

INTERPRETING CANADA:
NEW PERSPECTIVES FROM EUROPE

INTERPRÉTER LE CANADA :
NOUVELLES PERSPECTIVES DU CÔTÉ DE L'EUROPE

CANADIAN STUDIES IN EUROPE
ÉTUDES CANADIENNES EN EUROPE

VOLUME **10**

Published by / publié par
the European Network for Canadian Studies /
le Réseau européen d'études canadiennes
(ENCS / RÉEC)

in collaboration with

Masaryk University, Brno

1st edition, 2012

Edited by
Luigi Bruti-Liberati

Selected proceedings of the
NINETEENTH EUROPEAN SEMINAR FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS
IN CANADIAN STUDIES
Milan, Italy / 22-24 September 2010

This publication has been made possible with the aid of financial support
from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

© 2012, The European Network for Canadian Studies
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or means,
electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise,
without prior permission of the publisher and appropriate contributors.

Printed and bound by
Reprocentrum, a. s., Blansko

Cover / Couverture : Downtown / Centre-ville, Toronto

ISBN ~~978-80-210-5122~~
ISSN 1214-0562

Contents

Introduction	4
Balancing Cultures – Multicultural Canadian Children’s Literature / Grit Alter	7
Postmodernism in Leonard Cohen’s <i>Beautiful Losers</i> / Icía Álvarez Pérez	25
« Le traitement social-policier de l’immigration vulnérable. L’exemple canadien face aux défis de l’actualité espagnole » / Julián Arribas Martínez	35
Robert Kroetsch, from the Long Poem to the Sketches: For a Poetics of Process / Roberta Cadei	49
Engineering Bodies: Cyborg Takeovers in Canadian Speculative Fictions / Alba De Béjar Muñños	63
L’américanité du Québec : histoire, mythe et littérature. Sur la route du roman de la route / Linda Fasano	77
“Travel only when you must”: Remembering the Internment of German Merchant Seamen in Canada during World War II / Judith Kestler	97
Liquid Women in Margaret Atwood’s <i>The Edible Woman</i> and <i>Life before Man</i> / Catrinela Andreea Lazar	111
AlterNatives in Contemporary First Nations and Métis Narratives: preliminary considerations / Anna Mongibello	125
Margaret Atwood’s Multiple Subversions: The Question of Genre in Her Short Fiction / Emilie Péneau	137
Accommodating diversity throughout the Constitution. The elasticity of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the framework of the constitutional adjudication and of the notwithstanding clause / Maria Rosaria Radiciotti	153
A comparative perspective on hate speech regulation: the emergence of the Canadian model / Irene Spigno	169

Introduction

volume
10

This volume is a selection of the contributions to the 19th European Seminar for Graduate Students in Canadian Studies 2010 that took place in the Faculty of Linguistic and Cultural Mediation of the University of Milano, Italy, from the 22nd to the 24th of September 2010.

The Seminar was organized by the Italian Association of Canadian Studies with the intent of promoting scholarly and social exchanges among young European Canadianists.

The Seminar brought together 27 graduate researchers from Europe and 2 from Israel and Mexico to introduce and discuss their research findings on a wide range of topics relating to Canadian Studies such as linguistics, law, literature, history, women studies, cultural studies and immigration studies.

The European Network of Canadian Studies is proud of the achievements reached in the last years by a new wave of European researchers in Canadian Studies. The papers collected in this volume are an excellent example of dynamism and seriousness of purpose by European graduate students who devote their research to Canada past and present.

Introduction

Ce volume comprend une sélection des contributions du 19^{ième} Séminaire européen d'étudiants diplômés en Etudes canadiennes 2010 qui s'est tenu à la Faculté de linguistique et de médiation culturelle de l'Université de Milan en Italie, du 22 au 24 septembre 2010.

Le séminaire a été organisé par l'Association italienne des Etudes canadiennes ayant pour but de promouvoir des échanges scolaires et sociaux parmi de jeunes Canadianistes européens.

Le Séminaire a réuni vingt-sept universitaires diplômés de l'Europe et deux d'Israël et du Mexique pour introduire et discuter le fruit de leurs recherches dans une grande variété de sujets portant sur les Etudes canadiennes tels que linguistique, droit, littérature, histoire, études de femmes, études culturelles et études de l'immigration.

Le Réseau européen des Etudes canadiennes est fier des résultats atteints dans ces dernières années par une nouvelle vague de chercheurs européens dans les Etudes canadiennes. Les articles réunis dans ce volume représentent un excellent exemple du dynamisme et du sérieux de la part des étudiants diplômés européens qui consacrent leur recherche au Canada du passé et du présent.

volume
10

GRIT ALTER

WESTFAELISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITY MÜNSTER, GERMANY

Balancing Cultures – Multicultural Canadian Children’s Literature

volume
10

Abstract

This paper will provide an overview of the effect of the representation of multicultural children in literature for young readers in the US and Canada. Therefore, a look at a selection of secondary texts as well as the results of a number of surveys will serve as a background in front of which one title of the new Canadian book series “In the Same Boat” will be analyzed in detail. It will be shown that Hiromi Goto in writing *water of Possibility* meets the demands of the book series, creating authentic and fully developed characters and providing an enjoyable reading experience for all children, to a very high degree. Her main protagonist Sayuri invites the reader on an adventurous journey through Living Earth, in which she has to rescue not only her brother but also her new friends. She is empowered by Japanese mythology as well as her newly gained self-esteem and respect for other beings, be they welcoming or threatening. Her journey provides her with the necessary balance to feel at home in the new environment in the Canadian prairies to which her family recently moved.

Résumé

Ce document donnera une vue globale sur les effets de la représentation des enfants pluriculturels dans la littérature pour jeunes lecteurs aux États-Unis et au Canada. Pour ce faire le regard est posé d’abord sur un choix de textes secondaires – autant en théorie qu’en pratique – et sur les résultats de nombreuses recherches. Sur cette trame un livre de la nouvelle série “In the Same Boat” sera analysé en détail. Ce texte montre que Hiromi Goto satisfait à l’exigence des principes de la série dans son livre “*Water of Possibility*” parce qu’elle invente des figures authentiques et développées complètement. C’est pourquoi elle crée une expérience positive pendant la lecture pour les enfants de toutes cultures. Son personnage principal Sayuri invite le lecteur à un voyage aventureux à travers Living Earth. Pendant ce temps elle ne doit pas que sauver son frère, mais

aussi ses nouveaux amis et le pays Living Earth. Mais elle surmontera ce défi parce qu'elle est consolidée par la mythologie japonaise, la nouvelle assurance et le respect d'autres créatures, n'importe qu'elles soient accueillantes ou menaçantes. Le voyage lui donne l'équilibre essentiel pour enraciner dans le nouveau environnement, dans les prairies canadiennes où sa famille a déménagé récemment.

Introduction



"The third way, which is the only one I could ever use myself, consists in writing a children's story because a children's story is the best art-form for something you have to say."

(C.S. Lewis 1980, 208)

"A third child said she 'drew her yellow [haired] ... because she was good, so I wanted to make her pretty.'"

(Yeoman 1999, 438)

Above quotes draw the attention to an imbalance regarding the content and effect of children's literature. On the one hand, Lewis establishes the children's story is a piece of art that entails a high degree of expressiveness and therefore relevance; on the other there is a child who, from literary texts and the differing representation of children of European and other cultures, concludes that beauty is closely connected to having fair hair. The striking effect of San Souci's *The Talking Eggs* (1989) and the reading given by the girl in the second quote reveals the responsibility that authors of children's literature face when choosing characters for their stories and ascribing certain roles, character traits and conflicts to them. A slightly different kind of responsibility in this respect lies with teachers and librarians who should not only make wise decisions about which books shall be introduced in educational contexts but should also employ critical encounters with respect to characters and plots as well as trigger discussions about the representation of people of colour, the depiction of good and evil and the language used to describe differing powers.

Based on the aforementioned discrepancy of function and context as well as effect of stories on children, this article will offer a detailed look at multicultural literature for young readers focussing on the experiences and presentations of the multicultural characters and protagonists that are introduced in a selection of Canadian and US American literature for young readers. With reference to a selection of secondary texts,

examples from novels will be provided, which allow for a discourse and comparison to a fairly new Canadian book series that offers enjoyable reading experiences especially but not exclusively for a multicultural readership. It will be argued that although many texts that include multicultural characters and that are designed to meet the need of a multicultural readership have been published, a general move towards an establishment of positive self-images in literary texts for young readers has not been made, yet. The controversy of this move as well as examples of children's literature that goes beyond it will be discussed.

Children's Literature as a Mirror and Re-constructor of Society

The second quote above is a response by a girl in a survey conducted by Elizabeth Yeoman (1999) who analysed "the impact of textual and visual exposure on the belief system of children" (Hurley 2005, 222). In this ethnographic study, children of about 9 to 11 years of age read stories that "challenge and go beyond conventional and limiting traditional storylines about race, gender, and class through presenting unexpected characterizations, plots, outcomes, or details; for example, [...] stories where the protagonists belong to visible minorities" (Yeoman 1999, 427). For their interpretation of the texts read in class the students were expected to use their previous literary experiences.

Yeoman's most striking finding regards the students' inability to understand internalized racism (Hurley 2005, 222). Having heard a Cinderella-like tale (San Souci's *The Talking Eggs*, 1989) the children were asked to draw the main character using their knowledge of the classic *Cinderella* as well as *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (Steptoe 1987), an African Cinderella-like tale presenting a Black heroin. In her survey, Yeoman reports that the children "almost invariably drew White characters no matter what colour they were themselves" (Yeoman 1999, 437). When asking her students why they chose the respective skin colour, they answered:

- "I mostly thought she would get married and live happily ever after"
- "I imagined her dark, but I'm drawing her blonde" and
- "drew her yellow [haired]... because... she was good, so I wanted to make her pretty" (Ibid, 438)

Based on those comments, I cannot but agree with Yeoman's and Hurley's conclusion: The implication that most if not all of the children, including children of colour, see "White" as good, living happily ever after, and pretty, is disturbing (Cf. Hurley 2005,

222) and that thus the pervasive racist value system that the children have been exposed to and which they have internalized needs to be challenged.

As Saltman establishes “[t]he children’s literature of a nation [is] a microcosm of that country’s literary and socio-cultural values, beliefs, themes, and images, including those of geography, history, and identity” (Saltman 2003 in Bainbridge, Carbonaro, Green 2005, 311-2), it becomes obvious that this aforementioned system is not only reinforced by politics and economy, but also by literature available to young readers. Perry Nodelman’s estimation “whether we are conscious of it or not, illustrations always convey information, not just about what things look like, but how we should understand and what we should feel about the things depicted” (Nodelman 1993, 6) should therefore be extended to include texts in the broadest sense as well.

In respect to Canada and national children’s literature, Lewis (2001) states that the “verbal and visual aspects of Canadian books create particular representations of what it means to be Canadian” (Lewis 2001). In this context I would go one step further and emphasize that those representations also clearly state what it means not to be Canadian. In Bainbridge’s, Carbonaro’s and Green’s (2005) survey of Canadian literature read in Alberta, questions regarding the values embedded in the books Canadian children read, the representation and omission of voices, and the versions of histories, cultures and valid norms were fundamental. In view of theoretical and historical perspectives they point out that

[m]ost of the school texts available until the 1980s, as well as the Canadian children’s trade books in print at that time, projected a single voice that helped to repress any knowledge of difference. All readers were assumed to be white, Christian, and native speakers of English or French. A definite us-them tension was present “privileging one perspective and repressing all others with its particular talk on ethnicity, race and gender” (Johnston 2000). There were few references in the literature to Aboriginal Canadians, to French Canadians, and certainly not to immigrant groups other than the British.” (Bainbridge, Carbonaro, Green 2005, 314)

Referring to Heble (1997) as well as Johnston (2000), the authors further summarize that important developments in critical and cultural theory in the second half of the 20th century made it necessary to take Canada’s self-representational acts more into account. One consequence for the field of Canadian children’s literature was that multicultural perspectives were encompassed, which gave voice and later recognition to authors as well as protagonists who were marginalized before; authors and illustrators such as Paul Yee, Michael Kusugak, and George Littlechild, who “present points of view

from a diverse range of historically prevalent cultures and ethnicities, and [...] draw on more than one cultural repertoire”, are given as examples (Bainbridge, Carbonaro, Green 2005, 314). Johnston further emphasises that those authors “speak from the in-between of different cultures, always unsettling the assumptions of one culture from the perspective of another, and finding ways of being both the same as and different from the others among which they live” (Johnston 2000). Even if this development stirred a debate over issues such as the inclusion of minority cultures’ literature in the mainstream curriculum, the question of how children of colour are included in stories for young readers needs to be elaborated upon.

volume
10

Fictional and Realistic Images of Self

One of the many decisions to be made when writing about a topic that involves the discussion about social and cultural aspects is the ‘correct’ term that should be used to describe people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Deborah Davis (2009) offers a few very interesting and thought provoking insights to the usage of the term ‘minority’.

Whereas in the 1950s the *Webster's New World Dictionary* offered the explanation “a racial, religious, ethnic or political group smaller than and different from the larger, controlling group in a community, nation etc.” for ‘minority’, in the 2001 edition this was changed to a more covert: “a group differing, esp. in race, religion, or ethnic background from the majority of a population.” This definition entails the notion of “less than” and “inferior” compared to a majority which is ‘more’ of anything. Apart from the fact that history has proven that minority group members are well able to outnumber majority group members, this relationship focuses on the distribution of power, and not numbers. What do we transmit when using this terminology in reference to pupils and students in a classroom?

In order to understand this predicament of identity, prejudice and oppression, researchers have studied and reported on this phenomenon and created terms with which these groups can be described: segregated, displaced, disadvantaged, underrepresented, and at-risk. It is not only the academic field in which these terms are frequently used but also in everyday usage, newspapers, and schools. To indicate how this language usage influences children's identity, Davis asks to image a “young black boy who says ‘as a *minority* they don't expect me to succeed’ or the president of the black Student Union ‘as *minorities* we need a voice on campus’” (Davis 2009, 126, emphasis in original). Imagine an internal interpretation that says ‘As an inferior person, they

don't expect me to succeed' or 'because we are inferior, we need a voice on campus'. "This is subliminal, psychological rhetoric speaking 'as an inferior person or group' rather than a prideful statement of a positive identity, ethnicity or nationality. ... We often hear children referring to "living in a minority (inferior) neighbourhood", "shopping at minority (inferior) businesses" (Ibid). It is a language system backed up with ethnocentric perceptions of a dominant group of a society that has conditioned the dominated group to think "lesser than" and "inferior" and accept it as part of their identity, if not the defining part of their identity.

volume
10

With Davis' text in mind, I looked at secondary texts about multicultural children's literature and paid much more attention to the content of the stories that is described as such. In Bushman's and Parks' (2006) recommendations, it was striking that the contexts around which the stories of the protagonists of various ethnic backgrounds evolve are rather negative; they all entail the protagonist's desperate need to fight against discrimination and to struggle for a better life. African Americans "dialogue with therapists", have to deal with an "absent father" and "survive after the death of both their parents", are "accused killer[s]" or have to survive the "hopelessness of neighbourhood" (Bushman/Parks 2006, 195f.). Asian American narrations evolve around problems such as being 15 years old, pregnant and having to deal with the disapproval of the father, enduring "self-doubts", facing an arranged marriage with an ill boy who dies and the girl being left to support herself, or a girl who "masquerade[s] as a boy to feed herself and her family" (Bushman/Parks Haas 2006, 197ff.). These stories include broken families, physical, psychological and structural violence, and cause the 'minority' child to be (dis)placed to the bottom the social ladder.

Even though these contexts might represent 'real-life struggles'¹ to a certain extent, the question is: Don't children of colour deserve a positive reading experience? What sense of belonging are they allowed to develop? Don't they want to read stories in which 'a child like me' is a hero, without the tasks to flee from some kind of victim position? When this is rarely offered it could be assumed that those texts produce generations of people who will find it difficult to question their position within the relationship of majority and minority, dominant and dominated, power and powerless – and remain the inferior minority. Isn't it, rather, necessary to provide children with texts that do not implement stereotypes again and again only to offer a context from which the protagonists move towards a balanced identity? Bushman's and Park's article closes with

1 The term 'reality' is equally challengeable as the terms 'authentic' and "authentic reading material". Readers need to be aware of the fact that each representation of reality is a selection, a picture taken through a specific lens with a specific purpose. Therefore, fictional writing could only be realistic to a certain extent. As the novels suggested by Bushman and Park belong to the genre of realistic fiction, it is questionable which lens they used. Hence the inverted comma.

"[s]tudents need to make connections, and this is what multicultural teaching is about" (Bushman/Park 2006, 202). What kind of connections do the students make in those stories when children of colour are always presented as the victims of society? What do "white" and "coloured" readers learn from those stories? Literature for children should establish a representation of 'reality' that reflects how their society is constructed, how certain social mechanisms work. As Alsup (2010) discusses in detail, young adult literature has a magnificent influence on the readers' identity formation. Therefore it is necessary to acknowledge that the inferior victim position in which multicultural children find themselves reflected in the literature they read is not inherited by skin colour. How can children of colour define a positive self-image if not only their language but also their literature puts them into a position of inferiority and the struggler? It needs to be pointed out that it is not their ethnic background that makes them inferior per se, but rather their discursive positioning as a minority. In the novels suggested by Bushman and Park (2006), the child representatives of certain ethnic backgrounds reflect just that mechanism: their denigration in today's society. Even though those stories offer a happy ending, the focus of each story lies with the struggle, the fight, desperation and almost giving up because the dominance of the mainstream lies too heavy on them.

Because "the images used usually replicate the popular social values and moral attitudes of the times and of the culture, often without the realization that the child is unconsciously absorbing these values and attitudes from the images presented" (McKenzie 2003, 201-2) it is especially important that children get to read literature that refrains from re-establishing and implementing victim and struggler positions pre-occupied by protagonists who represent children of colour, literature that re-constructs a society that supports second-class citizenship. At the same time, educators who use those texts in their teaching contexts have to be aware of the fact that literacy instruction (or indeed any instruction) is not neutral (Bainbridge/Carbonaro/Green 2005, 313). Also Carmen Luke maintained that educators need to understand "how the public texts of everyday life construct our understanding of the world, and position persons to take up various social, political and cultural identities" (Luke 1997, 20). When characters of different ethnic and cultural background appear in children's literature it is important to develop a critical understanding of how the text positions those characters. In their study of Canadian children's literature being used in Alberta's elementary schools, Bainbridge, Carbonaro and Green found out that

[t]hirty-seven respondents (22%) believed that Canadian literature assisted students in learning Canadian culture, instilling a positive sense of self-esteem and developing a strong Canadian identity. [...] According to these 37 respondents, helping children to

understand that Canadians are different and special is an important role for Canadian children's literature. It helps students to feel that "it is ok to be Canadian." The respondents also emphasized that Canadian literature is a vehicle for fostering a sense of pride in being Canadian. (Bainbridge, Carbonaro, Green 2005, 320)

When taking into account the comments on the contexts in which multicultural characters and protagonists appear in children's and young adults' literature, it is questionable who "it is ok to be Canadian" is directed at. Who is able to instil those positive self-images and self-esteem? Who may develop a strong identity, independent of any culture?

volume
10

In The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, for Languages, the Ministry of Education explains that "The implementation of antidiscrimination principles [...] helps students strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It encourages staff and students alike to value and show respect for diversity in the school and the wider society." And further that

Learning resources [that] reflect the broad range of students' interests, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are an important aspect of an inclusive language program. In such a program, stories contain heroes and protagonists of both sexes from a wide variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. ... Teachers routinely use materials that reflect the diversity of Canadian and world cultures, including those of contemporary Aboriginal peoples, and make them available to students.

I argue that books that include stories as the ones mentioned above are not the ones that officials had in mind when putting together this demand that is also visible in curricula in Europe and the US.

In the Same Boat – Multicultural Heroes and Heroines

It was in 2001 when Coteau Books started publishing its new series "In the Same Boat" which aims at

celebrat[ing] the richness of Canada's cultural heritage and the shape of our society in the new millennium. The stories take different forms – adventures, family drama, historical fiction, even fantasy – and present information about a particular culture – its traditions, beliefs, stories, and customs – as background information to the main narrative.

This series was motivated by the desire of Coteau Books to do something about the lack of Canadian stories about particular cultural backgrounds. (Lunn, preface to series, ii)

So far the following titles have been made available:

Little Voice by Ruby Slipperjack, 2001 (Anishinaabeg)
I have been in Danger by Cheryl Foggo, 2001 (African Canadian)
Escape Plans by Sherie Posesorski, 2001 (Jewish Canadian)
The Water of Possibility by Hiromi Goto, 2001 (Japanese Canadian)
Lost in Sierra by Diana Vazquez, 2001 (Spanish Canadian)
Jason and the Wonder Horn by Linda Hutsell-Manning, 2002 (German Canadian)
Andrei and the Snow Walker by Larry Warwaruk, 2002 (Ukrainian Canadian)

volume
10

With those books children of diverse ethnic backgrounds have the chance to engage in a reading experience in which they can meet heroes who are just as diverse as them. They read stories in which a child like himself or herself is the protagonist, presented with an authentic character², not as a pure gap-filler. These books offer a response to what Janet Lunn described in the following way: “Why aren’t there any stories for us?” has been a heartfelt cry from Canadian children not descended from either French or English forebears for too long ... but there have been almost no children’s novels, no up-to-date stories with which these children might identify” (Ibid) The book series “In the Same Boat” is devoted to publishing authentic reading material that reflects the kaleidoscope of Canadian society.

In the following part the fantasy novel *The Water of Possibility* (2001) by Hiromi Goto shall be discussed in detail, providing an analyses that reveals how the author uses Japanese mythology to empower the Japanese Canadian protagonist Sayuri to balance her self, how she creates a ‘third space’ in which Sayuri is enabled to face her deepest fears³, which allows readers to escape into a parallel dimension of come-to-life Japanese mythology as well as a space for multicultural children to engage in a positive reading experience.

The story begins with Sayuri’s family moving to the small town Ganola in the Alberta prairie, “toward eternal boredom and prairie isolation” (Goto 2001, 2) which does not seem to promise any excitement for the girl. The only hope she discovers is a local swim team which has a decent reputation and a coach who pronounces her name correctly

² Cf. footnote 1.

³ As is revealed in the story, those fears regard her hesitation of facing and trusting herself and coming to terms with her own identity and personality.

without prompting, “properly rolling the ‘r’ halfway between an ‘l’ and an ‘r’” (Ibid, 46), which makes Sayuri feel welcome, although the other kids in the swim club do not seem to be as open as Coach Donovan. Although one of the girls seems to be distant towards Sayuri and has difficulty correctly pronouncing her name, this fact is explained rather with Sayuri thinking that being the “new kid was simply awful” (Ibid, 49) and is not related to her cultural background. For the swim coach her positive contribution to the swim team is important, not her cultural background. In this short episode Hiromi Goto refrains from referring to ethnicity but rather points at youngsters usually being hesitant towards newcomers, especially in the age of puberty.

Being new in Ganola, the only other people Sayuri knows are her younger brother, seven-year-old Keiji, and her parents. From Sayuri's perspective Keiji is too young to really understand how this move affects their life, and besides having asthma his habit of picking his nose does not make him an enjoyable playmate. With father Jun who is offered a job as a nurse in Ganola that he has long been waiting for and is thus the reason for the family moving there, and mother Kimi, who writes horror novels, wears crazy platform shoes and “paraded T-shirts that would be banned in any school” (Ibid, 4), Goto creates a modern family that lives a modern life where economic decisions rule over private.

Sayuri is a girl of Japanese Canadian ancestry – a fact that does not play a major role. She is not discriminated by other children, is not struggling for an identity, and does not have to cope with a broken family, as was the case in most of the multicultural novels mentioned earlier. Instead, she is caught in an adventure story, set out on a mission to save a mysterious world, Living Earth inhabited by creatures of Japanese mythology, and to save her brother; she is a girl filled with passion, courage and the need to support her new friends. In order to be successful she needs to rely on Japanese mythology, as her parents' storytelling help her fight nasty creatures. Sayuri is important because of how she behaves and because of the traits of character that she develops, not because of who she is in terms of ethnic background. In this way “multicultural literature can act as an iconoclastic force that replaces stereotypes with an understanding of the actual people who have inspired a literature and a way of life” (Maillet 2003, 51-52). In *The Water of Possibility* (2001), Hiromi Goto introduces a character who is not marginalized but offered centre stage, reversing Perry Nodelman's assertion that by “the act of speaking for the other, providing it with a voice, we silence it” (Nodelman 1992, 30). Sayuri is not only given a voice but also a heroic task that she has to solve. Thus, Goto makes Japanese Canadian culture comprehensible to the reader, reversing Nodelman again: “The final result of the silencing of the other is that we actually do make it incomprehensible to us” (Nodelman 1992, 30).

The struggles Sayuri has to face in her real life in Ganola are situated within the relationship to her brother and his habit of picking his nose, her embarrassing parents and her changing body (Goto 2001, 36-37). All of which are not culturally specific and do not present Sayuri as “other” because of her cultural background but because she begins to see herself as developing into someone “other” than her childhood self. The adventures and brave decisions she has to make in Living Earth contribute to this personal development to a large extent. For Sayuri the only aspect that counts in her life is that she loves her life in the big city (from the names of places such as her “favourite Vietnamese restaurant, the Memorial Park Library, the Lindsay Park pool” (Ibid, 1) this could be Calgary), and, being a very good athlete, her achievements as a competitive swimmer.

volume
10

Although Sayuri does not like the house the family rents because it is rundown and old, the siblings soon discover that the house is full of magic as they find a stuffed cat in one of the upstairs rooms which actually is alive and leaves through a liquid wall (Ibid, 14). The trip to eternal boredom becomes an incredible adventure when the children find out that the cellar door leads to a magical place called Living Earth, where Keiji gets lost and Sayuri needs the help of mythical figures, such as Echo, the kappa (Ibid, 93), and Machigai, the shape-shifting fox (Ibid, 100), oni (Ibid, 112), tanuki (Ibid, 128), and other creatures of Japanese folklore, to find him. It is not only the missing brother the girl has to find and rescue from the hands of Great Uncle Mischief, the power-hungry fox called the Patriarch, but she also has to save this myth-inhabited land. To be successful, she has to defeat her strongest enemy: herself. She has to find the courage to face her deepest fears and defeat a deadly enemy to make it home safe. As Sayuri struggles to battle this great evil, find her brother, and lead them both home, she finds new strength in herself and grows in wisdom. (Cf. homepage Hiromi Goto)

The space where the children are caught can be related to Homi Bhabha's concept of third space on different levels. One of which is Sayuri as an individual, as the 12-year-old whiny adolescent has to make a series of mature decisions, such as “act with dignity [...] act like a guest” (Goto 2001, 203) at a table with her worst enemy or, being imprisoned and able to flee she frees all the other prisoners as well without knowing how dangerous they might be (Ibid, 149). In the end those wise decisions turn her into a mature young woman. Losing her brother and fighting the Patriarch to get him back as well as safe Living Earth create for her a third space that “displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, [...] which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.” (Rutherford 1990, 211). This third space, as Homi Bhabha continues in the interview with Jon Rutherford, enables another position to emerge: Sayuri as a brave young girl ready to face her new life in Ganola. In order to

fully arrive in Ganola and accept her new life in the prairies, she needs to leave reality, struggle through a world of mythical figures and challenge the Patriarch, in order to fully arrive in reality again, having developed a new sense of self and having left behind some of her greatest fears.

Original Stories Balance the Self

volume
10

Sayuri and Keiji transcend their real world and are transmitted into Living Earth, a 'third space' which is populated with figures from Japanese folklore, the goblins and creatures of which the siblings so far have heard about only in Jun and Kimi's bedtime stories. To the talkative creatures like the oni and tengu, the frog-like kappa called Echo, tanuki raccoons, mischievous foxes, and a big, purple cat, Sayuri appears as a strange creature from "Earth As I Know It" as Sayuri calls the place where she is originally from. One tanuki tells her: "I have often heard tales of mythical humans, but have never cast my eyes on such a creature" (Goto 2001, 145).

Beverly Haun suggests "Canadian adolescent literature, created out of the postcolonial discourse surrounding transcendental hybridity, is a powerful tool for modelling how to actively, consciously choose to coexist in [...] diversity, creating from that diversity a national vision of cultural plurality. A third space can be created [...] a space of communication, negotiation, and translation – a space of hybridity (Homi Bhabha in Ghandi 1998, 81) (Haun 2003, 43). This estimation allows applying hybridity to the world in which Sayuri finds herself, as it is inhabited by mythical figures that are the real inhabitants of the world and it is rather Sayuri and her brother who are seen as fictional. They have been translated into a different world, in which communication and negotiation are the essential means of preventing the Patriarch from seeking the power over everyone.

Through including Japanese folkloric creatures in the plot in a very imaginative way, Hiromi Goto enables them to move from merely mentioned beings that add exotic flavour towards vivid and memorable characters who enrich a fast-moving plot. Moreover, those mythical figures, a kappa and a shape-shifting fox, combine important aspects of Japanese and Canadian culture – both of which are fundamental for Sayuri to rescue her brother and Living Earth. Only a balance of both will secure Sayuri's success.

Japanese mythology also helps Sayuri to find a balance within herself. When Sayuri cannot fall asleep, it is the Japanese story of Great Yamanba in the evergreen forest of Aso mountain (Goto 2001, 39-42) that Kimi tells her and that calms her down. In this scene, Japanese mythology serves as a means to provide comfort and ease of fear of

the unknown surroundings. The known story in the unknown house support a feeling of home in one of the first night Sayuri sleeps in the new house. It is a mythical story in a mythical place in which purple cats appear and disappear out of the blue and jump through walls that console Sayuri's discomfort. When she is in Living Earth and faces the very hungry oni, it is also a story that helps her not only to find comfort but also to avert the first attack by the oni, who rather likes the "clever birdie" (Ibid, 113) and is impressed by the heroic tales Sayuri tells herself. When the oni re-appears in the village of the tanuki (Ibid, 158) her mother's stories are supportive in that Sayuri remembers a "little manling who grew bigger with the magical double-headed mallet! Pounding on one side of the mallet made things bigger, but pounding in the other side of the mallet made things smaller" (Ibid, 159). Sayuri uses this trick to avert the second attack of the oni, she makes him smaller, reduces his hunger. As one of the main principles of the tanuki says that "[c]ruelty calls cruelty and kindness calls kindness" (Ibid, 160), the tanuki afterwards feed and welcome the oni into their village. In return, the oni later helps the tanuki to fight the Patriarch. Kindness indeed calls kindness.

When Sayuri and Keiji successfully return from their quest in Living Earth, they re-emerge through the root cellar and return to their home. This emergence shows an interesting parallel to the Yamanba in the story of Aso Mountain, in which Yamanba, who as keeper of the fires in the volcano is responsible for controlling the volcano's hunger. Because she people around the mountain know that she has a very lonely job, they honour her with a Festival of Fire. In turn, Yamanba would release the beast every few decades, because all beasts are hungry and need food. She would always call the creature back and thus control the balance of life and death around the mountain. As the people change and agree to more progress that makes life easier, they also forget to honour Yamanba; but the beast is still hungry. When the people completely forget about the keeper of fires, she is too weak, "rejoined the forest that has birthed her" (Ibid, 41) and the beast breaks free, because no one could control its hunger. Once the new city is destroyed and the people desperate, they remember the Festival of Fire and re-enacted the festival "with mourning and jubilation" (Ibid, 42). "And from beneath the soil, there was a movement. The earth heaved, shuddered, and a loud wail filled the night air. For Yamanba had been born anew." (Ibid, 42) In a similar way, Sayuri is born anew when she, together with Keiji, her newly gained wisdom and the assurance that she saved Living Earth, re-emerges from underneath the soil through the root cellar. Also Sayuri faced a form of destruction, by moving to Ganola, a hopeless place for a girl whose life belonged to the city, and rebirth, symbolized through her flight from Living Earth, including the assurance that she saved this place and her friends. Just as Yamanba's rebirth rebalances life and death around Aso Mountain, Sayuri's re-emergence

volume
10

from *Living Earth* allows her to balance her new life in Ganola. Yamanba's farewell greeting "Your life spiral will take you to many wondrous places" (Ibid, 167) thereby has manifold meanings regarding her further adventures in *Living Earth*, the quest for her brother, as well as regarding her life in "Earth As I Know It" (Ibid, 146).

When Sayuri and Keiji return home, they spend a wonderful evening with their parents, during which Sayuri asks her parents whether she could join all kinds of clubs in order to learn rock climbing and orienteering as well as yoga as both will support her strengths that keep her in balance. Also, she asks Jun to change the diet to fish-only non-meat" (Ibid, 312) out of respect for other beings (Machigai is a fox who does not eat meat and was therefore excluded from his clan). When they all sit together after dinner, Sayuri just watches everyone, "the miracle of their expressions, the emotions which played on their faces" (Ibid, 312). Sayuri is content with herself as well as with her surroundings. This feeling of content culminates in asking her mother whether she would like to sleep in her room as, this time, she wants to share stories with her. Sayuri's life spiral has taken her to a wondrous place called home.

Conclusion

This paper looked at a selection of secondary texts that deal with the representation of multicultural children in literature for young readers from the US and Canada. It was shown that although multicultural characters are included, their representation often evolves around negative contexts, in which the children of colour find themselves presented as strugglers against another dominating protagonist, they are shown in contexts in which they are discriminated against, or have to face despair, are used as gap fillers. That multicultural children inherit this position in society and re-establish this role in their surroundings is indicated with Yeoman's survey in which children of colour do not consider themselves to be beautiful, successful or facing a bright future. Those characteristics are rather attached to being white and having blond hair.

The second part introduces one title of the a book series called "In the Same Boat" which aims at providing reading experiences that allow multicultural children to find role-models in the books they read, they provide positive reading experiences that invite especially multicultural children to joyfully identify with the main protagonists. From those titles, *Water of Possibility* has been chosen as an example and been given a detailed analyses. In this novel the multicultural child is the main protagonist, filled with passion and bravery, determined to follow a quest for a greater good. Sayuri, as a representative of the protagonists in the other stories of the series, is a positive role

model and proves that multicultural children do not have to be strugglers for identity and victims of their harsh surroundings. Rather, they as heroes as well as readers deserve to have fun, adventures and wonderful experiences no matter which culture they represent or experience. It is also a story that shows children of different cultural backgrounds that both cultures they inherit are important and that remembering both ways opens up new paths and possibilities.

In *Canadian Children's Books: A Critical Guide to Authors and Illustrators* (2000) Jones and Stott pose that the “tendency of publishers large and small to issue books in which the racial or ethnic identity of the main characters is a fact, not the main theme” is most encouraging as

volume
10

such books move beyond the multicultural didacticism that made characters from minority groups important only insofar, as they could teach lessons in tolerance to readers who belonged to the majority culture. Like books about characters of European ancestry, that is, these books insist that their characters are noteworthy not simply as members of a group but as individuals with significant and interesting experiences. (Jones and Stott 2000, x)

If this assumption is true, children of all backgrounds will have the chance to discover more books such as the “In the Same Boat” series.

My intention is not to argue to close one's eyes in view of injustices people of colour have to face; also, it does not ask for colour-blindness or negate sufferings and difficulties children of colour had or have to face. Rather, it suggests that a different approach is necessary in order to provide children of multicultural backgrounds with positive self-images. However, a few questions remain open: How can a beneficial body of young adult literature for readers of diverse ethnic backgrounds be composed? What kind of stories shall be offered? Should readers find guidance and support in their personal challenges in the literature they need? How much ‘real-life struggle’ should then be presented? My suggestion is to additionally offer narratives in which all readers have the chance to be a hero or heroine in order to engage in an enjoyable reading experience, disregarding ‘real-life’ struggles. This can be done through literature that offers positive reflections of themselves, through “stories [that] can help [children] shape their sense of identity. Help them find a home in the world” (Watkins 1992, 194) as well as ensuring that “[y]our life spiral will take you to many wondrous places” (Goto 2001, 167).

Works cited

- Alsup, Janet. *Young Adult Literature and Adolescence Identity Across Cultures and Classrooms*, New York/ London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Bainbridge, Joyce, Carbonaro, Mike and Green, Nicole. "Canadian Children's Literature: An Alberta Survey". *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2005, 311- 327. Print.
- Bushman, John H. and Park Haas, Kay. *Using young Adult Literature in the English Classroom* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Person, Merrill Prentice Hall, 2006. Print.
- Davis, Deborah R. "Minorities vs. Minority Groups: How Language Defines, Defiles and Denigrates for Life". S. R. Steinberg (Ed.) *Diversity and Multiculturalism - A Reader*, New York: Peter Lang Verlag, 2009, 123-130. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*. London: Verso, 1976. Print.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. Print.
- Goto, Hiromi. *The Water of Possibility*, Regina: Coteau Books, 2001. Print.
- . "The Water of Possibility". *Homepage Hiromi Goto*. N.p., n.d.. Web. March 10, 2011, <http://www.hiromigoto.com/books/the-water-of-possibility>.
- Haun, Beverly. "The Rise of the Aboriginal Voice in Canadian Adolescent Fiction 1970-1990". Hudson, Aida and Susan-Ann Cooper (eds.) *Windows and Words - A Look at Canadian Children's Literature in English*, University of Ottawa Press, 2003, 35-48. Print.
- Heble, Ajay. "New contexts of Canadian criticism: Democracy, counterpoint, responsibility". Ajay Heble, Donna Pennee and Tim Struthers (eds.) *New Contexts of Canadian criticism*, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1997, 78-97. Print.
- Hurley, Dorothy L. "Seeing White. Children of Color and the Disney Fairy Tale Princess". *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 74, No. 3, 2005, 221-232. Print.
- Johnston, Ingrid. "Literature and Social Studies: Exploring the hyphenated spaces of Canadian Identity", in: *Canadian Social Studies*, 35(1), 2000, retrieved February 14 from www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css.
- Lewis, David. *Reading contemporary picture books: Picturing text*. New York: Falmer Press, 2001. Print.
- Luke, Carmen. "Media Literacy and cultural studies". Muspratt, Sandy, Luke, Alan and Peter Freebody (Eds.) *Constructing critical literacies: Teaching and learning textual practice*, Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1997, 19-49. Print.
- Maillet, Gregory. "A Parliament of Stories: Multiculturalism and the contemporary Children's Literature of Saskatchewan". Hudson, Aida and Cooper, Susan-Ann (Eds.) *Windows and*

- Words: A Look at Canadian Children's Literature in English*, University of Ottawa Press, 2003, 49-60. Print.
- McKenzie, Andrea. "The changing faces of Canadian children: Pictures, power and pedagogy". Hudson, Aida and Cooper, Susan-Ann (eds.), *Windows and Words: A look at Canadian Children's Literature in English*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003, 201-218. Print.
- Nodelman, Perry and Reimer, Mavis. *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 2003. Print.
- . "The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature", in Nodelman, Perry (Ed.) *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1992, 29-35. Print.
- . "The Illustrators of Munsch." *Canadian Children's Literature*, Vol. 71, 1993, 5-25. Print.
- Rutherford, Jonathan. 1990. "The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha." In Ders. (Ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, 207-221. Print.
- San Souci, Robert. *The Talking Eggs*. New York, Dial Books, 1989. Print.
- Steptoe, John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African tale*. New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard, 1987. Print.
- Yeoman, Elizabeth. "How does it get into my imagination? Elementary school children's inter-textual knowledge and gendered storylines". *Gender and Education*, Vol. 11, 1999, 427-440. Print.

ICÍAR ÁLVAREZ PÉREZ

COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY MADRID, SPAIN

Postmodernism in Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*

volume
10

Abstract

This paper engages in a study of 20th Canadian literature that takes as its point of departure philosophically inspired postmodernist theory approaches to the genealogy of the English Canadian novel. It aims at studying the impact that a central text such as Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* (1966) had on the Canadian literary scene of the sixties by questioning and analysing the use of postmodernist elements and techniques.

Cohen manages to innovate and to open new paths towards experimentalism by playing with the limits of fiction and introducing the techniques of segmentation, superimposition, and interpolation of extra-narrative elements. Intratextuality, intertextuality, and indeterminacy, along with the realms of fantasy, myth and reality, construct in *Beautiful Losers* a framework for transgression in the 1960's.

By exploring the postmodernist features that according to some critics make *Beautiful Losers* the first postmodernist Canadian novel, this paper wants to contribute to a reconsideration of the Canadian postmodern – a space for self-reflexivity, parody and irony, and the awareness of the uniqueness of the Canadian nation in which *Beautiful Losers* is written and read.

Résumé

Cet article prend comme son point de départ l'étude de la littérature canadienne du XXe siècle du point de vue de la théorie postmoderne philosophiquement inspiré dans les approches de la généalogie du roman Anglo-Canadien. Il vise à étudier l'impact d'un texte central tels que *Beautiful Losers* (1966) de Leonard Cohen a eu sur la scène littéraire canadienne des années soixante par le questionnement et l'analyse de l'utilisation d'éléments et techniques postmodernes.

Cohen parvient à innover et d'ouvrir de nouvelles voies vers l'experimentalisme en jouant avec

les limites de la fiction et l'introduction des techniques comme la segmentation, la superposition et l'interpolation des éléments extra-narratives. L'intratextualité, l'intertextualité, et l'indétermination, ainsi que la fantaisie, le mythe et la réalité, construisent dans *Beautiful Losers* une cadre pour la transgression dans les années 1960.

En explorant les caractéristiques postmodernes, le présent document veut contribuer à réexaminer la postmodernité canadienne - une espace pour l'auto-réflexivité, la parodie et l'ironie, et la prise de conscience de la unicité de la nation canadienne dans laquelle *Beautiful Losers* est écrit.

volume
10

The publication of *Beautiful Losers* in 1966 supposed a turning point in the Canadian literary scene. Cohen managed to shock audiences with an obscene, extravagant and bizarre novel that became a holy book among guru-seeking readers and counter-cultural circles. *Beautiful Losers* is a novel that does not depend on its content but on the way it is deployed; it is a mosaic of skits, aphorisms, historical times mix, voices shriek, physical settings, and constant allusions to pop culture and the contemporary scene.

When Cohen wrote *Beautiful Losers* the American modernist literature had already absorbed the narratives from Faulkner and Dos Passos. New paths towards experimentalism were opened and a challenging linguistic and sexual freedom let authors like W.S Burroughs, Pynchon or Torcchi to present new ways of writing stories in the midst of the 1960's scene: drugs, counter-cultural movements, new sexual possibilities, etc. These issues are all explored in Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*, a work perceived as an experimental monument to the sixties that "celebrates the wholeness of life, the diversity of experience, the triumph of body over mind, and freedom over slavish condition" (Thacker, 60).

This new experimentalism along with narrative techniques such as segmentation, superimposition and interpolation of extra-narrative elements, and the use of myth, fantasy and reality at the same narrative level has contributed according to some critics to make of *Beautiful Losers* the first Canadian postmodernist novel. According to B.W Powe, reading *Beautiful Losers* is "like flipping channels on a radio: the effect is hallucinative, even mesmerizing, and yet somehow inconsequential" (122). It is the aim of this paper to show how this inconsequence can be understood in the realms of a postmodernist theory.

Cohen chooses to depict his story by using multiple textual forms that make of *Beautiful Losers* an ensemble of different voices: newspapers, instructions, advertisements, poetry, letters, drama, grammar books, historical narrations, radio programmes, cinematographic moments, lists, etc. These are some of the intertextual devices that bring

indeterminacy to the text. But not only indeterminacy but the idea of a chaotic and pluralistic postmodern society. Just as Atwood, Burroughs or Pynchon, Cohen believes that intertextuality is the best way to portray a fragmented and chaotic society as the postmodern.

But the novel goes a step beyond intertextuality and equates the realms of fantasy, myth, history and everyday reality. Pop icons such as James Dean, Sophia Loren or Marilyn Monroe exist along with the protagonist triangle of the story: the narrator, F, and Edith, as well as with historical figures such as Catherine Tekawitha, a Mohawk girl who became a popular saint with her death by self-mortification in Quebec in 1680. These characters share all the same space despite historical timing differences and they all come from different traditions: Indian, Christian, Jewish, American pop and even Greek myths which stand all probably for a metaphor of what Canada represents itself, a land where different traditions meet and coexist.

Among this constellation of races and traditions, Tekawitha is the sexual and mystical obsession of the unnamed narrator of *Beautiful Losers*, who is a contemporary Canadian and constipated scholar that studies the A_s, an Indian tribe of losers with whom he identifies. His wife Edith is a Native American who belongs to the A_s and who has become a beautiful woman despite her teenage acne by means of 'F', the narrator's best-friend and lover who is an "extreme sensualist and Québécois revolutionary whose initial can stand for Friend, French, Fuck, Fantasy, Frankenstein, Flesh, Feeling, or Fraud" (Marshall, 139).

Therefore, the narrator is a dispossessed and lost scholar who is even deprived of his name. He remains nameless in the three parts of the novel and his identity is even questioned in the epilogue of *Beautiful Losers*, when an unknown and 3rd person narrator takes control of the story. On the other hand, the use of the initial 'F' to name the narrator's best friend highlights the idea of mutability and changeability, since 'F' can stand for many identities as explained above. Then like in many postmodernist texts, Cohen chooses to play with the identity of the protagonists by using mere initials or simply by not giving name to his first person narrator.

In the first part of the novel, the reader learns about the narrator's failure: his wife and best friend 'F' are dead, he shuts himself in his basement apartment and becomes obsessed with the seventeenth century story of Catherine Tekawitha, the virgin who probably represents the narrator's desire for redemption from his failed marriage. On the other hand, the figure of 'F' is mystified by the narrator; 'F' is depicted as an intelligent man who has enough originality and freedom of mind and spirit to fit all experiences into a complex system where myths and religions are tossed with contemporary advertising, comics, porn, films, etc. But this system is never coherently presented and

much of the interpretation of *Beautiful Losers* depends on the authority that the reader wants to give to 'F', whose system from one side is attractive: "We've got to learn to love appearances"; "Oh F", says the narrator, "do you think I can learn to perceive the diamonds of good amongst all the shit? - It is all diamond," answers F (10). But on the other hand, 'F's all-encompassing system presents the overwhelming contradiction of "connect nothing". F's system is finally reduced to a set of contradictions that remain a mystery for the reader. But perhaps in this mystery lies the essence of *Beautiful Losers*, into which playfulness and the exploration of new possibilities go hand in hand with postmodernist ideas.

volume
10

With the playfulness dimension of *Beautiful Losers* already introduced, the reader must go beyond the vision of unity and has to be prepared to accept fantasy and contradictions in Cohen's novel: from Hitler disguised as an Argentine waiter that bathes Edith and F. with a bar of "human soup" to a Danish Vibrator that becomes an autonomous creature. Myth, fantasy and banal reality are all blended in order to create blanks in the narration that need to be completed by the reader. These blanks get more and more indeterminate as the novel progresses, a dynamic which can easily be recognised in the structure of *Beautiful Losers*.

In part one, "The History of Them All", despite the fact that the narrator introduces different accounts in the realms of fantasy, history and reality, the reader can easily separate each category. But it does not happen the same in the second part, where in the letter that 'F' writes to his friend the narrator from the medical institution in which he is closed, the real and the fantastic get confused. Nonetheless, there is still a realistic frame in the second part that disappears in the epilogue, where an unknown and 3rd person narrator takes control of the story and freely mixes the realistic with the fantastic without limits and boundaries. This structure again stands for indetermination and confuses the reader who cannot separate fantasy from reality in the postmodernist experience of reading *Beautiful Losers*.

Looking now at the political content of *Beautiful Losers*, all the narrative techniques used by Cohen in the novel can be read in political terms. The narrator, who shuts himself away from the city of Montreal which he presumably loves, reflects frequently on the Canadian question without arriving at any conclusion or solution: "Is it because I've stumbled in the truth about Canada? I don't want to stumble on the truth about Canada" (43). Therefore, the narrator explores different possibilities but without finally committing himself to any of them.

At the same time, intertextuality and intratextuality may represent the Canadian history and politics as well, whereas the concept of superimposition of myths, history, and textual devices may be interpreted as a metaphor of the levels of oppression

that Canada has suffered throughout history: what the British impose to the French is what the Jesuits impose to the Indian tribes and what the contemporary British Canada imposes to Québec in the 1960's. Consequently, Cohen extends the experimental techniques of *Beautiful Losers* to the Canadian problematic of political repression by "re-viewing the colonial and post-colonial history through the doubled lenses of ironic defamiliarization." (Hutcheon, 81). This quotation stands for the use of irony as the device capable of articulating on one side the experimentalism and multiplicity of postmodernism, and on the other side the contradictions and dualities of the post-colonial experience. Therefore, it is through irony that the reader gets to know F's political views:

volume
10

The English did to us what we did to the Indians, and the Americans did to the English what the English did to us. I demanded revenge for everyone. I saw cities burning, I saw movies falling into blackness. I saw the maize on fire. I saw the Jesuits punished. I saw the trees taking back the long-house roofs. I saw the shy deer murdering to get their dresses back. I saw the Indians punished. I saw chaos eat the gold roof of parliament. I saw water dissolve the hoofs of drinking animals. I saw the bonfires covered with urine, and the gas stations swallowed up entire, highway after highway falling into the wild swamps (236-37).

According to F all men are victims of history, even the English-Canadians are dominated by the Americans and form part of the historical dynamic that divides groups of men into masters and slaves. In order to violate this dynamic, F proposes a universal revenge and liberation that seems unlikely of realization. Again F's system fails and his ideas or temptations to resolve his proposals are mocked by the comic tone of his actions and by the tragic fate of the characters in the novel. One example of the impossibility to reach liberation is found in one of the central episode of the novel, where politics, erotics, and emotions are all blended.

