscianism believes that making a global society in the twenty-first century involves the dialectical movement of political forces

both locally and globally. He explains that the forms of "globalization from below" associated with the lower reaches of the global social hierarchy are not only a counterpart of existence for "globalization from above" but also form a new moment in global politics, or a "clash of globalizations". This is where the agency of individuals and certain organizations were crucial during the 1970s and 1980s, and this is where the agents such as the World Economic Forum and others carried forward the neo-liberal projects in the 1990s. But, of course, there are no mechanically installed transmission belts in the world whose function is to mediate the transnational tendencies, adjusting the domestic economy to the requirements of global economy. In this sense neogramscianism involves widespread discussions on the importance of ideas, or strategic dominance in international order, and we witness a strong effort to articulate the subtle relationships between the structure and agency. Any genuine analysis of hegemony must adopt the method of concrete articulation and allow for contingency in the conceptual movement from abstract to concrete.

Being influenced by Foucault's thoughts on the power/knowledge mixture and the discursive formations in modern society (Gill, 1995, 402; 2000), Gill, for instance, knows very well that every exercise of power involves resistance-practice (Gill, 2008). The final outcome at all times reflects resistance-engendering differences, and is a result of conflicting strategies, a crystallization of struggles. Crucial to the understanding of these mechanisms is the distinction between the general field and the specific field constituted by particular discourses. A hegemonic project or comprehensive concept of control is formed, and incessantly reformed, in a process of struggle, and re-adjustment, resulting in unsteady and unstable conjunctures and alliances. We could see a concrete form of temporal stabilization and consolidation of neo-liberalism, internationally as well as within the advanced western countries, eventually.

Referring to the radical feminist ontology, Gill makes a strong correspondence between the fundamental social transformations and the restructuring of world society. He evokes the feminist term "social reproduction" to portray the aspects of reproduction of labor power, biological reproduction and other social practices connected to socialization (Bakker, Gill, 2003, 7). The commodity form is gendered; the exploitation is sexualized and racialized:

> Governance involves ideas that justify or legitimate political power and influence, institutions through which influence is stabilized and reproduced, and patterns of incentives and sanctions to ensure compliance with rules, regulations, standards and procedures. Governance thus entails both public and private forms of power, institutions of state and civil society, and it operates either within particular localities, or across national boundaries in regional or global frameworks. (Bakker, Gill, 2003, 5)

Neogramscianism′s starting point is that the dynamics of capital drives society forward to constitute itself at the transnational level. The reality of transnational

order involves complex compromises within and between classes. The classes are not outdated categories of the socio-economic analysis; it is precisely the transnational promotion of discipline of capital that reminds us of the relevance of classes within the capitalist formation. There is no doubt that neogramscianism has advanced our knowledge of the hidden trajectories of power within the processes of representation and that it remains useful in adumbrating the formation of subjectivity as well as complementing our understanding of the relationships between the national and international.

In neogramscianism, the transnational networks, the broad processes of transnationalization, do not eliminate the national state from the international relations, but due to the far-reaching consequences, national dimensions are no longer the primary horizon. Domestic property relations have been transformed all over the world to harmonize with directives of the IMF, WTO or relays at regional levels. The new neoliberal constitutionalism seeks to overcome the limits of national sovereignty by constructing a global order that will govern important political as well as economic aspects of both the internal and external behavior of states. It proposes a set of disciplinary regimes—reaching deep into the economic, social and political life of the states subject to it, while enabling the international flow of finance and trade and expanding the discipline of capital on a world scale. In this system, sovereignty is reconceived as a conditional aspect, granted by the "international community", which can be withdrawn if any state fails to meet the domestic or foreign standards laid down by the requirements of neoliberal governance.

Gramsci, Foucault, and the radical feminist ontology provide a productive framework for the exploration of the structure/agency problem in world society. The neogramscian hermeneutical reception of these authors takes over the careful exploration of the combination of private and public power, the analysis of the power/knowledge issue, the articulation of social reproduction as the terrain of exercising of power potentialities. Thanks to Cox and Gill, neogramscianism intends to integrate the analysis of institutional structure with our understanding of cultural productions. Neogramscianism could be understood as an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between the symbolic and the material. Although analytically distinguishable, the politics, economy and culture must be understood as not only overlapping but mutually constituted and always dynamic. What these points suggest is that effective theorization of globalization requires cross-disciplinary sensibilities; neogramscianism practices these sensibilities. As we know, feminist scholars continue to demonstrate, while mainstream accounts tend to ignore, gender as an analytical category and structural feature of social life. Dominant accounts tend to neglect, for example, the gendered nature and effects of expanding the discipline of capital, the feminization of welfare crises, and the sexual politics of new consumption patterns and family forms (Peterson, 2002; Gill, 2002). These processes are both a continuation of "capitalist racialized patriarchy" (Eisenstein) as a characterization of modernity, and a new conjuncture of neoliberalized capitalism that is associated with the conditions of the late 20th century.

The dominant framework of global governance is associated with the G7 countries and the international financial institutions like the World Bank or IMF. The dealing with globalization needs an analysis that brings together the dynamics of ideas, institutions, and material resources to highlight changes in the public/private configuration of power. In accordance with Gill, international organizations realize the function of organic intellectuals of the world economy: the TC's perspective to a large extent reflects the interests of the more dynamic and internationally mobile forms of capital, as well as the interests of the liberal „internationalist" elements within the state bureaucracies of the major capitalist states" (Gill, 1986). We could quote another statement: "trilateralism can be defined as the project of developing an organic…alliance between the major capitalist states, with the aim of promoting…a stable form of world order which is congenial to their dominant interests" (Gill, 1990, 67).

Gill has especially launched two ideas and during the last decades has elaborated on these concepts in detail. In discussing globalization from above, the reconfiguration of power and new patterns of inequality, he identifies a shift in the form of social discipline through market-based discipline. Neoliberal transformations with their political and constitutional initiatives in the sphere of money and finance are linked to the imposition of macro-economic and micro-economic disciplines in ways that are intended to underpin the power of capital in the state and in civil society. In exploring how this alteration has taken place, how it emerged, was consolidated and used, we should examine global discourses and political projects articulates within them. This will vary with the individual forms of policy production and with the manner in which the norms of capital are imposed on the state's activities. Taken together, these discipline-shifts trap the state. When the state intervenes to determine the society's life, it must subordinate its own policies to the disciplinary effects of capital-mediated transnational actors.

With the next idea, Gill proposes a term "new constitutionalism" that refers to the strategic significance of the juridical pillars of the new order. The nation-states are integrated into quasi-constitutional and transnational regulations and structures that determine the capacities of states to rehabilitate the distorted markets. The new constitutionalism takes the form of quasi-legal arrangements forming the constitutional structure of global political economy and articulates the overall hegemony of transnational actors. Trade, investment, global finance and global economic integration are linked to the widening jurisdiction and legal competencies of international organizations.

* * *

In short, the York school has provided innovative reading in global political economy. Analyzing the top-down strategic considerations and the victorious transnational class forces, Gill puts emphasis on the domination of certain transnational actors. But the whole picture calls for an exploration of the relationships

between the different fractions of transnational blocs. The political struggle is to be seen as occurring between concrete class fractions and their concepts of control. It is necessary to show how the politics, organization and ideological dimension of the conflict between class fractions have all shaped the ability of transnational capital as a whole to influence European integration or domestic tendencies. Nevertheless, there are some dilemmas with the applications of the research-program.

First, in the elaborated context, it seems occasionally that states are merely the mediator between the neoliberal constraints of global political economy and domestic economy, in fact, the states are only agencies which promote the carrying out of tasks they had no part in deciding with the unambiguous task of adapting national economies to the needs of circuit of capital. But the state must be analyzed in a much more complex manner. The realization of transnational pressures, the mediation of the dynamics of capital depends on the structural ties between the state and the given political and economic system, the strategic links between the actors of society and the political forces, and the complex web of interdependencies and social networks linking the state to the globalized environment. The state as a complex institutional ensemble always interprets and converts the binding, constitutional constraints of globalized political economy into the domestic society. We need to articulate at all times how these converting practices are established through specific practices within and outside the state. With this caveat in mind, we should proceed in tandem with more empirical work on the structuration of social relations.

Second, we are faced especially with the dilemma concerning the prioritizing of changes of the economic structures. Are the political institutions created only to respond to these changes? Do the ideas only assist the broadening of the neoliberal constraints? In these cases the link with Gramscian thinking is seriously weakened, because the economic structure is affirmed as an *ultima causa*. Gill insists that history is always in the process of making, in a complex and dialectical interplay between agency, structure, consciousness and action. But it is very difficult to balance among material capabilities, institutions and ideas and to conceptualize the mentioned dialectical interplay.

Third, we could accept the long term mechanism concerning the anchoring of the power of capital. But how can we articulate the mediation of a long-term mechanism with the political events or political struggles within the frame of the "short-term"? The ongoing and contingently determined political struggles play a crucial role, for example, in the forming of historical-transnational blocs. What is more, the entire analysis needs the articulation of the mediation between the transnational and national historical blocks.

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Corporate Governance in Canada: Recent Changes and the Best Practice

The system of interlinking relationships

Corporate governance in Canada, as well as in any other country with developed capital markets, is an integrated and complicated system of legal and financial instruments for monitoring, incentive and punishment. That system tries to balance the different interests coming from internal and external factors of influence. External factors come from the network of interlinking relationships among participants in the capital market[1]. Internal factors exist within companies whose shares are traded on the capital market. It means that if one wants to understand how the governance system works, he must take into consideration all the relevant factors from capital markets - external (investment banks, credit rating agencies, analysts…) and within a publicly traded company - internal (shareholders, directors, employees…) factors of influence.

Canada` s capital markets operate (with some exceptions) under a principle-based approach[2]. That approach influences the structures and processes in the corporate governance system and creates a "culture of compliance". Individual companies and institutions adopt approaches to corporate governance taking into account their own nature, complexity and risks[3].

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1 Kenneth A. Kim, John R. Nofsinger (2007), *Corporate Governance* Pearson Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 6.

2 Lefebvre Rock, 2008, *Corporate Governance in Canada`s Capital Markets*. 1. http://www.cga-canada.org/en-CA/SpeechesPresentations/ca_pre_2008-02-05_canada's-capital-markets.pdf

3 Corporate Governance Guideline, January 2003. *Effective Corporate Governance in Federally Regulated Financial Institutions.* 3.

The call for improvement

The corporate scandals in the United States and Canada have made corporate governance a main issue in the business world[4]. Investors and other stakeholders as well as all of society, have become increasingly interested in proper corporate governance and continue to call for improvement. New laws and corporate governance policies, as a response to these events, are based on the means by which members of the board and senior managers are held accountable for their actions. Boards and audit committees have new obligations within the frame of legal rules and regulations for accounting and disclosure, internal control and risk management. Recently progress has been made in key aspects of the corporate governance system.

The changes to corporate governance in Canada, as a result of cooperative work between regulators, government, academics[5] and industry participants, have been, in general, aspects of the corporate governance system. Those changes embody: enforcement (legislative amendments to the Criminal Code), financial reporting and market disclosures (new accounting guidelines issued by AcSB and the AASB), audit processes (to enhance the quality of its audit process, Canada has endorsed the creation of the Auditing and Assurance Standards Oversight Council and Canadian Public Accountability Board) and management accountability (new rules have been put in place)[6].

Good corporate governance

A recent study on corporate sustainability in Canada[7] has revealed that there are some typical characteristics of companies with good corporate governance, as well as of the policies of effective boards of directors. It has been found that companies with good corporate governance possess a strong sense of commitment and a "culture of compliance". They are board members with a strong sense of: independence, diligence, competence and ethics. Effective boards typically have: good board structure; productive meetings; a good succession planning system; a financial reporting and risk management system including an independent audit committee, a strategic information system and performance evaluation and compensation system.

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4 Jewett Peter, Corporate Governance Regulation in Canada: Where Things Stand http://www.torys.com/Publications/Documents/Publication%20PDFs/AR2005-36T.pdf

5 See the Research Study which has recommended a series of policy reforms with economic basis for them. Morck Randall, Yeung Bernard (2006) *Some Obstacles to Good Corporate Governance in Canada and How to Overcome Them.*

6 Lefebvre Rock, 2008, *Corporate Governance in Canada`s Capital Markets*. 1-3. http://www.cga-canada.org/en-CA/SpeechesPresentations/ca_pre_2008-02-05_canada's-capital-markets.pdf

7 Lefebvre Rock, 2008, *Corporate Governance in Canada`s Capital Markets*. 1-3. http://www.cga-canada.org/en-CA/SpeechesPresentations/ca_pre_2008-02-05_canada's-capital-markets.pdf

The heart of corporate governance in Canada is that a corporate director has serious obligations to work in the best interests of the corporation and its shareholders[8]. He or she must discharge duties in good faith, honestly and in a way which is regulated by law. They must fully understand the extent of their duties and responsibilities and the liabilities and penalties associated with board membership.

Certain obligations are imposed on directors by Canadian laws to ensure accountability and achievement of important social goals. Important issues in the structure of corporate governance include the number of directors, the role of the independent director, chair of the board, remuneration, resignation, board meetings, and proper committees.

The CEO and senior officers are responsible for managing the company on a daily basis and are monitored by the board. Their relationship must be full of confidence and the board must be provided with relevant, accurate and timely information by the CEO and senior management[9].

Pressure is imposed on directors and they respond by closer monitoring, critical evaluation the exposure to liability and efforts to better understand the nature of their obligations[10]. Potential liabilities can come from a broad range of situations/issues confronting directors: facing insolvency, environmental matters, disclosure obligations, financing issues, take-over bids, insider trading, tax liabilities, risk management, and confidential information.

When particular relationships put the director in the position of a conflict of interest, the director must declare his/her interest and refrain from voting on the matter. Directors must be active in the process of decision making (including dissent records).

A good corporate system is one which creates directors who discharge their responsibilities appropriately (in accordance with the standards imposed on them by the law).

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8 Swain Harry, Carruthers Jeff, Minden Karen, Urban Cheryl (2002), *Corporate Governance and Accountability in Canada*.38.

9 McDermott Robert and Farell Sean (2004), McMillan Binch LLP, *Corporate governance in Canada*, 16-17.

10 See more details in Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, 2005, *Corporate Governance in Canada*, A Guide to the Responsibilities of Corporate Directors in Canada.

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The Position of Latin America in Canadian Foreign Policy

1. Some introductory remarks

Canadian – Latin American relations is a topic that must be studied within the framework of the so-called "Western Hemisphere", understood as a political, economic and security concept, valid since 1823 (Monroe Doctrine[1]). We can *de facto* say that, within the "Western Hemisphere", a system of relations that unified Central, Northern and Southern America was created, which has passed through different phases of development. Nevertheless, when we analyze the system of international relations in this geo-strategic space, we can identify one hegemonic centre that directed, throughout history, the forms, modalities and results of nearly all Canadian-Latin American interactions. During the 19th century when Latin American countries became independent, the U.S. influence and interests mostly conditioned their international position and activities and that situation lasted almost until the 1960s. It means that Canadian-Latin Ameri-

[1] In his December 2nd, 1823, address to Congress, U.S. President James Monroe articulated United States' policy on the new political order developing in the rest of the Americas and the role of Europe in the Western Hemisphere. The statement, known as the Monroe Doctrine is considered to be the longstanding tenet of U.S. foreign policy. The three main concepts of the doctrine – separate spheres of influence for the Americas and Europe, non-colonization, and non-intervention – were designed to signify a clear break between the New World and the autocratic realm of Europe. While Americans generally objected to European colonies in the New World, they also desired to increase United States influence and trading ties throughout the region to their south.

By the mid-1800s, Monroe's declaration provided precedent and support for U.S. expansion on the American continent. In the late 1800s, U.S. economic and military power enabled it to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. The doctrine's greatest extension came with Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary, which inverted the original meaning of the doctrine and came to justify unilateral U.S. intervention in Latin America. Available in: *Bureau of Public Affairs: Office of the Historian, Timeline of U.S. Diplomatic History: 1801-1829*: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/jd/16321.htm.

can relations in the cited period were almost sporadical, i.e. without clear goals and concrete results on bilateral or multilateral levels.

Generally speaking, with the strengthening of the international position of Canada after World War II, Latin America appears as its new interlocutor and we can see that different forms of cooperation are being defined, especially economic and cultural. In practice, that meant that besides a hegemonic centre (U.S) whose influence remained unchanged, another partner for Latin America from the North entered the scene, a partner which did not have hegemonistic, interventionist or ideological aspirations in that part of the hemisphere.

In order to understand that process – the progressive positioning of Latin America in Canadian foreign policy strategy – it is necessary to make short references to some of the main characteristics and particularities of the development of this phenomenon:

- Historically, Canadian foreign policy strategy has always been focused on the achievement of international cooperation, well-profiled activism in international organizations with notably functional achievement of national interests.
- Therefore, we could say that the phenomenon of multilateralism is one of the main drivers of Canadian foreign policy strategy.
- The Canadian form of multilateralism in practice consists of adopting pragmatic political decisions in order to internationalize foreign policy activities that would reflect the high potential of the internal situation – characterized by fast economic development, social prosperity, peace, order and good government.
- Furthermore, it is important to stress that the core values of Canadian society such as democracy and human rights or cultural and educational issues became the fundamental ideological principles and at the same time the instruments of this foreign policy strategy[2].

Anyways, there is no doubt that Canadian foreign policy had its ideological but also clearly functional objectives. In reality, these characteristics are evident when analyzing Canadian–Latin American relations.

Concerning the ideological principle in Canadian foreign policy towards Latin America, we can note a drastic difference in relation to the policy in Washington. It is well known that the U.S. defended the ideology of the "free world"[3] within the "Western Hemisphere" using all means, including military interventionism,

[2] For further information, see: Stephen Kendall Holloway: *Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest*, University of Toronto Press, 2006.

[3] "Free world" is a term used in explanations of ideological, political and security rivalries during a period of bipolarity in the history of international relations; it was mostly used to refer to the western type of democracy and capitalist economy. The defense of the values of the "free world" was a NATO priority.

but also gave support to dictatorial and military regimes in Latin America. The ideological objective of the U.S. foreign policy was the defense of the "Western Hemisphere" from communism. Unlike the U.S, Canada demonstrated a high level of pragmatism in the same period, which resulted in progressive development of Canadian-Latin American relations, including Cuba – that is – the communist revolutionary regime that by no means fitted Canadian ideological principles that plead for democratic institutions, free elections and the strengthening of individual human rights. In short, it is obvious that this ideological strategy did not include the classic hegemonism and military interventionism.

The functional aspect of this strategy provided Canada with greater commercial benefits and, additionally, the possibility of improving its place as an important middle-power in the post World War II era. Consequently, we can also speak about the Canadian cooperative tradition in Latin America and positive international image based on collaboration, cooperation and compromise – together with the dynamic role in multilateral bodies such as the UN, NATO or OAS. To conclude – the Canadian tradition of multilateral behavior had its "golden age" in the 1940-1950 period. During this period Canada's benefits from its foreign policy practice were huge, not to mention the increase of its influence in the international community.

It also means that we could identify the Canadian involvement in world politics in the following modalities: "mediator", "middle-power", "bridge", "peace-maker", "peace-keeper", "community-builder", etc. These characterizations allow us to conclude that after World War II, and especially during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, one of the most important elements of Canadian foreign policy was the inclusion of a military dimension in its activities. If we take the example of Latin America and the Caribbean for instance, we observe that Canada currently has five defense attaché officers in this region. Those attachés are responsible for relations not only with their host country. For instance, Canadian defense attaché in Buenos Aires, Argentina also covers Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay[4].

2. Canadian-Latin American relations

Historically, as we have previously stated, Canadian-Latin American relations have represented a part of the system of the so-called "Western Hemisphere". However, we have to emphasize that the United States defined the "Western Hemisphere" as a zone of exclusive U.S. dominance or, from the American perspective – the zone of unique U.S. responsibility. In fact, the clearly asymmetrical history of international relations in the frame of "Western Hemisphere" mainly focuses on the U.S.–Latin American relations; even Demeterio Boersner, one of

[4] National Defense and Canadian Forces: *Canada-Latin America/Caribbean Defense Relations.*

The increasement in Canada's engagement in the resolving of actual problems in the world included the strengthening of the military component and progressive participation of Canadian soldiers in peace initiatives of the United Nations and OAS.

the most important Latin American experts in this field, did not allocate greater importance to the Canadian – Latin American relations in his well-known study *Relaciones internacionales de America Latina*[5].

Consequently, we could say that Canada has definitively had a secondary role concerning the Latin American agenda. But, this position opened up some room for new forms of engagement of Canadian foreign policy having in mind that such a position is based on completely different geopolitical and geo-strategic interests – of course, in comparison with the United States. The Canadian government tried to develop economic and political cooperation without being limited by the ideological influences of hegemonic strategy. After World War II, relations within the "Western Hemisphere" were conditioned by the logics of bipolarity and the main actor – certainly – were the United States and their strategy of fighting against the expansion of communism in this part of the world. Simultaneously with this political strategy, economic, financial and commercial strategies were applied, and they were firmly based on American national interests and economic benefits.

In the case of Canada, during this period we can note a growing identification of political, economic and cultural interests of Ottawa in Latin America, but with completely different approaches, concepts and diplomatic activity. The fundamental difference between the Canadian and U.S. strategy towards Latin America is that in the Canadian case, the policy of military intervention was avoided, which enabled Canada to present a positive and attractive alternative for cooperation with the developed North of the American continent. Consequently, we should not be surprised by the fact that the main partners of Canada were and still remain Cuba, Central American countries, Venezuela or Colombia.

Canadian professors John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna in their book *Sesenta años de relaciones bilaterales Cuba-Canadá*[6] (Sixty years of bilateral relations between Cuba and Canada) analyze this model of bilateral cooperation proving Canadian consistency in its relations to Cuba starting from 1960 up to date. The substantial difference between Canadian policy towards communist Cuba and the U.S. policy reflects itself in maintaining the *status quo* concerning the fall of the revolutionary government – what without any doubt – was the American strategic priority. Accordingly, there were some disagreements regarding the Cuban revolutionary regime between Washington and Ottawa. In this context, the role of the Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is especially significant. In practice, starting from 1968, Trudeau intensively developed Canadian relations with Cuba and this period (1968-1980) in the history of international relations within the "Western Hemisphere" was also characterized by the friendship established between Castro and Trudeau.

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5 Demeterio Boersner, *Relaciones internacionales de America Latina – Breve historia*, Ed. Nueva Sociedad, Caracas, 1990.

6 For further information see: John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna: *Sesenta años de relaciones bilaterales Cuba-Canadá*, Ed. Editorial cubana de ciencias sociales, La Habana, 2008.

What did that mean for Canada and its interests in Latin America? Firstly, Canada has clearly proved to have its own strategy towards Latin America in accordance with functional ideological principles of its foreign policy strategy, that is – the Canadian main goals were notably different from the American ones.

Secondly, the perception of Canadian foreign policy in Latin America was generally positive, because it was not hegemonistic and interventionist; on the contrary – diplomatic and commercial relations were completely normalized, including the Canadian direct investments in the sector of tourism, ecology, technology, support to the democratic development of those countries, better understanding of intercultural and educational issues, and the like.

Furthermore, this Canadian strategy increased its influence in the frame of the so-called "Third World", having in mind that constructive compromise and selective pragmatism concerning the ideological principles were the basic elements of this policy. For instance, we can say that Canadian policy towards Cuba was not an example of a *special relation* – a term used in scientific literature during the Cold War period for Soviet-Cuban relations. It was, in fact, a policy that pragmatically considered the reality of this country. A further special characteristic of Canadian-Cuban relations was that along with Mexico, Canada was the only Western-Hemisphere country that did not break political and economic relations with Cuba in the early 1960s, following the revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959. Traditionally, Canadian diplomacy has adhered to the principle that international commerce should not necessarily be impeded by ideological differences[7].

By 1981, with bilateral trade at $474 million, Canada had become Cuba's principal non-communist trading partner, beating Japan, France, and Spain. In June 1994, the Liberal government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien introduced its *policy of constructive engagement* with Cuba, which was designed to support a peaceful transition, full respect for human rights, genuinely representative government institutions, an open economy, and eventual reintegration into the political hemispheric institutions-organizations, such as OAS. The policy of constructive engagement consisted in establishing links in the areas of tourism, humanitarian aid, trade and investment and deepening the ties between these two countries far beyond under any previous government.[8] This Canadian strategy operated on the premise that promotion of dialogue and comprehensive business relations with the regime would gradually bring about political and economic liberaliza-

[7] J. Kirk, and P. McKenna. *Canada-Cuban Relations: The Other Good Neighbor Policy*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997, p. 38

[8] Kim Richard Nossal, "The Evolution of Canadian Policy toward Cuba since 1993", paper presented at ITAM-University of Havana conference entitled The Relationship of North America and Cuba in the Post-NAFTA Period, Mexico City, December 11-12, 2000, p. 1., quoted as in: Cristina Warren: *Canada's Policy of Constructive Engagement with Cuba: Past, Present and Future*, Focalpoint, Canadian Foundation for the Americas, 2003. available at: http://www.focal.ca/pdf/cuba_canada.pdf

tion in Cuba. In December 1994, at the first Summit of the Americas in Miami, Chrétien openly criticized the U.S. position on Cuba and asserted that the best way to cultivate democracy on the island was through constructive engagement rather than isolation. The same position was repeated at the meeting of the General Assembly of the OAS in Haiti, in June 1995, and Panama, in June 1996 when Chrétien played the French-Canadian card emphasizing the "Common Latin Blood" that bound Mexico and Canada, distinguishing them from their huge mutual neighbor[9].

It is very important to note that the high level of pragmatism of Ottawa has been functionally used to increase the economic presence of Canada in Cuba. In the absence of U.S. companies on the Cuban market, Canada's trade and investment presence has been brought to a significant level. Many Canadian firms, including European and Latin American, have been taking advantage of such a U.S. absence, strengthening their commercial presence. The idea is to fortify the position in the Cuban economy before the lifting of the U.S. economic embargo and to meet the anticipated demand from American visitors (in the sector of tourism) following the lifting of the travel ban. In addition, foreign investors foresee large capital gains from selling their Cuban holdings to American companies following the resumption of economic relations between the United States and Cuba.

UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimated the stock or accumulated value of foreign direct investment in Cuba at $2,118 million at the end of 2002[10]. Canadian direct investment has been estimated at 600 million U.S. dollars at the end of 2003, covering a broad range of activities: energy development, mining and tourism[11]. Cuba's state mining agency, Geominera, for instance, has entered into joint venture agreements with a number of Canadian companies, including Joutel Resources, Ltd., Republic Goldfields, Miramar Mining Corporation, Caribgold Resources, Homer Goldmines, and Macdonald Mines Exploration.

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9 Kirk and McKenna. *op. cit.* p. 151.

10 It is necessary to point out that the ECLAC was officially founded on Februar 28, 1948. The legal precedents of ECLAC were resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Lake Success on September 16th and November 29th 1947. It was the specific development of the Latin American economic school that achieved significant success within and outside of Latin America. We are free to say that the economic development of Latin America (1950-1980) was achieved according to the recipes of this school whose principles have been modified after the 'lost decade'. In short, ECLAC is a specialized agency of the UN with an inter-governmental profile. Some of the industrially highly developed countries participate in the work of this Commission and its regional headquarters is in Santiago de Chile. It has two sub-regional headquarters: in Mexico City for Central America and in Puerto España (Trinidad and Tobago) for the Caribbean.

11 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), *Canada-Cuba Relations*. Ottawa. 2005.

When we focus on the field of foreign trade, we can note that Cuba's overseas trade has been characterized by a persistent and widening trade deficit. As an example, Cuba's imports in 2002 amounted to some $4.2 billion, while its exports were just under $1.3 billion. By contrast, the Canadian-Cuban trade shows only a small Cuban deficit when the longer period 1989-2003 is considered. Two-way trade between Canada and Cuba grew from $194 million in 1990 to $497 million in 1997 before declining to $444 million in 2003[12]. From 1997 to 2001 Canada ranked second only to Russia as Cuba's most important export market. During this five-year period Canada ranked fourth among Cuba's importing partners behind, in descending order of importance, Spain, Venezuela, and China[13].

Important social-political, ideological and economic changes that have been taking place in Venezuela, starting from 1999, have led to certain disruptions in the U.S.-Latin American relations. Namely, the dynamic foreign policy activity of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela exerted a significant influence on the political development of several countries in Latin America, above all to Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua as Central American countries. Considering that the foreign policy of President Chavez is based on antihegemonism and anti-imperialism, i.e. anti-Americanism, there have been new forms of interference of Washington on the regional agenda. On the other hand, in case of Canada's relations with Venezuela, we can note similar phenomena, especially in the period after Hugo Chavez's coming to power: unlike the Canada-Venezuela relations, the U.S.-Venezuela relations suffered new tensions. Generally speaking, Canada and Venezuela have had unbroken diplomatic relations since 1949 when the Canadian General Consulate in Caracas was opened and definitely elevated to an Embassy in 1953. We can say that during that entire period, the main drivers of Canadian policy towards Venezuela were the achievement of democracy and respect of human rights, the expansion of trade and investments, the cultivation of the Canadian image by strengthening cultural and academic ties.

In fact, the Canadian Embassy in Venezuela promotes Canadian culture and the values of Canadian society. When Hugo Chavez was first elected in 1998, then re-elected in 2006, with more than 61% of the votes, Canada contributed to the transparency of the elective process with one hundred and ten thousand Canadian dollars and five observers. In spite of some irregularities regarding pooling stations' closing times, they objectively reported that elective process was acceptably carried out. It means that Canada closely monitors the process of the Bolivarian revolution, while paying particular attention to the level of human rights and democratic standards during the adoption of the measures by the current Venezuelan revolutionary government. Furthermore, Canadian support is given to the civil society organizations in the field of democracy and human rights.

[12] International Monetary Fund (IMF), Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook. Washington, 1995 and 2004., cited from: Eric N. Baklanoff and LaShondra Jones: Deconstructing "Constructive Engagement": Canada's Economic Relations with Cuba, 1993–2003.

[13] Baklanoff and Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 62

On this example we can see that both Canada and the U.S. put ideological principles first, which, at the beginning of the 21st century, means democracy, a free market, human rights and a developed civil society. The difference lies in the fact that the U.S. try to preserve their hegemony by direct confrontation with the revolutionary regime, like in the case of Cuba. An additional element that produced tensions in U.S.-Venezuelan relations is the clear anti-neoliberal and anti-globalist foreign policy of Hugo Chavez, as has been mentioned before.

Furthermore, we can see that Canada led a similar successful policy in other Latin American countries, where the democratic transition was supported against dictatorial regimes in power, like in Chile and Argentina, for instance. Additionally, Canada has supported human rights and democracy in Colombia where – due to drug trafficking and guerrilla activities – the situation has been very unstable, regardless of its democratic regime. It also pleaded for the same values during and after the Sandinist revolution in Nicaragua, etc.

3. Canada and the new Latin American regionalism

The decade of the 1980s, known as the "lost decade", represents a very important period in the development of regional and interregional integration on the American continent. Namely, a successfully carried out political (democratic) reform, as well as a neoliberal economic reform, have enabled North and Latin America to achieve a higher level of harmonization of their interests. We can say that the new integration models contain political and economic, security, and cultural questions in their platforms, showing us that the relations within the "Western Hemisphere" have transitioned to the sphere of complex interdependence. Concretely, in Latin America we have a redefinition of the existent models of regional integration, the launching of new forms of integration, emphasizing that Latin America has used very successfully the fall of bipolarism and identified its new partners in different parts of the world.

We can see similar phenomena in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the rules governing trade relations in North America underwent important changes as a result of the successful negotiation and ratification of two treaties: first came the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) in 1987, followed by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) ratified by Canada, Mexico and the U.S. in 1993. CUFTA was largely absorbed into NAFTA – alternatively one might say that CUFTA was "enlarged".

NAFTA was launched in January 1994 and it now forms one of the world's largest free trade areas. It is very important to emphasize that it represents the first integration model whose member states were two industrialized countries (the U.S. and Canada) and one developing country (Mexico). Thus, Canada directly linked its economic interests to a Latin American country, in this case – Mexico. Canada-Mexico trade has grown dramatically under NAFTA, despite geographic distance

and limited historic ties. Bilateral merchandise trade between the two countries reached $23.8 billion in 2008, a 424% increase from pre-NAFTA levels[14]. That way Canada continues to play an active and constructive role in helping North America maintain a solid position in the global economy. By strengthening Canada's trade and economic relations with the United States and Mexico, NAFTA is contributing to a more competitive North American platform from which Canadian companies can seek opportunities on the global marketplace. In a context where Canada experiences a global economic downturn and seeing economies in Asia and South America challenge North America's competitiveness, NAFTA continues to be the key to sustained growth and prosperity in the region.

On the other hand, it is very important to mention that Canadian foreign policy in Latin America was completed by signing of free trade agreements with Chile (1997), Costa Rica (2002) and Peru (2008). Currently this process advances with Colombia, Central American countries and CARICOM[15] countries. Using this methodology, Canadian diplomacy has successfully overcome the obstacles for the larger engagement of Canadian enterprises in this part of the Americas. For example, in the case of Mexico we could see that the removal of trade barriers led to increased trade between two countries, but also stronger linkage in other spheres.

Conclusions

Changing hegemonic structures have been crucial in the evolution of Canadian foreign policy towards Latin America and they opened up room for new forms of engagement in this continent, which the Canadian Government has functionally and pragmatically used. While there has been considerable discussion about the influence of domestic actors upon Canadian foreign policy towards Latin America, the focus here has been upon the changing international context in which they have operated. The actions of policymakers and interest groups have had significant influence, but they are limited by the opportunities present in any given world order. Prior to the Second World War, Canada had important economic interests in Latin America, but Ottawa's political relations with the region were notably limited. Certainly, the lack of Canadian autonomy in foreign policy until the 1926-1931 period was a significant limiting factor in this regard[16].

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[14] *Fast Facts: North American Free Trade Agreement*, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, available at: http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/nafta-alena/NAFTA-fast-facts.aspx?lang=eng

[15] CARICOM – Caribbean Community and Common Market is an organization of 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies with headquarters based in Georgetown, Guyana. Its main purposes are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy.

[16] James Rochlin: *Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy towards Latin America*, University of British Columbia Press, 1994. p. 227.

In *Canada, Latin America, and the New Internationalism*[17] Brian Stevenson states that post-war Canadian foreign policy has been characterized by two enduring themes – an ongoing commitment to *multilateralism* on the one hand, and a substantial *commitment to continentalism*[18] on the other. In the early 1970s, the post-war structures for international politics and economics entered a period that led to a dramatic transformation of these premises based on the relative decline of the influence of the United States (punctuated by the end of the Cold War), the rise of economic interdependence and the new *internationalism*, and the emergence of citizen-centered foreign policy. These three factors have had a substantial impact on both Canada's role in the world and its relationships with its main political and economic partners.

Stevenson argues that Canada's foreign policy toward Latin America has been profoundly affected by these three factors and has evolved in response to both changing domestic demands and shifting international circumstances. By analyzing a pivotal period in Canada-Latin American relations, he shows us how successive Canadian governments made important initiatives toward closer relationships with Latin America and were also pressured by non-governmental organizations to play a bigger role in the region. Canada's increased role can be seen in official foreign policy commitments, such as the decision to join the Organization of American States. While the United States have played a key role in sometimes constraining Canadian foreign policy in the region, it is important to realize that Canadian foreign policy has been steadied by a long-standing tradition of internationalism.

There is no doubt that Canadian experiences concerning Latin America demonstrate that the successful multilateralism of a middle-power permitted the achievement of the main objectives fixed in Ottawa's strategy for Latin America. Certainly, this policy was functional and pragmatic and it contributed to economic and social development and security in the "Western Hemisphere".

The concrete effects of such a policy have been evident in the field of trade and investments, and not only due to the coming into power of NAFTA, but also due to all other signed bilateral agreements of this type. Canadian enterprises could never be competitive with the American ones, considering the fact that the U.S. are the largest trading partner in the region; nevertheless – Canadian enterprises became important trading partners for Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru.

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17 Brian J.R. Stevenson: *Canada, Latin America, and the New Internationalism: A Foreign Policy Analysis*, *1968-1999*: 2000.

18 Clarifying the main foreign policy drivers of Canada, we should note that the commitment to continentalism is generally understood as making agreements or policies that favor the regionalization and/or cooperation between nations within a continent. In Canadian political history, continentalism has referred to policies that emphasize Canadian trade and economic ties within the North American continent, particularly the United States, over those with the United Kingdom and the British Empire.

In addition, we can see that Canadian exports to the Caribbean sub-region are growing in the field of telecommunication equipment, computer components, agri-food products and electronic equipment. Furthermore, it is necessary to stress that Canada enjoys strong trade relationship with Cuba, especially in tourism, mining and agriculture. Cuba is one of the largest Canadian trade partners in the Caribbean, in spite of the fact that a free trade agreement has not been signed. On the other hand, Central America is also a very important market for Canadian enterprises. Canadian exports to this sub-region include agricultural products, telecommunications, paper products and plastics, while the key imports include gold, coffee, clothing, agricultural products and electrical machinery. Concerning Venezuela, the consistent Canadian policy resulted in growing economic relations between these countries and we can say that Venezuela is one of the most important South American partners of Canada – primarily thanks to its oil production.

Finally, we can conclude that Canada's role in inter-American affairs has evolved from that of a distant observer, albeit with some important economic interests, to that of full partnership in the Americas. This position is characterized by a very dynamic political dialogue based on the achievement of certain level of Canadian autonomy concerning the policy towards Latin America and the quality of engagement within the OAS. The tradition of internationalism in Canadian foreign policy as viewed from the perspective of foreign policy analysis provides the framework within which to understand and accommodate changes in its policy toward Latin America.

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Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism

Introduction

Basing its fundamental principles on the experiences of the American federation, the traditional theory of federalism had for a long time rigidly supported the standpoint that one of the basic characteristics of a federation is the equal status of its constitutive units. The preceding principle was also enforced by the institutional arrangements of two other classical federations, Switzerland and Australia, which was also characterized by a symmetrical constitutional status of federal units. For this reason rare asymmetrical federal arrangements, which are characterized by a diverse status of constitutive units have for a long time been considered exceptions not deserving of particular attention seeing as they represent a deviation of federalism. However, the expansion of federalism as well as its ability to adapt had led to an increasing number of asymmetrical federal arrangements due to which this occurrence could no longer be ignored and considered an exception. Charles Tarlton had, back in 1965, emphasized the fact that not enough attention was being given to asymmetrical federal systems, at which time he also warned of the distorted picture in theory which reduces the concept of federalism solely to the symmetrical relations of legal and political units with the federal government. According to this author, in the theory of federalism, disregarded are the various ways „in which each member state in a federal system is able to relate to the system as a whole, the central authority, and each other member state" (Tarlton, 861). Undeniable is the fact that the cultural, economic, social and political factors create "variations in the symbiotic connection between those states and the system" (Tarlton, 861). Indeed taking into consideration that it is founded on the principle "unity in diversity", it can be said without any dilemma that it is in the actual nature of federalism to protect and preserve the diversity of its constitute units. In fact, there is not a federal system in which the constitutive units are identical or at least similar on all fronts. Let us examine some examples that shall confirm the formerly presented thesis, whereas it is certain that mutual differences between federal units are the most conspicuous if the criteria used for their differentiation involve their territories and population size. The most populated federal unit in the USA, California, has approximately 36,700,000 inhabitants, while on the opposite pole there is Wyoming that has only

about 530,000 inhabitants. In Canada there is an even more distinct difference in proportions between the most populated and least populated province. Hence, Ontario has about 13,000,000 residents, while Prince Edward Island has about 140,000 residents which make up 0.5% of Canada's entire population. Even more interesting is the fact that two of the most populated provinces in Canada, Quebec and Ontario, make up 62% Canada's population. Similar is the case with Australia, where the residents of two federal units, New South Wales and Victoria, make up 60% of the total population. There are drastic disproportions from the aspect of the size of territories of federal units. Taking Canada as an example again, Quebec, the federal unit that is the largest in its territory, spreads across 1,542,100 sq. kilometers, whereas Prince Edward Island as the smallest spreads across 5,700 sq. kilometers. The outlined examples of asymmetry in the federal systems represent *de facto* asymmetry; however, undisputable is the fact that all differences which exist amongst federal units are reflected on the political practice as well. Namely, the size of the territory, population and its economic strength to a great extent determine the influence of each of the federal units within the federation. Nevertheless, despite this *de facto* asymmetry, which is characteristic of all federal systems, of much more significance for us is *de jure* asymmetry, which is characteristic only for certain federations, amongst which is Canada. Finally, let us clarify that de jure asymmetry in federal systems represents such a constitutional situation in which not all federal units are subject to the same legal regime.

Constitutional (de jure) Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism

At the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, the idea of an association between the British North American provinces emerged. Such an idea was supported in its entirety by the Crown, because it was in its interest to make its colonies as independent as possible and to strengthen them by uniting them so as to empower them to resist the American invasion which was increasingly certain. Simultaneously, potentially Canadian regions on the unpopulated west could be imperiled by uncontrolled American migration. Aside from reasons of defense, of undisputable significance for the idea of the association of all British colonies were economic factors. The elimination of customs barriers and the broadening of the market represented a significant stimulant to the economy. In addition, the production of great surpluses of wheat for export and the increasing trade of wood, as well as the need for the import of numerous products imposed the building of a railway, because the existing transport system which included channels and harnesses could not suffice. The building of a railway would on its own effectuate very significant economic stimulation; however, that was an undertaking that greatly surpassed the capabilities of one province.

However, the formation of the modern Canadian state was preceded by diametrically opposite views in relation to the form of government of the future state. Namely, on the one hand, the political elite of Upper Canada, today's province of Ontario, led by John A. McDonald supported the establishment of a strong union

that would result in the creation of a unitary state. It is understood that the remaining Anglophone provinces could not side with this standpoint seeing as the creation of a unitary state would also mean the domination of Upper Canada, which was the most populated and at the same time economically strongest province. On the extreme opposite pole stood the politicians of Lower Canada, today's Quebec, who supported the creation of a more decentralized union because only in that way would the domination of the English speaking majority be impossible, which in turn would secure the preservation of the national identity of the Francophone population. The Francophone leaders made it their goal for the newly implemented institutional arrangement to make it possible to effectuate their motto: "Notre langue, notre nationalité, nos lois". In such circumstances it was necessary to search for a middle ground that would be acceptable for all provinces. As a distinctly practical and rational politician, John A. McDonald was aware of this, thus he stopped insisting that a unitary state be formed. His pragmatism is best seen in the following words: "[W]e found that such a system [the legislative union] was impracticable. In the first place, it would not meet the assent of the people of Lower Canada, because they felt that in their peculiar position — being in a minority, with a different language, nationality and religion from the majority, — in case of a junction with the other provinces, their institutions and their laws might be assailed, and their ancestral associations, on which they prided themselves, attacked and prejudiced" (Confederation Debates, 29). A compromise was found in the establishment of a federal system which involved the creation of a united and efficient state structure with the preservation of the autonomy and identity of constitutive units. This was confirmed by George-Étienne Cartier's words, in whose opinion no one's interests will be imperiled if a federal system be instated (Confederation Debates, 61). Nevertheless, it should be said that John A. McDonald was not a convinced federalist, thus he only accepted the federal form of government when it was certain that the federal government was granted "all the powers which are incident to sovereignty" (Confederation Debates, 33). However, precisely because its formation involved, aside from a large number of thus far independent provinces, two nations as well, the Canadian federal system acquired some characteristics which even to this day differentiate it from the majority of modern federations. In that sense, Canada was the first federation to introduce a different constitutional status of federal units in its constitutive act (British North American Act 1867).

That the newly created federal arrangement provided a special status to the Francophone province of Quebec could already be seen in section 94 of the BNAA. Namely, in this section the Canadian founding fathers had exempted Quebec from any potential unification of all or any of the laws relative to property and civil rights that might arise in Anglophone provinces. It is clear that in this way the separate legal culture of the Quebecers was preserved seeing as they are protected from any such centralizing measures in this area. In that sense, observable is the recognition by the founding fathers of Quebec as a 'distinct society' in all but name (Milne, 5). Nonetheless, regardless of the fact that there existed the possibility of unification of laws relative to property and civil rights in the English speaking provinces, this process never came about.

The composition of the federal parliament is a matter in which the most impressionable characteristic is the distinct position of the province of Quebec within the scope of the Canadian federal system (sections 22, 23 of BNAA). Each region in Canada has 24 Senators that must be residents of the province whose interests they shall be representing. However, only in the case of Quebec, it is foreseen that a Senator be appointed from each of the 24 electoral districts in Quebec. The existence of such a provision seems fully justifiable, because its aim is to secure adequate representation of both the majority which is of French descent as well as the Protestant minority of English descent. Contrarily, seeing as the appointment of the Senators lies within the competence of the federal government, it would be possible to circumvent the constitutional provisions and appoint all Senators from Quebec from the ranks of the Protestant minority. At the same time, these provisions also protect the Anglophone minority from the province of Quebec, because with such a provision they are also guaranteed adequate representation.