In this passage, 'F' and the narrator, while walking in the streets of Montreal, found themselves accidentally involved in a demonstration against the visit of Queen Elisabeth in 1964. The protagonists join the crowd and participate in their demands: "History! they shouted. Give us back our History! The English have stolen our History!" (126). The voice of a young film director resonates in the crowd: "History decrees that there are Losers and Winners. History cares nothing for cases, History cares only whose turn it is. I ask you, my friends, I ask you a simple question: whose Turn is it today?" (126). The narrator, stimulated by the presence of a feminine hand in his trousers, suddenly starts to shout slogans in favour of the separatists. However, the crowd begins to

disperse and the narrator is immediately recognized as an English-speaking Jew. The narrator's sexual desire is not fulfilled such as the demands of the crowd are silenced. Thus the turn of the losers never arrives and the narrator has to be rescued by F. for his condition of English-speaking Jew. But at the same time, the protesters are silenced and dispersed in order to restore public order in the streets of Montreal. This passage in which different emotional states are involved shows the sexual, political and historical frustrations that prevail in the contemporary society of Canada.

In order to overcome the frustrations described above, characters look for new spiritual quests by exploring new sexual possibilities. The lavishly rhetoric employed by Cohen in the novel and that so much scandal caused when *Beautiful Losers* was released, plays an omnipresent role in the text. 'F', the spiritual father in *Beautiful Losers*, preaches the total eroticizing of the body: Down with genital imperialism! All flesh can come!" (40). Sex and political revolution go hand in hand in *Beautiful Losers* like in the Québécois demonstration described above, but the actual revolution that worries the narrator and tortures him for his ignorance is F's and Edith's sexual encounters:

- You lousy fucker, how many times, five or six
- Ah, grief makes us precise!
- ...
- Seven
- Seven times with Edith?
- Correct
- You were trying to protect me with an optional lie?
- Correct.
- And seven itself might just be another option.
- Correct. (9-10)

'F', who met Edith before her marriage with the narrator and made of her a beautiful woman out of an Indian teenage girl with acne, becomes at the same time Edith's spiritual 'father' in the quest of holiness. A quest which is pursued by exploring new sexual possibilities that go from the "erotic telephone dance" that Edith and F perform in the telephone booths from the *System Theatre* to a sado-masochistic orgy with the Danish Vibrator and Hitler in Argentina. But Edith, not satisfied with herself and frustrated since she cannot get rid of F's influence and teachings, tries to pursue her spiritual quest with her husband instead with F. However, she fails in the attempt when painted in red in order to "restore a primitive Dionysian fire to hers and her husband's lives" (Marshall, 139), tries to convince her husband to do the same. However, he asks her to

wash off the red painting which probably represents her former and imperfect Indian red that was suppressed by F's intervention. In this sense, Edith may want to recover her authentic red self again in order to connect herself with her original identity as a member of the Indian A_s tribe.

From the same Indian tribe is Catherine Tekawitha, the saint who is linked with the contemporary character of Edith. However, Catherine gives herself to the Christian culture and rejects her sexuality very early. She opts for the mortification of the flesh by self-injuring. This extreme masochism leads her to death, but with the reward of turning white and beautiful in death. Catherine, who becomes a saint famous for her miracles, represents the narrator's sexual obsession; not only because of F's challenge to "fuck a saint", but also for the promise of a metaphysical and spiritual redemption. Therefore, the narrator's expectations about Catherine elevate sexuality again to a spiritual quest. But Catherine will not redeem the narrator since she is indeed another victim giving herself to another extreme, just like Edith, who in a parallel passage the reader knows she was raped being a teenager, or just like the narrator and the Québécois, who are all victims oppressed by the society in which they live. They have not reached therefore "the perfect balance" proclaimed by F's system. Again, F's system is closer to failure than success.

F, who is a member of the Parliament and a capitalist, is at the same time a mephistoopheles revolutionary who leads Edith and the narrator to an endless and dangerous quest of modern holiness. This holiness, which is closely connected with the dark and primitive side that has been repressed throughout history, and which is represented in *Beautiful Losers* by the Indian tribes, is what probably Edith and F are seeking shooting up themselves with holy water that comes from the river to which next lies the body of Catherine Tekawitha. And it is precisely this primitive aspect that Edith and F search, what Catherine rejects and tries to escape from by converting herself to the Christian faith.

Catherine becomes a saint, but according to F's system, modern holiness has to be achieved by the inversion of the former patterns; sexuality is not excluded from the condition of holiness. Furthermore, seeking a kind of balance without rejecting the contemporary world, becomes the essence of holiness. In F's words, a saint is a "balancing monster of love":

What is a saint? A saint is someone who has achieved a remote human possibility. It is impossible to say what that possibility is. I think it has something to do with the energy of love. Contact with this energy results in the exercise of a kind of balance in the chaos of existence. A saint does not dissolve the chaos; if he did the world would have changed

volume
10

long ago. I do not think that a saint dissolves the chaos even for himself, for there is something arrogant and warlike in the notion of a man setting the universe in order. It is a kind of balance that is his glory. He rides the drifts like an escaped ski (...). Something in him so loves the world that he gives himself to the laws of gravity and chance. Far from flying with the angels, he traces with the fidelity of a seismograph needle the state of the solid bloody landscape. His house is dangerous and finite, but he is at home in the world. He can love the shape of human beings, the fine and twisted shapes of the heart. It is good to have among us such men, such balancing monsters of love. (107).

volume
10

The quotation above summarizes the quests that the characters of *Beautiful Losers* undertake in order to become 'saints'. In the first part of *Beautiful Losers*, the narrator tries to seek and recover the emotions that will bring him the perfect balance. However, far away from balance and order, the narrator is portrayed as a confused and painful scholar who desperately courts an Indian virgin with his words. At the same time, the reader gets to know how Edith and F. do not achieve holiness too. Instead of balance, extremes meet leading the characters to self-destruction: "Edith commits suicide after telling the story of Catherine's Feast, and Catherine's religious life is a long suicide. F. drives himself to the madness of syphilis as he attempts to represent and be a self-sacrificial saint for all minorities and outcasts" (Marshall, 140). And the narrator, who was supposed to absorb and acquire F's teaching, ends in the epilogue as a wrenched old man chased by the police for abusing of a minor.

But the identity of this old man is not clear, and perhaps the narrator has turned into what F calls "The New Jew" that inhabits in the new Canada. According to F, the New Jew is a beautiful loser who plays favourite games and "loses his mind gracefully", just as he describes in the following lines:

He applies finance to abstraction resulting in successful messianic politics, colorful showers of meteorites and other symbolic weather. He has induced amnesia by a repetitious study of history, his very forgetfulness caressed by facts which he accepts with visible enthusiasm. He changes for a thousand years the value of stigma, causing men of all nations to pursue it as superior sexual talisman. The New Jew is the founder of Magic Canada, Magic French Québec, and Magic America. He demonstrates that yearning brings surprises. He uses regret as a bulwark of originality (...) Sometimes he is Jewish but always he is American. (161).

The above description belongs to the second part of the novel, which is the letter that F writes from the mental institution in which he is closed due to his madness. F.

introduces in an ironic way the betrayal of the Jewish kindness to the Québécois, while he declares at the same time that it is the wandering Jewish and victim the one who founds nations, since they possess a messianic sense of history. Therefore, the concept of the "New Jew" is not clear: from one side the Jew is called to found nations and restore the magic to the contemporary society, but on the other hand the Jew is the convenient amnesic who turns his back to the Canadian French. A position that contradicts F's views, who mentions at the end of the letter his longing for an independent Québec: "It is not merely because I am French that I long for an independent Québec (...) I want to hammer a beautiful colored bruise on the whole American monolith (...) I want History to jump on Canada's spine with sharp skates." (99).

volume
10

However, Canada remains as a territory composed by different races and cultures, but at the same time oppressed at various levels by historical conflicts that in *Beautiful Losers* take frequently the form of psychological conflicts. The utopian proposals of liberation are treated with irony and transformed into humour, and liberation can only occur in the form of art. In this sense, at the end of the novel the *System theatre* is reproducing a movie about Ray Charles, who may stand as a symbol of the artist who transcends historical circumstances but does not alter the course of history. Nonetheless, Ray Charles's blindness might stand also as the symbol for the blindness of the New Jew and consequently of the rest of society.

To this blindness Cohen proposes no solutions, as Mashall points out, "Cohen has no programmatic solutions for the problems he poses; instead he offers a greater awareness of their nature and of the perverse nature of a confused world so that man may continue to live on." (142). Therefore, there are no conclusions in *Beautiful Losers* but possibilities and uncertainties to be explored and played with.

These lack of answers is what makes *Beautiful Losers* a postmodernist novel where the author uses different narrative techniques already explained in this article: the narrative line is broken by continuous digressions in the plot -encyclopedic data and baroque descriptions are introduced- the space and line times are violated by the interaction between the contemporary society and the 17th century, and there are constant forms of intertextuality and cultural allusions throughout all the text. Furthermore, the motives and themes that Cohen proposes in his novel go hand in hand with some of the subjects explored in the works of postmodernist writers such as Pynchon, Burroughs, or Barth: alcohol, drugs, and the conception of sexuality as a personal and mystical quest. But the novel goes beyond the countercultural subjects of the 1960's and offers a post-colonial view of Canada with the use of droll irony. Politics and identities are blurred by the use of pseudonyms and the deconstruction of myths, and reality is confronted with fantasy.

These features above reaffirm the conception of *Beautiful Losers* as a postmodernist novel that shocked, for better or worse, the 1960's audiences. However, while the novel shocked in the 1960's and was catalogued as obscene and pornographic by some critics, nowadays *Beautiful Losers* is no more shocking. Maybe because of this lost or maybe because of the inconsistency of the following Leonard Cohen's works, the experimental innovation that supposed *Beautiful Losers* in the Canadian scene has been relegated to a secondary position in the postmodernist canon of major works. Nonetheless, due to Cohen's innovation and inauguration of the Canadian postmodernism, *Beautiful Losers* deserves a central position in the Canadian literary scene and should be regarded as a fascinating document that captures the uniqueness of the Canadian landscape and society.



Works cited

- Greenstein, M. *Third Solitudes. Tradition and Discontinuity in Jewish-Canadian*. Montreal: McGill-Queens, 1989.
- Heidenreich, Rosemary Elfrade. *The Postwar Novel in Canada*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *Splitting Images. Contemporary Canadian Ironies*. Toronto: Oxford U.Press, 1991.
- Marshall, Tom. *Harsh and Lovely Land*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979.
- Nadel, Ira. *Leonard Cohen*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1996.
- Powe, B.W. *A Climate Charged. Essays on Canadian Writers*. Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1984.
- Ravvin, N. *A House of Words. Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory*. Montreal: McGill-queens 1997.
- Rigelhof, T.F. *This is Our Writing*. Toronto: The Porcupine's Quill, 2000.
- Scobie, Stephen. *Intricate Preparations. Writing Leonard Cohen*. Toronto: ECW, 2000.
- Siemerling, Winifred. *Discoveries of the Other. Alterity in the work of Leonard Cohen, Hubert Aquin, Leonard Cohen and Nicole Brossard*. Toronto: U. Toronto P., 1994.
- Thacker, Robert. *English-Canadian Literature*. Washington : Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, cop. 1989

JULIÁN ARRIBAS MARTÍNEZ

UNIVERSITÉ DU JAÉN, ESPAGNE

« Le traitement social-policier de l'immigration vulnérable. L'exemple canadien face aux défis de l'actualité espagnole »

volume
10

Key words:

police, immigrant, integration, irregular administrative situation immigrants, security

Résumé

La gestion publique de la diversité poursuit incessamment que concepts tels comme liberté et sécurité soient effectives et réels. Dans ce but, l'organisation policière doit faire preuve dans leurs actions quotidiennes de professionnalisme, d'éthique et d'attitude de courtoisie, tact, sensibilité et respect vers la différence. Nous pensons qu'en raison de sa proximité, la ville apparaît comme l'un des organismes les plus proches à la personne ISAI : immigrante en situation administratif irrégulière. La diversité canadienne servira d'exemple à l'Espagne qui commence à voir les effets de l'immigration.

Introduction

À la Constitution Espagnole la Liberté, l'Égalité, la Justice et le Pluralisme Politique sont droits fondamentaux, qui jouissent d'une protection renforcée. La sécurité est le résultat de libre exercice des droits de tous. Ils gagnent tant sur la personne étrangère documentée comme à l'étranger qui déambule dans une situation administrative irrégulière (ISAI). Les situations qui sont engendrées par ces personnes méritent une étude détaillée pour éviter inégalités dans le développement du droit individuel à la liberté de ces citoyens et dans le devoir de la police chargée de veiller à la sécurité publique, part du processus migratoire d'intégration.

La gestion publique de la diversité poursuit incessamment que tels concepts définis soient effectifs et réels en dépassant tous les obstacles qui empêchent d'atteindre ce but. L'étude des politiques canadiennes, leur diversité et multiculturalisme, mais dans le domaine de la sécurité concernant personnes migrants, sont d'un grand intérêt pour un pays qui montre un relatif manque d'expérience dans le champ du phénomène de l'immigration.

Des multiples questions, relatives au traitement de la gestion de la diversité étrangère, posées chaque jour par citoyens et médias, sont analysées dans mon étude : les privations de liberté pour être identifiés ces personnes, l'absence de protection du mineur immigrant non accompagné, l'ensemble de mesures législatives à auxquelles peut s'adresser une femme ISAI victime de violence de genre ou de traite d'êtres humains, la conduite de véhicules sans documentation, les exemples des politiques migratoires française et canadienne, la formation de *gangs de rue*, les expulsions d'étrangers, la présence cyclique de l'immigrant saisonnier...

Les lignes de l'article tendent au grand travail canadien, particulièrement de la ville de Montréal, effectué dans le cadre des politiques de prévention dès les multiples domaines que celles-ci permettent : écolier, familial, social, d'aide humanitaire... considérant ainsi l'attention envers l'immigrant en situation administrative irrégulière, actuelle ou survenu, comme un processus de *reconduction personnalisée* en prévention d'activités marginales ou de délinquance.

Les politiques policières canadienne et espagnole: compétences, ressources humaines et principes basiques d'actuation

À 2007, la taxe nationale de la criminalité au Canada s'est située dans le plus bas point depuis il faisait 30 ans. Le nombre de crimes inscrits par les services canadiens de policier ont diminué 7 % par la troisième année consécutive. La descente a été observée dans la plupart des régions métropolitaines du Canada et il comprenait les neuf villes les plus peuplées. Des descentes les plus importantes ont été observées dans Québec (10 %), à Montréal ... Par quatrième année consécutive Québec il avait les taxes inscrites de crimes plus basses déclarées par la police. (Dauvergne, 1)

Mais aussi en 2009 les crimes déclarés par la police au Canada continuent de diminuer. Le volume de crimes et leur gravité ont tous les deux reculé, maintenant la tendance à la baisse observée au cours des 10 dernières années. Environ 43 000 crimes de moins ont été signalés à la police. Ce fléchissement était en grande partie attribuable

à trois crimes contre les biens : le nombre de vols de véhicules à moteur a reculé de 17 000, celui des affaires de méfait, de 10.000 et celui des introductions par effraction, de 5. 000. L'Indice de gravité de la criminalité (IGC) au Canada — qui mesure la gravité des crimes déclarés par la police — a diminué de 4 % par rapport à 2008, et il était de 22 % inférieur au niveau noté en 1999. (Dauvergne, M. et Turner, J. p. 2)

La distribution policière canadienne : du fédéral au local. L'exemple de l'ASFC

volume
10

Pour arriver à ces niveaux d'efficacité, au Canada les services de policier sont assurés par les trois ordres de gouvernement : fédéral, provincial ou territorial et municipal. De nombreuses collectivités de Premières nations (Indiens d'Amérique du Nord) ont également leur propre service de policier. Tandis que le Gouvernement Fédéral est responsable du droit pénal en vertu de la Loi Constitutionnelle, chaque province ou territoire assume la responsabilité de ses propres services de policier (provincial, territorial et municipal). D'autres nombreuses collectivités de Premières nations dirigent leur propre service de policier. entorno

Dans l'environnement canadien étudié nous pouvons différencier quatre types de policier : la Gendarmerie Royale du Canada (GRC) police fédéral ; Sûreté de Québec, police provincial sous l'autorité du Ministre de la Sécurité Publique de Québec ; des corps de Police municipaux qui dépendent des autorités municipales, mais leur organisation et effectifs sont approuvé par le Ministre de la Sécurité Publique (p.ex. le Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal -SPVM-que nous étudions) ; et les Corps et les services de policier autochtones.

Dans un premier niveau de concurrences policières nous nous trouverions avec la Gendarmerie Royale du Canada (GRC) le service de police national qui dépend du Ministère de la Sécurité Publique. Elle est unique dans le monde puisque c'est un service de policier municipal, provincial et fédéral en même temps. Il offre des services de policier fédéral à tous les Canadiens et des services de policier avec contrat à trois territoires (Yukon, le Territoires du Nord-ouest et Nunavut), 8 provinces, plus de 197 municipalités, 184 communautés autochtones et 3 aéroports.

Ses recherches, strictement fédérales, n'ont rien comparable avec la philosophie de la police de proximité comme il est connu outre le Canada ou dans Québec. Ils réalisent des recherches interterritoriales et ont une section d'immigration et de passeports. Il travaille étroitement avec Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada ainsi qu'avec le Secrétaire d'Affaires Extérieures. La Gendarmerie Royale du Canada a l'importante parcelle

dans l'immigration. Les méthodes de croiser la frontière diffèrent peu de ceux que nous connaissons en Europe : faux documents, documents authentiques obtenus irrégulièrement, visas falsifiés, implication conseillers d'immigration dont profitent Internet pour annoncer ses services et exploitent les moyens légitimes mais en trompant à des immigrants non admissibles éventuels. Ils croisent également la frontière par voie maritime et par train. Aussi dissimulés dans des camions. Comme à l'Espagne.

Dans un deuxième niveau de concurrence, elle apparaît, la Sécurité Publique de Québec (Sûreté du Québec) qui s'occupe d'en exclusivité 1083 villes et municipalités réparties dans 87 Municipalités Régionales de Comté. Chaque année ils évaluent par des enquêtes la qualité de ses services, le degré de satisfaction de la communauté, en recevant les commentaires des dénonciateurs, de victimes, de citoyens en général. Ses guides pour l'action: service (servir, aider, être utile et disponibilité), professionnalisme (être attentifs aux changements et être continuellement actualisé), respect (de la dignité et les droits des personnes ainsi que des valeurs démocratiques et individuelles) et intégrité (en prenant en compte l'intérêt public ainsi que les valeurs et normes de l'institution pour préserver la confiance des citoyens). Dans chaque MRC il y a des *Comités de Sécurité Publique des Municipalités Régionales de Comté* (similaires à les *Juntas Locales de Seguridad* espagnoles).

Mais les mairies jouent un rôle clef pour réduire la criminalité et renforcer la sécurité dans l'environnement local. N'oublions pas qu'ils sont l'Administration Publique la plus proche au citoyen et occupent une position privilégiée en permettant d'impliquer à de multiples secteurs et de focaliser ses efforts. Ils offrent une variété de services qui contribuent à améliorer la sécurité en pouvant faciliter la collaboration avec d'autres dans l'élaboration de plans d'action locaux et dans la mise en marche de solutions tant à court comme à long terme.^(Hastings,7) Et ces paris ne sont pas faits évidemment sans un bon service de policier local. Exemple de service policier au niveau local est le Service de Policier de la ville de Montréal (SPVM). En collaboration avec les institutions, des organismes socio-économiques, groupes communautaires et citoyens, le SPVM s'est engagé à promouvoir il y a longtemps la qualité de vie de tous les citoyens de Montréal, en contribuant à réduire la criminalité, à favoriser le sentiment de sécurité et à développer un milieu pacifique et sûr de vie. Il est considéré que ses capacités et compétences professionnelles et personnelles peuvent apporter un cadre d'idées pour être adaptées à la société espagnole vue leur projection adroite migratoire, au moins dans les années futures, avec la deuxième génération d'immigrants et tout ce que cela entraîne: problèmes d'intégration, des succès, d'échecs, de racisme, de déviations sociales...

Avec l'immigration la population se transforme et les institutions doivent s'adapter à cette nouvelle réalité internationale. Les stratégies d'action ne doivent pas être une

vision à long terme, mais bien un guide qui nous permet de canaliser nos actions en matière d'un développement de compétences interculturelles afin de combattre la discrimination raciale, celui ce qu'ils appellent profilage racial et illicite, le prévenir et surtout le rendre conformément à droit et fondé sur l'inclusion et l'égalité de traitement pour tous les citoyens avec la conviction ferme de la nécessité de traiter chacun avec dignité et respect.

En 2006, l'Institut pour la Prévention de la Criminalité (l'Institut pour la prévention de la criminalité - IPC) de l'Université d'Ottawa a invité aux maires de 14 municipalités canadiens à déléguer un représentant dans un Réseau municipal intéressé dans la prévention de la criminalité. Ce réseau était composé par les localités de Vancouver, Surrey, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Waterloo, Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal, Québec, Saint John, et Halifax. Les taxes de criminalité variaient d'une ville l'autre, ainsi que dans les secteurs où une forte concentration de personnes défavorisées ou désorganisées socialement était appréciée.

Toutes avaient dans commun des problèmes d'une violence, infractions contre le patrimoine et drogues. La consommation abusive d'alcool, les apparitions de gangs de rue ou vols de véhicules à moteur constituaient un lien commun délictueux dans plusieurs d'elles. L'efficacité de prévention de la criminalité variait de quelques villes à d'autres. Certains disposaient d'un centre de responsabilité chargé de promouvoir la collaboration entre organismes pour la prévention. Dans d'autres c'était quelque chose ponctuel, en étant la police qui promouvait ces initiatives.

La sécurité communautaire, ont observé, *c'était un phénomène qui requérait des actions globales par tous les ordres de gouvernement, en menant à bien pratiques qu'ils impliquent aux secteurs si variés comme le collège, les services sociaux, le secteur du logement, le secteur privé, les services policiers, les citoyens et les organismes communautaires.* (Waler, 44). Étant donné que le travail de la police est plus efficace quand il est effectué dans une harmonie avec la collectivité dans le cadre d'une stratégie municipale globale, il faudrait également parier pour augmenter le budget policier comme moyen pour réagir aux problèmes de criminalité. On appréciait une réduction de cette dernière, du victimisation et de la peur du crime, par la voie de la prévention ce pourquoi ces investissements s'avèrent plus rentables que les budgets habituels qu'ils couvrent les frais courants dans lutter contre la délinquance. Ils contribuent sans lieu aux doutes à développer et à améliorer les possibilités de réalisation de mineurs, femmes et quartiers défavorisés, en existant un appui considérable de la population vers ce type de stratégies qui minimisent les facteurs de risque liés à la criminalité quand, il n'y ayant aucun facteur par seul qui explique quelques taux élevées de délinquance. (Johnson, H. et Fraser, J., 56). Quatre composants susceptibles ont été obtenus de contribuer au succès en

volume
10

matière d'une réduction de la délinquance et un renforcement de la sécurité communautaire :

1. Une implication et un leadership énergique (par exemple du Maire ou du Chef de Policier), en alignant la sécurité communautaire à d'autres priorités locales (p.e. les services aux mineurs, logement, loisir ...) avec un financement adéquat.
2. Une coordination de tous les ordres de gouvernement (fédéral, provincial et local) avec un financement qui contribue au développement, les améliorations et le soutien des initiatives, de stratégies et de programmes qui aident à étudier les causes profondes de la délinquance.
3. L'établissement de partenariats qui favorisent l'établissement de priorités locales, inclusivement avec la création de structures de gouvernement local qui assurent la continuité dans des périodes de changements politiques et y compris étrangers à ceux-ci, en attribuant des responsabilités de même pluridisciplinaires en évitant des duplicités.
4. Une utilisation efficace des antécédents, des connaissances et de son évaluation afin d'orienter les décisions.

volume
10

Nous finissons avec l'étude d'un corps quasi-policiier chargé de gérer les frontières canadiennes et de garantir sa sécurité, d'autoriser les personnes à entrer au Canada et d'arrêter et d'expulser du pays ceux qui n'ont pas le droit d'être ou de rester dans lui. Il est l'*Agence de services frontaliers de Canada* (AFSC).

L'ASFC compte 13.000 fonctionnaires, dont 55 % (7.200) réalisent son travail d'uniforme. Il offre ses services dans 1.200 points du pays et dans 39 lieux de l'étranger. Ils se trouvent dans 119 lieux de l'entrée au pays et dans 13 aéroports internationaux. Ils rendent également leurs services dans des stations maritimes (3 grands ports) et ferroviaires (27 emplacements). Ses responsabilités comprennent le spectre douanier d'admission et sortie de marchandises ainsi que l'acceptation de personnes au territoire.

Comme agents d'immigration peuvent procéder à l'arrêt de personnes si des motifs raisonnables existent de croire qu'il se soustraira à une interview avec les bureaux d'immigration, à une recherche ou à une expulsion; aussi parce qu'il constitue un danger pour la sécurité publique; parce que l'entrée est interdit dans le territoire à cause d'une sécurité ou pour attenter aux droits de l'homme; finalement parce que l'on n'a pas pu accréditer son identité, bien qu'il s'applique seulement aux étrangers et non aux résidents permanents.

L'ASFC se centre sur deux aspects : douanes et contrôle de l'immigration. La première d'elles est la concurrence dans l'Espagne dans les équipes de *Aduanas e Impuestos Especiales*

de la *Agencia Estatal de Administración Tributaria* dépendant du Ministère des Finances, conjointement mais à ses ordres, avec la Guardia Civil qui exerce la fonction de *Resguardo Fiscal* de l'État. Mais dans ces mêmes ports et aéroports où on effectue les fonctions que nous citons, il se trouve d'abord, le *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía*, qui contrôle l'accès à territoire national de passeports et de la documentation de personnes qui essaient d'entrer en Espagne. C'est-à-dire, dans notre pays le contrôle de l'immigration est policiier, avant et ensuite. Au Canada il est délégué dans un Corps sans qualités policières spécifiques, mais qui arrive à exécuter les ordres d'expulsion, travail qui mène à bien en Espagne le CNP.

volume
10

Un « vieillie » loi de sécurité

Mais la composition de la police canadienne est beaucoup éloignée de l'espagnole. Cette affirmation est déduite pas tant par les succès, que toutes les deux amassent, comme par son facteur humain. Depuis 10 années le nombre d'employés civils dans la police canadienne a grandi à un rythme deux fois supérieur à celle de policiers. En 2009 il est compté ainsi 27.000 employés civils. Dans la Guardia Civil en 1996 on disposait d'un total 261 fonctionnaires.

En Espagne il fait déjà presque un quart de siècle, nous pensons qu'excessif sans que quelques retouches aient été déjà données, ont promulguée, la *Ley Orgánica de Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad*,¹ que marquera la concurrence étatique dans le traitement de la sécurité publique, «... la sécurité publique est de la compétence exclusive de l'État. Son maintien correspond au Gouvernement de la nation ... » en laissant aux Communautés autonomes et à des corporations locales, des compétences pour le maintien de cette sécurité, de parcelles qui étaient progressivement assumées.²

La norme continue en rappelant qu'il doit avoir d'activités en coopération réciproque et coordination mais, elles sont fréquentes, les rencontres qui dans différents aspects de la sécurité se sont posées. Même dans les données statistiques, émises de forme indépendant.

Il est nécessaire de rappeler avant de continuer les compétences policières, l'intérêt pris par la norme en influencer sur la collaboration et la coopération de tous. La Loi concrète que le *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía*, la Guardia Civil et de policiers autonomes et

1 L.O. 2/1986, de 13 de marzo, de Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad.

2 Aujourd'hui existent en Espagne un total approximatif de 174.000 policiers, c'est-à-dire 3, 71 policiers / 1.000 hab. Existente deux corps policiers de domaine national qui sont el *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* (62.600) et la *Guardia Civil* (88.000), bien que cinq Communautés Autonomes ont créé ses propres corps policiers : Catalogne avec ses Mossos d'Esquadra (15.118), le Pays Basque avec l'Ertzaintza (7.500), Navarre avec son Policier Foral (999), l'Andalousie et la Galice http://www.mir.es.

locales, différencient ses compétences mais ressembleront ses procédures de comportement. Dans la norme on permet la création, sur la base des Statuts d'Autonomie qui ainsi le reprennent, des Policiers Autonomes avec indication de compétences propres, en collaboration *avec et d'une prestation simultanée et indifférenciée* avec les Forces et Corps de Sécurité de l'État. De même la création de Policiers Locaux conformément au prévu dans cette loi, dans la Loi de Bases de Régime Local et dans la législation autonome. Il rappelle le caractère collaborateur des toutes les deux avec celles de l'État comme il rassemble son article 29 ... quand exerceront des fonctions de Police judiciaire ces derniers.³

volume
10

Mais en nous centrant sur les policiers de l'État espagnol, il charge au Cuerpo Nacional de Policía le contrôle d'entrée et la sortie du territoire national des personnes selon les prévisions de la législation des étrangères, refuge, asile, extradition, expulsion, émigration et immigration.⁴ À la Guardia Civil, la surveillance de voies de communication terrestre, frontières, ports, aéroports et installations que par leur intérêt lui demandent. Le point d'inflexion dans le sujet que nous traitons est la distribution de compétences tellement basiques pour la sécurité publique comme sont le contrôle de frontières (Guardia Civil) et la législation d'étrangères (Cuerpo Nacional de Policía), qui les différencie et que nous voulons souligner. Parce que cela projette des situations complexes comme celles qui se produisent après avoir attribué l'article 116 de l'Arrête Royal 2393/04 de 30 décembre par lequel on approuvé le Règlement de la L.O 4/00 du 11 janvier de *Droits et Libertés des étrangers en Espagne et son intégration sociale* (BOE n. 6 d'un 07/01/05), la concurrence dans les dossiers qui sont engagés par des infractions administratifs à la norme d'immigration, aux fonctionnaires du Cuerpo Nacional de Policía.

Cependant, bien que l'on puisse penser que nous nous trouvons devant une différence simple grammaticale dans sa différenciation, et près d'autres raisons lourdes et variées (comparaison salariale, moyens, installations...) peut-être il soit situé dans cette collaboration, coopération réciproque, coordination ou comme voulons le nommer, la

3 L'article 126 de la Constitution cite que la Police judiciaire dépend des Juges, des Tribunaux et du Ministère public dans ses fonctions - d'amples fonctions - de recherche du délit et assurance du délinquant.

4 Actuellement seulement un ordre d'expulsion de chaque trois est exécuté. Par cela, la coopération dans les travaux et les procédures nécessaires pour le retour des immigrants illégaux, spécialement en ce qui concerne son identification et documentation, retourne indispensable. Les statistiques sur la présence d'immigrants illégaux sont, par sa propre nature, difficiles d'établir, bien que les régularisations peuvent apporter l'information sur le nombre de personnes dans ces circonstances. Au moins 3,7 des millions de personnes ont été régularisés dans les États membres de l'UE (l'Allemagne, l'Espagne, la France, la Grèce, l'Italie, le Pays-Bas et le Portugal) dès les années 80. De la Communication «Une politique commune d'immigration pour l'Europe: principes, actions et instruments», Bruxelles, 05.12.2007. Bruxelles, 05.12.2007 [COM(2007) 780 final].

raison possible d'être de l'efficacité policière dans la prévention de la délinquance, puisque à la vue de ce caractère estompé de collaboration, il émerge le caractère d'une coopération réciproque que bien portée, c'est-à-dire étant adjectivé comme coordonnée, obtiendrait des fruits à court terme. Heureusement en septembre 2006 on créait le commandement unique des Directions générales de la Police et de la Guardia Civil peut-être pour une diminution d'une possible décoordination entre ceux- corps policiers.

Pour ce motif cardinal, la Loi rassemble la création de deux organes de coordination aux différents niveaux : le *Conseil de la Politique de Sécurité* (*Consejo de Política de Seguridad*), pour garantir la coordination entre les politiques de sécurité publique de l'État et des Communautés autonomes et les *Assemblées locales de Sécurité* (*Juntas Locales de Seguridad*), dans les municipalités qui ont le Corps de Policier propre. Donc bien, le 28 février 2005, le Ministre de l'intérieur de l'époque José Antonio Alonso convoquait pour la première fois depuis 1986 le CPS. Des commentaires restent.⁵

Le deuxième de ces organes de coordination, et à notre avis le plus important, sont les Assemblées locales de Sécurité, *Juntas Locales de Seguridad*, organes créés pour établir les formes et les procédures de collaboration entre les membres des Forces et Corps de Sécurité dans son domaine territorial. Présidée par le Maire ou partagée, s'il assistait, avec le Subdélégué du Gouvernement il dispose la norme que sa constitution et composition sera réglementairement déterminé. Passés vingt-deux années de la promulgation de la norme, le développement réglementaire on n'a pas produit, ce qu'a conduit à un comportement particularisé par l'édile et le commandement policier de la localité, dans la majorité des occasions et par les Mairies les plus diligents dans d'autres cas, par une publication sommaire de son «développement» peut-être dans le but de donner un caractère plus officiel à la réunion.

En février 2007 on signe le *Convenio-Marco de colaboración, coopération et de coordination entre le Ministère de l'Intérieur et la Fédération Espagnole de Municipalités et de Provinces, (FEMP) en matière de Sécurité Publique et Sécurité routière*.⁶ C'est un pas en avant pour raconter *avec plus de 55.000 policiers locaux, le capital opérationnel, technique, professionnel et humain que sans doute il faut mettre en valeur pour améliorer la sécurité globale dans notre pays ... puisqu'il constitue 29,3 % des policiers effectifs du système, de là l'importance d'incorporer à la gestion du système public aux organismes municipaux, aux corporations locales...*⁷ Rappeler que la FEMP est l'Association d'organismes locaux de niveau de l'État avec une grande implantation, qui groupe des Mairies, *Diputaciones*,

5 Dans le journal de Sessions du Sénat n° 115 tenue jeudi 3 mars 2005, on rassemble la comparution de M. Ministre pour informer sur le développement du CPS.

6 http://www.mir.es/DGRIS/Documentos/Documentos_del_MIR/Convenio_FEMP.pdf

7 En la p. 7 del Diario de Sesiones del Senado n° 115, jueves 03-X-05 Óp. cit.

Conseils et Conseils Municipaux Insulaires, en total 7.287, que représentent plus de 89 % des Gouvernements Locaux espagnols.⁸

Il convient de souligner l'intéressant de ce *Convenio Marco*: la sécurité publique n'est pas matière exclusivement des politiques et policiers, aussi de la société. Il résulte que nous voulions souligner l'épigraphie intitulé *Participation Citadine* avec la création des Conseils Locaux de la Sécurité, *Juntas Locales de Seguridad*. Cette raison on doit faciliter aux citoyens, par les biais de ses organisations, des associations et des collectifs représentatifs, leur participation dans l'élaboration et suivi des politiques de sécurité publique, en promouvant la constitution de ceux-ci Conseils dans toutes ces municipalités où une Assemblée Locale de Sécurité s'est constituée. Au moment d'aborder la politique de sécurité canadienne on a influé sur la grande importance de la présence de la citoyenneté, pour la réalisation d'objectifs de sécurité optimisés et qu'en Espagne nous tardons à activer.

Nous finissons en insistant sur le fait que le niveau parfait de comportement pour la connaissance de la personne ISAI ne sera pas une autre qui la municipalité. Évidemment le nombre d'habitants de la même, sa situation côtière ou intérieure, son attrait touristique, son industrie, agriculture ou la présence de routes de communication de haute densité feront que l'incident de la délinquance doive être abordé dans une plus grande ou moindre mesure. Progressivement la formation policière se trouve *in crescendo*, tant au niveau national comme celle qui affecte des policiers autonomes et locaux. À travers de l'utilisation du réseau d'Internet, comme d'intranet c'est-à-dire des réseaux corporatifs internes, les membres des forces de sécurité on accumulé des connaissances que, complétés avec cours de formation, leur ont doté d'une préparation plus que remarquable, en prouvant nous situer sans esprit à nous tromper dans la proue du bateau de la sécurité au niveau européen et mondial, comme lui justifient déjà par les activités policières en matière terroriste.

Aussi même, il serait intéressant de rappeler l'importance de la participation de la société civil dans la définition des besoins de sécurité locale dans une procédure de diagnostic de cette dernière, à l'égard de leur victimisation et qui comprend leur sentiment de sécurité. Apparaîtront là d associations de quartier ou comités de quartier, mais parfois ne sont pas représentatifs de la communauté, car ils sont les plus intéressés par la situation locale où ils participent (évidemment l'implication des habitants est plus succès dans les collectivités moins criminalisées). L'une des conclusions qui découlent de l'étude des pratiques mises en œuvre dans la municipalité est l'importance croissante de dynamiques associatives locales et sa composition ethnoculturelle. (Annick., y Dansereau , p. 174)

⁸ <http://www.femp.es>

La prévention de la discrimination ethnique dans l'activité policière

Aujourd'hui le profilage racial constitue un dossier majeur que doit gérer tout policier. Aussi-même le SPVM et la Guardia Civil espagnole. Cependant, et bien que des mesures ont été prises pour les prévenir, les personnes noires, chinois, sud-américaines... étaient beaucoup plus susceptibles d'être interpellées que les blancs par les policiers. Également avec les immigrants en général. C'est tolérance zéro. Des optimales relations avec les communautés ethniques et leurs associations devront figurer en tête de liste des priorités des toutes les policiers.

volume
10

Beaucoup de règles de droit international nous invitent à un traitement exquis dans la pratique policière. On pourrait citer la *Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, le *Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques* ou la *Convention internationale sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale*, qui reconnaissent la liberté et l'égalité de tous les citoyens et invitent à ce traitement objectif et exquis.

La discrimination raciale n'est pas toujours fondée sur un processus conscient. Ces pratiques sont souvent fondées sur préjugés et stéréotypes, ce qui entraîne une perception erronée de la réalité. Ce sont des « *jugements simplistes et non critiques que les personnes énoncent en se basant de caractéristiques comme le sexe, l'âge, l'ethnicité et la couleur de la peau, en attribuant des concepts que la société dans laquelle ils évoluent leur a toujours attribués* » (Paul, 52-56). La police de Montréal en 2004 a défini la discrimination raciale, qui a également conçu comme illicite, «profilage racial et illicite» :

« Action initiée par des personnes en autorité à l'égard d'une personne ou d'un groupe de personnes, pour des raisons de sécurité ou de protection du public et qui repose essentiellement sur des facteurs tels que la race, l'origine ethnique, la couleur, la religion, la langue, la condition sociale, l'âge, le sexe, le handicap, l'orientation sexuelle, les convictions politiques dans le but d'exposer un individu à un examen ou un traitement différentiel alors qu'il n'y a pas de motif réel ou de soupçons raisonnables pour le faire ». »⁹

Ainsi, l'organisation policière doit faire preuve dans leurs actions quotidiennes de professionnalisme, d'éthique et d'attitude de courtoisie, tact, sensibilité et respect vers la différence. Il est de plus en plus nécessaire de connaître la diversité culturelle des villes pour lutter contre les facteurs qui nourrissent la discrimination raciale comme les mythes et les stéréotypes, qui constituent une question majeure à laquelle

⁹ « Stratégie d'action sur le développement des compétences interculturelles » Politique 259-1 du SPVM, 01.11.94. En http://www.spvm.qc.ca/upload/documentations/Plan_action_rel_inter.pdf

la police doit faire face dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. *« L'objectif est de contribuer à la sensibilisation de la distinction entre l'ignorance et préjugés, parce que nos actions deviennent parfois mal orientées sur tels motifs. La réalité sociale montre que la discrimination raciale est souvent guidée par stéréotypes conscients ou inconscients. »* (Turenne, 3)

En Espagne nous avons eu l'occasion de connaître récemment un cas de discrimination ethnique dans une activité policière. Ainsi l'indique la Communication 1493/2006 de Nations Unies, publiée par la décision du Comité de Droits Humains de l'Organisation de Nations Unies.¹⁰

Il traite la plainte interposée devant l'Organisation par Mme Williams LeCraft contre l'Etat espagnol, après avoir épuisé les voies légales nationales (Cour d'instruction de Valladolid, Ministère de l'Intérieur, Salle du Contentieux Administratif, *Audiencia Nacional* et le Tribunal Constitutionnelle) suite ce qu'elle considérait comme une discrimination en raison d'un contrôle d'identité effectué en 1992, dans la gare de chemin de fer de Valladolid quand on lui demande la police l'identification mais n'a pas été posée à aucune autre personne dont ils se trouvaient en la plate-forme.

Notre Tribunal Constitutionnel il y avait propres les mots de la Cour contentieux administratif en constatant que *« ... l'obligation d'identification n'a pas obéi à une discrimination ouverte, après avoir été exclu qui existerait un ordre ou une instruction spécifique d'identifier aux individus d'une certaine race particulière... »*

En ce qui concerne qu'il puisse être une discrimination raciale la Haute Cour a jugé que *« ... rien indique que le comportement de l'agent de la police a agi guidé par préjugés raciaux ou une spécial prévention de certains membres d'un groupe ethnique particulier (...) l'activité policière a utilisé le critère racial comme une indication d'une plus grande probabilité que cette femme n'était pas espagnole.... »* Le cas échéant le Comité a jugé que :

« ... il est légitime d'effectuer contrôles d'identité en général dans le but de protéger la sécurité publique et la prévention de la criminalité ou pour contrôler l'immigration clandestine (...) mais menées par les simples caractéristiques physiques ou ethniques de personnes objet de ces derniers, ils ne doivent pas être pris en considération comme possible preuve d'illégalité possible dans le pays. Ni fait en sorte que seules les personnes possédant certaines caractéristiques physiques ou des groupes ethniques sont identifiés. Le contraire non seulement affecterait négativement la dignité des personnes touchées, mais aussi contribuerait

10 Résolution CCPR/C/96/D/1493/2006. du Comité de Droits Humains correspondant au 96^e Période de Sessions compris entre le 13 y le 31 de juillet 2009, présentée par Rosalind Williams LeCraft, nationale espagnole résidant à Valladolid. Avis émis d'après le paragraphe 4^e de l'article 5 du Protocole Facultatif de l'Accord International de Droits Civils et Politiques.

à la propagation d'attitudes xénophobes parmi la population en général et serait incompatible avec une politique efficace de lutte contre la discrimination raciale ... »

Le Comité finit en condamnant l'Espagne pour considérer que l'identification n'a pas été généralisée à toutes les personnes présentes dans la gare, mais seulement à la plaignante. Par conséquent condamne à fournir à l'auteur un recours utile, y compris des excuses publiques. Également l'obligation de prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour empêcher ses agents la réalisation d'actes comme celui étudié.

Ubeda, mars 2011.



Bibliographie

- A.M. Paul, (1998), "Where bias begins: The truth about stereotypes", *Psychology Today*, p. 52-56
- Communication "Une politique commune d'immigration pour l'Europe: principes, actions et instruments", Bruxelles, 05.12.2007. Bruxelles, 05.12.2007 [COM(2007) 780 final].
- Dauvergne, M. "Statistiques de la criminalité au Canada, 2007" Statistique Canada. N° 85-002-X au catalogue, vol. 28, n° 7, p.1.
- Dauvergne, M. et Turner, J. « Statistiques sur les crimes déclarés par la police au Canada, 2009 ». Statistique Canada. Été 2010. Vol. 30, no 2 Juillet 2010 No 85-002-X, Vol. 30, Ottawa
- G. Annick., y Dansereau, F. "Les pratiques municipaux de gestion de la diversité à Montréal" INRS. Urbanisation, Culture et Société. p. 174. Mars 2003.
- Johnson, H. et Fraser, J. (2007). *Making Cities Safer: International Strategies and Practices*. Ottawa : Institut pour la prévention de la criminalité, Université d'Ottawa.
- Lindsay, C. « Dans quelle mesure les immigrants sont-ils satisfaits de leur sécurité personnelle? » n° 89-630-X Statistique Canada Aout 2008
- Résolution CCPR/C/96/D/1493/2006. du Comité de Droits Humains correspondant au 96° Période de Sessions compris entre le 13 y le 31 de juillet 2009, présentée par Rosalind Williams Lecraft, nationale espagnole résidant à Valladolid. Avis émis d'après le paragraphe 4° de l'article 5 du Protocole Facultatif de l'Accord International de Droits Civils et Politiques.
- Sampson, Robert J., Stephen W. Raudenbush et Felton Earls. 1997. «*Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy*», *Science*, vol. 277, p. 918 à 924. Dans Fitzgerald, R. « *La crainte de la criminalité et le contexte du quartier dans les villes canadiennes* ». Centre canadien de la statistique juridique Statistique Canada. No 85-561-M. Juillet 2008.

Statistique Canada Centre canadien de la statistique juridique.85-225-X. « Les ressources policières au Canada. 2009 » Décembre 2009.

Velásquez, E. (2008). « Gobernabilidad de la seguridad ciudadana en Bogotá 1992-2007: una primera lectura ». En Velásquez, E., Godard, H. (eds). « Gobernabilidad territorial en las ciudades andinas. Organización y recomposiciones territoriales y sociopolíticas. » IFEA-U. Externado. Bogotá.

Waller, I. (2006). Less law, more order: The truth about reducing crime. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.



ROBERTA CADEI

UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA, ITALY

Robert Kroetsch, from the Long Poem to the Sketches: For a Poetics of Process

volume
10

Abstract

The following paper is part of my PhD dissertation, which focuses on the poetic production of the English-Canadian writer Robert Kroetsch, who has been defined “Mr Canadian Postmodern” (Linda Hutcheon) for having introduced the postmodern sensibility in his own country both with some fundamental critical essays and with a number of poetic and narrative masterpieces. The strongly innovative aspect of his works resides in the hybridization of the classic forms of the novel and of the long poem, probably aimed at recollecting the “ancestral” function of orality; the storytelling is so thematised as it enters the narrative and poetic texture. The focus on this last form, i.e. poetry, is based on the persuasion that it seems to be the best “place” where Kroetsch’s poetics is “displaced”, spread and, eventually, retrievable. The play with words is not a case at all, since the poet’s use of language is imaginative, playful and incredibly serious at the same time: it is about creating and recreating the world/word. Thence storytelling becomes a way of expressing both individual and collective (hi)stories, family story and the making of a country.

Résumé

L’article suivant fait partie de ma thèse de Doctorat, qui concerne la production poétique de l’écrivain anglo-canadien Robert Kroetsch, défini “Mr Canadian Postmodern” (Linda Hutcheon) pour avoir introduit la sensibilité postmoderne dans son pays, grâce à des essais fondamentales, aussi bien qu’à des nombreuses oeuvres poétiques et narratives. L’aspect le plus innovatif de son oeuvre est à rechercher dans la contamination des formes classiques du roman et du poème long, probablement dans le but de récupérer la fonction “ancestral” de l’oralité; la narration

se thématise en conséquence, car elle entre dans la structure narrative et poétique du texte. L'accent sur la poésie se fonde sur la conviction que celle-ci se présente comme le "lieu" élu où la poétique de Kroetsch est susceptible de "déplacement", de dissémination, mais finalement reconnaissable. Le jeu de mots n'est pas tout à fait gratuit, puisque la langue est imaginative, [...] et incroyablement sérieuse en même temps. Il s'agit là en effet de créer et de recréer le mot/monde. La narration devient donc l'espace où s'expriment les histoires collectives et personnelles, les histoires de famille et de la construction de la nation.

volume
10

Born in a small farming village in the prairies of Alberta, Robert Kroetsch has "grown" into one of the leading figures in the panorama of the Canadian Postmodern. The importance of both his critical essays and his fiction for Canadian literature has been recognized quite early by Linda Hutcheon (among others), who has coined for him the famous label of "Mr Canadian Postmodern" (Hutcheon, 160) because of the poignancy and the far-sightedness of his writings. Hutcheon was particularly referring to Kroetsch's role of forerunner in introducing a postmodern sensibility in Canada, both intellectually and stylistically. In his essays in fact he not only analyses with great sharpness and irony some of the most central (and contentious) issues of Canadian history (among others the making of the country, the relationship white men – natives), but he also focuses his attention on Canadian writing and writers, relating them to both European and American tradition (that is, the "canon"). By retrieving the connections of Canadian literature with its European "fathers" and its American "relatives" he has drawn the lines of Canadian imagery and storytelling, at the same time deconstructing the process of myth-making of western tradition.

The choice to focus on Kroetsch's poetry comes from the realization that over a span of about 50 years his poetic form has undergone substantial change, shifting from the long poem to more fragmented pieces of poetry, what he calls the sketches, which seem to better express the present conception/ state of his poetics. We are now in the position to assess different phases in his poetic production, mirroring a remarkable evolution which takes place both in his critical studies and in his creative writings. For Kroetsch, to choose a long form and a free verse means basically a greater degree of freedom both in the writing process and in the recovery of different forms of orality. The storytelling enters the poetic texture by structuring it, shaping poems as if they were vivid accounts of prairie life or of man-woman relationships: the poems can thus take on the form of a diary (as in *Excerpts from the Real World – A prose poem in ten parts*, 1986) or that of a ledger, or a catalogue or a hornbook. At first such list-like

structures could appear as quite simple narrative and poetic devices aimed at creating a kind of refrain or a thematic Leitmotiv, whereas to retrieve a dismissed way of recording facts, numbers, memories and history is indeed an effort to reconstruct reality having only some scattered fragments of it. The paradox of this cataloguing lies in the fact that even the definition of a single word for listing can be manifold: a ledger is “in bookkeeping, the book of final entry, in which a record of debits, credits, and all money transactions is kept”, but it is also “one who is permanently or constantly in a place; a resident” or even “a large flat stone, especially one laid over a tomb” (Kroetsch 2000, 11, 15 and 22). This tells us a great deal about Kroetsch’s poetics, because to conceive the possibility of having only a fragmentary knowledge of reality means for the poet that his role is, at most, that of collecting some sketches, some “field notes” about reality, but he will never catch the whole meaning of life, since “the truth changes ...and all that’s permanent is change” (interview with the author, 13th July 2010).

Throughout his writing career a fundamental reoccurring element is place, be it real, invented or metaphorical.¹ The fact of being inspired by and an inventor of place/places has much to do with what we can call the “Canadianness” of the writer. To be Canadian has always meant (from the very first explorations of the country) to relate oneself to place and space.² Both the vastness and the wilderness which characterize the North American landscape forced the traveler to find new ways of describing what he/ she saw and that’s why explorers traveling from east to west (literally pushing the frontier forward) were the first ones to put down on paper their impressions. The experiences of the 19th century surveyor and fur trader David Thompson are some of the most important in relation to exploration of North American territories. Kroetsch himself got particularly interested in the subject, having retrieved and studied Thompson’s field notes, memoirs and other documents of his contemporaries. The fascination with place and space takes in his case the form of an investigation about the first explorers and their ways of literally inventing a country. The necessity of creating new ways of expression, of using words anew by shifting their original meaning is probably one of the reasons for Kroetsch’s interest in those documents. He is fascinated by the accounts of the first settlers and explorers in much the same way he’s enchanted by native mythology, because both the accounts and mythology are two different ways of telling the same

1 The usual Alberta setting of his novels is in fact treacherous, since not all the places mentioned are retrievable (because invented), and in many other cases even some existing elements are modified or are not totally true to the actual place they refer to.

2 The literature concerning this topic is wide-ranging, but for an introduction to Canadian imagery and myth-making see Daniel Francis’ *National Dreams. Myth, Memory and Canadian History*, Cole Harris’ *The Reluctant Land: Society, Place, Space, and Environment in Canada Before Confederation*, and *Beyond Wilderness. The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art* edited by John O’Brian and Peter White.

story: that of the origins (the origins of humanity, the myth of creation and the “conquest” of the frontier). Another point which is retrievable in those writings is the way in which storytelling enters the text, that is when oral modes are used for constructing narration.³ Trying to apply to his works such typically oral structures, Kroetsch’s intention is overtly to write a poem that would bring together “the oral tradition and the myth of origins” (Kroetsch 1989, 7) and that’s why in both his fiction and poetry we find a number of rewritings of the western myth of origins par excellence: that of the Garden of Eden.

volume
10

In his acclaimed long poem *Seed Catalogue* (1977) Adam and Eve become paradigms of the first encounter with the opposite sex, of the discovery of love, even though the poet soon finds out that “playing dirty is a mortal sin/ the priest told us..” (Kroetsch 2004, 13). Having already committed the “mortal sin” as a young boy with Germaine, his Eve, he realizes that the priest had just evoked a mysterious act which, as soon as it is named, changes dramatically its meaning. For the two youths it meant to become “like/ one”, a way of dis/ covering another world without any moral or prudish restraint. With reference to this, critic Wanda Campbell points out:

He [the poet] discovers, to his dismay, that Adam and Eve fell out of the garden into sin. (...) Only after the priest calls it playing dirty is the thing they have discovered dis/covered into nakedness and shame. They fall from myth into language, and it is language that transforms a tale of sexual initiation into something more profound. (Campbell 24)

So if on the one side Kroetsch rewrites the biblical encounter and the Fall of Man, on the other he reflects on the role of the writer and of the poet giving back a very personal idea of the artist’s role, as if he/ she was a creator of reality by literally making (up) meanings, speaking both meaning and meaninglessness. In another passage of *Seed Catalogue* he significantly asserts: “We silence words/ by writing them down” (Kroetsch 2004, 34). Such a lapidary sentence expresses in fact both a conflict within communication, the struggle between orality and writing, and also a tension between the meaning and meaninglessness of language, or rather its ability to express a variety of meanings and leave at the same time some unexpressed undertones, casting a shade of mystery on the unknowable. As a matter of fact Kroetsch’s poetry is fascinated by absence, by the gap which sometimes can’t be bridged in terms of reality as well as

3 This interest in a somewhat parallel construction of meaning and place during the settlement years is confirmed by Kroetsch’s most recent studies on David Thompson, his writing, and his private life, which reveal a deep connection between landscape, natives and language. It is not by chance that one of the poet’s latest published works is a chapbook called *The Lost Narrative of Mrs. David Thompson* (2009).

in communication and relationships. The absence experienced by Kroetsch is the one of the poet/ thinker confronting with reality, for example that of the settlement. In a beautiful essay collected in *The Lovely Treachery of Words* he writes:

My sense of the gap between me and history was growing. (...) I was taking my first lesson in the idea of absence. (...) Where I had learned the idea of absence, I was beginning to learn the idea of trace. There is always something left behind. That is the essential paradox. Even abandonment gives us memory. I had to tell a story. I responded to those discoveries of absence, of that invisibility, of that silence, by knowing I had to make up a story. Our story. How do you write in a new country? (Kroetsch 1989, 1-2)

volume
10

The latter question expresses the poet's anxieties about writing and the making of poetry; the creative process is being questioned, because in such a "new country" all western paradigms (of truth and reality) are not valid or even reversed. Absence is experienced by Kroetsch not as a total lack of historical happenings, but as the untold, dismissed events regarding the time before the settlement. Since he cannot find answers in this 'new country' he starts to question his relationship with it. Regarding his personal experience, a certain sense of cultural void also came to him because of his father, who couldn't conceive the fact that his boy was more attracted by books and writing than by a crowbar and farming. In another stanza of *Seed Catalogue* the poet reconstructs a significant episode of his childhood, with his father again trying to discourage him from writing:

First off I want you to take that
crowbar and drive 1,156 holes
in that gumbo.
And next time you want to
write a poem
we'll start the haying. (Kroetsch 2004, 24)

But the marvels of nature are manifold: as for brome grass, a very resistant invasive weed which "flourishes under absolute neglect" (Kroetsch 2004, 28 and 31), so it is for poetry. One cannot prevent it from flourishing, even in the most inhospitable place. The *Seed Catalogue* is then a story about the difficulty of growing⁴ a person, a poet and a Canadian. In this sense maybe one can interpret the questions that the poet keeps

4 Of course we are here using the verb "grow" in the same ambiguous and playful way of the author, that is, mixing up the different nuances of meaning of the transitive and the intransitive form.

on asking: how do you grow a lover? How do you grow a past/ to live in? How do you grow a poet?

All in all these questions are about a personal and collective drama: that of being aware of absence, of the gap between inner and outer reality, and, perhaps, of finding a way of renaming it, making it anew. Referring to the *Seed Catalogue*, critic Douglas Reimer notices:

volume
10

Seed Catalogue deconstructs ideologies which have become familiar to us concerning the Western hero and the purpose and function of the poem and the poet on the prairie, and is concerned with language and the way writing is a supplement to speech and experience (...). The poem about a seed catalogue is a planting in the 'ground' of the 'oral' prairies (...), the non-intellectual prairies, the place of farmers, seeders, of poets of a new order (...) and the question about growing a poet IS the seed in the ground of prairie stillness.. (Reimer 115 and 121)

Together with a rewriting of the Garden myth and a reflection on absence, in Kroetsch's verses the storytelling merges into the poetic form by unveiling the narrative potential of things. For example in the *Stone Hammer Poem* the stone in question is a relic which takes on a variety of symbolic meanings: it is at the same time a remnant of the Ice Age and of the native culture which considered it a sacred tool, and it is also a "bare" stone found by the new settlers and used (or misused) as a farming tool, a hammer, a maul, but it is also an embodiment of poetry, because the poetic process involves a work of chipping, shaping and carving :

The poem
is the stone
chipped and hammered
until it is shaped
like the stone
hammer, the maul. (Kroetsch 1976, 57)

The stone also allows for an intuitive connection to the past, and it becomes a way of exploring both national history and his own family story. As Susan Wood puts it:

A grandfather, a tribe of plains Indians; (...) a prairie homestead (...): it has all become familiar material in contemporary Canadian literature. What transforms it, for Kroetsch as for the other poets, is the same power which transformed the stone into a hammer

into a talisman: the power of imagination. (...) Tracing the history of the stone hammer, then, involves Kroetsch in a personal reckoning with his family, with the general Western experience, and with his own craft. (Wood 28 and 30)

A flourishing of meanings which evokes both individual and collective histories/ stories: it is at the same time about Kroetsch's family and about the making of Canada, the "taming" of the frontier by constructing fences, barns etc.. A similar process of confrontation with the past seems the one that gives shape to another crucial poem, *The Ledger* (1975). As noticed before about Kroetsch's catalogues, the word ledger evokes a number of meanings, but all its nuances are related to memory and writing (it can be a record of debits and credits, a tombstone or even a book or a person who is permanently in a place). Regarding this playful, and at the same time terribly serious, use of an apparently common word, Wood points out:

Meanings are multiple and interconnected, as are the six meanings of the key word "ledger", each unlocking a different vision of the past. The poet-accountant tallies up his family's past, our past, seeking to balance myths and realities. (Wood 31)

As we read in another astonishing passage of *The Ledger*, a real balance between "myths and realities" seems unlikely if not impossible, since the settlement involved a violent process of "shaping" nature which goes hand in hand with an "unbalanced" shaping of the poem:

Shaping the trees.
Into shingles.
Into scantling.
Into tables and chairs.

Have a seat, John.	That they might sit down
Sit down Harry.	a forest had fallen. (Kroetsch 2000, 14)

Whereas the *Stone Hammer Poems* retain, at least visually, the "traditional" form of the long poem, poems from *The Ledger* start to display different structures; it is as if Kroetsch was intentionally exploring the white space on paper and experimenting with the blanks, the voids and the written words, the filling. The linguistic device of accumulating a number of meanings in the same word does nothing but reinforce the perception of density. Even the dialogic elements and the folding of original or invented documents in the poems are clear signals of a postmodern use of diverse media, a way

of digging into the past and reviving it. This archeological⁵ mode of investigating the past entwines with a multiform, playful use of oral wording, ranging from idiomatic expressions to common saying and tall tales, once more drawing on popular culture and storytelling. In his peculiar style, Kroetsch shows us the power of word/s, as if they alone could account for the variety of human experience, taking on the hard task of dealing with memory, history, life and death.

More and more, the structure taken by Kroetsch's poems draws nigh to the poetics they are expressing, so that form and content seem to be in a process of slow blurring. As a result, the boundaries between oral and written are questioned, and the conventional order is subverted, since the artistic act of "creation" is unveiled and the poet's intentions made clear. *The Hornbooks of Rita K* (2001) is perhaps the work which better displays this "falling" of language into a game, whose rules are openly revealed.⁶ This collection pretends to be the remaining writings of a disappeared poet, Rita Kleinhart (Kroetsch's Doppelgänger), retrieved by "an intimate friend" (Kroetsch 2001, 7) of hers, Raymond, who decides to edit the fragments. Since these kind of sketches are not finished (or, maybe, simply "unfinishable"), a veil of mystery is cast upon them, so that Raymond decides to introduce a comment on those few lines and ends up telling about himself and his relationship with Rita. His flow of words is indeed overwhelming with respect to the few hermetic verses of the woman and the more he tries to explain them, the more he gets involved in the writing process. He gradually takes on Rita's style, her playful and ambiguous use of language, and her resistance to interpretation; but it is not until the middle of the collection that he finally reveals the reason why Rita defined those fragments "hornbooks":

The hornbook is itself a book, but a book one page in length. Framed and wearing a handle, it sets out to fool no one. It says its say. Rita Kleinhart seems not to have got a handle on this realization. What she claimed for her poems was exactly that which they did not provide: the clarity of the exact and solitary and visible page. The framed truth, present and unadorned. Not a page for the turning, no, but rather the poem as relentless as a mirror held in the hand. (...) A one-page book covered in horn, but not a horny book. (Kroetsch 2001, 24)

5 Kroetsch's archeological approach derives from Michel Foucault's expression „archeology of knowledge“, which suggests a methodology to analyze the conditions of existence for meaning. (Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* 1969 first edition).

6 For a more detailed discussion of Kroetsch's conception of game, see his conversation with Shirley Neuman and Robert Wilson *Labyrinths of Voice. Conversations with Robert Kroetsch* (1982), from p. 49 to 83.

Here irony goes hand in hand with a mocking stratification of meanings, not unlike *The Ledger*, and at the same time we are given another aspect of Kroetsch's poetics: always claiming for "the framed truth, present and unadorned", the poet is rather unable to grasp it. He can't provide this "clarity" because he can't get to a unique and unambiguous rendering of truth, so maybe even the hornbook is a deceitful way of knowing, of describing reality. The problem is one of belief AND disbelief: a strong belief in art and creativity as the only way of experiencing life fully, pushing the poet forward in his search (that is, to keep on asking questions) and an equal disbelief in fixed patterns and rules makes him distrust closed/ framed systems. In his extraordinary essay "For Play and Entrance: The Contemporary Canadian Long Poem", Kroetsch expresses this point of view very clearly:

volume
10

The problem for the writer of the contemporary long poem is to honour our disbelief in belief – that is, to recognize and explore our distrust of system, of grid, of monisms, of cosmologies perhaps, certainly of inherited story – and at the same time write a long work that has some kind of (under erasure) unity.

And yet the long poem, by its very length, allows the exploration of the failure of system and grid. The poem of that failure is a long poem. (Kroetsch 1989, 118)

The fragmentation of poetry (and knowledge) that Kroetsch starts to experiment with in *The Hornbooks* is taken a step further in *The Snowbird Poems* (2004): the form shortens and the contents thicken. The poems give back an impressionistic rendering of reality, as if they were excerpts from a diary (or from "the Real World", to borrow Kroetsch's expression), but with the interpolation of passages from some classics of western literature such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Conrad's *Lord Jim*, or Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. These texts influence both the thematic and the structural features of Kroetsch's poems, and at the same time such "classics" seem to be enlightened by them. Apparently a paradox, this way of using and rewriting the canon is on the contrary a technique which reminds us of postcolonial writing, where the "new" text opens up multiple readings of canonic literature (i.e. Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1966, or Coetzee's *Foe*, 1986). As a matter of fact, a change in perspective is evident, since what comes after the quotation of a famous passage modifies the original, and makes it sound paranoid:

Crusoe

...I went up the Shore and down the Shore, but it was all alone, I could see no other Impression but that one, I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if

it might not be my Fancy; but there was no Room for that, for there was exactly the very Print of a Foot, Toes, Heel, and every Part of a Foot; how it came thither, I knew not, nor could in the least imagine.

then

Someone tapped my shoulder.

I turned. There was no one there. (Kroetsch 2004, 22)

volume
10

If on the one side the poet aims at the rewriting of western “tradition” (as for the Garden myth), on the other he also speaks of his own solitude, of the conflicts within himself and the paranoid relationship with the Other and, ultimately, with Art/ Poetry. In an essay focused on Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, Kroetsch explains this condition by comparing it to the Canadian development of a kind of “cultural schizophrenia”, a division between conscious aspiration and unconscious convictions which undermines the lives of Canadians making them develop a negative outlook of life. Kroetsch significantly spots this kind of “national” and intimate schizophrenia in Eli Mandel’s poem *The doppelgänger*:

The doppelgänger turns that latent schizophrenia into a statement about love, into a statement about being in the world, about art itself. About the predicament of the Canadian artist. (...) That (...) poem is at once a statement of Mandel’s own recognition of himself become his own other and an answer to Northrop Frye’s celebrated question to Canadians: ‘Where is here?’ (Kroetsch 1989, 156)

According to Kroetsch a certain duplicity is then an essential feature of the creative act and such tension is perhaps the same experienced by the poet when writing verses: he must confront with “the rules of the game”, that is, he has to deal with slippery meanings, with an untamed language and with conventions/ structures (even within a free verse); but at the same time he is aware that this “game” is a serious one. Comedy and tragedy are for the poet two equivalent faces of life, that’s why he is in some way compelled to put both into his writing.

In his latest collection, *Too Bad. Sketches Toward a Self-Portrait* (2010), Kroetsch keeps on “seriously” mocking the reader by presenting very short poems, with three-line-stanzas and apparently (only apparently) no connection among them. There again, by means of collecting some scattered fragments of life, he is able to render the puzzling effort to make up sense, to look for meaning in a tentative way. One of the opening poems of the collection, *Comic Book*, is a “derisively serious” reflection on this kind of quest for meaning, for clarity:

Death is a small intruder. He is painted red.
Yes, he is male. Look at the extended scrotum
(it's the heat), balls the size of avocados.
(...)

I found the comic book in a secondhand store
in a back street in Amsterdam. I was hoping for
a forgotten portrait by Van Gogh.

No, Death is not the devil. He is an oil baron,
or possibly an investment consultant. Or a
politician from Ottawa or Washington, DC.

Or a suicide bomber in Baghdad. Or a car
accident. Or a tsunami. Or a spot
on a lung. Or a burger with fries.

The possibilities are endless. Death
likes visions of himself. He hates the simple truth.
He prefers the visions of painters and poets. (Kroetsch 2010, 6)

The book in question is second hand and apparently undesired, unexpected, but reveals its importance for the powerful image it presents, which gives way to a bipolar reading of life: the comic vision merges with the tragic, in a virtually endless (and open) series of images. Death is personified, and it is male, sexually well determined by its genitals and immediately diminished by a wry comment ("it's the heat") followed by a strong negation ("No, Death is not the devil"), which signals an equally strong position of the poet. In fact, it would be easier for us to think about death as if it was something transcendent, an abstract "mean" (the devil) without real "meaning". Indeed, the poet lists (once again, as for the ledger or the catalogue) a series of real things, of actual examples of the many ways in which Death manifests itself. So Death is a person, a powerful one, or a catastrophe, a disease or an unmerciful fate. In any case it is left to the artist, be it the painter or the poet, to create visions of Death, endlessly mirroring a reality which will never be "the simple truth", because facts are always more complicated than what we might think. The reasons why such things happen are simply out of reach, so the only way of dealing with reality, with this "framed truth, present and unadorned" (Kroetsch 2001, 24) is perhaps to choose the visions of poets and painters.

volume
10

The only way out of such a maddening discovery is, paradoxically, to embrace foolishness just like the beautiful lyrics of *Emily Carr as Totem* suggest us:

Emily Carr kept a pet monkey. That way
she showed us her wisdom: we are,
all of us, wisely, on a fool's errand.
It's a matter of cutting the tree down,
then carving the dead tree back to life,
totemic of what was and what might be.
She showed us by keeping a monkey:
we must learn to ascend the felled tree,
wisely, daring to be foolish. (Kroetsch 2010, 10)

volume
10

The inspiration (and a provisional teaching) comes from one of the most acclaimed and controversial Canadian artists who lived at the turn of the 20th century.⁷ Interestingly enough, Kroetsch refers in the first place to the woman and not to the artist, even though he is not new to commenting on painters and their works in his essays.⁸ The fact is that Carr's fascination for native culture (epitomized by her work on totems) together with an eccentric personality made her for Kroetsch the "perfect" embodiment of artistic wisdom, because she had the ability of showing us the foolishness of our unending search for knowledge, wisdom and answers. At the same time this search is necessary, it is part of our human nature, and this is why we keep on "cutting the tree down" so as to make a totem out of it, breathing life back to the dead tree, and giving it a tentative meaning.

The quest for meaning is then a never-ending process, which could only "end" up provisionally by means of artistic visions, windows which open on a multiplicity of possible truths (rigorously plural and lower-case). This is also what Fred Wah probably meant when defining Kroetsch's writing a "poetics of process", since fragmentation makes subversion and doubt possible, it opens poetry/art to "a labyrinth of possibilities" (Introduction to Kroetsch 2000, IX):

7 On Emily Carr's biography and artistic production see Newlands' *Emily Carr: an Introduction to Her Life and Art* (1996).

8 For example in his essay "Reciting the Emptiness" (in *The Lovely Treachery of Words*), where he proposes to read Tom Thomson's "The Jack Pine" and Russell Drysdale's "The Drover's Wife", a reading which becomes a pretext to reflect on the postmodern condition, "where the gap tells us more than does the bridge" (Kroetsch, 1989, 35).

Kroetsch's poem, in other words, attempts to avoid design, to occupy a position of unresolved transition. (...) The advantage of such a poetics of process is epistemological. The grand design of the poem, that oppressive authority of the speaking and spoken 'I' of the normative lyric poem can be inverted, subverted. (Introduction to Kroetsch 2000, X)

Caught in the impossibility of defining the real and of finding an ultimate truth, the poet is therefore left, like a painter after having finished his work, with a bunch of sketches, pieces of a jigsaw puzzle for reconstructing a self-portrait.

volume
10

Works cited

- Campbell, Wanda. "Strange Plantings: Robert Kroetsch's *Seed Catalogue*". *Studies in Canadian Literature* 21.1 (1996): 17-36. Print.
- Coetzee, John Maxwell. *Foe*. London: Penguin, 1987. Print.
- Coleridge, Ernest Hartley (ed.). *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. London: Oxford University Press, 1912. Print.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim: A Tale*. London: Collins, 1957. Print.
- Defoe, Daniel. *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. London: Penguin, 1985. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *L'Archeologia del Sapere*. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1980. Print.
- Francis, Daniel. *National Dreams. Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2005. Print.
- Harris, Richard Colebrook "Cole". *The Reluctant Land: Society, Place, Space, and Environment in Canada Before Confederation*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008. Print.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Canadian Postmodern. A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988. Print.
- Kroetsch, Robert. *Too Bad. Sketches Toward a Self-Portrait*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2010. Print.
- . *The Lost Narrative of Mrs. David Thompson. + Ten Simple Questions for David Thompson*. Windsor (Ontario): Wrinkle Press, 2009. Print.
- . *Seed Catalogue. A Poem*. Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2004. Print.
- . *The Snowbird Poems*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2004. Print.
- . *Completed Field Notes. The Long Poems of Robert Kroetsch*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2000. Print.
- . *The Hornbooks of Rita K*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2001. Print.

- . *The Lovely Treachery of Words. Essays Selected and New*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.
- . *Excerpts from the Real World. A Prose Poem in Ten Parts*. Lantzville: Oolichan Books, 1986. Print.
- . *The Stone Hammer Poems, 1960-1975*. Lantzville: Oolichan Books, 1976. Print.
- Mandel, Eli. *Out of Place*. Erin (Ontario): Press Porcépic, 1977. Print.
- Newlands, Anne. *Emily Carr: an Introduction to Her Life and Art*. Ontario: Firefly Books/Book-makers Press, 1996. Print.
- O'Brian, John and White, Peter (eds.). *Beyond Wilderness. The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. Print.
- Reimer, Douglas. "Heideggerian Elements in Robert Kroetsch's *Seed Catalogue*". *Canadian Literature* 136 (1993): 115-128. Print.
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980. Print.
- Wood, Susan. "Reinventing the Word. Kroetsch's Poetry". *Canadian Literature* 77 (1978): 28-39. Print.

ALBA DE BÉJAR MUIÑOS

UNIVERSIDADE DE VIGO, SPAIN

Engineering Bodies: Cyborg Takeovers in Canadian Speculative Fictions

volume
10

Abstract

This essay will try to analyze how the figure of the cyborg, as a complex assortment of human and non-human parts, constitutes a map to 21st century sanctioned body-forms and lifestyles. How to render the technological attractive and thus desirable is increasingly relevant for the economic development of consumerism-oriented societies, and also for the very manner in which societies engineer a(n) (im-)possible future image of their ideal future citizenship. No longer just normal, the model body must now be perfect. Technology is being fetishized so as to turn the cyborg into the desired human ontology: a symbol of perfection meant to epitomize the final overcoming of human limitations through the symbiosis of military, scientific, and human parts.

However, and for all the glitter of its wired automaton materiality, the figure of the cyborg remains a paradoxical symbol. The cyborg elicits important questions around notions of (ab-)normality, capitalism, sexuality, eugenics, reproduction or even ethics that are still truly ambivalent and complex to answer. With an eye on all these matters, this essay will attempt to explore cyborg representations and the role of technology through an analysis of a selection of Speculative Fictions produced in Canada at the onsets of the century.

Résumé

Cet article tentera d'analyser comment la figure du cyborg, comme un ensemble complexe d'éléments humains et non-humains, constitue une carte de formes corporelles et modes de vie acceptés au 21^{ème} siècle. Comment faire pour rendre la technologie attrayante et donc souhaitable est de plus en plus important pour le développement économique des sociétés axées

sur la consommation, et aussi pur comprendre comment les sociétés créent une image future (im-)possible de leur citoyenneté idéale. Non seulement tout à fait normal, l'organisme modèle doit être aussi parfait. La technologie est fétichisée de façon à ce que le cyborg devienne dans l'ontologie humaine désirée: un symbole de perfection ayant pour but de résumer la victoire finale sur les limites de l'homme par la symbiose des parties militaires, scientifiques et humaines. Cependant, malgré le scintillement de sa matérialité automatisable, la figure du cyborg demeure un symbole paradoxal. Le cyborg suscite des questions importantes autour des notions de (a)normalité, capitalisme, sexualité, d'eugénisme, reproduction ou même d'éthique encore vraiment ambivalentes et complexes pour y répondre. Avec un œil sur toutes ces questions, cet article va tenter d'explorer les représentations des cyborgs et le rôle de la technologie à travers l'analyse d'une sélection de fictions spéculatives produites au Canada au début du siècle.

Introduction

In the past few decades, a large number of literary and cinematic pieces featuring cyborgs have been released onto the market taking advantage of the great magnetism that such pseudo-fantastic figures emanate. From Szuszi Gartner's recent collection *Darwin's Bastards: Astounding Tales from Tomorrow* (2010) released only last year, to popular box-office successes such as James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), independent ventures such as Chan-Wook Park's *I'm a Cyborg, but That's Ok* (2006) or even numberless comics by Marvel Entertainment, cyborgs have been overwhelmingly present as an already inextricable part of the way we conceive of the world of the future and, interestingly, not only of the future. Why and how cyborgs have colonized the contemporary imaginary so are relevant questions to pose in order to explore how both science and technology have been progressively taking over important roles previously a realm of each nation's particular political and social projections.

Historically, cyborgs can be said to derive from the 'science-is-all' approach that became dominant in the 1980s. The revolution in telecommunications taking place after the Second World War was another step in the move towards rationalization that characterized most of the 20th century (Haraway, 58). Already by the 1960s, robots—the by then image of futurity and technological evolution—were beginning to alter and develop under the pressures of intensive capitalism, consumerism, and the new sciences. As a result, cyborgs sprang forth as the posthuman combination of sentient and mechanic elements supposed to overcome the limitations of our human condition, superseding those with wire and metal.

On the bright side, cyborgs stand for the image of a 'future-become-present' where the principles of social engineering, risks management, and information access are the staples. Citizens buying this dream of a techno-Eden trust in the illusion of a world populated by various gadgets supposed to symbolize the standardization of efficiency that will grant them greater freedom to work, think, consume, and enjoy life. That is, happiness pressing a button, pleasure in a click. On the dark side though, questions of power, control, exclusion, increasing surveillance, the 'new eugenics' (CAE, 71) or reproduction, slide swiftly around the corners of our eyes otherwise busily distracted by the dazzling-brightness of life in *paradise.com*. A large number of theorists, in fact, have called our attentions to the manner in which the cyborg metaphor is being subtly redeployed to educate us to suitable forms of social behaviour numbing our senses to the reality of a neoliberal system that is mostly interested in its own unfettered reproduction.¹

However, cyborgs are not responsible for their 'bad name.' Indeed, a growing number of feminist theorists and authors have begun to reclaim this symbol's innate potential to question pre-established categories, institutions, and boundaries. In the minds of most feminist intellectuals, the words of Donna Haraway's pathbreaking "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" still reverberate with the ironic promise of a cyborgian 'vengeance': "By the late twentieth-century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (150). Cyborg bodies then are the contested terrain where much of the twentieth and twenty-first century battles around technology, consumerism, science, and capitalism were and *are* still played out. The three texts selected for this essay—Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003); Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* (2002); and Nalo Hopkinson's short story "Ganger (Ball Lightning)" from her collection *Skin Folk* (2001)—will serve to elucidate some of the potentialities, both negative and positive, of the cyborg image in contemporary Canadian literature and contemporary times. These three authors' texts drink from the cyberpunk tradition of the late 1970s and early 1980s where the works of William Gibson in literature—most outstandingly his *Neuromancer* (1984) novel—and Ridley Scott in film—*Blade Runner* (1982)—recuperated the powerful allure that the monstrous robotic organism of Fritz Lang's iconic *Metropolis* (1929) had already gendered female or that Mary Shelley had engraved into the collective subconscious ever since she first published her popular *Frankenstein* (1818). Thus, it may be about time, as Mary Catherine Harper pinpoints, to begin acknowledging "the extent to which it [our world] is populated by cyborgs" (418).

1 See for instance the essays contained in two recent collections around the cyborg topic edited by Chris Hables Gray (1995) and Jenny Wolmark (1999) respectively, where numerous authors explore the 'side-effects' of our infatuation with technophilia.

Engineering the 'new normal,' re-creating the body

volume
10

One of the biggest trends within Western and non-Western cultures in the last few decades has been the growing obsession with body-fitness and body-engineering. How to control and manipulate the body so that it better adapts and fulfils the demands of neoliberalism—social, (re)productive, and consumptive—has pushed the boundaries of scientific research and human imagination.² Increasingly, the bodies of the apt and capable are bodies that exhibit clear markers—cultural, racial, physical, and sexual—of contained desirability and normalcy. As Anne Balsamo estates, “[b]odybuilding, colored contact lenses, liposuction, and other technological innovations have subtly altered the dimensions and markers of what counts as a ‘natural’ body” (1). Indeed, the very notion of ‘the natural’ itself may be far more flexible than imagined, at once in clear opposition with ‘the produced,’ it is now also been widely used to define the artificially-created ‘new normal.’ Hence, both Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* and Larissa Lai’s *Salt Fish Girl* take over from this current and pervasive preoccupation with the physical and the organic, postulating with the consequences of worlds populated by genetically engineered hybrids; and both novels do so by exhibiting an almost-paranoid concern with bodily matters.

Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* situates us in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity has been reduced to Snowman, a man previously known as Jimmy, who must watch over the Children of Crake, a series of artificially generated cyborgs just taken out from a synthetic techno-womb laboratory ironically called *Paradise*. Beginning in “zero hour” (Atwood, 1), that is, the hour of nothingness, the hour in which the world became an ‘Other’ to itself, the text then moves back and forth between a disintegrating present where the remnants of human civilization are slowly rotting away, and the memories of former Jimmy, now Snowman, as he recuperates the story of the world’s collapse out bits and pieces of his own past life.

The landscape that Atwood portrays in her novel prior to civilizational havoc is one of hyper-individualized experience where all aspects of life on Earth have reached the climax of technological expression. Before the world collapsed, life on Earth had been carefully redefined according to the logics of numbers and reason; hence, citizens were separated into cities-compounds according to their supposed intrinsic value and mental/physical capacities. HelthWyzer, OrganInc, Nooskins, or RejoovenEssence were

2 Both the disclosing of the Human Genome at the opening of this century and the growing of a prosthetic semi-functional ear by performance artist and philosopher Stelarc are good examples of this imaginative-investigative split. As Stelarc himself declares in his website: “We inhabit an age of CIRCULATING FLESH” (Stelarc; capitals in the original).

some of the names those compounds were given signaling to the venerated properties that their ideal citizenry had to conquer in order to be granted 'a place in *Paradise*.' It was inside these compounds that the properties of life and history were altered and re-assembled daily thanks to advanced genetic modifications and various associated market calculations. And interestingly, it is in such a hyper-dehumanized context that the body becomes the primary vehicle for cultural inscription. The Children of Crake are a good example of this. Unlike in Lai's text, where cyborgs are the product of both conscious and unconscious mutations, Atwoods' cyborgs are a rational attempt at controlling the randomness and imperfectability of nature so that consumers may ultimately be able to purchase "totally chosen babies that would incorporate any feature, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer may wish to select" (Atwood, 357). Her Crakers are "amazingly attractive, these children—each one naked, each one perfect, each one a different skin colour—chocolate, rose, tea, butter, cream honey—but each with green eyes. Crake's aesthetic" (8). The ultimate perfection of these beings' bodies, crafted into a harmonious idyllic of multiculturalism and peaceful gender dualism, becomes highly representative for the progressive internalization of an updated version of the principles of natural selection that Atwood exacerbates in her narrative.

As the novel illustrates, before techno-revolution, natural selection dictated that only the physically-fittest survived long enough to perpetuate their genetic materials. After techno-revolution, posthuman strictures—which are nothing else but neoliberal strictures—dictate that only the technologically fittest do so. Such a prerogative lies at the heart of the particular geography presented in Atwood's novel. In order to protect the rights to survival of a few 'chosen' ones, Atwood conceives of a world of intelligent screening technologies that separate 'good from bad' and isolate the qualified from potential 'pollution' inside safe and neatly-enclosed compounds. The misfit, that is, those (un) natural involutions incapable of adapting to changes, are on the contrary condemned to roam the so-called Pleeblands, a dantesque scenario lying outside the compounds where a carnival of despair and illicit trafficking takes place daily full of those 'deformed' destined to perish. Consequently, Atwood's text becomes an uncomfortable extrapolation of a pseudo-eugenicist discourse that has intensified worldwide in the last few years. As the members of the CAE explain, "[e]ugenics...[n]ow hides under the authority of medical progress and the decoding of nature...which makes it palatable once again" (6), which means that "[p]eople are being taught to think eugenically" (71). Indeed, as Sarah Franklin argues in her analysis of contemporary stem cell research, the present situation is one in which the developments within the fields of genetics and genomics are immediately associated to salvation and progress through "a rhetorical fabric of hope, health, and an improved future through increasing biological control" (59).

In this manner, and by means of her Crakers, Atwood consciously weaves into her story current anxieties around the feasibility of multicultural coexistence, around human engineering or around gender inequality; for it is clear that the manipulations over her future race of pseudo-humanoids do not stop at their skin. The intrusion upon the bodies of the Children of Crake seeps into their ultimate overall behavior, both social and sexual. In this way, the Children of Crake reproduce to perfection the ideal for an extended nuclear family model of heterosexual mating and pious submission to their 'Creator,' where females are in charge of housekeeping and childrearing and males are the ones responsible for outer defense—even if this last task is fulfilled by means of a continuous renewal of a urine-borderline they produce by peeing *en masse* every few hours. This gendered distribution of social roles perfectly illustrates how in spite of our reverence for technological progress and automation "contemporary forms of technology rely on a logic of binary gender-identity as an underlying organizational framework. This underlying structure both enables and constrains our engagement with the new technologies" (Balsamo, 9-10).

Much in the same way, sexual intercourse for the Crakers of the future has been turned by their designers into a rationalized orgy of sorts, where females exhibit their coherent sexual desire "every three years" (Atwood, 193) by a blue belly that fades away as soon as pregnancy is achieved through a process of mating that weaves together one female and four males taking turns in copula. Once again, science features prominently so as to dictate the appropriate amount of sexual pleasure that is to take place during reproduction which, in its turn, must always occur within the framework of a heterosexual practice, directly doing away with unnecessary non-(re)productive sex. Thus, even reproduction, or rather, precisely reproduction, has become under siege in the post-apocalyptic scenario offered by Atwood's novel. Her text's satire seems, by the end, very clear: just when technology and science had been offered for consumption by exploiting the hypeness of a 'world *sans frontières*' promising a dream of superdevelopment and interactive integration, we find that such prospects have turned against ourselves and have otherwise resulted in unprecedented annihilation and alienation. In Margaret Atwood's novel humans fall prey to their innermost ontological delusions and, as Haraway would say, 'make of science their myth.'³

3 Donna Haraway actually writes: "Science is our myth" (88).

Of Monsters and Chimeras

One of the features of the present fetishization of technology and science in popular culture is that it achieves greater economic integration even as it fosters increasing human individualization. At the workplace, at home, or in the street, posthuman bodies are distracted from one another by the individual pursuit of their individual desires. Whether it is by means of greater control over people's movements, their education into the values of heteronormativity, or their alienation with consumer bliss, bodies in the contemporary world are mostly kept individually separated except for (re)productive needs.⁴

volume
10

However, even at the point where it seemed that thanks to technology and virtual environments the body would become obsolete—its material carapace only a hindrance—the quest for greater integration of humans with technology has not ultimately succeeded in creating “disembodied citizens” (Balsamo, 127). Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* is a good example of this.

In Lai's narration, “the body is the language of the Third Testament” (76). In her novel, corporate power has taken control of life on earth and has been creating cyborgs, that is, cloning humans, in a sort of chain-production nightmare. As one of Lai's main protagonists explains “[m]y genes are point zero three per cent *cyprinus carpio*—freshwater carp. I'm a patented new fucking life form” (157). These engineered cyborgs, crafted out of the DNA “of so-called Third World, aboriginal peoples, and peoples in danger of extinction” (160) into female bodies, are transported, disassembled, transformed, and reassembled when necessary according to the demands of capital exhibiting how, even when their disembodiment and re-embodiment has become a widespread cultural practice, the strong fixation with marking engineered bodies according to socially accepted standards of gender, race, and physical appearance prevents the body and its material qualities from completely disappearing. Hence, the subsequent re-embodiment of these female bodies becomes an act of intense cultural and capitalist re-inscription, for “[i]ndeed, the gendered boundary between male and female is one border that remains heavily guarded despite new technologized ways to rewrite the physical body in the flesh” (CAE, 9).

Lai's text is an explicit attack to discriminatory racist and sexist practices carried in the name of evolution both in Canada and elsewhere. Recuperating many of the points already dealt with for Atwood's novel, Lai exhibits how current discourses around technology and eugenics are fraud with a fetishization of technological

4 And even this last realm is gradually becoming a ‘zero-contact zone’ as well, where the body of the pregnant woman is often treated as passive receptacle for the ultimately important fetus-content (Casper 195).

development that merely desires the reification of the current cultural status quo. But unlike Atwood's narration, where cyborgs are ultimately a reduction of humanity to biological essentialism, Lai's story does truly explore the potential for disruption contained within the cyborg image. Once again set in a speculative North American future where the world has been divided into walled cities and unregulated spaces, *Salt Fish Girl*, which retells the stories of Nu Wa and Miranda Chin in two different time-space locations, demonstrates how cyborgs are the 'natural' offspring of our posthuman hallucinations.

volume
10

Rosi Braidotti has stressed how the quest for (productive) perfection inherent to neoliberal discourses has turned monstrous figures—Other(ed) figures—into the latent threat to a normality in power (177). Aware of this, Larissa Lai has her narration refusing to comply with the straight-forward association of natural with harmless and artificial with dangerous, with a story that, more than anything else, has ambiguity and cyborg Others constantly trespassing the boundaries of periphery and centre. Her main protagonist is a young female living in Serendipity in the year 2044 whose different body, race, gender, and sexuality situate her at the periphery of her society's sanctioned projections.

Miranda Chin is a young woman of Asian descent who, from a very early age, is marked as 'different' from the rest by a particularly pungent and uncomfortable "pepper and cat-pee" (Lai, 15) stench. As occurred with Atwood's text, bodies for Lai are *the* means for cultural inscription, and they also serve as the ironic *topos* where cyborg dystopia, lesbian insurrection, and a new myth of origins combine to shake the foundations of Western civilization. With her unbearable yet impossible-to-dismiss aroma, Miranda becomes the best emblem for an era where the avid consumptive and material impulses of humanity have fostered both planned and random mutations over humans and nature. Miranda's cyborgian body is the result of a hyper-reality conundrum where science, postfordism, and technology have ultimately lost control over the outcomes of their systems of production. Part human, part divine, and part techno-monster, Miranda's body defies categorizations; she is an affront to the rational principles which, paradoxically, have made her peculiar existence possible.

By means of her text's many cyborgs, Larissa Lai gives shape to a reality where the real protagonists are those who often populate the margins, those who are racially, sexually, and physically 'dissident'; that is, abject in almost any way possible but not for that reason condemned to disappearing. Haraway once wrote: "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animal and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contrary standpoints. The political struggle is to see form both perspectives at once" (154).

Lai's cyborg dystopia evidently takes over from Haraway's previous work. Refusing to provide a ready-made ending for her text, yet also refusing to offer any straight-forward reading of her cyborgs' behaviour, Larissa Lai merely sets off to explore the many blind sides of technophobia and technophilia.

Cyborg-Sexualities, Pleasure, and Pain

Even though Atwood's and Lai's novels end up with uncertain prospects for their cyborg protagonists, not all is dark and negative that surrounds the cyborg figure. As already hinted at the beginning of this essay, cyborgs embody an inherent powerful potential to unsettle essentialist discourse and expand future possible embodiments. Larissa Lai's novel does actually go in this direction, and so does Nalo Hopkinson's short story "Ganger (Ball Lightning)" towards which this final section of the essay will now turn its attention to.

Hopkinson's story focuses upon the relationship between Issy and Cleve as this couple of black North Americans struggles with miscommunication, race issues, and alienation. The cyborgian component is provided by the appearance of a strange species of kinesthetic organism, known as Ganger, that comes into being after Issy and Cleve use the "Senstim wetsuits" (Hopkinson, 222), two thin "oversized condom[s] possessed with fuzzy logic" (224) designed to be worn during intercourse and supposed to boost up sensation. The bulk of Hopkinson's cyborg exploration spins around gender, sexuality, and identity.

Issy's and Cleve's relationship to one another is marked with absence, the absence of effective communication. Couple issues, including race, prevent this couple's understanding of each other and push them into a spiral of technologically-mediated sex that will threaten the coherence of gender dualism by means of a transgender sexual experience of unexpected consequences.

The wetsuits, one for females, the other for males, adapt 'naturally' to body shapes. Cleve wonders whether in the lapse it takes for the wetsuits to adequately adapt to body contour, it might be possible for him to experience sex 'as a woman' by using Issy's already bodily-shaped wetsuit and vice versa. The experience is "so different" (Hopkinson, 226) that almost at the moment of sexual climax Cleve coils back mumbling "Jesus, you were fucking my inside-out dick" (226). This trans-gender experience, that problematizes questions of dual-gender, sexual inscription, and body image, threatens Cleve's assumed gender coherence and brings into focus hermaphrodite desire.

volume
10

As Anne Fausto-Sterling comments with respect to intersex children, “labeling someone a male or a woman is a social decision” (3), and we could similarly argue then that labeling someone a cyborg or a human is a social decision. As was the case with *Salt Fish Girl*, Hopkinson’s tale functions with the destabilization of numberless dualisms: male/female, normal/monstrous, pure/abject, white/other... Her irony though, springs from an unforeseen event taking place as the result of humans’ interaction with the mechanic.

After Cleve and Issy use the Semstin wetsuits, they contradict the instructions provided by the producer and leave the two suit-gadgets together fully charged. What ensues is a surreal scene of prophylactic-sex, where those empty sacks of transparent latex have sex with each other like crazy until morning comes, when the Ganger arises. The Ganger is a translucent hermaphroditic apparition formed off the electric energy of the wetsuits. Part suit, part ghost, part male, and part female, yet none of those completely, its *raison d’être* is pleasure, a pleasure that it seeks to the extreme almost producing both Issy’s and Cleve’s deaths. But the ganger’s ultimate function is destabilization, the destabilization of ontological categories, gender dualism, and sexual taboos.

Hopkinson’s story reworks the standard plot of fear and fascination with the abnormal Other, which in her case tingles with fear and fascination for the technological-sexual. According to Elspeth Probyn, in sex we become one with an Other, our bodies “opening up to reveal a multitude of surfaces that seek contact with other surfaces near or far” (61) and this seeking of contact touches on the dangerous, on the illicit, on the abject, and forbidden, all qualities that the technological and the sexual possess. Hopkinson adapts the hypeness of technology, symbolized by the wetsuits and their capacity to grant greater pleasure with minimum risk—no fluids spilling, no unnecessary contact, no unforeseen pregnancies, and “thrice as responsive” (Hopkinson, 223)—with the potential perils inherent to an amalgam of humans with technology and sex—thus the Ganger.

Current concerns around reproduction and heteronormativity are thus transposed into Hopkinson’s text, demonstrating how sex in our posthuman contexts must always be controlled and mediated by technology and science, which dictate the when and the how of the (safe) sexual act. Thus, it is Issy’s and Cleve’s non-rational usage of the wetsuits, their selfish pursuit of their *deviant* desire, which produces the Ganger. The irony in Hopkinson’s cyborg hermaphrodite though, is that, even when it almost causes both Cleve and Issy’s deaths by electrocution, its murdering potential comes in the form of a mixed pleasurable and painful massive electric orgasm. As the narrator tells us when the Ganger has hold of Issy’s limp body, “She was coming to death” (Hopkinson, 237).

Furthermore, and in tone with Lai’s work, Hopkinson’s story does also develop

a racial component intricately connected to the text's other concerns. Her two protagonists are blacks, that is, already Othered subjects, that, in an attempt to neutralize their otherness in a predominantly white mainstream culture, have folded upon themselves foreclosing any outer contact with their respective worlds other than sex. Sex and technology work for them as a substitute for those many issues they cannot directly address. Thus, the new technologies in Hopkinson's text contribute to an individualization of experience that, like in Atwood's and Lai's novels, could lead to unforeseen negative consequences. As Issy comments at some point in Hopkinson's tale: "Encase us both in fake skin and let it do the fucking for us" (Hopkinson, 243).

volume
10

Conclusion

The pieces explored in this essay exhibit how appreciations of the alliance between humans and technology largely depend on one's political and personal positioning. Although Atwood's story draws on the cyborg theme and builds up a devastated future where cyborgs populate the Earth criticizing unreflective reliance on science and technology, her usage of the cyborg symbol is somewhat obscured by a negative and deterministic appreciation of the human-machine alliance. Her cyborgs, though bionic, still preserve much of the dualism inherent to the Western tradition and are incapable of breaking away with the prospects of repeating human mistakes—and gender structures—once again. Lai's and Hopkinson's texts, on the other hand, leave the door open to hazard and possibility. Though Hopkinson's story does definitely condemn the unreflective usage of technology with a happy ending where the techno-monster finally evaporates, she is less restrictive with respect to possible new gender and sexual alternatives provided by a cyborgian re-embodiment. Her hermaphrodite cyborg-Ganger clearly waives recognition to Haraway's "post-gender world" (150). Similarly, Lai's open-ended novel where two of her racialized female-cyborgs escape corporate control and reproduce on their own, also allows her world a second chance where cyborg others may be a viable alternative to (mis-)shape the world differently. The results are a matter of odds.

The three texts are representative examples of the manner in which Canadian authors are giving voice to questions concerning not only the ontology of cyborgs, but also the ontology of the very category of 'human.' What is a cyborg? Are we cyborgs? Who is to decide who qualifies as one? Does living in a postcapitalist environment ruled by the logics of chain-production, local-global movements, material accumulation, physical fitness or technological mediation turn us into cyborgs? If so, which are the

consequences? Are our world and its future prospects any different from pre-cyborgian ones? And what happens with such parameters as gender or identity; where do these reside once the bounded material frame of our bodies is 'vandalized' by the mechanic? If providing a ready answer to these questions still remains somewhat problematic, then it may be useful to remember that, as Haraway proclaims, "[w]ho cyborgs will be is a radical question; the answers are a matter of survival" (153).



Works cited

- Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. London: Virago Press, 2004. Print.
- Balsamo, Anne. *Technologies of the Gendered Body. Reading Cyborg Women*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Metamorphoses. Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002. Print.
- Cameron, James. *Avatar*. Los Angeles: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2009. Film.
- Casper, Monica J. "Fetal Cyborgs and Technomoms on the Reproductive Frontier: Which Way to the Carnival?" Gray, Figueroa, and Mentor. 183-202. Print.
- Critical Art Ensemble. *Flesh Machine*. New York: Autonomedia, 1998. Print.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body. Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Print.
- Franklin, Sarah. "Stem Cells R Us: Emergent Life Forms and the Global Biological". *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Eds. Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 59-78. Print.
- Gartner, Szuszi. *Darwin's Bastards. Astounding Tales from Tomorrow*. Vancouver: D&M Publishers, 2010. Print.
- Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace, 1984. Print.
- Gray, Chris Hables, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, and Steven Mentor, eds. *The Cyborg Handbook*. New York & London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.
- Harper, Mary Catherine. "Incurably Alien Other: A Case for Feminist Cyborg Writers". *Science Fiction Studies* 22, 3 (1995): 399-420. Print.
- Hopkinson, Nalo. "Ganger (Ball Lightning)". *Skin Folk*. New York: Warner Books, 2001. Print.
- Lai, Larissa. *Salt Fish Girl*. Toronto: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002. Print.
- Lang, Fritz. *Metropolis*. Valladolid: Divisa Home Video, 2003. Film.