Furthermore, section 133 of the BNAA stipulates that either French or English may be used in the legislature and courts of Canada and Quebec, and that the records and journals of the respective legislatures be kept in both languages. The specificity of the aforementioned constitutional norm is that no other province, except Quebec, is mentioned.

On the educational front, with the aim of protecting the right to religious education, in section 93(2) of the BNAA, Quebec and Ontario could not restrict and perturb the already acquired privileges of the catholic and protestant religious schools with their legislatures.

Withal, seeing as the federal government appoints all judges, it is prescribed that all judges in the province of Quebec shall be selected from the Bar of that province (section 98 of the BNAA). In that way, the distinctiveness of the Francophone legal system is additionally protected, because in the province of Quebec, judges that are not familiar with the French civil law could not be appointed.

Following an analysis of the provisions which introduce asymmetry into the Canadian federal system, the question should be answered as to whether those provisions also involve the receding from the principles of equality between the provinces. Equality and equal rights do not necessarily mean that very significant differences, which exist between the provinces, should be ignored. On the contrary, asymmetry in the Canadian federal system was established for the purpose of protecting the equality of the provinces, further to which it also aims to protect and preserve the distinctiveness of the province of Quebec, and not to establish an unequal position between the provinces. Therefore, elements of asymmetry in Canadian federalism are foreseen precisely with the aim of preserving the principle of equality amongst the provinces, and not with the aim of providing one of them with a privileged status. As can often be heard from amongst Quebec authors', asymmetry contributes to factual, instead of formal equality.

Political Asymmetry in Canadian Federalism

Aside from constitutional asymmetry, Canadian federalism is also characterized by political asymmetry "understood as the federal and provincial governments developing policies where the roles and responsibilities of each would vary from province to province" (Graefe, 1). A classical example of political asymmetry is the opting-out mechanism, "under which a province can choose to opt out of a shared-cost programme negotiated with the other provinces and the federal government, and receive funding anyway so long as it maintains the same type of programme" (Smith, 2). The Canadian political practice is enriched by this new mechanism, which was intended to protect Quebec from centralizing measures, during the Pearson governments 1963-1968. It is a matter of the ability of the province to take responsibility for the financing and carrying out of certain programs otherwise carried out by the federal government in other parts of Canada. Therefore, the provinces were left with the possibility to opt out of a federal program, without being in a direct way penalized because they will receive appropriate compensation either in the form of certain financial resources or in the form of a reduction of taxes toward the federation. Quebec, almost traditionally, declined to participate in such programs, because in the opinion of its politicians, that was a perfidious way to usurp the provincial competences. For this reason it can be said that the significance of this mechanism is indisputable because it has to a great extent contributed to the flexibility of the Canadian federal system and allowed for the special demands of the Quebecers to be fulfilled. That Quebec aimed to stay outside the centralizing tendencies in the Canadian federal system can also be seen in the fact that this province did not accept the new Canada Pension Plan in 1965, but instead established a separate Quebec Pension Plan.

However, following the election of Trudeau to power in 1968, the practice of asymmetry had ceased and the politics of a strong central government and opposition to Quebec nationalism in favor of multiculturalism was proclaimed. This move back to symmetry was the response to the ever increasing demands of the Quebecers for the broadening of the competences of their province, which would in that way obtain a special status. That was a wise attempt to save the unity of Canada.

Patriation of the Canadian Constitution that were made in 1982 not only promoted equality of the provinces, but it did not lead to the reconstruction of the federal system sought by the Quebecers. Although the aim of all constitutional negotiations up until that time was to reach a compromise with the province of Quebec and to fulfill its demands as much as possible, the constitutional reform in 1982 was marked by crude ignorance of its demands. The Quebecers had unyieldingly defended their standpoint, that as one of the two founding people of Canada they have the right to veto on all constitutional changes. Pride and increasing national pride did not allow the Quebecers to accept the newly risen constitutional situation in which they belong to only one of the ten, completely equal provinces. The fundamental goal of the French-speaking Canadians, which

was formally expressed in a resolution by the Quebec parliament is that by the Constitution it "must be recognized that the two founding peoples of Canada are fundamentally equal and that Québec, by virtue of its language, culture and institutions, forms a distinct society within the Canadian federal system and has all the attributes of a distinct national community." (Québec, National Assembly, Votes and Proceedings, No. 12 (1 December 1981) at 143). That would mean that equality be proclaimed by the constitution, not the provinces, but two founding peoples, which would provide the province of Quebec with a special status, that would guarantee it that no constitutional changes that would concern their interests could be carried out without their agreement. On the contrary, Canada is defined as a multicultural society in which French-speaking Canadians are not recognized the status of a founding people. That meant that the demands of the Quebecers were crudely ignored, hence led by Prime Minister René Lévesque, they consistently remained at the standpoint that the constitutional reform of 1982 should not be accepted. It was clear that the situation, in which the province of Quebec with indignation refused to accept the constitutional amendments, could not continue for a longer period of time.

The first efforts made to fulfill the demands made by Quebec took place in 1987 when the Prime Ministers of all the provinces agreed upon the constitutional changes and concluded the Meech Lake Accord. With this agreement all of the demands made by the French speaking Canadians were fulfilled. The status of Quebec was recognized as a "distinct society" within Canada, and the existence of French and English language communities was marked as „fundamental characteristic of Canada." However, all of the other constitutional changes applied to all of the provinces, thus this agreement, except for declaratively, did not introduce asymmetry into the Canadian federal system. According to the valid revision procedure the proposed constitutional changes were supposed to be ratified by all of the provinces within a period of three years from their adoption in the federal parliament. However, as a result of the newly established political circumstances, up until the expiration of the three year deadline, in June 1990, the Parliaments of the two provinces (New Brunswick and Manitoba) did not ratify the proposed constitutional changes, thus the province of Quebec was once again isolated by the English speaking Canadian majority.

In such a situation, Quebec was faced with two possibilities: to present a new request, in the form of an ultimatum for its status to change within the scope of the federal system or to begin to move down the road to independence. With that in mind, the Anglophone part of Canada directed a clear ultimatum that a referendum on independence will be called, if they do not receive an acceptable proposal of a constitutional revision until October, 1992. The Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney, received this not at all surprising ultimatum presented by Quebec with readiness. Namely already in September of 1991 he presented the public with a draft proposal of constitutional changes. The final agreement amongst the provincial Prime Ministers took place with the conclusion of the Charlottetown Accord in 1992. Like the previous agreement, the Accord from

Charlottetown recognized Quebec as a "distinct society" within Canada that has the authority to protect and preserve the distinctiveness of the French speaking Canadians. However, seeing as Mulroney had drawn valuable lessons from the previous unsuccessful attempt at a constitutional revision, this Accord was not limited only to the fulfillment of the demands of the province of Quebec. The Western provinces were the most interested in the reform of the Senate, seeing as it was dominated by two provinces, Ontario and Quebec. It was therefore necessary to, with the aim of ensuring the assent of these provinces; carry out the reform of this anachronous institution, thus it was foreseen by this agreement for the Senate to become the election body in which all of the provinces will be represented on a parity principle. As compensation for this loss of the dominate position in the Senate, the province of Quebec was guaranteed that it shall have at least 25% of representatives in the House of Representatives (which was at that time the percentage of its citizens of the entire population of Canada), regardless of whether in the future there is a decrease in the portion of its residents in the entire population of Canada. If the reform of the Senate was supposed to contribute to the elimination of one element of asymmetry from the Canadian federal system, this other solution had the opposite effect, the introduction of new asymmetry into it. However, this Accord was also short-lived because the citizens of as many as six of the ten provinces voted against the adoption of the proposed constitutional revision.

The aforementioned attempts at constitutional changes unambiguously show that in Canada there prevailed a disposition against a constitutional reform that would ensure a special status for Quebec and introduce significant asymmetry within the federal system. This viewpoint was confirmed by the political practice in Canada which followed. Namely, all of the provinces, except Quebec, signed the Calgary Declaration in 1997 which specifically states that "if any future constitutional amendment confers powers on one province, these powers must be available to all provinces." However, not long after that declaration it seemed that the winds in Canada had started to blow in another direction. Following the failure and obvious lack of popularity of the proposed constitutional reforms which foresaw the introduction of asymmetric elements into the federal system, in September 2004 the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Health Accord was concluded which brought Canada back "to a minor tradition of "political asymmetry" (Graefe,1). In the Canadian political life up until then, asymmetry was linked with the demand of the province of Quebec to be recognized as having a special status within the scope of the federal system. This was confirmed by this Accord as well which defined asymmetrical federalism as a "flexible federalism that notably allows for the existence of special agreements and arrangements adapted to Quebec's specificity" (Brown, 3). Therefore, the Health Accord enabled the provinces to participate in the agreement under various conditions. The aforementioned Accord established general statements of principles that are intended to contribute to the improvement of health care and the resolution of problems in this domain which are most often in relation with human resources, waiting times, home care and primary care reform. The Governments of the

provinces are obliged to adopt plans for the resolution of the mentioned problems, to inform citizens of the progress made on an annual basis and to share the best practices amongst themselves. However, the province of Quebec was enabled greater flexibility in defining its plans to meet certain problems and in providing for different reporting requirements (i.e. reporting to the Quebec Health Commissioner rather than to the Health Council) (Graefe, 5). However, the conclusion can be drawn that the discussed asymmetry is very small, but its much greater political significance cannot be denied, seeing as many as 78% of Canadians supported this accord (Seidle and Bishop, 2). Therefore, that could be a clear sign that Canadians have become well aware of the conviction that asymmetrical arrangements do not have to imperil state unity. The answer to the question, whether the Health Accord is only an exception or whether it represents a new path to be followed by the political elites of Canada, can only be given in the future because past experiences of the political life of this country warn us that time would prove any of our predictions to be unsuccessful.

Conclusions

Following this concise retrospective on the evolution of asymmetry of Canadian federalism, one can raise the question as to its justifiability. By all means, the established asymmetrical arrangements in the BNAA were necessary for Canada to be founded at all. The basic reason for introducing constitutional asymmetry is rooted in the validity of treating unequal's unequally and it is in line with the vision of the Canadian founding fathers. After all, the creation of a modern Canadian state would not be possible if the federal arrangement was not in the position to protect and preserve the diversity of the constitutive units. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that the assertions which see the imperilment of state unity in the asymmetry of the federal system are absurd, because it is precisely that asymmetry that has contributed to the reconciliation of various interests and the creation of Canada. However, in the further development of Canada, two opposing tendencies could be traced. Quebecers, historically at least, have always wanted a more decentralized federal system, while Anglophone provinces have generally wanted stronger federal government. It is precisely for this reason that asymmetry of the federal system is the secure road to the survival and preservation of Canada and a way to avoid further attempts of Quebec to secede from Canada. Asymmetry of a federal system is therefore a wise compromise in terms of a reconciliation between two opposing visions on the future development of Canada and the relations between the federal government and the provinces.

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Margaret Atwood's *Strange Things*: The Power of Words in (Re) Connecting Through Diversity

Margaret Atwood explores the power of words in *Strange Things* by focusing on the imaginative mystique of the wilderness of the Canadian North. In this witty and informative book of essays (four lectures she held at Oxford University in 1991) she discusses many issues: the 'Grey Owl Syndrome' of white writers going native; the folklore arising from the mysterious—and disastrous—Franklin expedition of the nineteenth century; the myth of the dreaded snow monster, the Wendigo; the relations between nature writing and new forms of Gothic; and how a fresh generation of women writers in Canada have adapted the imagery of the Canadian North for the exploration of contemporary themes of gender, the family, and sexuality. She discusses the works of writers including Robert Service, Robertson Davies, Alice Munro, E. J. Pratt, Marian Engel, Margaret Laurence, and Gwendolyn MacEwan. Throughout the book, the emphasis is on the power of words: stories and storytelling, myths and their reinventions, fiction and fact, the weirdness of nature, and strangeness of the North.

Margaret Atwood calls this series of lectures *Strange Things,* which is a quote from a Robert W. Service poem about the Canadian North. The first lecture "Concerning Franklin and his Gallant Crew" is about 'the mysterious and disastrous Franklin expedition of the nineteenth century—the intent of which was to discover the North-west Passage, though the result was death for all—and its later echoes in Canadian literature" (3). She warns the readers (listeners) that there is some cannibalism in the first lecture "since it is now a proven fact that some of the expedition members ended up inside some of the others" (3). However, she concludes by pointing out to the power of words, the power of story telling, as stories, in literature, "hold a curious fascination both for those who tell them and for those who hear them; they are handed down and reworked, and story-tellers come back to them time and time again, approaching them from various angles and discovering new and different meanings each time the story, or a part of it is given a fresh incarnation" (11).

Such are the stories she is telling here. Such is the Franklin expedition story, the story in which *Franklin* represents a synonym for a disaster (May 1845, Sir John

Franklin and 135 men, two ships, attempted to discover the North-west Passage – a disaster). However, the Canadian literary imagination made of it a network of echoes (re)connecting the Canadian experience itself but also reconnecting it with European experience (the English nineteenth century ballad "Lord Franklin" and its many variations: "Lady Franklin's lament", "The Franklin Expedition"). "Lord Franklin' is still sung in Canada, and people in northern Ontario sing it without accompaniment, says Margaret Atwood, and concludes that "popular lore, and popular literature, established early that the North was uncanny, awe-inspiring in an almost religious way, hostile to white men, but alluring; that it would lead you on and do you in; that it would drive you crazy, and finally, would claim you for its own" (19).

The power of Franklin's story started to connect with popular lore very early, and went on with many literary voices, such as E.J. Pratt (a poet, whose echoes are found in Newfoundlander, *Titanic,* 1933); Gwendolyn MacEwen (a poet, verse play *Terror and Erebus,* broadcasted on the CBC around 1963); Al Purdy (a poem, 1967, "The North West Passage"); Graeme Gibson (the original ballad appears in the 1982 novel *Perpetual Motion*, set in 19th century Ontario); Mordecai Richler (the 1989 novel *Solomon Gursky Was Here);* Rudy Weibe, *A Discovery of Strangers,* (a book about Franklin's earlier expedition, 1994). Margaret Atwood closes this circle of reconnecting through words with a popular song "The Northern Passage", written by the well-known Canadian singer Stan Rogers (who died in an airplane fire). The song is a "reprise of the spirit of earliest exploration, seen in its heroic aspect; the other names mentioned are all those of northern explorers" (33). For him as for many others "exploration has become a metaphor for a spiritual journey, because the real, physical puzzle has been solved and the way made easy; but it's been solved by the dead explorers, who are somehow there, incarnate, in the routes they helped to trace" (33). The power of Franklin's story lives and connects-reconnects, as in its Chorus, *Verse 4* (34).

> How then am I so different from the first men through this way?
> Like them I left a settled life, I threw it all away
> To seek a Northwest Passage at the call of many men
> To find there but the road back home again.

The power of words to re-connect is even emphasized even more forcefully in her second lecture-chapter called "The Grey Owl Syndrome", after an enigmatic personage Archie Belaney of Hastings, England, who emigrated to Canada, and then adopted the Ojibway Indians but was also adopted by them, so that he later changed his name and his history and, as she says, "emerged years later as Grey Owl, a world-famous naturalist, writer and lecturer, accepted and beloved by all as what purported to be" (35).

He was followed by two nineteenth-century writers: John Richardson, author of the romance *Wacousta* (1832), and Ernest Thompson Seton (*Two Little Savages,* 1903), who pursued his ambition of turning everybody else into Indians. The

power of words of the Grey Owl redefined the identity of Archie Belaney, who was born in England in 1888, and who after an adventure was adopted into a local tribe and given a new name, "He-Who-Travels-By-Night", or Grey Owl. Helped by his wife (a 'real' Indian, Anahareo) he became a naturalist writer, a famous lecturer. His biographer, Lovat Dickson, explains the power of this myth, that is, the power of words: "In contrast with Hitler's screaming, ranting voice, and the remorseless clang of modern technology, Grey Owl's words evoked an unforgettable charm, lightening in our minds the vision of a cool, quiet place, where men and animals lived in love and trust together" (50) (he died at 50, and the public felt cheated as he was not a real Indian).

However, someone like Grey Owl, someone who lived such a deeply rooted collective dream, is hard "to keep buried", claims Margaret Atwood. Grey Owl is back in Robert Kroetsch's 1973 novel *Gone Indian,* and also in a M. T. Kelly 1991 story "Case Histories" (*Breath Dances Between Them)* (58)*, re*-appears in MacEwan's last book *Afterworlds,* where as Margaret Atwood explains, "he is more gently treated than he has been by the authors previously mentioned". She dedicates a poem to him, and calls it "Grey Owl's Poem" showing that his longing for unity with the land, his wish to claim it as homeland, and his desire for cultural authenticity did not die with him (58-9).

Gwendolyn MacEwan (*Afterworlds)*

GREY OWL'S POEM

There is no chart of his movement through the borrowed forest,
A place so alien that all he could do with it
    was pretend it was his own
And turn himself into an Indian, savage and lean,
A hunter of the forest's excellent green secret.

For all his movements through the forest were
In search of himself, in search of Archie Belaney,
    a lone predator in London
Telling the very king: *I come in peace, brother.*
(The princess thinking how alien he was, how fine.)

Stranger and stranger to return to the forest
With the beavers all laughing at him, baring
    their crazy orange teeth
And the savage secret—if there ever was one —
Never revealed to him. Stranger and stranger to return to

The female forest, the fickle wind erasing his tracks,
The receding treeline, and the snowbanks moving and moving.
(58)

The power of words is the power to unite, connect and re-connect through diversity then and now. Margaret Atwood reminds us that "it was one of the accepted truisms of Canadian literary criticism in the 1950s and 1960s that the Canadian poet's task was to come to terms with the ancient spirit—that is the, the Native spirit—of the land whites had not yet claimed at a deep emotional level" (59). This is exactly what John Newlove attempts in his long narrative poem "The Pride", which begins with images of the North and the old west, continues through legends, and ends with a statement of relationship and unity, that is - reconnecting through diversity:

John Newlove (*The Fatman: Selected Poems 1962-1972)*

THE PRIDE

not this handful
of fragments, as the Indians
are not composed of
the romantic stories
about them, or of the stories
they tell only, but
still ride the soil
in us, dry bones a part
of the dust in our eyes,
needed and troubling
in the glare, in
our breadth, in our
ears, in our mouths,
in our bodies entire, in our minds, until
at last
we become them

in our desires, our desires,
mirages, mirrors, that are theirs, hard -
riding desires, and they
become our true forebears, moulded
by the same wind or rain,
and in this land we
are their people, come
back to life again.

Margaret Atwood believes that this wish to be Native will probably not go away from Canadian culture, and that is why it should not be rejected either as naive or sentimental or embarrassing. On the contrary, in order to re-connect through diversity she suggests one step further, and rightly concludes: 'if white Canadians would adopt a more traditionally Native attitude towards the natural world, a less exploitative and more respectful attitude, they might be able to reverse the

galloping environmental carnage of the late twentieth century and salvage for themselves some of that wilderness they keep saying they identify with and need. Perhaps we should not become less like Grey Owl and Black Wolf, but more like them" (60).

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'How Should I Read These?' First Nations Voices in Canadian Literature

In her short-story collection *Traplines* (1996) in "Queen of the North", a Haisla-Heiltsuk writer Eden Robinson describes a scene when Adelaine, a disaffected Haisla teenager, hands a bannock to Arnold who posits the fry bread as foreign and asks:

> "How should I eat these?" he interrupted me.
> "With your mouth, asshole." (Robinson, 208)

Adelaines' short eloquent reply repudiates Arnold's act of cultural Othering. On the other hand, Arnold's cultural 'sensitivity' and inquiry about how to eat fry bread in the proper Indian fashion reinforces the differences and the need for cross-cultural communication at the same time.

As a white reader and a cultural outsider of this Native woman's text, Arnold's question "How should I eat these?" made me ask myself: "How should I understand and deal with a story written from a Native perspective?" Soon I discovered that another white scholar Helen Hoy was prompted by the same issue which resulted in her launching a whole project entitled "How Should I Read These? Native Women Writers in Canada." In her book, Helen Hoy focuses on the dangers of fixating on or ignoring the differences that exist between two cultures, exploring the problematics, as she says, of "reading and teaching a variety of prose works by Native women writers in Canada from one particular perspective, my own, that of a specific cultural outsider" (Hoy, 11). Actually, Helen Hoy's as well as my own questions challenge ideas of given and fixed issues about the content of stories.

The question of difference between the two cultures was especially popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s when debates on the appropriation of voice flourished and when Native writers challenged Non-native writers to stop stealing their stories. There were, and there still are, a lot of non-Native people who speak on behalf of Native people who retell Native stories or who even employ a first-person Native perspective. Maria Campbell and Linda Griffiths in *The Book of*

Jessica: A Theatrical Transformation" tackle the theme of the appropriation of a voice or the appropriation of a story as Lee Maracle, another Native author, would say. In *The Book of Jessica,* one of the characters, Maria, a Métis, points that

> Real, honest-to-God true art steals from the people. It's a thief. […] It comes in, and you don't even notice that it's there, and it walks off with all your stuff, but then it gives back to you and heals you, empowers you, and it's beautiful (Griffiths & Campbell, 83).

While Maria, a Native, and Linda, a non-Native, in *The Book of Jessica* advocate sharing and the exchange of ideas between two cultures, Okanagan writer and teacher Jeannette Armstrong points: "I don't feel that any non-Indian person could represent our point of view adequately" (Armstrong, 56). Daniel David Moses in his interview to Terry Goldie explains that the problem of appropriation has to do with the fact that most people are not sensitive listeners, so they are not sensitive transmitters of stories, because the cultures have different values:

> When someone from another culture hears a story I tell, they perceive only the things that relate to their values. If they try to retell my story they are going to emphasize those things that are important to them. That only makes sense. So all we're saying is don't retell our stories, change them, and pretend they are what we're about, because they are not (Moses &Goldie, xxi).

Therefore, a white author is seen as both displacing the Native author and subject and producing knowledge removed from his or her own.

First Nations literature, or Native literature, as it is also called, takes up a separate place within Canadian literature, though many Native authors are often treated as mainstream writers: Thomas King, Eden Robinson, Lee Maracle, Jeannette Armstrong, Tomson Highway. Native authors are not treated as ethnic writers either. Daniel Heath Justice, a Cherokee immigrant to Canada, who studies Cherokee literature through Cherokee political and social history, notes that "indigenousness is *not* ethnic difference, it is both cultural and political distinctiveness, defined by land-based genealogical connections and obligations to human and non-human bonds of kinship" (Justice, 146). As the term indigenous literature in Canada is synonymous with the terms aboriginal or native, and as it encompasses First Nations, Inuit and Métis writers, the perspectives, needs and concerns of each of these broadly defined groups are lost in the general category of the term. Indian is a much contested term, often dismissed by Native people as a European misnomer that conflates distinctive cultures of many tribes occupying North America at the time of their conquest. Thus, Michael Dorris (Modoc) and Louise Erdrich (Chippewa) express their gratitude to Columbus who was looking for India and not Turkey when he named the Indians (Dorris & Erdrich, 23). And Drew Hayden Taylor, an Ojibwa playwright, jokes that, upon arrival in an unfamiliar town, he does not ask the first Native he meets for directions to the nearest First Nations bar (Taylor, 53). First Nations, Native and Aboriginal are currently preferred terms for the

affirmation of Indigenous culture, their sovereignty and indigeneity, though these terms might perform the same homogenization.

Moreover, many First Nations writers, like Jeannette Armstrong, call the term Indian "a generic racist term" which implies that Indians are one large group of people without separate rights as Nations (Armstrong, 33). In a similar way, Drew Hayden Taylor in his play *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* (1990) explains what an Indian is:

> It's a generic term used to describe all original inhabitants of this land. It was popular up until approximately 100 years ago, my time. In fact, right around your time. *Points to Rusty.* The more politically correct term in this day and age are "Native" or "Aboriginal" (Taylor 1990, 48)

Marlene Nourbese Philip raises the question of "cultural apartheid" when a body or a book of literature are organized around the racial identity of writers (Philip, 150). It has been an ongoing debate, both inside and outside Native communities, about how Native literature and identity is to be defined and who is supposed to be included under the category since the risks are many: first, of creating simple Native and non-Native binaries, then of using race as explanatory, of reducing differences, or sometimes producing stock responses especially by those at a greater distance from Native life.

In order to emphasize their distinctive role within Canadian literature many First Nations writers themselves have started to express their own Native perspective in their texts about different categories such as, among others, the category of Canadianness and Canadian identity. A case in point could be Harold Cardinal or Duke Redbird.

In his essay "A Canadian What the Hell It's All About", Harold Cardinal, a Cree, defines a Native attitude toward the definition of what being a Canadian means for both white and non-white people in Canada, emphasizing the need for a Native person to redefine the term. As Harold Cardinal points in his essay, "unless we reach a common agreement on the meaning of that term, we must always define the concept as we understand it, so that others will know what we mean when we discuss Canadianism" (Cardinal, 206), because there is not a universally accepted definition of the concept of Canadianism in Canada. By explaining different origins of the term Canada, Harold Cardinal points to the fact that different people ascribe different meanings to the term. Thus, when a Cree-speaking person uses the term *Ka-kanata* or *Canada* he means "that which is clean". Further, Harold Cardinal explains: "We describe our country as the clean land, because it belongs to our Creator, who is a clean being" (Cardinal 206). When a Cree-speaking person is affirming his or her Canadianism he says: *Nee-yeow.* So, when a white person says "I am a Canadian," a Cree-speaking person says: "I am a *Nee-yeow*". When a Cree describes himself as *Nee-yeow,* he is saying, as Cardinal explains: "We are members of that nation of people who are part of the four seasons of

Mother Earth". Consequently, a white person, not understanding Indian culture, does not know what somebody means when he says: "I am a member of a Nation of people who are part of Mother Earth". Similarly, a Native person does not exactly know what a white person means when he identifies himself as a Canadian. To exemplify further, other tribes such as the Chipewyan, the Slavey, the Dogrid, or the Navajo, call themselves *Dene,* giving their own definitions of themselves as a people and explaining how they relate to their environment in their language. By defining their land as a clean land (Ka-Kanata), a Cree is implicitly defining his responsibility to that land and that is to keep both the land and himself clean. Explaining the nature of the Native's language, Keesic, a character in *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* points:

> But our language is formed by our thoughts. Our thinking forms our words. […] In our language, when you talk about the earth or the forest, you can smell the leaves around you, feel the grass beneath your feet. Until our language is spoken again and rituals and ceremonies followed, then there are no more Odawa (Taylor 1990, 66).

The basic problem of the misunderstanding between a Native person and a white person is the lack of any precise translation between the Indian and white languages. Still, there is a mistaken belief that a Native people's concept of Canada is in conflict with the concept that white people have. The absurdity is that of the Krushchev-Kennedy dialogue in Vienna when there was a lot of shouting between the two leaders based on opposing ideologies, while what they said differed so little. Of course, the difference is that a Native man and a white man have different personal perceptions, but a Native view is not to be given less consideration simply because a Native person expresses his belief in a language that is different, draws his images from a different culture and gives his own definitions of his nationhood. The problem both for a white and a Native man is to know how to read the other man's text, how to understand the other man's words.

The basic task that remains after three or four centuries of contact between the First Nations and the whites is a bridge of understanding between two worlds that exist as separate realities. As Harold Cardinal points out, the difference has created a "mirage gap" (Cardinal, 209) between people in Canada. What appears to be a divergence on the meanings of *Canada* and *Canadian*, as used by people on both sides, is more a mirage than reality. But the major point based on that mirage gap in understanding is that "the government has developed policies aimed at assimilating Indians to make them into what the larger, white society perceives to be Canadians" (Cardinal, 209). Thus, one finds that all the programs emanating from the federal or the provincial governments concerned with the economic development, education, and the like, have as their central purpose the assimilation or the integration of Indians into the Canadian mainstream. Assimilation or integration, the two terms frequently used for the white people in relation to First Nations people has changed the view of many Native people towards their environment. Duke Redbird, a Chippewa, for example, trying to develop his own

Native consciousness, and the Native awareness of all Canadians, concludes in his poem "I am a Canadian":

> I'm a ferry boat ride to the Island
> I'm the Yukon
> I'm the North-West Territories
> I'm the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort Sea
> I'm the prairies, I'm the Great Lakes,
> I'm the Rockies, I'm the Laurentians,
> I am French
> I am English
> And I am Métis
> But more than this
> Above all this
> I am a Canadian and proud to be free. (Redbird, 115)

His view is based on the Native perspective first, that he is part of the land he inhabits, and still he points to his indigenousness (I am Métis), but above all he is a Canadian he concludes, adopting thus, at the end of the poem, a white-oriented point of view.

The growing self-consciousness of Native people in the 1970s produced mainly protest literature. Many treaties that were made between the Natives and the whites represent recorded Native literature. An immediate and angry reaction to government proposals came from the Alberta Cree, Harold Cardinal, in *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (1971) as a reaction against "The Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy" (1969). In his book Harold Cardinal argues shrilly for the retention of special rights within the contexts of treaty and the Indian Act. His book became a classic on the Native situation in Canada. At that time he also wrote *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians* (1977), while a landmark classic *Halfbreed* (1973) was written by a Métis writer Maria Campbell, and *We Are Métis* (1980) by Duke Redbird. Duke Redbird's collected verse *Loveshine and Red Wine* (1981) is an example of the social protest poetry written in the 1980s. The turning point of the emergence of the Native novel came in 1983 when a Métis writer Beatrice Culleton wrote and published her novel *In Search of April Raintree*. Two years later Jeannette Armstrong published *Slash* (1985). Thomas King, of Cherokee and Greek origin, wrote three well received novels: *Medicine River* (1990), which has been made into a television film, *Green grass, running water* (1993), *Truth and Bright Water* (1999). Among the very successful Native novels is Eden Robinson's mainstream short-story cycle *Traplines* and her first novel *Monkey Beach* (2000) or the autobiographical writing "I am Woman" (1988) by a Métis/Salish writer Lee Maracle or her well known stories *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories* (1990).

The growing need for Native literature texts has given rise to a proliferation of oral histories and anthologies. *Enough is enough: aboriginal women speak out*

(1987) is a collection of stories about being Native and female told to Janet Silman by a small group of women activists from the Tobique reserve in New Brunswick. The first major Native anthology was *First people, first voices* (1983) edited by Penny Petrone. It was distributed internationally and has had many printings. *Seventh generation: contemporary Native writing* (1989) is the first anthology of poems written by Natives. It was followed by *Our bit of truth: an anthology of Canadian Native literature* (1990) edited by Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance who presented the writing of fifty-two young not very well known First Nations women. The first Native-edited anthology is *A gathering of spirit: a collection by North American Indian women* (1984) edited by Beth Brant. Thomas King edited *All my relations: an anthology of contemporary Canadian Native writing* (1990), while Daniel David Moses, Delaware, and Terry Goldie, a non-Native professor at York University, Toronto, edited *An anthology of Canadian Native literature in English* (1992). The first book-length critical study of the literature of Canada's First Peoples is *Native literature in Canada: from the oral tradition to the present* (1990) by Penny Petrone. Although the concept of criticism as it is understood in the Western literary tradition does not exist in aboriginal culture, several Native writers such as Jeannette Armstrong, Lee Maracle, Beth Brant, and the like, have taken up the role of literary critics objecting to the Euro-centric literary standard and approaches used by non-Native academics who, they claim, usually misinterpret Native messages. Meanwhile, the body of criticism done by Native scholars has been greatly broadened.

One of the most sophisticated white writings on Native people is "Where is the Voice Coming From?" by Rudy Wiebe. Rudy Wiebe demonstrates the desire of the white culture to frame and package Native culture so that it can be swallowed and a voice can be found. He concludes his story:

> And here is a voice. It is an incredible voice that rises from among the poplars ripped of their spring bark, from among the dead somewhere lying there, out of the arm-deep pit shorter than a man; […] a voice so high and clear, so unbelievably high and strong in its unending wordless cry.

The voice of "Gitchie-Manitou Wayo" – interpreted as "voice of the Great Spirit" – that is, the Almighty Voice. […]

I say "wordless cry" because that is the way it sounds to me. I could be more accurate if I had a reliable interpreter who would make a reliable interpretation. For I do not, of course, understand the Cree myself. (Wiebe, 191-192)

By pointing to the spiritual aspect of Native culture and to everything being a manifestation of Manitou, the Great Spirit, Rudy Wiebe concludes that the voice he hears is a "wordless cry" because he, as a non-Native author, may misinterpret it.

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Intercultural Sensitivity: Serbian Diaspora in Canada

Knowledge about other cultures and intercultural sensitivity are one of the most important qualities of a person who wants to live abroad or who has constant cross-cultural relations with other people. However, intercultural sensitivity does not come naturally – you need cross-cultural experience and knowledge about the culture in question so you can be able to understand that culture, develop your sensitivity and adjust to it. On the other hand, we are all predisposed to function best within our own cultural framework. Our sense of identity is founded in the cultural context in which we were raised and socialized and thus we tend to function best within our culture and with the people from our cultural background.

Milton Bennett tried to explain how people or groups tend to think and feel about cultural difference. In order to do that, he created the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to explain people's reactions to cultural differences. This model is valuable because it shows a progression of stages people may go through, including strategies for helping people move from one stage to another. Some people may stop in a stage and not progress any further; others may occasionally move backwards. The model is divided into "Ethnocentric Stages" (Denial, Defense/Reversal and Minimization) and "Ethnorelative Stages" (Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration).

Denial	**Defense/ reversal**	**Minimiza-tion**	**Acceptance**	**Adaptation**	**Integration**
Ethnocentric			Ethnorelative		



"Ethnocentric" may be defined as using your own set of standards and customs to judge all people, often unconsciously – one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way. "Ethnorelative" is a word coined to express the opposite of ethnocentric; it refers to a person who is comfortable with many standards and customs and who can adapt his/her behavior and judgments to many interpersonal settings – one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. The ethnorelative stages are characterized by a positive mindset about cultural differences. These stages are indicative of a person who will tend to make more inclusive decisions and actively seek to build a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment. (mdbgroupinc.com)

DMIS is based on years of direct observation and research. DMIS provides a structure for understanding how people experience cultural differences. Six stages of perspectives describe how a person sees, thinks about, and interprets events happening around them from an intercultural-difference perspective. Since DMIS indicates what a person sees and thinks, it also suggests what they do not see or think. DMIS, therefore, highlights how a person's cultural patterns both guide and limit their experience of cultural difference.

This part of the introduction will deal with these six stages of development on the example of the first generation of Serbian immigrants to Canada, interviewed in the summer of 2008 as a part of a cross-cultural project called the "Canadian Diaspora Project." Each stage will be defined and examples from the interviews will be given in order to show how this model works in practice.

1. DENIAL

The first phase is the **Denial** of cultural differences – people in this stage are not interested in cultural differences, they might even act aggressively to eliminate a difference if it affects them. This is the situation where one's own cultural perspective is viewed as the only real one. The existence of other cultures is not perceived, or, if it is, it is perceived quite vaguely. People who view the world through a denial template are likely to avoid the subject of diversity altogether if they can, or they may refer to "them" rather than using specific group names.

In extreme cases of denial, cultural differences are attributed to a sub-human status. At this stage, one does not feel threatened by the differences, one is simply unaware that they exist, or the differences never reach the point where they challenge one's view of the world.

The interviewee whose views illustrate this phase is Lidija Bogdanović. Although she has been living in Canada for more than 37 years (she got her citizenship in 1977), she does not feel comfortable there:

> After 37 years I spent here, I still do not feel comfortable – I am a part of this country, I am its citizen, I work here, live here, and there are a lot of things that make this country my home, but my body is here and my soul is over there…I am a Serb with the Canadian citizenship… My father and I remained Serbs in our souls - my mother and brother are more Canadians. Since they are more Canadians, they possess a kind of coldness…

She also tends to remain separated from others who are different and she feels comfortable with the familiar: "The nationality is important to me and 99,9% of my friends are Serbs. I have acquaintances that are Canadians, whom I met at work." On the other hand, she is aware of the problem and "if Serbia was economically better" she would return and live here.

2. DEFENSE / REVERSAL

Defense against cultural difference is the state in which one's own culture (or an adopted culture) is experienced as the only good one. The world is organized into "us and them," where "we" are superior and "they" are inferior. In this phase, people feel threatened by cultural differences, so they tend to be highly critical of other cultures, regardless of whether the others are their hosts, their guests, or cultural newcomers to their society.

The most common form of defense is the strong criticism of differences. We generally recognize this phenomenon in the creation of negative stereotypes, where every member of a culturally distinct group is regarded as having undesirable characteristics, which are attributed to the entire group. This strong criticism can be linked to race, gender or any other indicator of the assumed difference. This comes with the lack of cultural awareness and understanding of cultural differences. In all the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research, none of the interviewees fit into this category.

Reversal, or cultural inferiority, is the phase which is opposite to defense. It is created under the impression that some other culture is better than the culture of a person in this phase. In that way, one has distrust or negative feelings for his/her own culture. This perspective may be shaped by an idyllic, short experience in another culture, or a profoundly pessimistic view of one's own culture.

The interviewee, who is an example of the reversal phase, is Bianca Lakoseljac Queed. She left Serbia in 1971 and works as a teacher at a university. She renounced her Serbian culture and roots in order to fit in and succeed in the new society:

> It was easier for me to stick to English – my desire to fit into the new world and obtain a university education and to obtain teaching jobs required from me to give something up. That something was, in a way, perhaps a loss for me but it was also a gain in a way, because then I was able to teach at the Community College and at the university and something like that requires a lot of energy and a lot of commitment. I just did not have enough time to do everything I would have liked to do, and there were times when I regretted not keeping up with my Serbian community, but there were choices to be made and sometimes these choices seem right at the time. I still enjoy very much my Serbian language and I would like to reconnect, and I think that is perhaps where I am heading to… I am guilty to say that I have not kept up with my Serbian community. I would not be honest to say the opposite, but at this moment when I am being interviewed I wish could…

(It is important to emphasize here that the interview was conducted in English.)

3. MINIMIZATION

Minimization of cultural difference is the state in which elements of one's own culture are experienced as universal – applying to all. Cultural differences are subordinated to the overwhelming similarity between peoples and cultures; "we're all basically alike." Minimization is a kind of transition zone between denial/defense and acceptance/adaptation, where one's own cultural patterns are seen as central to an assumed universal reality.

The person in minimization regards her neighbor as different, but "nice". The example of this phase is an interviewee, Petar Nikolić, who claims that all people are basically the same or alike. He left the country in 1993 and works as a watchmaker:

> I have had various opportunities to meet people from different nations and cultures and that can be very interesting. While Ivana {his wife} was working in a café-confectionery we met people from various parts of the world – there was a girl from Greece, a guy from Egypt, a girl from China, a guy from Ukraine, etc. Once, we gathered all these people at our house, all of whom came to Canada after us, because the guy from Egypt had passed the TOEFL exam and we wanted to celebrate that. In order to get closer and to get acquainted with each other's culture, each of us sang a song, and the people who are usually reserved were very relaxed. I think that the people here are in constant panic and fear, each in his or her own way, because all of this is new for them. And then, whenever they find themselves in a situation described (without pressure, in a small group of people who treat them as equal), they are in a better mood and feel relaxed, because they see that the other people aren't worse in comparison to the people from their countries. We are all the same, only the chemistry that connects the people from the same region is much stronger and that is why those friendships last longer.

4. ACCEPTANCE

People in the **Acceptance** stage enjoy recognizing and exploring differences. Acceptance of cultural difference is present when one's own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews. People in acceptance are self-reflective in terms of their experience of other cultures and are able to acknowledge others as different from themselves, but equally human. They are not necessarily experts in one or more cultures but rather they are able to identify how cultural differences in general operate in a wide range of human interactions. On the other hand, the knowledge of and attitudes toward other cultures are not identical to acceptance. In order to be in this phase, you need to understand that people from other cultures are just as complex as you are. Their ideas, feelings, and behavior may seem unusual, but you realize that their experience is just as rich as your own.

Božidar Nikolić left the country in 1962 and one can say (based on his interview) that he succeeded in Canada – he runs his own business and he learned how to accept people from different cultures in order to do business with them. Not only did he accept those people and their culture, but he also made friends with them:

> Because I run a multi-million dollar business, I keep in touch with the people of different nationalities, not just Serbs. I learned to work together, accept and respect the people with very different life experiences. I am connected to the Serbs via religion and communities, and I am connected to the others mainly via business. Due to my business, I get invited to a great deal of celebrations and meetings and in that way I meet my non-Serbian friends.

5. ADAPTATION

Adaptation to cultural difference is the state in which the experience of another culture provides perception and behavior appropriate to that culture. One's worldview is expanded to include constructs from other worldviews. In this phase, people are able to look at the world "through different eyes" and may intentionally change their behavior to communicate more effectively in another culture (Bennett, 1993). People in the adaptation stage can intentionally shift their frame of reference (e.g. consider the greater influence of status in some cultures); they can empathize, or take the other person's perspective. They can choose to act in alternative ways, based on their intercultural perception. People in this stage may be called "bicultural" or "multicultural."

Adaptation means not only the recognition of cultural differences but also the ability to use your understanding of cultural differences and intercultural skills to improve your relationship with people from other cultures. You are capable of both cognitive and behavioral "code shifting," but this does not imply assimilation (giving up your own beliefs, values, and practices). The result of this phase is to adapt your behavior to be appropriate to the cross-cultural situation in order to communicate more effectively.

Most of the interviewees showed the ability to adapt to different cultural frameworks – when in Canada and when in Serbia. When in Canada, they need to act according to the Canadian rules and customs, but immediately when they land in Serbia, they adapt to the Serbian culture and customs. Dušan Đurić left Serbia in 1984 because of the economic situation at that time. He moved to Canada, got married and had two children, adapted, but his desire is to come back to Serbia:

> In Canada I feel at home, because I have been living here for a long time. But when I am in Canada, I suffer for Serbia, and so I visit Serbia very often. I find it easy to adjust there and I would like to be able to return after my retirement. One thing bothers me, though. When I am in Serbia, I have nostalgic feelings about Canada. We will see.

6. INTEGRATION

Integration is the last stage of openness to cultural difference. It is the state in which one's experience of oneself is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. People in this phase often deal with issues related to their own "cultural marginality." This stage is not necessarily better than adaptation. In most situations, it demands intercultural competence, but it is common among non-dominant minority groups, long-term expatriates, and people who travel a lot or move from one country to another very often ("global nomads"). (Bennett, 1986, 1993).

People in the integration stage have integrated more than one cultural perspective and behavior into their identity and their worldview, so they are able to move from culture to culture with ease. On the other hand, they may have difficulties articulating their identity, because it is so complex. As a result, people can develop a sense of disorientation and alienation ("I feel like I don't belong anywhere").

The example of this phase is Svetlana Nikolić, who came to Canada in 1970. She got married there, worked as a secretary for years, had children – 'life' happened to her in Canada. She is fully integrated, so she had some difficulties explaining her identity – she is both Serbian and Canadian:

> I am now first Canadian, but I am Serbian descent. It means that Serbia is my native country and I am proud of it, but at the same time legally I am Canadian… but I still have Serbian roots. I did not renounce Serbia – I visit it from time to time, but as a Canadian I can travel without visas, freely. I feel as both Canadian and Serbian, so you can say that I am Canadian Serbian." She also has many friends in Serbia and she is in touch with them, but has also Canadian friends – of English and French origin. On the other hand, she tried to explain the position of immigrants and her relationship with other people: "We all came from somewhere, and we managed to live with each other. There is no difference – we do respect whatever is Canadian, but at the same time we are allowed to keep in touch with our culture, origin, religion, etc… The people are very friendly and we all tend to help each other, because most of us {immigrants} do not know either French or English.

(It is important to emphasize here that the interview was conducted in English.)

When you finally reach the final stage, integration, you need to pay a lot of attention not to become disintegrated and lose your own identity. What a person needs to do to prevent this is to clarify or define a personal ethnical framework, which acts as a cultural mediator where the fact of not identifying completely with any particular culture will be considered a strength and not a weakness. (Bennett, 1993)

* * *

In this part, we could see how these stages function in real life – on the example of the first generation of Serbian immigrants to Canada. We could also see that the time you spend in a culture does not automatically mean the acceptance of that culture or even integration. The interviewees moved to Canada in search of a better life or to escape from one of the wars our country was involved in. All of them have different and authentic life stories and personal reasons for loving/hating Canada, but one thing is certain – they have all live there for years and for most of them Canada is their home. How you adjust and how culturally sensitive you are depends on what kind of person you are. What you need is the will and the ability to perceive and understand all cross-cultural differences in order to be able to accept them and feel comfortable with them. What is important is that if you want to be more inter-culturally sensitive and advance from the lower phase to the upper one, all you need is good will and enough education. But first, in order to understand other cultures, you need to understand the authenticity of your own culture.