- Park, Chan-Wook. *I'm a Cyborg, but That's OK*. Seoul: Moho Films, 2006. Film.
- Probyn, Elspeth. *Carnal Appetites. Food/Sex/Identities*. New York & London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Scott, Ridley. *Blade Runner*. Madrid: Warner Home video, 2008. Film.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Houndmills: McMillan, 1995. Print.
- Stellarc. *Ear on Arm*. Photograph. Webshots. *Stellarc*. n.d. 2011. Web. 01 March 2011.
- Wolmark, Jenny, ed. *Cybersexualities. A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. Print.

volume
10

LINDA FASANO

UNIVERSITÉ DE SALERNE, ITALIE

L'américanité du Québec : histoire, mythe et littérature. Sur la route du roman de la route

volume
10

Abstract

The aim of this study is a terminological, historical, mythical and literary analysis on Quebec Americaness. It will go over both its seemingly tautology, its status of "dustbin conceit" and "thematic muddle", in order to highlight Americaness as the main identity topic of Quebec as well as the other American collectivities. It will stress its sense of rupture, release and its political, ideological, mythical and literary outdistances either from the genetic European models or the influent American patterns. It will rapidly introduce the general situation of the New France continuity, the comings and goings between continuity and discontinuity of French Canada with its "Survivance", till the prominent rupture of French Quebec with its "Quiet Revolution" and its referendums for the "Souveraineté". The paper is then proving alterity, hybridity, cosmopolitanism and transculturalism are the main aspects of an "alternative" Americanity which the Canadian Province has basically tried to gain for twenty years: from "americanidad" to the first recognition of its "américanitude" and its "québécoisité", until the final assertion of its "québécoisité". These identity features are greatly represented by some of the last thirty years most important Quebec road novels written by Gabrielle Roy, Jacques Poulin, Roch Carrier, Jacques Godbout, Gilles Archambault, Monique LaRue et Guillaume Vigneault. They are indeed the writers who show better the historical, political, "mitoclasta" and "mitoplasta" routes of Quebec Americanity, moving by now to a "Latin-Americanity" or even to a "Transamericanity". These authors' novels cross over the American Myth of the "mouvement", the "Newness", the "Eden Happiness" and "Harmony", even the "material success". Through the hybridity of "road books" and "road movies" styles and contents, the study will show their novels deconstruct, de-mythify and criticize

US World. The analysis will finally issue their outdistance from its Americanism and its satanic, schizophrenic and exotic Americanness, and, on the contrary, their transfer of its best cultural and literary models, in order to reconstruct their own Myth, Literature, and their own endogenous, alternative and sharing Americanness.

Résumé

Cette étude sera un exposé terminologique, historique, mythique et littéraire sur l'américanité du Québec. Il dépassera à la fois la tautologie apparente, le statut de « concept-poubelle », de « fourre-tout » thématique de l'américanité pour la montrer enfin comme le fondement identitaire du Québec, à l'instar d'autres collectivités américaines. L'enquête soulignera sa signification de rupture, d'affranchissement, de décrochage politique, idéologique, mythique et littéraire aussi bien des modèles européens de descendance que des modèles états-unis d'ascendance. Il amorcera un survol rapide sur la situation générale de continuité de la Nouvelle France, des va-et-vient entre continuité et rupture du Canada français en état de « Survivance », et enfin de la rupture marquée du Québec lors de la « Révolution Tranquille » et des référendums pour la Souveraineté. L'étude démontrera ensuite que l'altérité, l'hybridité, le cosmopolitisme et le transculturalisme sont les aspects principaux de l'américanité « différenciée » que la Province canadienne essaie de gagner surtout depuis trente ans : de « l'americanidad » à la reconnaissance de son « américanitude » et de sa « québécoitude » jusqu'à l'affirmation finale de sa « québécoité ». Ces traits identitaires se trouvent tous représentés dans les quelques romans québécois de la route les plus significatifs des trente dernières années, écrits par Gabrielle Roy, Jacques Poulin, Roch Carrier, Jacques Godbout, Gilles Archambault, Alain Poissant, Monique LaRue et Guillaume Vigneault. Ce sont en fait les écrivains qui illustrent le mieux les parcours historique, politique, « mitoclasta » et « mitoplasta » de l'américanité québécoise qui bouge désormais vers une latino-américanité, voire une transaméricaineté. Les romans de ces auteurs traversent le mythe américain de la « mouvance », du « renouvellement », du « bonheur » et de « l'harmonie » édéniques, sinon de la « réussite » matérielle. L'étude démontrera qu'à travers l'hybridité du fond et de la forme des « road books » et des « road movies », leurs romans déconstruisent, démythifient et critiquent le monde étatsunien. L'analyse prouvera ainsi le décrochement de son américanisation et de son américanité satanique, schizophrénique, exotique, et, par contre, le transfert de ses meilleurs modèles culturels et littéraires, afin de reconstruire leur propre mythe, leur propre littérature, leur propre américanité endotique, différenciée et partagée.

Dans l'imaginaire populaire persiste encore la perception que l'Amérique se réduit aux États-Unis et que l'américain n'habite que cette partie du Nouveau Continent. Celui qui vit au Canada serait donc perçu comme un habitant d'un territoire indistinct qui semblerait plutôt séparé du Nord de l'Amérique. Parler ainsi d'américanité suscite d'emblée l'impression d'homologuer toute collectivité américaine au modèle étatsunien toujours dominant. La thématique met en place par contre la grande complexité des enjeux continentaux du Nouveau Monde qui est loin d'être une tautologie (Melançon : 72) et une lapalissade (*Petit Robert*, ad vocem)¹. Dire que l'américanité concerne les quatre coins de l'Amérique n'est pas du tout comme affirmer, en géométrie, que le quadrilatère a quatre côtés. Ce n'est donc pas un pléonasme, une redondance, un truisme, une « répétition inutile de la même idée sous une autre forme » (*Ibid.*). En d'autres termes, la culture et la littérature québécoises ne sont pas américaines seulement parce qu'elles s'écrivent en Amérique (Cf. Melançon, 72).

Il est vrai que le sociologue Yvon Thériault, détracteur de l'américanité québécoise, la définit d'abord comme un *concept-poubelle* à rejeter en tant que « ramassis hétéroclite d'énoncés dont on réussit difficilement à trouver la forme » (Thériault 2002a, 23). Il est aussi vrai toutefois que chaque réalité américaine, ainsi que tout côté d'un quadrilatère, possède sa singularité, concourant à la définition de la pluralité d'ensemble de l'Amérique. Bref, il n'est pas banal et simple d'affirmer que l'américanité concerne toute l'Amérique. Il s'agit plutôt d'une « proposition complexe qui reste vraie en vertu de sa forme seule, quelle que soit la vérité des propositions qui la composent » (*PR*, cit.). Le Québec est en effet l'une de ces propositions qui depuis plus de quarante ans utilise le terme d'*américanité* pour indiquer la redéfinition de sa conscience identitaire franco-américaine, c'est-à-dire le réveil de son appartenance au grand tout de l'Amérique en tant que civilisation distincte (Bouchard 2001, 12-13)².

Il est donc évident qu'en dépit de son statut de « fourre-tout » thématique, « l'américanité est au cœur du questionnement identitaire du Québec contemporain » (Thériault 2002a, 23). La province canadienne en prend en fait ses prémisses de base : la rupture, l'écart et la prise de position idéologique, politique, sociale et économique de la filiation européenne. La démarche des ruptures, « démarche essentiellement américaine, un préalable même à la constitution d'une américanité » (Lamonde 1999, 97-98),

1 *Tautologie* : n.f. – 1596 ; bas lat. *tautologia*, mot gr. 1. Vice logique consistant à présenter, comme ayant un sens différent, une proposition dont le prédicat ne dit rien de plus que le sujet > Lapalissade. Dorénavant, *Petit Robert* devient *PR*.

2 Parmi les collectivités du Nouveau Monde, à savoir celles « formées depuis le XVI^e siècle à même des mouvements d'émigrations intercontinentaux en provenance de l'Europe et dirigés vers des territoires *neufs* ...», Bouchard ne compte pas seulement l'Amérique, mais aussi l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande, l'Afrique du Sud et l'ancienne Rhodésie.

est surtout une traversée spatiale, là où l'identité se veut un processus d'appropriation symbolique médiatisé de l'espace (Raffestin, 15). Et alors, l'américanité se définit mieux comme « une tentative de description des caractéristiques civilisationnelles – culturelles et matérielles – inhérentes au partage d'un même habitat-continent et en opposition à l'européanité » (Thériault 2002a, 120). Plus précisément, elle détermine « l'ensemble des comportements propres au continent nord-américain. Ces comportements sont nés et se sont manifestés progressivement dans l'histoire à partir du début de la colonisation du Nouveau Monde » (Vigh, 66).

volume
10

Ce sont d'ailleurs les différents degrés de détachement qui distinguent les collectivités nouvelles : en ce qui le concerne, le Québec bouge entre les deux typologies extrêmes de rupture et de continuité que Bouchard définit dans sa « géométrie variable » du décrochage métropolitaine des sociétés américaines (Bouchard 2001, 27) : l'*idéaltypus* de la « reproduction dans la différence ou dans la rupture » et l'*idéaltypus* de la « reproduction à l'identique » (*Ibid.*, 24-25). Il n'adopte pas toutefois le modèle étatsunien du décrochage total, « par affrontement » (*Ibid.*). Son modèle de référence est plutôt celui du détachement « par usure » ou par « glissements successifs » (*Ibid.*) que le Québec apprend surtout de l'Amérique latine. Il fait sien en effet l'idéal identitaire de l'*americanidad*, de la *mexicanidad* et de l'*argentinidad* (Orringer, 5-16) ou encore de la *négritude*, de l'*antillanité* et de la *créolité* (Ndyaye, 16-17; Bernabé, 23-29) pour sortir de la passivité et de l'inconscience identitaire de l'*américanitude* (Montpetit 1986 : 140), pour s'affranchir de l'idée d'un « Québec presque Amérique » (Lamonde 1996, 75-86) et arriver donc à la conscience d'une *américanité* « susceptible de révéler la pluralité des Amériques » (Thériault 2002b, 28). Bref, le Québec vise une *américanité différenciée* (Migueluez, 9) qui sorte de la *quhébetude* (Ducharme, 68) en éveillant la *québécitude* et en affirmant la *québécité* en tant que compromis entre l'*américanité* et la *francité* (Ndiaye, 10)³.

Ce survol terminologique s'explique mieux à travers le parcours historique du Québec qui commence avec la *Nouvelle France* du XVII^e siècle. Dès son nom ancien, il est évident que le Canada et une partie des Eus actuels n'étaient au début qu'un prolongement de la Mère Patrie française⁴. Bref, il n'y avait ni une américanité « horizontale » ni une américanité « verticale » (Bouchard 2002, 12-13)⁵. Si d'une part la Conquête britannique au XVIII^e siècle ne fait qu'imposer au Canada un simple changement de filiation et

3 Terme qui englobe toutes « les caractéristiques linguistiques et culturelles transmises par la langue de Molière ».

4 Il est notoire que la Nouvelle France comprenait un territoire immense qui allait du delta du Mississipi, de l'Acadie et de la Louisiana.

5 La perspective horizontale concerne l'impact sur le territoire et la cohabitation des « immigrants primitifs » – les colonisateurs européens – avec les « habitants primitifs », les autochtones. La perspective verticale concerne par contre les rapports de filiation et de dépendance du Canada de l'Europe.

de dépendance européennes, d'autre part il détermine le premier vrai décrochage, aussi bien horizontal que vertical, du Canada français : l'effort de la *Survivance* du peuple francophone à la colonisation britannique (Tétu de Labsade, 62). Ce que Thériault retient, dans l'histoire franco-canadienne, comme refus de l'américanité, c'est peut-être son affirmation (Thériault 2002a, 354) : la rupture « horizontale » du Canada français avec l'anglophonie étatsunienne et britannique et le contraste « vertical » à la domination politique et économique de l'Angleterre arrive à travers le maintien de la filiation linguistique, culturelle et idéologique avec la France. Bouchard affirme d'ailleurs qu'il n'y a pas une reproduction fidèle de tout ce qui vient de cette partie d'Europe (Bouchard 1996, 19)⁶. D'une façon générale, il est quand même vrai que « contrairement à l'Amérique anglophone, qui a débuté sous le signe de la rupture et qui a renforcé cette rupture en déclarant son indépendance et donc son américanité totale, le Canada a été fondé selon une volonté d'expansion de la civilisation européenne et de la religion catholique » (Balthazar, 275).

Si l'émancipation politique est « le moule pour l'américanité » (Thériault 2002a, 67), c'est « une pensée d'actes fondateurs y compris celui d'une affirmation „d'indépendance“ intellectuelle » qui déterminerait l'américanité véritable du Québec (Lamonde 1999, 97-98). Malheureusement, le Canada français n'a jamais réussi l'indépendance politique : son unique tentative d'affranchissement – la révolte des patriotes en 1837-1838 – a été violemment réprimée (Cf. Lamonde 2001, 29-30)⁷. Le même sort attend le Québec français qui, après l'échec des deux référendums d'indépendance en 1980 et en 1995, vit encore forcément la dépendance fédérale canadienne et l'asservissement au Commonwealth britannique (Cf. *Constitution, partition of*, en ligne). Ces trois moments de rébellion politique sont moins déterminants que la célèbre Révolution Tranquille pour l'affranchissement culturel du Québec (Cf. *Révolution Tranquille*, en ligne)⁸ : ce vaste mouvement de contreculture, de laïcisation et de libéralisation des mœurs amorce « un processus de transformation d'une société duelle en une société 'organiquement' articulée » (Migueluez, 21), une société qui se désenclave de plus en plus de sa double racine coloniale par son affirmation culturelle autonomiste. Contrairement à Thériault, Bouchard dirait que « la volonté d'établir, à côté de la puissance américaine, une société différente » (Thériault 2002a, 354), signifierait l'affirmation d'une américanité différenciée

6 Supportant les idées de la Nouvelle historiographie, Bouchard soutient que le Canada français ne se limiterait pas seulement à reproduire « dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent la vieille matrice européenne », mais qu'il présenterait déjà des éclats de différenciation et d'autonomisation continentales latentes.

7 Cet événement historique marque toutefois, selon l'historien Lamonde, un moment topique de la construction de l'identité américaine qui, elle, remonterait aux dernières décennies du XVIII^e siècle.

8 Le terme est une traduction de l'anglais *Quiet Revolution* que le journal torontois, « Globe and mail », attribuait à l'époque au mouvement socio-culturel le plus important du Québec.

qui avèrerait la célèbre formule identitaire de Lamonde : « - Q = (F) + (GB) + (USA)² - (R) » (Lamonde 2000, 25). Le Québec a dû cependant payer le compromis de l'*américanisation* afin de rendre sa société compétitive face au géant étatsunien. Ce compromis Thériault l'appelle *Mauvaise Amérique* c'est-à-dire le « projet économico-technique qui vise à imposer les tenants du libre échange panaméricain » (Thériault 2002b, 28). Les différents processus d'américanisation seraient par ailleurs les principaux responsables du développement de l'américanité québécoise, de la culture à la fois matérielle et culturelle du Québec, de son ouverture à l'altérité américaine (Bernier, 176-184).

volume
10

Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les années 1980 marquent l'avènement d'une littérature de « l'ailleurs », un ailleurs d'abord étatsunien et tout récemment aussi latino-américain et panaméricain (Cf. Andrès). L'altérité – « the quality of being Other or different, as opposed to the Ipseity – The Same or Self » (Dvorak, 149) – est évidemment l'envers nécessaire de l'identité, l'élément essentiel à la construction de l'individualisme post-colonial. Toutes les littératures post-coloniales sont en fait des littératures de l'altérité (Cf. Ashcroft, 78) c'est-à-dire que toutes les littératures qui vivent une condition de marginalité, à la fois spatiale et temporelle, par rapport à une littérature dominante. Dans ce contexte, le roman postmoderne québécois se fait le principal porte-parole de l'altérité culturelle du Québec, de sa condition d'entre-deux identitaire, de son tiraillement entre Europe et Amérique. Le regard sur l'altérité, qui arrive par le franchissement de l'extra-territorialité, à savoir par le « désaïssissement » (Harel, 281)⁹ dans l'espace américain, établirait le « pacte interculturel » nécessaire au Québec afin de dépasser son assise rigide de l'identité et résoudre donc son « ambivalence mélancolique » par l'acceptation d'un autre, d'un « tiers étranger » qui devient souvent un « tiers-exclus » de la société (*Ibid.*, 281-284).

Le sous-genre du *roman de la route* questionne en profondeur les attentes contemporaines du partage d'une culture américaine commune qui soit finalement interculturelle et transculturelle. Il célèbre, en d'autres termes, la « mutation du roman national vers l'hétérogène » (Lapointe, 290), en visant ainsi la construction de la *Bonne Amérique* c'est-à-dire l'Amérique du renouvellement perpétuel qui, par l'errance, se rapproche de l'hybridité, du métissage et de la mixité, s'opposant à la *Mauvaise Amérique* : l'homologation, la mondialisation, le *melting pot*, la technocratie (Thériault 2002b, 28). Le concept d'hybridité devient donc le paramètre essentiel pour décrire la représentation des multiples identités nationales qui composent les sociétés américaines contemporaines dont le statut multiethnique avancé ne permet pas de les considérer univoquement : « ...postcolonial theory has recently termed catalysis or hybridity – whether it be ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or political – an energising tension generated

⁹ « le séjour dans en lieu étranger ».

by ethnocultural intermixing that is a distinguishing feature of the Americas » (Dvorak, 159). Les États-Unis représentent en fait la première collectivité post-coloniale à développer une littérature nationale distinctive à travers une combinaison d'éléments culturels différents. L'exaltation emphatique de la différence du modèle européen et « the cultural cross-fertilisation » (*Ibid.*, 157) ont donc été les tenants principaux de toutes les littératures post-modernes à la recherche d'originalité et d'individualité.

Dans le domaine romanesque québécois, la critique ne peut que reconnaître l'indéniable filiation du *roman de la route* au *road book* et au *road movie* étatsuniens : il s'agit « d'un amalgame original issu de deux traditions culturelles et de deux formes d'expression distinctes, de telle sorte qu'il nous donne à voir comment s'opèrent certains transfert culturels et artistiques » (Morency 2006, 18). Au transfert formel, qui unit le littéraire et le cinématographique, se superpose le transfert thématique où le mythe turnérien de la Frontière évolue dans le mythe contemporain de la route : tous les deux sont les espaces symboliques de la naissance et de l'évolution du peuple américain : « l'image du Québec prend forme en se situant dans la mouvance culturelle américaine en résistant à celle-ci, en refusant de se laisser absorber » (Chassay, 22). Le double sens du mot « mouvance » est en effet la clé de lecture américaine du roman de la route québécois (*PR*, ad vocem)¹⁰. Graviter dans l'orbite étatsunienne ne signifierait pas s'assimiler mais plutôt en assumer le mouvement, la mutabilité et la versatilité pour l'utiliser à son gré, de façon originale, tout en dépassant les frontières – dans le sens européen de bornes à ne pas franchir – saisissant plutôt la frontière turnérienne qui, en tant qu'espace « qui invite à bouger, qui incite à avancer et à entrer [...], sigle l'américanité de la culture qui l'englobe » (Modenesi, 165-166). Le roman québécois de la route – roman de la frontière par excellence – s'inspire donc de l'héritage littéraire et artistique de l'errance états-unienne pour réhabiliter le passé historique et culturel du Québec en passant surtout à travers une révision et une réécriture du mythe américain. Celui-ci, mouvant et transformationnel, est en effet le mythe princier de l'américanité, puisqu'il rappelle l'idéologie de base de la culture américaine : le renouvellement perpétuel (Morency 1994, 11).

Si l'exaltation de la nouveauté anime la pensée moderne depuis Hobbes, Locke et Rousseau, l'américanité est une radicalisation de la modernité, et donc elle est plus que l'Amérique (Cf. Tocqueville, 49). L'Amérique n'est que la création de la « première vague de l'économie-monde » tandis que « le processus de sa création politico-culturelle – l'américanité – est comme un condensé de tendances les plus lourdes de la modernité » (Thériault 2002b, 31). Bref, l'Américanité serait l'expression de la post-modernité ou

10 *Mouvance*: « I.2. Orbite, sphère d'influence ; II.3 (1914) Didact. Caractère de ce qui est mouvant, qui se meut, qui bouge ».

mieux encore le côté positif d'une médaille dont le revers négatif serait la surmodernité, l'excès, l'accélération et la superposition de lieux générant des non-lieux (cf. Augé 1992, 43) et des non-temps (Augé 2008, 10). L'être de l'américanité, être sans lieu et sans mémoire chez Tocqueville, essaie de trouver sa place et construire son histoire dans la mouvance de l'Ouest américain : celui-ci a toujours été, depuis la découverte de l'Amérique, l'ultime frontière, la limite extrême de l'étrangeté, de l'altérité à rencontrer (Cf. Todorov, 8), et donc lieu mythique par excellence tant d'affirmation matérielle que de bonheur spirituel et édénique.

volume
10

Dans les *romans de la route* en question, tous les protagonistes prennent la route mythique vers l'Ouest américain non pas vraiment pour s'y établir, mais pour réhabiliter leur terre de départ en tant que lieu idéal de réalisation identitaire. Bref, ils veulent transposer l'Ouest à l'Est. Si cela n'est pas possible, ils s'efforcent alors de s'établir ailleurs. Il s'agit d'hommes et de femmes, de vieux et de jeunes, de blancs et d'indiens, d'intellectuels et de gens ordinaires qui laissent momentanément le Canada francophone pour combler des manques à la fois individuels, collectifs, affectifs et identitaires. Ils abandonnent leur statut sédentaire d'« arpenteurs » pour devenir des « navigateurs », à savoir « des nomades qui ne s'abaissent pas à arpenter la terre et qui savent d'autant plus, maintenant que la planète entière est arpentée, que la terre est à tous » (LaRue, 1996, 21-22).

De quoi t'ennuies-tu Éveline ?¹¹ est le premier roman représentatif de l'effort de réduction des manques identitaires du Canada francophone. Ce roman-récit de Gabrielle Roy précède et annonce les autres à partir de la question rhétorique du titre à laquelle une vieille femme ordinaire cherche à répondre par son voyage transaméricain. En effet, Éveline s'ennuie d'abord de son frère aîné – au prénom emblématique de Majorique – qui va mourir avant qu'elle ne le rejoigne. Elle part de Winnipeg, au Manitoba, pour arriver à Bella Vista, pays rural de la Californie qui apparaît comme un microcosme idéal de bonheur, d'amour, d'absence de violence et de douleur et donc le meilleur paradis qu'elle puisse atteindre (Cf. Novelli, 67). Éveline s'ennuie aussi de l'aventure, du changement, de la nouveauté et ce voyage familial devient le prétexte idéal pour répondre à « l'appel de l'ailleurs » (DQ, 28) qui l'invite à « partir, connaître autant que possible les merveilles de ce monde, traverser la vie en voyageur » (DQ, 11). La vieille femme renverse ainsi les rôles traditionnels de la femme sédentaire et de l'homme nomade ainsi qu'une jeune fille le fait dans *Volkswagen blues* de Jacques Poulin¹². L'écrivain en panne Jack Waterman, grand sédentaire, est poussé au nomadisme par la métisse Pitsémine qui, avec ses longues jambes de Grande Sauterelle, selon son surnom indien (VB, 13 et

11 Dorenavant DQ.

12 Dorénavant VB.

42), conduit son camarade de voyage à travers l'Amérique à la recherche de son frère aîné, Théo, disparu depuis longtemps et retrouvé enfin à San Francisco, aphasique et paraplégique.

Crises existentielles, nostalgies familiales, troubles d'amour et crises créatives animent aussi l'esprit nomade de Robert Martin dans *Petit homme tornade*¹³ de Roch Carrier qui, douze ans après Poulin et Roy, prolonge la même thématique du manque identitaire : le divorce, l'aridité de sa vie universitaire poussent l'historien à quitter Montréal pour aller en Arizona dans l'espoir d'y voir plus clair. Il veut à la fois fuir « l'enfer conjugal » (*PHT*, 10) et regagner « dignement sa place à la tribune des historiens de la nation » (*PHT*, 20). C'est encore à l'Ouest, au Colorado, qu'il trouve l'inspiration pour écrire un essai historique sur Jacques Dubois, synecdoque de la mobilité franco-canadienne, entre la fin du XIX^e et le début du XX^e siècle. C'est l'époque de tous les « compatriotes canadiens-français qui, par centaines de milliers, ont fui la misère de leur terres ingrates du Nord » ; ces gens qui « fascinés par les États-Unis où le rêve se transformait en fortune, hypnotisés par leur espoir, (ils) ont suivi les anciens sentiers, (ils) en ont inventé de nouveaux » (*PHT*, 12). À l'instar de Poulin et de Gabrielle Roy, Carrier rappelle l'itinéraire réel et métaphorique de la « présence française en Amérique » (Morency 2003, 1028) : présence manitobaine, dans *DQ* et présence québécoise dans *VB* et *PHT*. Il est cependant significatif que le protagoniste de Carrier finisse par perdre les traces du fermier et abandonner son projet d'écrire son essai au titre héroïque : « Le fermier Dubois à la Conquête de l'Amérique sauvage » (*PHT*, 72).

À l'utopie heureuse de la réussite franco-américaine dans un hameau de la campagne californienne exprimée par Gabrielle Roy dans son récit, suit progressivement la conscience historique malheureuse de l'absence française en Amérique (Le Moyne, 27)¹⁴. Si l'écrivaine fait d'Éveline l'anneau manquant à l'union entre son origine manitobaine et la nouvelle lignée étatsunienne de son frère, par contre, Poulin et Carrier ne voient pas de lignée pour le canadien-français du Québec : Théo et Jacques Dubois deviennent en fait la synecdoque de la défaite de l'empire français en Amérique du Nord. Robert Martin, d'abord excité à l'idée de suivre les traces de cet « Ulysse de cette épopée américaine » (*PHT*, 84), c'est-à-dire « l'épopée de l'Amérique telle que l'ont vécue les Canadiens français » (*PHT*, 81), s'aperçoit en cours de route que « Dubois n'a pas d'histoire. Il est comme l'Amérique. C'est un trou de mémoire » (*PHT*, 195). L'historien arrive donc à la conclusion que « son rêve était plus excitant que sa mémoire » (*PHT*, 207). Jack Waterman, dans *VB*, fait la même opération à la fois d'exaltation et dénégation du mythe américain, bien qu'il y ajoute son pouvoir de régénération : « la découverte de

13 Dorénavant *PHT*.

14 « l'invention et la forme de l'Amérique ne sont pas françaises ».

l'Amérique avait été la réalisation d'un vieux rêve » (VB, 109). Un rêve qui, au-delà de l'histoire, s'alimente des croyances mythiques faisant de l'Amérique la terre idéale où reproduire le Paradis céleste perdu. Dans cette terre les gens ont cherché à être libres et heureux, à éviter les erreurs du passé et à « recommencer à neuf » (*Ibid.*). Ce rêve souvent « brisé en miettes comme tous les rêves » renaitrait « de temps à autre comme un feu qui couvait sous la cendre » (VB, 110).

L'ardeur de cette renaissance mythique n'est pas toutefois alimentée par le blanc, le *pur laine* québécois ou l'américain étatsunien, symbole plutôt de la déchéance, du vide moral et de l'exaltation matérielle. La renaissance est plutôt représentée par le métis, qui est en effet « le personnage mythique de l'américanité » (Thériault 2002, 30). Pitsémine est, aux yeux de Jack Waterman, « quelque chose de neuf, quelque chose qui commence [...] quelque chose qui ne s'est encore jamais vu » (VB, 247) et qui trouve à San Francisco, en Californie, son lieu d'élection : « elle pensait que cette ville où les races semblaient vivre en harmonie, était un bon endroit pour essayer de faire l'unité et de se réconcilier avec elle-même » (VB, 317-318). Carrier emprunte l'idéal poulmien de métissage en la transposant dans le métis qu'on rencontre dans son roman : Jean-René Goupil, le fils mystérieux de Petit Homme tornade, à savoir le vieil indien que Robert Martin rencontre par hasard en Arizona. L'historien finit par abandonner le parcours d'un homme blanc sans mémoire pour reconstruire les traces de la vie de cet indien qui « dépossédé de tout » (PHT, 181) par les Blancs envahisseurs, demeure cependant dépositaire d'une mémoire ancestrale : « L'insaisissable Joseph Dubois trouve un personnage de substitution dans le vieil Indien, Petit Homme Tornade, qui laissera des descendants au pays du Québec » (Dorion, 189). Ses recherches servent à révéler à l'indien l'existence de son fils, né de sa relation avec l'infirmière de guerre Blanche LaRivière : cette union permet « un retour historique vers les origines de deux peuples », tout en rassemblant « par les lois du sang deux ethnies en apparence irréductibles » (*Ibid.*). Le discours du métis, face à la famille finalement réunie est emblématique de cette réconciliation identitaire : « Il y a une cinquantaine d'années, en Europe, à la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'histoire des Blancs et l'histoire des Indiens se sont unies dans le corps d'une jolie Blanche de la ville de Québec. Ce soir, l'histoire des Blancs et l'histoire des Indiens se rencontrent dans son propre corps » (PHT, 222). Si Majorique réalise son Eden familial dans la campagne californienne et Pitsémine trouve l'harmonie dans son milieu urbain le plus cosmopolite, Jean-René Goupil se réconcilie avec lui-même dans sa ville natale : « la conjonction s'opère dans le Vieux-Québec qui, territoire fondateur de l'Amérique française, constitue le symbole absolument fascinant de la fusion des deux mythes, celui de l'Indien – devenu l'Amérindien pour les ethnologues du XXe siècle –, et du nouvel Américain ». Ces trois personnages représentent tous quand même

l'incarnation d'un Nouvel Adam québécois, « d'un homme primordial [...] d'un ancêtre mythique, qui se présente comme synthèse et comme promesse de recommencement et d'amélioration des conditions de vie de la collectivité » (Bernd, 25). Le voilà l'être par excellence de l'américanité qui est capable de vivre aux quatre coins du monde, à Québec comme ailleurs, tout en gardant cependant sa spécificité identitaire (Dorion, 189).

Les trois romans présentés esquissent surtout l'américanité mythique de la narrative québécoise de la route : toutefois, la démarche « mitoplasta » aboutit à un parcours « mitoclasta ». En effet, la cheminement heureux et harmonieux envisagé dans les romans de Gabrielle Roy, Jacques Poulin et Roch Carrier se déséquilibre dans les romans de Gilles Archambault, de Monique LaRue et d'Alain Poissant. Ils révèlent plutôt un essor continental de plus en plus négatif et exotique. Ils confirmeraient, en d'autres termes, la dimension dysphorique du cosmopolitisme et du continentalisme que Simon Harel perçoit déjà dans *VB* (Harel, 283). Dirait-on une américanité distopique, dérisoire, sinon satanique et schizophrénique.

Le *voyageur distrait*¹⁵ d'Archambault célèbre la démythification du littéraire par l'histoire d'un écrivain en panne qui, totalement sédentaire et apathique, souffre d'angoisses pour l'obsession perpétuelle de la mort. Michel ne s'éloigne de Montréal que pour suivre les traces de Jack Kerouac et en écrire son histoire. Contrairement à Jack Waterman et à Robert Martin, il semble dédaigner l'expérience collective de la réussite migratoire de tous les franco-canadiens aboutis à Lowell dans les années 1930 – tous les migrants qui ont formé ce « petit Canada » en reproduisant d'abord la « petite société catholique » et qui ont fini par graver « les échelons de la hiérarchie américaine » (VD, 54) – en remarquant la déchéance de l'écrivain-mythe de la littérature étatsunienne. Au fur et à mesure qu'il procède dans sa plongée au coeur du rêve américain qu'il va « expérimenter jusqu'au bout » (VD, 81) par le biais de l'existence de Kerouac, il en découvre plutôt « la caricature géniale de l'écrivain québécois » (VD, 78). Celui-ci n'est qu'« un petit homme honteux qui ne cesse de s'excuser de vivre » (*Ibid.*). Sa passivité aboutit cependant au même vide existentiel que Kerouac atteint par une vie forcenée et hyperactive. Dans un des soliloques les plus exemplaires de ce roman, le protagoniste, Michel, jette sur lui-même la haine qu'il ressent pour ce « pape de la *beat generation* » (VD, 79) : il est, comme Kerouac, « vaincu au départ, cherchant à la fois l'émancipation et le retour au sein maternel, croyant s'être libéré sexuellement et puritain en diable, s'amusant aux préliminaires du zen alors que sa religion puérile n'avait pas dépassé le stade du chemin de croix de l'école Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Lowell » (*Ibid.*). Il se demande, par rhétorique, si cet écrivain qui lisait Pascal, mais qui vivait « en *Canuck* » – terme symbole « de l'impuissance, de la velléité » – n'était que le reflet de lui-même (VD, 78).

15 Dorénavant VD.

Il est évident que Michel entreprend un parcours de dénégation mythique qui aboutit cependant une régénération professionnelle. Il démythifie à la fois le rêve américain et le mythe de Kerouac, dans un voyage transaméricain où il va de Montréal à Lowell, et, passant par New York, arrive jusqu'à San Francisco afin de retrouver l'inspiration perdue et écrire une histoire pour une série télévisée (VD, 90). Bien qu'il retrouve sa verve d'écrivain, l'ouverture continentale se conclut toutefois par un repli de plus en plus marqué : il préfère son « monde fermé, replié sur soi » (VD, 11) puisque « sa maison qui le protège contre l'invasisseur » (*Ibid.*). Enfin, « il n'a jamais été si loin du nomadisme » (VD, 152), il le rejette plutôt à jamais, à l'opposé de Kerouac et de sa compagne, Mélanie, qui représente sa contrepartie féminine. Le thème constant de l'homme sédentaire et de la femme nomade, indépendante et forte revient encore dans ce roman : de la vieille femme ordinaire de Gabrielle Roy – Éveline – et la jeune métisse androgyne de Poulin – Pitsémine – on arrive à Mélanie, la « femme de carrière » (VD, 13), la femme engagée (VD, 153), la juriste qui se bat pour « l'avancement des femmes ou la lutte contre le sexisme sous toutes ses formes » (*Ibid.*).

Cette opposition binaire entre nomade et sédentaire reflète parfaitement la condition d'entre-deux de la littérature et de la culture québécoise qui entreprennent une course de relais : la route de la réussite dérive sur la route de la faillite. Les romans de Monique LaRue et d'Alain Poissant confirment particulièrement la tendance d'une américanité moins « endotique » qu'« exotique » (Lapointe, 289) : *Les faux fuyants* et *Vendredi-Friday* racontent respectivement moins des voyages identitaires que des fuites forcées par le besoin de survivance et l'attrait du vagabondage fou sans justification.

*Vendredi-Friday*¹⁶ est le titre du roman de Poissant qui annonce le jour maudit où James Gastineau, un homme ordinaire et père de famille sur la quarantaine, décide de partir pour fuir la quotidienneté : son voyage est, à son dire, « ...une fraude. Donc un crime, admet-il, car il quitte une femme et trois enfants. À haute voix il opte pour le mot *follerie* » (VF, 21). Cette *follerie* lui est fatale : « cette attitude des enfants gâtés par la vie, cette nonchalance » (VF, 15) avec laquelle il entreprend sa fuite folle et injustifiée lui coûte finalement très cher : après avoir sillonné à toute vitesse l'Amérique depuis Boisvert, près de Québec, Woonsocket, dans le Rhode Island – sa ville de naissance –, New York, Memphis, Saint-Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles et San Diego, il rentre chez lui, en écrasant accidentellement un de ses trois fils, Peter (VF, 129). L'accident arrive fatalement un vendredi, jour du début et de la fin à la fois du voyage de James Gastineau et de l'existence de son fils. Le roman se termine aussi brusquement que la vie du jeune enfant, au rythme fou de la vitesse de sa voiture sportive, tout en véhicu-

16 Dorénavant j'utiliserai l'abréviation VF.

lant la dénonciation du nomadisme à l'américaine¹⁷. Peut-être que l'épilogue tragique du voyage de James Gastineau est lié à son origine étatsunienne : son pays de souche est souvent représenté comme apologie de la violence dans l'imaginaire narratif québécois et sa destinée n'est que de perpétuer cette violence. Il n'incarne finalement que la mauvaise Amérique, c'est-à-dire l'américanisation, l'Amérique de l'apparence, de la superficialité, du profit, de l'argent et de la violence.

Cependant, dans *les Faux fuyants*¹⁸, la violence mine aussi l'intérieur d'une famille de souche québécoise : une famille dévastée par l'abandon d'un père et l'alcoolisme maternel que deux « jumeaux dépareillés » (FF, 41), Klaus et Élodie, ont subi avant de fuir de la ville de Montréal. Leur fuite est sillonnée de *faux-fuyants*, de fausses routes et de déroutes qui les conduisent à la dérive : « de dérapage en dérapage » (FF, 139), « de décapotages en décapotages » (FF, 35, 18, 67, 98, 114-115, 116-117, 179), ils découvrent la bisexualité du père et la dépression de leur mère, l'abandon, le vagabondage, l'indigence, la violence. Leurs déviations familiales ne déterminent que des pensées et des actions déviées : les mires incestueuses de Klaus et les orgies d'Élodie (FF, 68) ne conduisent ces jeunes qu'à la « vie-mort », oxymoron qui revient de façon obsédante dans le roman (FF, 18, 20, 67, 81, 99, 113, 117, 147, 146, 180). La vie reniée des ruelles malfamées, des *bums* montréalais (FF, 21), de la drogue et de tous les excès de la vie ne sont que des faux chemins, des culs-de-sac, des impasses (FF, 107), « des faux départs ne pouvant aboutir qu'à une arrivée déviée » (FF, 119). Le tragique, le drame de la folie et la menace de la mort dominent en effet tout le roman et atteignent le sommet alors que leur mère perd la vie dans un accident de voiture, sur la voie qui la rapprocherait à ses fils, abandonnés auparavant pour aller se désintoxiquer en Californie. Les deux jumeaux malheureux sont donc moins des nomades que des rôdeurs : Klaus et Élodie n'ont pas de choix, leur fuite est obligée, ils doivent bouger pour survivre, fuir le désespoir, la déchéance, la mort. Ils ont perdu le nord, et pourtant c'est vers le Nord québécois qu'ils se dirigent pour tenter de conjurer la déchéance (FF, 27) : en effet, c'est l'unique roman de la route analysé où le dualisme québécois, poussé à l'extrême par l'expédient narratif des jumeaux malheureux, se rétrécit aux « grandes routes droites du Nord décapoté » (FF, 40). La frontière étatsunienne n'est accessible qu'à la fin, pourvu qu'il y ait la séparation du double, des deux jumeaux dont c'est le plus fort, Klaus, qui prend la route du Sud floridien (FF, 199).

17 Le rythme accéléré de l'histoire est aussi révélé par la narration fragmentée et l'intrusion de l'anglais. L'écriture accélérée de ce roman n'a sa contrepartie que dans l'écriture « flyée » (113) des *Faux Fuyants* de Monique LaRue où s'ajoutent la dispersion des voix narratives, la prédominance d'un registre linguistique populaire, souvent vulgaire, et la présence du joul. Dans les autres romans en question, ce sont la lenteur et la méditation de la quête voyageuse qui dominent leurs narrations.

18 Dorénavant FF.

*Une histoire américaine*¹⁹ de Jacques Godbout et *Copies Conformes* de Monique La-rue offrent une perspective différente du parcours distopique de l'américanité. Par leur vision pessimiste du monde informatique, technocratique et économique ces romans québécois marquent le lancement des années quatre-vingt dans l'ère informatisée et mondialisée du troisième millénaire et son renouveau du rapport entre l'espace et l'identité. Ils témoignent de l'affaiblissement progressif de la liaison endotique avec l'espace qui double la distance exotique d'avec la civilisation *globale* américaine du *melting pot*, du *Big Brother* et de l'intelligence artificielle. Si l'on a d'abord sillonné la terre à pied, puis à cheval et en chariots, et puis encore en voitures, on va désormais sillonner l'air et le web en avion et par le biais des souris informatiques. Bref, la territorialité se définit de plus en plus par l'extra-territorialité, sinon par la déterritorialité. L'homme est toujours autre que soi et il cherche donc à vaincre, par l'empathie pour l'autre ou « l'aperception » lacanienne (Harel, 282)²⁰, la dérision et la faillite du cosmopolitisme et du pluriculturalisme, ne s'avérant encore que dans un « cantonnement périphérique » (*Ibid.*, 293).

Une histoire américaine est un exemple excellent de critique dure et de satire véhémente de la civilisation californienne aux exordes de la mondialisation. L'exil carcéral du protagoniste, Gregory Francoeur, est le point de vue privilégié de la narration : « au nomadisme du voyage succède la sédentarité de l'écriture en prison » (Lintvelt, 67). Loin d'avoir la liberté de témoigner « la culture française en Amérique » (*HA*, 23), ses recherches sur le bonheur à l'Université de Berkeley n'aboutissent qu'au malheur d'un complot, d'un chantage (*HA*, 58), sinon d'un piège des services secrets, masqué d'un « quiproquo » (*HA*, 115). Il persiste dans ce roman une « pensée du malentendu » (Harel, 291) qui ne détermine que désinformation et fausses vérités. La narration n'est donc qu'une auto plaidoirie de sa mésaventure américaine qu'il va écrire sur des feuilles en format légal (*HA*, 15), afin de comprendre le sens de son expérience insensée. De lieu « béni » et mythique (*HA*, 23), la Californie devient lieu d'images et d'actions « sataniques » (*HA*, 32) qui le font accuser du viol d'une jeune étudiante et du dol d'un centre de recherche de physique nucléaire, dépositaire d'importantes archives informatiques (*HA*, 13). L'ironie et la dénonciation pamphlétaire du protagoniste dévoilent une société qui se présente comme apathique, « un asile d'aliénés » (*HA*, 62), un « agglomérat » de gens sans culture et « sans épaisseur humaine » (*HA*, 63). Le paradoxe de l'incommunicabilité dans l'ère par excellence de la communication globale fait de l'homme « l'idiot du village global » (*HA*, 41). Les investissements d'argent dans le nucléaire, dans la

19 Dorénavant *HA*.

20 « vision spontanée des choses, non médiatisé par la réflexion [...] saisie immédiate du désir de l'autre qui est toujours un puissant facteur d'identification ».

recherche spatiale et informatique ne sont que des « dollars de mort » (HA, 59). La seule voie de sortie pour un « Franc-cœur » n'est que l'extradition : la confession de son engagement apparent dans une affaire internationale d'immigration clandestine (HA, 177) sert toutefois pour mettre en liberté la jeune réfugiée éthiopienne, Terounech ou la « toute pure », selon le dialecte local (HA, 66). Son geste permet à la fille de vivre son rêve américain de liberté, en réalisant enfin son désir de « se fondre dans la foule » (HA, 169). Être cosmopolite mais encore « périphérique » comme la métisse poulinienne Pitsémine (Harel, 290), l'Africaine Terounech reste également seule en Californie²¹. En effet, Gregory ne réussit l'altérité californienne qu'en dehors du « cadastre québécois » (Ibid., 282) et de la réalité elle-même : il lui reste seulement le rêve multiethnique d'un futur mariage avec l'Éthiopienne et l'arrivée d'un Nouveau-né pour racheter ses faillites et inaugurer « la dynastie des Planétaristes » en opposition « aux fins du monde que nous préparons, inexorablement, les laboratoires de la Californie » (HA, 179). Le paroxysme godboutien dessine finalement le portrait exacerbé d'une américanité qui, dans la réalité, ne demeure qu'infernale, satanique, lunatique et schizophrénique²².

La projection surréelle de Godbout d'une Amérique futuriste associée à la violence, à la démence et à l'automation (Lapointe, 289) trouve plus ou moins sa contrepartie féminine dans *Copies Conformes* de Monique Larue : cette réécriture parodique du polar américain de Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, voit Claire Dubé – journaliste manquée, désormais mère de famille – s'engager malgré elle dans une affaire d'espionnage informatique : elle doit récupérer la macro-disquette du logiciel de traduction de son mari qui, devant retourner à Montréal, ne peut pas continuer son importante recherche sur « l'interlangue » à l'Université de Berkeley (LaRue 1989, 13)²³. Elle n'en recevra enfin qu'une « copie conforme » (CC, 180). Tout apparaît « parfaitement faux et irréal » à San Francisco, sa maison est une « authentique copie de maison romaine » (CC, 19) et les gens ne sont qu'artificieux. La femme californienne est « trop riche, trop maigre pour être réelle » (CC, 24). Le visage « plastifié, momifié » (CC, 74) de son amie californienne contraste avec son visage qu'« aucun scalpel ne (le) touchera jamais » (CC, 129). Elle doit cependant traverser l'écran californien pour réaliser que sa vérité est loin d'être américaine : Claire doit avoir une aventure sexuelle, doit se maquiller, doit se peindre les ongles, mettre la robe de son amie, devenir donc une « décalcomanie » d'elle-même (CC, 96), pour enfin réaliser qu'elle ne peut être que « la femme d'un seul homme, la mère d'un garçon de cinq ans » (CC, 129) et qu'elle aime son mari (CC, 177). Si Claire

21 Simon Harel remarque dans les québécois décrits par Godbout et Poulin la peur de la « pluralité du cosmopolitisme » causée par la précarité identitaire du Québec, encore assez forte dans les années 1980.

22 «The California crazy» est le syntagme le plus obsédant du roman : c'est la folie donc qui domine la société américaine, selon Godbout.

23 Dorénavant CC.

ne trouve pas en Californie la magie promise du voyage américain elle bénéficie de son miracle (CC, 65), le déplacement américain lui ayant permis de retrouver son identité : « ainsi faut-il se déplacer pour se retrouver » (CC, 185). À l'instar de tous les romans de la route précédents, les romans de voyage de Godbout et de LaRue représentent en définitive une dichotomie continentale réduite au seul espace nord-américain où ils dessinent le Québec et l'Amérique étatsunienne en tant qu'opposition entre bon et mauvais, positif et négatif, vrai et faux, original et copie, réalité et virtualité.

Il faut attendre le tournant du nouveau Millénaire pour l'avènement romanesque d'une américanité différenciée qui soit l'expression d'un monde interculturel et trans-culturel, à savoir « un lieu d'où surgissent tout les points de vue et où s'exprime la diversité en français en Amérique » (LaRue 1996, 28). Le roman du jeune écrivain Guillaume Vigneault, *Carnets de naufrage*, est exemplaire à ce propos. Le protagoniste, Alexandre, est le *coureur des routes* du XXI^e siècle par excellence : « toujours aimé la route [...]. Et la sensation d'être coupé, pour un temps, du cours tortueux de sa vie » (Vigneault 2000, 34)²⁴. Il trouve dans le voyage la façon de dépasser son naufrage sentimental, la perte de sa femme qui l'a quitté. Il entreprend à peu près la même route de Dean Moriarty de Kerouac, une route à la fois nord-américaine et latino-américaine : à travers le déplacement du personnage principal au Mexique ce roman célèbre donc la sortie du Québec de la nord-américanité. Cette ouverture est emblématique de la maturation identitaire, de la prise de conscience d'une solidarité qui fasse du monde latin et roman, dont il est culturellement plus proche, « le lieu d'une certaine rédemption, un nouveau possible latéral qui se substitue aux États-Unis comme espace de transformation » (Morency 2006, 27). Ce texte témoigne aussi de la conciliation déjà remarquée dans *DQ*, *VB*, et *PHT* entre l'individualisme, qui pousse à la rupture, à l'isolement et à la dérive, et le communautarisme qui par contre ouvre à l'autre, à la différence. Vigneault témoigne, pour conclure, de la présence de l'espoir québécois d'une *américanité* qui puisse se fonder sur « l'appartenance continentale, sur la participation au temps et à l'espace du Nouveau Monde, sur un déterminisme tellurique distinct qui apparente les Québécois aux Brésiliens et aux Cubains tout autant qu'aux Américains (Lapointe, 291).

La conjonction avec l'univers roman se retrouve encore dans le vrai roman de la route de cet écrivain. Il s'agit de *Chercher le vent*²⁵, où le protagoniste fait son voyage américain en compagnie d'une belle catalane, Nuna, recueillie dans la rue. Dans ce texte, le *coureur de bois* de Carrier – le Jacques Dubois de la fin du XIX^e siècle – de-

24 Dorénavant CN.

25 Dorénavant CV.

vient le deuxième *coureur des routes* du XXI^e siècle (Morency 2006, 28)²⁶. Sa dérive, contrairement à celle de son homonyme dans *PHT*, ne se conclut pas par une perte identitaire : sa traversée du Maine, de la Floride et de la Louisiane lui permet de se retrouver et de rentrer au Québec, précisément à Montréal. Bien qu'il rétrécisse son déplacement dans l'espace nord américain et finisse par perdre les traces de la fille catalane, perdue dans le monde démentiel et insensé du Disney World floridien (CV, 169), il retrouve en Louisiane l'humanité et l'authenticité du Mexique du Dean américain et de l'Alexandre québécois. La Louisiane représente un lieu magique, un mythe à rejoindre (CV, 184), un exemple positif de la réussite, du mixage et du syncrétisme ethnique, social et linguistique, voire le lieu à la fois de la *Survivance* et de la *mouvance* de la culture française.

En conclusion, les romans de la route québécois montrent d'un côté les interrogations, les inquiétudes et les monstruosité des processus d'américanisation de la société québécoise. De l'autre côté ils illustrent aussi leur américanité qui, qu'elle soit mythique, édenique et endotique ou satanique, lunatique et exotique, contribue à l'affirmation d'une américanité en tous cas différenciée, à savoir d'une québécity de plus en plus caractérisée par le métissage, le cosmopolitisme, le multiculturalisme et le transculturalisme.

volume
10

Bibliographie

- Andrès, Bernard, « Quelle latino-américanité pour le Québec et le Brésil ? », *Géographie et Culture*, 45, (printemps 2003) : 5-18. Presse.
- Archambault, Gilles, *Le Voyageur distrait*, [Stanké, Montréal, 1981], Boréal, Montréal, 1988, Presse.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, London/New York: Routledge, 1989. Presse.
- Augé, Marc, *Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Seuil, Paris, 1992. Presse.
- . *Où est passé l'avenir?*, Éditions du Panama, Paris, 2008, Presse.
- Balthazar, Louis, « Un Québec américain dans le miroir de l'Europe », in Robert Laliberté et Denise Monière (éds), *Le Québec au Miroir de l'Europe*, (Premier Congrès Européen d'Études Québécoises de l'Association Internationale d'Étude Québécoises, [AIEQ], Paris, le 23-25

26 Morency remarque aussi le renvoi intertextuel du nom de famille à Bob Dubois de *Continental Drift* (1985) de Russel Bank.

Octobre 2003), Bibliothèque Nationale du Canada, Québec, 2004 : 275-284, www.aieq.qc.ca/nouveautes/actes_aieq.doc, *sine*, web.

Bernabé, Jean, « De la négritude à la créolité : éléments pour une approche comparée », in Lise Gauvin et Jean Jonassaint (éds), « L'Amérique entre les langues », *Études françaises*, 28, 2-3 (automne-hiver 1992) : 23-38. Presse.

Bernier, Léon, « L'américanité ou la rencontre de l'altérité et de l'identité », in Bouchard, Gérard et Lamonde, Yvan (éds), *Québécois et Américains. La culture québécoise aux XIXe et XXe siècles*, Fides, Montréal, 1995 : 176-184. Presse.

Bouchard, Gérard, *Genèse des nations et des cultures du Nouveau Monde*, Montréal, Boréal, [2000], 2001. Presse.

———. *Entre l'ancien et le Nouveau Monde. Le Québec comme population neuve et culture fondatrice*, Ottawa, PUQ, 1996. Presse.

Carrier, Roch, *Petit homme tornade*, Stanké, Montréal, 1996. Presse.

Chassay, Jean-François, *Présence américaine dans le roman québécois*, in Chassay, Jean-François (éds), *L'ambiguïté américaine. Le roman québécois face aux États-Unis*, Montréal, XYZ, 1995 : 17-32. Presse.

Constitution, partition of, in <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>, *sine*, web.

Dorion, Gilles, « Le métissage des mythes dans *Petit Homme Tornade* de Roch Carrier », *Voix et Images*, 123, (2001) : 74-76. Presse.

Dvorak, Marta, « From alterity to Hybridity », *Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies*, 52 (2002) : 149-162. Presse.

Ducharme, Rejean, *L'Hiver de force*, Gallimard, Paris, 1973. Presse.

Godbout, Jacques, [Seuil, Paris, 1986], Boréal, Montréal, 2001. Presse.

Harel, Simon, « La tentation cosmopolite », *Voix et Images*, 12, 2, (41), (1989) : 281-293. Presse.

Lamonde, Yvan, *Allégeances et dépendances : l'histoire d'une ambivalence identitaire*, Nota Bene, Quebec, 2001. Presse.

———. « Pourquoi penser l'américanité du Québec », *Politique et société*, 18, 1 (1999) : 97-98. Presse.

———. *Ni avec eux, ni sans eux. Le Québec et les États-Unis*, Nuit Blanche, Montréal, 1996. Presse.

LaRue, Monique, *L'arpenteur et le navigateur*, Fides, Montréal, CÉTUQ, (Les grandes conférences), 1996. Presse.

———. *Copies conformes*, Boréal, Montréal, [1989], 1998. Presse.

———. *Les faux fuyants*, Québec Amérique, Montréal, [1982], 2009. Presse.

Lapointe, Jean-Pierre, « L'américanité du roman québécois contemporain », *Études Canadiennes/Canadian Studies*, 33 (1992) : 289-297. Presse.

Le Moyne, Jean, *Convergences. Essai*, HMH, Montréal, 1961. Presse.

- Lintvelt, Jaap, *Le voyage identitaire aux États-Unis dans le roman québécois*, in Morency, Jean, den Tonder, Jeanette et Lintvelt, Jaap dir, *Roman de la Route et voyages identitaires*, Nota Bene, Montréal, 2006 : 55-86. Presse.
- Melançon, Benoît, « La littérature québécoise et l'Amérique ». Prolégomènes et bibliographie, *Études Françaises*, 26, 2 (1990) : 65-108. Presse.
- Miguel, Roberto, « Étude critique. À propos de la Critique de l'Américanité de Joseph Yvon Thériault », *Sociologie et société*, 36, 2 automne (2004) : 247-259. Presse.
- Modenesi, Marco, « *Va donc dans l'Ouest jeune homme: présence et signification de la Frontière dans le roman québécois contemporain* », in Liana Nissim e Carlo Pagetti (a cura di/éds) *Intersections. La narrativa canadese tra storia e geografia*, Bologna, Cisalpino, (1999) : 137-170. Presse.
- Montpetit, Raymond, « Culture et milieu de vie: l'espace urbain à Montréal », *Écrits du Canada français*, 58 (1986) : 132-141. Presse.
- Morency 2006, Jean, *Un voyage à travers les mots et les images. Sur la piste des romans de la route au Québec*, in Morency, Jean, den Tonder, Jeanette et Lintvelt, Jaap (éds), *Roman de la Route et voyages identitaires*, Nota Bene, Montréal, 2006 : 17-34. Presse.
- . *Volkswagen Blues*, in Aurélien Boivin (éds), *Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires du Québec (1981-1985)*, tome VII, FIDES, Montréal, 2003, VII : 1026-1030. Presse.
- . *Le mythe américain dans les fictions d'Amérique. De Washington Irving à Jacques Poulin*, Québec, Nuit Blanche, 1994. Presse.
- Ndiaye, Christiane, *Introduction aux littératures francophones: Afrique, Caraïbe, Maghreb.*, Presses Universitaires de Montréal, Montréal, 2004. Presse.
- Novelli, Novella, *Postfazione*, in Gabrielle Roy, *Il viaggio di Éveline*, Sinnos, Roma, 2004 : 61-74. Presse.
- Poissant, Alain, *Vendredi-Friday*, Éditions du Roseau, Montréal, 1988. Presse.
- Poulin, Jacques, *Volkswagen blues*, [1984], Montréal/Paris, Leméac/Actes Sud, 1998. Presse.
- Orringer, Nelson, *Miguel de Unamuno. Americanidad*, Biblioteca Aycucho, Caracas, 2002. Presse.
- Quijano, Anibal and Wallerstein, Immanuel (eds), "Americanness as a concept, or the Americas in the World-system", *International Social Science Journal*, 132, (1990) : 23-40, sine, web.
- Raffestin, Claude, *Pour une géographie du pouvoir*, Librairie technique, Paris, 1980. Presse.
- Révolution Tranquille*, in [http:// www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com), sine, web.
- Roy, Gabrielle, *De quoi t'ennuies-tu Éveline*. Suivi de *Élie, Élie, Élie*, Boréal, Montréal, (1960-1982), 1984. Presse.
- Têtu de Labsade, Françoise, *Le Québec. Un pays, une culture*, Boréal/Seuil, Québec, 1990. Presse.
- Thériault, Joseph Yvon (2002a), *Critique de l'américanité. Mémoire et démocratie au Québec*, Montréal, Québec Amérique, 2002. Presse.
- . (2002b), « L'américanité contre l'américanisation : l'impasse de la nouvelle identité québécoise », *Interfaces Brasil /Canada*, 1, 2, (2002) : 27-36. Presse.

Tocqueville, Alexis, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 1986. Presse.

Todorov, Tzvetan, *La conquête de l'Amérique : la question de l'autre*, Seuil, Paris, 1982. Presse.

Vigh, Arpad, « Les mythes de la réussite dans l'imaginaire québécois », in Robert Laliberté et Denise Monière (éds), *Le Québec au Miroir de l'Europe*, (Premier Congrès Européen d'Études Québécoises de l'Association Internationale d'Étude Québécoises, [AIEQ], Paris, le 23-25 Octobre 2003), Bibliothèque Nationale du Canada, Québec, 2004 : 66-73, www.aieq.qc.ca/nouveautes/actes_aieq.doc, *sine*, web.

Vigneault, Guillaume, *Chercher le vent*, Montréal, Boréal, 2001. Presse.

———. *Carnet de naufrage*, Boréal, Montréal, [2000], 2003. Presse.

JUDITH KESTLER

UNIVERSITY OF WUERZBURG, GERMANY

"Travel only when you must": Remembering the Internment of German Merchant Seamen in Canada during World War II

volume
10

Abstract

The fate of German civilian sailors during the two world wars have yet to receive due attention both in the depictions of wartime by the shipping companies as well as in the scholarly historiography of shipping. Following the outbreak of World War II, sailors of the German merchant marine were literally caught in the middle. Many were taken into custody by the Allies. Of these, a particularly large proportion has been interned in Canada for many years. This paper investigates the experiences of the sailor Rudolf Lell and the manner in which he processed those experiences. It concentrates on his depiction and assessment of the events after the war. A photo album constitutes the study's main source with the aim of showing how its compiler had interpreted the events. The results of this analysis contribute not only to the field of war ethnology and the study of biographies; they also add to Canadian Studies, as by looking at the example of one merchant mariner the paper also explores the shaping of a very positive mental image of Canada in post-war Germany.

Résumé

Le destin des marins marchands allemands pendant les deux guerres mondiales n'a encore été que très peu abordé jusqu'à présent, aussi bien dans les chroniques des compagnies maritimes que dans l'historiographie maritime scientifique. Après le déclenchement de la guerre, les marins marchands se sont littéralement trouvés pris entre deux feux. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont été capturés par les alliés et ont passé plusieurs années internés au Canada. Le présent travail examine les expériences vécues d'un de ces captifs, le marin Rudolf Lell, et la manière dont celui-ci intègre

et structure ces expériences dans sa biographie. Il s'intéresse en particulier à la description et l'interprétation que fait le marin des événements qu'il a vécus et dû surmonter dans l'après-guerre. Un album de photos constitue la source principale de cette étude qui s'efforce d'éclairer au plus près l'interprétation de Rudolf Lell sur les événements. Par ses résultats, cette analyse espère apporter une contribution non seulement aux différents domaines de recherche de l'ethnologie de la guerre et de la recherche biographique, mais aussi aux Études canadiennes interdisciplinaires. En effet, sur l'exemple d'un marin, elle révèle et pose la question d'une idéalisation très positive du Canada dans l'Allemagne d'après-guerre.



This paper focuses on the internment of over 5000 German merchant civilian seamen who were brought to Canadian camps during World War II as British civilian Internees. From a wide range of sources – including interviews with former internees, written autobiographical accounts of their internment, and drawings made after the war – I have chosen to discuss in this article one single, and still fascinating document: a photo album.¹

Before analyzing this source, in the first section I will give a short introduction to the historical background of the internment of civilian seamen during World War II, and a short overview of the rather small number of scholarly works already done on this subject. In the second section, I would like to examine if and how internees retrospectively perceive the internment as a major biographical experience. This is done by exploring a photo album, which is a popular and widely-used, but scholarly fairly uncommon mixed-media source. As a conclusion, I will discuss how these findings are related to the wider field of wartime narratives and how they can initiate further investigation of the interdisciplinary Canadian Studies.

Of the total number of approximately 80,000 German civilian sailors in 1939, just under 10,000 were interned or spent waiting periods in oversea harbours six months after the outbreak of the war (Nelles, 48). However, mainly the fate of those sailors of the German merchant navy who were able to lead their vessel back to Germany became publicly known. Less is known about the fate of those who were taken prisoners.

Already on the 25th August 1939, all German vessels were ordered to leave the normal ship routes and to move 30 to 100 sea miles off the routes (Dinklage and Witthöft, 23).

¹ This paper presents some aspects of the topic I've already discussed in my Master's thesis as well as a couple of new ideas which I am going to explore in detail in my doctoral thesis. For sharing their ideas on my text and for helping with the translation of the French abstract I would like to thank Yvan Corcelle, Ashley Harper, Julia Neu and Christina Ramsenthaler.

The shipping companies had thus lost all their influence on their vessels' route (Dinklage and Witthöft, 20). At the same day the captains were ordered to paint their ships with camouflage colour and, if possible, return home (Cramer, 41). Two days later this order was supplemented with the information to call also at friendly and neutral harbours, such as Spanish, Japanese, Italian, Russian and Dutch harbours (Schmelzkopf, 242). The captains' decision about where to go exactly was informed by the respective fuel supplies. Many ships had difficulties obtaining enough fuel in oversea harbours at the time, and so nearly 40 % of all German trading vessels were moored abroad by the end of September 1939 (Seekriegsleitung). When the war broke out the main goal of the Seekriegsleitung, *German Naval Warfare Command*, was to bring back to Germany the great number of vessels being at sea or laying in foreign harbours in order to use them for further strategic purposes. National Socialist propagandists stylised returning vessels and their crews and captains to heroes with the purpose to motivate more captains for a break through (Ahrens).

volume
10

Given the superiority of the British naval forces, encounters with British armed vessels were a common and expected danger for those German ships who tried to get home. For this case the Reichsverkehrsministerium, the *German Department of Transport*, had made arrangements: The ships' crews had to camouflage their ship while en route and to practice every hand's touch necessary for reliably sinking the ship (Seekriegsleitung). Should they not withdraw their vessels from the enemy through self-sinking, Captains had to fear hard punishments after the war (Dinklage and Witthöft, 26–27).

In most cases, when the crew had successfully – which in this context means irreversibly – initiated the self-sinking of their ship, the men were picked up by the enemy ship without fighting. They were interrogated on board ship and then brought to the nearest transition camp. After several days up to several weeks in huts or tents, the newly captured merchant mariners were transported to permanent camps. Despite what the term suggests these camps were often not less transitory than the one the men had first found themselves in. Many seamen got to know up to five different camps until they finally arrived at a place where they spent more than a few weeks and where they experienced the cease of hostilities at the end of the war. For approximately 5000 German Seamen² in British captivity (that is the majority of all interned sailors) the remote but safe place they reached after an odyssey-like and dangerous journey through war zones was Canada.

In May 1940, Britain had asked the Canadian Government to accept internees and prisoners of war. The reason for this request was the increasing number of German

² This number is based on research in the records of the German Department for Foreign Affairs, R 127882.

enemy aliens and prisoners of war who were considered a danger for Britain in case of a German invasion (Puckhaber, 195). Assuring the security of the internment camps while defending the country went beyond Britain's military capacities (Puckhaber, 196). Already on June 10, 1940, the Canadian Government agreed to accommodate 4000 internees plus up to 3000 prisoners of war (Puckhaber, 196–97). This number was later stated more precisely, because Canada was ready to receive 4456 internees and prisoners plus 1500 Italian fascists (Puckhaber, 196–97). But this categorical classification of prisoners was not appropriate. Not only was there a considerable number of German merchant seamen not mentioned in the first request, but also, as Paula Jean Draper puts it, "Ottawa had been pressed by the British to accept prisoners of war and 'dangerous enemy aliens', only to discover on their arrival that these were 'innocent refugees'" (Draper 2000, 172).

Immediately after Canada had accepted Britain's demand the latter initiated seaborne mass transportations of prisoners of war in summer 1940 (Beaumont, 1). Canada was not informed about this step until the first transport was already on his way across the Atlantic. Among the first to be transported to Canada were the Merchant seamen. One of the first transports, the former cruise ship *ARANDORA STAR*, was to gain notoriety because of her sinking after a German torpedo attack in July 1940 (Beaumont, 1). More than 800 prisoners died. Another ship, the *DUCHESS OF YORK*, "provided its passengers with the most eventful trip. It was the only ship on which interned refugees were forced to live amongst the Nazi internees who were also deported." (Draper 1983, 17) The guards of the internment camps were yet to discover that their 'guests' were not only dangerous enemy aliens Britain had mentioned in the first place (Puckhaber, 198).

When asked to talk about their war experiences in the biographical interview, all prisoners who were interned in Canada stressed that it was an extremely important period of their life with which they associate very fond memories. This aspect is highlighted particularly in the accounts of those who took the opportunity to work outside the camps on farms, in factories, or as lumberjacks. They quickly got involved with the families or the permanent staff of the company they were working in and thereby got to know Canada and Canadians. All of the men I interviewed for my dissertation project³ wished to emigrate to Canada in the early post-war years, but only few could do so because of the rigid Canadian immigration politics towards Germans until September 1950 (Bassler, 16). However, even for those who returned to live in Germany, Canada

³ I was able to trace 11 former internees; all of them were immediately willing to talk about their experiences in a biographical interview. Interviews with a total length of 19 hours were conducted and recorded by myself between September 2007 and July 2008.

never ceased to be a place for which they longed to return to. So the most intriguing question for me: how was it possible that the internees came as enemies and left as friends?

This question has not yet been addressed in research. In my Master's Thesis, I examined the case of one merchant mariner, reconstructing the circumstances of his internment and how he has coped with the events in the aftermath of the war up to the present. His experiences still play an important role in the everyday communication of his family. Beginning with my research on this topic, I was surprised to find a huge quantity of fascinating sources, but not one single scholarly publication dedicated to the internment of German merchant seamen during either World War I or World War II. I see three main possible reasons why this topic has been neglected for such a long time and by so many different academic disciplines.

volume
10

First of all, cultural anthropologists in general haven't dealt much with prisoners of war. But even when they did, German scholars in particular chose to examine the most painful experiences in this field: the imprisonment in Russian camps during and after World War II. In postwar Germany, there was no need to justify this kind of research, because the importance of the subject was quite obvious to everyone on the personal and emotional level. More than 3 million German soldiers had been detained in Russia, some of them as long as until 1955, when after the intervention of chancellor Adenauer in Moscow the last ten thousand prisoners returned home to Germany, seriously altered by the longstanding captivity under very poor conditions. Malnutrition, diseases and forced labour in the Russian Camps caused a death toll of approximately 30 %, and many of the returnees suffered psychologically for the rest of their lives. A considerable number of medical and psychological studies show the great need to come to terms with these experiences in the postwar period (Gottschick 1950a; Gottschick 1950b; Gottschick 1963; Hassenstein; Hemsing; Jen-sch; Reichner; Schmitz 1949; Schmitz 1950).

In contrast, Canada in particular, but also other British Dominions such as Jamaica or India, presented very favourable conditions for prisoners of war and internees. They did not have to starve but enjoyed wholesome and tasty food, they were medically looked after and could keep themselves busy with virtually any activity they wanted in their spare time – be it arts and crafts or language and vocational classes. As a consequence, there seemed to be no need to further investigate this kind of captivity during the post-war period. Sad as it may be, Scholars who would have preferred to study the 'easy way' of internment would possibly have had to explain themselves. It is also likely that this situation caused many former internees of the Western Allies to not deliberately tell about their (good) experience.

Secondly, most academic disciplines concerned with prisoners of war focus mainly on soldiers as they witness the hostilities in the most direct manner. As a consequence, there is still much research to do on the Civilians' situation during the war.

In the field of internment studies, there is a number of important works dealing with the internment of civilians, of enemy aliens or jewish refugees in Canada (Carter; Draper 2000; Draper 1983; Draper 1978a; Draper 1978b; Farges 2008; Farges 2006; Kelly; Koch). For the study of merchant seamen this is interesting because in Canada Jewish internees in some camps were accomodated together with non-Jewish Germans at the onset of captivity. Among those non-Jewish German Civilians, the majority were sailors. As Paula Jean Draper puts it, "among the prisoners were some of the leading intellectuals, political activists, entertainers, musicians, and professionals of Germany and Austria. [...] They mixed with students from *yeshivas* (Jewish seminaries) and universities, as well as merchant seamen." (Draper 2000, 178–179) But, maybe due to the release of most anti-nazi refugees between 1941 and 1943 (Bassler, 34–35), this fascinating but for the inmates rather threatening and conflict-laden mixture and the role of the seamen therein has not yet been explored in detail (Bassler, 34–35).

Approaching the internment of German merchant seamen in Canada from a cultural and anthropological point of view, I consider the photo album to be an example of a retrospective document dealing with important biographical experiences of captivity. Rudolf Lell was born in 1921. After an apprenticeship as a mechanic in his hometown he went to sea in 1938. Together with his colleagues he was captured after the self-sinking of his ship, the ODER in March 1941. Released at first, the crew was interned again during the conquest of Assab by the British. After staying in some transition camps in North Africa and India, he lived in the Indian camp Dehra Dun for eight months. In this camp he found a stimulating mixture of people of very different backgrounds: missionaries, scientists, engineers and a large number of merchant seamen. The latter group was brought to Canada in June 1942. After the passage to Canada, Rudolf Lell was interned in Camp 33 Petawawa close to Ottawa before the sailors were transferred to Camp 23 Monteith in January 1944. After the war, Rudolf Lell worked voluntarily on a farm. Before returning to Germany in the end of 1946, he met his sister in Niagara Falls, who was a nun in a US convent since the 1930s.⁴ After his retirement from a job with the railway police of his hometown in the 1980s Rudolf Lell designed an album with photos and other documents about his experiences between 1939 and 1946, which, since his death in 2002, is still owned by his family.

As German historian Bernd Boll suggests, the outward appearance of a collection of war photographs is an important clue about the interpretation of the pictures inside

⁴ For a more detailed account of those events see part one of my Master's thesis.

the album (Boll, 173). For instance, this refers to the choice of the album, the visual motifs, the arrangement of the pictures, text and other documents. All these aspects can tell us what role in the war the author claims for himself (Boll, 173).

In the following paragraph, I will have a closer look at Rudolf Lell's album. It consists of two customary photo albums with photos, postcards, photocopies, historical documents, texts on white self-adhesive labels and notes, and coloured pictures from magazines of the 1980s and 1990s. The most important component of the album are the photos themselves. Because of their close relationship to memory they are very meaningful for the individual and different from letters, souvenirs or diaries, as Timm Starl emphasizes (Starl, 148). As memory, photography produces and saves pictures alike (Wagner-Egelhaaf, 85). As Rudolf Lell did not possess a camera, it is likely that the photos in the album were taken by different unknown photographers. Therefore, Rudolf Lell's part in the composition of the album was not that of a photographer gathering his best pictures but that of an editor or a compiler. The composition of materials is not coercive, but one can notice Rudolf Lell's effort to complete the existing documents wherever possible. In contrast to the documents which originated in the captivity, the additional material cannot tie to any memory that leads back directly to this context. The following example shows why memory is to be regarded as a construct (Assmann, 47): What a person remembers decades after a certain event is a patchwork-like object, a montage, where elements of different origins are interwoven. This also corresponds with the functioning of the brain: When a person recalls information, it is being composed from various items and different areas of the brain are involved (Erl, 85). In shaping his personal memory in the form of an album, Rudolf Lell tried to complete his stock of photos and documents as close as possible. For this purpose he used travel guides, magazine articles, and possibly also travel brochures. Through all these additions the album has a quasi-touristy glance:

Maps locate the events and allow the viewer to retrace journey routes. The choice of maps – out of travel guides, brochures and schedules – shows the touristy approach of the compiler. The tendency to illustrate the journey as closely as possible is apparent in the choice of additional pictures. Shown are sights like the Taj Mahal, Bombay station and Château de Frontenac in Québec City.

Short texts from a travel guide offer information which Rudolf Lell's own material cannot give. Again local sights are emphasised so that the touristy glance at travelling in times of war still prevails. In Rudolf Lell's memory album text is the binding and structuring element between photos, documents and other material. The text corpus consists of telling or describing parts, headlines and legends. These text elements advance the personal interpretation of the events. For instance, headlines sometimes

operate with categories which could also be found in holiday albums, such as "Recreation can get started" or "Discovering customs and cultures". Next to legends with brief information there are humorous and ironic commentaries: "Hein plays the accordion beautiful at night" – Soloist Rudolf Lell, 1st Accordion-Club Bamberg", "Sharp look from the bridge" – End of war not yet in sight" or "Embatkalla – all step off". The language and style of the album texts express the relation between the writer and the content. Whole passages in Rudolf Lell's album are written in a telegraphic style. He often uses the historical present, which may draw the viewer closer to the events but does not reveal much of the protagonist's emotions. The structuring of events at the language level is extremely informative. This is most evident in the description of the capture. Through specifying place, day and time the capture is assigned to a special moment within the war events:

"On the 11th June 1941 Assab, the last Italian Red Sea harbour, was captured from the seaside by English troops. Around 4.30 in the morning, attack with artillery and jet planes. – Go to the air-raid shelter. Around 8 a.m. the first English words 'Come on boys, get out'. Welcomed by an Indian captain with drawn pistol, it followed, with raised hands, a new chapter of war– the captivity." (Rudolf Lell, photo album)

Rudolf Lell's marking of the captivity as a new chapter of war is symptomatic of the biographical stories of captivity and war. Both are presented as two different kinds of experiences divided by the serious cut of the borderline situation 'capture'. Language and reporting perspective in Rudolf Lell's album are not homogeneous and thus mirror the events. Times of little threat such as the one in Massaua and Embatkalla resemble holidays, cheerfully and ironic. Times of high threat are presented from a distant point of view and without any references to personal emotions. Besides the already shown characteristics, the text comprises more special features. Foreign-language terms indicate that Rudolf Lell got around and thereby learnt something. The following example contains an English maxim which portrays the speaker as widely travelled. "Guarded well by Indian soldiers we walk from the harbour to Bombay station. What an impressive building! However: travel only when you must!" Rudolf Lell not only learnt sayings but also acquired a specialized vocabulary which he documented in bilingual lists of words learnt during his work on the farm: "hoeing weeds – Unkraut hacken, drawing sugarbeets – Zuckerrüben ziehen, set up corn sheafs – Garben aufstellen, picking tomatoes – Tomaten pflücken, trashing beans – Bohnen dreschen." A similar function – to document the worldly wisdom of the writer – has the address of the Klemm family's farm in Ontario where Rudolf Lell worked as a farmhand, and further addresses of

friends and acquaintances written next to the photos. The addresses place the events in a personal context and serve as evidence for the close personal contacts Rudolf Lell made with locals in Canada.

On the one hand, although the means are simple a creative claim becomes visible when looking at the album. On the other hand an orientation on precise examples out of popular magazine travel logs is obvious. This is proved by correspondences respecting the text-picture-relation, text structure, accumulation of categories and presentation. Since the 1920s it is typical for magazine travel logs to adjust text and pictures to the journey's run (Pohl, 110). The habit to accumulate categories such as "Customs and Cultures" – to be found in travel logs, travel guides and even in private albums until the present day – developed during this time and is still present in private albums today. Succinct headlines call upon the reader's interest in the story and encourage him or her to read.

volume
10

In order to evaluate the album and get a clearer insight into its function I would like to look at three aspects of development within the presentation of the events:

- 1) The objective accuracy of the documentation decreases in the run of the presentation. At first, the events are dated as exact as possible. In some cases, even the time is mentioned; e.g. the self-sinking of the ODER "21st ... March 1942: German ODER leaves Massaua harbour. Stop in Assab on the 23rd March 1941. At 8 p.m. put in the Strait of Perim." Rudolf Lell gave up such exact timing in the description of his stay in Canada. The date of the transfer from Camp 33 Petawawa to Camp 23 Monteith is missing and the dates of his employment of labour after the war are only given in weeks or months.
- 2) At the beginning of the album the look at Rudolf Lell's journey is that from a bird's eye view. Maps bring about a distant point of view, but guarantee a geographical location of the events at all times. This changes with the arrival at Halifax in August 1942: maps are left out completely and even the camp life in Canada is hardly documented. The monotony of camp life would have engendered boredom– felt more keenly with the increasing length of residence in the camp–, which may have made Rudolf Lell disinclined to depict camp life through photographs. From the distant point of view of the 1980s, camp life may not have seemed to be the most important part of the captivity experience. However, after the war, the photographic documentation becomes more detailed and also more personalised, as it is supplemented by names and addresses of families in London, Ontario, and the surrounding areas. The geographical location is more and more replaced by the personal location in a network of relationships.

3) Rudolf Lell's story as presented to us in the album could also be read as a story of removal and rapprochement, alienation and 're-familizing'. Leaving his family, he joined a male society, first on board and then in the camp. Therefore the end of war and his stay in Canada both mark a turning point for him in numerous respects: Through labour, first at a construction site and then at the Klemms' farm, he experienced a quasi-return into civil life, retrogression from No. IN 13236 to an individual. Pictures of Rudolf Lell in civilian dress among the Klemm family symbolize his return into a meaningful civil life. In the encounter with his sister Berta, Rudolf Lell finally anticipated the return to his own family at home in Germany. The latter is, by the way, left out completely in the album as it does not form a part of the journey narrative but stands for the regained normality of civil life at home.

To sum up: Looking at Rudolf Lell as an example we see how experiences are verified and interpreted in memory albums. According to Roland Barthes, photos play an important role to confirm what they show (Barthes, 95), thus verifying the facticity of the events pictured in the photos. Even in showing borderline situations such as captivity, the style of self-documentary behaviour is mostly determined by media.

The interpretation of war experience as travelling experience as obvious in Rudolf Lell's album is not an isolated case. Besides the longstanding captivity the war is for many men the greatest journey of their life (Köstlin 1984, 104). Even in the case of the interned sailors, where a professional mobility was replaced with both a forced mobility and forced immobility, the presentation of the war as a great adventure prevails. Therefore, the veterans' fascination for the war is quite similar to the touristy fascination. The same is true for those civilian seamen, who found themselves involuntarily involved in the war. The photo album can help individuals to reflect on their inner development and act as a tool for discussions with others in this regard (Köstlin 1995, 400). History will be reproduced and traded as memories (Köstlin 1995, 400). A failed holiday will be changed into a successful story like a war odyssey in an adventurous journey around the world (Köstlin 1995, 403). Many former prisoners of war return to the places of their captivity when they are old. Telling the journey while sitting on the couch with the album on their knees and with a concentrated listener on hand can be a substitute for travelling to the pictured places. Without leaving the regained security the individual can retrace the journey over and over again and thus cope with it bit by bit. As Eric Kandel puts it, "remembering the past is a form of mental time travel; it frees us from the constraints of time and space and allows us to move freely along completely different dimensions." (Kandel, 3). Rudolf Lell gave up seafaring after the war and did never travel outside Europe again.

Examining Rudolf Lell's account, we not only find the three main functions of a biographical album – interpreting, verifying and explaining the personal development of its author (Köstlin 1995, 400) – but also some typical components of a so-called "captivity narrative". This term by Robert Doyle relates to American captivity literature. Doyle speaks of the individual parts as "event scenarios" (Doyle, 85) that are typically arranged as follows:

"Beginning with a precapture autobiography, the captivity narrator shapes the story after the [...] major events of the actual captivity experience—precapture autobiography, capture, remove [...], prison landscape, resistance, and release (escape, liberation, and subsequent repatriation)—and ends the narrative with the deep reflections that form a prisoner's lament." (Doyle, 85)

volume
10

Apart from the resistance, which was irrelevant in the case of Rudolf Lell and most of the other German sailors who were kept imprisoned in Canada, all of the other event scenarios can be found in the retrospective description in the photo album (Doyle, 85). In this case, the last step, the reflection does not form a lament but rather an acknowledgement. It is not laid down in the album but was performed orally in the direct communication between the narrator and his audience (Kestler, 9). In doing so, Canada was—like in travelogues on Canada by German authors—presented as a place of projection or place of desire (Sigrist, 208). This view was expressed by every contemporary witness interviewed on the topic. Retracing the war experiences and the memories of Rudolf Lell, the serious contrast between the time spent in Canada and the time before is evident. Danger and threat caused by the war ceased immediately after they had reached their highest level, that is the crossing of the Atlantic to the Canadian shore. Together with that, the conditions Canada held for the internees were amongst the best to be found for prisoners anywhere in the world during this time. This did not only concern food, lodging, hygiene, education, and spare time activities in the camps but a general open-mindedness and cordiality the POWs found with their hosts. After initial reservations about the enemy sailors, more than a few veterans' guards, who had already fought in the First World War became important role models for the young Germans who – in view of their age – could have been their sons. And after the war this attitude had spread widely throughout the Canadian society, so that many farmers who employed a German POW as a farmhand on their homestead would have liked to adopt 'their boy' or see him marry their daughter.

Closing a gap in German maritime history as well as in the cultural anthropological study of prisoners of war, preliminary results of the research presented in this paper

concern the dimension of biographical relevance. Apart from that it touches upon a reshaped picture of the sailor, of camps and captivity, for example in examining German-Canadian culture contact during wartime involving sailors as protagonists and the camp as space and scene.

Works cited

volume
10

- Ahrens, Adolf. *Die Siegesfahrt der "Bremen": Aufgezeichnet von Christian Hilker*. Berlin: Steinger, 1940. Print.
- Assmann, Jan. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. 4th ed. München: C. H. Beck, 2002. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Die helle Kammer: Bemerkungen zur Photographie*. 2nd rev. ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986. Print.
- Bassler, Gerhard P. *Das deutschkanadische Mosaik heute und gestern*. Ottawa: Deutschkanadischer Kongreß, 1991. Print.
- Beaumont, Joan. "Victims of War: The allies and the transport of prisoners-of-war by sea, 1939-45." *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 2 (1983): 1-7. Print.
- Boll, Bernd. "Vom Album ins Archiv: Zur Überlieferung privater Fotografien aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg." *Mit der Kamera bewaffnet: Krieg und Fotografie*. Ed. Anton Holzer. Marburg: Jonas, 2003. 167-78. Print.
- Carter, David J. *POW - behind Canadian barbed wire: Alien, refugee and prisoner of war camps in Canada, 1914-1946*. Elkwater, Alta.: Eagle Butte Press, 1998. Print.
- Cramer, Uwe. *Die Bedeutung der deutschen Handelsflotte im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Frankfurt am Main, 1995. Print. M.A. Thesis, University of Frankfurt am Main.
- Dinklage, Ludwig, and Hans Jürgen Witthöft. *Die deutsche Handelsflotte 1939 - 1945: Handelsschiffe, Blockadebrecher, Hilfskriegsschiffe*. 2 vols. Hamburg: Nikol, 2001. Print.
- Doyle, Robert C. *Voices from captivity: Interpreting the American POW narrative*. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1994. Print.
- Draper, Paula Jean. "The Camp Boys: Refugees from Nazism interned in Canada, 1940-1944." *Enemies within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*. Ed. Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 171-93. Print.
- . *The accidental immigrants: Canada and the interned refugees*. Toronto, 1983. Print. Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto.
- . "The accidental immigrants: Canada and the interned refugees." *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 2 (1978a): 1-38. Print.

- . "The accidental immigrants: Canada and the interned refugees." *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 3 (1978b): 80–112. Print.
- Erll, Astrid. *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen. Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2005. Print.
- Farges, Patrick. *Le trait d'union ou l'intégration sans l'oubli: Itinéraires d'exilés germanophones au Canada après 1933*. Paris: Édition de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2008. Print. Dialogiques.
- . "Nous les Camps Boys: Constructions de la masculinité dans les récits des réfugiés-internés au Canada." *Migrance* 27 (2006): 62–69. Print.
- Gottschick, Johann. *Psychiatrie der Kriegsgefangenschaft: Dargestellt auf Grund von Beobachtungen in den USA an deutschen Kriegsgefangenen aus dem letzten Weltkrieg*. Stuttgart: Fischer, 1963. Print.
- . "Kriegsgefangenschaft und Psychosen." *Der Nervenarzt. Monatsschrift für alle Gebiete nervenärztlicher Tätigkeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der psychosomatischen Beziehungen* 21 (1950a): 129–32. Print.
- . "Neuropsychiatrische Erkrankungen bei deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in den USA im Lichte statistischer Betrachtungen." *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* 185 (1950b): 491–510. Print.
- Hassenstein, F. [Friedrich?]. "Der Mensch in der Gefangenschaft." *Studium Generale* 3 (1950): 5–8. Print.
- Hemsing, Walter. "Der deutsche Geistesheld in der Kriegsgefangenschaft." *Psychologische Rundschau* 3 (1952): 291–302. Print.
- Jensch, Nikolaus. "Über psychogene Störungen der Kriegsgefangenschaft." *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* 74.12 (1949): 368–70. Print.
- Kandel, Eric R.: *In Search of Memory. The Emergence of a New Science of Mind*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. Print.
- Kelly, John Joseph. *The prisoner of war camps in Canada 1939-1947*. Windsor, ON, 1976. Print. M.A. Thesis, University of Windsor.
- Kestler, Judith. *Kriegsgefangenschaft und Weltreise: Untersuchungen zur Biographie eines unfreiwilligen Teilnehmers am Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Bremen: Hauschild, 2010. Print. deutsche maritime studien 11.
- Koch, Eric. *Deemed suspect: A Wartime Blunder*. Toronto: Methuen, 1980. Print.
- Köstlin, Konrad. "Photographierte Erinnerung? Bemerkungen zur Erinnerung im Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit." *Hören – Sagen – Lesen – Lernen: Bausteine zu einer Geschichte der kommunikativen Kultur*. Ed. Ursula Brunold-Bigler and Hermann Bausinger. Bern: P. Lang, 1995. 395–410. Print.

- . "Krieg als Reise." *Reise-Fieber: Begleitheft zur Ausstellung des Lehrstuhls für Volkskunde der Universität Regensburg*. Ed. Margit Berwing and Konrad Köstlin. Regensburg: Lehrstuhl für Volkskunde, 1984. 100–14. Print. Regensburger Schriften zur Volkskunde 2.
- Nelles, Dieter. *Widerstand und internationale Solidarität: Die Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation (ITF) im Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus*. Essen: Klartext, 2001. Print. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Soziale Bewegungen, Schriftenreihe A, Darstellungen Bd. 18.
- Pohl, Klaus. "Die Welt für Jedermann: Reisephotographie in deutschen Illustrierten der zwanziger und dreißiger Jahre." *Ansichten der Ferne: Reisephotographie 1850 - heute*. Ed. Klaus Pohl. Gießen: Anabas, 1983. 96–127. Print.
- Puckhaber, Annette. *Ein Privileg für wenige: Die deutschsprachige Migration nach Kanada im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus*. Münster: Lit, 2002. Print. Studien zu Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft Nordamerikas 20.
- Reichner, Hans. "Über Lagerneurosen." *Studium Generale* 3.1 (1950): 9–21. Print.
- Schmelzkopf, Reinhart. *Die deutsche Handelsschifffahrt 1919 - 1939: Band I*. Oldenburg: Stalling, 1974. Print.
- Schmitz, Willi P. "Kriegsgefangenschaft und Schizophrenie: Zum Problem der Bedeutung exogener Faktoren bei der Schizophrenie." *Medizinische Klinik. Wochenschrift für Klinik und Praxis* 45.44 (1950): 1404–10. Print.
- . "Kriegsgefangenschaft und Heimkehr in ihren Beziehungen zu psychischen Krankheitsbildern (Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Mangelernährung und ihrer somato-psychischen Auswirkungen)." *Der Nervenarzt. Monatsschrift für alle Gebiete nervenärztlicher Tätigkeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der psychosomatischen Beziehungen* 20.7 (1949): 303–10. Print.
- Seekriegsleitung. *1 SKL Kriegstagebuch, Teil D. Zur Lage der Handelsschifffahrt, 27. August bis 31. Dezember 1939*, 27. August bis 1939. Federal Archives, Department Military Archive, RM 7/310.
- Sigrist, Gisela. "Kanada – Wunschraum, Kanada – Wunschtraum." *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 45.2 (1995): 208–18. Print.
- Starl, Timm. *Knipser: Die Bildgeschichte der privaten Fotografie in Deutschland und Österreich von 1880 bis 1980*. München: Koehler & Amelang, 1995. Print.
- Wagner-Egelhaaf, Martina. *Autobiographie*. Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 2000. Print. Sammlung Metzler 323.

CATRINELA ANDREEA LAZAR

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

Liquid Women in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* and *Life before Man*

volume
10

Abstract

In talking about the (post)modern society, one of Bauman's favourite metaphors is that of liquidity in an attempt to render the current state of modern society, its changes and position in the history of modernity (Bauman, *Liquid modernity*). The notion of liquidity reflects the diminishing role of the spatial dimensions of social life and highlights the central importance of the flow of time and social change. Liquid life is a new concept. It is life in a society in which virtually everything is in motion and refuses to be consistent. As a consequence, there is a fear of permanent involvement and people increasingly delay commitment in the area of loving relationships. Thus, individuals need to re-engage in this context of liquid society by rethinking their pattern of living under all its aspects: relationship (family/ friends/ strangers), love and sexuality.

From this point of view, it is my intention to analyse the pattern of behaviour of female characters in two of Margaret Atwood's novels, namely *The Edible Woman* and *Life before Man*. In both novels, the characters are prone to the social patterns of life and simple prisoners of their own life. It is difficult to see if it is a merely devastating portrait of relationships or an unsuccessful human fight while trying to be coherent in a confused world.

Résumé

Lorsqu' il parle de la société (post)moderne, l'une des métaphores que Bauman aime le plus est celle de « liquidité » qu'il décrit dans un essai sur l'état actuel de la société moderne avec ses changements et sa position dans l'histoire de la modernité. La notion de liquidité reflète le rôle de moins en moins considérable que les dimensions spatiales ont dans la vie sociale et met en évidence l'importance du temps qui coule et le changement social qu'il entraîne. La vie qui

coule est un nouveau concept. Il s'agit de la vie dans une société sans consistance, qui manque de cohérence et où pratiquement tout est en mouvement. Par conséquent, il y a une peur permanente de s'impliquer et, de plus en plus, les gens ne s'engagent pas facilement dans des relations amoureuses. C'est pour cela que, dans ce contexte où on parle de société en mouvement, l'individu a besoin de s'engager de nouveau et reconsidérer son modèle de vie sous tous les aspects- relationnel (famille / amis / étrangers), amoureux et sexuel. De ce point de vue, mon intention est d'analyser le modèle de comportement des personnages féminins dans deux romans de Margaret Atwood, nommément *The Edible Woman* et *Life before Man*. Dans les deux romans, les personnages sont sujets à des modèles sociaux de la vie et de simples prisonniers de leur propre vie. C'est difficile de voir si c'est simplement un portrait dévastateur des relations humaines ou une lutte sans succès de l'homme tout en essayant d'être cohérent dans un monde confus.

1. People emerging in and mirroring society

It is known that people influence society through their own actions, often creating groups, organizations, networks and institutions. In its turn, society influences people and enabling them to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect oneself as an object. So, actually, this reciprocal relationship between people and society stresses the fact that people have always emerged in and mirrored society.

It is particularly important to understand the nature of society or social structure: its forms and patterns, the ways in which it develops and is transformed or shaped. The nature of an individual and what he does depend to a large extent on the society in which he lives, but, on the other hand, the society itself is always in the process of being created through the interpretations and definitions of people whom Herbert Blumer names so beautifully as "actors in situations" (Blumer, 74)

People look for different situations for themselves that need to be taken into account of, act on certain parameters and try to fit their lines of action with others in order to accomplish their goals. From this perspective, individuals are said to be free to define the situation in a way they find suitable for themselves without ignoring the fact that society is always conceived to be in a state of flux with no real organizations or structure as Stryker remarks:

"[It] tends to dissolve structure in a solvent of subjective definitions, to view definitions as unanchored, open to any possibility, failing to recognize that some possibilities are more probable than others. On the premise that self reflects societies, this view leads to

seeing self as undifferentiated, unorganized, unstable, and ephemeral.” (Stryker, 27)

We should take into consideration different levels of analysis on the patterns of behaviour within and between individuals to obtain a better understanding of the relation between individual and society. On the one hand, at one level, we could look at the patterns of behaviour of one individual over time and come to know that individual. By examining several such patterns across similar individuals, we come to know individuals of a certain category. On the other hand, we can look at patterns of behaviour across individuals to see how these patterns fit with the patterns of others to create larger patterns of behaviour, inter-individual patterns that result in social structure. From this point of view, it is essential to understand how people act to approach, or better, to verify their conceptions of who they are.

So, it is important to remark that people are always embedded in the very social structure that is simultaneously created by themselves. It is this social context that is central in distinguishing sociological approaches to the study of individuals and society.

volume
10

2. Liquid life

In an attempt to render the current state of modern society its changes and position in the history of modernity, one of Bauman's favourite metaphors is that of liquidity. (Bauman, *Liquid modernity*, 2000). The notion of liquidity is a metaphor of the comments on “postmodernity”, “second modernity”, “reflexive modernity” or “late modernity” in philosophy and social theory in the last three decades. It reflects the diminishing role of the spatial dimensions of social life and highlights the central importance of the flow of time and social change.

A certain number of changes either under the form of ruptures or of disconnections has taken place or is to take place in our world. All these tightly interconnected changes have created a new context in which individuals must face up a wide range of challenges that cannot be avoided. Modernity is not any longer in its solid phase; it seems to have turned into a liquid phase in which social structures cannot find any resources to be more stable and logical and secondly, individuals are no longer what they used to be: they simply exchange roles in their race for “tomorrow”.

Liquid life is a new concept. It is life in a society in which virtually everything is in motion and refuses to be consistent (in the sense of the structures that claimed to establish the old version of modernity). When quality lets you down, you tend to seek redemption in quantity. People and their lives are approached in terms of quantity or

volume... just like fluids:

"Fluids travel easily. They flow, spill, run out, splash, pour over, leak, flood, spray, drip, seep, ooze; unlike solids, they are not easily stopped- they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and boar or soak their way through other still." (Bauman 2000, 3)

Blocked in different social roles, people seem to borrow peculiar features: just like fluids, they "leak", or experiencing things with maximum intensity, they "pour over" or "splash".

volume
10

Thinking of the female characters in *The Edible Woman* and *Life Before Man*, I perceive them exactly as Bauman approaches people's behaviours, in terms of quantity and volume: they feel crammed with every social role. As a consequence, it is difficult for them to reconsider their self ignoring the pattern built by the society they live in.

In *Liquid Love* Bauman describes how this movement not only changes our thinking about love and sexuality but also our ideas about human relationships (the relationship with your neighbours, with strangers): "After all, the romantic definition of love as- till death do us apart- is decidedly out of fashion [...]" (Bauman 2003, 5)

As an extension of the free life dominated by consumer choices, people increasingly delay commitment in the area of loving relationships: options must be kept open. There is a fear of permanent commitment: one may always find a better relationship, and furthermore, a relationship which doesn't work could be an obstacle to further self-development.

Bauman suggests that people prefer to talk about networks rather than partners. In a network of 'virtual relationships' it is easier to form temporary connections and take breaks. It is a clear way of relating to each other, in which breaking off relationships can take place without excessive drama or emotional investment:

The art of breaking up the relationship and emerging out of it unscathed, with few if any festering wounds needing a lot of time to heal and a lot of care to limit the collateral damage[...] beats the art of composing relationships hands down- by the sheer frequency of being vented. (Bauman 2003, 23)

In liquid modernity, the shape and fate of love acquire new dimensions. As Bauman likes to believe, love is each time a unique event. Love strikes suddenly, we can neither prepare for nor learn to love. Love itself, unpredictable and capable of striking fast, easily aligns with other patterns of life in liquid modernity. The shape and fate of love has acquired new dimensions; it does not bind people. It is as if people were walking the

narrow path between distance- too great for love to grow, and closeness- too strong to enable the duality of beings on which love depends. (Bauman 2003, 3)

Nowadays, to keep a solid love relationship is even more difficult, for two reasons. Firstly, a consumer culture that favours instant use and satisfaction, depends on qualities opposite to those necessary for the fostering of love, such as courage, faith and discipline. And, secondly, we interpret our inability to love by the lack of proper knowledge and believe that love, like everything else, can be learned with the help of lifestyle magazines and self- help guides.

Also in terms of sexual relationships, Bauman makes an analysis of “sex as such,” detached from love or commitment, which Anthony Giddens has called the “pure relationship”. The author also introduces an important distinction between *homo faber* and *homo consumer* in the context of relationships. For the former, commitment and construction of lasting relationships was a natural instinct- and sex was a tool of social-ity. For the latter, sex is another object of consumption that does not lead to further accumulation, as it is based on quick usage and disposal.

The question remains, why do people today favour lightness and speed over long term commitment? According to Bauman, it is because love is a project that can be compared with a “*bridge leading to nowhere, or to nowhere in particular*”. Family life and close relationships become revocable, and thus, a matter of choice, a situation with which *homo consumens* is quite familiar. But, at the same time, they become as uncertain as much of our risky liquid modernity. (Bauman 2003, 48-9)

Bauman states that:

“Postmodern era can be said to be defined by the individual's quest for the sublime happiness at the expense of security. Society has held to the concepts of beauty, purity and order for centuries; now, a new world view has emerged with the individual at its nucleus” (Bauman 2000, 6)

3. Liquid women: leading a liquid life

In Margaret Atwood's work, her concern with the individual's quest for self- identity, a consistent feature of her writings, is more than obvious. Her early novels, *The Edible Woman* and *Life Before Man* point to the fragmentation inherent in human beings and the breakdown of relations between the two sexes in a decaying society in which chaos reigns and roles can no longer remain fixed.

Even if the novels had been written a long time ago, before Bauman coined the

volume
10

concept of “liquid times”, however, we cannot simply remain indifferent to the problems identified by Atwood that perfectly accommodate with the Polish sociologist’s ideas.

The two novels raise more questions in several different fields- artistic form, politics, feminism or psychoanalysis- than they answer, and clearly, there are many different ways of coming to the subject in Atwood’s writings. But my intention is to analyse the pattern of behaviour of the female characters who are prone to the social patterns of life and simple prisoners of their own life: they are simply thrown into an universe without frontiers seized with overwhelming signals, languages, codes, temptations and sanctions.

Francois de Singly endorses Bauman’s opinion on fluid identity in his book *Les uns avec les autres*. He starts with the Lacanian concept on *self* stating that *self* is born vulnerable and during one’s life it acquires multiple identities according to certain priorities. Modern individual is always integrated in society complying with its rules, but, however, the stake of the social game is too complex: he simply makes use of it to affirm his identity being careful with the various situations he confronts. In our contemporary society, the need to identify with singular (“demande de singularism”), the concern to particularize (“le souci de particularisation”) is much more complex than yearning for generalization. (Singly , 80)

In certain moments, considering the necessity to singularise, individuals feel like avoiding the routine of the daily roles that minimize personal experience. People think that life is insufficiently rewarding and choose to go for a kind of “journey”, a gap or a separation. It is exactly that type of journey to which Fernando Pessoa makes reference when he states that life does not involve any evolution, it is only a long range of experiments. Thus, certain responsibilities are left behind under the false impression of freedom of trying something else in the hope that that the new ones are less burdensome.