Authenticity of Canadian Serbs

1. Migration Waves

According to Vladislav Tomovic, from the middle of the 19th century, when Serbs first began to immigrate to Canada, until the present moment, six 'waves' of Serbian migrations can be discerned:

- those who arrived prior to World War I,
- those that immigrated between the two wars,
- political immigrants forced to leave Yugoslavia immediately following World War II,
- families of the political immigrants and those who defected from Yugoslavia during the fifties,
- the so-called 'economic immigrants', following the promulgation of a new Yugoslavian economic policy after 1965,
- refugees and highly educated professionals who fled the civil war of the 1990's. (Tomovic, 53)

Each of these six waves had its own specific reason for leaving its native soil in search of political and/or economic freedom, and each was confronted with unique challenges. The interviews presented here mostly belong to the last wave of Serbian migration to Canada, with an exception of a few, that belong to the fifth wave of migration. In general, the prevailing factors for the interviewees' migration to Canada were: bad economic conditions in the home country illustrated in the interviews that follow as a high rate of unemployment, underdeveloped economy, high rates of taxation; in the case of the sixth migration wave, the prevailing factor can be summed up as a transitional phase in the development of

Serbian economy that succeeded the civil war of the 1990's in the former Yugoslavia which culminated in the bombing of Serbia during 1999.

The answer to the question – Why Canada? – was identical for all the immigrants interviewed for the purpose of this project: Canada, unlike Serbia, offered security and a well-organized system (medical care, economy, law). The interviewees especially emphasized the efficacy of the administration and bureaucracy (red tape) and Canadian standard of living - the ability to earn enough money to obtain a house, car, holiday trips – which has been almost impossible in their home country, bearing in mind the frequent inflation in Serbia, particularly in the 1990's decade. One of the interviewees, Lidija Bogdanovic talks precisely about this:

> You don't need to have connections for everything you need to do, as it is the case in Serbia. The other thing is the standard of living – I can earn enough money for a flat, a house, a car, to travel and so on. Regarding the economic side, it is much better here than in Serbia.

2. Occupation

Bearing in mind the reasons for the migration to Canada, a certain occupational stereotype of the Serbian immigrant can be established. Due to the objective economic needs of Canada there has been a noticeable shift in the occupational and professional structure of Serbian immigrants to Canada in the last twenty years, on account of the need to 'import' the right occupational categories of immigrants and to 'export' from Serbia the surplus of such prospective immigrants. The process of the 'brain drain' was a response to the war situation in the homeland. The exact number of Serbs who came to Canada as professionals in the decade of 1990's is thought to be between 10, 000 and 20,000 (Tomovic, 397). Many more such immigrants are wanted by the Canada immigration policy now than ever before. Unlike the first wave of migration to Canada that was mostly based on uneducated, somewhat skilled immigrants in the 1920's, Canada is now enriched with professional engineers, computer and communication experts, university graduates with degrees in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and a small number in pharmacy, medicine and dentistry. In some cases, the professional associations of the last three professions made certification impossible for some foreign-educated individuals. In the late 1990's, they relaxed their regulations somewhat and offered the possibility of surplus training and education which enabled this category of immigrants to be employed after obtaining the necessary certificates.

3. Language

There are several factors which have been associated with one's ability to retain and make one's family retain their own language. The most important factors are the following: one's intention to stay in Canada permanently, work status, church attendance, the type and size of the community in which one lives, the extent of

free time association with people other than those from one's own group. The interviews conducted have showed that mostly all the interviewees preserved their mother tongue and used it in their homes. A fact that should be emphasized here is that, with the exception of two interviews that were conducted in English (with Bianca Lakoseljac Queed and Svetlana Nikolic), all the interviews were conducted in Serbian. The interviewees have stressed the importance of preserving their mother tongue, as a means of preserving their national identity. In most cases, English is used at work, with colleagues, while, on the other hand, Serbian is used at home, with the family. However, funny situations happen when it becomes easier to switch from one language to the other. This is the experience of Svetlana Nikolic:

> When we speak between ourselves, we speak Serbian with some English words that we find easier to pronounce and remember. We are mixing it up a little bit, so it can sound funny sometimes. But as long as we understand each other, we do not have any problems.

However, we should emphasize here that the interviewees are representatives of first generation immigrants. Their children, members of the second generation immigrants, speak Serbian, some of them are rather fluent, while on the other hand, some of them speak it rather poorly (in most cases, the children understand Serbian quite well; however, when they are addressed in Serbian, they respond in English) - a fact which their parents are generally not pleased with. Aleksandra Savic has not showed her dissatisfaction concerning her children's knowledge of Serbian, but merely factually stated that, although a lot of effort is put into their acquisition of Serbian, their Serbian is still rather poor:

> It is easier for them to speak than to read. They find it hard to express themselves because of their limited vocabulary. We work with them at home as much as we can, they go to school on Saturdays, but that is not enough for a better and more fluent knowledge. What they need is a constant exposure to Serbian language.

The steadily increased use of the English language is a notable factor of Canadian Serbs that is common to other minorities in Canada. The rapidity of this process will be determined by the interplay of factors within and outside of the social institutions in which Canadian Serbs live and work, one of which is their willingness to preserve their national heritage.

4. Serbian heritage

The Serbs in Canada brought with them a system of values and beliefs steeped in their rich history. The majority of the interviewees emphasized the importance of their national identity: they are very proud of their national history and willing to preserve their cultural heritage. The Serbian customs are mostly respected and the important dates - slava, Christmas, Easter – celebrated in the Serbian fashion.

Lidija Bogdanovic celebrates some of the Serbian holidays, but also points to a 'problem' about fitting these holidays into her work calendar:

> I practice some of the customs – I go to church on Easter and Christmas, but I don't take my days off of work. In this system, a day off in order to celebrate one's national holiday is allowed only on the paper, but I'm not sure how positively it would be looked at if somebody took it. They allow, but I think they would look at you with a glower look if you took that day off. Because of that, I don't take those days off, and I celebrate by going to church. For the rest of the customs I wasn't taught by my parents, who tried to make Canadians of us and to think less about our customs in Serbia, in order to lessen our pain for not being there.

Like other ethnic groups in Canada, the Serbian immigrants preferred to be in their own social milieu. For this reason, we can account for the propensity and the endurance of their social organizations and institutions. The most common institutions mentioned by the interviewees were the church and the Serbian bookshop 'Srbika'. This bookshop, apart from offering Serbian literature, also provides the interviewees with "the pleasant atmosphere and nostalgic talks about the home country." (interview with Tamara Apic, a bookshop assistant). Church going is one of the activities that the Serbian immigrants pay special attention to. The peculiarity of the Serbian Church in Canada is based on the fact that there are two fractions of it: the so-called official fraction (which was established during the first wave of migration) and the chetnik fraction (which was established in the migration after the Second World War – apparently, the official church representatives did not want to get mixed with political immigrants. Although this issue is long forgotten, the two fractions have still remained.)

Language retention is characteristic of an attempt on the part of immigrants to pass on to their offspring elements of the old culture and tradition. Hence, the children of the Serbian immigrants are rather active in institutions such as Serbian schools, and, to my surprise, folklore societies. The majority of children in Serbia disparage these types of societies, while in Canada, the majority of Serbian immigrants' children see it as a favorite pastime, a chance to hang out with their Serbian friends.

However, in spite of all the attempts to preserve their Serbian national identity, the second generation will probably fit into the Canadian mosaic. They appear to have no difficulty adapting and accommodating to the existing Canadian culture. For example, the frequent cases of inter-marriages (among the second generation immigrants they are common, the first generation is mostly against them) illustrates that Serbs completely fit into the Canadian mosaic. They have managed to blend the cultures. They are able to live, prosper and raise families in this new and very different environment, yet still retain their unique Serbian ways. An interesting idea for the next project of this kind would be to study the second generation immigrants and to compare and contrast them with their predecessors.

5. Final Thoughts

The final questionnaire question was related to the final thoughts regarding Serbia and Canada. The answers given are rather diverse: from the idea that Canada has become their proper home and Serbia is just a nostalgic memory (Bianca Lakoseljac Queed), to the idea of regarding both countries as home countries (Svetlana Nikolic), and finally, to the idea that the only proper home is Serbia, while Canada is a mere work place (Lidija Bogdanovic). Although there is a great diversity in the attitude of the first generation Serbian immigrants regarding Canada and Serbia, the future of the Canadian Serbs, concludes Tomovic, and I share his opinion, will be identical to the future of any national group in Canada:

> The future of the Canadian Serbs will not be different than that of any other national group. Cultures, as we understand them, are products of human societies operating under the influence of cultures handed down to them from earlier societies. The multiplicities of Serbian historical groups will share some elements of their earlier times as well as more recently acquired values, norms, beliefs and habits. It is expected that social solidarity and cultural integration will go together, making inter-generational differences less noticeable. (Tomovic, 398)

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Identifying Canadian Literature: One Possible Definition

Unity is comforting, but diversity is reality in the realm of Canadian literature and culture. Assigning nationality to a text is common practice — a method of categorizing a chaotic assembly of works into easily recognizable, and saleable, slots. The citizenship of an author is considered, by some, to be an adequate marker of the type of texts he or she creates. Yet the notion that Canadian authors produce "Canadian" texts is problematic and restrictive. It presupposes a definitive Canadian culture on which the author may draw, an inability of the author to supersede his or her cultural inputs, and an acceptance that individual voices can speak for a diverse nation.

Canadian cultural identity has long evaded definition. So too has its representation in literary works. Attempts to determine a true Canadiana peaked in literary criticism circles in the 1970s, not coincidentally alongside an upsurge in Canadian political nationalism. Common themes were identified, such as isolation, wilderness, and the Great White North. These motifs were true reflections of a uniquely "Canadian" experience. Not all texts, however, fell so easily into these analytical slots. Unlikely associations were forged between dissimilar texts linked only by the citizenship of their authors. Many Canadian texts resisted such simple classification, exposing the failure of imposed homogeneity on a body of diverse work. Canada is not easily broken down into component parts that translate readily into common literary themes. Perhaps this is because its politics, economy, and sociology are largely regional. The issues that affect Canadian daily lives are disparate and region-specific. East coast fisheries, west coast environmentalism, northern self-government, and southern urbanism — these elements inform Canadian experience in a far more direct way than national ideals. Immigration and separation issues contribute to an ever-evolving "Canadian" consciousness, which cannot be distilled so easily into identifiable themes. The sheer variety of cultural inputs resists simple characterization; there is no stable set of cultural markers from which an author may draw. The Canadian experience does not exist as a uniform consciousness. Insisting that it does and proving it with coincidental linkages is limiting and simplistic.

"Canadian" may be a convenient identifier, but it is unreliable and outdated. Even if a homogeneous and stable Canadian culture could be identified, would writers necessarily draw on it and reflect it in their works? Those who stress the importance of an author's nationality, Canadian or otherwise, implicitly assume that the author is both a passive product and mirror of his or her era. The Canadian writer becomes at once a sponge and filter for all things "Canadian." Yet writers are more than products of their culture — the creative mind can supersede the limits of its inputs. Placing undue relevance on a Canadian writer's citizenship implies that the writer is what he/she writes, that the act of writing is necessarily a presentation of a uniquely Canadian self. But writers routinely overcome their environmental boundaries and write outside of their cultural context. Margaret Laurence wrote regional fiction referring to Manawaka, Manitoba in her novels The Stone Angel and The Diviners. Michael Ondaatje wrote about the power and the limits of cultural representation in his work. His novel The English Patient is set in deserts of Northern Africa and the main character, the Hungarian desert explorer, feels relieved of having official identity and nationality. Writers, and the works they create, are more than composite products of ice storms, fiddle music, and hockey arenas.

Writers create — sometimes out of something they know, and sometimes out of nothing at all. The undefined Canadian identity makes it an untrustworthy qualifier, the writer's ability to overcome it makes it unimportant. The importance placed on an author's citizenship can be detrimental to the reading experience, as it elicits preconceptions about the text before the reading experience has even begun. It builds expectations, which serve to filter out competing elements. Slotting texts into easily recognizable channels is a reliable crutch; the constant provision of that crutch, however, inhibits us from ever walking alone. Assigning the "Canadian" qualifier to not just the author, but to the text he or she creates, streams the reader's thoughts down specific interpretive channels toward a common gulf of analysis. The experience of reading and mulling over and arriving at personal conclusions is de-emphasized. By imprinting citizenship and nationality into the minds of readers before they read a text, their opinions, even subconsciously, are fitted to the expectation of what Canadian literature is and should be.

Literature requires its readers to be creative. Identifying literature according to the citizenship of its creator ruins the experience by providing a formula and a handy answer booklet. Many world literatures are used as cultural indicators by both readers and historians. When a text is touted as Canadian, it is assumed that between its lines lies a uniquely Canadian expression of creativity, perhaps even an insight into what it is like to be Canadian. But one voice, or even a small collection of voices, be they the most creative, honest, and nation-proud voices of all, cannot speak for such a diverse country. Writers do not define a nation; they produce small microcosms into which its citizens can escape. Writers are not elected. They are not representative. Saying with any conviction "This is Canadian" removes writing from the realm of fiction and transposes it into reality, infusing it with the responsibility of spokesmanship.

Assigning Canadian identity to a work also makes readers feel like it belongs to them somehow, that they are not only consumers of the text, but contributors as well. It is natural to want a unified set of qualifying cultural elements, and to want these elements expressed beautifully in a national body of literature wherein each text reflects a uniquely Canadian perspective. Such homogeneity leads to a comfortable sense of cultural identity, and contributes to national pride. This, however, is not the Canadian reality. Canadian texts are as different as Canadians themselves, and reflect vastly divergent life experiences, perceptions, and methods of expression. The sheer variety of works produced by Canadian authors are a testament to their diversity; describing them as simply "Canadian" is too simple to be truly meaningful. Sometimes it is enough to read consciously, to be aware of the resistance of these texts to a simple characterization, and to reassert our own abilities, as readers, to decipher individual texts for themselves.

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A Personal Attempt at Integrating Cultural Diversity – The Example of Eva Hoffman

Eva Hoffman, a Polish – Canadian author, wrote her autobiographical novel *Lost in Translation* (1989) in which she described her life in her homeland, Poland, from where her family and she emigrated under the threat of anti-Semitism, then her life in North America, Vancouver, Canada, and her settlement in the USA. The plot thus follows a chronological timeline. Parallel to the timeline is the depiction of an inner development of her character that is actually, the main theme and purpose of this autobiography. The inner development, change and growth of her character is the change towards a full, rich existence, a life that in itself incorporates and integrates two different cultures without one taking precedence over another.

Chapter I, 'Paradise', outlines the author's joyful childhood in Poland. Chapter II, 'Exile', is about her adolescence in Vancouver, the encounter with a new culture, significantly different from her original one, and the first attempts at coming to terms with it. Chapter III, 'Life in a New Language' is set in her new, chosen homeland, the USA. This time we witness all the previous changes resulting in a realized, autonomous individual. On the example of her own life, presented to the audience in the form of this autobiographical novel, Eva Hoffman beautifully proves that integration of cultural diversity is not only possible, but is not ultimately difficult.

This autobiographical novel depicts the author's search and realization of identity in a bilingual, bi/multi-cultural, globalised world. The scale of the problem of emigrating into a new linguistic environment is suggested with particular subtlety and force by the very title *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. The book initiates insights into questions of the relationship between language, culture and selfhood which today are of a broad theoretical interest, largely due to conflicting traditions acting as the defining characteristic of modernity. Today there is much dispute on new, emerging forms of identity, going all the way up to denying the concept of identity altogether as it subsumes the idea of being static that is in contrast to the need to develop. The fact that the author is an émigré is symbolic of globalization. The author herself says that 'the exile is the archetypal condition of man'. The novel presents a search for personal identity performed by

analyzing and attempting to understand various, sometimes contradictory layers of cultures. It is done through the medium of language. By analyzing language, the author analyses her inner experience.

The relevance of language is paramount, and it is clearly seen in this work. As suggested by the title, the novel describes a life in a new language, the author's movement from one into another language, and the influence that such a move has on her life. Once in Canada, she tries to 'translate' herself from Polish into English. Translation becomes one of the key concepts for reading this autobiography. A great question that this book poses is if an autobiography can help realize an identity composed of two languages and two homelands.

The central part of this autobiographical novel almost entirely deals with the author's perception of the new language, English. It is a portrayal of the North American (Vancouver) culture of the late 60's and 70's. She describes her inner path from the very first impressions that this new language imprints on her perception of the world, and the effect of that world onto her inner life, her identity. Through a gentle story on fitting into a Canadian society, she elucidates her gradual coming to terms with that new language, its meanings, and the experiences that it reflects. The author continuously makes comparisons with her mother tongue, often aware of the differences that the two languages exhibit. Those are the idiosyncratic values of different societies and their visions of the world, the historical layers of experience. She knows how one language can express great depths of human perception, perhaps unknown to another culture. She also gains insight into essential cultural differences that may have preconditioned different perceptions. On the other hand, she feels the acquisition of a new language as a change in her own personality. Her spirit is changing as her new language allows her new perspectives of the world around. At times, among the multitude of new stimuli, her mother tongue seems either inadequate or loses the meaning it used to have. Incorporating a new language leads to a change in personality. Language contains and expresses a certain view of the world through complex historical and psychological sedimentations. Learning a language subsumes adopting that vision of the world.

A new identity is born in the moment of renaming. The symbolic and real acts are inseparable, showing the importance that linguistic marking has for the perception and realization of identity. When the author enrolls at a Canadian school the teacher gives her a new name, an approximate English equivalent to her original, Polish name. She, Ewa, becomes Eva, and her sister Alina becomes Elaine. That is a 'careless baptism' on the part of the teacher, which the author feels as 'a small, seismic mental shift'.

> The twist in our names takes them a tiny distance from us – but it's a gap into which the infinite hobgoblin of abstraction enters. Our Polish names didn't refer to us; they were as surely us as our eyes or hands. These new appellations, which we ourselves can't yet pronounce, are not us. They are identifica-

> tion tags, disembodied signs pointing to objects that happen to be my sister and myself. We walk to our seats, into a roomful of unknown faces, with names that make us strangers to ourselves. (Hoffman 1989, p.105)

At this stage, the new language is unnaturally attached to her. It is not a reflection of her feelings and thoughts, it does not support her identity. However, she intuitively grasps the renaming act as a major change that is yet to happen.

What follows is a true learning of that new speak. Completely immersed in it, she starts to retell her first experiences in English. In the beginning she feels the sounds, syllables, rhythm. That is an irrational stage when she 'likes' or 'dislikes' some words according to their melody. She intuitively sees social conventions, the absence of meaning masked with polite phrases. Such experience minutely corresponds with the process of language acquisition in children.

Eva Hoffman becomes bilingual. As she tells of her acquisition of the English language, she makes comparisons and contrasts with her mother tongue, yet the words with the same signifier are not felt equally.

> But mostly, the problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signified. The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. 'River' in Polish was a vital sound, energized with the essence of riverhood, of my rivers, of my being immersed in rivers. 'River' in English is cold – a word without an aura. It has no accumulated associations for me, and it does not give off the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke.
>
> The process, alas, works in reverse as well. When I see a river now, it is not shaped, assimilated by the word that accommodates it to the psyche – a word that makes a body of water a river rather than an uncontained element. The river before me remains a thing, absolutely other, absolutely unbending to the grasp of my mind. (p. 106)

The paragraph speaks in favor of the thesis that only a truly felt personal experience leads to a full experience of language. Hereby, the author touches upon highly relevant contemporary issues, those of bilingualism and translation. When speaking of translation, she emphasizes the huge cultural heritage held within a language, that in turn becomes further enriched by personal experience. Such an attitude to language has in itself characteristics of both the collective and personal. She realized that a 'symmetrical', complete translation is not a reality. What cannot be translated are the sedimentations of an experience of a community. The words of another language have different layers and do not convey the same experience.

Here commences the most acute insight into the contrasted natures of her two cultures. Eva Hoffman comprehends that through her two languages. As

an immigrant, a person that now has in herself two types of cultural heritage, she is now in a position to feel the possibilities and limits of one language in a thoroughly authentic way. Her elaboration on the incapacity of language to express her unique experience illustrates the relevance of language for expressing oneself. She even says that when one is not able to express themselves, their identity, due to the inappropriateness of language, one does not really exist.

A complete assimilation is actually impossible. Identity acquired in one culture cannot be erased as that would really mean the wiping out of entire personal psychology. Instead, people who strive for 'completely fitting into a new society' reach one artificial state of simulation of belonging. Thus realized identity certainly has nothing to do with authenticity. One seems to live in a sort of vacuum where the meaning of either culture is elusive. Such immigrants exemplify impoverishing and inhibiting way of complying with the new surroundings.

Eva Hoffman possesses a different sensibility. She has no desire of losing her previous heritage, her original identity. Therefore she places heavy importance on memory, active memory that creatively influences the experiencing of the new. Concurrently, she is conscious of the unreliability of memory that is often distorted due to complex psychological mechanisms. Nevertheless, memory has an undeniable relevance in mental stability and growth.

The author's sensibility is such that she spontaneously attempts to build her own personality on the twofold cultural heritage. This process is not initiated as a conscious decision, but as a profound spiritual need. Nothing ever being autochthonous, this striving can be traced back to a humanistic, primarily family background. The previous excerpt testifies to this. Strengthened with such a perception of the world, where differences do not imply a conflicting relationship, but mutual enrichment and fulfillment, she now approaches life in the new community more consciously. With the same love that was apparent in her experience of the old homeland, she now begins to perceive the new one. She tries most conscientiously to understand it thoroughly and so incorporate it into her internal world.

As shown, the condition of being an immigrant is a universal human condition. Immigration is one of the civilization traits of man, their innermost striving to conquer hardships, new spaces, whether they be physical or spiritual. The author evokes her thoughts on this: 'As a radically marginal person, you have two choices: to be intimidated by every situation, every social stratum, or to confront all of them with the same leveling vision, the same brash and stubborn spunk' (p.157). Her words reflect the primordial human condition of the fight for survival: 'I too am goaded on by the forked whip of ambition and fear, and I derive a strange strength – a ferocity, a puissance – from the sense of my responsibility, the sense that survival is in my own hands' (p.157). It is of great importance that the fight cannot be successful only if in line with the given circumstances.

This part of the autobiography beautifully illustrates personal actualization, strife to acknowledge one's potentials, to be oneself both inwardly and in the world. The medium of identity realization is language. The process of realizing one's identity largely resembles narration, the fact supported by the very genre here in question. The chapter being discussed ends with perhaps a crucial stage in the individuation process – seeing oneself truly which is the precondition for personal growth.

This is the axis idea of this autobiography. The chapter titles, 'Paradise', 'Exile', 'New World', strengthen that idea with their mythological and archetypal parallels. In this case, in the context of globalization, exile can be understood as a personal difference, authenticity, and endeavor to endure in the attempt of realizing one's identity within a society, yet not succumbing to its given or imposed models. When elaborating on this topic, the author creates a strikingly beautiful text on the fullness of living. She recalls Nabokov, who despite given historical circumstances, regimes and ideologies, managed to overcome them, lived the way he wanted to. Identity thus achieved is proof of freedom and independence.

> I wish I could breathe a Nabokovian air. I wish I could have the Olympian freedom of sensibility that disdains, in his autobiography, to give the Russian Revolution more than a passing mention, as if such common events did not have the power to wreak fundamental changes in his own life, or as if it were vulgar, tactless, to dwell on something so brutishly, so crudely collective. I wish I could define myself – as Nabokov defines both himself and his characters – by the telling detail, a preference for mints over lozenges, an awkwardness at cricket, a tendency to lose gloves or umbrellas. I wish I could live in a word of prismatic refractions, carefully distinguished colors of sunsets and English scarves, synesthetic repetitions and reiterative surprises – a world in which even a reddened nostril can be rendered as a delicious hue rather than a symptom of a discomforting common cold. I wish I could attain such a world because in part that is our most real, and most loved world – the world of utterly individual sensibility, untrampled by history, or horrid intrusions of social circumstances. Oh yes, I think the Nabokovian world is lighted, lightened, and enlightened by the most precise affection.
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> . . .
>
> How trite and tedious, in contrast, to see oneself as a creature formed by historic events and defined by sociological categories.
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> . . .
>
> His observations are those of an entirely free man;... (pp.197-198)

The realization of one's inner potentials even when they contradict social circumstances, needs to be achieved within a society. Such a demanding balance

is the ultimate proof of an actualized personality. And it requires lots of mutual understanding, will, and patience. 'The soul can shrivel from an excess of critical distance, and if I don't want to remain in arid internal exile for the rest of my life, I have to find a way to lose my alienation without losing my self' (p.207). As in the contemporary world, the world of globalization, exile is an archetypal condition of humanity, there have appeared numerous social theories on the relativity of culture as an answer to this new condition of being. Globalization on one hand is an affirmation of cultural diversity. Cultures themselves are no longer isolated, or at least separated. Instead, clear boundaries are obliterated. The author compares this situation with translation which for her represents understanding different experiences. Words alone are insufficient, imagination is equally needed, an ability and willingness to ponder into the other. 'There are shapes of sensibility incommensurate with each other, topographies of experience one cannot guess from within one's own limited experience' (p.205).

Due to living in different cultural norms, the author questions the validity of those norms that are most often unconsciously perceived as given. That is one personal, concrete experience that corresponds with the contemporary social theory that deals with the concepts of race, nationality, identity. For an immigrant these concepts have specific connotations as they are viewed from two different cultural perspectives. Autobiographies show the element of fiction that may even be formative in the creation of the concepts of race, nationality, identity. Immigrants write on experiencing life in their homeland and abroad, thus necessarily on the similarities and differences. Autobiography therefore shows the possibility of ambivalence and reconciliation. In a higher context, as a personal, but also historical document, autobiography can signal the complementarity of two cultures.

In one interview, Eva Hoffman pointed out:' I think every immigrant becomes a kind of amateur anthropologist—you do notice things about the culture or the world that you come into that people who grow up in it, who are very embedded in it, simply don't notice. I think we all know it from going to a foreign place. And at first you notice the surface things, the surface differences. And gradually you start noticing the deeper differences. And very gradually you start with understanding the inner life of the culture, the life of those both large and very intimate values. It was a surprisingly long process is what I can say.'[1]

The author locates the focus of the text on the process of translation, the process that – materially and symbolically – navigates an understanding of transnational narratives. The acculturation that Ewa goes through, does not eradicate a previous self or create a new, but rather produces a new position that is situated 'betwixt and between' (216). This new fluctuating in-between space becomes the always shifting site of her Polish-Jewish cultural identity and her new North American self. The book is a transcultural narrative of exile. The in-between space as a

[1] *Conversations with History:* Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley, globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Hoffman/hoffman-con0.html

site of resistance: resistance to a traditional notion of assimilation that works to accept, but also to absorb and flatten, the exile; resistance to smoothing out the foreigner's otherness; and a defiance against the creation of a new proper subject that erases her past so that she can successfully function in a new community. The novel thus transcodes self history and geography into a new language. Hoffman's memoir is less a story of one individual's life than a many-faceted account of conquering an alien and unyielding language and the subsequent necessary transformation of the self and identity in this conquered space.

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(Re)Connecting through Our True Stories: Immigrant Identities in Silvija Jestrović's Literary Works

It seems easy to connect and reconnect through cultural diversity nowadays. On the other hand, the borders of diversity have become blurred due to the phenomenon of globalization. The world has become a *global village*, where many and various pieces of information spread rapidly over a short period. Who has the time to process all this? Thus, people have started to take news for granted and to believe what they have been told. Therefore, even the most benevolent people are exposed to distortions of facts and misrepresentations of events and people. Canadians are no exception. Silvija Jestrović illustrates that point in her drama *Not My Story*.

Since, in this postmodern time, it has become popular to try to erase past events and to retain only those details from your past that are useful in developing your new self in the future, it is very difficult to create a correct picture of the Other. Many critics deal with the complexity of the identity issue. The notion becomes even more problematic when the immigrant identity is in question.

Can we familiarize ourselves with a true story about someone without having certain insights into their past? In an attempt to interpret Jestrović's characters we need to focus on Serbian cultural identity during several stages of migration and the appearance of *culture's in-between* among the Serbian Diaspora in Canada. The author herself belongs to it and speaks of her own experience concerning this circumstance in her essay *Playwright between Languages*.

In her book *Serbs in Canada: the Life and Symbols of Identity*, Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović has distinguished four periods of Serbian immigration to Canada over the last century: 1. the interval between the end of the nineteenth century and the First World War, 2. The Inter War period, 3. a few years during the Second World War, 4. the sixth decade of the twentieth century (Lukić-Krstanović, 27-29). We may also add a fifth wave of immigration to Canada following the Yugoslav wars of the nineties. Silvija Jestrović and her three heroines in the drama belong to the last mentioned stage in the process of the immigration of Serbian people to Canada.

The Serbs have always done their very best to preserve the main attributes of their cultural heritage: religion, language and customs. At the same time, they have always tried to contribute to the new community and be exemplary citizens. Sofija Škorić confirms that fact in her theoretical work *Serbian Cultural Development*. Most of the first Serbian immigrants who went to Canada were semi-literate. Although they were respected for being excellent workers, they did not attempt to adopt the new culture, language and way of life and to become Canadians because they regarded their stay in Canada as a temporary one. They expressed their creativity through traditional ways which they brought with them as part of their cultural heritage: the epic poems accompanied by *gusle* or lyric songs chanted to the sound of the tamburitza. There was hardly any trace of written literature at that time. The first Serbian author that published his work was Mićun Pavićević (1879-?) from Welland, Ontario, who wrote a few books and established the first Serbian newspaper in Canada, *Kanadski glasnik*.

The first active proponents of Serbian cultural life in Canada were the second generation Serbs in Canada. They founded the first organizations and magazines, such as the *Voice of Canada* which was considered to be "a watchful guardian of all our national treasures and of all things sacred to us" (Škorić, 196). Although books were sometimes advertised in *Glas*, there were no book reviews. *Glas* occasionally published pieces of classic Serbian literature and immigrant poetry or prose which were interwoven with patriotic feelings and nostalgia.

However, literary works did not have good conditions for development. Papers and publishers were guided by pragmatic and political principles. Modern and inventive literature was not encouraged at all, so many writers abandoned literature. Those unfavorable circumstances occurred again among the third and the fourth wave of Serbian immigrants. The most valuable books released by the *Avala* publishing house which was established in 1954, were *Serbs in Canada* by Pero Bulat and *Immigration of Serbs to Canada and Their Activities* by Olga Marković. Those works from the fifth and the sixth decade serve as the basis of an ethnic study of the life of Serbs in Canada today. As a matter of fact, the immigrants that came in the 1960s and 1970s were not willing to deal with literature and contribute to their original ethnic culture. They were more interested in science and industry (Škorić, 191-209).

Keen interest in Serbian literature started to be strongly manifested among Serbian immigrants at the end of the twentieth century with the newest wave of newcomers following the collapse of Yugoslavia. Predominant reminiscences of the past and melancholic feelings are present in prose and poetry alike, although it seems that the poets are more obsessed with nostalgia and memories of the old country.

Unlike Serbian poets in Canada who are divided into: 1. artists that rely on traditional forms of poetry and 2. poets that follow modern and experimental techniques in creating their works, most Serbian prose writers and playwrights in Canada are similar to the second category of poets. Motives from their national

history are combined with universal themes and contemporary issues. In an attempt to develop her characters, Silvija Jestrović has given a brief historical report of events that incited her three protagonists to leave their homes and start new lives, but she also deals with intercultural and ontological problems.

Being an artist is difficult under normal circumstances, but what is it like in a foreign cultural milieu where you are uprooted from your home? In *Not My Story* Silvija Jestrović focuses on the lives of three female artists who are struggling to reinvent themselves after moving from the Balkans to Canada. Nena is a photographer, Sonya is an actress and Lela is an art historian. Unfortunately, unfavorable circumstances stop them from having the careers they trained for. Therefore, Nena is now a waitress, Sonya is a dental receptionist and Lela performs in a peep show. When their friend Sasha, a writer and filmmaker from Toronto arrives to make a documentary about the lives of artists, the three of them, they falsify their lives to make themselves look successful. Apart from the three friends that resemble Chekhov's *Three Sisters* and their amiable Sasha, there are two more artists in the play, Sasha's personal assistant Giuseppe, a painter, and Nena's husband David, an actor.

Therefore, this drama is often called "six faces in search of identity" according to Dragana Varagić, the leading actress and the director of this performance which was the first Serbian play by a contemporary Serbian author on the stage of a Canadian theatre (Jovićević, 2). *Not My Story* was performed in the Artword Theatre in Toronto in 2004. In her interview for the Serbian newspaper *Glas javnosti,* Dragana Varagić spoke about the success of the play and said that this work played with cultural stereotypes and current media and showed how the identity of a person could be fragile and how it depended on others in creating *themselves* (Jovićević, 2).

In general, there are not many reliable records about the theatrical arts among the Serbs in Canada. Theatrical arts were known to have flourished in the third, fourth and fifth decades of the twentieth century. The most popular plays were comedies, as well as historical plays. However, there was no Serbian theatre group that performed on a professional level. Language, financial constraints and free time have been the primary obstacles. One of the most appreciated and recognized Serbian theatre groups is the Serbian National Theatre Kosovo, which has produced plays from the Serbian classical repertoire such as *Koštana, Đido, Pečalbari, Hajduk Stanko, Devojačka kletva, Kir Janja, Dva cvancika, Jazavac pred sudom* and many comedies by the popular satirist Branislav Nušić (Škorić, 209-215).

Jestrović's plays differ from those performances because they are written in English and they deal with other topics. The author shifted her focus from collective to individual identities. Therefore, there is need to focus on each character in turn.

Nena writes a letter to Sasha. She is in love with him and she wants to tell him something that would impress him, although it is not true:

> I'm getting married. To this guy who works with me in the restaurant... That's just temporary... the restaurant I mean... I'm still doing art photography, of course... yes, Sonya lives here too. She... she is... I think she is going to play Masha again in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* this time in English. And Lela, of course. I'm not seeing very much of her[1] (Act I, Scene 1).

However, Nena notices when other people lie about themselves. It is impossible that the slightest detail passes unnoticed under her watchful eye of an art photographer. Nena says to Sonya and David while they are preparing to be photographed: "Each face is a map, a coded journey. I want to capture that journey by photographing the map..." (Act I, Scene 3). She advises them not to put any make up on before shooting, except for a tiny bit of powder on their noses. But Sonya and David do not seem to understand her or her explanation: "But you're covering your maps, you are faking" (Act I, Scene 3). David insists: "I must have my eyeliner. 'Cause it is me' " (Act I, Scene 3). He cannot live without adding an additional substance to his face that will make him different. He wants to be something he is not, at any cost. But Nena should not reproach him for that behavior. She also tries to be somebody else. She wants to purchase a Canadian identity by a calculated marriage with David. She pays him $ 3,500 to take the role of her husband and to sleep in her room during Sasha's stay at her place. She does not only pretend about being a real bride, although she says in the interview with Giuseppe: "I've always wanted people to get my true story. But I didn't want to disappoint either, I wanted to be interesting, I wanted to be accepted..." (Act II, Scene 3).

Every immigrant is insecure and tries to prove themselves in the new environment, but Nena starts to show this in the wrong way, by telling lies about herself. She talks to Giuseppe about being at a party once where she did not know anybody. The people were nice, but cold. They did not want to start a conversation with her. When somebody asked her how it was living under a dictatorship she decided to draw attention to herself. Actually, she said as a joke that the secret police had knocked on her door in the middle of the night. But since they took it seriously and more people gathered to listen, she proceeded with her lies, although the next day she felt embarrassed. She thought that people would appreciate her work more because she had experienced difficult moments in life:

> Whenever people ask me 'why did you come here?', I always feel I should say my house was set on fire, my family was slaughtered in front of my eyes, while I was gangraped by a batallion of drunken soldiers... If I had such a story maybe people would love my work better, maybe they would invite me to their exhibits and parties, maybe they would put me into some program for endangered artists... Maybe then I would be me (Act II, Scene 3)!

She does not know who she is now. She is ready to abandon her own identity and to embrace Canadian identity but she seems to have become wedged between

[1] All references to the play *Not My Story* are marked by the relevant act and scene in parenthesis following the quotes.

the past and the future. She is somewhere in between two cultures, or she is an example of *cultures in-between* which Homi Bhabha explained in *Culture's In-Between* (Bhabha, 53-60).

This author is interested in the culture of minorities such as immigrant culture and identity. Bhabha thinks that immigrant identity cannot be exactly the same after the arrival in a new cultural milieu. Elements of the original cultural identity, language and customs have been lost or transformed into new forms. However, immigrant identity can never be completely assimilated into the new cultural pattern (Bhabha, 53-60).

Nena thinks that she will move towards a new cultural identity, if she marries a Canadian although she is in love with Sasha. She realizes at one point that she has been taking the wrong approach, but she can never present her real self again. The last attempt to do that is her exhibition *Faces of Exiles*. However, visitors at her exhibition ignore her attempts to explain the truth and make their own conclusions about her: "she escaped from the war", "she suffered", "She is an exile herself", "she was oppressed", "I've heard her house was burned down", "She lived under dictatorship", "I've heard she was in jail" (Act II, Scene 3). Thus, Nena will be unjustly labeled until the end of her life.

Her friend Sonya shares the same destiny. She is an actress with a Slavic accent. That distinctive feature is an advantage when she is thinking about getting the role of Masha in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. On the other hand, her accent limits her job opportunities. She has only been offered a role in a commercial for a chocolate bar where she is supposed to play an alien and to wear a hideous mask. It is not surprising that she is disappointed. The alien can be a symbol of an immigrant who feels strange in a foreign cultural milieu, as if he or she were from another planet. The producers were looking for an actress with a strong Slavic accent. It would emphasize the Otherness in the commercial. But Sonya thinks that her accent is not really that strong. Lela proposes an interesting solution: "You can fake it, I suppose" (Act I, Scene 5). Sonya's answer is to be expected: "Of course I can" (Act I, Scene 5). She is a great actress, both on stage and in her real life. But sometimes playing oneself is the hardest role an artist has to face.

When Sasha interviews her, Sonya says that she resigned from The Drama Theatre in her country because she does not believe in entertaining crowds during a time of war. She also says: "Back there my audience used to ask me for autographs, bring me flowers...This land is huge. It's easy to get lost" (Act II, Scene 6). She talks about her life trying to show that she is not lost. But in conversation with Giuseppe she reveals her real worry asking him: "Do you sometimes feel like a dramatic character... a hero... in a wrong play"? (Act II, Scene 8).

At the end of the play Sonya gets pregnant with Giuseppe who has gone to an island Capo de Angelo and has sent her a letter. The pregnancy seems to be

another burden and obstacle for her in her search for a role. Producers reject her, although she does her best to persuade them to hire her:

> Why do you think this character can't be pregnant? The playwright has been dead for such a long time, he wouldn't mind and everybody know the play more or less... Don't you think that the playwright would love a new interpretation of his play? Don't you think her pregnancy would bring a new meaning to the play? Oh, this is not what your audience expects... I see... But why do you always have to do what they expect?! Do you ever think of surprising them a little (Act III, Scene 1)?

It is not easy to make an audience which is accustomed to particular ideas and beliefs change their mind and accept something or somebody different. That is why the role of an immigrant is so hard.

The third protagonist, Lela has succeeded in surprising us. She says about herself: "I'm an expert in make-believe" (Act II, Scene 3). She tries to persuade Nena that she is not preoccupied with Sasha's arrival and that she considers him to be just an episode from her past life. But it is not easy to deceive Nena who is still hurt because Lela destroyed her relationship with Sasha: "He wanted to take me back with him. To America. Then you showed up. Wearing your little black dress" (Act 2, Sc 3). Lela tries to defend herself by saying: "It was my father's funeral!", but Nena replies to her: "He wasn't even dead" (Act II, Scene 3). Lela was even pretending about her father's death.

She changes personalities easily. She dons another wig and is somebody else in her peep show *Naughty Fantasy World*:

> If we go with the red, I suggest we let the hair down, strong make up, blouse unbuttoned to show just a suggestion of cleavage. I'd call her Natasha, the mail bride from St. Petersburg. Or we could go in a completely different direction. Brown hair, pony tail, no make up, pale face, same blouse, buttoned up. Iryna from Moldova, a victim of human trafficking, perhaps... What do you think? (Act I, Scene 3).

We might think she is a mysterious and controversial figure that shows her real face at the end of the play when Sasha visits her peep show. They have a conversation about their affair eight years ago. It turns out that Fenix, a Serbian paramilitary leader who used to be a well-established painter before the war in Yugoslavia, is Lela's father. Sasha wrote the award-wining biography about him, *The Fenix*.

Lela is not sure whether Sasha has come to see her or is seeking more information about her father. But she does not let anyone confuse her. She strikes back and contributes to Sasha's confusion about her father's death by giving him a painting that looks like Fenix painted it himself. The peculiarity about this episode upon Sasha's departure lies in the fact that the painting is still fresh at the moment

Sasha gets it. So Fenix might be alive after all. Or is it just a figment of Sasha's imagination that makes him worry about his life at the end of the play? Has Lela succeeded in buying his fear as well as a branch of *Naughty Fantasy World,* in Ontario? The name *Naughty Fantasy World* may not only be a reference to Lela's peep show. It might also stand for a new country that seems like a promised land to immigrants. They may start new lives there and be anything they want. Sasha and Giuseppe mention that issue in their conversation: "...nobody really knows who they are, nobody knows if they are who they say they are and it doesn't matter, they walk down the streets anyway... nobody knows their true stories" (Act 1, Scene 2).

However, it is difficult to know if someone is who he says he is, today in particular when identity has become unstable. Anthony Giddens, Stuart Hall and Zygmant Bauman wrote about this phenomenon. Bauman began his essay *From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity* with Douglas Kellner's description of postmodern identity which is "a freely chosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self" (Bauman, 18).

Jestrović's characters show that fact. Nena, Sonya and Lela play with Sasha's perception. The three of them do not acquaint him with their true stories and real identities in Canada. They have chosen to be abstract personalities, something they were in the past, although they are not those women anymore.

Many people do that with their identities today. Identity has become a matter of choice. As Giddens writes:

> The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual "supplies" about herself. A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour nor - important though this is – in the reaction of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individuals' biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing *story* about the self. As Charles Taylor puts it, "In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and where are we going" (Giddens, 54).

In modernity it is important that an identity is solid and stable, while in postmodernism an identity strives to release itself from any fixation and interpretation in terms of collective identity. Bauman clarifies this point:

And so the snag is no longer how to discover, invent, construct, assemble (even buy) an identity, but how to prevent it from sticking. Well constructed and durable identity turns from an asset into a liability. The hub of postmodern life strategy is not identity building, but avoidance of fixation (Bauman, 24).

People want to live one day at a time. They do not want to be tied to one place or to one vocation only. They do not want to commit to anything or anybody. They are satisfied with living in a *pure relationship* which Anthony Giddens wrote about.

In this kind of relationship, partners are connected by transient emotions or interests. They do not have any commitment or obligation to each other. They enjoy their relationship while it lasts. David and Nena are an example of *a pure relationship*. Their marriage is devoid of romantic feelings and care. It seems to be a good, temporary adventure at the moment, which offers David an opportunity to earn money and go to New York to his boyfriend, while Nena will get work and a Canadian passport. Nena even needs to pay an extra fee to David to spend nights in her bedroom while Sasha stays with them. David thinks that he has a strong spiritual bond with his boyfriend, although he does not know his phone number in New York. When his boyfriend breaks up with him, it does not take long before he starts seducing Giuseppe.

Giuseppe's wedding gift to Nena and David is a symbol of a pure relationship and a new approach to everyday life. It is a painting called *The Ahistorical Landscape* which shows an abstract landscape with two mutilated bodies – a male and a female. Giuseppe tries to explain the picture to Lela: "It's a place without history, without culture, without politics, without context... depicting just a couple of remains... Otherwise it represents absolute freedom and happiness" (Act II, Scene 2). The question whether if *mutilated bodies* are a good sign of happiness and whether absolute freedom really makes people happy. The picture depicts a postmodern time when people are devoid of attachment to history and tradition. But since they have got rid of the only firm strong point in their lives, they start to wonder aimlessly in the undefined space of *an abstract landscape*, because a human being cannot survive without relying upon certain criteria and values. They are *mutilated* without them.

In her analysis of Margaret Atwood's work *Robber's Bride* Vesna Lopičić emphasizes Atwood's attempt to successfully show "to what extent modern man's integrity is crippled" (Lopičić, 40). Atwood also deals with the lives of three heroines like Jestrović. Their names are Tony, Rose and Charis. According to Lopičić, Atwood's three protagonists represent modern versions of the female divinity the Goddess of Complete Being by Ted Hughes. However, those three women are only three fragments of the originally complex entity which stands for integrated human personalities: intellect, senses and feelings. Tony, an academic, stands for intellect. Rose, who enjoys food, represents the senses, and Charis, an intuitive and sensitive woman, is the embodiment of feelings.

Can this division be applied to Jestrović's characters? Nena, with her passion for smoked salmon, represents the senses. Sonya, who longs to be loved again by her audience stands for feelings. Lela, an ambitious and intriguing character, may stand for the intellect.

Atwood tries to show that social institutions "can have a damaging effect on individual subjectivity which is not always easily discerned" (Lopičić, 41). We may apply this sentence to our characters by adding a few words and rephrasing it. Therefore, people in a foreign cultural milieu may have an adverse influence on individual immigrant identity which is not always easily understood because it is different. Misunderstandings of immigrants in the form of cultural stereotypes may undermine their individual integrity in the same way conflicts within the family and marriage did to Atwood's characters. On the other hand, support and understanding always build up an individual's integrity. Both Atwood's and Jestrović's works are a reminder that Canadian society should not fall short of its duty but should help each member to overcome difficulties in their lives and contribute to a happy end of their stories.

An immigrant identity cannot rely on the familiar values and criteria in a foreign cultural environment. Each collective identity is different because it represents a *common memory* of collective history and Canada and Serbia do not have identical histories. Furthermore, they belong to different kinds of nations. There are two types of nations, according to Pešić (Pešić, 191-209). Their members are defined by different beliefs and patterns of behavior.

A member of the Ethnic Model of a nation can change the country in which he or she lives, but their place of birth will remain the signifier of their nationality during their lifetime. People who belong to this type of nation can be united by a particular idea and are willing to respond to the call of their original homeland to fight for a certain goal. The most important attribute of this model of a nation and its culture is sharing the same language, which does not need to correspond with the borders of a state.

In the Civic Model of nation (for example, Canada), all members of the nation live within the borders of the same state. They are situated on a historical territory that has a special meaning for them, making them feel bound to each other by geographical, historical and cultural ties. All the people who belong to this model of nation are equal before the law and have the same political rights. They also share the same culture and ideology (for example, multiculturalism).

Jestrović's heroines seem to have distanced themselves from their national heritage and approach to the Canadian way of life. Nena marries a Canadian, Sonya thinks that she can fake her foreign accent and Lela seems to have completely forgotten her old personality. They want to be strong individuals. They seem not to be bound by their tradition and they do not show nostalgia like the characters in the works by Nebojša Milosavljević and David Albahari.

But, they cannot escape from themselves. Nena's husband is not her true love, Sonya cannot find a suitable role although she is a great actress and Lela is about to stop being able to distinguish between reality and imagination. Nobody really understands them. They are not happy although they claim they are. Trying to

behave in a different way does not mean that you have changed immediately. Silvija Jestrović shares that characteristic with her protagonists.

In her essay *Playwright between Languages*, Jestrović mentions her attempt to write a new play three years into being an immigrant playwright in Toronto. She wanted to avoid the theme of exile and emigration in her writing at any cost. Jestrović was impressed and inspired by the figure of Sor Juana after she had read Octavio Paz's biography of this woman. Sor Juana was a Catholic nun and a Mexican writer who wrote in baroque verse. She seemed to have nothing in common with Jestrović. Therefore, her colleagues were surprised and confused when she told them that she wanted to write a biography about Sor Juana. And they were right. Jestrović realized that fact soon. She would never be able to break the cultural barrier and blur the distinction between Sor Juana's and her own cultural identities:

> I gave up the *Sor Juana* play, realizing for the first time that I had entered the gap between cultures. The idea for the play was a logical mistake – I wanted to communicate the cultural context in which I physically lived, assuming the cultural circumstances that I had left a few years ago. So, I wrote a play about immigrants. What else a writer with an accent to do? (Jestrović, 2).

Jestrović goes on to describe the unfavorable position of immigrant writers as far as a new, foreign language is concerned. Other Canadian writers of Serbian origin were also confronted by this problem (David Albahari, Dragan Todorović, Goran Simić).

Jestrović thinks that the true relationship between words and a writer can best be revealed in a new cultural context. She has come to the conclusion:

> Language plays tricks on writers between languages, and in return, we try to outdo our own mixed idioms. I often think of Titania and Bottom, who has been transformed in an ass in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as a metaphor of a writer in languages that he/she is not able to fully control (Jestrović, 2).

Jestrović concedes that she is satisfied with her English, sometimes thinking that she is finally able to "pull the linguistic strings with dexterity" (Jestrović, 3). Yet after just a few days, when she reads the same work again she becomes disappointed when faced with oversights and mistakes – omissions of articles, misplaced prepositions or idioms that cannot go together. Jestrović explains that problem of an immigrant writer with the fact that "the expressive function is stronger in his/her mother tongue, while the possibility to communicate within the new context is in the appropriated (thus foreign) language" (Jestrović, 3).

Jestrović's position of an immigrant playwright is more complex than the position of an immigrant writer. A playwright is supposed to be able to deal with

words and context at the same time. He/she needs to pay attention to linguistic and cultural nuances:

> A playwright always operates between two semantic systems – the theatrical and textual. As such, playwright language is never fully mono-linguistic, since it eventually involves different idioms as means of characterization and counts on the meaning generated through subtext, movements, gestures, and images that come into play through the process of staging. Furthermore, the very transfer of dramatic text in to a stage performance involves translation, or a merging of two semantic systems (Jestrović, 1).

Jestrović has a similar opinion about the position of an immigrant playwright like Homi Bhabha, but she calls his *culture's in-between* a different name – *defamiliarisation*. „The playwright between languages, distanced from his/her native culture and never completely integrated into the host culture, enjoys the particular pleasure of defamiliarisation"(Jestrović, 7).

Bhabha's words may imply that an immigrant sees the world from an unusual perspective. It is not the vantage point either of his original culture or of the new culture. It is a strange perspective, all in all. Jestrović tries to link this idea to the well-known concept *ostranenie,* that is to say, estrangement, the pillar of Russian Formalist's school, and adds: "Since assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes blur the perception of reality, the role of artist is to see things differently" (Jestrović, 6).

Other writers of Serbian origin in Canada complain about their inability to express themselves properly in a foreign language. Dragan Todorović created a piece *In My Language I Am Smart* for the Deep Wireless Festival of Sound Art, which was broadcast on May 11 in 2005 on CBC Radio One. It expresses that worry. Although Todorović learned English at school and thought that he had a good command of that language, he came across a problem when he moved to Canada. His vocabulary, grammar, and spelling were fine, but he could not achieve "the precise meaning and finesse of expression" (Todorović, 1). He thought in the Serbian language. There were many nuances lost in translations into English because he was unable to do it accurately. The biggest problem was the sound of his English. Since he had acquired English from Hollywood movies and rock and roll, his English was harsh, aggressive and presented him in a different light from who he was. "Suddenly I realized that somewhere in the process of acquiring the tone of the modern language I had lost my identity. It was painful to realize that in my language I was smart, but I sounded stupid in English" (Todorović, 2). He gave an example of a conversation with his Canadian friend about the architecture of a church. Although Todorović was a great connoisseur of arts in Serbian, the only sentence he was able to utter at that particular moment was: "Yeah, it's cool" (Todorović, 2). He comes to the same conclusion as Jestrović, her characters in *Not My Story* and all immigrants:

> The process of learning a new language is not rounded and simple: at first, it is not the language as a whole that is acquired, but a series of foreign words

> is superimposed onto mother's tongue. Unavoidably, one has to go through mutation that is both painful and funny. This piece is an exploration of the immigrant's experience (Todorović, 2).

An immigrant does not need to learn only a new language but he/she has to become accustomed to new cultural patterns. We had already made clear that Canadian and Serbian cultures and states differ from each other. A colleague of Jestrović and Todorović, Goran Simić repeats Sonya's assessment from *Not My Story* about the greatness of Canada: "This is a great country if you want to get lost or to start a new life from the beginning" (Simić, 2).

However, he is also aware of the shortcomings of living in a foreign cultural environment due to the dissimilarities of Canadian and Serbian cultural identity. He says in an interview:

> On the other hand it's terribly difficult to replace your past, beliefs, and continue with your life and profession. Here exists a huge gap between friendliness and politeness...how most people describe Canadian mentality...but you can get lost easily looking for friendliness. Cactus can survive Northern Pole temperature only in room temperature. Coming here I knew that I will become kind of hybrid writer with roots deep in the past and head in reality and I simply knew that I can't afford myself to stop because there's too much things I still have to say which I can't say in some other forms like delivering pizza or carving. I guess it's question of how much energy you have personally and how much heart do you have to give. And I am truly thankful to my dear Canadian friends, I would be half of person without them (Simić, 2).

Simić was lucky to have friends in Canada that can understand him. Other immigrants were not so fortunate.

We have established that Canadian and Serbian cultural patterns are not the same because they belong to different kinds of nations. Members of two distinct kinds of nations have different lifestyles, systems of belief and behavior.

However, these two different nations in Canada share a common desire to prove themselves and to succeed in their present country and homeland. All five waves of Serbian immigrants to Canada have demonstrated that example, as have Jestrović's characters, although that is no easy task.

Jestrović's drama *Not My Story* and her essay *Playwright between Languages* aim to draw attention to the unfavorable circumstances of immigrant artists and writers in Canada who have to adjust to a foreign cultural milieu by developing new literary approaches and new identities. Unfortunately, that process cannot be completed well, if those people are exposed to misunderstandings and stereotypes, which is the case with Jestrović's characters.

People rarely show an ability to create an accurate picture about something or someone who is not like them. If something or someone is different from you, it does not mean that he/she is a worse person. Stereotypes relying on lazy assumptions such as those that people who belong to a particular group are devoid of certain skills or incapable of accomplishing certain tasks should fall into oblivion. We must not label people incorrectly, refusing to see them as they really are. If we want to reconnect through diversity, we should respect each other for our true story.

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Getting at the Kernel of Canadianness: Douglas Coupland's *Souvenir of Canada*

What is our history? How much a part of us is the landscape, and how much are we a part of it? It is a human tendency to inscribe geography with temporal qualities, and this is what Canadian writer Douglas Coupland does in his novels and essays: he tries to give space a beginning and an end. To his homeland he dedicates two books of souvenirs, *Souvenir of Canada* and *Souvenir of Canada 2*, in which he tries to find out what makes Canadians Canadians with a mixture of nostalgia and wit.

Literally, "souvenir" is an act of remembering or an object that serves as a reminder, and Coupland invests his creative energy into constructing an amalgam of memories, facts and inscriptions which duly represent his private Canada, located in the weirdest places. Some will be eager to accuse the author of sharing the cynicism and paranoia of the anxious, consumer-glutted generation which populates Coupland's novels and stories, but his experience of Canada sets him on an easy-going and photo-heavy journey which will be remembered for a long time despite controversies.

The book only Canadians would get

There had been a number of books containing illuminating and witty analyses of Canadian popular culture and cultural iconography before Coupland set his foot on what he considered an untrodden path. Authors such as Geoff Pevere, Greig Dymond, Lynne Van Luven, Priscilla Walton and Daniel Francis published their studies on various aspects of Canadian cultural matters during the nineties. Both serious and humorous ripostes to the cultural history and the specific "identity trouble" of the country were authored by a wide range of writers, from Margaret Atwood to Douglas Barbour and Stephen Scobie. Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* was a serious endeavor to identify the traits that distinguish Canadian literature from the literature written in other world countries, and her insight may also apply to issues other than literary. As it happens, the space Canadians inhabit is impossible to grasp both physically and mentally, and the sheer physical inaccessibility to all of the country affects

the understanding of its culture. Furthermore, as a "space you inhabit not just with your body, but also with your head", Canada has never been clearly defined. Atwood posits survival as a metaphor for Canadian literature, in the same manner *the Island* is for the British or *the Frontier* for the American. She connects survival to the "collective neurosis" of Canadian authors, to the colonial past of her country which resulted in misconceptions of the Self.

While Atwood deals with the Canadian status of the victim of American domination, Douglas Coupland attempts to question Canadian volatile identity and tries to alleviate the anxiety caused by the lack of identity. American cultural and economic domination, it seems, has suffocated the Canadian specific status, but this is a premise Coupland objects to, even if that results in the explication of weird and uneasy Canadian contrarieties.

Souvenir of Canada is therefore not a cultural study but a deeply personal account, both sentimental and ironic. Coupland hangs on carefully chosen and slowly processed particles of reality, clinging to his intimate vision of the homeland, and yet his memoirs and souvenirs retrieve cultural facts which usually remain hidden, unknown or are generally acknowledged as irrelevant.

Douglas Coupland has always been well aware of postmodern conceptions of centre and margin. His characters choose to remain marginal or isolated, especially those in the early novels, such as *Generation X*. By saying "We live small lives on the periphery; we are marginalized" (Coupland 1991: 11), the narrator Andy suggests that he and his friends decided to move away from the centre and embrace the fringe and seemingly futile, listless lives. The centre-periphery axis for Coupland has become a north-south one in which California is the apocalyptic and (oxymoronically) poststructuralist centre. This intimate vision of the marginal, as well as the mixture of cynicism and sentimentality, has become Coupland's particular brand.

At the beginning of the *Souvenir of Canada* Douglas Coupland states that his intention was to write a book about Canada "that only Canadians would get". Seen as the author's tribute to all things Canadian, this alphabetically organized book which soon after its release obtained a sequel, duly elaborates issues both central and peripheral to the quality of "Canadianness", ranging from Native people's reserves to French-language cereal boxes or the Miss Canada Pageant. It is quite unclear whether Coupland wants to cast a bizarre image of Canada as a "*Star Trek* manner parallel-universe country" or simply mocks its national myths. Critics tend to agree that this intimate dictionary of the writer's homeland is myopically Anglo-European or that it could be labeled as a Coupland-centric vision of Canada at best, but it is left to the reader to decide whether Canadianness according to Coupland is an intimate recollection or an attempt at satire, or perhaps both.

Coupland has been dealing extensively with his Canadian experience in his novels and stories (such as *Girlfriend in a Coma* or *Life After God*), as well as

in non-fictional books *City of Glass*, *Souvenir of Canada*, *Souvenir of Canada 2*, which were written with the intention of reflecting both the author's growing up as a Canadian and some obscure cultural matters that struck the outsider as curious and strange. 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, beer bottles, the Canadian flag, the "weirdly large" dietary role of cheese, candy bars and hockey. Coupland's getting at the kernel of Canadianness can be deemed as both cynical and sentimental; nevertheless, the critics were harsh with what they considered factual inaccuracies and a vision of Canada which seemed to them much too Anglo-European. More benevolent reviewers, however, claim that it is Coupland's free-ranging references and metaphors that make *Souvenir of Canada* a delightful read. Yet no one could say that this personal guide is comprehensive, since Coupland's view from what the critics term his "west Vancouver ivory tower" fails to take in widely known tidbits such as Celine Dion or Trudeaumania. Some take the book as the new release of the Canadian brand of national self-deprecation.

"Random" and "unique" seem to be the best words to describe Coupland's alphabetically arranged witty summaries containing personal anecdotes and bizarre statistics. Some texts also feature photographic illustrations, and the graphic design seems to function as an inherent part of an experiment in memory, history and story-telling, all united into one project. *Souvenir of Canada 2* even contains a photo-essay on "Canada Home", an abandoned home that Coupland had decorated with sculptures, furniture and various memorabilia, turning it into an artistic project.

Canada on the Screen

Coupland's two *Souvenir* books were turned into a film *Souvenir of Canada* in 2005, which might strike us as ironic, since none of his eleven novels have reached the silver screen so far, in spite of many attempts and carefully planned endeavors. The "collective neurosis" elaborated in witty passages which parodied glossaries and travel guides was further projected on to the film which, ironically enough, has nothing to do with Generation X or other literary ephemera Coupland has eternalized: it puts into the limelight the writer's conceptual art practice.

Souvenir of Canada focuses in particular on Coupland's Canada House project. As part of a personal artistic statement about Canada, Douglas Coupland takes an old house of the vintage Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation design to remodel it into an intimate recollection of Canadiana, into a temporary artistic exhibit entitled "Canada House". This was a post-WWII house that was about to be torn down, but not before Coupland turned it into an artistic explosion of Canadian symbols such as goose decoys, hockey pictures and Kraft slices. Coupland turned a bungalow in Vancouver, built in the fifties, into an art installation populated with his Canadiana, before it was bulldozed.

While we see him at work, Coupland tells the story of his life as a youth in Vancouver who became the author of the famous *Generation X*. Definitions of things strictly Canadian also popped up on screen, and were explained in detail. The *Generation X* author and ardent Vancouverite provides a very personal, scrapbook style musing on national identity, making the critics agree that watching the documentary is an entertaining, albeit ephemeral experience which leaves you wishing the writer would probe deeper into Canada's national psyche.

The film begins with the back story of Coupland's working for an ad agency in 1979 in Canada. The task of making an ad for Ryder Beer leads to the author's further interest in the symbols of Canada and exploration of the issues about what makes Canada different and what it means to be a Canadian. Coupland also gives his take on various aspects that mark his country's identity such as Distance, French, Terry Fox, Toronto, the Wild and many more. The first part of the film offers a wealth of information both on Coupland's personal memories and on Canada, and funny moments such as how students could never draw the Maple Leaf in the Canadian Flag.

The article "The Maple Leaf" in *Souvenir of Canada* takes us back to the year 1967, when Coupland's class in kindergarten was given red crayons to color the Canadian maple leaf flags – the new flag that was designed for the country's centenary. Childhood memories are accompanied with witty comments such as: "The maple leaf flag is not an easy one to draw; most Canadians couldn't make a good one if they tried. It becomes easy to envy the flags of Japan or France for their simplicity. And compared to Americans, Canadians don't display the flag nearly as often, but this is changing." (Coupland, 2002: 66). Coupland jokes about the uses and misuses of the maple leaf: "It's always fun to watch movies in which the props department was run by a kid – in the middle of a World War II scene, you'll see the new maple leaf flag and go *Aha!*" (Coupland, 2002: 66). Coupland makes fun of anachronisms but never forgets that all the misused symbols are charged with affection. He comments on the fact that the Miss Canada Pageant vanished in 1991 as proof of the fact that Canada has worked harder than any other country to attain the true equality of all of its citizens.

The books and their documentary record capture the symbols and events which might be forgotten, and serve as a chronicle of curiosities. This personal journey offers a wealth of footage and information and was termed by critics "a wonderful time capsule of all things Canadian": Coupland's own tale of his family, his trip across Canada with his best friend, and his father's cattle farm could have been an entity all its own. However, the personal and the cultural segments of Coupland's project are slightly disjointed in this film. It seems that the book must have ended somewhere in the early 1980s, as no symbols or celebrities who came after around that time are mentioned. Thus the film is more of an intimate recollection than a cultural study, turning the writer into a peculiar and eccentric figure rather than a cultural theorist. The critics complained that if the film is a chronicle of all things Canadian as it claims, Coupland's own personal story should

have been minimized. He is by no means a commonplace or "average" Canadian, and the inclusion of his own story detracts from the stated purpose of the film.

Liz Braun of the "Toronto Sun" writes an apology for the film, calling the documentary "surprisingly endearing", "weird", "and while it's a bit odd as a movie, it's quite wonderful as some sort of national artifact." Terry Fox's prosthetic leg or that NASA robotic manipulator known as Canadarm are two items, as Douglas Coupland points out, that only Canadians recognize and understand. The books of souvenirs are a mix of history, geography, totems, geology, art, personal biography and nostalgia, a personal touch on the Canadian landscape, but the documentary adds another important element of what we might term "anxiety of authorship". The film reveals that Coupland cannot quite cope with the idea of his parents leafing through his tales of urban anomie, as if he wants to confirm his characters' detachment from their families. He satirizes estrangement which became essential in contemporary mores, using his own family as a specimen in his personal exploration of the dilemma whether Canada is a nation or a notion.

Jerusalem of another kind

Another important element of Coupland's Canadianness is Vancouver, a magic city to which he dedicates a book of its own. *City of Glass* gives a revealing portrait of the city which seems to be defying globalization. The economic history of Vancouver has been a series of rushes after lumber, gold, salmon, real estate and by the end of the nineties dotcoms, and Coupland juggles those facts not for the sake of the "official" take on Vancouver but in order to pay his tribute to the city in which he was raised and still lives. Accordingly, *City of Glass* defies genre, since it is not a guide or encyclopedia but a weird collage of text and image reflecting the spirit of the city. The title refers to the actual appearance of downtown Vancouver, with its "pale-blue or pale-green towers that have come to dominate the city skyline since 1990."

Vancouver is used as the setting for Coupland's novel *Girlfriend in a Coma*, much because of the city's versatility: Coupland's hometown can be morphed into any North American city with little effort, and that is why it became so attractive to the film industry. With one of the world's most dramatic settings, Vancouver earns a living in the movies passing itself off as any place from Singapore to Bavaria. "Vancouver can neatly morph into just about any North American city save for those in the American Southwest, and possibly Miami," writes Coupland near the opening of *City of Glass*. Still, this implies that the city is postmodern, both hyper-real and fictional, both artificial and having its own distinct feel. Coupland compares Vancouver to Seattle, with its sky which is "steely gray" and with its "sugar-dusted mountains", seeing Vancouver as the place where civilization ends and where eternity begins. In *Girlfriend in a Coma* Vancouver is a shimmering city seen from the top of a black mountain, yearning to be New Jerusalem and the next best thing to a utopia.

"Vancouver has come into its own in the nineties," writes Paul Delany, "with three best selling authors -- Douglas Coupland, Nick Bantock, William Gibson... who seem utterly globalized, stylized, and deracinated producers of a 'location-independent' literature." Indeed, William Gibson has only published one story that is set in Vancouver ("The Winter Market"), and Coupland's most famous novel, *Generation X*, is set in Southern California. As a result, Vancouver is nowhere in the international literary imagination and yet everywhere. Coupland seems unperturbed by his city's multiple identities, and even celebrates this "everycity[ness]" at the very center of his book with a marvelous map that shows all the cities contained in Vancouver (Granville is Denver, West End is San Francisco, and so on). The provincial and the global seem to merge in Canada, much to Coupland's liking: he is happy to inscribe the map of the whole world into the personal sketch of his beloved homeland.

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"Lady Bruton's Timely Plot": Modernism, Imperialism and Canada

Edward Said pointed out that many prominent characteristics of modernism which we had tended to see as a product of internal dynamics had partially been "a response to the external pressures on culture from the *imperium*." (Said, 188). The new inclusiveness of the European culture became at the beginning of 20th century ironically connotated – it served to show how vulnerable Europe was in the face of the emerging nations. (Said, 189). Irony seems to be the key word – in modernist culture it is, according to Said, pervasive, and, along with the formal dislocations and displacements, it is influenced by factors that are consequences of imperialism: the contending natives and the existence of other empires. Said suggests that, when Europe began to face its imperial delusions, it did this ironically and attempted inclusiveness in a new way. "It was as if having for centuries comprehended empire as a fact of national destiny to be taken for granted or celebrated, consolidated, and enhanced, members of the dominant European cultures now began to look abroad with the skepticism and confusion of people surprised, perhaps even shocked by what they saw." (Said, 189).

In Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, set in one day in June 1923, two characters, members of British high society and the political cream of the crop, Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitebread, have lunch at Lady Bruton's. She invited them to help her write a letter to *The Times*, in which she proposes a "project for emigrating young people of both sexes born of respectable parents and setting them up with a fair prospect of doing well in Canada." (Woolf, 120).

That Canada has for her a "private" meaning seems clear, as the narration immediately underlines: "- it may be Emigration, it may be Emancipation; but whatever it be, this object round which the essence of her soul is daily secreted becomes inevitably prismatic, lustrous, half looking-glass, half precious stone…" (Woolf, 120). Canada seemingly could have been replaced by something else, as "emigration" and "emancipation" produce alliteration which suggests possible alternatives. But this is a mere hint, as neither the method of realizing her project nor the choice of Canada are random. First of all, she wants to make her "private" dream public. Here we move from private obsession and project, to the object,

loved in the ambivalent way of a colonizer, gazed at by the colonizer's eyes. A closer look to the scene from this "imperial angle" reveals a triangle of colonies that keeps reappearing. Actually, Canada is the third colony to appear on the scene. The first one is South Africa, mentioned in connection with Milly Brush, Lady Bruton's secretary, who is also present in the scene. South Africa comes up in a conventional inquiry about her brother who had been for "half-a-dozen years… doing badly in Portsmouth" (Woolf, 115). This creates a refined contrast to the glorious second mentioning of South Africa, a few pages later, as a goal of the expedition Lady Bruton herself had organized during the war. So, it is the war, this turning point and the major event of the time, that clearly marks the rise and decline of the empire represented by Lady Bruton's march and Milly Brush's unsuccessful brother. The very order of presentation in which failure precedes success points to the remembrance, the past, the nostalgic memory of integrity, hovering over the scene.

If the implications of South Africa are not clear, then the failure in India is an obvious warning that the days of the Empire are over. It is Peter Walsh, coming back from India "battered, unsuccessful, to their secure shores" (Woolf, 119). He is judged a hopeless case, beyond repair, as "there was some flaw in his character" (Woolf, 119), meaning, he could never settle there to become a success. India is finally brushed aside in the epilogue of the scene, when Lady Bruton dozes off: "Murmuring London flowed up to her, and her hand… holding which she seemed, drowsy and heavy, to be commanding battalions marching to Canada…" (Woolf, 124). The victorious march to South Africa is displaced and condensed into a dream of a conquering expedition to Canada. Yet, she does not actually propose the conquest by armor, rather by *amor*. The eugenic aspect of the idea of Millicent Bruton is completely in accordance with the time. In that period, "the spectre of evolutionary reversal, of degeneration, haunted the late Victorian consciousness, feeding into depictions of the poor, the slum, and Empire. In 1921 William McDougall wrote that "the superior half of the population is ceasing to produce children in sufficient numbers to replace their parents, while the lower half continues to multiply itself freely" (quot. in Armstrong, 74). In order to prevent 'race suicide', the science of eugenics offered a social hygiene that would discourage the unfit and stimulate the fit to breed. It was a kind of "second nature", technologically engineered, meant to correct the evolutionary process, when an intervention was needed. As Tim Armstrong writes in his study on modernism, "/F/ar from being the discredited entity which Nazi policies were to render it, eugenics was in the mainstream of social thinking, supported more readily by progressives than conservatives." (Armstrong, 75). Lady Bruton's idea of exporting the basis for a superior race overseas seems exaggerated to the rest of the party: "Emigration was not to others the obvious remedy, the sublime conception. It was not to them (not to Hugh, or Richard, or even to devoted Miss Brush)… "(Woolf, 120). The remedy for what? The "race suicide" or the falling Empire? Most likely, both. George Perkin Grant, the Canadian political theoretician, considered eugenics one of the traits of modernism and focused on the issue in Nietzsche's work. The plot Lady Bruton constructs requires a setting that

still seems full of opportunities. Canada becomes the topos of her obsession and the narration whose utopian character she does not notice. It seems that in her colonizing story actual 'Canada' does not play a role, while the reactions of others reflect that reality. Note that the time of the novel is five years after WWI. Canada played a significant part in it, sending a contingent as early as October 1914 to Britain, just as it did in the second South African (the Boer) war, at the beginning of the century. The stability of Canadian loyalty to the British crown could have appeared restorable to the mind of Lady Bruton, a mind with "little introspective power (broad and simple – why could not every one be broad and simple? – she asked)" (Woolf, 120). If supporting Britain in the war brought further divisions among the English and French-speaking communities in Canada, then it could be restored by settling young, well bread British people, giving them a good prospect. After all, the Prince of Wales made an official tour of Canada, laying the foundations of the tower of the new Parliament buildings in Ottawa, replacing those which were destroyed by fire in 1916. It is not that Lady Bruton was naive, far from it. It seems only that she has lost her sense of time. However, it will turn out that the irony of this scene works at least on two levels.

On the first level, Millicent Bruton is presented in the same way as her own 'Canada'. She is a representation, a sign of something else. In the novel which is based on the subjective views of its characters, in their thoughts, meetings, melting and mixing, as if thrown in the air above their heads, we find traces of her inner intimate life only at the end of the scene, when her work is done and she, dozing, literally relinquishes control. At the beginning of the scene, she stands for her family, but, being a woman, immediately distorts the idea of heritage as the backbone of patriarchal society. "Which was she now, the General's great-granddaughter? great- great-granddaughter?...It was remarkable how in that family the likeness persisted in the women. She should have been a general of dragoons herself." (Woolf, 116). It is not only Richard Dalloway who perceives her masculine traits. Soon we understand that she "had the reputation of being more interested in politics than people; of talking like a man" (Woolf, 117). She despises women as they prevent their husbands "from accepting posts abroad" (Woolf, 117). Lady Bruton is a colonizer, she is the very spirit of the colonizing Empire, a spirit distorted by time, and by being a woman, the other of the society, she disrupts the very idea of colonization. Therefore, simultaneously, she represents both the idea and the mocking aspect of it and becomes a mark of modernity, of whose pervading irony, in the present scene, she seems to be the only one who is unaware.

It is time which makes this whole idea ironic. Because, truly, once upon a time it would not have been ridiculous, but at that historical moment, after the war had worn away the previous world, the novel turns into a modernist play of representation. The war had brought a sense of paralysis (Armstrong, 16) and discontinuity with previous experience. According to Hayden White, the specificity of modernism is the dissolution of the event as a basic unit of temporal occurrence, which undermines the very concept of factuality and its distinction from fiction. In White's view, modernism that is focused on sequences and episodes of events

is better equipped for modernist and premodernist events than the traditional storytelling techniques used by historians. Modernist techniques of representation provide the possibility of de-fetishising both events and the fantasy accounts of them which deny the threat they pose in the very process of pretending to represent them realistically; they clear the way for that process of mourning which alone can relieve the burden of history and create a more realistic perception of current problems possible. (See White, 82). Therefore, the big event of WWI and the discontinuities it had brought are represented in a fragmentary way. The murmuring of Hugh Whitebread while modifying Lady Bruton's ideas, and the mere fragments of text suggest that the plot is being made… "how, therefore, we are of opinion that the times are ripe… the superfluous youth of our ever increasing population… what we owe to the dead…" (Woolf, 122). So, the future of Canada and the civilized world is taken to be a mock utopia. There is, however, another level of irony in this scene which works only for the readers who read the book after the second great war of the 20th century. What the military Millicent of the novel is plotting and dreaming about turned, not much later, into reality, into a bloody nightmare. The irony of the scene therefore is also in the feeling of superiority over Lady Bruton's lost sense of time – as, from that perspective, it seems that she was the only one who really had it. And, it is also in the banality of her idea that marks all tyrants, murderers and evil doers in human history. Canada is, seen from this angle, the utopian story turned into a nightmare. By this paradoxical turn, Canada stands for Europe and European civilization, fatally wounded by its own inability to recognize the danger of Imperial dreams.

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Pierre Baillargeon, penseur de la liberté

Introduction

On pourrait le surnommer le mal-aimé tant sa personnalité, son talent et son œuvre furent méconnus ou controversés, ce dont il a beaucoup souffert[1]. Dans son *Journal*, inédit, en juillet 1948, Baillargeon fait remonter l'incompréhension dont il fut victime à sa scolarité où condisciples et maîtres lui reprochent d'être différent: "Il veut être original", telle est sa condamnation.

Il faut attendre 1980 pour que, en dehors de quelques articles plus ou moins compréhensifs, un universitaire embrasse l'ensemble de l'œuvre: André Gaulin, professeur à l'Université Laval, aujourd'hui émérite, publie *Entre la Neige et le feu*, sous-titré *Pierre Baillargeon, écrivain montréalais* aux Presses de l'Université Laval dans la collection "Vie des Lettres québécoises". D'emblée, il qualifie Baillargeon d'"auteur majeur et inconnu du Québec".

Il est vrai que l'écrivain est un solitaire, un classique de l'écriture, ayant vécu longtemps en France et particulièrement critique à l'endroit de la société québécoise. C'est qu'il a grandi dans "la grande noirceur", l'époque de la dictature populiste de Duplessis qui conforte jalousement les traditions cléricales et paysannes du Québec. Comment ouvrir les ailes d'un esprit de liberté et de modernité ?

À la différence de Pierre Vadeboncoeur, il sera trop aigri et trop affaibli par la maladie pour s'engager dans la Révolution tranquille où il eût pu jouer un rôle remarquable comme maître à penser, voire simplement comme journaliste progressiste (Voisin 2009).

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[1] L'Union des Écrivains québécois ne le mentionne pas dans son *Dictionnaire des écrivains québécois contemporains* (1983) ; le panorama de la littérature québécoise contemporaine (Dir. Reginald Hamel, 1997) l'ignore, de même que le manuel intitulé *Littérature québécoise.Des origines à nos jours* (H.M.H., 1996).

Une vie difficile[2]

Né en 1916, il est orphelin de père dès 7 ans. "Mon père a toujours été perdant" (*J.I.*, 1954) et selon son fils, il s'est tué à la tâche. Sa mère contrarie sa vocation littéraire et l'oriente vers la médecine. "Ma mère avait raison de vouloir mon bien plutôt que mon bonheur." (*M.C.P.*, p. 126). Mais cardiaque, il devra abandonner ses études. Il se souvient avec amertume de l'école catholique en particulier et de la scolarisation en général. Il écrit avec humour: "J'ai gardé un souvenir délicieux des maladies de mon enfance" (*J.I.*, été 54). Il se vantera d'être le champion de l'absentéisme de sa classe. Il se sent comme un autodidacte tourmenté sadiquement par des professeurs obtus.

Mais il est fasciné par la langue française, surtout par sa pureté classique. Il ne cessera de dénoncer la pauvreté et la bâtardise des écrits du Québec, en particulier des journaux encombrés d'anglicismes. En 1938, il effectue son premier voyage en France qui inspirera *La Neige et le feu* qui oppose Québec et Paris. Il s'y marie en 1939 avec Jacqueline Mabit, mais ce ne sera pas une véritable réussite. Il rentre à Montréal en 1940. Sa femme le rejoindra avec leur fille en 1941.

Au Québec, il gagne difficilement sa vie comme traducteur à l'armée et il publie une plaquette à compte d'auteur, *Hasard et moi*. En 1941, il co-fonde avec Roger Rolland la revue "Amérique française" dont il sera le directeur jusqu'en 1944.

À partir de 1942, il devient journaliste à "La Patrie". D'abord, il traduit des bandes dessinées, les comics américains. Il n'accède au rang de chroniqueur qu'à partir d'avril 1947, avec deux rubriques: "Les Miettes du temps" et "Paroles métropolitaines". Il publie coup sur coup *Les Médisances de Claude Perrin* (1945), *Commerce* et *La Neige et le feu* (1947), ainsi que *Églogues* en 1948. Son épouse aussi publie, par exemple *La Fin de la joie* en 1945. Mais leurs œuvres sont plutôt mal accueillies.

Déçus, ils retournent en France en 1948 mais, dès avril 1949, il rentre seul bien qu'il ait trois enfants. En septembre de la même année, il rejoint sa famille pour un long séjour où il s'épanouira dans l'amour de la France et des rencontres enrichissantes. C'est alors un couple heureux, avec quatre enfants, à Pullay, dans un petit coin de Normandie. Il rencontre dans son "presbytère" des écrivains et des artistes importants: Claudel, Mauriac, Paulhan, Plisnier, La Varende, Maurice Genevoix, Franz Hellens, le peintre Vlaminck). Cependant, sa vie matérielle reste précaire. Sa femme tombe malade et il doit poursuivre son journalisme alimentaire. Il devient même professeur d'anglais et à nouveau traducteur. Et il reste en attente d'un succès littéraire, n'ayant comme consolation qu'un prix de l'Académie française et la médaille d'argent des Arts et des Lettres.

[2] Pour signaler les œuvres, nous utiliserons les sigles suivants: *H.M.* pour *Hasard et moi* ; *M.C.P.* pour *Les Médisances de Claude Perrin* ; *C.* pour *Commerce* ; *N.F.* pour *La Neige et le feu* ; *S.N.* pour *Le Scandale est nécessaire* ; *M.H.* pour *Madame Homère* ; *L.C.* pour *Le Choix* ; *J.I.* pour *Journal inédit*.

En décembre 1959, il revient seul au Québec où il poursuit son journalisme et ses traductions alimentaires. En 1962, il publie *Le Scandale est nécessaire* et, en 1963, *Madame Homère*, mais il n'accède qu'à un public restreint. Sa dernière consolation sera d'être appelé par la Société Royale du Canada, mais, cardiaque, il meurt en 1967. Le 20 avril de cette année, il avait écrit dans son journal: "Le peu que j'ai fait, je l'ai fait malgré tout: malgré le collège, malgré le manque d'intérêt de mes compatriotes pour mes efforts, malgré la fatigue des différents postes subalternes que j'ai dû occuper, malgré ma mauvaise santé en général, malgré mes doutes, malgré le sentiment que j'ai de la vanité de tout ici-bas."

Ses combats

Il s'attaque d'abord à l'obscurantisme moyenâgeux de ses années de formation avec une lucidité implacable. Il dénonce tout ce qui entrave la liberté de pensée et le libre examen du réel. "Le Canada est un pays mort et Montréal est une ville sans âme en expansion rapide comme une bombe éclate." (*J.I.*, 27 mai 1960) À l'opposé de ce qu'il a vécu en France, il dénonce une tradition qui engendre le sous-développement intellectuel. "C'est malheureusement les femmes qui créent l'atmosphère d'un pays. l (majuscule)'éducation leur est confiée. Les nôtres sont abâtardies par le couvent ; le cinéma et leur mère." (*J.I.*, 25 septembre 1941)

Son anticléricalisme est évidemment assez virulent. Si le clergé québécois a sans doute sauvé la langue française avec le catholicisme, il a assumé un rôle historique en devenant un éteignoir, y compris du véritable sens du sentiment religieux. "Le clergé est très fort ; s'il tombait, il ne resterait rien: il a remplacé la religion." (*J.I.*, 3 août 1946) "Le Christ en chassant les vendeurs du temple en a voulu chasser toutes les sortes de trafics, et le plus subtil de tous qui consiste à troquer le bonheur terrestre contre la félicité céleste." (*J.I.*, été 1954)

Baillargeon dénonce l'aspect antidémocratique de l'Église – elle reconnaît aujourd'hui encore n'être pas une société démocratique – qui "ne peut guère préparer à remplir le rôle de citoyens, à développer le sens de la responsabilité, l'esprit, l'initiative, la mystique du progrès, le jeu des idées." (*J.I.*, 3 mars 1958) Son fond humaniste se révolte contre l'idée de sacrifice ou de macération. "De prime abord, me paraissent suspects, de mauvaise foi, les trouble-fête et leur mépris pour la simple joie de vivre." (*J.I.*, 5 octobre 1945) Dans de multiples pages du *Journal*, en particulier de l'été 1954, Baillargeon note qu'entre la religion et la folie, sans les confondre, "la distinction est parfois subtile".

Baillargeon lutte aussi pour la pureté de la langue, car la qualité de la pensée en dépend largement. Il admire la précision lexicale et la concision du français classique. "Je n'ai jamais aimé les auteurs prolixes." (*M.C.P.*, p. 146) "L'esprit n'a que faire d'images qui ne sont pas des idées." (*M.C.P.*, p. 188) "Je suis un fanatique de la bonne littérature, de la prose française des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles,

de la clarté, de la simplicité, de l'harmonie, de la probité." (*J.I.*, 17 mai 1946) On comprend qu'il ait paru inactuel ! Il pointe un problème particulier à son pays:

> La langue française, approfondie, étudiée avec amour, est un moyen d'aliénation, d'isolement chez nous. On se sépare autant des siens en étudiant le français qu'en adoptant l'anglais. Que dis-je: mieux ! Car celui qui adopte l'anglais demeure Canadien tandis qu'autrement…" (*J.I.*, été 1954)

Il mène aussi un combat pour une pédagogie moderne. En effet, la pédagogie est essentielle pour la dignité et l'émancipation de toutes les couches de la population. Il dénonce donc le psittacisme, la mise en condition idéologique dont, notamment, l'argument d'autorité, en particulier religieux, est un outil important. "L'enseignement livresque, c'est l'enseignement sans les livres." (*M.C.P.*, p. 97) Avoir du caractère serait-il une menace pour la société ? Car "à le briser, écoles et collèges s'emploient" (*L.C.*, p. 36) Les enseignants, peu ou mal formés, devraient développer "la curiosité intellectuelle, le sens esthétique, l'indépendance d'esprit". (*L.C.*, pp. 48-49) Il en est de même pour "une profitable méfiance à l'égard des mots". (*J.I.*, 1948). "Enfin, rien n'a été conforme à l'admirable essai de Montaigne sur l'institution des enfants, où tout a été dit une fois pour toutes sur cette question" (*M.C.P.*, pp. 96-97). Il faudrait "établir que la principale richesse d'un pays, c'est l'instruction de ses habitants, son capital intellectuel". (*J.I.*, 3 août 1946) Dire que le pape Pie XII disait du système québécois qu'il était le meilleur du monde ! Le meilleur pour qui ? On retrouve une critique analogue dans *Les Insolences du Frère Untel* du frère enseignant Jean-Paul Desbiens qui sera persécuté par sa hiérarchie[3].

D'une façon générale, Baillargeon défend une idée moderne de la culture. *Le Choix* (1969) lui est particulièrement consacré, mais ce fut une préoccupation permanente. Ce problème est énorme pour un Québec cléricalisé et cerné par l'anglophonie. Rappelons que Vadeboncoeur n'a cessé, lui aussi, de combattre pour libérer, épurer et fortifier une culture authentique. Dénonçant l'idéologie de la survivance, Baillargeon ironise: "Nous survivons, il est vrai. Mais vit-on pour cela ? Un cimetière domine Montréal." (*Amérique française*, avril 1946, p. 86). Le Québec lui paraît un étrange pays où "la survivance combat la vie". (*N.F.*, p. 174). Admirateur de la culture française, l'essayiste ne pouvait rêver que d'une culture émancipée des pesanteurs de la tradition.

Trois figures

Baillargeon se présente à nous sous trois aspects: le traducteur, le romancier, et surtout l'essayiste ou le moraliste, bien qu'il ait été aussi quelque peu poète et conteur. Comme traducteur, il a surtout assumé un travail alimentaire auprès des journaux et des services officiels, tels que Bell Canada par exemple. Il a obtenu un certain succès en traduisant Arthur Conan Doyle, par exemple *Étude en rouge* (1956).

[3] Les Éditions de l'Homme, Montréal, 1960.

Le romancier fut plutôt contesté et même appelé "anti-romancier", car ses récits sont fort autobiographiques, notamment *Les Médisances de Claude Perrin*, *Commerce* et *La Neige et le feu*. L'homme garde tôt une certaine distance d'avec sa société et le "personnage principal n'est que le porte-parole de l'auteur qui y juge sévèrement son milieu" (Panorama, 64). Baillargeon se méfie du roman et décrie la description: "Qui pardonne au romancier de lui avoir fait lire dix pages pour une pensée ?" (*C.*, p. 149) Selon André Gaulin, *Commerce* serait "le manifeste même de l'anti-romancier". (p. 154)

On l'aura compris, c'est avant tout le moraliste qui nous intéresse par l'acuité du regard, la lucidité de la pensée, le recours à la rationalité. Est-ce l'influence de Montaigne et de la "tête bien faite" qui lui fait écrire que, dans un roman, "dès que la sérénité de l'esprit, le libre exercice de l'intelligence, l'empire tranquille de la raison sont compromis chez l'homme, il me dégoûte comme s'il était pestiféré". (*J.I.*, juillet 1948) Il se distingue donc par la concision, le sens de la formule et le goût de l'aphorisme, mais aussi par un certain humour. "Critiquer est facile ; ce qui est difficile, c'est de *se* critiquer." (*S.N.*, p. 95)

Il se rapproche parfois de l'analyse de Vadeboncoeur, par exemple quand il note: "Notre problème n'est pas un problème politique, ni un problème économique, ni un problème scolaire, mais un problème moral." (*L.C.*, p. 36) Il a d'ailleurs une piètre idée de ses concitoyens: "L'absurdité de leur existence étant intolérable, ils ont inventé une récompense dans une autre vie." (*J.I.*, 13 août 48) Son ironie peut être cinglante: "Gens heureux ! Ils s'installent confortablement dans le malheur !" (*C.*, p. 109) Dans son *Journal*, le 10 septembre 45, il note: "J'enrage que nous ne soyions que des êtres humains. Que de chaînes, que d'illusions, que de mirages !"

Sa lucidité est souvent ravageuse: "Bien de chez nous veut généralement dire: à notre niveau" (*S.N.*, p. 33). Ou encore: "Dans la province de Québec, tu es libre de dire tout ce qu'*on* pense (*S.N.*, p. 28). Et attaquant de front le pilier de la tradition et de la société, il ose: "Les fondements de la foi seraient une traduction, cet à peu près, et la tradition orale cet on- dit" (*S.N.*, p. 136).