When referring to the exchange of social roles, Georg Simmel also considers that what individuals initially consider to be a form of liberation, finally proves to be an exchange of responsibilities: it does not take too much time till the new responsibility has become a burden again. (Singly, 78)

It is of paramount importance to remark that the process of identity construction ends up with an open identity, an identity with a sort of a variable geometry. Self is coreless and as a result, no social dimension of identity, either given or claimed, can be the key of an individual’s existence. Self has to take after Emile of J.J. Rousseau: Emile copes either with dramatic or neutral, or, unpleasant or favourable episodes. It is important for any individual the way in which he perceives his own existence and the

power with which he masters the paradoxes of his life. The very moment when he can say "That's me" is significant for his whole existence: people need to reserve their claim to take up temporary roles.

The female characters to whom I shall make reference are Marian MacAlpin, the main character of the novel *The Edible Woman* and Elizabeth Schoenhoff and Lesje Green, the two female protagonists of *Life Before Man*. Each of them lives her own drama. Marian MacAlpine tries to face up problems of self-identity as a willing member of the consumer society in which she lives but instead finds herself suddenly identifying with the things being consumed as a result of a marriage proposal which seems to her to open up unexpected horizons. Elizabeth Schoenhoff, one of the two female protagonist of *Life Before Man*, whose lover commits suicide, finds herself alone in the family home, no longer a wife but a divorced mother with her two young daughters. The other female protagonist, Lesje Green, Elizabeth's husband's mistress, often withdraws in an imaginary world, a lost one, just like the Lithuanian meaning of her name, Lost World. Everything that happens to them, every change that appears in their life, even if it is a fantasy, makes them reconsider themselves, run after so numerous and varied stimuli that their self becomes overloaded and risks to collapse.

The novel *The Edible Woman* marks the moment when Atwood started to explore the sexual politics through the comic exposure of the contradictions between the social myths of femininity and the woman's status as victim of a society that encourages a certain type of representations that minimises the feminine essence of who she is.

Actually, the plot of the novel aims at transforming a social problem in a comic satire where a young woman is fighting against her destiny. Atwood depicts humorously women's frustrations, troubles and anxieties and reveals the absurd social conventions of her times. She intermingles the traditional conventions with marketing language formula characterizing the early period of a consumer society. The most illustrative example is that of Ainsley, Marian's roommate who, even if she entirely rejects marriage, insists that every woman has to have "at least one baby" sounding as if it had been "a voice on the radio saying that every woman should have at least one electric hair dryer." (Atwood 2009, 43)

Just like her friend, Marian MacAlpin neither enjoys the idea of being married, nor does she find herself in any of the traditional mother and wife roles imposed by society. Moreover, it is these responsibilities that generate existential fears. Marian's story contradicts the traditional story of female maturation in which the "growth" of the heroine is performed once with the action of courtship, and marriage is regarded as the climactic event that confers on the heroine her entire personal identity. Thus, Marian suffers from persecutory fears and disintegration anxiety as a result of Peter's dominance of

volume
10

her. So, it is obvious the author's intention of contesting the traditional story of female experience with its prescribed ending that insists on marriage and/ or on motherhood as the expected outcome for the female heroine.

We can easily remark how female passivity and submersion in the patriarchal roles can lead not to self- fulfilment, but to an intensifying sense of self- diminishment that also put into light the sexual objectification and potential victimization of Marian MacAlpin as she consents to femininity.

For a more complex picture of femininity, Atwood builds up two other female characters, quite relevant for her topic: Ainsley and Clara. Through them, Atwood sends Marian the conservative messages typical of the culture of the 60's. Unlike Clara whose attitude toward her husband is "sentimental, like the love stories in the back numbers of women's magazines," Ainsley advises Marian to marry in the States "If I were you I would get married in the States, it'll be so much easier to get a divorce when you need one," being quite convinced about the marriage failure: "the thing that ruins family ... is the husbands". (Atwood 2009, 100)

She pushes things so far and envisions herself as an earth- mother of sorts hoping to seduce some unknowing super-male into fathering her child without any intention of either marrying him or letting him know of his parenthood.

Ironically, while Ainsley shares the inherited cultural belief that motherhood fulfills women, Clara, a mother with three children, urges Marian not to "believe what they tell you about maternal instinct" and spoils the mother- infant bond by comparing her baby to a leech or an octopus covered with suckers. (Atwood 2009, 37)

Marian is that type of romantic heroine trying to give meaning to her identity and, for that, she has to set out on a journey from where she is expected to come back 're-shaped'. The structure of the novel allows us this interpretation: the first and the third part are narrated in the first person. The radical shift from the first person narrative in Part 1 to the third person in Part 2 stands for Marian's loss of an independent sense of self. In Part 1, Marian seems to be satisfied with her way of living: she does not have a safe job according to her higher education, but she is in a relationship with a man who seems to be less interested in it: "I knew I was all right on Friday when I got up; if anything I was feeling more solid than usual" (Atwood 2009, 3)

This feeling of safety disappears when the company for which she works let her know she is eligible for the pension plan. When she is asked to sign the document, her signature being kept till the day when she is sixty-five, Marian is overwhelmed with panic:

Somewhere in front of me a self was waiting, pre-formed, a self who had worked during innumerable years for Seymour Surveys and was now receiving her reward. A pension.

I foresaw a bleak room with a plug-in electric heater. Perhaps I would have a hearing aid, like one of my great-aunts who had never married. (Atwood 2009, 15)

Actually, this is the moment when things turn upside- down. Firstly, the feeling of normality to which Marian is used, is dashed by her friend's announcement of having an illegitimate child, and later on, by Peter's marriage proposal:

My first impulse was to answer, with the evasive flippancy I'd always used before when he'd asked me serious questions about myself, 'What about Groundhog Day?' But instead I heard a rather soft flannelly voice I barely recognized, saying, 'I'd rather have you decide that. I'd rather leave the big decisions up to you.' I was astounded at myself. (Atwood 2009, 107)

volume
10

It is quite surprising how simple and ordinary things may complicate our existence. It is the measure that we give to certain things that seem to be incomprehensible in certain moments of our life. Similarly, in *Life Before Man*, Atwood describes the banal existence of several characters who try to compete with themselves in an attempt to give meaning to their every day life, or better still, their every day self.

The female protagonists, Elizabeth Schoenhof and Lesje Green are lost in their own world and find it difficult to reintegrate themselves in the ordinary reality shared with the others. For Elizabeth, the desperate situation is partly due to some quite remote and unhappy experiences: she is haunted by a sad childhood filled with the image of a drunken mother, who dies in a fire accident, an emotionally troubled sister who passes away in an asylum and a rigid aunt who raised her after her mother's death. Her multiple roles, that of a mother, wife and mistress, generate a sort of abandonment of her own being.

Its climax is exemplified by Elizabeth's interior monologue when she finds out about her lover's suicide:

I don't know how I should live. I don't know how anyone should live. All I know is how I do live. I live like a peeled snail. And that's no way to make money. I want that shell back, it took me long enough to make [...] Elizabeth tries to concentrate on the words "next year", finds she can't. (Atwood 1996, 3)

It is a desperate outcry of a woman who finds herself wandering on the unknown paths of the world:

You wanted me to cry, mourn, sit in a rocker with a black-edged handkerchief, bleeding from the eyes. But I'm not crying, I'm angry. I'm so angry. I could kill you. If you hadn't already done that for yourself. (Atwood 1996, 3)

For Elizabeth, real time has ceased to exist. It is the moment when the human dimension is given a priority; everything starts to get meaning after Chris's suicide. This is the focal point of her attention, though the narrative perspective slides confusedly between Elizabeth's inner state and external description, suggestive of her own split of consciousness:

volume
10

She is not *in*. She's somewhere between her body, which is lying sedately on the bed, on the top of the Indian print spread, tigers and flowers, wearing a black turtleneck pullover, a straight black skirt, a mauve slip, a beige brassiere with a front closing, and a pair of pantyhose, the kind that come in plastic eggs [...]. She can see herself there, a thickening of the air, like albumin. (Atwood 1996, 4)

Her state of suspension is described by Coral Ann Howells as being close to that form of daydreaming which could be described not as an alternative to the real world but as a supplementary part. (Howells, 70) It occupies a problematical space on the limits of the rational and is connected with perpetual reality but also disconnected from it, "near but different". It is exactly this moment of disruption when Elizabeth easily remarks the "vacuum on the other side of the ceiling" which stands for the vacuum in her life:

Into the black vacuum the air is being sucked with a soft barely audible whistle. She could be pulled up and into it like smoke. She can't move her fingers. She thinks about her hands, lying at her sides, rubber gloves [...] (Atwood 1996, 4)

The space to which she is familiar is the space of absence, as figured in the "black holes". This is Elizabeth's inner-space scenario, imaged as the abyss into which she firmly resists falling, though she is drawn into it under the shock of Chris's suicide. It is a threatening feeling that continuously invades her mind with the rituals of domestic life: she listens through her half-open door to her daughters who prepare themselves innocently for Halloween and hears her husband bringing her a cup of tea. The split between the two worlds is obvious, but Elizabeth is not able to identify any way of crossing between them. This inability chases her till the end when, unexpectedly, she succeeds in assigning a meaning to her mere existence.

She opens her eyes. She must focus on something simple and clear. There are three simple and clear. There are three bowls on the sideboard, pinkish mauve, porcelain, Kayo's, he's one of the best. She is confident in her taste, she knows enough to have earned that confidence. (Atwood 1996 , 16)

The other female protagonist, Lesje Green is a museum palaeontologist and Elizabeth's colleague, although not her friend. She starts an affair with Nate, who is Elizabeth's husband, having learned about the latter one's extramarital affair only to find herself in conflict with her colleague. She knows that she cannot compete with Elizabeth's beauty and elegance, but, at the same time, she takes herself as she is. She lives by herself and dreams of a better life among the dinosaurs of the Mesozoic era:

volume
10

Lesje is wandering in prehistory. Under a sun more orange than her own has ever been, in the middle of a swampy plain lush with thick- stalked plants and oversized ferns, a group of bony- plated stegosaurus is grazing [...] Lesje knows, when she thinks about it, that this is probably not everyone's idea of a restful fantasy. (Atwood 1996 , 10)

Lesje surprises the reader by her simplistic way of approaching herself. She prefers to be invisible and definitely sexless , being under a continual threat of erasure just as her name suggests (Lesje means a lost world):

She certainly doesn't want to play Other woman in some conventional, boring triangle. She doesn't feel like a other woman; she isn't wheedling or devious, she doesn't wear negligées or paint her toenails. William may think she is exotic, but she isn't really; she is straightforward, narrow and unadorned, a scientist; not a web-spinner; expert at the entrapment of husbands. (Atwood 1996, 119)

So, her thoughts are significant for her general mood: being in a relationship with a man who does not cater for her interest, she strives to foster her relationship with Nate. The fact that her lover keeps on oscillating between her and his family, especially his daughters, without being able to make the right decision, prevents Lesje from finding a solution to her problems: "What was once a wholesome absence of complications is now an embarrassing lack of complexity" (Atwood 1996 , 118)

After a long state of desperation that almost compels her to commits suicide following the Elizabeth's dead lover's example, Lesje changes her gloomy perspective on life and decides to get pregnant. It is this intrusion of real life that makes her face tentatively towards the future: "If children were the key, if having them were the only

way she could stop being invisible, then she would goddamn well have some herself" (Atwood 1996, 285)

If Lesje withdraws herself into her imaginary world of extinct dinosaurs and Elizabeth, in her dark fantasy world, Marian also experiences a form of alienation; she feels alienated from her body as she is suddenly shocked into admitting that she too shares the mysterious female condition:

She examined the women's bodices with interest, critically, as though she had never seen them before [...] What a peculiar creatures they are; and the continual flux between the outside and inside, taking things, giving them out, chewing, words, potato- chips, burps, grease, hair, babies, milk, excrement, cookies, vomit, coffee, tomato- juice, blood, tea, sweat, liquor, tears, and garbage... For an instant she felt them, their identities, almost their substance, pass over her head like a wave. (Atwood 2009, 206)

All three characters are blocked in different social roles and they no longer feel responsible for them. Indeed, the most obvious situation is that of Marian's who lives with more intensity every day of her life. She is afraid of "growing up": marriage, maternity or ageing (the office pension plan), but she revolts against it. She does not want any of these futures, and it is in this context of challenge to the discourse of both femininity and adulthood that her hysterical eating disorder or adventurous episodes with Duncan need to be interpreted. On the other hand, the other two characters, Elizabeth and Lesje endure the painful burden of being disconnected from the real world each of them in her way. Thus, Lesje finds relief when dedicating to her professional responsibilities: her passion for her subject is so intense that she has dreams of reversing the course of history to make the dinosaurs live: "strange flesh would grow again, cover the bones, the badlands would flower" (Atwood 1996, 72) Like Elizabeth's black holes, this imagined territory is the place where she negotiates the gaps between real life and desire. Lesje knows that her dinosaur scenario is a regressive fantasy, "but thinking about men has become too unrewarding" (Atwood 1996, 118), by which she means her relationship with William a young environmental engineer.

This is what Bauman calls another illusion of postmodern life. He considers that this sudden abundance and apparent availability of love experiences feed the conviction that falling in love is a skill to be learned. The mastery of the skills grows with the number of experiments and assiduity of exercise. One may even believe that love-making skills are bound to grow as experience, although more exhilarating than the one currently enjoyed is not as thrilling and exciting as the one after the next:

The kind of knowledge that rises in volume as the string of love episodes grows longer is that of love as sharp, short and shocking episodes, shot through by the a priori awareness of brittleness and brevity. The kinds of skills that are required are those of finishing quickly and starting from the beginning [...]. ” (Bauman 2003, 6)

Works cited:

- Atwood, Margaret. *The Edible Woman*. London: Virago Press, 2009. Print
- Atwood, Margaret. *Life Before Man*. London: Vintage- Books, 1996. Print
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. Print
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. Print
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Le présent liquide*. Paris: Edition du Seuil, mars 2007. Print
- Blumer, Herbert. *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Berkley: The University of California Press, 1986. Print
- Howells, Coral Ann. *Margaret Atwood*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. Print
- Simmel, Georg. *On Woman, Sexuality and Love*. New Haven: Yale University Press , 1987. Print
- Singly, de Francois. *Les uns avec les autres*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2004. Print
- Stryker, Sheldon. “Identity competition: Key to differential social movement involvement”, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63, (2000): 284-297. Print

volume
10

ANNA MONGIBELLO

UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES "L'ORIENTALE", ITALY

AlterNatives¹ in Contemporary First Nations and Métis Narratives: preliminary considerations

volume
10

Abstract

Taking the strategies of representation enacted by the Canadian sociopolitical order as a starting point, this article provides some preliminary methodological considerations necessary before dealing with the narratives by contemporary First Nations and Métis women writers. Jeannette Armstrong, Beth Brant, Maria Campbell, Lee Maracle and others contest the cultural normativity and re-present alterNative identities in contrast with the 'official' representations of 'Indians'.

Résumé

Prenant comme point de départ les stratégies de représentation promulguée par l'ordre socio-politique canadien, cet article offre des considérations méthodologiques préliminaires avant d'examiner des narratives par des femmes écrivains autochtones and métisses. Jeannette Armstrong, Beth Brant, Maria Campbell, Lee Maracle, entre autres, contestent la normativité culturelle et re-présentent des identités alterNatives qui contrastent avec les représentations 'officielles' des 'Indiens'.

1 I owe the term to Ojibway writer Drew Hayden Taylor whose play *AlterNatives* speaks of a group of activists, the so called "alterNative warriors" (Taylor, 57), who try to challenge common orthodoxies and formulaic depictions of "the Indian", accepted both by the Native and the non-Native communities.

Native Literary and Cultural Renaissance

The first chapter of *A History of Canadian Literature* by W.H. New, published in 1989, is dedicated to Indigenous mythmakers. New overtly acknowledges the Native cultural stance, thus recognizing the role of Indigenous cultural production in the making of the nation. As a matter of fact, Native Canadian writers had been gaining public attention since the 1960s. McKenzie has called the period Native Literary and Cultural Renaissance (McKenzie, 84), triggered by political movements which responded not only to the politics of assimilation adopted by the Canadian government, but also to the lack of adequate representations of the Indigenous peoples within the Canadian society. Such a complex process of self-assertion could be synthesized into two main phases. The first one, starting in the mid-1960s, coincided with the change in political climate that organizations such as the National Alliance for Red Power (NARP) and the American Indian Movement (AIM) were achieving in both Canada and the United States as well as with the translations of ancient myths by Ojibway artist and writer Norval Morriseau, *Legends of My People: the Great Ojibway* (1965). The second phase began in the 1980s and was characterized by the rise of a strong corpus of Indigenous narratives that compelled critics to begin to recognize and deal with Native literatures. As a consequence, from 1989 onwards, numerous anthologies registered a proliferation of native voices: in 1989 Heather Hodgson edited *Seventh Generation*, and in 1990 New remarked his interest in First Peoples with the publication of *Native Writers and Canadian Literature*, while Jeanne Perrault and Sylvia Vance collected writings by Aboriginal women writers in *Writing the Circle*; two years later, Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie published *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* thus signalling that the interest of publishing houses in Native cultures embodied the request of the Canadian reading public and critics for such productions. Moreover, as Barbara Godard explains “Native Canadian culture had never before received such public attention as it did in Toronto in the spring of 1989” (Godard, 109) when, at the Theatre Pass Muraille, *Dry Lips Oughta Go to Kapuskasing*, the latest play by Manitoba Cree author Tomson Highway, gained an extraordinary critical acclaim. Taking the strategies of representation enacted by the Canadian sociopolitical order as a starting point, my intent, here, is to provide some preliminary methodological considerations necessary before dealing with the narratives by contemporary First Nations and Métis women writers. Jeannette Armstrong, Beth Brant, Lee Maracle, Maria Campbell, and others contest the cultural normativity and re-present alterNative identities in contrast with ‘official’ representations of ‘Indians’.

Strategies of representation

In each cultural circuit, practices of representation are a key process and part of the way power operates: by intervening in discourses about certain subjects, power tries to fix 'true' representations, i.e. to construct meanings through language. As a consequence, the politics of representation constitute tactics to maintain control and validate the mythologies of superiority. According to Stuart Hall, "representational systems consist of the actual *sounds* we make with our vocal chords, the *images* we make on light-sensitive paper with cameras, the *marks* we make with paint on canvas, the digital *impulses* we transmit electronically" (Hall 1997, 26): the accent posed on the 'making' suggests that meaning does not depend on the materiality of the sign, but on the social function that it acquires in cultural contexts. In this sense, Indigenous peoples have been the objects of knowledge produced in and through representational systems. Official discourses, aiming at producing 'realities' of the Other "politically, sociologically, ideologically, scientifically" (Hall 1996, 40), adopted several strategies such as naming and stereotyping (a policy that shifts between idealizing and demonizing).

Naming is the discursive manipulation of spatial and individual identities through language, that is the representation of political objects in discourse. According to Bill Ashcroft "names invoke ownership" (2009, 82) and are the most powerful means of cultural incorporation. Stereotypes, as embodiments of essence, are the product of political choices which tend to impose politically oriented representations of subjects: by distorting elements of reality, they try "to ensure a comfortable construction of ideology" (Alatas, 2). The production of stereotypes tends to reiterate Manichean dichotomies which oppose idealized/mythicized and demonized representations of the Other. As a consequence, idealization (or mythicization) and demonization are the processes through which representations are constructed and legalized in discourses of power: they are the very technologies that produce systems of representation. Each strategy of representation underpins appropriation and domestication.

In Canada the strategies of representation enacted by the dominant power have been functional to the absorption of the 'Indians' in society, that is to the erasure and reconstruction of Indigenous identities in discourses of power. As a consequence, these strategies produced 'official' representational systems that categorised Indigenous peoples on the basis of Euro-Canadian perceptions. In "The Case of the Word Métis", Oriana Palusci discusses the ways in which the Indians have been named in the Canadian context: the term "Indian", she argues, "identifies both the language and a person in a collective way, as a comprehensive umbrella term which, cramming together heterogeneous ethnic groups, inhabiting an unidentified geographic space called

volume
10

America, simplifies the many-faced universes of *Indian* identities, languages and traditions" (2010:61). In *A Dictionary of Canadianisms*, published in 1967, *Indian* is the only descriptor used to identify Indigenous peoples. Gerald Vizenor points out that "the word *indian* transposes the real, a colonial coalescences of thousands of distinct native cultures and communities in one misnomer" (2007:12) while Steffi Retzlaff defines it "a White invention" (61). Nevertheless, by the end of the 1970s, that is between the first and second phase of the Native Cultural Renaissance, the term was gradually replaced by *Aboriginal*, officially adopted in the Constitution Act in 1982: this was "a change which rhetorically asserts the freedom of indigenous cultures from the historical mistakes of European definition" (New 2003, 5). A further shift towards self-assertion was the introduction of the term *First Nations* used for the first time by Chief Sol Sanderson in 1981: the adjective "first" underlines that Indigenous peoples had been living in North America much before the arrival of the Europeans. For what concerns the word Métis, as Palusci explains, it does not refer to a racially pure individual, but to "a person split into different races, one part belonging to Europe, the other part inferior, corrupted and imbedded in the term *mongrel*" (65) a French name indicating the bastard son of Indian concubines, in other words, an half-breed. Therefore, Métis had a deeply depreciative meaning. It was only by the end of the 1960s that the term was re-appropriated by Métis authors who tried to restore a Métis 'pride': Maria Cambell's *Halfbreed*, published in 1973, is the story of a Métis woman who, after having experienced racism and discrimination, learns to appreciate her 'Halfbreed' heritage.

When the strategy of naming is applied to space, places are reinvented in discourse in order to be domesticated and familiarized (Ashcroft 2009:76): the Europeans who arrived in North America and re-named the landscapes were clearly mapping and appropriating the territories. At the same time they were erasing the Indigenous discourses over the land and imposing their own spatial narrations. When the French explorer Jaques Cartier settled in what later became Quebec city, he used the word "Canada", probably adopted from the Huron-Iroquois *kanata* meaning "village", to refer to New France (DeRocco and Chabot, 124); nonetheless, Indigenous peoples had traditionally designating the territories on which they lived with the term "Turtle Island". As Retzlaff explains (263), "Turtle Island" appears repeatedly in the discourses of Native peoples but "does not correspond precisely to any of the concepts embodied in terms such as 'Canada' or 'North America', as these terms support a Western perspective including the supremacy of the political, economic, religious or historic beliefs and values of Western societies" (Retzlaff, 267). On the contrary, it refers to an environment which is deeply connected with the notions of "homecoming" and "Mother Earth". The term was recovered by Morriseau in his translations of the Ojibway legends and in his

painting of the Great Turtle: according to Retzlaff, it has recently become a key concept in contemporary Pan-Indianism (267). The term has seen a further restoration with the spread of the Internet: nowadays turtleisland.org is a Native owned and operated Web site, “the best online source for Aboriginal, First Nations, Native People’s news and information”².

Naming has not been the only strategy adopted to mystify Indigenous subjectivities in Canada: in fact, technologies of idealization have worked to promote, among the other demystifications, the myth of the “authentic Indian”. When in 1885 the CPR, i.e. the Canadian Pacific Railway, was officially opened to the public, a tour of the Rocky Mountains was offered in order to make money; it included the sight of Aboriginal inhabitants in their natural setting, ‘true and authentic’ Indians in feathers and buckskin. Idealization responded to a European anthropologic interest in exotica: when world fairs were organized, ‘primitive’ peoples were brought to the metropolises and exposed as attractions. Nevertheless, in those same years, the government was enacting a form of cultural genocide through the Indian Act, thus banning traditional ceremonies such as Thirst Dance, Sun Dance and Potlatch, being too ‘primitive’ and inadequate for the new image of contemporary Canada. Moreover, as Betty Bastien and Celia Haig-Brown discuss in their studies on First Peoples and their traumatic experience in residential schools, the very idea of the “lazy native”, promoted by the Puritans from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards, had been instrumentalised by the colonial ideology to justify compulsory education and mobilization to agricultural labour in Indigenous communities.

volume
10

Resisting representations

The systematic discipline by which power works within and produces systems of representation through orders of discourse is continually resisted. Resistance circulates over time and space, spread throughout the network of power as a capillary movement that struggles with tactics, local circuits and technologies of control, thus creating, through counter-tactics, counter-circuits and counter-technologies, apparatuses of disruption. First Nations and Métis literatures epitomize a struggle in language, the articulation of counter-discourses that challenge the very assumptions through which power constructs Indigenous subjectivities discursively: emancipation discourses emerge from within their political activity and challenge the mystified representations produced by what Foucault calls the “regime of truth” (1980, 131). Destabilizing utterances of

2 online at http://www.turtleisland.org/front/_front.htm (12 March 2011)

contestation trigger discourses of self-representation. In the struggle for displacing cultural hierarchies and undermining its position of dominance, Indigenous literatures play a central role, in that they contrast the rhetorical violence with which power has subsumed Native peoples in its cultural circuit by opposing rhetorics of resistance.

Ashcroft discusses the process by which colonized subjects try to resist the forces designed to shape them as 'others' in terms of "interpolation", that is "the access such 'interpellated' subjects have to a counter-discursive agency" (2001, 48): interpolation is a strategy of resistance that involves insertion, interruption and interjection meant to disrupt the constructed coherence of discourses of power. In this sense, Indigenous narratives of self-formation interpolate the discourses produced by the "regime of truth" and destabilize both institutional practices and systems of representation. They also challenge the insidious process of absorption through which power tries to 'digest' Indigenous peoples in its social apparatus or to erase their special status. According to Sunera Thobani, official multiculturalism, just to mention one, though complex, example, despite having been defined as antithetical to the assimilation policies promoted by the Canadian government through the residential schools, has resulted in a deeper assimilation of First Peoples under white supervision (Thobani, 172).

As politicized activities, First Nations and Métis narratives challenge the hegemony of the dominant literary institutions as well. The 'silence' Native literatures emerged out of was, in fact, the product of strict politics of exclusion enacted through hegemonic discourses of power that not only strived to deprive Indigenous peoples of their languages and their traditions but also established restrictive cultural norms. In this sense, Aboriginal literatures are not 'emergent' literary voices "arising as a result of Aboriginal peoples 'literacy' in an official language", as Okanagan author Jeannette Armstrong points out (2005, 180): given a wider definition of literature which is not strictly linked to the writing system, they must be read as Aboriginal spoken art forms rooted in ancestral traditions and shaped by conventions and ancient knowledge. As a consequence, "Aboriginal literatures are a distinctive genre within Canadian Literature" (Armstrong 2005, 180), sites of reconfiguration where to affirm self-representation and interrogate the cultural normativity. In this reactionist framework where literature and political struggle intersect, Canadian Native women's narratives have adopted miscellany and oratory in order to disturb the claustrophobic metaphors and the mystified representations used by the dominant literature to objectify Indigenous women as 'princesses' or 'squaws'.

The necessity of negotiating a critical approach to First Nations and Métis literature is a crucial knot to unravel. As an intellectual project, Native (or Indigenous) studies has offered methods of research and enquiry in order to understand Indigenous

cultures from the inside: although both Native studies and literatures continue to be referred to as 'new' or 'emergent' fields, there is a long-standing Native intellectual as well as cultural tradition in Indigenous communities. As Robert Warrior points out, Indigenous literatures have been thought to require the beneficial of European literary tradition whereas Native studies derives from an extensive Indigenous intellectual tradition which gives substance to Native epistemologies. Indeed, by the end of the 1960s, Native Studies programs were introduced in Canadian universities: the first initiative was launched at Trent University in 1969 and in the early 1970s the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians created a series of institutions within Indigenous communities that had no tradition of university level education. The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, launched in 1981, became the voice of the Canadian Indian/Native Studies Association. In their introduction to *Native American Studies in Higher Education*, Duane Champagne and Joy Strauss stress the necessity for Native studies to distinguish from "race, ethnic, cultural and multicultural studies [because] [n]one of the latter approaches fully appreciates or emphasises Indigenous rights of self-government, land and negotiated relations to state governments" (12). Nevertheless, as Gail Valaskakis points out, Cultural Studies' resistance to essentialism as well as its analysis of power hierarchies is helpful in the acknowledgment of Indigenous literatures as oppositional discourses in struggle with contradictory representations (Valaskakis, 151). Despite its anti-colonial engagement and even though some Indigenous writers articulated their politics in postcolonial terms, Native Studies has been almost ignored by Post-colonial scholars. The exclusion from the post-colonial symposium is partly due to Native Studies' stress on Indigenous traditions and intellectual sovereignty. Nonetheless, such disregard for both Native American and Canadian contexts may be the result of the domination of the field by African, Asian and Caribbean "agendas and paradigms", as Eric Cheyfitz points out (4).

volume
10

Self-translation as counter-discourse

The cultural production of First Nations and Métis women writers such as Jeannette Armstrong, Beth Brant, Maria Campbell and Lee Maracle may be understood in terms of self-translation: not only these writings are culturally self-translated by subjectivities at the crossroads of different languages and cultures, i.e. identities informed by linguistic and cultural plurality, but they are also translations of the Indigenous self in literature. As re-constructions of the self, they are functional to the re-assessment of cultural identities. What emerges here is that narratives by Canadian Indigenous women

writers resist the dominant cultural norms as counter-discourses, disrupt Canadian mythology as self-representations and reconstruct cultural identities as self-narratives. Katheri Akiwenzie-Damm states that for many Indigenous writers “creative language in written or spoken forms is used, not merely as a form of individual self-expression, but as a form of cultural expression that raises the communal consciousness of the people” (Akiwenzie-Damm, 171). The alterNatives emerging from such narratives are the very cultural identities restored from misleading representations, devaluation and silencing. “Alter”, which is the Latin word for “other”, implies that such identities are ‘other than’ the official representations promoted so far: therefore, they address the very myth of ‘authenticity’ as a Euro-Canadian unit of measure on the basis of which Indianness could be quantified.

Adopting Ashcroft’s definition of transformation “which describes one way of viewing cultural identity [and] the strategic process by which cultural identity is represented” (2001, 4), First Nations and Métis women’s narratives can be understood in terms of transformative cultural production. Their intent is to alter the “influences exerted by the dominating power” in order to transform them into tools “for expressing a deeply held sense of identity and cultural being” (2001, 20). Counter-narratives such as *Slash* by Armstrong or *Bobbi Lee* by Métis author Lee Maracle epitomize the regeneration of Indigenous identities in writing which offers a “way back to the Good Red Road” (Brant, 11) as Mohawk writer Beth Brant suggests, that is a way of life among Native peoples of balance and continuity.

Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel, brought the word “Indian” into sharp focus and best exemplifies the mechanisms of appropriation through which First Nations and Métis authors were trying to find their way to self-empowerment. A main characteristic of Maracle’s narration is its genesis: in fact, the story was initially recorded as an oral autobiography in 1972 at the Liberation Support Movement Information Centre in Richmond. Life stories of chiefs and elders had usually been collected by Euro-Canadian anthropologists who, at the very beginning of the twentieth century, showed ethnographic interests in chiefs and elders’ recounts. Indeed, Maracle’s story should have led people to “political struggle” (Maracle 1990, 19): the activists of the LSM Centre, Don Barnett and Rick Sterling, who taped Maracle’s recount, believed that her testimony could have been helpful in the understanding of racism and violence against Native people in Canada. According to Armstrong, who wrote the preface to the second edition of *Bobbi Lee*, “the telling of our lives, the back-tracking, the map-making through the treacherous terrain of our individual experiences is perhaps a more important exercise than we Native people readily appreciate” (15).

Once translated into written form and published in 1975³, *Bobbi Lee* became “an extremely important document to Canadian literature” (15), as Armstrong suggests. Indeed, Maracle’s narrative tries to turn the Euro-Canadian historiographic perspective upside down and disseminate an alterNatively ‘other’ point of view: in fact, she portrays the chaos pervading the path towards the achievement of political consciousness from an inner point of view, which is not only Indigenous, but also a woman’s insight.

While autobiography, as a Western genre, traditionally celebrates individuality (Bataille and Mullen Sands, 11), Maracle’s life-story traces a communal path to regeneration and affirms the subordination of the individual to the community. As Arnold Krupat maintains, Indigenous autobiographies are dialogic in that “the self is not constituted by the achievement of a distinctive, special voice that separates it from the others, but, rather, by the achievement of a particular placement in relation to the many voices without which it could not exist” (Krupat, 133). In fact, Bobbi narrates the transformation of her individual “I” into a collective “we” and the cultural negotiations she has to enact in order to survive within the communities she lives in.

Because of her Métis identity, Bobbi is denied access to the Indian community; nonetheless, as she enters school, she understands to be an “Indian” for everybody else: “three months after I entered school I became aware that I was an Indian and that white people didn’t like me because of the colour of my skin” (Maracle 1990, 33). At the same time, her father’s whiteness not only complicates her belonging to the inner circle of the half-breeds but also troubles her family ties because “only two of the boys were ‘white’ while the rest of us were definitely ‘Indian’” (131). Her life in such a strange community where “weird things were always happening” (25) is uneven and decentred as the place and the houses, “cold and dump” (1990:22) with no electricity, people “on the North Shore mud flats” (21) dwell in. The mud surrounding their precarious boatshed is both a thick barrier of isolation remarking differences and distance, and also a black hole under whose gravity people and things collapse and are reassembled differently. When she leaves home for Visalia, “a strange little ‘Mexican’ town” (53), the community she lives in completely denies her existence (1990, 56) and she feels like “a piece of furniture, a table or something” (1990, 58). In Vancouver she experiences to what extent difference “set[s] you apart from the rest of the community, make[s] you a foreigner” (1990, 68) thus negating the very possibility of belonging. Once in Toronto, her dislocation becomes even worse: she degenerates into an “appendage” (1990, 92), “a kind of a parasite [...] detached and unconcerned” (1990, 98). In order to solve her dislocation and de-subjectification, she needs to belong, that is to find a placement as a Métis woman within Canadian society. After a long period of de-humanization, Bobbi

3 The second edition was published in 1990 as *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*.

manages to find a way back to her origins: she learns to “think Indian” (207), faces her “indigenous womanhood” (230) and unravels her story. “We are all Indians”, she asserts, “one people with many cultures” (208), thus enacting the shift from a subjective (mis)conception of identity to a collective identification.

Concluding remarks

volume
10

The struggle over the means of representation and the strategies of absorption reaches its fullest accomplishment within First Nations and Métis creative writings which question, interpolate and transform the dominant cultural discourses and the literary norms. Such counter-discursive narratives provide an entry into the mechanisms of self-formation and re-presentation: as translations of the Indigenous self in literature, they provide alterNative perspectives, disrupt Canadian mythology and restore Indigenous cultural identities from misleading representations, devaluation and silencing.

Works cited

- Akiwenzie-Damm, Kateri, “First Peoples Literature in Canada”, in Newhouse, David et al. (eds), *Hidden in Plain Sight. Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Print.
- Armstrong, Jeannette, “Aboriginal Literatures: a Distinctive Genre within Canadian Literature”, in Newhouse, David et al. (eds), *Hidden in Plain Sight. Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Print.
- . *Slash*. Penticton: Theytus, 1986. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. *Caliban’s Voice. The Transformation of English in Post-colonial Literatures*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.
- . et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, (1989) 2003. Print.
- . *Post-colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- Atalas, Syed Hussein. *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos, and Javanese from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*. London: Frank Cass, 1977. Print.
- Brant, Beth. *Writing as Witness. Essay and Talk*. Toronto: Women’s Press, 1994. Print.
- Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973. Print.

- Champagne, Duane and Strauss, Joseph H. (eds). *Native American Studies in Higher Education: Models for Collaboration between Universities and Indigenous Nations*. Walnut Creek: Rowman Altamira, 2002. Print.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Columbia Guide to American Indian Literatures of the United States since 1945*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. Print.
- DeRocco, David and Chabot, John F. *From Sea to Sea: A Newcomer's Guide to Canada*. St. Catharines: Full Blast Productions, 2008. Print.
- Episkenew, Jo-Ann. *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy and Healing*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Random House, 1980. Print.
- . *The History of Sexuality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. Print.
- Godard, Barbara. "Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women Writers", in Kam-boureli, Smaro (ed.). *Canadian Literature at the Crossroads of Language and Culture: Selected Essays by Barbara Godard 1987-2005*, Edmonton: Newest Press, 2008. Print.
- Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage, 1997. Print
- . *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. Print.
- . "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in Rutherford Jonathan (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. Print.
- Highway, Tomson. *Dry Lips Ough a Move to Kapuskasing: A Play*. Saskatoon: Firth House, 1989. Print.
- Hodgson, Heather. *Seventh Generation: Contemporary Native Writing*. Penticton: Theytus, 1989. Print.
- Krupat, Arnold. *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. Print.
- Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference, Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Print.
- Maracle, Lee. *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1990. Print.
- . *Bobbi Lee: Struggles of a Native Canadian Woman*. Richmond: LSM Press, 1975. Print.
- McKenzie, Stephanie. *Before the Country: Native Renaissance, Canadian Mythology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.
- Morriseau, Norval. *Legends of My People: the Great Ojibway*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1977. Print.
- Moses, Daniel David and Goldie, Terry. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

New, William Herbert. *Native Writers and Canadian Writing*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990. Print.

———. *A History of Canadian Literature*. New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989. Print.

Palusci, Oriana. *English but not Quite: Locating Linguistic Diversity*. Trento: Tangram, 2010. Print.

Perreault, Martha Jeanne and Vance, Sylvia. *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada. An Anthology*. Edmonton: NeWest, 1990. Print.

Retzlaff, Steffi. *Tradition, Solidarity and Empowerment: the Native Discourse in Canada*. Verlag: Ibidem, 2005. Print.

Sands, Kathleen and Bataille, Gretchen M. *American Indian Women Telling Their Lives*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989. Print.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *AlterNatives*. Burnaby: Talonbooks, 2000. Print.

Thobani, Sunera. *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.

Valaskakis, Gail Guthrie. "Indian Country. Negotiating the Meaning of Land in Native America", in Nelson, Cory et al. (eds). *Disciplinary and Descent in Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Vizenor, Gerald (ed.). *Literary Chance: Essays on Native American Survivance*. València: Universitat de València, 2007. Print.

Warrior, Robert. *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 1995. Print.

EMILIE PÉNEAU

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, IRELAND

Margaret Atwood's Multiple Subversions: The Question of Genre in Her Short Fiction

volume
10

Abstract

This article explores Margaret Atwood's use and subversion of the genre of the short story and its sub-genres. After a brief introduction that presents the place of the short story in Canadian literature and considers the premises of short story theory, this essay offers an analysis of Atwood's shorter pieces. It foregrounds how Atwood consciously subverts and parodies genres as forms and discourses. Such subversion disrupts the reading process, thus transforming the reader into an active producer of meaning and drawing attention to the ideological discourses inherent in the use of genre conventions.

Résumé

Cet article analyse la façon dont Margaret Atwood exploite et bouscule le genre de la nouvelle et ses sous-genres. Après une brève introduction indiquant la place que la nouvelle occupe dans la littérature canadienne and présentant les règles de base proposées par les spécialistes de la nouvelle, cet essai offre une analyse des fictions les plus courtes. Il montre comment Atwood transgresse volontairement and parodie les genres en tant que formes et discours. Cette transgression perturbe la lecture car elle oblige ainsi le lecteur à devenir ainsi l'interpréteur du sens et met l'accent sur le discours idéologique inhérent à l'usage des conventions liées aux genres.

Margaret Atwood is an acclaimed writer, in her native Canada and abroad, but although she writes in many genres she is best known for her novels, and then for her poetry, rather than for her short stories. Yet, it is striking that such a successful author chooses to continue writing in what is still commonly considered a minor genre: the short story. Even more striking is the form, or forms, her short pieces take. Here, I use the term “pieces” rather than “stories” because, as I intend to show, her writings which come under this wide and not so clearly defined generic category are varied and tend to resist categorisation. I thus prefer to use the term “pieces”, which has the inconvenience of being vague, but the advantage of encompassing all the texts that belong to her collections of short fiction. This essay will, thus, be concerned with Atwood's use of the genre of the short story and its sub-genres. My concern here is not only with the form itself, but also with genres as discourses and how Atwood subverts them.

In this essay, I intend to provide a brief overview of the place of the short story in Canadian Literature before considering some theoretical questions on the short story and finally examining how Atwood uses this genre subversively. I will argue that her subversion of the form, particularly in the shorter pieces, disrupts the reading process, thus transforming the reader into an active producer of meaning. I will also focus on how Atwood challenges the discourses inherent in certain genres, whether literary or popular, as well as highlighting how her critique derives firstly from the formal parody of this genre and its sub-genres.

It has often been argued that the short story genre is an expression from the margins. Frank O'Connor, in his seminal work *The Lonely Voice*, famously argued that it is the voice of the “submerged populations” and such a view might easily apply to colonial and postcolonial countries other than O'Connor's Ireland. Indeed, Adrian Hunter notes that “the short story is, and always has been, disproportionately represented in the literatures of colonial and postcolonial countries” (Hunter, 138). Although he emphasises that “[i]t is extremely difficult to think what generally applicable relationship can be said to exist between the short story and the experience of (post)colonialism per se”, he argues that economic reasons and the form of the short story as appropriate to “the representation of liminal or problematized identities” are important factors (Hunter, 138). Moreover, Mary Louise Pratt highlights the success of the short story at a time when the United States was still a nation in development (Pratt, 104), which seems to indicate that there is a correlation between the national status and the form it produces. Unsurprisingly, then, the genre has proved successful, even emblematic, in postcolonial countries such as Canada, to the point that critic Reingard Nischik calls the short story “the flagship genre of Canadian literature” (Nischik 2007, 1).

Literature in Canada has faced many challenges, as Atwood's notorious and much debated book, *Survival*, and other of her critical writings reveal. In *Survival*, Atwood attempts to place Canadian literature within a tradition, to give Canadians a sense of their culture. She argues that this tradition revolves around the theme of survival, which is present in Canadian literature as in Canadian culture (one might consider survival in the context of early settlers facing the wilderness, but also of a country on the margin of two major powers: the British colonisers on the one hand and the American superpower on the other) (Atwood 2004). Indeed, Canadian literature was long thought of as near to non-existent and what was mainly taught in Canadian schools and universities were the English classics. More recently, one could argue that Canadian literature is overshadowed by narrow, U.S.-centric definition of "American" writing. Consequently, Canadians did not feel as if they had a culture of their own; they were influenced by the cultures of their former colonisers and that of the country of which they were a periphery, the United States. If one considers the short story as an expression from the margins, then Canada is a perfect site.

David Arnason describes the development of the short story in Canada and relates it to the conditions of publication there (Arnason, 159). He notes that in the nineteenth century, the genre became popular with the existence of magazines and newspapers, which would devote a page to literary writing (Arnason, 159-60). This trend was global; however, it seems more significant in Canada since publication was near to non-existent and the short story became the first national literary medium of expression. In the twentieth century, publishing houses were slow to find their ground, lacked funds and found it difficult to survive because of a lack of market and readership. The public would be unaware of the national literature and would tend to read imported books; at the other end of the spectrum, writers would emigrate or try to get published abroad as they could not see an interest and market for their art in their own country. Consequently, publishing houses were reticent to publish anything Canadian. Thus, journals and magazines were almost the only medium of expression and even they had a restricted readership. It is only around the time of the publication of *Survival*, in 1972, that Canada saw a move towards indigenous literature being published at home, what is labelled the "Canadian renaissance", in which individual artists and Robert Weaver's reading programmes on the CBC played a major role.¹ This historical context and the early conditions of publication explain why the short story has for a long time been one of the major genres in Canada and, as Arnason emphasises, this is how "a tradition has developed" (Arnason, 164).

The success of the short story in Canada and its recognition abroad is best exemplified in the work of Alice Munro, Mavis Gallant, Audrey Thomas, Alistair McCleod and,

1 See Nischik (Nischik 2007, 16-18) and Thacker (Thacker, 177-79).

of course, Margaret Atwood. In her survey of the short story in Canada, Nischik highlights how prolific and diverse the genre is in the country (Nischik 2007, 1-39). Often the short story is seen as an apprentice work: a genre the author would abandon as soon as s/he is able to move to something longer and often regarded as a higher genre: the novel. For instance, Pratt notes that the short story has "a reputation as a training or practice genre" and argues that it is usually used to teach writers and readers skills (Pratt, 97). However, as theorists of the short story have continuously insisted, it is a genre distinct from the novel, which imposes its own demands. It is necessarily defined in relation to the novel, yet presents a different set of characteristics and techniques, which I will discuss later. I would therefore argue that Atwood uses this genre and form for specific purposes, which are closer to those of her poetry. For Atwood, the novel is a genre concerned with plot and character (in Ingersoll 1992, 135), and must have "people [that] exist in a social milieu; [which] gets into the novel" (in Ingersoll 1992, 137). However, she considers poetry a more appropriate genre in which to play with words and "out of time experience" (in Ingersoll 1992, 223). The form of some of her shorter fictions is sometimes closer to that of poetry in its play with language, its rhythm, its lack of plot or its disposition on the page. The piece "Let Us Now Praise Stupid Women" (Atwood 1993, 31-37) is such an example:

-- the airheads, the bubblebrains, the ditzzy blondes:
the headstrong teenagers too dumb to listen to their
mothers:
all those with mattress stuffing between their ears,
all the lush hostesses who tell us to have a good
day, and give us the wrong change, while check-
ing their Big Hair in the mirror,
all those who dry their freshly-shampooed poodles
in the microwave,
and those whose boyfriends tell them chlorophyll
chewing gum is a contraceptive, and who
believe it; (Atwood 1993, 31)

Other pieces would adopt forms that might be closer to mini-essays in their concerns and forms. For instance, many of the shorter pieces have distinct paragraphs separated by asterisks or numbers, as "The Female Body" (Atwood 1993, 39-46):

1.

I agree, it's a hot topic. But only one? Look around, there's a wide range. Take my own, for instance.

...

2.

The basic Female Body comes with the following accessories: garter-belt, panty-girdle, crinoline, camisole, bustle, brassiere . . . (Atwood 1993, 39-40)

As a result, her collections of short pieces present a myriad of forms, which are difficult to distinguish and blur the boundaries between what would at first appear as distinct genres or forms. These uses of various forms allow Atwood to be more experimental, but also, in some cases, to address her concerns more directly without abiding to the constraints of developing a plot. This notion of plot is actually central to the short story. Indeed, theorists have argued that the success of the short story does not rely on the complexity of plot, as with novels. For instance, Poe constantly reminds us that the short story should have a single effect (Poe, 60-65), an idea also endorsed by Brander Matthews (Matthews, 73, 76), and Anton Chekhov argues that one should avoid descriptive commonplaces and aim at "the compactness that makes short things alive" (Chekhov, 196-97). Such ideas are still prevalent today (see Pasco, 124-25). In all these instances, plot, even if minimal, is still central; yet, some contemporary short fictions, such as Atwood's, can be seen as rejecting this emphasis. Richard Ford suggests that the (post)modern short story in America moves away from these concerns with plot to focus instead on self-reflexive questions of narrativity (Ford, viii). This consideration of plot is significant and can be related to the closing of her piece "Happy Endings", which presents various traditional and stereotypical plots and concludes as follows: "That's about all that can be said for plots, which anyway are just one thing after another, a what and a what and a what. Now try How and Why" (Atwood 1994b, 70). Indeed, when looking at Atwood's short fiction, one needs to focus on the "how" and "why" of the pieces, since there is not always a plot as such in them.

These shorter pieces can be seen as Atwood playing with the short story genre and its conventions and can be related to her awareness of the difficulties of defining the short story. Atwood remains aware of the theories and conventions behind the forms she uses. She argues that "[y]ou have to understand what the form is doing, how it works, before you say, 'Now we're going to make it different, we're going to turn it upside down, we're going to move it so it includes something which isn't supposed to be there, we're going to surprise the reader'" (in Ingersoll 2006, 92-93). Although the

volume
10

conceptualisation of the short story began as early as the nineteenth century with writers thinking out their art, short story theory proper is relatively recent and offers much debate and controversy. At the origin of the debate of “what is a short story?” is Poe’s statement that it should be read in one sitting and that its principal characteristic is its unifying effect: “in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting” (Poe, 60). The short story is difficult to define. Norman Friedman proposes that the term includes “all ‘narrative fiction in prose which is short’” (Friedman, 15). However, like other theorists, Friedman agrees that such definition is problematic because it is relative: it is a piece of prose fiction which is short, or rather shorter than a novel. Yet, it seems impossible to decide on what short should be. Even Poe’s delimitation of it being read in one sitting is relative since, as Ian Reid notes, not everyone is able to sit for the same length of time (Reid, 10). Considerations of length seem to create more problems than helping to provide a definition. Despite these difficulties, many theorists and writers have tried to agree on a definition and to decide on what a short story is and what it is not. However, recent criticism has focused more on considering these problems, refuting earlier definitions and offering general tendencies, rather than coming to a fixed rigid definition and has also moved beyond these questions of definition in order to consider other aspects related to this genre.² For instance, Austin Wright suggests a cluster of characteristics that emphasise the tendencies of the short story without pigeonholing works into rigid categories (Wright, 47-49). According to Wright, the best way to come to a definition is to allow for flexibility and for borderline works to be included in the genre; he thus emphasises the importance of the phrase “tends to” (Wright, 48-49). Among the characteristics that are most often mentioned are the idea of suggestiveness, the importance of the beginning and ending and the notion of unity, first advanced by Poe.³

If we examine Atwood’s work in this genre, we are struck by the variety of forms she adopts. So far, Atwood has published eight collections of short fiction; we could even add *The Penelopiad* to this list since it is a novella and, depending on the critic’s definition, could be considered as a long short story. Three of these collections, *Dancing Girls*, *Bluebeard’s Egg* and *Wilderness Tips*, are what Nischik refers to as “short stories proper”. They correspond to our common idea of the short story in their length

2 For a comprehensive overview of the debate on the short story, consult the essays collected by Charles E. May in *The New Short Story Theories* and by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey in *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*.