Son esprit critique s'applique aussi à la linguistique et à la critique littéraire, notamment à propos de ses auteurs préférés: La Fontaine, Montaigne, Rabelais, La Rochefoucauld et les moralistes français. "La ponctuation est une analyse logique en raccourci: trop souvent, elle sert à suppléer la pauvreté de la syntaxe." (*S.N.*, p. 85) "Le génie est un bénéfice du temps. Les poètes ont abandonné la rime, puis la raison, gardant quelques lecteurs: psychiatres et snobs" (*S.N.*, p. 91). "L'imitation jouit du préjugé que ce qui a réussi réussira. D'où tant de romans" (*S.N.*, p. 93). "Rabelais a fait entendre le plus grand éclat de rire depuis Aristophane (…) Comme Rabelais a brassé 40.000 mots, Montaigne agite 40.000 idées. Il n'en sert aucune" (*S.N.*, p. 100-101).

Pour conclure

Pierre Baillargeon nous apparaît donc comme un champion de l'hétérodoxie et de la qualité intellectuelle même si sa lucidité est parfois douloureuse: "En général, l'amitié n'est qu'une fiction commode pour s'entretenir de soi" (*S.N.*, p. 148). Cela n'exclut pourtant pas une générosité: "Être humain, c'est être tout plein des autres. Être humain, c'est enfermer en soi l'humanité entière" (*J.I.*, 14 juillet 1955). Il fut certes un écrivain malheureux: "Je suis demeuré un auteur sans œuvre" (*M.C.P.*, p. 44). C'est que son activité de journaliste a dévoré une part importante de son temps et de son énergie et que sa maladie l'a sans doute condamné à nombre d'inachèvements ou de fragments. Pourtant, la qualité de sa pensée émancipatrice et celle de son écriture classique auraient mérité un meilleur sort de son vivant, celui que lui reconnaît Maurice Blain en quatrième page de couverture de son essai typique, *Le Scandale est nécessaire:* "Il est notre premier maître dans l'art d'écrire."

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Daniel Danis, chantre québécois de la nature

Daniel Danis est un dramaturge en vogue dont les pièces de théâtre sont jouées avec un grand succès au Québec et en France car le monde particulier qu'il peint attire l'attention aussi bien par le choix des sujets que par la spécificité de la langue par laquelle ces sujets sont traités. Amateur de la vie d'un monde rural, Danis exprime une sorte de rêve d'archaïsme, de quête du ciel et de la terre, qui est loin de l'univers des villes. Les personnages vivant loin de la civilisation, c'est-à-dire loin des villes, n'emploient qu'un vocabulaire rudimentaire, qui satisfait largement leurs besoins. Les membres d'une famille ou d'une petite communauté vivent comme dans une tribu, se comprennent à demi-mot et communiquent entre eux par des gestes, les mots étant réduits au strict nécessaire.

Dans sa pièce *Le Chant du Dire-Dire* Daniel Danis oppose le monde rural sur le point de disparaître à un monde où le progrès technologique glorifie plus les machines que les êtres humains, tandis que dans la pièce *Le Langue-à-Langue des chiens de roche* le dramaturge peint l'homme tout proche de la nature, avec ses besoins charnels, son admiration envers la force brute et brutale et ses élans vers les cieux, en quête des valeurs archaïques rêvées et perdues dans notre monde industrialisé. Dans notre essai, nous nous proposons de démontrer la manière avec laquelle Daniel Danis éclaire l'âme de cet homme qui lève le regard vers les cieux imaginaires et dont il tâche de percer le secret grâce à la langue.

C'est justement grâce à sa langue que Daniel Danis est devenu le dramaturge hors pair qui, depuis plus de quinze ans, est lauréat des prix littéraires les plus prestigieux. Elle le distingue de tout autre dramaturge canadien par sa singularité: riche et colorée, elle invente un monde fantastique peuplé de petites gens dans toute leur complexité. Ses personnages parlent peu, mais ils sont très sensibles aux lois de la nature et, littéralement, ils sont restés des enfants dans leur naïveté et dans leur manière de résonner aux signes que la mère nature envoie à sa progéniture. Leurs destinées obtiennent des proportions cosmiques, vu le fait que l'individu se sent être le noyau de l'univers dont il est issu, et en même temps il est parti intégrante de la famille, cette cellule inventée par la société. C'est pourquoi l'enfance et les souvenirs jouent le rôle primordial dans le monde danissien. Le dramaturge moderne se comporte comme un auteur des tragédies antiques et avoue que ses pièces dégagent

des cellules-mémoires qui continuent de vivre en lui, „un peu comme ces rêves qu'on fait enfant et qui vous habitent jusqu'à la fin de votre vie". (Mancel 2008/09). Daniel Danis pose que les traces psychologiques que la pièce véhicule continuent d'agir parce qu'au lieu d'être nombrilistes et repliées sur elles-mêmes, elles sont bonnes à mettre en commun et à partager avec les autres.

Ces rêves qui viennent des tréfonds de l'être l'unissent avec la majestueuse nature dont il fait partie, et il les partage avec les membres de sa famille, auxquels il reste „soudé"; mais, en même temps, les personnages danissiens, avec leur tendance à vivre en tribu, se confrontent avec la société, dont ils ne se sentent pas compris. Le public est très sensible à la voix de ce chantre québécois, qui unit dans son univers artistique la meilleure tradition de la littérature orale à sa connaissance de la littérature écrite, aussi bien largement européenne que celle de la littérature de la Mère Patrie des Canadiens français. En ce sens Daniel Danis est proche de ses compatriotes tenant compte de la valeur primordiale de l'identité spécifique des descendants des pionniers venus conquérir le Nouveau Monde. Lui aussi, comme la plupart des écrivains canadiens, par son éducation première, comme un homme vivant ou du moins ayant vécu dans un espace intermédiaire entre la culture québécoise – souvent colorée d'influence amérindienne – et la tradition littéraire et philosophique européenne, possède une vision du monde portant le sceau caractéristique pour l'homme proche de la nature qui l'entoure tout en l'inspirant. Dans ses pièces de théâtre on peut facilement découvrir l'imaginaire du Québec de l'agriculture et de la colonisation des terres basé sur les mythes rapportés de l'ancienne patrie et retravaillé dans un espace original et originel, caractéristique des réalités formé de génération en génération.[1] D'autre part, les Québécois ont toujours vécu sous la menace des anglophones, supérieurs en nombre et Daniel Dionne affirme que l'imaginaire national doit contribuer à redonner au peuple colonisé ce qu'il a perdu à cause du colonisateur, en posant que „l'imaginaire national c'est ce qui habite dans les profondeurs des abîmes de l'histoire de l'inconscient collectif et national du peuple. Le peuple incarne la nation et il porte en lui un élan spirituel et moral incomparable". (Dionne 2006). Cela explique pourquoi les auteurs québécois sauvegardent jalousement leur langue, qui représente une arme puissante contre l'anglicisation d'une part et qui témoigne de leurs racines françaises par l'emploi des archaïsmes du parler populaires, de l'autre. La littérature orale jouait un rôle primordial dans cette lutte pour les contes et les mythes rapportés de l'Ancienne Patrie et après les années 40 du XX^{e} siècle les dramaturges québécois marient bien le passé avec l'avenir, tout en évitant les pièges de l'assimilation.

Gilbert David compare l'œuvre de Michel Tremblay, qui est devenu, bien malgré lui, le maître ayant introduit le joual et le chantre de l'idiome québécois populaire, avec l'œuvre danissienne – ni conservatrice ni enfantine – et attire notre attention sur l'opinion de Pascale Casanova que l'hégémonie du „réalisme" dans les petites cultu-

[1] Nous nous permettons de renvoyer à notre article „Le passage du patrimoine européen à l'invention du mythe du Nouveau Monde: contes et légendes", in Klaus-Dieter Ertler/Martin Löschnigg, éd. *Inventer le Canada* Canadiana, Band 6, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2007, 225-242.

res, selon les déclinaisons les plus variées, „exclut toute forme d'autonomie littéraire" (Casanova 1999, 270) et que „les préoccupations formelles, c'est-à-dire spécifiquement littéraires et autonomes, n'apparaissent dans les 'petites' littératures que dans une seconde phase, lorsque les premières ressources littéraires ayant été cumulées, la spécificité nationale établie, les premiers artistes internationaux peuvent mettre en cause les présupposés esthétiques liés au réalisme et s'appuyer sur les modèles et les grandes révolutions esthétiques reconnues au méridien de Greenwich" (Casanova 1999, 274). David pose qu'aujourd'hui deux postures s'offrent à l'écriture dramatique pour s'affranchir de l'oralisation populaire de surface, dans une perspective critique. Notamment, elles recouvrent la polarisation stratégique, qui a cours au Québec depuis au moins les années 1980, „et ce n'est pas un hasard si c'est sur la langue à privilégier au théâtre que les joueurs se sont manifestés dans les luttes pour le capital symbolique, voire la légitimité sociopolitique" (David 2007, 79).

> Les deux grandes familles de stratégies, fondatrices de toutes les luttes à l'intérieur des espaces littéraires nationaux, sont d'une part *l'assimilation*, c'est-à-dire *l'intégration,* par une dilution et un effacement de toute différence originelle, dans un espace littéraire dominant, et d'autre part *la dissimilation* ou la différenciation, c'est-à-dire l'affirmation d'une différence à partir notamment d'une revendication nationale. (Casanova,1999, 246).

Nous partageons l'opinion de Gilbert David que „la langue contemporaine du théâtre québécois n'a rien d'homogène et qu'elle est traversée par des tensions inhérentes au statut de la culture francophone, tant dans le contexte nord-américain que dans l'ensemble mondial des littératures majeures, la France en tête" (David 2007, 64). Donc, il est possible d'avancer que des auteurs québécois comme Normand Chaurette ou Larry Tremblay orienteraient leur écriture en fonction du pôle „assimilation" – sans la connotation péjorative du mot, bien sûr – alors que les dramaturges comme Michel Tremblay, Réjan Ducharme ou Jean-François Caron se détermineraient dans leur acte créateur en fonction de pôle „différenciation". Entre ces deux pôles extrêmes se situent les auteurs qui chercheraient à adopter des approches de compromis, en optant pour l'oscillation délibérée d'un pôle à l'autre. Gilbert David classe l'œuvre danissienne dans ce dernier groupe et propose d'examiner son écriture quasiment écartelée entre une double postulation:

> celle de l'oralité populaire et celle de la littéralité. Si cet écartèlement est le fait de plusieurs écrivains québécois contemporains, le choix de Daniel Danis paraît s'imposer, du fait que la stratégie langagière qui traverse son œuvre est emblématique de la recherche d'une oralité singulière par laquelle se voit reconfiguré l'ensemble des composantes du texte de théâtre, à commencer par le personnage qui […] devient le principe actif de cette dramaturgie dramatico-épique (David 2007, 64).

Mais, c'est avec raison que Marie-Aude Hemmerlé, parlant du statut de la parole dans les dramaturgies francophones contemporaines, insiste sur le mélange du traditionnel et du moderne chez ce dramaturge en vogue de nos jours:

> Dans le théâtre de Daniel Danis, récit et dialogue entretiennent un lien étroit et ambigu; les spécificités génériques de chacun nourrissent l'autre. Loin d'appartenir au théâtre-récit ou d'être une simple narration du drame, la dramaturgie danissienne conjugue une hybridation narrative qui place le récit au cœur du dialogue – renouvelant ainsi le statut du personnage, celui de l'acteur et la place du spectateur (Hemmerlé 2005).

Dans la pièce *Le Chant du Dire-Dire* Daniel Danis semble vouloir mettre sous le charme aussi bien le lecteur, l'acteur et le spectateur, à la manière des mages de la parole de l'Antiquité, car il unit les éléments formant l'univers: il mentionne un canot qui glisse „sur les eaux d'un lac souterrain", ce qui symbolise à la fois la source de la vie, les tréfonds de l'inconscient et l'histoire des êtres vivants; il évoque l'homme portant „une flamme" à l'instar de Prométhée ayant volé aux dieux cet élément indispensable à la survie pour le donner aux humains; et il présente un homme „immobile et tout ouïe" qui „conduit la parole vers l'un des derniers retranchements du monde" (Danis 2000, 7), personne/personnage censé transmettre le message à la manière du chœur de théâtre grec destiné à présenter ou à commenter l'action. Cet homme est habillé „d'ocre, de sanguine et de verts bleus" (Danis, 2000,7) et – se tenant debout sur le sol solide – il épie la parole planant dans l'air et voguant sur l'onde: le spectacle unissant le macrocosme et le microcosme pouvait commencer sur la scène mondiale, sur laquelle l'homme représente un noyau à part.

Nous avons déjà dit que les personnages danissiens parlent peu, mais qu'ils sont très sensibles aux lois de la nature. C'est pourquoi leurs destinées obtiennent des proportions cosmiques, vu le fait que l'individu se sent être le noyau de l'univers dont il est issu, et en même temps il fait partie intégrante de la famille, cette cellule inventée par la société. Le dramaturge avoue que ses pièces dégagent des cellules-mémoires évoquant les rêves et les souvenirs d'enfance, mais nous osons poser que ces personnages sont des enfants de la nature, vulnérables dans leur naïveté et en quête permanente de la pureté des temps immémoriaux, dont les lois se sont perdues dans les temps modernes portant le sceau du progrès technologique. C'est la raison pour laquelle l'action des pièces de théâtre se déroule loin des villes tentaculaires.

> Loin de tout regard, de tout bruit, de toute parole prononcée, loin au-dedans de son corps, plongé dans le silence du silence, l'être peut secrètement s'unir à son âme – pour atteindre une indifférence à la vie et à la mort afin de laisser monter, en son corps, la pureté (Danis 2000, 9).

Aucun être humain ne peut vivre complètement isolé et en union la plus traditionnelle de deux êtres dans la société, soit en ménage. Le bonheur du couple n'est pas complet sans enfants et les orphelins ou les enfants abandonnés se sentent trahis par la nature. Les quatre enfants „soudés" par la destinée des enfants adoptés par le couple Durant se sentent proches malgré le fait qu'ils ne sont pas liés entre eux par le lien de sang. Comme la plupart des habitants, les enfants se contentent de peu

et – heureux d'avoir enfin un foyer – aucun d'eux ne parlait beaucoup, notamment „À peine. Parler pour le besoin, tout juste. Pas de nécessité à jaser. La mère, la leur, craignait ce silence" (Danis 2000,15). Comme gardienne du foyer familial, c'est la mère qui trouve la solution pour les „délier": elle fait faire au père un instrument en cuivre, le Dire-Dire, où les petits disaient des mots et par la suite obtenaient des bonbons ou un boni en argent sonnant. Danis souligne l'amour filial pour leurs parents adoptifs se servant des constructions de phrases typiques pour les personnes avec une éducation restreinte Rock, William et Fred-Gilles parlent ensemble ou à la troisième personne du singulier, comme le chœur antique, et ne cessent de répéter „la mère, la nôtre chérie", ou „le père, le nôtre" comme s'ils voulaient souligner leur sentiment de tendresse mutuel. Et l'on dirait que la nature était devenue jalouse de leur bonheur dans ce Paradis terrestre loin de la civilisation urbaine et „après plusieurs années, le jour arriva où tout a commencé, comme si, par le Dire-Dire, on avait appelé du très loin le chaos" (Danis 2000, 7, 16). Rock annonce la tragédie par une phrase lapidaire: „Le malheur, avec son lot de troubles s'en venait chez nous" (Danis 2000,16). Les événements se déroulent dans un temps accéléré et toutes les scènes se reflètent comme dans un miroir: la scène paisible du foyer familial où les enfants jouent aux cartes et au Dire-Dire, soudés dans leur microcosme familier, est doublée par l'orage en dehors, où les éléments de nature semblent déchaînés dans le macrocosme cosmique: „dans le ciel de ce midi-là, le cul noir des nuages frôlait la cime des arbres"; le chaos avait commencé à tonner-foudroyer. Sur le toit de tôle de la maison, la pluie clouait des gouttes de fer" (Danis 2000, 16). À Fred-Gilles ce chaos ressemble à un gant d'horreur et le vent soufflait très fort. La bouffée d'air fait éclater la porte du sud au moment où le père entrait par la porte du nord. Rock effrayé constatait que „les tonnerres marchaient en tournant autour de [leur] si petite maison. Des tonnerres qui mesuraient une cinquantaine d'arbres, l'un par-dessus l'autre, qui pesaient des tonnes de montagnes". (Danis 2000, 7, 17). L'on dirait que le Dire-Dire avait appelé tout ce chaos des lointaines car la mère est atteinte par la foudre à travers le jouet en cuivre et le père est terrassé sur le plancher mouillé. Tandis que Rock, l'aîné des enfants, tenait les frères entre ses bras, tout vibrait, même les petites fenêtres de [leurs] yeux, les murs de [leurs] peaux, la cave de [leurs] peurs" (Danis 2000, 17-18) et Noéma, leur jeune sœur, effrayée par cette force de nature débridée, poussait des cris stridents en planant dans la pièce. Daniel Danis donne une description poétique de la force déchaînée où la vie des enfants fut changée en un instant. Pour montrer à quel point les destinées des parents et des enfants étaient liées, le dramaturge fait enterrer les parents chéris par leurs enfants aimés, le père au nord de la maison et la mère au sud, devant la porte d'entrée. Le noyau familial éclaté détruit le microcosme et les quatre orphelins ressemblent au roseau dont parlait Pascal, bousculés par les tonnerres, mais dans leurs âmes, ils restent soudés à l'éternité. La vie et la mort se côtoyaient et les enfants ont dû continuer à vivre leur propre vie ensemble, tout en se souvenant de l'amour obtenu par les Durant.

Les frères et la sœur tenaient à rester ensemble dans leur petite maison, près de laquelle étaient enterrés leurs parents et ils se sont confrontés pour la première fois avec les municipiens, qui voulaient les envoyer dans des familles d'accueil. Le

médecin Forgeron et son épouse qui n'ont pas eu d'enfants, avaient voulu adopter Noéma, mais les frères les ont accusé d'avoir volé leur sœur. Le maire de la municipalité, qu'ils considéraient être leur oncle, vu le fait qu'il était le frère de leur père Durant, a fini par céder et il „s'est décidé-forcé" (Danis 2000, 23) à les aider. Danis insiste sur la sincérité des jeunes, qui continuent à aller à l'école et Rock a même appris à cuisiner chez les dames du Cercle des Bonnes Fermières, à l'opposé des adultes qui, au commencement venaient leur rendre visite, leur apporter à manger, le boulanger faisant même le détour pour leur apporter du pain et des gâteaux. Puis, les visites se sont espacées et après quelques années, les Durant de l'Orage étaient complètement abandonnés à leur sort. Lorsqu'ils étaient jeunes, on leur organisait des petites soirées, une dizaine par an, pendant lesquelles les planchers résonnaient dans la cave des pieds des danseurs. Mais, après le départ de Noéma, qui a quitté la maison pour aller faire carrière de chanteuse dans la ville, les municipiens ont manifesté leur hypocrisie et ont oublié les frères Durant. Les trois frères sont restés à attendre le retour de leur sœur aimée, cette „tourneuse des bars dans toutes les contrées" qui „chante l'amour et la peine dans le style country-gigué ou country-planant" (Danis 2000, 25).

Mélissa Proulx souligne cette actualité de la critique de la société que Daniel Danis met en évidence:

> L'orage ayant aussi démoli leur maison, les quatre endeuillés devront également se protéger des „municipiens" ligués contre eux. „Ce qui m'intéresse dans le travail de Daniel, c'est le miroir des communautés. Il y a les municipiens, mais aussi le public dans la salle, qui est encore plus important parce qu'il est comme le jury, il est pris à témoin. Les personnages sont toujours à défendre leur histoire." (Proulx 2008).

Daniel Danis insiste sur les valeurs anciennes et raconte les destinées des Durant dans une langue spécifique, avec une grammaire souvent fantaisiste et en se servant du langage des régions rurales où se mêlent des anglicismes, tels le coroner ou la country musique avec les archaïsmes rapportés de la Mère Patrie, comme, par exemple, la gigue. Il ne partage pas sa pièce de théâtre en actes et en scènes, mais se sert d'une expression vieillie: le „dire". La pièce *Le Chant du Dire-Dire* est partagée en vingt „dires", dont les deux premiers „Émerger pour le temps des partages" et „Les traces du chaos dans la maison Durant" présentent les quatre personnages principaux et le milieu dans lequel se passent leurs vies, les deux suivants racontent l'attente impatiente des frères pour revoir leur sœur chanteuse vedette, tandis que la suite présente la lutte des trois frères pour la santé de leur sœur revenue muette et „catastrophée". La pièce se termine à la manière des tragédies raciniennes, tous les participants optant pour la mort pour éviter la confrontation avec la réalité de la société téchnologique et pour rester unis pour l'éternité.

Le critique de théâtre Raymond Bernatchez insiste lui aussi sur la spécificité de la langue danissienne et sur la forme de sa pièce:

> De Danis, je dirais qu'il est parvenu à inventer une langue théâtrale unique [...] c'est la structure même de la pièce qui est incomparable, puisqu'il s'agit d'un récit-dialogue puisant aussi bien dans le bagage du conte que dans celui du drame psychologique théâtral nord-américain, aux confins quelque part des illuminations chamaniques amérindiennes (Benatchez 1998).

Mais, l'on y trouve aussi les traces d'anciennes habitudes paysannes rapportées de la France. Par exemple, les frères attendent Noéma dans leurs habits d'été, endimanchés. Rock a donné des recommandations à ses frères cadets: „il fallait se tenir debout, fiers, les bras ouverts, à cause de l'accueil. Dire, pour son premier coup d'oeil, la bienvenue à leur soeur" (Danis 2000, 26). William décrit en détails les préparatifs faits en honneur de l'arrivée de la soeur prodigue:

> Il est huit heures du matin, on a mis nos trente-six. Aujourd'hui, on n'osera pas s'asseoir nulle part. On pince les poussières, on souffle le pollen, on reste neufs, tout neufs. Même le ciel est neuf (Danis 2000, 26).

Fred-Gilles associe leurs habits et leurs parfums à la plus belle saison de l'année:

> Une belle journée pour attendre pareillement. Avec, au cœur, des battements quasiment pour enterrer ma voix. De la tête aux pieds, quand je suis habillé chic, je me sens agrandi, comme pour le chic de Noël, dans nos habits d'hiver de fêtes, mais là, debout, dans nos habits d'été. Barbe rasée, la peau rougie, on a tapoté nos joues du parfum d'été. On a nos parfums selon la saison (Danis 2000, 26).

En bon psychologue, Danis sait faire sentir la déception des frères avec l'écoulement du temps dans l'attente stérile de l'arrivée de Noéma. À midi, les frères vont enlever leurs vestons, vont laver leurs mains encore propres, relever les manches de leurs chemises et faire attention de ne pas salir leurs cravates. La différence de leurs caractères est soulignée par la manière avec laquelle ils s'apprêtent à saluer leur sœur: Rock, l'aîné, va prendre les devants, Fred-Gilles va se déplacer en oiseau-mouche, tandis que le plus réaliste William va faire klaxonner leur camion baptisé le Toreau. Mais, leur attente était vaine et ce n'est que le lendemain que les agents de police vont apporter Noéma toute grisée, le regard égaré et plongée dans un mutisme proche de la folie.

Au lieu de l'interner dans un asyle, ce que leur proposaient les habitants de la ville voisine, les frères s'occupent d'une manière touchante de leur sœur: ils la lavent, la baignent, la maquillent et l'appellent par le nom de caresse: Quiquine ou Rouquine. Le dire où les frères s'occupent de la toilette de Noéma porte le nom poétique de „L'heure des soins d'amour", ce qui est une manifestation de plus de l'amour fraternel. Mais, Daniel Danis introduit un élément fantastique dans sa pièce: Noéma, la malade chérie des Durant, devient lumineuse dans certaines situations et cela provoque de nouveaux malentendus avec les habitants de la ville voisine. Lorsqu'on a appris par le ouï-dire que le corps de Noéma devient lumineux, les gens se sont

précipités dans la cour des Durant. Pendant l'orage, où il y avait encore des tonnerres, le docteur Forgeron les a appelés les „anormaux inconséquents" (Danis 2000, 75) tout en insistant sur un arrêté de la cour proposant d'enfermer Noéma dans une institution. Pendant que les éclairs tombaient sur la terre, Rick a tiré une balle sur la masse assemblée et les trois frères se sont refugiés dans la savane en emportant le corps de leur soeur avec eux. Autrefois, dans la petite forêt les enfants avaient bâti un château pour Noéma.[2] Le sunaturel se mêle de nouveau dans le texte de Danis et il décrit un cortège nuptial imaginaire, „un cortège de l'amour de quatre-vingt mille éclairs montés sur leurs échasses" (Danis 2000, 79) en escortant le mari imaginaire de Noéma le Tonnerre. Dans cette nuit d'orage la boucle est bouclée: les frères enfoncent leur soeur dans le lac marécageux et se noient avec elle. En disparaissant dans le néant, les membres de la Société d'Amour marient les éléments caractéristiques du théâtre-récit de Daniel Danis avec les mythes typiques de la littérature orale, où les éléments surnaturels personnifiés cotoyaient les êtres humains. Encore une fois, le noyau de la famille, cette celulle inventée par la société, rencontre le temps immémorial du cosmos éternel, les rêves de l'enfance et l'imagination créatrice unissant ses deux espaces, tout en rapprochant la naissance, la vie et la mort. Le renouveau symbolique de la nature assure la durée des sentiments tendres des humains, par quoi, Daniel Danis, ce chantre de la nature a mérité le Prix du Gouverneur Général pour sa pièce de théâtre extraordinaire.

La metteure en scène Anne-Marie Riel a réussi à expliquer la magie des textes danissiens en peu de mots:

> C'est une fable racontée dans une urgence. L'écriture de Daniel se situe toujours après une longue période de silence; d'un coup, les personnages prennent la parole et c'est comme un torrent, s'anime la metteure en scène. Pour se mettre un texte de Daniel Danis en bouche, il faut se lever tôt! C'est plein de ruptures, de contrastes, d'antithèses... L'écriture de Daniel est torrentielle. C'est une avalanche d'images, de merveilleux mots, de néologismes (Proulx 2008).

Dans son autre pièce, *Le Langue-à-Langue des chiens de roche*, Daniel Danis reste ce même chantre de la nature, mais, cette fois-ci, les personnages sont touchés par la téchnologie citadine, malgré le fait qu'ils vivent de nouveau loin des villes.

> La nature qui façonne les hommes modèle également leur langue. Celle de Daniel Danis est immédiatement reconnaissable; elle est comme une gravure sur bois. Parfois elle se fige et se raidit, parfois elle s'envole tout en gardant sa force charnelle (Danis 2001, 92).

Si la pièce précédente était partagée en „dires", celle-là est partagée en „vagues", ce qui l'unit automatiquement à la nature, voire aux éléments créateurs du monde,

[2] Qu'il nous soit permis de citer ici le dédicace que Daniel Danis a écrit à l'auteure de ce texte et qui explique l'importance du Dire-Dire et du château: „Un Dire-Dire peut-il réveiller un château, un château de lumière qui éclaire les mots de l'âme?"

mais les personnages y sont beaucoup plus proches des pulsions, plus enclins à se soumettre à leurs instincts et à manifester leurs désirs charnels et leur force brute. La brutalité est surtout manisfeste lorsque les îliens battent leurs chiens en plein jour, mais – d'après la devise célèbre *homo homini lupus* – les personnages manifestent souvent l'hostilité envers leurs proches. Pour Sophie Pouliot, „il s'agit incontestablement d'une œuvre forte" (Pouliot 2001), tandis que Luc Boulanger y voit „habile mélange de lyrisme et de cruauté, de tragique et de poétique, de terroir et de modernité". (Boulanger 2001). Pour faire le résumé de la pièce, on pourrait dire en deux phrases: Sur les rives du Saint-Laurent, certains membres de l'étrange communauté des îliens, entre vents et brumes, lancent un „au secours d'amour" tandis que d'autres conjurent leur désespoir et leur violence dans des „party rage". C'est le portrait d'une société en marge où famille, sexe et mort s'entremêlent dans un chant troublant et sensuel.

Donc, ici encore, Daniel Danis traite ses sujets préférés: les rapports entre les membres d'une famille, y compris la relation compliquée entre une mère Amerindienne et sa fille, fruit du viol de sa mère, ainsi que les rapports entre un père despotique et violent et son jeune fils; mais, les rapports entre les personnages sont beaucoup plus libertins et on entend scander les participants de la „partie rage": „J'ai le goût des bons cieux! J'ai le goût des bons sexes!" (Danis 2001, 88). Niki, la jeune fille de quinze ans, cherche ses premières expériences en rapports sexuels et en consommation de drogues, tandis que Djoukie rêve d'un amour tendre et romantique. L'on y rencontre aussi une femme ayant beaucoup d'expériences dans la pratique charnelle de l'amour que les hommes nomment symboliquement Déesse.

Mais, il faut souligner le fait que dans la pièce de théâtre *Le Langue-à-Langue des chiens de roche* Daniel Danis emploie beaucoup plus d'anglicismes que dans sa pièce *Le Chant du Dire-Dire*. C'est pourquoi on peut en conclure qu'il s'est tourné de la position de „différentiation" vers celle d'„assimilation". De même, si la pièce précédente était écrite dans un français très compréhensible, malgré le jeu avec l'ordre des mots dans la phrase, celle-ci est pleine de québécismes que les lecteurs formés sur le français de France ne sont pas censés comprendre. C'est pourquoi le livre imprimé en France est muni d'un Glossaire à la fin de la pièce où l'on trouve des explications nécessaires pour la bonne compréhension du texte. Le lecteur curieux y trouve, par exemple, que „atriqué" veut dire „habillé d'une tenue vestimentaire étonnante"; que „bazou" est une „vieille automobile délabrée" et „gravelle" désigne le gravier; „grippette" signifie „malcommode", tandis que l'expression „ne pas virer dans le beurre" veut dire „ne pas perdre son bon sens, ne pas paniquer".

Donc, c'est avec raison que nous avons appelé Daniel Danis le chantre québécois et son langage pittoresque et imagé en est la preuve. Mais il reste toujours cet enfant dont parlait Michel Tremblay qui se laisse tremper au cirque puis qui accepte le rêve éveillé qui lui rappelle les souvenirs de son enfance résonnant dans l'âme de tout être humain. Il est toujours fasciné par l'immensité du cosmos, par

la couleur du ciel ou par le bruit de l'eau. Les scènes qui se déroulent pendant la nuit cachent le mystère et l'inconnu qui attirent et provoquent la peur en même temps. Les personnages rebelles, insolites ou quasi sauvages restent toujours proches de la nature, qui offre un cadre adéquat à leurs sentiments. Le mélange de l'archaïque et du moderne que Danis manie adroitement donne une signification particulière à l'œuvre dramatique de ce Québécois mondialement célébré. Ses pièces donnent preuves de sa bonne connaissance de la littérature orale et la composition des scènes d'une précision mathématique est due à sa connaissance de l'art d'écrire classique et c'est la raison pour laquelle son message est écouté et compris par le public dans le monde entier. Ce message est en même temps très philosophique et profondément humain. Daniel Danis est un être humain qui peut fièrement porter le nom du roseau pensant inventé par Blaise Pascal pour désigner la grandeur de l'intelligence de l'homme, petit de taille par rapport aux chênes millénaires, mais qui a sa place dans l'immensité de l'univers, et il combine adroitement les règles de la nature et les règles de la volonté humaine.

> Que ça commence avec un vent de nuit, un vent chaud et humide comme au début de l'humanité. D'où je suis perchée, sur l'autre rive, je peux voir les maisons, les lampadaires, le dernier traversier qui vient de mouiller au quai rouge. Je devine la terre labourée du futur champ de maïs jaunes des voisins, la route grise qui serpente le tour de l'île, je devine aussi notre maison mobile parquée à côté de notre poste d'essance, le Gaz-O-Tee-Pee. Un vrai beau bric-à-brac pour des débiles mentaux oubliés (Danis 2001, couverture verso).

Cette description poétique de l'endroit sur lequel se déroulent les vies des habitants de cette île où les chiens ne sont pas les meilleurs amis de l'homme possède le charme des tableaux idylliques des peintres des époques passées, mais le tableau porte le sceau de la modernité technologique grâce à laqulle la terre solide est liée aux îlots. Le raversier et la maison mobile en sont des témoins. Mais, le désir de conquérir le monde et l'opinion d'être plus intelligente que les adultes se voit bien dans la phrase finale, où l'adolescente Djoukie désigne ironiquement les îliens de „débiles mentaux oubliés".

La même sagesse et la même boutade se révèlent dans la dédicace que Daniel Danis nous a adressée: „Des vagues comme des langues qui traduisent la montée des corps vers des cieux imaginaires et archaïques." Par cette phrase nous aimerions terminer notre essai sur les deux pièces de théâtre de Daniel Danis, en répétant ce que nous avons dit au commencement de notre travail: C'est justement grâce à sa langue que Daniel Danis est devenu un dramaturge hors pair qui, depuis plus de quinze ans, est lauréat des prix littéraires les plus prestigieux. Elle le distingue de tout autre dramaturge canadien par sa singularité: riche et colorée, elle invente un monde fantastique peuplé de petites gens dans toute leur complexité. Ses personnages parlent peu, mais ils sont très sensibles aux lois de la nature et ils sont littéralement restés des enfants dans leur naïveté et dans leur manière de résonner aux signes que la mère nature envoie à sa progéniture. Leurs destinées obtiennent des proportions cosmiques, vu le fait que l'individu se sent

être le noyau de l'univers dont il est issu, et en même temps il est partie intégrante de la famille, cette cellule inventée par la société. C'est pourquoi l'enfance et les souvenirs jouent le rôle primordial dans le monde danissien. Pourtant, il ne faut pas oublier non plus que l'enfant remplace l'intelligence et la sagesse par l'intuition et – lorsqu'il n'est pas content de la réalité – instinctivement, l'enfant se réfugie dans les rêves, nourris le plus souvent par les souvenirs de la prime jeunesse. Ses souvenirs se trouvent cristallisés dans les ouvrages de Daniel Danis, qui nous ouvre la porte d'un monde magique créé par son imagination créatrice et nous invite à explorer les mondes inconnus dont les confins sont là où la possibilité de rêver nous a fait défaut.

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Discours de femmes: *Maryse* de Francine Noël

A sa parution, en 1983, le roman *Maryse* de Francine Noël devient vite un best-seller dans le milieu littéraire québécois. Il est lu et interprété par de nombreux lecteurs et critiques qui lui ont donné de multiples interprétations et perceptions: historique, féminine/féministe, sociale, académique, etc.

On peut évoquer une interprétation historique car la correspondance entre les événements fictifs et les événements du passé québécois ont porté un peu la critique vers une interprétation historique. Le roman a été reçu comme la reconstitution fictive et le reflet de la société québécoise à une époque précise. Le roman est daté avec précision, c'est-à-dire que Francine Noël veut ainsi rapprocher les événements fictifs des événements réels du passé.

Ou d'une interprétation académique car le roman donne aussi une image du milieu universitaire, des cégeps, des cafés d'étudiants, des divers groupes d'étudiants et de leurs discours politiques. L'auteure attire l'attention sur le ridicule du projet de recherche du personnage masculin, Michel, portant sur la revue *Penthouse* – excellent corpus selon le professeur, ancien prêtre, et questionne ainsi la pertinence de certaines recherches savantes ou scientifiques, ou du moins qui se le prétendent. Ce roman est une critique du système universitaire qui passe de signifié en signifiant «tout en se retrouvant en plein dans le référent» et de signologie en sénémantique et littérologique et finit par disqualifier toute recherche sérieuse. Francine Noël donne une assez sombre image de ce monde dans lequel on «apprend à donner aux professeurs ce qu'ils veulent voir», où les livres ne sont pas un outil de liberté, mais de répression et d'assimilation.

On a aussi évoqué la portée féministe du roman car il montre l'évolution intellectuelle et l'émancipation de la femme vis-à-vis de l'homme par le biais de la parole.

On peut parler d'une interprétation sociale puisque le roman montre l'évolution de la société québécoise vers la fin des années soixante et au début des années soixante-dix.

Nous nous proposons de voir dans cette article l'évolution du personnage principal, Maryse, du statut objet au statut sujet, de sa dépendance affective à son chum jusqu'à sa libération et sa prise en main sept ans plus tard.

Maryse: femme – objet

Dans ce roman, l'auteure montre l'évolution de la société québécoise dans les années de 1968 à 1975 et plus précisément, les différents aspects de la condition féminine. Elle montre la trajectoire de la femme qui a évolué de la position d'objet à celle de sujet après avoir pris la parole qui est le fil conducteur du roman. L'histoire montre l'évolution de la société, de la place des femmes dans cette évolution et, en retour, de son influence sur la femme. Par la diversité des points de vue, Francine Noël donne une image assez complète des événements et des personnages car se greffent sur le récit premier des récits secondaires qui racontent le passé et laissent entrevoir le futur.

Maryse, le personnage principal, est le personnage principal et le point de fuite du roman. C'est elle qui met le lecteur en contact avec les autres personnages du roman qui sont très souvent construits par opposition – certains personnages participent à des manifestations tandis que d'autres restent passifs, certains prennent leur vie en main, d'autres se laissent emporter par le flux de la vie. Cette opposition montre l'aspect contradictoire de l'époque et de la société décrites.

La parole appartient traditionnellement aux hommes, ce qui est souvent repris dans le texte par le biais du mythe de Pygmalion: l'homme crée la femme à l'aide du langage qui est celui de l'homme. Maryse est ainsi dominée par le langage de Michel qu' elle ne comprend pas et ne peut parvenir à s'exprimer dans ce langage qui lui échappe. Elle ne possède pas aussi les outils pour essayer de le comprendre (comme on peut le voir dans la conversation sur le Bauhaus). Maryse dépend de Michel non seulement par la parole, mais aussi par l'image qu'elle se fait d'elle-même. Elle est d'ailleurs entrée dans le monde de Michel grâce à son aspect physique - il la trouvait jolie, mais pas à la hauteur sur le plan intellectuel. Elle pense qu'elle est un élément de la vie de Michel et se juge par rapport à ce rôle. Elle a besoin du regard de Michel, ce regard la rend vivante, elle se voit par son regard et elle veut être bien à ses yeux à lui. Elle est très souvent inquiète, elle se trouve comme beaucoup de femmes «insécure» (Noël, 67). Elle doit être docile et malléable – Michel sort, découche, rentre quand il veut, et Maryse reste dans l'appartement à l'attendre, parfois vainement. Le texte montre à quel point Maryse intériorise les leçons de Michel. Elle devient son Autre, son complément défini par ses besoins à lui et selon ses principes. Impressionnée par son savoir, elle se sent inculte et inférieure à lui, alors que l'on peut bien voir dans le roman qu'il s'agit d'une personne qui ne manque pas de culture – dans ses discours, elle fait de nombreuses références au cinéma, à la poésie, littérature, psychologie, etc. Mais elle n'a pas encore trouvé sa parole, elle doit apprendre à se connaître, à se modeler, et c'est ce qu'elle fait tout au long du texte. Dans la seconde étape de son apprentissage, elle va passer du statut objet au statut sujet.

Maryse: femme – sujet

Maryse est tellement enfermée dans le regard de Michel que vient le moment où elle sent qu'elle doit se prouver à elle-même qu'elle existe:

> Il fallait pourtant qu'elle se fasse quelque chose, non pas tant contre Michel que pour se prouver à elle-même qu'elle existait, qu'elle était quelqu'un, quelqu'une, quelque chose, un corps au moins. (Noël, 203)

Elle doit se libérer de cette dépendance et pour pouvoir y parvenir, elle se met à écrire une pièce de théâtre. Pour cela, elle demande l'aide de son amie Marie-Lyre à laquelle elle dit qu'elle est «sa paire» (Noël, 419). La création féminine se base sur l'égalité et sur l'idée de dialogue. Dans un univers masculin, le contact est stérile, il ne mène qu'à des paroles, jamais à des actes. Les nombreuses conversations politiques masculines n'ont pas toujours un sens pour Maryse et ne débouchent sur rien de concret à la différence de celles des femmes – Marité défend les femmes battues, Mary Lise multiplie les lettres aux journaux, les appels aux lignes ouvertes, bref, tout ce qui peut faire évoluer la société. La vision féminine du politique est fondée sur l'émotion, la compassion et l'engagement concret. C'est pour cela que seules Marie-Lyre et Marité peuvent l'aider dans son projet d'écriture. La prise de possession du langage s'effectue graduellement grâce à un constant retour au mythe de Pygmalion et à l'histoire d'Elisa Doolittle. Elle est fascinée par ce personnage, car celui-ci représente la maîtrise du langage,et par extension, l'accès au statut de sujet. Comme l'explique François, Elisa Doolittle est l'histoire du créateur dépassé par sa créature qui se révolte et revendique sa liberté. Ce qui arrive à Maryse. La parole à laquelle Maryse naît lui permet de relativiser sa relation avec Michel et elle se rend compte que finalement, elle n'a aimé en lui qu'une voix:

> Elle pensa que Michel n'avait jamais été qu'une voix, que pure extériorité. Elle ne saurait jamais ce qu'il avait au fond de lui. Aussi étrange que cela pouvait paraître, elle avait passé cinq ans de sa vie avec Michel Paradis à cause de cette voix émouvante qu'il avait… (Noël, 431)

Elle découvre non seulement l'usage de la parole, de sa parole, mais elle peut aussi remettre à sa place Michel en lui tenant un discours plein de jargons intellectuels qu'il ne comprend pas:

> Tu comprends, minou, chez moi, l'instance représentative a toujours été doublée d'entrée de jeu, si je puis dire – et ça je m'en doute depuis la fin de ma cure au monoglutamate de sodium -, cette instance, dis-je, a toujours été redoublée par une instance auto-réfringante profondément castatrice et néanmoins subliminale qui, inévitablement, devait s'hyperboliser un jour dans la non-représentativité du sujet historisé, lequel est mon sujet préféré, ça, tu dois le savoir.[…] J'ai donc opéré avec succès un déplacement du signifiant vers l'altérité irréversible de la coupure. Je n'étais, jusqu'à jeudi dernier, qu'un corps sans organes mais depuis lors, je me suis retapée. Olé! J'étais, structuralement, affreusement

> entravée, occultée, même, et j'irais jusqu'à dire occlutée, à ne me rêver perpétuellement que sur la voie didascalique, laquelle, tu le sais sans doute mon chéri, est la voie de garage des théâtreux timides. Bref, je n'étais qu'un texte-prétexte, un texte-objet, et je suis devenue un texte-sujet. […] Depuis jeudi, […], je me suis réintégrée, je m'habite et plus personne ne vient jouer avec mes bibites. Moi aussi, j'ai lu, mon chéri. Words, words, words! On ne pourra pas dire qu'il n'y aura eu que tes mots dans notre histoire. (Noël, 354-355)

Les rôles sont inversés: cette fois-ci, c'est Michel qui ne comprend pas le jargon littéraire alors que Maryse découvre la possiblité de manipulation qu'offre le langage. Ce n'est qu'à ce moment que Michel avoue à Maryse qu'il l'aime, mais trop tard, car Maryse ne peut revenir en arrière. La prise de parole constitue un point de non-retour vis-à-vis de l'état antérieur. Le langage est synonyme de libération car Maryse peut saisir enfin les codes du langage et les utiliser comme bon lui semble. Tout comme le fait le personnage d'Elisa:

> Elle (Elisa) est en effet supérieure à Higgins parce que plus sensible que lui et, à mesure qu'elle apprend à bien parler, on découvre qu'elle sait penser, qu'elle avait toujours pensé. (Noël, 368).

Dans ce passage, on peut voir que la femme peut penser et sait penser. Les hommes jouent encore un rôle important en regard des choix que font les femmes, de ce qu'elles pensent. C'est le langage qui permet aussi bien à Elisa qu'à Maryse d'accéder à la fonction de sujet.

Le personnage de Marité auquel Maryse choisit de s'identifier est un personnage féminin différent de ceux de l'époque présentés. Il s'agit d'une personne qui s'assume. Elle a fait des études de droit, est devenue avocate et défend les femmes battues, s'est mariée, a eu un enfant, une bonne, et divorcé… - tout le trajet, à part le divorce, de la femme menant une vie bourgeoise respectable et rangée. Elle n'accepte pas les obligations de la société: après la naissance de son fils, elle décide que «Mieux valait être la méchante que la victime.» (Noël, 107) et divorce. Elle veut rester elle-même malgré les difficultés de vie d'une mère seule. Quand Maryse lui raconte que Michel l'a battue, elle lui fait la leçon:

Maryse s'entendit répondre: «Il ne m'a pas beaucoup battue» (Noël, 269). Sur quoi Marité répond:

> J' suppose qu'après le troisième, t'as cessé de compter! Vous êtes toutes pareilles. Toutes les femmes battues ont les mêmes maudites justifications toujours prêtes! C'en est décourageant. (Noël, 269-270).