3 See Seán Ó Faoláin’s chapter “On Convention” (Ó Faoláin, 173-98)

and in their narrative form; although we could argue that they do not always present a narrative unity since they are sometimes fragmented by alternative points of view, shifts between present and past or by running two parallel narratives. Yet they generally seem conventional in their form. The collections of the second group, *Murder in the Dark*, *Good Bones*, *Good Bones and Simple Murders* (a collection of a selection of stories from the two previous collections with the addition of "Simple Murders") and *The Tent*, are more innovative, and even subversive, in the forms they adopt. These collections contain those pieces which are at a crossroads between prose poetry, short fiction and mini-essay. The latest collection, *Moral Disorder*, also resists categorisation since it is a hybrid between the short story collection and the novel; it is what would commonly be thought of as a short story cycle.

Few critics have explored the collections of shorter pieces; however, those who have done so have emphasised Atwood's particular use of the genre and have tried to categorise, to a certain extent, those pieces. As an examination of their work reveals such categorisation is not obvious. The pieces of the collection *Murder in the Dark* have been described as "fiction théorique" (essay-fictions) (Verduyn, 124), "a hodgepodge of narrative bits, prose poems and sketches" (Spriet, 24) or "Baudelairean prose poems" (Merivale 1996, 99-100; Nischik 2003, 6). Lorna Irvine argues that the collection "is not consecutive narrative, not even a specified genre" (Irvine, 267) and Nischik notes the "tremendous structural and technical variety" of the pieces in these collections, which "operate within the generic parameters of the short story, yet it would be inaccurate to describe them simply as short short-story (or prose poetry) collections. Among the various 'genres' they contain are mini essays, 'essay-fictions,' short dialogues, dramatic monologues, and reflections"; as well as the absence of "an appropriate collective term" to characterise them (Nischik 2009, 50). We can find the same confusion regarding the pieces in *Good Bones*. Rosemary Sullivan compares them to the "*conte*, that curious French form that is midway between parable, fairy-tale, and story" (Sullivan, 113); Michel Delville calls them "short shorts" (Delville, 57); Patricia Merivale sees the collection as "a prose-poem sequence" (Merivale 1995, 254); while Sharon Wilson argues that the pieces "can be described either as prose poems or short-short, sudden, or flash fiction" (Wilson, 18). Although less work has been published on *The Tent*, the collection clearly presents the same generic indeterminacy.

Atwood herself does not offer any answer as what to call those pieces. In some documents she refers to them as poems while in others she calls them pieces.⁴ She also emphasises their variety: "Those little pieces are in a number of different genres, but one

4 For instance, in the "acknowledgements" section of *Good Bones*, the stories are described as "pieces" and it is mentioned that "Three also appeared in Selected Poems II" (Atwood 1997, 112).

thing that they have in common is that they're very short. I think of them as sampler boxes of chocolates, in which each chocolate is different but they're all chocolate" (Atwood 2010). When discussing the genre of the piece "Happy Endings", she says that "[i]t was not a poem, a short story or a prose poem", but calls it a "creature", "a mutation" and refers to pieces of this type as "aberrations" (Atwood 1989, 298-99).

As the survey above reveals, it is difficult to categorise Atwood's shorter pieces. They show the writer at her most experimental. I would suggest that Atwood consciously subverts the form from within and attempts to shatter the boundaries that exist between genres. Her writing in these pieces is highly self-reflexive and tends to draw attention to the genre itself. Many of these pieces play with and subvert formal frames of readings and thus destabilise readers' expectations. Indeed, she compares the effect these pieces have to that a white frog would have: it deceives expectations, and says that: "This is the way such a mutant form unsettles us" (Atwood 1989, 299). It is clear from this statement that by using such forms, Atwood consciously aims at upsetting our reading.

As mentioned above, the genre of the short story relies extensively on the technique of suggestion. Short story theorists have noted that, because of the shortness of the genre, each word is important to the meaning of the text and has thus been carefully balanced. The reader should thus consider the use of words and what they suggest. According to Pasco, "readers expect the vocabulary to bear more than its usual significance. Not only does every word carry a full weight of meaning, short stories also make frequent use of ellipsis. Readers expect to generalize, to read in depth and between the lines" (Pasco, 125). Only the minimum is said; however, the connotative meaning of words is crucial to the short story. Suggestiveness will also tend to leave interpretation more open since the reader is left to imagine what is not said.

One method of suggestion is intertextuality. However, intertextuality requires previous knowledge from readers, and the ability to recognise and reconstitute the intertextual reference will result in a richer interpretation of the story. In Atwood's short fiction, the knowledge of folk-tales and other intertexts will have an impact on the way we read the story. For instance, failure to recognise that the piece "Gertrude Talks Back" (Atwood 1993, 15-18) refers to *Hamlet* will result in a loss of significance. Indeed, Gertrude in *Hamlet* is a secondary character and speaks few lines. In Atwood's revision, not only is she given a voice, but she also admits to murdering Hamlet's father. This revision can thus be read as a feminist her-story giving a voice and agency to a previously silenced woman.

Therefore, through the use of intertextuality and suggestion, the pieces can present multiple meanings, some requiring prior knowledge and/or demanding some research,

thus transforming the reader into an active producer of meaning rather than being the passive receiver of a narrative. Intertextuality is evident in many pieces by Atwood, such as "Salome Was a Dancer" (Atwood 2007b, 51-54) or "Bluebeard's Egg" (Atwood 1988, 131-64). It supposes the reader to be familiar with the antecedent story, or pre-text, and the resulting story, or post-text, derives its meaning from the intertext, which can be seen as the interpretation made by the reader from the interconnection between the two texts.⁵ Intertextuality can involve other texts, but also genres, in which case the reference is made to a group of works operating according to the same conventions. In her short pieces, Atwood often refers to these groups of texts or genres and subverts them, by parodying the form and revising well-known stories for instance.⁶ By doing so, she subverts the conventions associated to the genre, thus criticising the form, as well as the discourses associated with the genre. Such subversion destabilises readers by upsetting the conventions with which they are familiar and makes them become active readers. It also offers a critique of the discourses involved in specific genres, but one that is only effective insofar as the reader has become an active decoder of the text.

Pratt's statement that "[g]enres are not essences. They are human institutions" (Pratt, 92) emphasises the fact that genres are human constructs and, consequently, ideological. Indeed, genres raise expectations for readers and thus condition the reading of a text. Pasco insists that "[w]hile . . . inclusion or exclusion from a genre does not affect the quality of a work, it may encourage readers to read with inappropriate expectations" (Pasco, 123). Therefore, labelling a work as a short story or an essay will have a different impact on the way we are going to read the text as fiction or non-fiction.⁷ Yet, Atwood's writing displays postmodernist trends regarding this division between the fictional and the factual, and her short pieces can be seen as breaking or blurring such boundaries. One example of this is how the use of a label for these pieces can be deceiving. For instance, the collection *Murder in the Dark* is subtitled "Short Fictions and Prose Poems", but, as Antoinette Quinn notes, "[r]eaders of this collection are even left in some doubt as to which of its sequences of prose are to be categorised as short fictions and which as prose poems" (Quinn, 17). For example, the piece "Autobiography" (Atwood 1994b, 9-10) presents such indeterminacy. The title seems to suggest an autobiographical narrative; however, it consists mainly of a lyrical landscape description, in which the only (not quite) event happens in the closing paragraph: "Once, on the rock island, there was the half-eaten carcass of a deer, which smelled like iron, like

volume
10

5 I borrow the terms pre-text and post-text from Andrea Stolz (Stolz, 27).

6 By genre, I refer both to the form of a text and to its discourse.

7 See Douglas Hesse for an analysis of the blurring of boundaries between narrative essays and short fictions (Hesse, 85-105).

rust rubbed into your hands so that it mixes with sweat. This smell is the point at which the landscape dissolves, ceases to be landscape and becomes something else" (Atwood 1994b, 10). There, thus, seems to be a tension between the title and content of this piece, which Merivale describes as a "sharply abridged modernist short stor[y] of growing up" (Merivale 1996, 101). It is unclear under which category this piece should be filed.

The impact of such subversion of generic conventions should not be underestimated. These subversions take readers out of their comfort zone, turning them into critical agents. According to Theodor Adorno's theory and critique of popular art, mass readers tend to read for entertainment and recreation; they are passive readers who do not process the text. For Adorno, art is highly ideological, particularly popular art, which, according to him, has the function of appeasing the masses and making them accept their situation.⁸ Popular fiction responds to certain conventions, which are what the reader expects to find in a certain genre, and as a result it leads to a certain complacency rather than provoking the reader to think about his/her condition and ways to challenge it. Atwood agrees with such a view; she says that "on the whole the audience prefers art not to be a mirror held up to life but a Disneyland of the soul, containing Romanceland, Spyland, Pornoland and all the other Escapelands which are so much more agreeable than the complex truth" (Atwood 1984, 393). By choosing to read work written in a certain genre, readers know what to expect. If these expectations are disrupted, they will be more prone to critically engage with the text and consider the discourses at work within it. Atwood's work is entertaining, but is by no means escapist and in order to avoid falling into this trap, she uses devices that force the reader to stop and reflect about the text. The subversion of form or well-known literary genres is one of these devices. Quinn argues that *Murder in the Dark* "is a 'text that seeks to produce a new reader' [Umberto Eco]" and notes the opacity of this "defamiliarized text" that demands that the reader use "the third eye" (Quinn, 17-18). The reading of the text is therefore destabilised with, hopefully, the result of producing a new and more alert reader, who will participate in the creation of the text.

If we look at Atwood's collection, *Murder in the Dark*, we soon discover that once we have gone past the first pieces, which are written in a semi-autobiographical mode and

8 Adorno noticed that in late capitalism, culture was increasingly influenced by the economy and had become an industry in itself. As for any other industry, the "culture industry"'s aim is profit. Hence, works of art are considered successful when they create money. Therefore they are designed to entertain the masses rather than make them think (Bernstein, 7). They come to the market as 'pre-digested' products that do not require any efforts to be consumed and the consumer becomes a passive receiver. According to him, artworks carry the ideology of those in power and make the masses lose their ability for reflection and criticism.

present epiphanic moments, we are confronted with pieces that are highly self-reflexive and bring to the fore literary practices. The reader is actually forced to consider how pieces come into being. For instance, in the title piece "Murder in the Dark" (Atwood 1994b, 47-50), the writer is compared to a murderer in a detective game by which rule the murderer must always lie. We are also led to consider how plots are constructed according to certain rules in "Happy Endings" (Atwood 1994b, 63-70). Other pieces also draw attention to how language creates reality, as in "Bread" (Atwood 1994b, 71-75), and to what the writer faces, as in "The Page" (Atwood 1994b, 76-79). Some pieces' titles invite us to consider genres directly, as in "Women's Novels" (Atwood 1994b, 57-62) and "A Parable" (Atwood 1994b, 101-02). Yet, it is probably in *Good Bones* that this play with genre and form is most evident.

According to Wilson, the pieces in *Good Bones* are "postmodern metatexts" which are "examples of Atwood's transgressive and subversive genre bending" (Wilson, 18-19). She notes Atwood's use of intertexts and stresses that "Atwood's play with genres and intertexts is metaformal, metacritical, and thereby profoundly political" and sees her as "mimic[ing] and parody[ing] forms, only to turn them inside out and deconstruct them" (Wilson, 19-20). Her parodies are not limited to literary genres but can also be parodies of various discourses or of writings from popular culture and everyday life, such as magazine articles. In "Making a Man" (Atwood 1993, 53-58), Atwood parodies the typical "how to" section in women's magazines and teaches us various methods to make a man. The piece begins as follows: "This month we'll take a break from crocheted string bikinis and Leftovers Réchauffées to give our readers some tips on how to create, in their very own kitchen and rumpus rooms, an item that is both practical and decorative" (Atwood 1993, 53) and then proposes five methods to make a man. This piece adopts a form from popular culture that is recognisable to us all. The "how to" section of women magazines is ideological in that it carries discourses that posit the woman in the role of the "angel of the house". However, here Atwood plays with this form since its content turns men into "practical and decorative" objects, which can be recycled as doorstops. Rather than attacking such a form, Atwood cleverly writes from within its conventions and parodies it in order to make readers reflect on the discourses of such articles.

One of the genres she tends to play with extensively is the fairy tale. Many of the pieces in her various collections display intertextual references to fairy tales and are formal parodies of this genre. "There Was Once" (Atwood 1993, 19-24) usefully illustrates Atwood's resistance to the generic conventions of the fairy tale and highlights how genre gives certain expectations to readers, which she obviously subverts and deconstructs. It also shows us how plots respond to readers' expectations and are built

according to conventions. The story is a parody of the archetypal fairy tale where the poor stepdaughter marries the prince and they live happily ever after. The story, which takes the form of a dialogue, begins as a classic fairy tale, although in the French or German language since the first words are “there was once” rather than “once upon a time”. Just by reading these few words, readers expect a classic fairy tale containing all the ingredients necessary for the plot to come to its anticipated end. Here, though, an English-speaking reader might be disturbed by the change in the introductory phrase. The classic beginning is still recognisable but we can sense that the rules have already been changed. The story at first contains all the elements of the fairy tale: “There was once a poor girl, as beautiful as she was good, who lived with her wicked stepmother in a house in the forest” (Atwood 1993, 19). However, the storyteller is soon interrupted by his listener asking him to revise details of the plot one by one, such as the characterisation and the setting: “forest” is replaced by “suburbs” (Atwood 1993, 19), “wicked stepmother” is replaced by “stepfather” (Atwood 1993, 23) and so on. Every single detail is challenged by the interlocutor, until the story is completely deconstructed and “there was once” becomes “here” and “now” (Atwood 1993, 24).

The deconstruction of a classic fairy tale can be seen as Atwood playing with literary or genre theory, such as that developed by Vladimir Propp, who created a “morphology of the folk-tale”, and as a critique of the way structuralist theory tries to categorise each and every text. In *Morphology of the Folk-Tale*, Propp highlights in a scientific way all the functions of the dramatis personae in the fairy tale and affirms that “[a]ll fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure” (Propp, 74-75). Indeed, in “There Was Once”, we find all these ingredients of the fairy tale; however, they are progressively replaced by other ingredients and deconstructed to the point where the story does not exist anymore. By doing so, Atwood shatters our expectations of what a fairy tale should be and consist of and asks us to reflect on the implications of having such rigid formal frames that work only according to fixed rules.

Moreover, in Propp's theory, characters act as stereotypes and Atwood's pieces deconstruct such stereotypes. For instance, in “Unpopular Gals” (Atwood 1993, 25-30), she gives a voice to the minor characters of fairy tales, such as the ugly sister, the witch or the wicked stepmother, who explain that their representation is necessarily negative because of the conventions created by such rigid rules, yet argue that without them there would not be any plot: “I'm the plot, babe, and don't ever forget it” (Atwood 1993, 30). The genre of the fairy tale is ideological and intends to present a discourse of good versus evil and to come to a certain moral. By rewriting these fairy tales and drawing our attention to their structure, Atwood asks us to consider how form and genre impact on our reading.

To conclude, I would like to reemphasise the fact that Atwood's use and subversion of the genre of the short story is not only play but a serious matter. I have discussed a few issues in this essay regarding Atwood's use of this genre. First of all, we have seen how the medium of the short story can be seen as appropriate for Atwood's purposes; it is a genre that lends itself to experimentation. However, we have also considered how short story theory has, since its early beginning with Poe, aimed at providing rules and conventions that could apply to the genre. Yet, it seems clear from analysing Atwood's collections of shorter fictions that, although she works from within this tradition, she subverts its conventions. These subversions shatter readers' expectations regarding what they are about to read and asks them to consider what is involved in the use of a certain form or genre. By doing so, she disrupts the reading process and turns the reader into an active participant. This highlights that Atwood is not simply a writer delivering messages; instead, she relies on the involvement of the reader with the text in order to create meaning. It is perhaps relevant to note that her concerns in her non-fiction and her fiction are related. However, in her short fiction, these concerns are encoded through multiple methods, such as her use of intertextuality and genre subversion, and the reader must interpret the text. As always, Atwood, in her use of the form, resists pigeonholing, which might in fact be considered as a critique of academics' and critics' tendency to over-generalise and categorise. Significantly, when asked what is a good short story, Atwood answers that, as long as the writing is grammatically correct, it is only a matter of taste (Atwood 2010); thus highlighting that what is normally considered "good" does not necessarily depend on rigid rules.

volume
10

I wish to acknowledge the support of the Association for Canadian Studies in Ireland. I would also like to thank Margaret Atwood for finding time to grant me an interview.

Works Cited

- Arnason, David. "The Historical Development of the Canadian Short Story." *RANAM: Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines* 16 (1983): 159-64. Print.
- Atwood, Margaret. *Second Words*. 1982. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1984. Print.
- . *Bluebeard's Egg*. 1983. London: Virago, 1988. Print.
- . Afternotes. *Sudden Fiction International: Sixty Short-Short Stories*. Eds. Robert Shapard and James Thomas. New-York: Norton, 1989. 298-99. Print.
- . *Wilderness Tips*. 1991. London: Virago, 1992. Print.

- . *Good Bones*. 1992. London: Virago, 1993. Print.
- . *Good Bones and Simple Murders*. New York: Doubleday, 1994a. Print.
- . *Murder in the Dark: Short Fictions and Prose Poems*. 1983. London: Virago, 1994b. Print.
- . *Dancing Girls*. 1977. London: Vintage, 1996. Print.
- . *Good Bones*. 1992. Toronto, ON: New Canadian Library, 1997. Print.
- . *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. 1972. Toronto: McClelland, 2004. Print.
- . *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005. Print.
- . *Moral Disorder*. 2006. London: Virago, 2007a. Print.
- . *The Tent*. 2006. London: Bloomsbury, 2007b. Print.
- . Personal interview. 18 Jun. 2010.
- Bernstein, J. M. Introduction. *Theodor W. Adorno: The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed. J. M. Bernstein. London: Routledge Classics, 2001. 1-28. Print.
- Chekhov, Anton. "The Short Story." *The New Short Story Theories*. Ed. Charles E. May. Athens, Oh: Ohio UP, 1994. 195-98. Print.
- Delville, Michel. "Murdering the Text: Genre and Gender Issues in Margaret Atwood's Short Short Fiction." *The Contact and the Culmination*. Eds. Marc Delrez and Bénédicte Ledent. Liège: L3-Liège Language and Literature, 1997. 57-67. Print.
- Ford, Richard. Introduction. *The Granta Book of the American Short Story*. Ed. Richard Ford. London: Granta, 1992. vii-xxii. Print.
- Friedman, Norman. "Recent Short Story Theories: Problems in Definition." *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Eds. Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1989. 13-31. Print.
- Hesse, Douglas. "A Boundary Zone: First-Person Short Stories and Narrative Essays." *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Ed. Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1989. 85-105. Print.
- Hunter, Adrian. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.
- Ingersoll, Earl G. *Margaret Atwood: Conversations*. London: Virago, 1992. Print.
- . *Waltzing Again: New and Selected Conversations with Margaret Atwood*. Princeton, NJ: Ontario Review, 2006. Print.
- Irvine, Lorna. "Murder and Mayhem: Margaret Atwood Deconstructs." *Contemporary Literature* 29.2 (1988): 265-76. *Jstor*. 26 Jun. 2009 <<http://www.jstor.org/search>>. Web.
- Lohafer, Susan, and Jo Ellyn Clarey, eds. *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1989. Print.

- Matthews, Brander. "The Philosophy of the Short Story." *The New Short Story Theories*. Ed. Charles E. May. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1994. 73-80. Print.
- May, Charles E., ed. *The New Short Story Theories*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1994. Print.
- Merivale, Patricia. "From 'Bad News' to 'Good Bones': Margaret Atwood's Gendering of Art and Elegy." *Various Atwoods: Essays on the Later Poems, Short Fiction, and Novels*. Ed. Lorraine M. York. Concord, ON: Anansi, 1995. 253-70. Print.
- . "Hypocrite Lecteuse! Ma Semblable! Ma Soeur!": On Teaching *Murder in the Dark*." *Approaches to Teaching Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and Other Works*. Eds. Sharon R. Wilson, Thomas B. Friedman and Shannon Eileen Hengen. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1996. 99-106. Print.
- Nischik, Reingard M. "Murder in the Dark: Margaret Atwood's Inverse Poetics of Intertextual Minuteness." *Margaret Atwood's Textual Assassinations: Recent Poetry and Fiction*. Ed. Sharon R. Wilson. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 2003. 1-17. Print.
- . "The Canadian Short Story: Status, Criticism, Historical Survey." *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*. Ed. Reingard M. Nischik. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007. 1-39. Print.
- . *Engendering Genre: The Works of Margaret Atwood*. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 2009. Print.
- O'Connor, Frank. *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*. Cork: Cork City Council, 2003. Print.
- Ó Faoláin, Seán. *The Short Story*. 1948. Cork: Mercier 1972. Print.
- Pasco, Allan H. "On Defining Short Stories." May 114-30. Print.
- . "On Defining Short Stories." *The New Short Story Theories*. Ed. Charles E. May. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1994. 114-30. Print.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "Poe on Short Fiction." *The New Short Story Theories*. Ed. Charles E. May. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1994. 59-72. Print.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "The Short Story: The Long and the Short of It." *The New Short Story Theories*. Ed. Charles E. May. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1994. 91-113. Print.
- Propp, Vladimir. "Morphology of the Folk-Tale." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 72-75. Print.
- Quinn, Antoinette. "Atwood and Autobiography: The Opening Sequence of *Murder in the Dark*." *RANAM: Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines* 22 (1989): 17-25. Print.
- Reid, Ian. *The Short Story*. The Critical Idiom. Ed. John D. Jump. London: Methuen, 1977. Print.
- Spriet, Pierre. "Margaret Atwood's Post-Modernism in *Murder in the Dark*." *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 11.2 (1989): 24-30. Print.

Strolz, Andrea. *Escaping from the Prison-House of Language and Digging for Meanings in Texts among Texts: Metafiction and Intertextuality in Margaret Atwood's Novels Lady Oracle and The Blind Assassin*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006. Print.

Sullivan, Rosemary. Afterword. *Good Bones*. Ed. Margaret Atwood. Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1997. 113-17. Print.

Thacker, Robert. "Short Fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature*. Ed. Eva-Marie Kröller. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 177-93. Print.

Verduyn, Christl. "Murder in the Dark: Fiction/Theory by Margaret Atwood." *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 57 (1986): 124-31. Print.

Wilson, Sharon R. "Fiction Flashes: Genre and Intertexts in *Good Bones*." *Margaret Atwood's Textual Assassinations: Recent Poetry and Fiction*. Ed. Sharon R. Wilson. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2003. 18-41. Print.

Wright, Austin. "On Defining the Short Story: The Genre Question." *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Eds. Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1989. 46-53. Print.

MARIA ROSARIA RADICIOTTI

UNIVERSITY OF GENOA, ITALY

Accommodating diversity throughout the Constitution. The elasticity of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the framework of the constitutional adjudication and of the notwithstanding clause

volume
10

Abstract

The selected point of view on Canadian system of government is focused on the dynamic of its Constitution, in the light of legislatures activity, through the use of section 33, the notwithstanding clause, as a mean to deal with federal diversity. The leading actors of the constitutional agreements gave birth to a special device, that let an entrenched, rigid Charter of individual rights to be flexible enough to deal with the challenges of a pluralistic and federal legal system crossed by deep cleavages. A legal device with a political role: the history and the working of the notwithstanding clause is linked to the way in which the "constitutional odyssey" evolves, depends on how much the constitutional rights represent the main core of a common shared identity.

Résumé

Le point de vue sélectionné sur le système de gouvernement canadien se concentre sur la dynamique de sa constitution, à la lumière de l'activité du parlement par l'utilisation de l'article 33, la clause nonobstant. Ensemble a le pouvoir des juges de interpréter la constitution, sa clause c'est un moyen de composer les clivages sociales, linguistiques et culturelles que caractérise le Canada. Les acteurs principaux des accords constitutionnel ont donné naissance à un dispositif spécial, qui permettent a la Charte des droits individuels rigide de s'adapter à un système pluraliste traversé par de profonds clivages. Un dispositif juridique avec un rôle politique: l'histoire et le fonctionnement de la clause dérogatoire est liée à la façon dont le «odyssée constitutionnel» évolue, dépend de combien les droits constitutionnels représentent le noyau principal d'une identité commune et partagée.

Introduction

volume
10

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the protection of fundamental rights has been an imperative aim of an increasing number of democratic legal systems, as a consequence of the serious infringements which had occurred in the previous years. Entrenched in rigid documents, superior to every other source of law, individual rights and freedoms of human being represent the core of constitutional documents, surrounded by special devices to protect their inviolability (Rolla- Ceccherini, 2008, 146). These safeguards are of particular importance in the contemporary fragmented society, where people of different ethnic origins, language, culture, religion share the same political community. The core of the democratic-pluralistic state consists of the acknowledgment of different interests, values, groups, which are afforded full expression and development. Constitutional protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, in which everyone can recognize himself notwithstanding his or her belonging, together with the recognition of ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious diversity, represents the basic principles necessary to accommodate both pluralism and unity. In the era of the democratic state, contemporary constitutions, far from being merely a means of guarantee against the arbitrary use of power, shall deal with the challenge of becoming a place of integration between the different events that comprise the cultural and social pluralism. Especially federal legal systems are noteworthy involved in this process. The distribution of power between different levels of government, that once seemed to exhaust any expression of cultural and ethnic pluralism, through the will of local majorities, proved incapable of facing the entry of new cultures on the political stage and the push for recognition of minorities and national identities (Groppi, 2001, 3). In order to protect the political unity of the state, federal countries with a population of different ethnic origins and strong push for identity need to enhance a true “constitutional patriotism” (Habermas, 1992, 116-118), a concept of citizenship built on a common ground of shared and superior values, beyond the specific identity of each individual (Kymlicka, 1999, 335)¹. Preserve the features of a common universal membership, and at the same time promote the cultural differences as elements of common national heritage: this should be the guideline of the contemporary multicultural state.

¹ The author refers to the notion of policy of cultural differences.

Constitutional protection of fundamental rights between rigidity and elasticity. The Canadian constitution in action

Supremacy and rigidity of the constitutions, together with the judicial review of legislation represent the most widespread devices in the contemporary constitutionalism to entrench the fundamental values of a nation and bind governmental institutions to comply with them. Rigidity is the outcome of a special amending procedure that prevents ordinary legislator from changing constitutional provisions, in that way endowed with a strength superior to law. Rigid constitutions, though not preventing in any way the change of the provisions, make it more difficult and require a stronger and broad agreement between the political forces involved. This process, that takes different forms in each constitutional experience, should grant stability to the system, prevent the abuses of power and safeguards minorities rights (Bryce, 1901, 221-228). Nevertheless, rigidity limits the ability of a government to face unexpected events out of the constitutional framework. This is the well-known struggle between rigid and flexible Constitutions, that opposes stability to accommodation.

Fragmented legal systems, crossed by deep social, cultural and ethnic cleavages with high level of conflict, whose constitutions are based on a political compromise, especially experiment the tension between the need of stability and unity, through a bulk of entrenched common values, and the demand of accommodation to different and conflicting interests. In these contexts, flexible Constitutions, provided of the elasticity to answer to multiple and divergent demands, but missing the support of a compact and homogeneous political front, usually are not strong enough to avoid deep and easy changes capable of undermining all the system. At the same time, too much stability, through complex procedures, can prevent those changes necessary to accommodate the demands that arise.

In some constitutional experience, like the American above all, judicial review of legislation has proved a solution to reconcile the superior force of the formal constitution with the need to accommodate and counterbalance clashing interests. Constitutional judges not only protect the supremacy of the constitution, but also interpret its provisions (Cappelletti, 1990, p.23). The more written text formulation is general, the more is the power of judges to read it in a broad manner. This is especially true when rights and freedoms are at stake. In view of the fact that provisions concerning individual rights are usually drafted in a general formulation, the interpretative role of judges can be very wide (Cappelletti, 1984, p.13). Therefore, judicial constitutional construction represents an opportunity to let a written constitution

volume
10

to be a true living constitution (Renquist, 2006, 395-401), capable of dealing with the development of societies, still compulsory and in action.

Alternatively, other nations, to avoid the limits of rigidity, choose flexible constitutions, and in the course of the years introduced several elements of rigidity accorded with different degree to various constitutional provisions, and or introduced weak form of judicial review concerning rights and freedoms (Tushnet, 2003, 2781-2802)².

The Canadian legal system, crossed by deep federal and ethnic cleavages, found out an *ad hoc* compromise between rigidity and flexibility, between demands for unity and request of recognition of diversity, when in 1982 the federal and provincial governments agreed to adopt a supreme charter of individual and minorities rights as a part of a reformed constitution (Woherling, 1992, 195-250). The Constitution Act, 1982 provided for a complex amending procedure, according different degree of rigidity to various provisions, providing some of them with the appropriate desired level of elasticity, in order to enable the political forces involved to find an easy way of accommodation (Viviani Schlein, 1997, 14). At the same time it introduced a supremacy clause, section 52, vesting the courts with the power to declare of no force or effect any law inconsistent with the constitutional norms (Strayer, 1988, 5). Simultaneously, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provided for a notwithstanding clause in section 33, granting the legislatures of both federal and provincial levels the power of immunizing or overriding a judicial decision of invalidity of a law conflicting with the rights and freedoms enclosed in the document. Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives the federal Parliament and provincial legislatures the power to declare, expressly, in an act that this act, or a provision, will operate notwithstanding the force and the effect of some constitutional rights. The notwithstanding clause means that the values spreading from the Charter of rights may not be superior in every case and might be accommodated when are at odds with other different rights and general interests. The presence at the same time of two conflicting provisions affecting the Charter, one that entrenches the rights and freedoms and the other that let them be overridden, is the outcome of a specific political context, crossed by deep social and communities cleavages. Under the provision of judicial adjudication and construction of individual rights, as well as under the provision of section 33, the Canadian Charter is rigid enough to protect democratic, mobility and language rights, at the core of the document, and flexible enough, or better to say, less rigid, to deal with the challenges of a pluralistic and

² This is the case of the Basic Laws of Israel legal system, but also of the British one, after the adoption of the Human Rights Act in 1998.

federal legal system, to accommodate social, cultural and ethnic diversity, groups and minorities interests, provincial claims. In Canada the power to reconcile different interests is vested not only in the courts and in their interpretative role, but also in the parliaments. Thanks to this special constitutional dynamic, judges and legislators are the actors of a dialogue that allow to restore a discrepancy between form and practice, and to accommodate written provisions to the values dominant among social forces (Mortati, 1998, 11).

The Canadian “constitutional odyssey”: the search for a single national identity, the constitutional protection of rights and the notwithstanding clause

volume
10

The purpose of the constitutional reform of 1982 was to finally bring the colonial past to an end and allow Canada to achieve full sovereignty. This process, well-known as the Patriation of the Constitution (Lanchester, 1983, 337-360), transferred the full power to change the constitution from the British Parliament to the Canadian counterparts, carrying out a course started with the adoption of the Statute of Westminster, 1931, and never accomplished because of a struggle between the federal and provincial governments, concerning the amending formula, around the weight each federal unit should have had in the amendment procedure and in the federation (Hogg, 1998, 53). While western and eastern provinces asked for an equal role of all components in the federation, Quebec claimed a special place for the francophone distinct nation, opposite to the Anglophone Canadian nation (Woherling, 1998, 560-630). Constitution Act, 1982 is the landing place of a “constitutional odyssey” (Russell, 1992, 13), lasted for 120 years and developed around the problem to find a solution to the disagreement on the nature of Canadian political community. The push for national identity of francophone *québécois*, looking for a stronger and asymmetric role in the federation, or for sovereignty, the demand of West and East provinces for more powers in a federation of equals and the aboriginal people’s request for recognition were the problems left unresolved by the constitutional agreement of 1867 that led to the Canadian Confederation. British North America Act, 1867 was a pact reached by political elites to create a single State from four British colonial governments. It was a pleasing solution for the founding fathers who were looking for a corpus of rules to bring different communities together, but it lacked of the legitimacy given by a people with a strong national consciousness: “The Confederation compromise was sheltered from the strain of a full public review in all sections of the Country, but at the cost of not forming a political community with

a clear sense of its constituents and controlling elements. Thus, at Canada's founding, its people were not sovereign, and there was not even a sense that a constituent sovereign people would have to be invented" (Russell, 1992, 33). In view of the fact that British North America Act confirmed the will of the federal components to live together, none discussed its supremacy and the judicial power to struck down conflicting laws.

The problem of the Canadian national identity was abandoned for almost a century, until québécois asked for the recognition of their national aspirations, questioning the survival of the federation. Trying to deal with Quebec claims, in the second half of XX century, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, at the centre stage of Canadian politics for two decades proposed a project of nation building based on a constitutional reform regarding mainly an amending formula and a charter of fundamental and minority language rights (Russell, 1983, 30-54). Trudeau's idea moved from a pan-canadian view of national political community, according to which every citizen should have had equal rights, freedoms and duties wherever he lived in the federation, notwithstanding his cultural, religious or language identity; and at the same time should have had the right to protect its distinctness, either francophone or anglophone. Trudeau wished to build a true Canadian nation, based on common values, shared by everyone and on the will to respect and protect cultural differences, as the elements of Canadian national heritage. Therefore, the Charter of individual and languages rights represented the core of the constitutional reform.

The debate that took place since then, and until 1982, over the amending formula and the constitutional charter of individual and language rights, reflected the fight between different views about the nature of Canadian political community. It is at the crossroads of these conflicting views about who Canadians are, about the nature of their political community, whether pan-Canadian, bi-national, symmetrically federal, reflected in the constitutional negotiations, that is situated the origin of the notwithstanding clause, the special device that gives Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms a particular elasticity to accommodate the demands of unity and the recognition of diversity.

Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the accommodation of competing interests.

Section 33 provides federal parliament and provincial legislatures the opportunity to adopt a law which expressly states that the provisions contained therein produce effects notwithstanding what is required by sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Charter itself. The range of application of the clause, therefore, involves fundamental freedoms of religion, thought, expression and association (section 2), the right to freedom, health and personal security (section 7), as well as the legal guarantees in cases of arrest and detention and, finally, the principle of equality enshrined in section 15. Instead, right to vote (section 3) and democratic rights (sections 4 and 5), right to mobility in the country (section 6), official languages rights (sections 16-20), the right to minority language education and gender rights (section 28) are excluded from the application of section 33. The exercise of the override power is subject to several conditions in order to avoid or to temper the risk of misuses or abuses. Indeed, parliaments must declare expressly in a law their will to use the notwithstanding clause and which is the right to be limited. Moreover, the clause automatically expires after five years, a period subject to extension, beyond which the effects are suspended. Whenever the legislature intends to give full application to a political decision, even if it has not passed the scrutiny of the Court, then, through the inclusion of notwithstanding clause, the act would be immunized from effects resulting from a decision of unconstitutionality. The automatic expiration after five years, moreover, allows the electorate to give their consent, or dissent, to the decision taken by its representatives, by virtue of the obligation on the legislature to declare explicitly which rights have been infringed (Johansen-Rosen, 2008, 1-20).

As reported by the literature on this topic (Leeson, 2001, 297-327), the notwithstanding clause is the outcome of a struggling bargain of the last minute, the so called “kitchen agreement”, during the night between the 4th and the 5th of November of 1981, between the Ministers of Justice of Federation, of Saskatchewan and Ontario, to bring about the constitutional reform. However, during the negotiations, that took place over more than a decade, the intention to weaken the impact of constitutional rights over provincial jurisdiction has always been kept in mind, whether through an override clause, a limitative clause or an opting-in clause.

As a compromise of the last minute, the notwithstanding clause allowed the province and the federation to reach an agreement over a controversial constitutional charter of rights (Axworthy, 2007, 58-63). Considering that at the time of enactment

volume
10

of the Constitution Act, 1982, each province had a bill of rights, the protection of rights did not represent the cause of the disagreement, as well as judicial review of legislation. Actually, since 1867 Canadian laws had been subject to the judicial scrutiny if inconsistent with the British North America Act, 1867, a British law prevailing in the Dominion due to the Colonial Laws Validity Act, 1865³. Rather, provincial governments were afraid that a judicial adjudication of constitutional rights could restrict their sovereignty in the relative jurisdiction assigned by s. 92 of the British North America Act.

volume
10

At the end, the constitutional agreement provided a bill of rights, promoting a pan Canadian national identity, and let the federal units to take themselves out of the norms of the Charter. Not every rights codified in the Charter is subject to section 33. First of all, official languages rights and minority language educational rights, according both francophone and anglophone minorities equal possibilities to speak own languages everywhere in the public in Canada, represents the core of Trudeau nation building project. At the same time, democratic rights cannot be overridden without undermining the foundation of the modern state guarantees.

The application of the notwithstanding clause, despite its potential relevance, in practice has proved somewhat limited by the provincial legislatures and entirely lacking at the federal level, so much that some predict a fall into disuse. The override power has been largely used by those provinces with a stronger community identity, Alberta and Quebec, above all.

Since 1982, and over a decade, during a fervent debate to bring Quebec in the constitutional framework and to satisfy provincial claims, the use of the notwithstanding clause touched its apex. Highly disappointed by a constitutional agreement reached without its consent, until 1985 Quebec government enclosed a notwithstanding clause in every acts enacted by the National Assembly before and after the date the Charter received the royal assent, 17 April, 1982. This was the well-known “blanket use”, provided by Bill 62, that was repealed in 1985, when the liberal Henri Bourassa became Prime Minister of Quebec, succeeding to the separatist *Parti Québécois* government of Lavesque. Since then, the use of a notwithstanding clause has been dependent from detailed and specific reasons.

Therefore, in 1988, the Quebec National Assembly adopted a law to provide the Charter of the French Language with a notwithstanding clause in order to protect the duty to use solely the French language in the commercial advertisements, posters

3 Indeed, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council broadened provincial jurisdiction tank to a bulk of decisions widening the scope and meaning of section 92 of the British North America Act, to the detriment of federal jurisdiction.

or firm name, against a decision of the Supreme court defending freedom of expression of section 2 of Canadian Charter. This leading case, *Ford v. Quebec* [1988], 2 S.C.R. 712, concerned a group of commercial firms who displayed on their premises signs with the name both in the French language and in the English language⁴. The court found the norms inconsistent with the Canadian Charter, because the limit to freedom of expression was not proportionate to the goal, although rationally connected to the purpose of protecting French language and assuring its predominance in Quebec society. Immediately after judges had declared the challenged provisions inoperative, Quebec legislature enacted a law to amend the Charter of the French Language to make binding the sole use of French language in the signs outside the buildings, while just markedly predominant inside the buildings, and protected this law with a notwithstanding clause. The clause expired in 1993 and was never renewed. The Anglophone dissent, at the origin of the failure of the constitutional accord of Meech Lake, that should have recognized Quebec the status of distinct society, induced Quebec government to accommodate the need to protect French culture with the duty to respect the Charter values. Instead, few years later, the struggle for identity choose the secession strategy (Woehrling, 1995, 294-329).

In 1982, the Assembly of the Yukon Territory enacted the Land Planning and Development Act, which provided, in advance, that the rule reserving a fixed amount of seats to aboriginal people in the Land Planning Board should have operated notwithstanding section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The law, however, never received the royal assent and the notwithstanding clause never had the occasion to operate.

Few years later, in 1985, the provincial legislature of Saskatchewan enacted the SGEU Dispute Settlement Act requiring the end of a strike which some workers had engaged in the framework of a trade union protest. Fearing that the provincial Court of Appeals could declare the back to work legislation inconsistent with freedom of association, as previously had happened with a similar law, the government placed a notwithstanding clause. Contrary to the expectations, however, the Supreme Court declared the law which required workers to stop the strike not inconsistent with the Charter and the notwithstanding clause never operated.

During the nineties, Quebec and Alberta remained the sole provinces to use the override power. This power was invoked in Quebec, to protect welfare policies in

4 Section 58 of the Charter of the French Language provided that: "Public signs and posters and commercial advertising shall be solely in the official language. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the cases and under the conditions or circumstances prescribed by regulation of the Office de la langue française, public signs and posters and commercial advertising may be both in French and in another language or solely in another language". And s. 69 that "... only the French version of a firm name may be used in Québec".

pension packages, such as retirement bonus to men, women and priests (*Loi sur le régime de retraite de certain enseignants*, R.S.Q. c. R-9.1 ; *Loi sur le régime de retraite de personnel d'encadrement*, R.S.Q. c.R-12.1 ; *Loi sur le régime de retraite des fonctionnaires*, R.S.Q. c.R-12; *Loi sur le régime de retraite des enseignants*, R.S.Q. c.R-11 ; *Loi sur le régime de retraite des employés du gouvernement et des organismes public*, R.S.Q. c.R-10;). The provincial Government wished to prevent a court ruling supporting the principle of formal equality, expressed in section 15(1) of the Canadian charter of Rights and Freedoms. These clauses, further renewed in 2010, will be in force until 2014.

The Alberta government was one of the most convinced opponents of a constitutional charter of rights. Rich in natural resources and oil, over which claimed full sovereignty and economic advantage, and strongly rooted in conservative values, it was the first to propose to enclose a notwithstanding clause in the Charter to prevent the federation increases its power through the role of constitutional judges appointed by the Government of Canada. In Alberta the notwithstanding clause has been invoked twice. First of all, in 1998 provincial government tabled Bill 26, the Institutional Confinement and Sexual Sterilization Compensation Act, to balance the right to compensation of the victims of past sexual sterilization policies with the government economic claims, after a court ruling set a great money compensation in the Muir case (*Muir v. Alberta*, 132 D.L.R. 695). Due to the Sexual Sterilization Act, in force between 1928 and 1972, Leilan Muir, as well as many other people, was deprived of the ability to procreate children because a test established she had a low IQ. In the Sexual Sterilization Compensation Act case, the notwithstanding clause has never operated because a strong parliamentary and popular opposition demanded for the withdrawal of Bill 26, that occurred twentyfour hours after it had been tabled.

Secondly, two years later, in 2000, the Alberta Government amended the Civil Marriage Act to restrict marriage only to men and women. Preventing a court ruling based on the equality clause, recognizing the rights of same sex couples to be married, the government protected the act with a notwithstanding clause. Advocating the traditional religious concept of family and marriage, the Alberta government strongly opposed a new course of Supreme court decisions that was extending the prohibition of discrimination on sexual orientation ground (*Canada (Attorney General) v. Mossop*, [1993], 1 S.C.R., 554; *Haig v. Canada*, [1993], 2 S.C.R. 995; *Vriend v. Alberta*, [1998] 1 S.C.R. 493 ; *M v. H.*, [1999], 2 S.C.R. 3). Presuming an evolution in Albertans tolerance, induced by the Charter revolution, it was never renewed after it expired in 2005.

Conclusions

The history of the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, therefore, follows firmly the evolution of the Canadian “constitutional odyssey”, the search for a common and shared national identity. It is from this point of view that is necessary to look at it, in order to understand how it has worked since the Charter is in force, to understand its meaning and scope, and especially to understand what role it will have in the future. While some expect its repeal or disuse (Axworthy, 2007, 58-63), others propose reforms (Russell, 2007, 65-68) (Weiler, 1984, 51-92) or prefer to maintain the status quo.

Except for the Government of Yukon Territory, the sole actors who used the override power were the governments of western provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, but especially Quebec government, according to a proper location on a regional basis, remarked by the complete absence of the eastern provinces and Ontario. Section 33 was invoked in contexts that are characterized by a strong consciousness of local identity, political, ethnic, cultural or linguistic. In some cases, it has been a means of affirmation of strong collective demands of national identity, of community identity opposed to a nationalism based on individual rights. Generally, whereas the override power is a vehicle of expression of instances of identity, its use, both before or after a judicial decision, is a valuable indicator of the evolution of the national consciousness, if a concept of Canadian political community prevails, rather than a compromise between different demands. When the community interests may be accommodate in other ways, or reconciled under a shared national idea, the override power can be weakened or become obsolete. The constitutional Accord of Charlottetown, offering a broaden vision of the Canadian national community, arranged to reform the override power in order to make it harder to use. Specifically, the package of reforms reconciled the recognition of aboriginal people’s aspirations to self-government, the distinct identity of Quebec society, the multicultural nature of Canada, the respect for individual rights and the principle of formal equality and substantive diversity of the provinces within the federation. As a consequence, the Accord tightened the conditions on the use of section 33, for which would have required a parliamentary majority of 60%. Therefore, when the particular instances of identity converge on a single plan, which claims to represent the synthesis of each without incurring in their devaluation, the override power can be limited. Indeed, the draft constitution drawn up in Charlottetown failed, incapable of representing different demands of identities: “Quite a package! Something for everyone (well, almost everyone), but maybe not enough for anyone “ (Russell, 1992, 173). So the

volume
10

override power remained the preferred vehicle of expression of provincial rights or of the distinct character of Quebec society.

Section 33 recognizes the override power to provincial parliaments, as well as to federal one, even if this last case never occurred. The complete disregard at the federal level is not surprising when we think that the notwithstanding clause was strongly supported by the provinces, particularly those in the West, while also opposed by the central government led by Trudeau. In the years following the Patriation, the hostility of the federal prime ministers, conservatives or liberals alike, expressed in relation to section 33 has been continuous⁵. Rather, the feeling of aversion was mentioned in all those occasions when the use has been more controversial, when the notwithstanding clause represented the clash of opposing views of the nature of Canadian identity.

During the negotiations, that took place over more than a decade, the intention to weaken the impact of constitutional rights over provincial jurisdiction has always been kept in mind, whether through an override clause, a limitative clause or an opting-in clause. Although, as a device that limits the judicial protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, section 33 has been always a controversial provision, since its adoption and as a consequence of its use, or misuse. Those who criticize section 33, as a menace to a single Canadian nation approach, wish for its abolition (Whyte, 1990, 347-357), while the supporters, interested in the enhancement of provincial rights, in the counterbalance of judicial activism (Morton, 2003, 25-29), or in the advancement of the constitutional dialogue between courts and legislatures (Hogg-Bushell, 1997, 75-124), at the most look for the amendments that could strengthen its legitimacy in a constitutional state (Manfredi, 2001, 10). Truly, section 33 provides for some mechanisms that prevent the abuse of the override power, such as the expiration clause after five years since its enactment. Since 1982, cases of use of section 33 were limited in number and incipient degeneration interrupted quickly. Nevertheless, some have emphasized the occasional use to argue the disuse of the override power and the final prevalence of a pan-Canadian national vision based on universal individual rights and not on specific identities. This reasoning has also drawn support from the consensus, increasingly acquired by the Charter of Rights in civil society and by constitutional judges that broadened the scope of rights and set

5 Except for current Prime Minister Stephen Harper who in two occasions advanced the possibility to use the override power. First of all, as leader of the Opposition during the government of Paul Martin, proposed to repeal same sex-marriage law and to protect new legislation with notwithstanding clause against a rooted judicial orientation, in case he would have had the parliamentary majority. Afterwards, he considered to invoke notwithstanding clause to prevent a court rulings on a law imposing a harsh punishment to convicted human smugglers, *The Canadian Press*, 13-09-2010.

the terms to reconcile clashing demands of identity. Other authors, however, have called for a swift revaluation of the override power, although reformed, in order to allow greater democratic legitimacy, through a closer link between legislator's and the people's will.

The future of the notwithstanding clause still depends on the attitude of the national question and on the degree of tension between clashing demands. It is evident that the Canadian legal system continues to function despite its numerous and deep differences through a process of reconciliation or balancing of different instances of pluralism that occurs from time to time and takes advantage of more than one interpreters to evolve or accommodate codified values to those emerging constantly in a social substrate highly dynamic. Actually, the preconditions to the use of the override power are still present in the Canadian society, although other ways proved really capable of managing diversity, to address different interests, e.i. executive federalism and above all the judicial decisions (*Reference re Secession of Quebec*, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217; *Re: Resolution to amend the Constitution*, [1981] 1 S.C.R. 753, p.760; *Ford v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, [1988] 2 S.C.R., *Solski (Tutor of) v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2005 SCC 14, [2005] 1 S.C.R., *Nguyen v. Quebec (Education, Recreation and Sports)*, 2009 SCC 47, [2009] 3 S.C.R.)⁶. The more those mechanisms succeed, the less conflicts arise, the less is the need of the safety valve of the notwithstanding clause.

volume
10

Works cited

- Axworthy, Thomas S. *The notwithstanding clause: sword of damocles or paper tiger?*, in *Policy Options*, (2007): 58-63
- Bryce, James. *Flexible and Rigid Constitutions*, in *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1901, vol.1
- Cappelletti, Mario. *Giudici legislatori?*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1984
- Cappelletti, Mario. *Les pouvoirs des juges: article choisis de droit judiciaire et constitutionnel comparé*, Paris, Economica, 1990

6 The Supreme court of Canada in some noteworthy decisions set a framework to reconcile conflicting views, common citizenship values and community interests: *Ford v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, [1988] 2 S.C.R., *Solski (Tutor of) v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2005 SCC 14, [2005] 1 S.C.R., *Nguyen v. Quebec (Education, Recreation and Sports)*, 2009 SCC 47, [2009] 3 S.C.R. Ruling on these cases, concerning the struggle for identity of Quebec, the Court tried to balance the need for Quebec to protect its *visage linguistique*, deserving consideration in a context predominantly anglophone, with the fundamental rights or language rights recognized to the other linguistic minority, the Anglophone in Quebec.