C'est l'opposition entre Maryse et Marité qui montre la différence entre la femme –objet (Maryse au début du roman) et la femme-sujet (Marité). Elles ont eu, toutefois, un trajet similaire puisque elles ont toutes les deux dû ouvrir les yeux, se regarder et se construire. Elles essaient de surmonter l'écart entre ce que l'on

attend des femmes dans la société et ce qu'elles aimeraient ou voudraient faire. Michel ne demande jamais à Maryse son opinion, elle ne l'intéresse pas de ce point de vue. Il peut même se montrer condescendant, ex. en tenant un discours féministe qui la rabaisse:

> Tu sais, minou, je suis très sensible aux problèmes des la condition féminine: les femmes du tiers monde vivent dans un état de sujétion scandaleux. (Noël, 342)

Et si Maryse lui dit de se préoccuper d'abord des femmes du Québec, il continue sa pensée:

> T'es vraiment colonisée-dominée, avait répondu Michel, tu ne peux pas parler du sujet sans t'impliquer personnellement et tout ramener à une dimension triviale. (Noël, 342)

Il lui impose ses opinions tout en lui reprochant d'être dominée par les traditionnelles valeurs bourgeoises! Si les opinions et les pensées de Maryse diffèrent des siennes, elles n'ont pas de valeur. Les valeurs traditionnelles sont présentes dans tout le roman, les hommes s'attendent à ce que les femmes se conforment à leurs besoins et à leurs valeurs, il est sous-entendu que les femmes s'occupent du nettoyage et de la nourriture:

> […] Jocelyne était portée (par une sorte d'atavisme?) vers les tâches domestiques […] (Noël, 61)

> C'était la première fois de leur vie de couple que Michel pensait à l'épicerie et il fallait qu'Hermine[1] soit là! Le sac contenait trois petits steaks – la seule chose que Michel savait cuisiner – du lait, une demi-livre de bacon Maple Leaf, des chips et beaucoup de bière. Maryse sourit: il avait oublié le pain et la nourriture pour chats mais pensé à l'essentiel, sa bière! (Noël, 342).

La femme se définit dans ses rapports aux autres, à l'Autre, en tant que mère, épouse, maîtresse, amie, etc. Et il est évident qu'arrive un moment où les femmes en ont assez de se façonner par rapport à l'Autre, un Autre qui leur a été imposé à travers l'Histoire. C'est par rapport au regard de l'Autre que les femmes ont existé, et c'est pour cela que le physique, l'art de paraître et non d'être, est si important pour les femmes. Le seul souci de Maryse est de ne pas embarrasser Michel. Même si elle s'ennuie avec les amis de Michel durant les interminables réunions ou discussions, elle doit rester jolie, et surtout ne pas paraître bête.

L'avenir se pose donc par rapport à la relation à l'Autre. Il peut être une femme, comme Marie-Lyre qui va aider Maryse à écrire son livre, il peut être un homme, comme François qui est l'opposé de Michel, le prince charmant, beau parleur et venant d'une famille aisée, dont le mythe est encore fortement ancré dans la société. François possède des qualités essentielles comme la sensibilité, la com-

[1] Hermine est la mère de Michel.

préhension, la douceur (comme le montre son patronyme, Ladouceur). La fin du livre montre que l'évolution de la société ne peut s'effectuer que par une relation de construction entre femmes et entre femmes et hommes. Il s'agit d'une construction à laquelle tous doivent participer. Si l'on veut que les rapports entre hommes et femmes changent radicalement dans une société, il faut bien que et les hommes et les femmes y participent. La femme peut se voir attribuer un nouveau rôle dans la société, hormis celui de procréer ou de s'occuper des foyers, comme le remarque ironiquement Marie-Lyre Flouée, appelée plus familièrement MLF, et dont le nom est un acronyme du Mouvement pour la libération des femmes, groupe féministe en France:

> Veux-tu bien me dire pourquoi on se sent plus concernée que les hommes par la crasse? (demande Maryse). […]
>
> -C'est comme si on avait une vocation de torcheuses – on est toutes des femmes de ménage. (Noël, 163)

De nouvelles possibilités peuvent être créées – la trinité des Marie – Maryse, Marité et Marie-Lyre en est un exemple sensible, compréhensif. La venue à l'écriture lui permet de se pencher sur ce que l'institution a rejeté ou du moins minimalisé: l'écriture des femmes du Québec, le travail invisible des muses. Elle est à la recherche d'une écriture personnelle qui lui permettrait de traiter du quotidien, et se met ainsi à écrire *Fragments des vies posthumes de Rosirène Tremblée, muette et mortenée*. Elle écrit donc la vie de sa mère, mais aussi celles de tant de femmes inconnues qui «se levaient sous sa plume, sortant de l'oubli et du silence.» (Noël, 420).

La fin du roman montre que le point de vue de la femme est devenu celui qui présente la femme, et non plus celui de l'homme. En prenant la parole, la femme décrit son monde, ses expériences et ses aspirations de son point de vue. C'est cette nouvelle parole qui peut exprimer l'expérience des femmes.

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Le métaféminisme d'Anne Hébert

Depuis la fin des années 1970 a émergé au Québec une nouvelle génération d' écrivaines qui prend ses distances d'avec l 'écriture féministe radicale de cette decennie sans pour autant se soumettre à l'écriture masculine traditionnelle. Et l'on est d'accord avec Lori SaintMartin qui affirme que «contrariement à ce qu'on laisse souvent entendre, les idéaux féministes n'ont pas été abandonnés pour autant, qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un recul du féminisme, mais d'un déplacement, dans la continuité plutôt que dans la rupture» (Saint-Martin, 237).

C'est par l'intermédiaire de certaines de ses oeuvres où, d'après Gilles Dorion, elle parle de «l'enfance meurtrie, la puissance maternelle, la Grande Noirceur entretenue par la collusion du clergé catholique et du pouvoir politique, la violence, l'opposition entre les Forces du Bien et du Mal» (Dorion, 20), qu'Anne Hébert participe à ce renouveau littéraire.

Les critiques remarquent que son oeuvre est sans doute moderne, elle est toujours le lieu de la manifestation d'un point de vue unique et essentiel, d'une vision singulière des choses. Les personnages hébertiens, dans leur effort pour circonscrire un réel fuyant et incertain, se heurtent à des contraintes qui empêchent leur «moi» de s'épanouir. Il en résulte d'une identité trouble, une conscience fragmentée, qui ne les empêche pas, toutefois, d'entreprendre une quête éperdue d'individualité. Anne Hébert nous fait entendre le rire de la vie qui est au fond de l'enfer quand il s'attaque à la naissance d'un monde étouffant et conformiste.

Par son oeuvre poétique er romanesque, Anne Hébert embrasse une longue période de quelques decennies. On ne peut pas dire avec une sureté absolue que les oeuvres d'Anne Hébert sont ouvertement féministes. Elle ne s'est que très rarement distinguée par un engagement féministe ouvert, sauf en 1988 où elle a affirmé qu'«on ne peut pas être femme sans être féministe». Les interprétations féministes des romans hébertiens sont en effet caractérisées par une grande prudence, une hésitation certaine et par une grande difficulté d'appliquer avec rigueur les théories et les grilles d'analyse féministes. Pourtant, comme le dit Anne Fontenau, «ses premiers romans s 'intéressent quasi exclusivement à la quête féminine et aux difficultés d'émergence d'une féminínité désaliénée dans la société patriarcale» (Fontenau,

130). Ses romans peuvent être considérés comme métaféministes. Le métaféminisme est un concept apparu à la fin des années 1970 et décrit dès le début des années 1980 notamment par Lori SaintMartin. Elle voit le métaféminisme comme « le nouvel espoir du féminisme, son évolution, son renouvellement, plutôt que sa mort, et les idéaux féministes n'ont pas été abandonnés pour autant. Il s'agit des stratégies formelles différentes» (Saint-Martin, 79). Pourquoi le métaféminisme... Parce que, comme l'affirme Toril Moi, « pas de véritable postf éminisme sans post-patriarcat et comme la mort du patriarcat se fait attendre, il faut trouver un autre mot...» (Moi, 12). Ce qui caractérise le métaféminisme c'est «le fait que sont finies les luttes collectives, finis les appels à la solidarité».(Saint-Martin, 80). Au contraire, l'expérience personnelle est omniprésente, pas le combat militant des féministes des années 1970. D'après Anne Fontenau, c'est «la trosième génération des féministes, les revendications pour l'égalité et la reconnaissance des différences sont toujours de mise, mais le combat a néanmoins changé de visage» (Fontenau, 128).

Les mots suivants de Julia Kristeva affirment ces revendications nouvelles:

> Une distance peut être désormais prise par rapport aux deux générations féministes précédentes. Pour cette troisième la dichotomie homme-femme en tant qu'opposition de deux identités rivales paraît appartenir à la métaphysique. Désormais, l'autre n'est pas un mal étranger à moi, bouc émissaire extérieur: autre sexe, autre classe, autre nation. Je suis victime et bourreau, même et autre, identique et étranger. Il ne me reste qu 'analyser indéfiniment la séparation fondatrice de ma propre et intenable identité. (Kristeva, 268).

On va essayer de montrer dans notre texte quelles sont les idées métaféministes dans le roman *Le Premier jardin* d 'Anne Hébert. Ce roman nous montre comment l'expérience même de la maternité donne naissance et forme à l'oeuvre, remettant en question de vieilles idées reçues sur les femmes et la création par le biais d'un nouveau discours de mère.

C'est une ville au bord d'un fleuve. C'est une femme vieillissante, Flora, qui y revient. Ella avait cru pourtant, à tout jamais, avoir abandonné cette ville et son enfance. Partie vivre en France, elle s'est dédoublée dans les personnages qu'elle a interprétés tout au long de sa carrière, mais ce retour au pays va la forcer à un retour sur elle-même. Or, voici que la ville l'appelle, lui offre un rôle, car cette femme est actrice. Tour à tour, Célimène, Ophélie, Phèdre ou Jeanne, elle a passé sa vie à se dédoubler, à être une autre. L 'état civil prétend qu'elle s'appelle Pierrette Paul. Mais, elle revendique le nom de Flora Fondanges, qu'elle a choisi entre tous, reprenant son bien propre dès qu'elle ne joue plus. Les vestiges et les souvenirs du passé viennent se superposer au visage que la ville lui offre, et peu à peu remontent à la surface les moments les plus sensibles de sa mémoire, chacun des épisodes de son enfance qui ont décidé de son destin. Elle cherche sa fille abandonnée ; elle joue enfin son propre rôle et explore le premier jardin qui est le lieu privilégié de son enfance. Anne Hébert aborde le thème de la réconciliation avec son moi intime ; avec les douleurs et les secrets que l'on enfouit au plus profond de soi- même.

Anne Fontenau voit dans ce roman tous les thèmes propres au métaféminisme: le refus d'assujettir l'écriture à une idéologie quelle qu'elle soit, même féministe, la liberté et l'individualité, la quête d'identité féminine, les expériences des femmes, la recherche de l'autonomie, les difficultés des relations mère/fille, l'enrichissement féminin par les relations hétérosexuelles, la fin de la condamnation de la masculinité etc. Ce roman représente aussi la valorisation de la maternité puisque les métaféministes insistent sur la complicité qui peut unir les femmes et leur filles, mais aussi sur les conflits de générations féminines. Ce roman repose sur le rapport avec le maternel, avec l'origine perdue, dont on porte éternellement la nostalgie déchirante:

> Et si c'était ça, la vie? L'idée de la bonté maternelle absolue, comme ça, au bout du monde, et si l'on part à sa rencontre, on oriente sa vie dans sa direction, n'importe qui, n'importe où, n'importe comment, tant l'espoir et le désir sont forts, tous tant que nous sommes, comme quelqu'un qui serait sans regard véritable, orphelin sans feu ni lieu, tandis nos doigts d'aveugle se méprennent à mesure sur le tendre et doux visage de l'amour. (*Jardin*, 100).

La maternité est, donc, une construction sociale qui impose une quantité appréciable de responsabilités à la femme. Si certains peuvent louer le rôle maternel comme un pouvoir absolu qui remplit une fonction liberatrice, on peut y voir également la source même de l'oppression de la femme. Selon cete opinion, les enfants de ces mères emprisonnées deviennent victimes à leur tour du mythe de la maternité. De ce point de vue, la problématique du rôle maternel est explicitement présente dans l'oeuvre d'Anne Hébert.

Dans les romans d'Anne Hébert, la mère évolue au sein d'une société patriarcale particulièrement oppressante. En tant que mère, elle est rarement épanouie: elle souhaite vivre alors sa féminité autrement que par sa matérnité. Mais cela ne se vérifie pas toujours. Trois figures maternelles sont à dégager chez Hébert: la femme enceinte, la mauvaise mère et la mère rêvée. Les mères ont différents visages mais la déviance n'est jamais loin. Elles oscillent entre la tentation d'aimer et l'empêchement de vivre. Elles représentent une société en mutation qui cherche la place des femmes dans un monde pensé par des hommes. La maternité dans l'oeuvre d' Anne Hébert ne se réduit jamais aux stéréotypes. Elle est entière même si sa violence est indéniable.

Toutefois, ce roman comporte une vision mixte de la femme, celleci pouvant y apparaître négative aussi bien que positive. Le personnage de la mère rejoint donc cette image négative de la femme qui, devenue progressivement beaucoup moins présente dans l'oeuvre hébertienne depuis 1960, y était largement présente auparavant.

Le Premier jardin apparaît comme le roman de la mémoire aussi, c'estàdire comme le récit d'une puissante aventure intérieure, au terme de laquelle l'héroine se trouve confrontée au secret de sa vérité. Cependant, si son exclusion hors d'ellemême et de son histoire semble irrémédiable, sa conquête de la liberté lui

permet, le temps d'une mise en scène, d 'élever son propre malaise existentiel à un degré supérieur en l'inscrivant dans la longue lignée des femmes dépossédées, transfigurée en une généalogie mythique et compensatrice. Donc, comme l'affirme Anne Fontenau, «*Le Premier jardin* est probablement le seul roman d'Anne Hébert où une jeune femme décide de mener la vie qu'elle souhaite en ne se laissant pas dévorer par sa mère ni par les règles sociales» (Fontenau, 140).

Alors, le roman *Le Premier jardin* présente clairement le thème de la mère puisque c'est en partie pour revoir sa fille Maud que Flora Fondanges effectue un retour à Québec:

> Deux lettres ont suffi pour qu'elle entreprenne ce long voyage et revienne à son point de départ... un mot, un appel plutot, de sa fille Maud. (*Jardin*, 28).

L'incipit pose alors un problème d'interprétation car au niveau de la diégèse le rapport entre mère et fille semble peu réussi ou du moins inachevé: Flora finit par voir sa fille, qui est fugueuse, mais leurs rencontres sont peu nombreuses et leur séparation finale est prévisible et inévitable. Cette relation est surtout marquée par les signes de l'absence: tout en faisant l'objet du discours des autres, Maud apparaît rarement dans le récit. Cependant, ce roman qui paraît de prime abord peu structuré, repose sur une triple structure liée au rapport à la mère et au maternel. Justement parce qu'elle est triple, cette structure est complexe et difficile à répérer. Elle correspond à trois relations entre mère et fille: 1) la relation de l'orpheline Flora Fondanges, alias Marie Eventurel, avec ses parents adoptifs (et en plus, avec la mère qu 'elle n'a jamais connue mais dont l'absence la hante encore) ; 2) la relation de Maud avec sa mère Flora ; 3) la relation de Flora Fondanges avec les mères de la Nouvelle-France, et avec la première mère de toutes, Eve. La fascination pour les femmes du passé est ainsi liée à la nostalgie de la mère à jamais perdue.

Si la relation de Flora et de Maud se caractérise par la séparation – symboliquement représentée par l'espace puisque Flora vit en France et Maud au Québec - l'absence et finalement la perte, c'est en partie pour dédoubler le rapport de Flora avec sa mère. Mais utiliser le mot «mère» dans le cas de Flora peut sembler étrange puisqu'elle est orpheline. On aurait même envie de dire «dédoublement orpheline» car Mme Eventurel qui l'accueille dans son foyer n'accède jamais à une véritable maternité. Mme Eventurel est une fausse mère. Perte de la mère, perte de la fille, du début jusqu'à la fin, ce roman thématise l'absence et la dépossession dans la relation mère-fille.

Alors, à cette triple relation maternelle que nous avons mentionné et qui structure le texte, correspond sur le plan temporel une triple remontée aux origines (toujours maternelles) du monde. A part le temps présent qui est celui de la recherche de Maud par Flora, on y distingue trois temps passés: 1) le temps de l'enfance de Flora Fondanges ; 2) le temps d'une fusion éphémère entre Maud et Flora, trop belle pour durer (mère célibataire, Flora doit quitter Maud pour gagner sa vie en jouant des rôles au théâtre) ; 3) le temps d'une ville dans l'histoire, raconté par

les femmes, célèbres ou inconnues, bonnes, mères, religieuses, filles du Roi, qui remontent à la première femme, Marie Rollet, elle-même incarnation humaine de la toute première mère, Eve. C'est de cette perspective-là qu' Anne Ancrenat explique la signification du titre du roman *Le Premier jardin*:

> ... Le titre *Le Premier jardin* évoque le temps des commencements, l'Eden, le paradis perdu, il renvoie à l'espace mythique de la création que métaphorise le premier jardin cultivé en Nouvelle-France, par le premier homme Louis Hébert et la première femme Marie Rollet. L'image de ce premier jardin qu'Anne Hébert inscrit à l'enseigne de son roman condense deux univers temporels: le temps mythique et le temps historique. (Ancrenat, 198).

A la fin du roman, Flora est moins obsédée par le passé, elle renonce à percer «le seul secret qui avait de l'importance pour elle, celui de sa naissance qui ne lui sera jamais révélé» (*Jardin,*149). Elle craint encore ces souvenirs qu'elle a exorcisés le jour de son départ du Québec, mais elle continue de porter en elle l'image de ce jardin édénique qui, malgré le temps passé en France, atteste à la fois l'existence d'un paradis perdu et de son enracinement dans une identité canadienne.

Ainsi, l'écriture hébertienne tend à questionner les mythes culturels dominants, la valeur de l'héritage québecois, la part du féminin dans cette histoire qui semble s'être faite sans les femmes. Anne Hébert a contribué, à sa manière, à redecouvrir la voix et l'histoire des femmes longtemps dénigrées. Sans vouloir imposer à son oeuvre une étiquette idéologique qui orienterait son travail créatif, on constate tout de même que cette écrivaine a bien souvent donné la parole à des narratrices féminines et qu'elle a souvent laissé le récit s'adapter au point de vue des femmes (Elizabeth de *Kamouraska*, Nora et Olivia des *Fous de Bassan*, Flora du *Premier jardin*), quel que soit ce point de vue. Ses propres propos sont significatifs:

> Il a toujours été question de la femme en littérature mais très souvent ce sont les hommes qui font parler de la femme. Maintenant la femme parle pour elle-même, en son nom propre. La littérature change, on y reconnaît une voix de femme. Il est très important qu'on entende cette voix. Une voix qui soit audible et perceptible, une voix qui rende un son juste et vrai. Pendant si longtemps cette voix a été étouffée, camoufflée. (Cité par Bishop, 193)

Le travail d'Anne Hébert dans *Le Premier jardin* contribue justement à rendre aux femmes du passé leur voix effacée. Remettant en cause les rôles, les identités, cette écrivaine fait ressortir le caractère complexe et fuyant de la réalité sans rien cacher de son impureté ou de sa dureté.

C'est pour cela qu'on voit Flora Fondange en quête d'une identité propre tout en cherchant également l'identité collective qui retrace l'histoire oubliée des femmes. Cependant, son savoir n'est pas historique, il ne relève pas d'une science: il est jeu, théâtre, apparence, mais il possède l'effet de vérité. Sa méthode repose sur l'intuition, sur le jeu, sur sa sensibilité:

> Depuis longtemps, Flora Fondanges est persuadée que, si un jour, on arrive à tout rassembler du temps révolu, tout, exactement tout, avec les détails les plus précis – air, heure, lumière, température, couleurs, textures, odeurs, objets, meubles - on doit parvenir à revivre l'instant passé dans une toute fraicheur. (*Jardin*, 104)

D'où, à notre avis, l'importance du jeu théâtral qui confie au personnage principal plusieurs rôles, plusieurs identités qui servent du toile de fond pour cette quête d'une identité précise, qu'on appelle *la sienne propre*. Donc, dans cette quête la problématique du nom propre est fondamentale. Si l'on est d'accord sur le fait que le nom est la marque qui assure un individu de son identité, il est évident que le manque, le vide plutôt du nom propre de la protagoniste est fortement significatif. Le fait que «Flora Fondanges» soit un nom d'emprunt, un pseudonyme, et qu'on ignore le vrai nom de l'orpheline, renvoie à la thématique centrale du roman, la tentative de la part d'une femme de reconstruire une unité existentielle à travers la définition de ses origines. Dès sa prime jeunesse, Flora jeune fille, sans origine, sans points d'attache, rêve d'une unité qui serait presque immobile:

> N' être que soi toute la vie, sans jamais pouvoir changer, être Pierrette Paul toujours, sans échapper jamais, enfermée dans la même peau, rivée au même coeur, sans espérance de changement, comme ça tout doucement jusqu 'à la vieillesse et à la mort. (*Jardin*, 63)

Flora est incapable de s'accepter sans origines et sans identité, elle trouve la solution de vivre la vie des autres:

> Eclater en dix, mille fragments vivaces: être dix, cent, mille personnes nouvelles et vivaces. Aller de l'une à l'autre, non pas légèrement comme on change de robe, mais habiter profondément un autre être avec ce que cela suppose de connaissance, de commpassion, d'enracinement, d 'effort d'adaption et de redoutable mystère étranger. (*Jardin*, 63-64)

> Longtemps Flora Fondanges a été une voleuse d'âme, dans les hôpitaux, dans les asiles, dans la rue, dans les salons, dans les coulisses, à l'affût des mourants et des bien-portants, des innocents et des fous, des gens ordinaires et des autres qui sont pleins de prétentions. Elle leur prend leurs gestes et leurs tics, leur façon de pencher la tête et de baisser les yeux, elle se nourrit de leur sang et de leurs larmes. (*Jardin*, 81)

La quête de l'identité propre à travers celle du collectif, les difficultés de la maternité sont les premières caractéristiques de ce roman qui permettent de le considérer comme un roman métaféministe. Cependant, il faut ajouter que si les romans féministes mettaient l'accent sur la complicité inévitable des femmes entre elles, sur la sororité, les écrits métaféministes redonnent l'ancienne importance aux relations sexuelles. Nulle oreille féminine complice dans ce roman. L'amour homme-femme, l'amitié homme-femme sont seuls mis à l'honneur. Anne Hébert

établit donc une certaine critique des idéologies absolutistes des années 1960 et 1970, où la révolution sexuelle avait encouragé l'expérimentation de l'amour libre et l'inutilité de la fidelité.

Le double positionnement de Flora, fille à la recherche de sa mère et mère à la recherche de sa fille, constitue la nouveauté du roman. A la fin, Flora a traversé sa nuit et réglé ses comptes avec l'enfance, elle a fait le deuil de sa mère et de sa fille, elle a mesuré l 'étendue de sa solitude. Ella a accepté non seulement le passé, mais aussi l'avenir.

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Comment la figure de *l'Ange du foyer* traverse-t-elle les romans d'Anne Hébert *Kamouraska* et *Les Fous de Bassan*

Les romans d'Anne Hébert *Kamouraska* (1970) et *Les Fous de Bassan* (1982)[1] traduisent le lourd poids des contraintes imposées par la société patriarcale du Québec dans les années soixante. Comme «la couleur locale» donne une empreinte indélébile à la formation psychologique des personnages de ces œuvres, il est nécessaire de prendre en compte le cadre socio-culturel qui caractérise le Québec de l'époque. L'auteur vise à présenter un milieu fermé, régi par le pouvoir religieux, et où les valeurs traditionnelles imposent aux individus un certain conformisme. Les victimes de cette société asservissante et prônant l'obéissance aux lois patriarcales sont avant tout les personnages féminins, même si les personnages masculins ne sont pas épargnés. Dans son œuvre, Anne Hébert met en scène une palette de femmes cloîtrées dans leur maison et condamnées à la solitude et à l'existence en fonction de «l'Autre». Puisque le rôle de l'héroïne hébertienne est réduit à la procréation, aux tâches domestiques, au service des hommes, il serait juste de lui attribuer le rôle de «l'Ange du foyer». Tout cela explique la deuxième partie de ce syntagme, à savoir le champ lexical lié au «Foyer». A présent, il importe d'éclaircir le mot «Ange». Pourquoi la femme est-elle identifiée à un Ange? Il s'agit d'une époque qui associait à la femme des valeurs «angéliques», à savoir la pureté, la pudeur, la sagesse et la morale. Le mariage était considéré comme une union sacrée qui imposait à la femme tout un code comportemental. Selon cet idéal, la femme devait respecter et aimer son mari, lui être soumise et lui obéir. Elle était toujours aux côtés de son mari pour glorifier son autorité. En mettant en scène des femmes d'un caractère incohérent et ambivalent, déchirées entre la soumission et la liberté, Anne Hébert préconise un nouveau modèle de la femme, qui sera à l'antipode de la femme «Ange du Foyer».

[1] Désormais, nos renvois aux œuvres littéraires d'Anne Hébert se feront dans notre texte, à l'aide des sigles suivants placés avec la pagination entre parenthèses: 1) K - *Kamouraska,* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1970*,* 2) FB - *Les Fous de Bassan,* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1982.

Qui joue le rôle de l'Ange du Foyer dans les deux romans?

Il convient désormais d'étudier des scènes de la vie conjugale qui reflètent le visage angélique de la femme hébertienne. Dans les deux romans, l'auteur présente la femme dans son rôle d'Ange du foyer. Cela signifie que la femme n'a d'autre «métier» que d'être mère et épouse. La question est de savoir si nous pouvons vraiment parler d'un «métier de la femme», car Élisabeth de *Kamouraska* mentionne à plusieurs reprises « [s]on devoir conjugal» (K, p. 10). Cette femme s'identifie à la terre fertile qui donne les enfants: « Je n'ai été qu'un ventre fidèle, une matrice à faire des enfants. Terre aveugle, tant de sang et de lait, de placenta en galettes brisées», dit-elle (K, p. 11). L'héroïne est consciente de son existence consacrée à la procréation. En effet, les femmes stériles et célibataires, telle Irène, épouse du pasteur Nicolas Jones dans *Les Fous de Bassan*, ont été rejetées par la communauté.

Il en va de même pour les mères dans *Les Fous de Bassan*: «Et le vent qui tourbillonne tout autour de la maison fait résonner Griffin Creek avec des voix de femmes patientes, repasseuses, laveuses, cuisinières, épouses, grossissantes, enfantantes, mères des vivants et des morts, désirantes et désirées dans le vent amer.» (FB, p. 215). Cette longue énumération de «métiers» vise à montrer l'histoire des femmes et les activités qui occupaient leur vie. Ce n'est pas sans raison que l'auteur fait émerger une voix de femmes mortes, anonymes. C'est une manière de remonter à «l'archaïque» qui perdure à travers les siècles.

Dans la société autoritaire, la femme n'arrive à s'affirmer qu'en fonction du collectif. Nécessairement, tous les personnages féminins sont obligés de sauver l'honneur, l'honnêteté et la fierté de leurs maris. D'où découle la conception qu'il vaut mieux mourir qu'attirer la honte. En d'autres termes, ce qui compte pour les personnages masculins, c'est l'apparence, l'image qu'ils produisent aux yeux d'autrui. De ce fait, la femme docile leur convient parfaitement. C'est elle qui joue le rôle du miroir. Il semble que les héroïnes hébertiennes soient condamnées à jouer le rôle du reflet du miroir qui nécessite un support. Ce poids pèse lourd sur les héroïnes hébertiennes. Élisabeth d'Aulnières est consciente du poids de cet idéal prescrit: «C'est cela une honnête femme: une dinde qui marche, fascinée par l'idée qu'elle se fait de son honneur.» (K, p. 11). À la différence de son mari qui passe sa vie à fréquenter d'autres femmes, à sortir et à boire, la femme reste à la maison, repliée sur elle-même. Si elle essaie de transgresser les normes communément admises, elle est immédiatement répudiée et critiquée. Nous pourrions donner comme exemple les tantes d'Élisabeth qui l'avertissent de penser à l'honneur: «Tante Adélaïde me supplie de songer à l'honneur de la famille. – Vous savez bien, tante Adélaïde, que je tiens à mon honneur plus qu'à ma vie. Comment pouvez-vous peser sur moi un aussi injurieux soupçon?» (K, p. 157). Le recours à l'ironie paraît flagrant. L'un des moyens d'exprimer le refus des conventions de la communauté religieuse, c'est de parodier le discours attendu, de surprendre le lecteur. En ce qui concerne Élisabeth, l'éducation de «poupée mécanique» que les tantes Lanouette lui ont dispensée l'emprisonne dans un monde enfantin. Ces dernières lui inculquent le culte de sa beauté physique. En tant qu' «Ange du

Foyer», elle est censée être belle, séduisante, prête à charmer son mari. Dans ce sens-là, le personnage féminin devient «poupée» dans les mains de l'homme et lui permet d'exercer son despotisme. La collectivité tâche de conserver les valeurs héritées, de préserver tout ce qui relève de la sainteté et de l'angélisme quand il s'agit des femmes. Dans la mesure où le mariage n'est pas fondé sur l'amour et sur les sentiments, mais plutôt sur l'arrangement entre les familles, la désillusion apparaît comme une conséquence logique: «Les liens de mariage, c'est ça. Une grosse corde bien attachée pour s'étouffer ensemble.» (K, p. 86) déclare l'héroïne de *Kamouraska*. Rappelons que le verbe «marier» est apparu au XIIème siècle, au sens de «donner une fille en mariage», au sens de «prendre pour femme». Cela renvoie à l'objectivation de la femme comme marchandise. À titre d'exemple, on peut parler du mariage d'Élisabeth que sa mère prépare comme un rite de passage du monde enfantin au monde adulte, passage qui ne se fait pas sans heurts: «Le premier bal approche. Il va falloir marier la Petite.» (K, p.60). Pour cette raison, il y a toujours un décalage entre les attentes des femmes et la réalité. L'héroïne hébertienne s'attend à l'amour et à la tendresse, mais elle ne les atteint pas.

Les stéréotypes du monde traditionnel: l'homme - «le maître», la femme - «la poupée mécanique»

Il faut souligner que des rapports hommes-femmes relèvent d'interdits sociaux et du poids d'un héritage lourd à porter. Tout d'abord, il importe de remarquer que les filles et les garçons ne sont pas élevés de la même façon. Dès leur plus jeune âge, les garçons se permettent une grande liberté en comptant sur l'obéissance et la docilité de leurs sœurs. C'est dans le cadre familial qu'elles apprennent à ne pas contrarier les hommes. À lire les deux œuvres, il est facile de constater que l'opinion des personnages masculins vis-à-vis des femmes est presque unanime. Ils se croient plus forts et par conséquent plus puissants. Ils considèrent la femme comme un simple objet de désir qui devrait répondre à leurs attentes. Il s'agit d'une conception de supériorité masculine fondée sur le mythe du guerrier. On rend hommage à un homme qui va en guerre pour affirmer ses valeurs et sa force. C'est pourquoi il reporte cette supériorité physique sur le plan mental et intellectuel dans la vie quotidienne.

Les hommes hébertiens se croient dotés d'un grand pouvoir sur les femmes et le lien qui définit leurs rapports est la violence. On peut citer Nora *des Fous de Bassan* (l'une des victimes de Stevens Brown) qui confirme cette hypothèse: «Je prétends que Stevens n'aime pas les femmes, mais seulement la cochonnerie qu'on peut faire avec les femmes.» (FB, p.130). Ensuite, il importe de commenter l'opinion de Stevens*:* «Je crois que cette femme [Maureen] est heureuse de nourrir un homme et d'être commandée par lui.» (FB, p. 66). Il est donc logique que sa misogynie atteigne son apogée dans les scènes sexuelles avec Maureen, une des femmes les plus âgées des *Fous de Bassan*. Le choix du vocabulaire actualise un scénario du rapport maître-esclave. La femme est créée pour «nourrir» l'homme, et comme l'indique la forme passive «pour être commandée par lui». Anne Hébert

veut souligner que ces faits sociaux suscitent des conséquences dans la sphère privée de ses protagonistes. Par exemple, dans la majorité des cas, l'acte sexuel est privé de toute sorte d'émotions de la part des personnages masculins. Pour Stevens Brown, c'est un moyen de se défouler, de satisfaire son désir selon ses besoins et d'exercer son pouvoir sur la femme: «Je [Stevens] veux le plus épuiser mon pouvoir d'un coup […]» (FB, p.69).

D'autre part, il faut remarquer que, dans la même société conventionnelle, ce n'est pas seulement la femme qui est stigmatisée, mais aussi l'homme qui doit assumer le lourd poids des stéréotypes de la tradition. Effectivement, le devoir de l'homme est de «se montrer» devant la collectivité qui prescrit l'idéal de virilité. Le personnage masculin cherche à gagner la gloire en guerre et à servir sa patrie, sa famille et Dieu. À titre d'exemple, on peut parler d'Antoine Tassy, le premier mari d'Élisabeth d'Aulnières. En tant qu'homme, il dirige tout. Il est maître de lui comme de l'univers. En dominant la terre, les héros hébertiens dominent les femmes, les enfants, les bêtes. Apparemment, ils sont dotés du rôle de dominants et de propriétaires. Nous pouvons constater que ce type de règne masculin peut produire deux effets: «l'exil intérieur» de la femme ou la révolte des personnages féminins.

La conséquence des chaînes conventionnelles

Nous en arrivons à une conclusion évidente: ces femmes, à leur tour, sont coupables de leur condition, parce que nous trouvons dans leur attitude une sorte d'altruisme. Les héroïnes hébertiennes acceptent le code social et intériorisent leur propre douleur. Toutefois, ces femmes perpétuent la tradition. Prenons l'exemple d'Olivia, image de la future femme traditionnelle, chargée de s'occuper du foyer domestique après la mort de sa mère: «Mes frères se contentent de montrer la garde autour de moi, afin que je sois prisonnière dans ma maison.» (FB, p. 210). De toute évidence, cette jeune femme acquiesce. Elle ne peut s'imaginer comme un individu différent de ses mère et grands-mères du passé de Griffin Creek. Elle se confond avec le rôle de l'Ange du Foyer, ce que démontre l'affirmation de Stevens: « Depuis le temps qu'[Olivia] se cache dans des occupations ménagères, séquestrée par trois hommes ombrageux, son corps magnifique gêné dans ses gestes les plus simples, par la peur d'être soi-même, belle et désirable, avouable et avouée, dans la lumière de l'été» (FB, p. 96). Les filles sont «préparées» très tôt à leur future vie conjugale. Elles se rendent compte d'être réduites à l'existence en fonction de «l'Autre», et cet «Autre» est toujours masculin, le père, le grand-père ou le frère. Il ne faut pas négliger le fait que les femmes elles-mêmes soient responsables de la persistance de cette conception de l'Ange du Foyer. Il va sans dire qu'elles inculquent inconsciemment à leurs filles les normes imposées par la société traditionnelle qu'elles tiennent elles-mêmes de leurs mères[2]. On peut citer la mère d'Olivia qui, bien que gravement malade, à bout de forces, charge sa fille de reprendre le „le flambeau domestique": «Avant d'être changée en statue

[2] «Car nous, c'est à travers la pensée de nos mères que nous pensons, si nous sommes femmes.» Virginia Woolf, *Une chambre à soi*, Paris, Éditions Denoël, 1992, p. 113.

sous les draps, ma mère m'a fait jurer d'être bien obéissante et de prendre soin de la maison.» (FB, p. 209.). Tout cela amène à soulever la question de l'origine du sentiment de l'infériorité féminine chez Élisabeth. Elle hérite un tel sentiment de sa mère. Au moment où sa mère Marie-Louise d'Aulnières devient veuve, son unique désir est d'aller rejoindre son mari dans la tombe. «Il ne faut pas renoncer à l'honneur «d'être Madame» (K, p. 53).

De toute évidence, la société condamne la femme à l'effacement et à l'infériorité. D'où le repli de la femme hébertienne sur elle-même et l'aliénation. Patricia Smart pose ce problème dans son étude *Écrire dans la maison du père. L'émergence du féminin dans la tradition littéraire du Québec.* Selon Neil Bishop:

> « *La maison du père*» est cette métaphore par laquelle Patricia Smart désigne la société patriarcale traditionnelle qui enfermait la femme dans un exil interne et intérieur, psychique et social, et encore sexuel, intellectuel, axiologique et moral. Confinée à la maison, la femme hébertienne vit un profond déchirement physique et psychique, cependant que la voix d'un surmoi aussi vieux que le monde patriarcal lui interdit la liberté. Surmoi qui peut expliquer pourquoi dans les œuvres hébertiennes, c'est la femme qui redoute l'espace ouvert et l'homme qui l'occupe. Cet exil est d'autant plus écrasant, que la femme hébertienne a été trahie par ses précurseurs féminins, matriarches puissantes qui perpétuent le règne de la mort en prêchant la douceur et la perte de soi. (Bishop, 186).

La notion «d'exil» résume la condition sociale des femmes représentées par les personnages hébertiens. Nous pourrions parler d'un «exil intérieur». Cet exil implique la clôture, le repli de la femme sur elle-même, la solitude intérieure dans la profondeur de son âme. La femme devient étrangère à elle-même, ce que démontre le cas d'Élisabeth: «Me voici enfermée dans ma propre solitude. Figée dans ma propre terreur. Incapable d'aucun mouvement, d'aucun geste. Comme si la source même de mon énergie (étant faussée) se mettait soudain à produire du silence et de l'immobilité.» (K, p. 215). Il en va ainsi d'Irène dans *Les Fous de Bassan* qui est souvent identifiée à une statue de marbre, froide et immobile: «Cette femme n'a jamais eu l'air vivante, sa vraie nature étant d'être incolore, inodore et sans saveur, déjà morte depuis sa naissance» (FB, p. 101). Il va de soi que cette vie est conçue comme absurde pour les héroïnes hébertiennes. Il s'agit dans les deux cas de personnages enfermés dans «la prison» où la mort s'impose comme imminente.

Conclusion

Enfin la question se pose de savoir si les personnages féminins ont réussi à briser le miroir du passé. Les femmes hébertiennes n'arrivent pas à se débarrasser de leur rôle d'Ange du Foyer parce qu'elles-mêmes doivent renoncer aux stéréotypes de la société conformiste, elles-mêmes doivent opter pour un changement radical. La femme, de son côté, pourrait faire en sorte d'améliorer ses relations

avec les hommes, parce que menée par les préjugés qui la forcent à intérioriser ses aspirations, elle se voit aliénée dans la société traditionnelle. L'objectif de cette analyse est de démontrer qu'il est difficile de déraciner des préjugés, mais qu'il est encore plus difficile de changer de mentalité dans une société patriarcale.

En guise de conclusion, nous pourrions dire que l'auteure préconise l'effacement des différences sexuelles. Elle se garde de l'éviction du masculin et ne vise pas à exécrer la vie de couple en harmonie. La solution, selon Anne Hébert, n'est en rien le conflit, mais la réconciliation des sexes et leur collaboration mutuelle. La dialectique des sexes occupe une place prépondérante dans les deux romans. Anne Hébert donne comme réponse à ces deux récits la connaissance des sexes à travers la littérature et l'art comme sublimation du conflit et comme affirmation d'une identité propre à chaque individu.

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Au carrefour des temps ou comment conquérir l'Amérique en une nuit

Le film "Comment conquérir l'Amérique en une nuit?" (2004) se laisse interpréter comme la confluence des tissus narratifs et fictionnels de Dany Laferrière, ce qui implique la difficulté de le juger selon les critères de la cinématographie en faveur d'une lecture plutôt littéraire. Le film met face à face deux caractères à peine esquissés et deux destinées - Fanfan, un homme mûr, qui a quitté son pays il y a 20 ans pour venir s'installer à Montréal et Gégé, un jeune homme, naïf ou maladivement optimiste, venu à la métropole pour conquérir, d'après ses dires, l'Amérique.

Dès les premières scènes, le lecteur fidèle de Laferrière reconnaît peu à peu l'atmosphère et les motifs de son œuvre, ainsi que les histoires racontées dans l'interview de 1999[1] - l'univers de l'enfance d'Haïti, le non lieu représenté par l'aéroport, la scène du baiser, les propos en "Noir et Blanc", les différences entre les deux mondes etc. À première vue, rien de spécial. Mais ce qui frappe et émeut à la fois c'est ce nœud temporel, ce point de carrefour qui fait que Fanfan, l'homme adulte se dirige vers le passé, tandis que Gégé veut regarder uniquement vers l'avenir, les deux hommes mélangeant leurs présents.

Mais finalement qui sont ces personnages et qu'est-ce qu'ils cherchent? Gégé, le plus jeune, vient d'Haïti, portant dans ses bagages une affiche sur laquelle trône la photo d'une belle fille blanche au dessous de laquelle il est écrit que celui qui conquiert la blonde conquiert l'Amérique. Sa manière naïve de prendre et de prétendre les choses, de s'émerveiller à la vue d'un jeune couple en train de s'embrasser, de vouloir manger des hamburgers, sans s'inquiéter du contenu de cholestérol, en d'autres mots sa faim de l'Amérique, tout cela rappelle les figures des jeunes hommes qui peuplent la littérature de Laferrière et qui lui ressemblent jusqu'à un certain point. Des personnages jeunes, plein de vie, qui rient et font éclater de rire les autres, des immigrants haïtiens en quête de cette Amérique qui les adopte.

Parfois, la lecture que ce personnage jeune fait du monde est assez difficilement interprétable pour le lecteur non-identique, telle que la scène déjà citée du baiser

[1] Laferrière, Dany, *J'écris comme je vis. Entretien avec Bernard Magnier*, Ed la Passe du vent, 2000.

à l'aéroport, qui semble dédiée plutôt au public fidèle du romancier ou alors à un certain public ethnique. Juste après avoir mis le pied sur le territoire canadien, Gégé voit devant l'aéroport un couple en train de s'embrasser et il fait un commentaire à haute voix, étonné de la situation. Fanfan lui sert de "traducteur", mais l'explication passe entre les deux amis, car le spectateur reste en quelque sorte surpris de la réaction du personnage.

Dans l'interview accordée en 1999 à Bernard Magnier, l'auteur raconte cette même histoire, en éclairant les significations qui tiennent d'une rhétorique de l'entre les deux mondes - Haïti et Montréal:

> La première chose que je vois, en arrivant à Montréal, c'est un jeune couple en train de s'embrasser, à l'aéroport. C'était interminable. Je me demandais dans quel monde je venais d'arriver et qu'est-ce qu'il m'attendait ? Un baiser en public était, à l'époque, impensable en Haïti. Je me suis dit: " Mon petit Dany, je crois que nous y sommes. " C'est à Montréal que j'ai pris conscience de la misère sexuelle dans laquelle je vivais à Port-au-Prince. J'avais vingt-trois ans en débarquant à Montréal et j'étais encore vaguement puceau. J'avais fait l'amour, mais dans de si mauvaises conditions qu'il vaudrait mieux ne pas en parler. Quand tu fais l'amour tout en tendant l'oreille pour savoir si quelqu'un arrive dans ta direction, ou en plaçant un vigile, mon cousin Miko à qui je payais un ticket de cinéma pour ce faire et qui chaque cinq minutes venait renégocier le contrat avec moi, exigeant que j'ajoute une glace ou un pop corn, ceci a pour effet de vous faire débander. D'un strict point de vue sexuel, ce n'est pas très drôle d'être adolescent à Port-au-Prince. (Laferrière, 2000, 175)

Sans cet appendice explicatif, la scène risquerait d'être interprétée comme la confrontation des deux mondes séparés par la tonalité, les réactions, même l'éducation. En effet, la rhétorique cache toujours le choc de la confrontation, mais elle fait référence à la liberté, au droit à l'intimité, ce qui fait que la réaction assez marquée de Gégé dit la stupéfaction de la découverte de son malaise. Il s'agit d'une appropriation différente de l'espace qui sépare le pays d'origine du pays d'accueil, car en Amérique du Nord, l'espace privé et l'espace publique sont différemment distribués et interprétés. On peut s'embrasser devant l'aéroport, en réinterprétant de cette manière l'espace ouvert et en le fermant à des barrières psychologiques pour assurer son lieu à soi, son territoire de tendresse et d'intimité. Par l'opération d'attribution, le non-lieu représenté par l'aéroport devient une extériorité, le symbole du lointain et de la séparation. L'enceinte close de l'aéroport perd sa signification et se réorganise comme l'espace des autres, au pluriel, donc l'espace paradoxalement ouvert, publique, commun. Ainsi la liberté de l'Amérique du Nord est synonyme, dans ce cas, du pouvoir de disposer de l'espace et de le transformer à son désir, d'instaurer son intimité en dépit des autres.

Apparemment, la situation est totalement différente en Haïti et cela constitue la base psychologique de la réaction de Gégé. Dans son pays, l'espace est suffoquant et surpeuplé, ce qui fait que l'homme soit frustré et obligé à trouver des stratégies

de compromis. L'explication est donnée aussi par l'auteur dans l'interview antérieurement citée:

> La vérité à propos de la grande misère sexuelle dans laquelle vivent les gens. Il n'y a pas que " le grand goût de manger ", il y a aussi celui de faire l'amour dans des conditions convenables, c'est-à-dire avec un minimum d'intimité (dans une chambre fermée). Les gens qui vivent en Amérique du Nord n'ont aucune idée de l'importance de l'espace. En Haïti, la grande majorité des gens naissent, vivent et meurent sans avoir jamais été seuls, pas même durant une heure de toute leur existence. C'est pour cela que le rêve tient une si grande place dans la vie des gens. (Laferrière, 2000, 174)

N'être jamais seul signifie ne pas avoir droit à l'intimité, par conséquent *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans le fatiguer* devient *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre* tout simplement dans un monde où l'espace privé manque de signification. Dans les deux pays les gens s'embrassent les uns devant les autres, mais en Amérique on dispose de ce pouvoir de faire de l'espace public son espace à soi tout en disposant toujours (ou presque toujours) d'une clé d'un chez soi qui assure l'intimité. C'est d'ailleurs l'un des motifs récurrents dans les interviews données par Laferrière - la clé de l'appartement et la possibilité de fermer un espace.

En ce qui concerne Gégé, il comprendra vite que l'Amérique joue selon d'autres règles qu'il est prêt à interpréter. Il déclare qu'il ne veut pas du tout s'adapter, mais l'enthousiasme qu'il met à la découverte de cette Amérique le contredit. En effet, tout le film semble créé pour contredire ce personnage qui traverse la narration en souriant et en prenant le masque de l'optimisme incurable. Par ailleurs ses actions et ses affirmations trouvent rarement le support dans la fiction, étant en permanence contredites par les autres personnages. C'est par exemple le cas de la discussion sur les hamburgers dont Gégé se déclare intéressé, même s'il apprend de Fanfan que c'est du cholestérol à l'état pur. Cependant ces hamburgers signifient la liberté de choisir même mal, car, comme le fait savoir le personnage, tout le monde en a marre, mais Gégé, il n'en a même pas goûté.

Par contre, dans le gros plan, le personnage Dany Laferrière lui même fait son apparition et parle à la télé de la fast food, en décrédibilisant son personnage. La frontière entre la vérité et le mensonge, entre la fiction de la réalité et la réalité de la fiction télévisée est floue ce qui fait que chaque plan met en question l'autre. L'intervention de Dany Laferrière dans l'univers de la fiction a donc comme effet la relativisation des propos, mais aussi elle renvoie à un avant-dit. C'est une stratégie par laquelle les "je" impliqués dans la narration arrivent à se confondre et à se séparer dans le tourbillon verbal et émotionnel qui les emporte, procédé qui rappelle une autre déclaration de l'auteur:

> Le "je" contaminé consiste à phagocyter les "je" des autres (se servir d'une histoire qui est arrivé plutôt à un ami). J'aurais pu ajouter un "je" générationnel quand il s'agit d'un ensemble des personnes qui ont grandi ensemble dans

> la même époque, sous une même dictature (je tente alors de fondre toutes ses sensibilités dans le "je" du narrateur). [...] J'ai tendance à dire, afin d'esquiver le problème de la stricte biographie qui ne relate que des faits véridiques relatifs à un individu, que mes romans sont une autobiographie de mes émotions, de ma réalité et de mes phantasmes. (Laferrière, 2000, 161)

Au delà de toute ressemblance et tout renvoi à l'œuvre de l'auteur, l'histoire de Gégé reste peu plausible, le personnage rappelant les héros picaresques qui traversent des aventures sans en tirer profit sur le plan de la sagesse. De toute façon, cette histoire de réussite à l'américaine est prise avec bienveillance par le spectateur/lecteur qui choisit de sympathiser avec cet optimiste et naïf incurable qui, de surcroît, après sa première nuit à Montréal, finira par embrasser la blonde dont il rêvait.

Si l'histoire de Gégé peut paraître facile et issue directement des films de série B américains ou pire, des soaps opéra au final heureux, son association avec Fanfan lui confère une dimension peu remarquée par les commentaires, pas très nombreux d'ailleurs, malgré le prix remporté par le film.

Fanfan, le poète haïtien devenu chauffeur de taxi à Montréal, est le gardien des clés de cet univers qu'il veut mettre entre les mains de son jeune ami. Tout au long des 24 heures qu'il passe avec Gégé, Fanfan met toute son expérience à la disposition du jeune homme, sans tenter pour autant d'éteindre l'enthousiasme assez niais de son cadet. Fanfan l'avertit que la différence qui les sépare des autres ne saurait pas être passée sous silence. En effet, à Montréal, les gens ne rêvent pas comme l'immigrant haïtien, ne dansent pas, ne mangent pas, ne souffrent pas et ne font pas l'amour comme lui. Et la différence se fait remarquer surtout lorsqu'on remarque que c'est le monde des Blancs à l'intérieur duquel le Noir ne peut être qu'un accident suspect. La discussion continue discrètement en arrière plan sur la filière des théories postcoloniales qui parlent de la couleur de la peau comme d'une réalité politique. C'est pour cela que la narration lie des scènes suggestives telles que les avertissements sonores des voisins (on apprend que, lorsque les Haïtiens parlent à haute voix, les autres pensent qu'ils s'entretuent), la scène de la boutique du coin (resté seul dans le magasin avec Gégé, le vendeur prend son arme pour se mettre à l'abri de tout danger possible et probable, à la stupéfaction du nouveau venu), la discussion avec la blonde sur la nationalité et la couleur de la peau (quand on reçoit le passeport suédois, on prend la nationalité, mais on ne devient pas Blanc pour autant).

De ce point de vue, les personnages se trouvent sur des positions différentes, car Gégé renoue avec l'écrivain du premier roman de l'auteur[2], tandis que Fanfan

[2] Dans *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer*, roman d'ailleurs présenté par Laferrière lui-même dans le film, le personnage principal conçoit la lutte pour le pouvoir dans les termes de la lutte sexuelle. Il passe son temps à draguer les jeunes filles anglophones qui étudient à l'université McGill. Ce point de vue est d'ailleurs très bien expliqué dans l'interview antérieurement citée.

prépare le terrain pour léguer son présent à Gégé et pour pouvoir ensuite partir à la rencontre de son passé et de son univers heureux de l'enfance et de l'adolescence, celui raconté avec tendresse dans *l'Odeur du café* et *Le Charme des après-midi sans fin*. Comme on l'apprend de la bouche d'André, la petite amie blanche, blonde et québécoise de Fanfan, "pour tout voyage il y a un retour", en d'autres mots l'expérience de l'éloignement finit nécessairement par le retour à l'origine. Par conséquent, après avoir présenté Gégé à ses amies québécoises (dont l'une est prête à lui offrir sa chaleur la plus charnelle), après lui avoir laissé un appartement, une licence de taxi, pratiquement toute une vie, Fanfan prend l'avion pour Port-au-Prince, tentant de renouer une histoire d'amour finie il y a 20 ans. Dans cette histoire, le spectateur/lecteur découvre le côté idéaliste de Fanfan, qui n'a jamais réussi à oublier son premier amour.

Le choix de Fanfan n'est pas surprenant si l'on prête l'oreille aux dires des personnages. L'échange que Fanfan fait en venant au Canada, la poésie contre le taxi, l'ineffable et l'insécurité contre la liberté livrée avec les petites humiliations de la vie modeste, en marge de la société, ne le rend pas heureux malgré sa bonhomie et son ouverture d'esprit. A Montréal, le personnage fait son expérience dure, en vivant la solitude la plus navrante. Comme il le fait savoir à Gégé, l'éloignement implique la chute, l'impression de se noyer sans jamais réussir à toucher le fond.

Fanfan vit avec la nostalgie des jours heureux en Haïti, mais ces jours s'avèrent impossibles à récupérer, étant plutôt le fantôme dont il s'en prend pour pouvoir survivre. C'est d'ailleurs ce qui lui fait observer Gégé: il est Haïtien à Montreal, mais dès qu'il mettra le pied à Port-au-Prince il sera Québécois. Apparemment, Fanfan n'a jamais cessé d'habiter son Haïti des rêves[3], étant physiquement à Montréal, son cœur battant à Port-au-Prince, comme prisonnier éternel de la terre natale. En plus, son appartement parle de son pays, car les plats sont haïtiens, la musique est haïtienne et la nostalgie tout autant.

Etant donnée sa solution à la détresse de l'exile, Fanfan doit nécessairement régler les comptes avec sa mémoire et son passé. La tentative de faire un simulacre de sa vie, comme il le fait, de bonne foi, en s'efforçant de conserver l'apparence du monde d'origine ne semble pas du tout gagnante. Fanfan retournera à Haïti et il apprendra vite que la femme aimée a été la victime des Tontons Macoutes, en trouvant la mort dans une prison haïtienne.

Dans ce contexte, le problème posé par Dieuseul (que de significations!) au début du film, où se faire enterrer, change d'un coup de significations. Pour Fanfan, la mort de sa bien-aimée équivaut à la mort de ses rêves, la rupture brutale de ses attachements. Dans un certain sens, c'est aussi sa mort et il se ferra enterré par conséquent dans ses terres natales. Mais, même si cette nage contre le courant afin de récupérer son temps finit assez mal, l'auteur laisse à son personnage quelque espoir. Dans un paysage urbain ensoleillé, peuplé des gens qui lui ressemblent

[3] L'ami avec lequel Fanfan partage le taxi dit qu'en effet le personnage n'a jamais quitté Haïti.

mais auxquels il est devenu sans s'en rendre compte étranger, Fanfan voit danser André, sa blonde québécoise, venue le secourir et se sauver soi-même. Echappé brutalement à son passé, Fanfan a cette fois-ci une chance.

Par ailleurs, il peut paraître un peu étrange que ce soit toujours la blonde qui joue le rôle du possible sauveur. Mais à la différence du premier roman de Laferrière, dans ce film la blonde incarne un principe cher à l'auteur, celui féminin, l'altérité la plus étrange et la plus troublante de son univers romanesque. Si Gégé, à son âge, le sang en ébullition, veut conquérir la blonde pour disposer pleinement de l'Amérique, en lui faisant sauter à la face les préjugés et les idiosyncrasies, Fanfan a eu sa blonde sans se rendre compte de sa conquête, étant bloqué dans un passé fictif. De plus, sa blonde est plus réelle et plus abordable, un peu enrobée, passée de la première jeunesse et ne résistant pas très bien à l'alcool, mais bien réelle, gentille et chaleureuse, prête à lui offrir son affection et son amitié.

Aveugle, Fanfan est reconnaissant à André uniquement pour la main tendue, mais il partira chercher son bonheur dans les bras d'une autre femme qui lui ressemble. Fanfan a eu son Amérique à lui sans la reconnaître ou bien sans savoir comment la lire. Et pendant 20 années cette Amérique ne lui rapporte pas la tranquillité et la sérénité recherchées.

Quand cette Amérique le suivra en Haïti et ferra des efforts pour lui ressembler, Fanfan la découvrira et probablement l'acceptera dans ses plans d'avenir. La scène où André danse sur la place publique au milieu des Haïtiens qui semblent l'ignorer est un hommage à cette vie ensemble au delà des différences, des couleurs, des mots. Il est fort probable que la solution naïve de Gégé ne soit pas la meilleure, mais il est sûr que l'encrage dans le passé ne mène nulle part, pouvant offrir tout au plus une existence de doutes et de souffrance. L'avenir c'est venir à la rencontre de l'autre, l'accepter dans sa vie, se concevoir soi-même comme évolution et comme projet de durée. Et la blonde ne tardera pas à se laisser conquérir, en même temps que cette Amérique fictive elle aussi. Une histoire sur l'homme et sur sa solitude, sur les différences qui nous séparent et nous approchent les uns des autres, mais surtout un propos délicat sur l'amour.

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Le problème de l'identité culturelle dans le roman *L'Ingratitude* de Ying Chen

Les traits culturels se référant à l'individualité d'une ethnie traduisent la notion d'identité culturelle. Celle-ci réunit tout ce qui est commun aux membres du groupe, comme les règles, les normes et les valeurs que le sujet partage avec sa communauté. Cette notion comprend de prime abord la langue, la religion, l'art, et tout ce qui procure à chaque individu le sentiment d'appartenance, l'un des sentiments fondamentaux, étant donné que l'homme est un être social. Plus largement, l'identité culturelle renvoie à la question du sens. C'est elle qui nous explique qui nous sommes. Elle s'intègre à l'essence de notre être et se présente sous la forme d'un cadre dont on ne peut se détacher sans éprouver des conséquences importantes qui concerneraient particulièrement l'intégrité personnelle.

Le problème de l'identité culturelle est très souvent traité dans la littérature migrante. C'est par ce sujet que les différentes cultures communiquent et s'enrichissent. C'est un privilège des milieux multiculturels, tel que celui du Canada.

> Depuis quelques années, les cultures migrantes ont profondément changé le système littéraire au Canada, en particulier celui du Québec. Par le trésor culturel millénaire rapporté dans leurs bagages mentaux des pays dont ils sont originaires, les œuvres des écrivains migrants – souvent venus de loin – représentent un défi considérable pour l'axiologie de la canadianité ou de la québécité. Elles véhiculent des repères culturels qui n'ont aucun rapport avec la genèse parfois difficile de l'espace francophone au Nord de l'Amérique, ce qui offre un chemin tout aussi sinueux que mystérieux dans de nouvelles connaissances au niveau du discours de l'Histoire littéraire. (Matić 2005, 145).

L'identité culturelle s'y présente surtout sous la problématique *d'acculturation* ou de *déculturation*. La première notion sous-entend les processus par lesquels un groupe humain assimile tout ou une partie des valeurs culturelles d'un autre groupe humain, ou bien l'adaptation d'un individu à la culture étrangère avec laquelle il est en contact. Par ailleurs, la déculturation comprend la perte de l'identité culturelle, ou l'abandon, le rejet de certaines normes culturelles. Ce rejet, c'est-à-dire cette rébellion contre des normes culturelles données est l'un

des sujets abordés dans *L'Ingratitude*, roman écrit par la romancière sino-québécoise[1] Ying Chen.

Ying Chen, l'une des romancières de la génération montante au Québec, est née à Shanghaï en 1961 où elle a obtenu, en 1983, sa licence ès lettres françaises, à l'Université Fudan. Dès lors elle travaille comme traductrice et interprète. En 1989 elle quitte sa Chine natale et s'installe à Montréal pour étudier au département de langue française de l'Université McGill. Puis elle déménage à Magog, ensuite, en 2003 à Vancouver. C'est au Nouveau monde qu'elle commence sa brillante carrière d'écrivaine. Ses oeuvres sont le fruit d'expériences profondément vécues et tour à tour chinoise et québécoise. Intelligemment conçus, ses romans et nouvelles[2] sont attirants par leur style extrêmement simple et par leur philosophie mariant celles de l'Orient et de l'Occident. Couronnées par de nombreux prix littéraires, ses oeuvres sont considérées comme des réussites littéraires incontestables.

L'Ingratitude est le troisième roman de Ying Chen où l'auteure nous montre son pays natal. Après *La Mémoire de l'eau* (1992), où elle décrit la Chine contemporaine vue à travers plusieurs générations de femmes, elle publie *Les Lettres chinoises* (1993) où elle explore les particularités des deux cultures, chinoise et québécoise, et le choc des cultures, surtout concernant la liberté, tant politique que sexuelle, qui mène jusqu'au déracinement. Dans son roman suivant, *L'Ingratitude* (1995), l'auteure continue à nous démontrer que l'identité culturelle est inséparable des caractères des protagonistes, qu'elle conflue avec leurs vies, notamment avec celle de l'héroïne qui raconte son histoire. On peut constater que la jeune écrivaine attribue un rôle considérable au code culturel de ses héros. Il ne s'agit pas là d'un simple décor, mais d'un facteur très important qui sert de moteur à l'intrigue.

Le roman *L'Ingratitude* traite des rapports familiaux, surtout des relations mère-fille. Mais au cours de l'histoire on apprend de plus en plus de faits sur l'entourage des héros, telles les moeurs, les règles prescrites et non prescrites, mais aussi sur des éléments de la philosophie orientale, et en les rassemblant tous, le lecteur obtient une image de la société chinoise de l'époque suivant la mort de Mao Zedong. La fresque sociale obtenue reste néanmoins incomplète, vu le fait que le

[1] Les Sino-canadiens sont originaires de Chine et représentent une importante minorité ethnique du Canada. D'après la statistique, au Canada en 2001 il y avait 1 094 700 Canadiens d'origine chinoise. Les premiers Chinois y sont arrivés vers la fin du dix-huitième siècle, plus précisément en 1788, et se sont installés en Colombie-Britannique, en Ontario, en Alberta et au Québec.

[2] Ying Chen a publié les romans suivants: *La mémoire de l'eau* (1992), *Les lettres chinoises* (1993), *L'ingratitude* (1995; elle a reçu le Prix Québec-Paris, et le journal *La Presse* l'a nommée "personnalité de la semaine" du 10 mars 1996), *Immobile* (1998; reçu le Prix Alfred-DesRochers en 1999), *Le champ dans la mer* (2002), *Querelle d'un squelette avec son double* (2003), *Quatre Mille Marches: un rêve chinois* (2004), *Le Mangeur* (2006).

dosage des informations est toujours en fonction du sujet principal, et non pas en fonction d'une étude sociologique approfondie.

La plupart des informations se rapportent à la vie des gens ordinaires. La quotidienneté est décrite comme un mécanisme précis. Il est impossible de changer les choses, tout est déterminé, chaque pas est prévu, attendu. Le lecteur s'aperçoit bientôt qu'il existe un cadre social ou des circonstances sociales qui orientent le comportement des héros, leurs attitudes, leurs pensées et même leurs sentiments les plus intimes. Ils les ont appris et acceptés comme une invariabilité stricte et obligatoire. Ce sont leurs coordonnées sociales. Elles témoignent d'une appartenance à une certaine couche sociale d'un certain pays, d'une certaine époque historique et de tout ce qui détermine une identité, par conséquent une destinée. L'héroïne du roman, la jeune Yan-Zi, n'en est pas consciente. Insatisfaite de ce que la vie lui impose, elle commence à lutter contre sa condition. Elle voudrait changer les circonstances de sa vie, en particulier l'attitude et les sentiments de sa mère envers elle, mais sa lutte sera vaine, parce que le conflit mère-fille provient d'un problème beaucoup plus complexe qu'elle ne le pense. En bref, sa mère a grandi dans une société figée et s'y est conformée et c'est pourquoi elle ne peut pas se comporter autrement. D'autre part, la mère ne comprend pas pourquoi sa fille voit les choses d'un autre oeil. Il s'agit pratiquement de deux mondes, et la discorde entre eux peut être vue comme le conflit entre deux générations, entre deux esprits différents, celui de la Chine traditionnelle et celui de la Chine moderne. Mais, laquelle des deux va gagner? La plus forte, semble-t-il, et c'est celle qui persiste, pourrait-on dire, depuis toujours. On voit qu'on ne peut pas s'arracher facilement aux dispositifs sociaux, perpétuellement soutenus par l'opinion publique. Dans ce roman, la tradition chinoise, forte et stable depuis des millénaires, se présente comme l'unique matière dont on puise les qualités et les défauts des personnages. Dans un certain sens, elle représente l'alter ego des gens, une imminence, une force suprême. Mais, l'écrivaine s'est concentrée sur le fait que cette force peut être malsaine et destructrice.

Les héros de ce roman vivent et ne se plaignent pas. La plupart des gens restent consentants envers les exigences des règles sociales. Par contre, Yan-Zi ne peut plus supporter d'être toujours épiée par l'oeil maternel. Sa nausée augmente et se transforme en une révolte, en une nécessité de s'évader des contraintes imposées par sa famille ou par les gens de son entourage. Ce roman est en fait l'histoire d'une fille rebelle qui voudrait vivre hors de la matrice imposée par la société.

Alors, quel est le sort de celui qui veut être non-intégré, non-conformiste, autrement dit qui plaide pour la liberté d'être différent? La liberté du choix, est-elle possible dans un pays tel que la Chine de cette époque? Voilà l'autre problème majeur, abordé dans le roman. La réponse n'est pas simple. Entre autres, cela touche la question des sexes, plus exactement celle de l'infériorité de la femme. Est-ce que la jeune Yan-Zi comprend que sa vie est déterminée par les conventions, les moeurs de la société dont elle est issue? Evidemment que non: elle s'imagine avoir toute la liberté possible pour déjouer les exigences posées tour à tour par sa mère,

par ses amis, par le monde entier. Elle a naïvement cru qu'elle pouvait enrayer sa propre destinée et celle de sa mère. Finalement, le sort a été plus rusé et la rébellion de la jeune femme n'a été que vaine. Cette histoire soulève beaucoup de questions, tant philosophiques que métaphysiques. De plus, elle nous dépeint de près un pays éloigné.

L'image de la famille

Yan-Zi est une jeune femme timide, modeste, honnête, respectueuse, obéissante et laborieuse, tant à la maison qu'à l'extérieur, parmi ses amis ou collègues. Elle sent qu'elle doit être une fille digne de ses parents honnêtes. Dans n'importe quelle situation elle se montre prête à se soumettre à toutes leurs exigences, surtout à celles de sa mère difficile:

> Je cherchais en vain à lui [à la mère] plaire. J'essayais de me bien comporter. Je faisais le ménage. Je mangeais modérément. Je consacrais huit heures par semaine à l'apprentissage de la couture. Je sortais peu. Je fermais les yeux sur les hommes et les oreilles sur leurs affaires. Je me joignais doucement aux bavardages de mes tantes et de mes voisines. Et, avec un sourire prolongé, j'approuvais tout. Je n'avais presque pas de défauts. Une fille parfaite. Une fille digne de sa mère. (Chen 1995, 21).

Mais, tous ses efforts restent vains. La mère demeure toujours mécontente et reproche à sa fille d'être ingrate.[3] Yan-Zi trouve les raisons de cette attitude dans la douleur physique qu'elle a infligée à sa mère au cours de l'accouchement. En effet, elle est née par césarienne, et elle comprend que ce mal devait se transformer en une incurable douleur psychique.

> Mais on ne pouvait pas vraiment plaire à une mère après lui avoir fait mal en venant au monde. On ne pouvait pas réparer cette blessure trop violente du corps qui ensuite devenait celle du cœur. Maman récompensait tous mes efforts en me qualifiant de petite hypocrite. Elle croyait, et ce avec raison, que j'étais au fond exaspérée par les ouvrages féminins, gourmande, sensible aux hommes et d'esprit très critique. Déçue par toutes ces bassesses, elle me trouvait pitoyable. (Chen 1995, 21).

Mais, cette même blessure n'a pas aidé sa mère à se souvenir de l'anniversaire de sa fille unique. C'est ce que la jeune fille ne peut comprendre autrement que comme l'expression d'une extrême insensibilité, comme une punition trop sévère pour *une fille parfaite*. "J'aurais préféré naître d'une pierre ou d'une plante sans nom" (Chen 1995, 20), dit-elle, en ajoutant que la cicatrice sur le ventre maternel rappelle à la fille à qui elle appartient.

[3] L'une des interprétations possibles du titre du roman est qu'il s'agit de l'ingratitude de la fille envers sa mère qui lui a donné la vie.

> [...] La ligne foncée sur ce ventre étranger me criait en pleine figure: Tu ne peux pas m'échapper, c'est moi qui t'ai formée, ton corps et ton esprit, avec ma chair et mon sang – tu es à moi, entièrement à moi! (Chen 1995, 20).

La fille, donc, appartient *entièrement* à sa mère, celle qui est dans la culture patriarcale la figure centrale de la maison. C'est pourquoi la focalisation du récit est dans cette relation mère-fille, et c'est pourquoi le conflit entre elles est tellement lourd.

La mère de Yan-Zi a une forte personnalité, elle est correcte et morale, mais envers sa fille elle est sévère et impitoyable. Elle est loin d'être une mère sensible, pleine de tendresse et d'amour, ce que la jeune fille désire, on peut même dire rêve durant toute sa vie. La mère néanmoins aime sa fille, mais d'une manière retenue. Yan-Zi souligne que l'amour était la dernière chose à laquelle sa mère croyait (Chen 1995, 12). Ses émotions sont toujours réduites au minimum, elle ne rit même jamais devant sa fille. C'est une mère qui ne sait que donner des leçons ou administrer des châtiments. D'ailleurs, le rôle d'une mère n'est pas de gâter son enfant, mais de lui donner une bonne éducation de maison et d'être autoritaire, puisque, comme disait la mère, l'autorité est le garant d'une bonne éducation (Chen 1995, 26). La mère de Yan-Zi s'est toute consacrée à son rôle de chienne gardienne du seuil de la maison et surtout du nom de la famille. C'est pourquoi elle épie chaque pas de sa fille, et particulièrement depuis le moment où elle a remarqué ses regards et commentaires rebelles.

La femme dans la société orientale est d'esprit docile et ne doit pas trop penser. L'ignorance est une qualité chez ces femmes, remarque la fille avec ironie, en citant Kong-Zi, le père du féodalisme, dont elle se moque à plusieurs reprises. La femme aspire à se marier avec un homme convenable, pas forcément riche, mais qui possède des qualités morales. On voit dans ce roman que la mère cherche un tel homme pour sa fille. Mais, la mère est autoritaire et son opinion est la seule qui compte. "Les jugements de maman équivalaient à des décisions" (Chen 1995, 49), remarque Yan-Zi, à qui il ne reste rien d'autre que de se soumettre. Le mariage, c'est un contrat entre deux familles, comme cela a été le cas pour les parents de Yan-Zi, et l'amour n'y est pas obligatoire. La fille constate que l'amour entre ses parents n'existe pas. Voilà encore une chose qui désespère la jeune fille. Elle imaginait une vie conjugale basée sur l'amour, et cela tranche avec la réalité. Yan-Zi aime Hong-Qi, son collègue de l'université, et elle imagine se marier avec lui. Mais, pour la mère de Yan-Zi, il n'est qu'un "nouveau venu dans [leur] ville, un ridicule étranger malgré le glorieux passé de son père, un provincial dont les pieds sentaient encore la terre" (Chen 1995, 43). Seul Chun, d'après les jugements de la mère, "possédait juste assez de qualités et de défauts pour devenir un mari ordinaire" (Chen 1995, 51), mais la fille ne supporte pas son attitude possessive envers elle, et d'ailleurs elle a d'autres projets pour l'avenir.

La mère, gardienne de la morale de la maison, se montre furieuse lorsqu'elle apprend que Yan-Zi a violé une loi non prescrite, selon laquelle une fille doit se

marier vierge. Encore célibataire, Yan-Zi s'est lancée dans l'aventure de l'amour charnel (avec le fiancé de sa collègue!). De cette manière, elle s'est compromise et a scellé son avenir: désormais elle ne pourra jamais faire un mariage de convenance. De même qu'elle a souillé son nom, elle a souillé celui de sa famille. C'est le comble de la discordance mère-fille:

> Ton bonheur a chuté avec ta morale. […] Devant toi, et aussi devant moi, les chemins sont coupés, l'abîme s'est creusé, le vide s'est installé, et tu reviens me dire en souriant: Ça y est, la chose est faite! Oui, la chose est faite. Ta mort est faite, ma pauvre. Tu vivras comme une morte. Mon cœur aussi est mort. (Chen 1995, 88).

Mais, cela n'est qu'une partie du projet de vengeance de la fille envers sa mère tyrannique. Depuis un certain temps la fille pense à se suicider, tant moralement que physiquement, pour châtier sa mère, pour soulever en elle non pas la haine, mais une douleur profonde, un sentiment dont on ne guérit pas facilement.

> Je brûlais d'envie de voir maman souffrir à la vue de mon cadavre. Souffrir jusqu'à vomir son sang. Une douleur inconsolable. La vie coulerait entre ses doigts et sa descendance lui échapperait. [...] Elle n'aurait plus d'enfant. Sa fille unique s'envolerait loin d'elle ainsi qu'un coup de vent mortel croise un arbre en le secouant, mais sans s'arrêter, impitoyable. (Chen 1995, 18).

Et elle réussit dans son projet. La mère souffre et se reproche de ne pas avoir été assez attentive:

> C'est un peu de ma faute. Si j'avais fait plus attention à ces hypocrites autour de toi, si j'avais surveillé de plus près tes sorties. J'aurais dû deviner tes tendances malheureuses depuis longtemps. (Chen 1995, 88).

La fille soumise devient donc la fille indocile. Elle a senti le besoin de s'arracher à sa *mère-araignée*. Ce besoin de liberté totale et d'esprit critique, dont la fille témoigne tout au long de l'histoire et que sa mère lui reproche avec violence, n'appartient point à l'image de la fille issue de la famille traditionnelle. C'est dans le caractère de l'héroïne que nous lisons l'esprit anticonformiste, celui des générations nouvelles de la Chine moderne, celle qui reçoit de plus en plus l'influence des pays occidentaux.

Dans la famille traditionnelle chinoise la figure du père représente l'autorité incontestable. Ici, le père est un professeur d'université, qui se retire dans le silence de sa chambre pour se plonger dans ses livres. Il est plus intéressé à ce qui se passe au Viêt-nam ou en Yougoslavie qu'à ce qui est servi à table. Il ne s'occupe ni du ménage, ni des courses, ni des invités ni même de l'éducation de sa fille. Il s'occupe du monde extérieur, de la politique mondiale, et dans sa maison, il se contente d'être un figurant, de rester muet. Ce n'est pas un mari exemplaire, mais il est tout de même très important pour sa fille. Pour elle, il est une pierre précieuse,

un diamant, elle l'aime et l'admire, mais toujours de loin. Lorsqu'elle lui donne une tasse de thé, elle le fait avec une discrétion complète, pour ne pas le déranger, mais ses mains ne peuvent s'empêcher de trembler, parce qu'elle sent qu'il est un homme exceptionnel, un homme à grandes valeurs et à grande renommée. Elle ne lui reproche jamais son silence, ni la fureur dont il a fait preuve à son égard, à l'égard de sa fille unique, lorsqu'il a appris qu'elle a connu l'amour charnel, parce que son *papa*, comme elle l'appelle, a toujours raison. La fille justifie tout ce que son père fait, ou ne fait pas (après l'accident de voiture qui a bouleversé sa vie). Elle même cherche à justifier sa main indifférente, celle qui n'a jamais su caresser sa fille, en disant qu'il est un intellectuel, or donc insensible.

La figure de la grand-mère ici est d'une importance considérable. Elle élargit l'image de la famille traditionnelle. On voit le rapport typique entre elle et sa belle-fille. Elles se détestent l'une l'autre. Yan-Zi remarque ironiquement que la source de leur antagonisme réside dans la qualité de leurs cheveux. La grand-mère, étant très belle, tient au fait que la féminité se base sur sa toison longue et soignée qui est d'ailleurs le reflet de ses valeurs personnelles, or, son fils a épousé une femme aux cheveux courts, donc sans qualités. En revanche, la belle-fille méprise sa belle-mère, puisque les cheveux trop longs doivent être en disproportion avec la raison. Elles ne se comprennent pas bien et elles ont toujours des opinions différentes. Ne partageant ni les mêmes convictions ni les mêmes goûts, elles se disputent même à propos du choix des vêtements destinés à la fille décédée (la grand-mère tient à des vêtements de coupe traditionnelle tandis que la mère préférerait des vêtements plus modestes), ou à propos du repas qui succédera à la crémation de la fille (la grand-mère désire un repas végétarien avec du tofu et la mère du boeuf).

Yan-Zi respectait sa grand-mère et l'aimait tendrement, d'autant plus qu'elle reprochait à sa belle-fille son comportement et ses attitudes, surtout envers sa fille.

On voit donc que l'antagonisme entre les membres de la famille se prolonge d'une génération à l'autre. C'est avec la plus jeune que la révolte va éclater, puisque les jeunes de la génération de Yan-Zi se permettent beaucoup plus de libertés. C'est le directeur de l'entreprise où travaille Yan-Zi qui reproche aux nouvelles générations d'être de plus en plus libérales et émancipées. Il remarque que la tradition chinoise, autrefois pure, est menacée par les mauvaises influences de l'Occident (Chen 1995, 88). Pourtant, c'est la réalité. On voit dans les rues des gens vêtus à la parisienne, on va au théâtre regarder *Les mains sales* de Sartre et ainsi de suite. Le pays s'ouvre petit à petit à l'Occident, et le processus d'acculturation devient inévitable. C'est la mère qui désapprouve ces nouvelles tendances, en disant qu'en réalité on vit en Chine et non en Amérique libérale, et signale que les jeunes ont malheureusement changé et se permettent trop de libertés: ils ne respectent ni leurs professeurs, ni leurs parents, ni leurs ancêtres. Elle conclut qu'en tuant son passé, on tue son avenir (Chen 1995, 20).

La mort. La liberté

La vie dans un monde qui ressemble à une cage mène vers l'aliénation. Dans ce monde l'amour devient un privilège au lieu d'être un sentiment ordinaire. Comment vivre sans amour? Yan-Zi ne voit qu'une issue. Se sentant mal-aimée, étouffée, désespérée, elle cherche à se venger de sa mère tyrannique. Sa nausée se transforme donc en révolte. Pour elle, il s'agit de *tout ou rien*. Cette idée camusienne d'après laquelle "nous nous révoltons, donc nous sommes", remplit les derniers jours de la jeune fille qui ne pense qu'à sa rancune. Elle a risqué de perdre son être moral et par la suite elle est prête à perdre son être physique. Elle pense à engloutir une grande quantité de somnifères. Mais, le destin va la surprendre une dernière fois en brisant ses projets: sa vie se termine dans un accident de voiture, donc par la mort physique, cette issue tellement désirée, mais cette mort accidentelle vient contrarier la fille dans son dessein de punir sa mère, de lui donner, une fois pour toutes, une leçon de morale. La fille était obsédée par le suicide qui soulèverait chez sa mère, en tant que parent, un sentiment d'échec total ou au moins un remords et une souffrance maternelle des plus profondes, en tout cas un châtiment cruel. Par contre, la mort sous les pneus d'un camion – symboliquement au Boulevard de la liberté – ne fera que provoquer la pitié des gens envers la pauvre mère. La lettre d'adieu – où la fille confie son amour envers sa mère – jetée à la poubelle du restaurant juste avant l'accident, accomplira peut-être ses voeux, mais le sentiment de triomphe évidemment manquera.

Dans la société chinoise, le suicide, cet acte prémédité orienté contre la vie en tant que valeur suprême, est considéré comme criminel. Cette fois-ci l'accident de voiture a sauvé la fille, dans un certain sens, puisqu'elle ne sera pas jugée, encore une fois, comme ingrate et rebelle.

La fille ne désirait pas finir sa vie ratée dans sa chambre, dans le foyer paternel qui lui causait tant de peine, elle préférait le faire dans le restaurant nommé *Le Bonheur*, le seul endroit où elle se sentait heureuse. Le nom du restaurant, ce lieu où on ne s'arrête que pour un petit moment, est symbolique, puisque dans la vie, le bonheur se réduit à des moments isolés. Pour Yan-Zi, la mort équivaut au bonheur puisqu'elle donne la libération complète de la contrainte insupportable qu'est la tutelle maternelle, et de tous les liens du sang. Yan-Zi enviait les orphelins, disant que leur vie était beaucoup plus facile. Elle a toujours vécu comme fille de sa mère et imaginait mourir pour devenir *rien*, c'est-à-dire pour devenir définitivement elle-même. C'est pourquoi elle était tellement attirée par le néant, par le vide, par la non-existence. Finalement n'appartenir à personne, ni à ses parents insensibles, ni à Chun, qui se figurait maître de sa future épouse. Elle songeait à devenir libre comme le vent.

Terminer ses jours au restaurant, cela signifie se débarrasser des moeurs liées à la table, auxquelles sa mère tenait tellement. Yan-Zi a constaté qu'elle appartenait à une *nation maigre*. On mange de maigres repas qui sous-entendent beaucoup de légumes sans viande. On ne mange le tofu, même s'il est un mets végétarien que

lors d'occasions exceptionnelles. Quant au riz, on ne l'épargne point. La mère est convaincue que si on en laisse un peu dans son bol, on court le risque d'attirer un malheur et c'est pourquoi on s'efforce toujours de respecter cette consigne, pour éviter les réprimandes. On mange modérément, excepté lors d'un banquet où est servie de la nourriture qu'on n'a pas souvent l'occasion de manger chez soi, telle que la viande ou la soupe de tortue. Lorsque Chun donne à sa future belle-mère le ginseng, plante qui symbolise l'éternité mais qui coûte toute une fortune, Yan-Zi désespère lui reprochant de ne pas avoir donné de viande, une nourriture aussi précieuse que cette plante, mais plus utile pour leurs estomacs.

Au restaurant, Yan-Zi commande deux rouleaux de printemps, ce qui est un peu trop pour elle. Elle les avale et aussitôt a mal à l'estomac, mais elle est contente de ne plus avoir à manger à la maison:

> Je serai libre de manger beaucoup. Ou pas du tout. Je m'épargnerai le riz ce soir! À la maison, on laisse tomber le riz seulement pour les grandes occasions: les mariages, les funérailles, ou la fête du printemps. Je pourrais donc, à partir de maintenant, me donner l'illusion de vivre en tout temps de grandes occasions. (Chen 1995, 114).

La Chine, pays qui a connu une longue période de famine, garde le souvenir de ce temps-là. C'est dans ce pays qu'on se salue par *avez-vous mangé.* C'est pourquoi le thème de la nourriture est inévitablement présent dans le roman.

> La famine était une plaie saignante [...] de cette population qui n'avait emporté la victoire sur ce fléau qu'en 1978, la première année où il n'y ait pas eu de morts de faim parmi les Chinois. C'est pourquoi dans *L'ingratitude* nous trouvons des scènes au restaurant "Bonheur", où l'héroïne se gave de nourriture, comme un condamné à mort lors de son dernier repas. (Matić 2005, 152).

Et c'était vraiment son dernier repas. Elle allait bientôt mourir, mais d'une manière tout à fait inattendue.

Dans le récit, on mentionne la croyance que la vie commence ou se termine au moment déterminé par la volonté du Seigneur Nilou, le personnage imaginaire qui préside aux réincarnations. Ce déterminisme explique l'interprétation du suicide comme une expression d'irrespect envers l'ordre des choses. C'est au Seigneur Nilou, et non pas à l'homme, de dire le dernier mot, de désigner celui qui doit mourir. Par ailleurs, Yan-Zi constate que mourir jeune signifie aussi transgresser les lois divines, un acte tout aussi honteux que celui de montrer ses jambes. Quant à Yan-Zi, elle a fini ses jours au moment où le Seigneur Nilou l'a appelée, ni plus tôt, ni plus tard. Par la suite de l'histoire on apprend que sa mère a acheté un jeune oiseau et l'a mis dans une cage suspendue sous la fenêtre. La fille au nom d'oiseau n'est plus, mais un autre oiseau est là, prisonnier et soupirant après la liberté.

* * *

Notre comportement au sein de notre famille, dans les bureaux, dans les rues, pratiquement partout, témoigne de notre lien avec le milieu culturel dont nous sommes issus. Chaque pas de notre vie est preuve que nous sommes en concordance avec ce paradigme donné, celui qui fait partie intégrante de l'homme. Dans ce roman on nous révèle une culture chinoise divisée entre son visage traditionnel, c'est-à-dire conservateur, figé, dur, symboliquement représenté par la mère de Yan-Zi, et un visage libéral, ouvert aux changements, incarné par Yan-Zi. L'héroïne, qui est en même temps la narratrice, analyse le comportement de tous les personnages, y inclus le sien, tâchant de trouver et de comprendre les raisons de la sévérité et de l'incompréhension maternelles. Son objectif se restreint à cela, mais l'histoire nous donne une image plus large.

Les questions de la vie et de la mort, de l'amour et de la haine, ou de la liberté de choix et de la contrainte, tout cela s'entrelace dans le roman. L'auteure nous donne la possibilité de lire cette histoire à plusieurs niveaux, et de saisir non seulement le caractère de l'héroïne ou celui de ses proches, mais d'obtenir une image plus ample, celle de la société chinoise de l'époque d'après la mort de Mao Zedong. On y explore les rapports entre les membres de la famille ou entre les collègues, puis la question de l'amour et du mariage, la position de la femme dans la société, ses obligations, les coutumes concernant la nourriture et ainsi de suite jusqu'à la question de la mort et du suicide qui mène par la suite à la question de l'essence de la vie.

D'un côté, l'histoire de Yan-Zi est ordinaire, parce qu'il s'agit d'une fille qui appartient à une famille moyenne, et, d'un autre côté, son histoire est fortement intime, personnelle et hors de toute universalité. C'est avec virtuosité que la romancière nous présente une histoire fortement tragique et humaine, aussi particulière que générale.

La nausée, accumulée dans la poitrine de l'héroïne, grandit et se transforme en soulèvement, en besoin de s'évader physiquement d'une lourde quotidienneté. En cela consiste l'universalité de l'histoire[4], et la question de l'identité personnelle ici se rapproche de celle de l'interculturalité. Mais, l'ambiance culturelle dont l'héroïne est issue est sans aucun doute chinoise, donc très particulière.

[4] La romancière utilise un procédé très proche de celui que Roger Caillois appelle la *révolution sociologique*, ce qui veut dire "la démarche de l'esprit qui consiste à se feindre à la société où l'on vit, à la regarder **du dehors et comme si on la voyait pour la première fois**" (Lagarde et Michard, 1988, 79). Ce procédé favori des écrivains et philosophes français du XVIIIe siècle, tels que Montesquieu ou Voltaire, ici n'a pas le but de comparer un pays imaginaire au pays dont on est issu en réalité, mais il a une autre valeur: la romancière veut se détacher de toute subjectivité, vu le fait que c'est un roman intimiste, écrit sous forme de confessions, forme qui représente la forme la plus subjective. Elle veut assurer une certaine autorité aux propos de l'héroïne-narratrice, obtenir l'impression que le *je* du récit n'est pas seulement la voix de l'héroïne, mais aussi la voix de l'auteure omniprésente, ce qui devient évident vers la fin du roman, quand la narratrice, Yan-Zi étant morte, poursuit son récit avec les autres protagonistes.

Dès son arrivée au Québec, l'auteure de ce roman est devenue consciente de la difficulté d'abandonner un paradigme culturel accepté dès l'enfance malgré la volonté ou la nécessité de se déraciner et de se replanter aussitôt dans un autre sol. C'est pourquoi elle cherche ce qui est essentiel en nous et trouve finalement que nous portons en nous-mêmes toute une gamme de traits culturels, tout un système invariable qui fait notre identité. Ying Chen se demande si c'est possible de négliger ou de nier ce fait personnel, cette base de chaque être humain. Au fur et à mesure de la lecture, nous découvrons que cette question est aussi sensible que complexe: notre identité personnelle est toujours liée à notre identité culturelle. Chaque changement de l'un de ces deux systèmes a une conséquence intimement liée à l'intégrité de la personne. Il en va de même avec les plantes et leurs racines, ou avec les oiseaux et leurs ailes. Dans *L'Ingratitude*, une fille, portant le nom d'un oiseau, a cherché à s'envoler, décoller du sol, mais elle avait déjà perdu ses ailes sur la piste.

Ying Chen explore son être intime, son code chinois, et le transpose dans ses romans. Son écriture est imprégnée de philosophie: elle aborde les questions de l'existence, de l'essence. Justement cette universalité des sujets traités fait de ses romans de petites fêtes pour le lecteur.

Ce roman, qui se base sur l'interprétation minutieuse de la société et de l'individu, témoigne de la diversité culturelle du continent nord-américain. Il émeut le lecteur, l'invite à l'introspection et le pousse à réfléchir sur la condition humaine. C'est pour cela que nous avons l'impression que l'histoire de Yan-Zi est universelle, qu'il s'agit de l'histoire de n'importe quelle jeune fille de la Chine contemporaine, ou peut-être d'un tout autre pays s'éveillant et s'arrachant au bercement du traditionalisme.

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L'espace dans les mondes possibles: la géographie des œuvres de Négovan Rajic

Depuis les années soixante, la théorie des mondes possibles, abandonnée depuis Leibniz, a connu sa résurrection avec les travaux des philosophes d'abord (Kripke, Plantinga, Hintikka), qui se sont opposés à l'idée de «one-frame world» (selon Doležel, *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*, 1998), selon laquelle le monde dit «réel» domine les mondes fictifs et est doté d'une consistance ontologique plus solide. Les représentants de la théorie des mondes possibles en littérature postulent qu'il existe «multiple-world frame», une multitude de mondes possibles, dotés d'une indépendance qu'ils ne possédaient pas jusqu'alors. Selon cette théorie, les assertions portant sur les entités des mondes fictionnels sont aussi vraies ou fausses que dans ce qui est appelé couramment «monde réel». Les mondes possibles possèdent alors une autonomie ontologique totale et représentent eux-mêmes la réalité complète. (Cette théorie offre ainsi une explication philosophique à la création littéraire.) Parmi les autres mondes possibles, figurent les mondes fictionnels comme artefacts produits par les activités esthétiques: compositions poétiques et musicales, mythologie et narration, peinture et sculpture, théâtre et danse, cinéma et télévision, et autres. Etant construits par les systèmes sémiotiques, ils peuvent être perçus comme objets sémiotiques.

Comment l'œuvre de Négovan Rajic pourrait-elle être interprétée à partir des positions de cette théorie? Les mondes narratifs qu'il crée sont souvent bizarres et ainsi très proches de ce que Doležel appelle «mythe moderne» chez Kafka (1998, 2004). De plus, comme dirait Ruth Ronen (*Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, 1994), la théorie des mondes possibles justifie l'intérêt porté sur les problèmes de références et de tout ce qui concerne la relation entre la littérature et le monde réel, ce qui est primordial dans cette œuvre dotée de références doubles (voir Novaković, 2004). L'interférence des mondes est présente aussi dans les références qui portent sur l'art, élément très important dans la prose rajicienne (Jérôme Bosch dans *Les Hommes-taupes* ; son tableau auquel Rajic renvoie le plus souvent dans ce roman est le «Déluge», visiblement peu peuplé, tout comme les mondes fictifs rajiciens). Son langage offre aussi une double perspective avec les traductions littérales des locutions serbes en français (Novaković 2005) ou par les mots spécifiques qu'il emploie (Matić 2002). Dans la présente communication, nous essaierons d'abor-

der l'œuvre de Rajic d'abord en admettant que ses mondes narratifs représentent une entité ontologique autonome, de les considérer du point de vue de la saturation (Doležel, Ronen) et ainsi dégager les différences qui en découlent, surtout par rapport aux coordonnées qu'il donne à ses mondes imaginaires. Nous analyserons son conte «Trois rêves» et les différentes valeurs que Rajic y attribue à l'espace, ainsi que la signification de ces valeurs selon la théorie des mondes possibles.

Bien que tous les mondes fictionnels soient partiels et incomplets, la plupart des œuvres de Rajic sont visiblement dépourvues de personnages, et pourraient être interprétés d'une manière proche de ce que Doležel appelle «one-person world», dans la mesure où il y a dans le récit visiblement peu d'interaction entre le protagoniste et les autres personnages, d'ailleurs peu nombreux. Le personnage au centre de ce monde fictionnel se trouve dans un état psychologique qui diffère légèrement de ce qui est normal: les personnages principaux soit rêvent ou sont malades («Trois rêves»), soit se trouvent dans un état d'angoisse qui se rapproche de ce qui est couramment reconnu comme une maladie mentale (*Les Hommes-taupes*). Le monde référentiel de l'œuvre (selon la terminologie de Marie-Laure Ryan, 1997) est encore difficile à dégager étant donné que le lecteur - en tant que déchiffreur sémiotique - ne dispose pas d'un cadre référentiel solide (Rajic intervient souvent en introduisant les préfaces ou postfaces qui ainsi brouillent les pistes). Dans ces mondes se produit un effet bizarre qui est paradoxalement vu comme normal, et le monde narratif de Rajic est ainsi proche des mondes hybrides (Doležel 1998, 2004). Les mondes narratifs rajiciens sont fréquemment teints d'une nuance d'oppression qui peut être comprise comme une donnée provenant de la nature de ces mondes. L'œuvre de Rajic résiste cependant devant chaque interprétation rigide, grâce au cadre ambigu dans lequel elle est située, et l'interpénétration des mondes est presque toujours présente dans ses ouvrages.

Les coordonnées spatio-temporelles qu'il crée ne pourraient plus corroborer ce point de vue. Rajic souvent évite de situer précisément ses œuvres dans le temps et l'espace (dans une interview l'auteur explique qu'il prétend ainsi au caractère universel de ses ouvrages). Dans ce cadre nous dégagerons deux types de productions narratives créées par Rajic. D'un côté se trouvent les ouvrages plutôt saturés par les informations que l'on pourrait en dégager, y compris les informations précises portant sur l'espace, et de l'autre, ceux qui sont plutôt dépouillés des informations et dans lesquels les références spatio-temporelles, tout en y existant, ne sont pas fixées. (La saturation est interprétée dans la théorie des mondes possibles en fonction de la «texture» de l'œuvre, qui est à son tour difficile à définir, mais dont les lacunes sont perçues de la part du lecteur.) Cependant, dans les deux types d'ouvrages, les notions géographiques portant sur un référent réel sont souvent traduites littéralement, et ainsi deviennent presque oniriques ; la solidité du référent est ainsi évidemment mise en question.

Commençons par son roman autobiographique *Vers l'autre rive. Adieu Belgrade* et les contes de guerre parus dans *Service pénitentiaire national* («Les Treize», «Le 22 juin 1941»). L'univers de ces ouvrages est fixé du point de vue spatio-temporel: nous savons quand et où se déroule l'action de ces ouvrages, et les coordonnées spatio-

temporelles du monde référentiel du texte équivalent celles du monde réel. En plus, le roman abonde en personnages présentés d'une manière détaillée (ce qui représente une qualité particulière de ce roman, vu qu'il rend hommage à l'élite culturelle et intellectuelle belgradoise d'avant-guerre) ; les contes aussi sont très réalistes. Ce ne sont pas des «one-person worlds» (quoique le roman représente une autobiographie), les interactions entre les personnages sont nombreuses à la manière de la fiction réaliste (rappelons que, selon la théorie des mondes possibles, les mondes réalistes ne jouissent pas d'un statut différent des autres mondes ; la seule différence réside dans la mesure où ils sont saturés). Pourtant ici comme dans de nombreux autres ouvrages Rajic joue avec le décalage entre une activité mimétique complète et ce qu'il nous offre: il traduit littéralement en français les noms des référents géographiques ou en offre des paraphrases (nous ne citerons que quelques exemples provenant de la prose rajicienne: la rue de la Grand-Mère Griotte, l'avenue du Général Voyageur, le parc de la Justice Géométrique, le parc des Biches, le champ des Merles). En employant ces noms pour les référents du monde réel (voir dans Pavlović 2000 et Novaković 2005), Rajic y ajoute du lyrisme qui l'éloigne d'une simple activité mimétique. L'arrière-plan de son roman est ainsi distingué, vu que le référent réel existe et un lecteur avisé le déchiffre facilement ; cependant, c'est le seul élément pour ainsi dire fantastique. Par son soin d'élaborer la carte géographique moitié réelle moitié fantastique, Rajic détache son univers d'un référent réel solide et dote son ouvrage d'une valeur universelle, ces coordonnées floues donnant une autre qualité à l'espace.

Dans de nombreux récits qui s'approchent des «mondes hybrides» (on y reviendra plus tard) et où l'on peut dégager la qualité de «one-person world», l'espace joue un rôle plus important que les autres personnages. La notion de l'espace y est élaborée ; la ville existe et est dotée d'une vie qui est davantage accentuée par l'intérêt que lui prête l'auteur en élaborant sa géographie, où persistent les noms géographiques qui d'une manière étrangement précise renvoient à Belgrade. Une fois encore, un lecteur averti déchiffre facilement ces traductions presque lyriques. Parfois il est facile de suivre sur la carte de Belgrade tous les noms des immeubles ou des rues auxquels Rajic renvoie (prenons pour exemple le conte «Trois rêves»: le protagoniste passe successivement par les rues Lomina, Balkanska, Kraljice Natalije, Terazije, traduites comme rue de la Casse, de l'Espoir, de la Reine Morte, place de la Balance, et désigne les bâtiments près desquels il passe: Grand Hôtel des Deux Tours, hôtel Métropole, restaurant «Au cor de Chasse», ce qui représente respectivement hôtel Moskva, hôtel Metropol, restaurant de Lovački Rog). Pour un lecteur qui ne connaît pas l'ancien domicile de Rajic, la carte de la ville semble être bâtie sur un espace visiblement imaginaire, et cependant très présent et richement développé dans le récit. Par ce soin de tracer la carte de l'espace où se déroule l'action et par le désir de ne pas la doter d'une consistance d'origine visiblement mimétique, Rajic produit l'effet d'un espace flottant, non-fixé sur les coordonnées réelles (ou partiellement, pour un lecteur serbe), et pourtant solide.

Dans *Sept roses pour une boulangère*, récit également proche des mondes hybrides (vu la violation des règles de logique où un personnage demeure longtemps dans un espace clos, tout en entretenant les relations avec les autres, et étant donné

que cette situation risque de se prolonger à perpétuité), cet effet bizarre provient de l'importance que Rajic attribue à l'espace. Dans les souvenirs du personnage principal figure Paris, ville dont l'identité n'est pas difficile à discerner: l'angle du boulevard Diderot et la rue Beccaria, gare de Bellevue, rue Saint-Denis, Arc de Triomphe… L'âpreté du récit est alors due à l'effet produit par ce cadre, qui montre que le personnage principal demeure actuellement dans un espace clos et donc une situation impossible, paradoxalement vue comme acceptable. Cette situation bizarre, qui rapproche ce récit au monde hybride kafkaïen, est ainsi représentée par un espace impossible, et le récit n'aurait pas été reconnu comme tel sans cette valeur attribuée à l'espace. En plus, la boulangerie qui anime la mémoire du personnage principal n'existe plus et est substituée par la succursale d'une banque: le monde du passé n'existe plus, tout en étant très présent dans la mémoire du protagoniste. Le présent du protagoniste est donc un espace impossible, et son passé a disparu et a été remplacé par les autres mondes. De cette manière les mondes sont sujets à l'oblitération, et relativisés ; la relation entre le narrateur à la première personne et les autres mondes est fragile, et dépend largement de son choix. Le personnage au centre de l'intérêt dirige le fil du récit: c'est par son monde que l'on mesure l'intérêt des autres, lesquels, quoiqu'indépendants (la banque fonctionnant bel et bien loin du puits où demeure le personnage principal), sont perçus comme entités remplaçables l'une par l'autre.

Outre les modèles des mondes qui sont soit quasi-réels soit presque hybrides, reste «Un Cas d'ubiquité», conte fantastique dans le recueil *Service pénitentiaire national*, où se provoque une mystification effectuée uniquement sur le jeu de miroir, notamment des coordonnées de droite et de gauche. Les deux brasseries, l'une vis-à-vis de l'autre, sont accessibles de deux côtés en même temps: on entre dans celle de gauche et on pénètre ainsi à la fois dans celle de droite. L'explication de cet effet miraculeux est réelle pour les autres personnages, qui en sont amusés étant donné qu'il s'agit d'une attraction touristique, alors que le protagoniste plonge dans un drôle d'état psychologique et en devient presque malade.

Dans le conte de «Trois rêves», publié dans le recueil *Propos d'un vieux radoteur*, l'espace est doté de plusieurs valeurs. Nouvelle typiquement rajicienne, cette œuvre offre l'image d'un «vieux garçon» solitaire, habitant une grande ville, peu satisfait de sa vie, peu content de son emploi, manquant d'amis intimes (en un mot, se sentant «futile»), accablé également par la dictature qu'il perçoit comme un état anormal, contrairement aux autres personnages qui semblent indifférents à la situation politique. Ce conte est pour la plupart focalisé sur ce personnage non-nommé, narrateur à la troisième personne. Cependant, deux fois dans le texte le récit n'est plus focalisé: la narration devient objective lorsqu'on s'inquiète sur la santé du personnage principal (ce qui légitimerait une explication réaliste d'événements bizarres), et à la fin du conte, où on assiste à un dédoublement des mondes: la dame au landau figurant à la fois dans le monde bizarre du protagoniste et dans le monde réel, les événements bizarres ne sont donc nullement impossibles dans le monde réel. Dans les contes de Kafka ce mélange des éléments naturels et surnaturels est interprété par Doležel comme le monde hybride,

où les événements bizarres sont perçus comme normaux, le monde naturel et le monde surnaturel y coexistant en même temps, ce qui n'est pas perçu comme impossible ou improbable. Le réel et le bizarre se mêlent dans la prose rajicienne d'une manière difficile à interpréter à partir d'une seule position ; les bizarreries sont parfois explicables par l'épuisement mental des protagonistes, cependant, cette explication est souvent dominée par un autre élément bizarre qui l'emporte, et le lecteur ne saurait décider s'il s'agit d'un univers réel ou fantastique. Les impossibilités qui réapparaissent semblent faire partie intégrale de ces mondes fictifs (tout comme chez Kafka), cependant, Rajic donne cette explication aux bords du texte, au début ou à la fin, le récit ayant ainsi une autonomie partielle. Le paradoxe du puits dans *Sept roses pour une boulangère* ou la double réalité de «Trois rêves» semblent fixer ce texte dans un univers où les règles de la logique de notre monde ne sont plus valables. Symétriquement, la préface et la postface des *Hommes-taupes* semblent donner un point de vue fondé dans la réalité normale (toutefois, le temps et l'espace où se déroule l'action et auquel appartient l'auteur du péritexte restent un mystère). La plus grande partie du texte peut-être interprétée ainsi doublement lors de la lecture, mais pas d'une manière cohérente, ce qui est le cas des mondes hybrides kafkaïens. En plus, les paradoxes rajiciens sont très souvent liés aux problèmes de son pays d'origine, et un lecteur connaissant son arrière-plan comprend ces dédoublements d'une manière spécifique.

Le personnage principal de ce conte est souvent nommé le «sous-locataire». L'unique nom qu'il porte est donc lié étroitement à l'espace et à son état non-fixé, passager (parmi le peu de personnages qui figurent dans ce récit se trouve sa logeuse, donc, un des rares rapports qu'il entretient avec les autres dépend de sa situation vis-à-vis de son espace familier, habitable). La vie du personnage principal est ainsi étroitement liée à son statut d'individu non-situé d'une manière durable. Il flotte, tout comme dans ces rêves. Une de ses premières inquiétudes dans ce conte est produite effectivement par l'espace. Le jour même où il décide de profiter pleinement de son temps libre dehors il ne peut ne pas remarquer une étrange disposition de l'espace duquel il jouit:

> C'était curieux, pensa-t-il, le parc se trouvait entre l'orphelinat et le cimetière des brigands. Pendant quelques instants, il chercha une signification particulière à cette ordonnance des lieux, mais il n'en trouva aucune. De toute évidence, il s'agissait d'un simple hasard. (Rajic 1982, 154)

Le sous-locataire est ainsi invité à réfléchir sur le contraste qui s'opère entre un paysage clairement idyllique et le lieu maccabre par lequel il avoue avoir été fasciné. Une autre appréhension presque simultanée est liée au danger réel émanant d'un jeu des jeunes qui risquaient de se faire emporter par l'eau qui coulait vers le barrage. Le danger n'y est pas figuré autrement que par l'espace: on risque de se faire oblitérer par une force qui est primordialement spatiale. Plus tard, on découvre que les jeunes filles par lesquelles il avait été attiré en tant que jeune se trouvaient dans un espace plus ou moins éloigné du monde quotidien du protagoniste, à savoir une jeune fille aperçue à travers une fenêtre d'une villa ou la

sœur d'un de ses amis lors d'une promenade. Ces autres personnages humains, avec lesquels il voulait se lier, étaient loin, dans un espace fermé ou provisoire, et l'impossibilité de ces liaisons est ainsi accentuée davantage par l'espace (et ainsi le monde) éloigné du monde du protagoniste. Dans le conte, le temps se fait espace aussi: de vieux journaux déposés depuis des années sous le lit du protagoniste sont redécouverts et offrent une possibilité de passer en revue les mondes disparus avec le temps. L'intérêt étrange du sous-locataire pour les obituaires n'est pas inspiré par une curiosité morbide mais plutôt par une prise de conscience de la fragilité et de l'état passager des mondes, remplaçables l'un par l'autre: la disparition est atténuée par l'existence postérieure solidement fondé et palpable dans ces vieux journaux. En outre, le journal par lequel il couvre son visage afin de plonger dans le sommeil est l'élément qui le mène au rêve qui changera sa vie. Sous ces mondes disparus mais solidement présents, il plonge dans une rêverie, en sachant qu'il allait «remonter dans un autre monde aux lignes floues.» L'espace y joue un double rôle: d'un côté, l'intérêt du protagoniste est clairement attiré par l'espace qui l'entoure plutôt que par les personnages, et de l'autre, les figurations manifestes représentent les mondes absents mais dans lesquels on pourrait s'introduire et ainsi les ressusciter, en oblitérant la prédominance du monde actuel. Le «one-person world» est ainsi consciemment et même confortablement situé entre les mondes, portant en conscience l'idée d'un choix libre entre eux. Si le protagoniste quitte l'hôpital, par exemple, c'est pour retrouver l'espace adoré, pour revoir un vieux platane duquel on avait fait des aquarelles. Sur une de ces aquarelles figuraient une dame au landau ; se rappelant cela, il commence à flotter (une fois encore) et est aperçu par une vraie dame au landau, qui le voit et croit voir un cerf-volant. Cette mise en abyme manifeste le dédoublement des mondes. Une explication réaliste ou purement fantastique ne suffit pas, mais on est invité à épouser le point de vue selon lequel tout est possible.

Si l'espace intime offrait ici l'idée d'un choix libre du sujet, une vraie pérégrination (introduite par le dédoublement du corps du personnage principal) dans la capitale aboutit à une maladie réelle (somatique sinon psychologique) du protagoniste. Les rues de la ville (parfois étrangement, même macabrement vides au crépuscule), les restaurants, les transports en commun, les jardins publics, l'espace public s'ouvrent au sujet qui y perd visiblement en consistance. En s'opposant à l'idée de la dictature, il se sent différent des autres, ce qui le mène à une modification progressive de son comportement et à la manifestation des troubles psychologiques. Très sensible au fossé qui sépare l'intime d'avec le public (il n'accepte pas l'idée que les lettres envoyées par le dictateur à une multitude de citoyens, imprimées et non pas écrites à la main, peuvent être personnelles), il souffre de l'exposition au monde malgré son amour et la bonne connaissance de sa ville natale. L'espace public l'engloutit. Il est ainsi dominé par la réalité (floue ici comme ailleurs ; il n'est pas étonnant que Rajic dédie cette nouvelle, imprégnée d'éléments fantastiques, à la mémoire de Roger Caillois). Le monde construit autour d'un personnage, confronté à la réalité, se montre faible et insoutenable. Le monde qui l'entoure, cependant, possède une vie qui est indépendante, et, malgré l'affection déclarée pour cette ville de la part du protagoniste, elle reste

un espace différent, un «ailleurs». Les autres la peuplent et se sont parfaitement adaptés à ses règles, mais le protagoniste n'arrive pas à réunir son propre monde à celui qui l'entoure ; les éléments fantastiques, dépendant de l'état psychologique du personnage principal, y ajoutent une nouvelle incertitude, celle qui sape l'autorité du référent bien accepté de la part du lecteur, à savoir un personnage idéologiquement proche du lecteur (qui s'oppose lui-aussi à la dictature), avec la focalisation interne. Le monde référentiel du texte est ainsi difficile à dégager, flottant entre un monde très étroit pivotant autour du protagoniste, vivement marqué des troubles psychologiques, et celui de la ville, où les absurdités de la dictature passent pour des événements normaux. Un lecteur modèle ne saurait de quel côté pencher.

De cette manière, les mondes fictifs créés par Rajic abondent en détails qui éloignent le lecteur de l'intérêt porté uniquement sur le développement de l'action. L'action y stagne souvent, se développant d'une manière trop rigide pour être intéressante, et l'intérêt est alors concentré sur les observations et les analyses présentées par le personnage principal, très souvent isolé vis-à-vis des autres. Une cloison étanche sépare souvent le narrateur du monde qu'il habite, soit réelle, soit psychologique. Le monde psychologique du narrateur est alors enrichi de détails paraissant neutres et immobiles, mais dotés d'une valeur nostalgique. Cette couche émotive est liée largement à l'espace décrit: le narrateur connaît bien la ville qu'il habite, et l'aime bien, ce qui est visible par les rues dont il cite les noms le plus souvent possible. Si le narrateur y prête une attention spécifique, il ne se perçoit pas lui-même comme tel: les personnages rajiciens ne se perçoivent pas comme particulièrement intéressés pour les détails portant sur l'espace. Pourtant, l'œuvre rajicienne ne foisonne pas en portraits physiques des autres personnages, par exemple ; c'est l'espace environnant qui prévaut discrètement mais de façon évidente. Cet espace, qui est pour l'auteur le lieu contenant des souvenirs capitaux, caché sous la couche épaisse du temps et de la distance qui le séparent de son pays natal (Rajic ayant quitté le Serbie depuis très longtemps), représente pour ces personnages un lieu d'amortissement contre l'atrocité et l'hypocrisie du monde réel, auquel on se heurte d'une manière pénible (quoique l'auteur ait pris soin de réduire les descriptions des réactions émotionnelles normales de ses personnages au strict minimum).

Riche et intelligemment bâtie sur plusieurs références autobiographiques, culturelles, historiques et intertextuelles, imbue de fantastique, l'œuvre rajicienne invite à la réflexion sur la qualité ontologique des mondes narratifs. D'un côté, ces ouvrages semblent être bizarrement et parfois même caricaturalement dépourvus de détails, tout en offrant une explication provenant du monde réel, déchiffrable (notamment en ce qui concerne la dictature) même aux lecteurs qui ne connaissent pas trop l'origine de Rajic. De l'autre, ils possèdent une solidité indéniable. Par ce soin de mélanger le bizarre au réel, l'auteur fait preuve de ce qu'il appelle «surréalisme réel», ou, comme le dit Alexis Klimov en parlant des pièges de la distinction rationnelle entre le réel et le fantastique, «la réalité est souvent loin de se ramener à ce que nous appelons la réalité».

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Les particularités sémantiques des noms et des verbes en français québécois

Dans chaque coin du monde on parle une langue ayant ses particularités, ce qui est le cas aussi en Amérique du Nord, qui connaît plusieurs variantes du français comme, par exemple, le français acadien, le français louisianais, le français québécois. Dès qu'on met le pied sur ce vaste territoire, on peut entendre un français qui est différent de celui de France, aux niveaux phonétique, sémantique, morpho-syntaxique etc., et notre travail a pour l'objectif d'éclaircir certaines particularités sémantiques du français, dernièrement mentionné, parlé par environ six millions de Québécois. Dans cette variante du français, on trouvera des noms et des verbes qu'on peut répartir en plusieurs catégories: archaïsmes, dialectalismes, emprunts (amérindianismes et anglicismes), néologismes, provincialismes ou périphérismes.

Avant d'entamer notre sujet, et pour mieux faire comprendre ces changements linguistiques, il faudrait d'abord attirer l'attention sur quelques faits historiques ayant laissé de grandes traces sur le français québécois.

D'après de nombreux linguistes, le français québécois est issu du parler et des dialectes des colons français des XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles. Le Québec a recueilli de nombreux dialectes des colons français, qui avaient commencé à s'y installer et qui venaient de Normandie, Champagne, Bourgogne, Bretagne, Provence etc. Ceux-ci avaient une tendance commune, qui était d'unifier la langue avec celle de leurs voisins dans le but de faciliter une compréhension mutuelle. De même, il faudrait ajouter que le français était parlé par une majorité des colons paysans. À cette époque-là, même en France, on ne se servait que des dialectes, la norme n'ayant pas encore été établie.

À partir de la fin du XVIII^{e} siècle, le français parlé en France évolue différemment de celui parlé au Québec. Après la Conquête, l'anglais connaît un grand essor et son influence est remarquable sur le territoire québécois. Il ne faut pas oublier non plus le phénomène de l'industrialisation au XIX^{e} siècle qui laisse des traces sur le français québécois (variantes locales: *joual, magoua*[1]). Cette variante évolue

[1] 1. Le *magoua* est une variété régionale du français québécois basilectal parlée entre Trois-Rivières et Maskinongé.

plus facilement, généralise ou abandonne des règles. De plus, ce n'est qu'en 1965 que le Québec obtient un ministre de l'éducation, alors qu'auparavant on ne s'engageait pas du tout pour le français québécois. De nombreuses discussions vont être menées à ce propos. À ce titre, on peut mentionner l'ouvrage «Les Insolences du frère Untel», où Jean-Paul Desbiens analyse la prononciation et les variantes de la langue parlée par ses élèves et qui a suscité une grande polémique. C'est d'ailleurs de cet ouvrage là que vient le mot *joual,* une déformation du mot *cheval*, et qui a été utilisé dès lors pour désigner une forme de parler québécois. Tous ces changements ont contribué à la création d'une nouvelle variante du français, différente du français de France, et pourtant significative.

Quant aux « archaïsmes » en Amérique du Nord, il faut tenir compte du fait qu'à la suite de la conquête anglaise, le Canada est resté isolé de la mère patrie et que c'est la tradition orale qui y a été dominante pendant près de deux siècles. Une grosse majorité du Canada francophone a appris le français «par oreille» et non «par principe». C'est la raison pour laquelle aujourd'hui on peut y entendre des mots qu'on trouve rarement en France et qui ont presque disparu du français standard.

D'autre part, il est très difficile de distinguer les archaïsmes et les dialectalismes car les dialectes des provinces de France ont presque tous, plus ou moins, contribué à modifier le sens de ces archaïsmes.

Quoi qu'il en soit, durant les siècles passés, les Québécois, tout en essayant de se comprendre, ont réussi, d'une certaine façon, à unifier leur langage.

Quand on revient sur le sol français, on peut remarquer que ces archaïsmes sont bien conservés dans les écrits des auteurs anciens, et ce sont exactement les mêmes qu'on peut entendre aujourd'hui au Québec. Par exemple, tels sont les mots qu'autrefois utilisait Rabelais (XVI^{e} s.): ASSAVOIR, BOUGRINE, FOURCHER, FOURCHE, GARGOTON/GORGOTON, GRAF(F)IGNER (on trouve cet emploi chez E. Zola (XIX^{e} s.), ou encore chez M. Pagnol (XX^{e} s.).

Chez Montaigne (XVI^{e} s.), on trouve également quelques mots qu'on emploie encore au Québec: VALEUR, FAL(L)E, NOIRCEUR, PÉCUNE, PICOTE, etc. On vient de voir seulement quelques auteurs d'autrefois qui se sont servis d'archaïsmes. Pour eux, c'était l'usage contemporain, comme pour les Québécois, mais quand on se réfère au standard, à la norme française, ce n'est pas le cas.

Citons encore quelques mots de ce vieux français, utilisés en Amérique du Nord, les mots que les Français ont oubliés et qu'on trouve dans les dictionnaires de l'ancien français: ABRIER, BARBOT, BARRER, BAVASSER, BLONDE, COUVERTE, DARDER, ÉCARTER, ÉCHAPPER, MARIER, etc. Nous ne venons de faire qu'un bref aperçu sur quelques archaïsmes couramment employés au Canada et qui sont parfois considérés comme solécismes. Ils sont nombreux en québécois et il faut avoir en vue que la langue des ancêtres s'est modifiée et a évolué depuis l'époque de la colonisation. Quoi qu'il en soit, par rapport au français standard,

le français québécois représente un riche trésor et on peut dire que c'est un musée d'archives en matière d'archaïsmes.

Quand on parle des « dialectes » au Canada, il faut mentionner le fait que tous les arrivants de France, durant l'époque de la colonisation, venaient de différentes provinces. Ils parlaient tous le français, mais chacun avait apporté une variante différente selon sa provenance, son expérience de vie et son éducation. Parmi eux, il y en avait qui connaissaient le parler populaire de Paris et d'autres, qui connaissaient les parlers des régions françaises. Ces traits ont été intégrés à la langue dès les premières décennies de l'existence de la Nouvelle-France.

Au XVI^{e} siècle, les premiers colons ont tendu à unifier inconsciemment la langue pour pouvoir mieux se comprendre. Cependant, cela n'a pas duré. Le XVII^{e} siècle est une période d'interdiction des parlers locaux, et il est suivi en France de l'époque de la Révolution, qui, elle non plus, n'était pas favorable aux dialectes du Canada, vu le fait qu'elle préconisait l'unification du français aux niveaux administratif, juridique et social. Ce n'est qu'à la période du romantisme que naît une certaine curiosité pour l'exotisme ainsi que pour les parlers en voie de disparition et justement «c'est à partir de cette époque qu'on a vraiment commencé à recueillir les formes patoises et à produire des glossaires» (Poirier 1980, 61). Aujourd'hui, ces glossaires constituent un riche trésor de mots et d'expressions qui appartiennent au français d'autrefois.

Cependant, à cause de la pauvreté de la documentation, il n'est pas toujours facile de distinguer les dialectes des archaïsmes, ainsi que leur provenance. Comme on l'a déjà mentionné, les dialectes avaient laissé leurs traces, plus ou moins grandes, sur les archaïsmes. Cela s'est produit puisque, d'une part, durant la période de l'unification de la langue, une grande majorité des colons étaient attachés à leurs patois régionaux, et d'autre part, parce qu'une minorité d'entre eux étaient lettrés (Il faut noter que les mères, qui étaient souvent illettrées, avaient un grand rôle dans la transmission de la langue. En effet, ce sont elles qui s'occupaient des enfants et leur transmettaient l'éducation). Durant des décennies, ces divers dialectes se sont entremêlés et ont contribué à la création d'une nouvelle variante du français.

Parmi ces dialectes français au Canada, les plus présents sont ceux du Nord-Ouest, de l'Ouest et du Centre de la France (de Normandie, notamment de la Basse-Normandie, d'Anjou, du Berry, puis de Bretagne, de Picardie, de Bourgogne, de Poitou-Charentes, du Lyonnais, de Touraine, du Maine etc. et même de Suisse). On peut remarquer que la présence des dialectes de la France d'oïl est celle qui domine et c'est une influence qui n'est pas négligeable.

Nous allons maintenant citer quelques mots qui font partie de ce groupe qu'on appelle dialectalismes et qu'on emploie encore aujourd'hui en français québécois: (S')ADONNER, ACHALER, BORDÉE, CHAMBRANLER, CHÂSSIS, DÉBARBOUILLETTE, ENVALER, GODENDARD, GOSSER, MOUILLASSER, TRALÉE, PICOSSER, PATATE, etc.

En parlant « des emprunts », il faut revenir au fait que le premier peuple, les premiers habitants en Amérique du Nord, avec lesquels les colons venus de France ont été en contact ont été les Indiens appelés aujourd'hui Amérindiens. Les Français leur avaient donné le nom d'Indiens car ils croyaient avoir trouvé la route des Indes (c'est aussi la raison pour laquelle ils nommèrent le maïs «blé d'inde»). Bien évidemment, l'idée de se comprendre était née très vite, et les missionnaires s'étaient aussitôt mis à faire le projet d' «apprendre les langues locales pour faciliter leurs rapports avec les *Nations sauvages* » (Poirier 1980, 64).

Dès la colonisation et jusqu'à nos jours la plupart des mots ont été perdus et ceux qu'on entend encore réfèrent le plus souvent à la flore, à la faune, aux objets, ou encore aux toponymes. Les langues autochtones qui ont eu une grande influence sur le québécois font partie des langues algonquiennes (l'abénaquis, le cri, le micmac, le montagnais et l'ojibwé). «En effet, les langues algonquiennes sont les plus répandues au Canada et c'est avec des locuteurs de ces langues, surtout des Algonquins et des Montagnais, que les Français du Québec ont eu le plus de contacts» (Vézina 1997).

Quand on parle des « amérindianismes » il faut aussi tenir compte du fait que, au cours des siècles, les rapports entre les colons français et les indigènes ont diminué et que pendant ce temps-là, un grand rôle dans l'apprentissage des langues autochtones a été tenu par les coureurs de bois et les voyageurs. «[...] pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de lire, par exemple, les mémoires de Louis Fréchette, où celui-ci raconte des anecdotes sur les séjours d'Amérindiens dans la région de Lévis au milieu du XIXe siècle. Par contre, ceux qui s'occupaient de la traite des fourrures et de l'exploration du continent ont continué de fréquenter assidûment les Amérindiens jusqu'au XXe siècle. Ce qui fait que le parler des voyageurs a accueilli plus de mots indiens que le parler des *habitants*. Cet aspect de la question fait actuellement l'objet de recherches» (Vézina 1997).

Les contacts avec les Anglais ont aussi contribué au fait que certains mots d'origine amérindienne soient entrés dans la langue québécoise par l'intermédiaire de l'anglais. Quoi qu'il en soit, ce terrain n'est toujours pas exploré et à ce problème s'ajoutent aussi d'autres questions comme l'orthographie de ces mots, leur prononciation, qui sont assez instables et qui actuellement ne font pas l'objet de notre analyse.

Citons maintenant ces mots qu'on appelle amérindianismes et qu'on entend encore au Canada. Concernant le vocabulaire de la flore, on trouve des mots comme: ATOCA/ ATACA, CHICOUTAI/ CHICOUTÉ/ CHICÔTÉ, PIMBINA/ PEMBINA, etc. Dans le domaine de la faune, on trouve les amérindianismes suivants: ACHIGAN, CARCAJOU, MASKINONGÉ/ MASQUINONGÉ, OUAOUARON/ WAWARON, OUANANICHE, etc. Dans la toponymie québécoise, on trouve aussi des amérindianismes comme: CANADA, QUÉBEC, SAGUENAY, etc. Quand il s'agit des objets ou d'autres domaines de la vie quotidienne au Canada, on peut encore entendre des mots comme: BABICHE, COMÉTIQUE/ COMITIK, NIGOG/ NIGOGUE, Cependant, il y a beaucoup d'amérindianismes en français québécois qui sont venus par l'anglais. Parmi ces mots figurent: MACKINAW/

MAKINAW/ MAQUINA, MOCASSIN, MOHAWK, POW-WOW/ POWWOW, SQUAW, TOBOGGAN/ TOBOGANE/ TOBOGGANE, etc.

Après avoir vu ce répertoire des mots qu'on appelle amérindianismes, on remarquera que parmi eux il y en a qu'on peut aussi trouver sous les mêmes formes et avec les mêmes sens en français standard (*achigan, atoca, carcajou, pimbina, Canada, Québec,* etc.). De même il y en a qui sont usités seulement sur le territoire québécois (comme par exemple: *ouaouaron*) et cela s'explique par le fait que la réalité n'est pas la même pour ceux qui habitent au Québec et pour ceux qui habitent en France, d'où aussi le fait qu'en France le sens d'un mot amérindien a évolué, ou il en a obtenu un autre (*mocassin*, *toboggan*), puisqu'il est entré en français, non directement par le monde amérindien, mais par l'intermédiaire de l'anglais.

En ce qui concerne la situation linguistique au Canada, on peut dire que c'est un pays qui a deux langues officielles, l'anglais et le français, et que le français ne devient langue officielle qu'en 1969. C'est pour cette raison qu'on a plus de locuteurs anglophones (57,8 % de population) que francophones (22,1 % de population) dans ce grand pays, et qu'on sent une grande influence anglaise dans tous les domaines de la vie quotidienne.

Quand on regarde ce phénomène historiquement par rapport à la France, on peut remarquer qu'au Moyen-âge le français a eu une grande influence sur l'anglais et que c'était une langue très appréciée surtout dans les cours anglaises (Henri II, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, etc.).

Cependant, avec la colonisation et après les nombreuses guerres entre les Anglais et les Français sur le territoire de la Nouvelle-France, la situation a changé. C'est à partir du XVII^{e} siècle que ce changement a lentement commencé à se faire, plus précisément avec la conquête britannique (vers 1760). Il était très difficile de sauvegarder et de protéger le français, vu le fait qu'à cette époque-là, le Québec était une province isolée et entourée par les Anglais.

D'autre part, cette invasion s'est encore accélérée aux XIX^{e} et XX^{e} siècles avec l'industrialisation. Du point de vue actuel, on est conscient qu'on vit dans un temps de globalisation et qu'on peut sentir l'influence de l'anglais dans le monde entier. Elle est de plus en plus présente dans chaque coin du monde, dans chaque domaine de la vie quotidienne (médias, musique, films, publicités, marques, politique, économie, science, technique, etc.), et on ne peut pas facilement lui échapper.

Il faut aussi avoir en vue qu'un « francophone de l'étranger, conversant avec un Québécois, remarquera assez peu les anglicismes usuels tels [...] *fun* (plaisir) ou *bad luck* (malchance) [...] Mais que la conversation s'engage sur des sujets comme l'automobile, la mécanique ou les sources d'énergie et il lui faudra prêter attention, s'il n'est pas familier avec l'anglais, pour ne rien perdre des propos qui seront tenus » (Poirier 1980, 67).

Pour ce qui a trait au lexique, à la sémantique et aux « anglicismes », qui nous concernent dans cette étude, Claude Poirier, en se référant à J. Darbelnet, propose de faire la répartition suivante:

- anglicismes lexicaux (emprunt d'un mot anglais avec un ou plusieurs sens): BEANS, DEAL, FLAT, GAME, JOB, JOBBER, LIGHTER, etc.;
- anglicismes sémantiques (emploi d'un mot français avec un sens anglais): (S') ADRESSER, AGENDA, BRASSIÈRE, CHARGER, CONTRÔLER, OPPORTUNITÉ, etc.;
- anglicismes morphologiques (modification d'un élément du mot, sous l'influence de l'anglais): AVISEUR, CONTACTER, CUIRETTE, MAGASINAGE, SURTEMPS, TECHNICALITÉ, AMI(E) DE GARÇON /FILLE, APPEL LONGUE DISTANCE, BILLET DE SAISON, CHIEN CHAUD, LAVE-AUTO, LECTEUR DE NOUVELLES, etc.;
- anglicismes syntagmatiques (Poirier 1980, 68) ou expressions et tournures calquées sur l'anglais, auquel nous allons nous attacher aussi: ALLER EN GRÈVE, ALLER EN PROLONGATION, ÊTRE AMI(E) AVEC, ÊTRE EN AMOUR AVEC, TOMBER EN AMOUR AVEC, ÊTRE EN CHARGE DE, FAIRE UN HOMME DE SOI, etc.

On pourrait ajouter encore deux groupes d'anglicismes à cette répartition. Le premier comprend «les archaïsmes français maintenus en raison ou avec l'aide de l'anglais» (Poirier 1980, 68) qu'on appelle *anglicismes de maintien*. Tels sont les mots «breuvage» et «barbier». Ces mots sont désuets par rapport au français standard et ils désignent dans l'ordre «tout liquide que l'on boit» et «coiffeur pour hommes». On pourrait aussi les classifier parmi les archaïsmes car ils étaient employés jusqu'au XIX^{e} siècle mais c'est grâce à l'anglais qu'ils se sont conservés dans l'usage écrit et oral.

L'influence anglaise est très forte partout dans le monde entier, et aussi au Québec, où les langues française et anglaise sont en constante proximité, il est donc très difficile de garder et de protéger le lexique français. À ce problème, nous pouvons ajouter la grande distance géographique de la mère patrie. Pour échapper à ces pièges, les Québécois se réfèrent à la traduction d'un mot anglais par son équivalent français le plus général, et ici on parle déjà du deuxième groupe d'anglicismes. Tels sont des mots comme « maïs soufflé (pop-corn)», «arrêt (stop) », «fin de semaine (week-end) », «ciné-parc (drive-in)», «stationnement (parking)», etc. (Matic 1998, 22).

Nous venons de voir comment les Québécois luttent contre cette anglomanie: soit ils évitent certains mots anglais en utilisant l'équivalent français, soit ils recourent au procédé du calque qui finit par masquer l'emprunt sans pourtant l'éliminer, ou encore ils enrichissent leur français en attribuant à un mot un ou plusieurs sens anglais.

Parfois il est très difficile de dégager ces deux langues, d'identifier l'origine d'un mot, de déterminer à quelle langue un certain mot a été emprunté, parce que

durant les siècles passés le français et l'anglais se sont côtoyés sans relâche et ont changé chacun à sa manière, en s'influençant l'un l'autre.

Quand il s'agit du genre que les Québécois attribuent à des mots empruntés de l'anglais, cela varie. Dans la plupart des cas, si un mot anglais se termine par une voyelle, il est considéré comme masculin (*un aréna, un party*, etc.), cependant si le mot anglais se termine par une consonne il est considéré comme féminin (*une balloon*, *une draft, une peanut*, etc. (Meney 2003, XVI)).

À la suite de ces constatations, nous pouvons conclure que le Canada est un terrain propice au bilinguisme. De même, nous venons de voir de quels types d'anglicismes les Québécois se servent, et il faudrait avoir en vue qu'ils pourraient être parfois mal compris des Français. Cette dualité linguistique nous démontre aussi, qu'il y a là de bons et de mauvais côtés. D'abord, elle enrichit la langue, mais d'autre part, elle peut être menaçante pour l'une de ces deux langues car les gens oublient comment les utiliser correctement.

Concernant les « néologismes » au Québec, on peut constater que ce phénomène est dû au nouvel entourage que les premiers Français ont connu, les nouvelles réalités et la séparation et l'éloignement de la France. Cependant, à cause du manque de documents écrits, il est parfois très difficile de les établir avec certitude car, soit ils auraient pu exister dans un autre pays francophone (Belgique, Suisse, etc.), soit ils ont évolué, obtenu un nouveau sens. De même, parmi ces néologismes on peut en trouver certains dont l'étymologie est sujette à caution. Ces mots, dits «nouveaux», concernent différents domaines de la vie quotidienne (géographie, flore, faune, conditions climatiques, spécialités, sport, etc.), et possèdent une différente compréhension, conception de la réalité (par exemple d'un fleuve, d'un bois, etc. (Poirier 1980, 74)). Ce sont les mots comme: ACÉRICULTURE, BECSCIE, BERLINE, CARRIOLE, CASSE-CROÛTE, CENTIN, IVRESSOMÈTRE, LIQUEUR, MARCHETTE, POUDRERIE, etc.

Pour terminer cette étude nous allons encore mentionner une classification des substantifs. Il s'agit notamment des «provincialismes» ou «périphérismes», mots par lesquels Lionel Meney a appelé les termes qu'on emploie encore dans «certaines provinces françaises, en Belgique, en Suisse et au Canada», dans son *Dictionnaire Québécois-Français* (Meney 2003, p. XXI).

Leur nombre n'est pas si grand, mais il est assez important car il sert de lien entre les pays francophones et les aide aussi à réaliser une meilleure communication. Ce sont les mots comme: BEC, CASE POSTALE, CHAMBREUR, CUISINETTE, DÉJEUNER, DÎNER, HYDRANT(E), MITAINE, SOUPER, etc. Parmi ces mots on peut aussi trouver quelques formes des professions féminines (ÉCRIVAINE, PROFESSEURE, DÉPUTÉE, PROCUREURE, etc.).

Il a fallu beaucoup de temps pour que ces particularités du français québécois soient acceptées et on doit souligner que cette variante du français est passée

par une période d'insécurité langagière. Aujourd'hui, dans les dictionnaires du français standard, on peut trouver un certain nombre de ces mots qui sont cités comme particularités régionales (par ex.: *bec, mocassin, souper,* etc.). On dirait que du point de vue de l'évolution des langues, et surtout des langues en contact, le français québécois constitue une norme qui mérite d'être acceptée. Pour qu'il n'y ait pas de malentendus, et pour éviter l'incompréhension, il est important d'être conscient et d'accepter le fait que le français peut aussi exister sous des formes variées. En apprenant et en acceptant ces différences, tout francophone arrivera à une meilleure compréhension, une meilleure compétence communicative ainsi qu'un enrichissement du vocabulaire. De même, il est important de comprendre qu'une société perd beaucoup en perdant sa langue. Elle perd ses valeurs, ainsi que son droit d'exister. Il ne s'agit plus de «fautes de français», mais de ses particularités, ses originalités qui constituent un riche trésor linguistique. C'est un grand capital culturel qui s'étend bien au-delà du vocabulaire du français standard et qu'il faudrait toujours soigner et enrichir. Cette étude nous démontre aussi que la langue française d'aujourd'hui ne connaît pas de frontières. Chaque pays francophone contribue de quelque manière à sa richesse. C'est un phénomène bien puissant, en transformation constante, qui contribue à la vivacité d'un peuple et d'une culture. Le français n'est pas une langue qui appartient seulement aux Français, mais aussi à tous les autres francophones. C'est pour cette raison qu'il ne faut pas hésiter à le parler, à l'enrichir et à faire des ponts d'une variante à une autre.

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