- Groppi, Tania. *Federalismo e costituzione: la revisione costituzionale negli stati federali*, Milano, Giuffrè, 2001
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Morale, Diritto, Politica*, Torino, Einaudi, 1992
- Hogg, Peter – Bushell, Alison. *The Charter Dialogue Between Courts and Legislatures (Or Perhaps The Charter of Rights Isn't Such A Bad Thing After All)*, in *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 35, (1997): 75-124
- Hogg, Peter W. *Constitutional Law of Canada*, Toronto, Carswell, 1998
- Johansen, D. – Rosen, P. *The notwithstanding clause of the Charter*, sul sito www.parl.gc.ca/information/library
- Kylimcka, Will. *La cittadinanza multiculturale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999
- Lanchester, Fulco. *La «Patriation» della Costituzione canadese: verso un nuovo federalismo?*, in *Rivista trimestrale di diritto pubblico*, (1983): 337-360
- Leeson, Howard. *The notwithstanding clause*, in Russell Peter H. - Howe Peter. (eds), *Judicial Power and Canadian Democracy*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, (2001): 297-327
- Manfredi, Christopher P. *Judicial power and the Charter: Canada and the paradox of liberal constitutionalism*, Toronto, Oxford university Press Canada, 2001
- Mortati, Costantino. *La Costituzione in senso materiale*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1998
- Morton, Frederick L. *Can judicial supremacy be stopped?*, in *Policy Options*, October (2003), 25-29
- Renquist, William H. *The notion of a living constitution*, in *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 29.2 (2006): 395-401
- Rolla, Giancarlo – Ceccherini, Eleonora. *Scritti di diritto costituzionale comparato*, Genova, EICG, 2008
- Russell, Peter H. *The notwithstanding clause: the Charter's homage to parliamentary democracy*, in *Policy Options*, (2007): 65-68
- . *Constitutional Odyssey. Can Canadians be a sovereign people?*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992
- . *The political purposes of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in *Canadian Bar Review*, 6 (1983): pp.30-54
- Schlein, Viviani, M. P. *Rigidità costituzionale: limiti e graduazioni*, Torino, Giappichelli, 1997
- Strayer, B. L. *The Canadian Constitution and the Courts: The function and Scope of Judicial review*, Toronto, Butterworths, 1988
- Tushnet, Mark. *Alternative form of judicial review*, in *Michigan Law review*, (2003): 2781-2802
- Weiler, Peter C. *Rights and judges in a democracy: a new canadian version*, in *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 51, (1984-1985):51-92
- Whyte, John D. *On Not Standing for Notwithstanding*, in *Alberta Law Review*, 28.2 (1990): 347-357

- Woehrling, José. *La Constitution canadienne et l'évolution des rapports entre le Québec et le Canada anglais de 1867 à nos jours*, in *Revue française de droit constitutionnelle*, (1992) : 195-250
- . *Les aspects juridiques d'une éventuelle sécession du Québec*, in *Canadian Bar Review*, (1995) : 294-329
- . *La Constitution du Canada, la législation linguistique du Québec et le droits de la minorités anglo-québécoise*, in LEVRAT N., (a cura di), *Minorités et organisation de l'état*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, (1998) : 560-630

volume
10

IRENE SPIGNO

UNIVERSITY OF SIENA, ITALY

A comparative perspective on hate speech regulation: the emergence of the Canadian model

volume
10

Abstract

After the end of World War II the need to provide a legal regulation against hateful expressions emerged at the national as well as the international level. Although the spread of racist and hateful expressions is a worldwide problem, the remedies that have been developed can be summarized in three different approaches. Actually, for more than thirty years the framework of legal tools against racist hate speech was dominated by two very different and opposite approaches: the US and the European one, the latter represented by the German model. In the United States, racist expressions are strongly protected by the Free Speech Clause, provided by the First Amendment. It guarantees the marketplace of ideas, in which also hateful expressions deserve protection as a form of political speech, necessary to the public debate and to the strengthening of democracy. On the contrary, in the European context - for a long time dominated by the German approach - a strong commitment in the legal protection against hateful and racist expressions is the main value to deserve protection, being sometimes translated into the provision of criminal sanctions. However, in the last two decades the Canadian regulation emerged, and it can be considered as a third model. Indeed, in providing a legal regulation of hateful expressions, the commitment to multiculturalism and equality emerges.

Résumé

Après la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale la nécessité de fournir une réglementation juridique contre les manifestations haineuses émergé au niveau national ainsi qu'au niveau international. Bien que la propagation de propos racistes et haineux est un problème mondial, les voies de

recours qui ont été mises au point peuvent se résumer en trois approches différentes. En fait, pendant plus de trente ans le cadre des instruments juridiques contre le discours haineux raciste a été dominée par deux approches très différentes et opposées: d'un coté la voie américaine (des États-Unis) et de l'autre la voie européenne, cette dernière étant représentée par le modèle allemand. Aux États-Unis, les expressions racistes sont fortement protégées par la clause de liberté de parole, prévue par le Premier Amendement. Elle garantit le marketplace of ideas, dans lequel les expressions haineuses aussi méritent d'être protégées en tant que forme de discours politique, nécessaire pour le débat public et pour le renforcement de la démocratie. Au contraire, dans le contexte européen - pendant une longue période dominée par l'approche allemande - la protection juridique contre les expressions racistes et haineuses est la valeur principale digne de protection, qui est aussi exprimée en prévoyant des sanctions pénales. Toutefois, au cours des deux dernières décennies, la réglementation canadienne a émergé, et elle peut être considérée comme un troisième modèle. En effet, dans le règlement juridique des expressions haineuses prévue par ce modèle, l'engagement envers le multiculturalisme et l'égalité émerge.

Introduction

Auschwitz was not built with stones. It was built with words.

This sentence was pronounced by the Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and it recalls our attention on the role played by words - and more generally expressions - in the commission of crimes against humanity and genocide. Sometimes words are not simply oral expressions, but they can be something more: they can be harmful and really dangerous. The reference is made not only to the role played by words in the anti-Semitic propaganda on which National Socialism based its racial extermination policy against Jews, that lead to the Holocaust. In a wider perspective, we should reflect, for example, on the role played by the broadcast *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* in the Rwandan genocide. But we could cite even several more examples. History has assisted to the same dynamic many times and it could be repeated again in the future. It is a still highly topical issue, as underlined by the continuous incidents of racist and xenophobic violence of which we receive daily news. All these considerations imply that law does not simply stand by without doing anything: its duty is to take all the necessary measures in order to ensure that those values risen from the ashes of an Europe destroyed by World War II and recognized as fundamental by the whole international community

will not remain a dead letter. Hate expressions are messages that convey prejudice and discrimination, based on race as well as religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, etc.. They have been indicated through the concept of “hate speech”, that has been taken from the U.S. legal scholarship. “Anti hate speech” provisions represent a restriction on the constitutional right to free expression: they emerged at the national as well as the international level since the end of II World War. Thus, they incorporate a common feeling in the fight against racial discrimination, that lead to the development of three different approaches expressed through the provision of different legal tools.

The present article will be articulated in three parts: in the first one, some indications about the meaning and content of “hate speech” will be provided; secondly, the most important elements of the Canadian model of hate speech regulation and its differences with the American approach as well as the European one will be drafted. The last part will be focused on the influence of the Canadian model abroad. In fact, while speaking about a legal model, I mean both a legal system made by normative rules and their judicial interpretation as well as its attitude in inspiring other foreign jurisdictions.

volume
10

An overview on the meaning and content of hate speech.

Sometimes words are not only words. They are something more. Indeed, there are some expressions of our inner thought that are harmful and can be included in the category defined by the North American legal doctrine as *hate speech* (in the USA) or *hate propaganda* (in Canada). These words include violent, racist and offensive insults caused by a deep feeling of hate, (un)justified by and translated into prejudice and discrimination.

The victims of these expressions are identified by their membership into a *targeted group*, considered as an ethnic, racial, cultural or religious community, that constitutes a minority from a quantitative point of view. It is a problematic issue, that has still dramatic proportions. It implies the need that law takes the necessary remedies in order to guarantee an effective prevalence of those values considered as fundamental. Indeed, principles like tolerance, pluralism and equality, that have been affirmed especially after World War II, are now shared by the majority of contemporary democratic societies. Hate can be based on different grounds: ethnic or national origin, gender or sexual orientation of the person they are directed to, age, disability, etc. However, in this article I address only with racist hate speech: the other forms of hate speech (like the religious or gender ones) pose different threats, thereby justifying a different interpretative approach.

The majority of contemporary democratic States, with the exception of the United States of America and few more cases, adopted legal rules in order to prevent and punish hate expressions. These provisions, even if limiting racists constitutional right to free expression, are generally considered as constitutionally consistent, as the result of a balancing process between different constitutional values. Thus, constitutional judges prefer a concrete interpretative approach, giving prevalence to a specific value (specifically, equality or human dignity) that prevails on another one (in this case, freedom of expression).

volume
10

But the core of the issue resides in the answer to the following question: why racist expressions are dangerous? Several answers can be provided. First of all, because they threaten human dignity and secondly, because they express the violation of the right to no discrimination. From a constitutional point of view, the issue impose a rethinking of balancing pressures in the attempt of reconciling fundamental rights in contemporary democratic societies. On one side freedom of expression and, on the other one, the dignity and identity of the individual and the group he/she belongs to. The outcomes of this balancing process, even if with different nuances among the States under scrutiny, let us categorize the different remedies into three different approaches. For a long time only two models/approaches have been available. They are in sharp contrast: from one side the U.S. one, according to which the guarantee provided by the I Amendment has been considered almost as absolute. Thus, it grants protection also to those forms of expression and behavior with a racist content, like the so called “cross burning” (practice used by Ku Klux Klan members in order to intimidate black people), because their restriction would be considered as content based, and as such forbidden by the I Amendment itself. Moreover, in the U.S. context, also racist hate speech are evaluated as necessary to the enrichment of the public debate and the strengthen of democracy.

Although the U.S. regulation set cannot properly be considered as a model, because it has been left pretty isolated, the other “hate speech” model traditionally available is the European one. It has been generally identified with the German approach, even if a deeper analysis demonstrates that in the European context it is possible to find very differences between jurisdictions. It is incontestable that the German case has been strongly influenced by the Holocaust memory and the extermination policy perpetrated by Nazi forces and this historical inheritance has justified the hard regulation provided by the German legal order. Indeed, while in the United States the free marketplace of idea gets the stronger protection, because necessary to protect democracy, in Europe human dignity is the more guaranteed value, justifying also the protection through criminal sanctions.

Even if it constitutes a strong limitation to the constitutional right of freedom of expression, the balancing test of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* let the emergence of human dignity as the most important value. Thus, while the U.S. approach has been kept pretty isolated, thereby being quite difficult considering it a proper model¹, the German model, even if very restrictive toward freedom of expression (just think about the criminal sanction of Holocaust denial), has had widespread diffusion among a lot of European countries, thanks also to the activity of legal vehicle played by international and supranational law in human rights protection.

But in the last decades, we have assisted to the emergence of a new model: the Canadian one. It can be considered as a “third way”, for its borderline position between the U.S. approach and the European one. In the following paragraph, the features characterizing the Canadian hate speech regulation model will be put under scrutiny.

volume
10

The Canadian regulation against hate propaganda and the protection of multiculturalism

Despite the existence of a common cultural background between Canada and U.S.A., the latter has developed a constitutional interpretation of freedom of speech that is clearly distinct from the one provided by the former. Even if both countries are multiethnic and multicultural nations, the Canadian legislative approach on hate speech as well as the judicial interpretation of such legal rules have refused the U.S. approach in an explicit way, stressing the Canadian Constitution’s commitment to multicultural diversity, group identity, human dignity and equality (see the 1990 Canadian Supreme Court decision *R. v. Keegstra*²). The Canadian legal model expresses the dynamic and dialectical clash between racist hate speech and the protection of freedom of expression. Indeed, Canadian case law, and in particular the decisions issued by the Supreme Court, drafted a set of judicial principles and perspectives that respect both freedom of expression and the principle of non-discrimination, placing Canada in a leading position in the comparative framework.

The Supreme Court jurisprudence has been defined as

distinguishable in a free and democratic society (Moon, 182-199).

1 In this article, the difference between legal approach and model is stressed, thereby considering as models only those legal systems that are imitated by other jurisdictions and has been widely influencing.

2 *Regina v. Keegstra*, (3 S.C.R. 698 (1990)).

It is not only a legal clash, but it assumes also philosophic features. The balancing of two fundamental principles is at stake, rather than the effectiveness or the validity of legal remedies: on the one hand, freedom of expression, considered as the lifeblood of democracy and of the autonomy of the individual, and on the other hand, the right of minorities, to be protected from discriminatory expressions, humiliation, degradation and from all the offenses that can derive from them. Indeed, this is the clash between the elements on which free and democratic societies are based (Cotler, 1405).

Starting from a normative point of view, the Canadian legal order provides one of the most complete, instructive and attractive set of remedies against hate propaganda, based on a full set of legal precedents and normative rules, including criminal sanctions as well as civil anti discriminatory remedies. It can be considered as the consequence of the role played by Canada in the international context as a reference for the Holocaust denial movement and racist propaganda, that gave to the courts the chance to pronounce many decisions on this issue. Another reason can be found on the different normative tools provided by the Canadian legal system in the fight against discriminatory expressions. In fact, the federal Government as well as the provincial ones have adopted normative provisions with a double purpose: to punish hate mongers and to prevent the discrimination they cause through the restriction or the ban of racist expressions. Thus, while the Canadian Criminal Code considers as crimes the advocacy of genocide, the public incitement of hatred and the wilful promotion of hatred, Provinces and Territories, even if they do not have a competence in criminal law, have adopted legal rules against the harm provoked by hate mongers through human rights legislation remedies³.

Actually, a federal sensitivity in the fight against racist expressions emerged only after the end of World War II, when also Canada started to be aware of the need to provide legal remedies to fight racist group defamation. It will be only in 1965, that the Cohen Committee was constituted in order to study problems connected to the spread of different forms of hate propaganda. The outcomes of the Committee research activity demonstrated the existence of a climate of malice and violence intended as irrational and malicious abuse of certain identifiable minority groups in Canada, even if less substantial than those registered in the U.S.A. More specifically, hate propaganda and racial superiority theories, were able to create a clear and present threat toward democratic society, thereby recommending the adoption of a set of legislative remedies able to deal with different aspects of racist group defamation. The Cohen Committee recommendation became law in 1970, with the inclusion of, among the others, the crime of

3 For example, Alberta, R.S.A. 2000, C. H-14, Section 3, British Columbia, RSBC 1996, Section 7, Saskatchewan, RSS 1979, section 14, Northwest Territories, S. Nu. 2003, section 14.

willful promotion of hatred (section 319(2) Criminal Code), which went along with the rules already approved by the provincial laws between 1962 and 1972. Moreover, at the federal level the Canadian Human Rights Act was approved in 1985, whose section 13 considers as a discriminatory practice the telephonic communication of every statements able to expose one person or more to hatred and contempt.

Section 13 (R.S.C. 1985, c. H-6), as modified by the 2001 Anti-terrorism Act, c. 41, s. 88, provides that

Hate messages

13. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

Exception

(2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) applies in respect of a matter that is communicated by means of a computer or a group of interconnecte or related computers, including the Internet, or any similar means of communication...in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a broadcasting undertaking.

Interpretation

(3) For the purposes of this section, no owner or operator of a telecommunication undertaking communicates or causes to be communicated any matter described in subsection (1) by reason only that the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking owned or operated by that person are used by other persons for the transmission of that matter. [1976-77, c.33, s.13.]

The adoption, in 1982, of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms represents the checkpoint of the freedom of expression case law development with specific reference to hate speech cases, thanks to the Supreme Court interpretative activity on section 2 (let. b) of the Charter.

Section 2 (b) provides that

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(...) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.

volume
10

Thus, decisions issued by the Supreme Court can be considered as leading cases, with reference to the Canadian context as well as the comparative one. It could be surprising that there are no reported cases about hate speech against Native people, but all the cases decided by the Supreme Court involve Jews and black people. More specifically, hate literature produced in Canada has been about Holocaust denial and conspiracy organized by Jews, as well as the circulation of theories affirming the superiority of the Arian race.

The Supreme judge highlighted which are the most important values within Canada, in what I like to call “judicial triptych”: with this expression I mean a set of three decisions on hate propaganda, all issued on the 13th December 1990, in which the constitutionality of section 319(2) Criminal Code - the willful promotion of hatred - was at stake (*R. v. Keegstra* [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697, *R. v. Andrews* [1990] 3 S.C.R. 870, and *R. v. Taylor* [1990] 3 S.C.R. 892 - actually in the last one, the constitutionality of section 13 of the Human Rights Code was at stake).

In particular, the *Keegstra* case, that constitutes the first one decided by the Court that day, was about a High School teacher, Keegstra, who, during his classes, thought that Holocaust never occurred and it was the result of a Jews conspiracy. He asked his students to reproduce his lessons content, if they did not want their mark to suffer. The judicial *reasoning* on which the Supreme Court decision was based, was focused on two fundamental steps: all the judges agreed in affirming that the anti-Semitic lessons given by Keegstra had to be considered as a form of expression protected by section 2. As a matter of fact, the Chief Justice Dickinson, writing for the majority, affirmed that

It is enough that those who publicly and willfully promote hatred convey or attempt to convey a meaning (*R. v. Keegstra*).

The content of the message is irrelevant in order to evaluate whether an expression can be considered within the borders indicated by section 2(b) of the Charter. But the point on which the judges disagreed, with a majority of 4 judges against a minority of 3, regarded the constitutionality of section 319(2). The majority concluded that the provision according to which the willful promotion of hatred is a crime, was constitutional because its main purpose was, among the others, the prevention from suffering discrimination for the targeted groups and the reduction of racial, ethnical, and religious tensions that can derive from that. In particular, the Chief Justice underlining how section 319(2) pursue a high relevance purpose, stated that

Parliament has recognized the substantial harm that can flow from hate propaganda, and in trying to prevent the pain suffered by target group members and to reduce racial, ethnic and religious tension in Canada, has decided to suppress the willful promotion of hatred against identifiable groups (*R. v. Keegstra*)

More specifically, in that occasion the Court affirmed that in order to limit a constitutional right is necessary to consider the contextual elements. In the Canadian society, those elements are embodied in sections 15 and 27 of the 1982 Charter: thus, the promotion of the principle of equality, the protection of human dignity of individual and targeted groups, the commitment to international obligations, the respect of Canadian society's multicultural composition and pluralism. The protection of these values guarantees more advantages than damages that could derive from not punishing hate expressions. Chief Justice Dickinson recognized that criminal law limitations have to be considered as a tool to

volume
10

advancing the goals of equality and multicultural tolerance in Canada (*R. v. Keegstra*)

The conclusions reached by the Supreme Court in *Keegstra* were reproduced in the other two judgments already mentioned above: *R. v. Andrews* and *R. v. Taylor*. The fact that the decisions were reached with a strict majority indicates that racist hate propaganda is still an hard debated issue; nonetheless, they represent an important statement of the central values in the Canadian society.

According to what has been said so far, it is possible to outline the main features of the Canadian model: it is distinguishable for the caring posed on the potential damage produced by hate propaganda and racist insults, which - rather than producing immediate damages directed against the individual - can be harmful against the whole society. Indeed, in all the decisions under scrutiny, the protection of multiculturalism and equality emerged as a fundamental value to be protected, thereby being a relevant part of the judicial reasoning in discrimination cases. Moreover, the Court considered the general limitation clause provided by section 1 of the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms⁴, stating that rights and freedoms are not absolute, but they are subjected

only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

⁴ Section 1, 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provides that «The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society»

The Canadian approach is original in its content if compared to the U.S. approach, which protects, as underlined above, the marketplace of ideas, guaranteeing the free trade also of racist expressions and ideas. It has original profiles if compared with the “European model” too: in fact, the latter focuses on the core of the protection of equality and human dignity, according to an individual perspective, while the Canadian regulation is based on the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism and the collective dimension.

But it is original also for its exportability and influence on other jurisdictions, as it will be explained further in the following paragraph.

volume
10

The circulation of constitutional ideas and the exportability of Canadian hate propaganda regulative approach: the South African experience

The approach developed by the Canadian Supreme Court in the interpretation of anti hate speech normative rules has widely demonstrated the consequences of the circulation of constitutional ideas as well as its high attractiveness on foreign jurisdictions. Indeed, it has been already underlined how the Canadian Supreme Court has refused the U.S. approach to hate speech regulation in an explicit way, stressing the Canadian Constitution’s commitment to multicultural diversity, group identity, human dignity and equality (see *R. v. Keegstra*). Thus, a nuanced approach was adopted in order to balance these values with the constitutional right to freedom of expression, while the U.S. approach as well as the European one were dismissed. However, it would be not correct to state that the Canadian approach developed as an isolated judicial set: indeed, the new model represented by the Canadian commitment in hate speech regulation represents one of the highest expressions of its involvement in the circulation of constitutional ideas through the quotation of foreign case law.

The relationship between Canada and other jurisdictions is mutual, expressing a dialogue between different jurisdictions. On one side, Canadian judgments have been influenced by foreign case law (Groppi, 36); on the other one, they are still influencing on new democracies as well as on already established democratic societies. Indeed, the attitude in citing foreign legal materials was demonstrated by the Canadian Supreme Court also in hate speech decisions, through the reference to precedents from English-speaking countries that share the same British Imperial history, the same common law, and similar social and economic conditions. More specifically, it is possible to read that

Indeed, this Court's attention has been drawn to the fact that a great many countries possess legislation similar to that found in Canada (see, e.g., England and Wales, Public Order Act 1986 (U.K.), 1986, c. 64, ss. 17 to 23; New Zealand, Race Relations Act 1971 (N.Z.), No. 150, s. 25; Sweden, Penal Code, c. 16, s. 8; Netherlands, Penal Code, ss. 137c, 137d and 137e; India, Penal Code, ss. 153-A and 153-B, and generally, the United Nations Study on the Implementation of Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). The experience of Germany represents an awful nadir in the history of racism, and demonstrates the extent to which flawed and brutal ideas can capture the acceptance of a significant number of people. One aspect of this experience is not, however, determinative in deciding whether or not hate propaganda laws are effective (*R. v. Keegstra*)

volume
10

United Kingdom and U.S. are the most cited jurisdictions, even if the latter is used by Canadian judges for clarification and help, being left pretty isolated, because of the different approach developed by Canada

Canada and the United States are not alike in every way, nor have the documents entrenching human rights in our two countries arisen in the same context. It is only common sense to recognize that, just as similarities will justify borrowing from the American experience, differences may require that Canada's constitutional vision depart from that endorsed in the United States (*R. v. Keegstra*)

On the contrary, decisions from European countries (other than the United Kingdom) are seldom referred to by the Court, as well as Central and Southern America, Asian and African countries, and no reference to these jurisdictions is made in hate speech cases.

On the other side, Canadian decisions on hate speech cases have expressed great influence abroad, being cited by, among the others, South African Constitutional Court, Namibian High Court and Supreme Court (i.e., see the *Kauesa* cases) and High Court of Australia. Although a common interpretative approach is emerged, each national specificity is not disregarded.

The influence of the Canadian legal system on the South African one is mainly expressed in two moments: the first one is partly in the drafting of the 1996 Constitution Bill of Rights, while the second one is the influence produced on hate speech decisions. The institutionalized racism that characterized South African society for a long time left an indelible mark which the new constitutional state has to deal with. This is

a partial explanation of some provisions contained in the new democratic Constitution. The drafting of the South African Bill of Rights was preceded by several negotiations and agreements between the different forces that tried to lead South Africa towards democracy. One of the most important documents in this process was the Charter of Fundamental Rights proposed by the National Party: during its drafting, extensive references to comparative constitutional law were made, in particular to the United States, Canadian, German and the European Convention on Human Rights law. In the same way, the Charter of Social Justice, a document published by eight lawyers in December 1992, was clearly based on the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It is not surprising that the South African Constitutional Framers sought for inspiration in already consolidated foreign constitutional models: the reasons behind this attitude reside in the consideration that in South Africa there were no constitutional experts with a high expertise in Bill of Rights drafting. Thus, the South African Bill of Rights has been strongly influenced by Canada, United States and Germany; especially with reference, among the others, to the limitation clause provided by section 36 of the 1996 Constitution, which represents a variation of the analogous rule established in section 1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition, section 39 of the South African Constitution provides that in its interpretative activity, a Court may consider foreign law too.

However, freedom of expression is recognized by section 16 in wide terms; the subsection 2 provides for the restrictions to the constitutional rights recognized in subsection 1, that move away from the comparative experience. Indeed, subsection 2 provides that the constitutional protection of freedom of expression would not be extended also to advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

In the *The Islamic Unity Convention v. The Independent Broadcasting Authority and Others*⁵, the South African Constitutional Court stated on the constitutional consistency of clause 2(a) of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasting Services⁶ with section 16. The provision at stake established that

Broadcasting licensees shall ... not broadcast any material which is indecent or obscene or offensive to public morals or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any

5 *The Islamic Unity Convention v. The Independent Broadcasting Authority and Others*, (2002(4) SA 294 (CC)).

6 Provided by Schedule 1 of the Independent Broadcasting Act num. 153/1993.

section of a population or likely to prejudice the safety of the State or the public order or relations between sections of the population.

In a case involving broadcasting during which the legitimacy of the State Israel was contested and the Holocaust denied, the constitutional judge focused on the sentence according to which only those expressions *likely to prejudice the relations between section of the population* were forbidden. Indeed, after underlining the content and the nature of freedom of expression within the South African constitutional system, and recalling previous constitutional jurisprudence and other judgments taken from foreign case law (among the others, the European Court of Human Rights one⁷), the Constitutional Court concluded for clause 2(a) constitutional inconsistency. In fact, even if the sentence *section of the population* provided by this provision is less specific than *race, ethnicity, gender or religion* prescribed by section 16(2) of South African Constitution, the judge underlined how the ban provided in the rule at stake overwhelmed the content of the constitutional provision. Moreover, he considered that not all the expressions able to prejudice the relationships between section of the population can be translated into *advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnic origin, gender, religion constitute incitement to cause harm*, that represents the only expression forbidden by the Constitutional provision.

After affirming that *clause 2(a)* represented a freedom of expression restriction, the Court considered whether it could be justified according to *section 36* of the South African Constitution underlining how

the appropriate regulation of broadcasting by the government and its organs, in the public interest, serves an important and legitimate purpose in a democratic society, particularly in view of the constitutional duty to put such regulation in place. This is because of the critical need, for the South African community, to promote and protect human dignity, equality, freedom, the healing of the divisions of the past and the building of a united society. South African society is diverse and has for many centuries been sorely divided, not least through laws and practices which encouraged hatred and fear. Expression that advocates hatred and stereotyping of people on the basis of immutable characteristics is particularly harmful to the achievement of these values as it reinforces and perpetuates patterns of discrimination and inequality. Left unregulated, such expression has the potential to perpetuate the

⁷ *United Communist Party of Turkey and Others v Turkey* ((1998) 26 EHRR 121 paras 38 – 48) and *Refah Partisi and Others v Turkey* (unreported judgment, App nos. 41340/98, 41342/98, 41343/98 and 41344/98), in which the European Court considered as a legitimate restriction to freedom of expression those regarding a real threat to fundamental values and the constitutional order.

negative aspects of our past and further divide our society. The Constitution accordingly demands that regulation should “ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society”, a mandate which is hardly surprising in a country still riddled with a legacy of inequalities, and in which not all have equal access to and control of resources, including the electronic media» [para 45].

And it is with the harm provoked by hate expressions that the South African Constitutional Court quote the Canadian decisions, *R. v. Keegstra*, stating that

volume
10

Expression that advocates hatred and stereotyping of people on the basis of immutable characteristics is particularly harmful to the achievement of these values as it reinforces and perpetuates patterns of discrimination and inequality.

Conclusion: The Canadian model against hate propaganda and the protection of multiculturalism

As underlined above, the Canadian approach against hate propaganda represents a third regulative way, differing from the other two, mainly because of the interpretation of section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms issued by Canadian judges. In particular, the Supreme Court in its interpretative activity balanced new values, never considered before in Europe neither in the U.S.. Indeed, over the recognition and promotion of values like human dignity, justice and social equality, the Canadian system focuses also on multiculturalism. It constitutes the basis of Canadian society and imposes the respect of cultural and collective differences, providing the need for social and political institutions in order to guarantee the participation of minorities in the social life.

Another distinguishable feature of the Canadian approach is that it provides not only criminal sanctions - as what happens in Europe - but it establishes also a system based on *Human Rights Codes*. It is a more effective way to fight discrimination: as a matter of fact, they affect more the educative purpose rather than the punishing one. Moreover, the excessive use of the criminal sanctions, typical of the European model, represents a weakness in a such delicate topic that involves constitutional rights.

The knowledge of the past is fundamental for the development of a collective and individual sensitivity in the present: however, it is necessary to consider the effects produced by globalization, and the circulation of ideas, opinions, and people. The increasing racists episodes are proportional to migratory movements. Societies, also those usually culturally homogeneous, have assumed multicultural features. These considerations

impose a rethinking on which should be the protected values: the cultural difference and the respect for pluralism. Their guarantee needs to be translated in politics orientated to the protection of individual identity and of the group he/she belongs to.

Thus, the punishment of discriminatory expressions should be considered as a way to protect multiculturalism. As a matter of fact, “the fights for recognition” issued by minority groups presenting cultural, ethnic, social and religious differences are developed under the “no discrimination paradigm”. The protection of multiculturalism has become an indefeasible right in Canada, thereby representing the key element for a more effective fight against racism.

volume
10

Works cited

- Cotler, Irwine.: *Hate Speech, Equality, and Harm under the Charter: Towards a Jurisprudence of Respect for a “Free and Democratic Society”*, in Beaudoin, Gérald A., Mendes Errol (eds.), *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Markham, LexisNexis, 2005.
- Groppi, Tania: *A User – friendly Court: The Influence of Supreme Court of Canada Decisions Since 1982 on Court Decisions in Other Liberal Democracies*, in *Supreme Court Law Review*, 2007.
- Moon, Richard: *The Regulation of Racist Speech*, in Cohen-Almagor, Raphael (eds.), *Liberal Democracy and the Limits of Tolerance. Essays in Honor and Memory of Yitzhak Rabin*, 2000.

VIOLA TALAKHADZE

INSTITUTE OF PHILOLOGY AND JOURNALISM, N.G.CHERNYSHEVSKIY SARATOV STATE UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA

Newfie Jokes as Linguistic Expressions of Canadian Ethnocultural Stereotypes

volume
10

Abstract

The paper deals with the stereotypical vision of Newfoundlanders as seen by citizens of mainland Canada and Newfoundlanders themselves and as reflected through *Newfie jokes*. It explains the reasons why *Newfie jokes* appeared in the Canadian folklore tradition and gives an overview of their history. The linguistic analysis of these jokes establishes key features of the existing hetero- and auto-stereotype of a typical Newfoundlander (as perceived by mainland Canadians and Newfoundlanders themselves).

Résumé

L'article représente une étude qui porte sur l'image stéréotypée des Terre-Neuviens aux yeux des Canadiens continentaux et des Terre-Neuviens eux-mêmes, ainsi que sur la réflexion de cette image dans *Newfie jokes*. L'article explique les causes de l'apparition de *Newfie jokes* dans la tradition folklorique canadienne et propose un abrégé de leur histoire. L'analyse linguistique de *Newfie jokes* révèle les traits essentielles de l'hétéro- et autostéréotype d'un quidam de Terre-Neuvien (comment celui-ci est vu par les Canadiens continentaux et les Terre-Neuviens eux-mêmes).

According to the linguistic relativity principle laid down by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf and the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt, native speakers of any language conceptualize reality with the means of and through the language. A singular fragment of this nation-specific linguistic picture of the world is a stereotype. Stereotypes are studied not just by ethnographers, sociologists, psychologists and political scientists, but also by linguists. In some countries there even exists a separate interdisciplinary branch, imaginology, that studies how stereotypical notions originate, function and influence societies.

volume
10

In all of these studies, a stereotype (from Greek *στερεός* (*stereos*), “firm, solid” and *τύπος* (*typos*), “impression”) is uniformly defined as a culturally determined rigid notion of some phenomenon. In its psychological meaning the term was introduced into technical literature by the journalist Walter Lippmann. In his work *Public Opinion* (1922) he explained it as a means of economy of effort when analyzing and classifying the world. He also regards it as a defense mechanism that a certain group uses to affirm its position in society:

They are an ordered more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves. They may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which we are adapted. [...] It is not merely a short cut. [...] It is the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense or our own value, our own position, and our own rights. [...] They are the fortress of our traditions, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy. (Lippmann 2007, 93-94)

According to Lippmann, stereotypes persist because “the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities, is exhausting” (Lippmann 2007, 87). And since “we do not see first, and then define, we define first and then see”, we have no choice but to accept stereotypes predefined by culture, for the sake of convenience (Lippmann 2007, 81).

Most common objects of stereotyping are generalized and simplistic visions of some social group. Such social stereotypes have the logical form of a pointedly simplified and emotionally charged assertion that ascribes or denies some attributes or features to a certain group of people. Such generalizations exist not only as mental constructs, but are also reflected in the language where they are solidified and made more rigid in texts of precedent genres. According to the psychologist Gordon W. Allport, stereotypes serve to justify or rationalize people’s acceptance or rejection of a particular

group and continue to exist because “they are socially supported, continually revived and hammered in [...] by novels, short stories, newspaper items, movies, stage, radio, and television” (Allport 1979, 200). One of the most widespread linguistic social stereotypes is an ethnocultural stereotype. It finds its linguistic expression in connotations of ethnonyms that manifest themselves in the language in figurative meanings, metaphors and similes.

In Canada, one of the strongest linguistic ethnocultural stereotypes is evoked by the ethnonym “*Newfies*” (Eng) / “*Newfs*” (Fr). This ethnocultural stereotype exists in two forms: that of an autostereotype (a flattering vision of Newfoundlanders by themselves) and that of a heterostereotype (a critical and derisive vision of Newfoundlanders by mainland Canadians). Both of them exist in their hyperbolized forms in *Newfie jokes*.

volume
10

The tradition of ridiculing other nationalities or ethnic groups is not exclusively Canadian. In a broad sense, *Newfie jokes* have their counterparts in other countries (think of American jokes about Poles, Brazilian jokes about the Portuguese, Polish jokes about Russians, and so on all over the world). Their emergence and existence are explained by the sociological notion of ethnocentrism introduced by William G. Sumner in 1906. Ethnocentrism is based on the idea of belonging to “the best people”, the tendency to believe that one’s ethnic or cultural group is superior to all other groups. Due to that belief, a person places one’s own group in the centre of the objective world, and all other groups are rated and scaled with reference to it:

Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders. Each group thinks its own folkways the only right ones, and if it observes that other groups have other folkways, these excite its scorn. (Sumner 2002, 13)

Thus, when devising, telling, or sharing an ethnic joke, people “export” or impute a particular ludicrous feature or trait to members of a distinctly different group, and it gives the joke tellers the sense of vicarious superiority. Adopting such an attitude, on the one hand, as claim some researchers, reinforces in-group social ties by giving them the feeling of belonging and of collective consciousness. On the other hand, such blind generalizations are based on limited information and they label people not as such but the very essence of what they are. It can lead to false assumptions about people, feeds irrational and unfair prejudices, and causes social tension, hostility, abusive and discriminatory behavior and practices.

The theory of ethnocentrism explains why people choose to ridicule a group that is defined and excluded in terms of ethnicity. But that poses a question why mainland

Canadians choose not people from across the state border, but their fellow countrymen as the butt of their jokes. The reason why it is Newfoundlanders and not any other community or group of people that is always made the object of ridicule is explained by the theory of the British sociologist Christie Davies. According to the theory he introduced, a group of people chosen as the object of defamation and derision by some society often shares the same national identity and language with this society, but occupies a periphery of this society, while the joke tellers are in its centre (See Davies 1998). A periphery in this case is understood not just as a geographically remote area, but also as culturally and economically disadvantaged regions.

The accuracy of this theory in relation to Newfoundland and its place at the periphery of Canada and Canadian society can be proven by factual data.

Firstly, as the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* states:

more, perhaps, than any other country, the history of Newfoundland has been moulded by physical factors [...]; since those factors determined the topography of the land, the climate, the soil, or lack of it, marine life around its shores and the plenitude of good harbours, they provided the milieu for Newfoundland's economy and the history associated with that economy. (Smallwood 1984, 975)

Newfoundland is geographically isolated from the rest of the country, being a triangular-shaped island off the Atlantic coast of Canada, separated from the main continent at Labrador by the 10-15 mile wide Straight of Belle-isle. The easternmost part of North America, Newfoundland is located in a different time zone (Ami 1915, 973-975). So marked is this geographical marginality that a "popular mainland image of this place and its people is that of a barren, desolate, icebound island peopled by the numbskull butts of "Newfie" joke cycles" (Byrne 1995, 2). Newfoundland is generally believed by most Canadians to be "the place everyone has heard of but never visited" (Gard 1996, Introduction).

Secondly, being Britain's oldest colony, Newfoundland enjoyed a long autonomous colonial history and historically always had stronger ties with the mother country than the rest of the dominion. The flag of Newfoundland can serve as a proof of its allegiance to Britain: the Union Jack (known officially as the Union Flag) was Newfoundland's national flag from 1931 until 1949, and then as its provincial flag from 1952 until 1980. Even the design of the Golden Shaft, today's flag of Newfoundland and Labrador, pays tribute to the Union Jack and the provinces' British heritage. Apart from that, the island had a settlement pattern different from that of mainland Canada, the ethnic composition of its founder European populations being almost homogeneously British

and Irish, unlike the predominantly Loyalist make-up of the rest of the country.

Thirdly, the island has always been a have-not province with the highest rate of unemployment. Its low economical development is closely linked to Newfoundland's dependence on one industry – the traditional inshore and Bank fishery:

That industry was subject to the vagaries of nature, such as ice and storms, as well as other factors [...] including periodic scarcity of fish, foreign competition and fluctuations in world markets. In the best of times the fishery could give the settlers little more than a subsistence; in the worst of times it gave them dire poverty and hardship. (Smallwood 1984, 979)

volume
10

Even with mild diversification of Newfoundland's economy after the building of mines and mills, fishery has remained the economic mainstay of the island. Newfoundland's political and ideological isolation is explained by the fact that it was the last province to join Canada on March 13, 1949, when, following two referenda, a small majority of people voted in favour of joining Canada.

The combination of these factors had the combined effect of excluding the province from the country's cultural, economic and political centre, and firmly established Newfoundland in its peripheral status. As cultural critics Geoff Pevere and Greig Dymond point out:

Newfoundland represents the virtual and actual outer limits of the Canadian experience. If one of the defining characteristics of Canadian popular culture is a sense of continental marginality, then the Newfoundland experience exists on the margins of marginality. The outsider's outsider. Alienation squared. (Pevere et al.1996, 30)

As a result of this, a rigid heterostereotype of a typical Newfie was formed and further solidified in the language in the form of *Newfie jokes*. A linguistic analysis of about 200 *Newfie jokes* collected from Internet sources allowed to determine their key features.

In the Canadian humour tradition, Newfoundlanders more often than not are portrayed as numbskulls: backward, ignorant and not endowed with innate intelligence or quick-wittedness, as it can be seen in the following example:

Did you hear about the Newfie who was ecstatic that he finished a jigsaw puzzle in 87 days?
On the box it said three to five years.

What is seen as comic and made fun of is often their native slow-wittedness not only in something that can be indeed hard to comprehend for backwoodsmen, but even in what they are supposed to be unquestionable experts in (e.g. fishery):

How many Newfies does it take to go ice fishing?
Four. One to cut a hole in the ice and three to push the boat through.

Philosophers classify all existing theories of humour into three groups:



- 1) incongruity theory (introduced in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790)):

In everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the Understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing. (Kant 2010, 129)

- 2) relief theory that argues that laughter results from/involves a release of energy (introduced in Herbert Spencer's *The Physiology of Laughter* (1860); Sigmund Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905));
- 3) superiority theory that goes back to Plato (*Philebus*) and Aristotle (*Poetics, Rhetoric, Nicomachean Ethics*), but it is **Thomas Hobbes who is traditionally considered its founding father**. According to the superiority theory of humour, derision of weaknesses and imperfections of others strengthens our own feeling of superiority over them:

The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly. (Hobbes 1812, 65)

That is why a lot of ethnic jokes are based on the idea of competitiveness between the joke-tellers and members of some out-group they feel superior over. And in Newfie jokes stupidity of Newfoundlanders is often stressed by means of infavourably comparing them to their clever fellow countrymen from other provinces, as it can be seen in the following example:

A young Newfoundlander was walking around a field in Newfoundland, when he saw an old looking bottle on the ground. He picked it up. And suddenly a genie appeared before him.

The genie said, "For freeing me, I will grant you one wish."
The young man said, "Ok. I wish that there was a bridge going from Newfoundland to the mainland."
The genie said, "I am sorry, but I can't do that. That would be too much change. That would be almost impossible. It would change too many people's lives."
So the young man thought for a second, then said, "Ok, then. I wish that Newfoundlanders were as smart, or even smarter than anyone else in the world. Or at least smarter than any other Canadian."
The genie said, "So, do you want two lanes, or four?"

volume
10

The fact that the island is one of the least economically developed regions of the country could not but find a reflection in the ethnic stereotype about its inhabitants. Newfoundlanders are often represented as have-nots seeking to take advantage of most improbable situations to make a profit even if in the end it will be to their own cost:

A Nova Scotian, Ontarian and a Newfie met Jesus in a bar, and each bought him a drink.
Some time later, after finishing the drinks, Jesus leaves his seat and approaches the three men. He reaches for the hand of the Nova Scotian and shakes it, thanking him for the Bluenose. When he lets go, the Nova Scotian gives a cry of amazement. "Oh! The arthritis is gone," he says. "The arthritis I've had for years is gone."
Jesus then shakes the hand of the Ontarian, thanking him for the Molson Canadian. Upon letting go, the Ontarian's eyes widen in shock. "By Jove," he exclaims. "The migraine I've had for over 40 years is completely gone. It's a miracle!"
Jesus then approaches the Newfoundlander, who has a terrified look on his face. "Back off, buddy, I'm on Workers Compensation."

The same stereotype finds its further development in the tradition of ascribing to Newfoundlanders of some flaws and habits that are considered to be inherent signs of people from backward and undeveloped regions, such as alcoholism and so on. That is why the islanders are often portrayed as the asocial elements:

A social worker knocks on the door. A young girl answers. "Could I talk with your father?" he says. 'Fat'er 'e ain't home, 'e's in jail,' says the girl. 'What about your mother then?' 'Well, mot'er's in the lunatic.' 'Do you have any brothers?' 'Yessir, der's t'ree. Tom, Dick, an' 'arry.' 'Can I speak with them?' 'Well, Tom took after fat'er, 'e's in jail.' 'How about Dick, then?' 'Well, Dick took after mot'er, 'e's in the lunatic.' 'And Harry?' "You can't speak

wit' 'arry, 'e do be at Harvard.' 'Harvard! What's he studying?' 'Oh no. 'e ain't studyin' – dey's studyin' 'e...'

An ethnic stereotype is attached directly not only to a corresponding ethnonym, but to the entire lexico-semantic group “a representative of a specific ethnic group/community”. This group includes synonyms formed to give an ethnonym some specific connotation. One of the ways such synonyms can be formed is by means of antonomasia (a metonymic transfer when a proper name is used to designate a member of a class and vice versa). Thus, the most common first names in some ethnic group start to function and be used as synonyms of a corresponding ethnonym. If we take Newfoundland, then synonyms of the ethnonym “Newfie” will be first names “Garge”, “Wilbur”, “Shamus”, “Marge”.

Since ethnic stereotypes are often based on the most noticeable and colourful cultural differences, apart from ways of behavior, lifestyles and traditions they also correlate with linguistic differences. That is why any speaker with national linguistic consciousness identifies a representative of some specific ethnos (with which some ethnic stereotype is associated) by his/her speech. Linguistically, the island has some marked differences from the continental regions of the country. Newfoundland English represents a highly distinctive variety within Canadian English in terms of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. These striking differences of the local language variety from the standard language are used in Newfie jokes in two ways:

- 1) as “speech markers” of ethnicity. They include:
 - graphic rendering of peculiar pronunciation features (*ya=you, yer=your, da=the, dat=that, dis=this, dere=there, wit=with, tree=three, in' =-ing, sumtin=something, `ere=here*, etc);
 - use of *bes* (*be'es*) instead of *is* to mean regularly repeated or continuous action/ event (*Your clothes be'es twice too big for Bessie*);
 - dialect forms of possessive and reflexive pronouns (*me=my, meself=myself*);
 - use of *b'y* (*boy, by*) as a form of address (*He's got us now by, what are we gonna do?*);
 - use of emphatic exclamations, especially of religious nature (*Jaysus, Mary and Joseph!*, the most common speech marker being *Lard' Tunderin' Jaises/Jaysus!=Lord Thundering Jesus!*).
- 2) as the mechanism of the development of a joke, when linguistic differences of Newfoundland English from the literary standard do not simply act as “speech markers”, but rather as the objects of scorn:

Shamus and Mick are looking all over town for work and finally see a sign on a lumber yard gate, "Tree Fellers Wanted." Shamus starts to go in, but Mick calls him back and says, "There's no point applying, there's only two of us!"

Alongside the existing ethnic heterostereotype about Newfoundlanders from the point of view of mainland Canadians, in the Canadian humour tradition there exists an autostereotype about islanders, that is the way Newfoundlanders see themselves. In jokes that express the autostereotype, Newfies are portrayed as quick-witted, prudent, smart and brave as opposed to a generalized image of a not bright and easily fooled mainlander.

volume
10

What's black and blue and floats in the bay?
A mainlander telling a Newfie joke.

To a separate group belong jokes which cannot be easily classified as relating to the ethnic heterostereotype or autostereotype. This can be explained by the fact that ambiguity is central to most jokes. This ambiguity is further intensified by the fact that different groups evaluate particular qualities in different ways. That is why some ethnic jokes (especially ones involving disputes) are two-edged. In jokes belonging to this group the ludicrous characteristics brought to the foreground either are very ambiguous and can be interpreted both ways or act rather as a means to create a comic effect than as the object of scorn.

Garge and Bert were at a job site. Garge said to Bert, "I bet ya a hundred bucks I can get the day off work."
Bert said, "Yer crazy man, let me see ya do it."
So the foreman walks in and there's Garge standing straight up like a fence post.
The foreman says to Garge, "What's wrong wit you, me son?"
Garge says, "I'm a burnt out light bulb."
"Sumtin wrong wit yer head, take the day off work."
As Garge walked out the door smiling Bert started to walk out behind him.
Foreman says, "Where you think yer goin Bert?"
Bert says, "Well ya don't expect me to work in de dark, do ya?"

Thus, the stereotypical vision of Newfoundlanders was formed as the result of a number of socio-cultural and historical factors and solidified in the language in the form of *Newfie jokes*. These jokes reflect an existing heterostereotype of Newfoundlanders as

inarticulate, tight-fisted and not bright, as well as a more flattering autostereotype of them as a smart and quick-witted lot.

The significance of Newfie jokes for Canadian society is a controversial issue. On the one hand, it is hard to argue with Christie Davies who maintains that despite being so derisive, most ethnic jokes should not be seen as “covert ways of making an accusation” (Davies 1990, 8) because “most joke-telling is done as an end in itself and not a means to some other end” (Davies 1990, 9). The fact that mainland Canadians scorn Newfoundlanders does not imply that they feel aggressively hostile towards them because “intense intergroup resentment or even open ethnic conflict fail to produce any ethnic jokes at all” (Davies 1990, 8). What such choice of the butts of jokes may signify is that Canadians perceive Newfoundlanders as a subject salient to them, probably because of their uniqueness and exclusion. On the other hand, since jokes provide insights into how societies work, there can be other explanations as to why Canadians keep up the tradition of ridiculing Newfoundlanders. One of possible explanations to consider in conclusion is the following one:

Newfoundland is not only one of the most marginalized provinces in the country, it is also the most reluctant member, after Quebec. With a small population inhabiting a rocky outcropping along the Atlantic Ocean, Newfoundland has supported itself through a precarious fishing-based industry and regional equalization payments – a form of national welfare subsidized by the wealthier provinces. The combination of underpopulation, isolation, and poverty placed Newfoundland in the unfortunate position of being the most ridiculed province in the country. The “Newfie joke” is a continuing national tradition that has provided Canadians from other regions with a source of superior sentiment that could be seen as masking their own feelings of subordination to central Canada and the United States. (Jonathan Alan Gray et al. 2009, 170)

Works cited

- Allport, Gordon Willard. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979. Print.
- Ami, Henry M.. *Stanford's Compendium of Geography and Travel: Canada and Newfoundland*. London, UK: Stanford E. Ltd, 1915. Print.
- Byrne, Patrick. *Folk Tradition, Literature and a Society in Transition: Newfoundland*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1994. Print.

- Davies, Christie. *Jokes and their Relation to Society*. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998. Print.
- . *Ethnic Humor around the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. Print.
- Gard, Peter. "Land and Sea: Eight Artists from Newfoundland." *Arts Atlantic*, vol.54 (1996). Print.
- Gray, Jonathan Alan; Jones, Jeffrey P.; Thompson, Ethan. *Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-network Era*. NYU Press, 2009. Print.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Treatise on Human Nature and that on Liberty and Necessity*. Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 1812. Print.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. Digireads.com Publishing, 2010. Print.
- Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion*. Filiquarian Publishing, LLC., 2007. Print.
- Pevere, Geoff; Dymond, Greig. *Mondo Canuck: A Canadian Pop Culture Odyssey*. Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall, 1996. Print.
- Smallwood, Joseph R. (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, Vol. 2. St. John's, Newfoundland: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1984. Print.
- Sumner, William Graham. *Folkways: A Study of Mores, Manners, Customs and Morals*. New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2002. Print.

JOHN WOITKOWITZ

FREE UNIVERSITY BERLIN, GERMANY

Imagining Northern and Arctic Canada and Canadian Diplomacy in the early Cold War

volume
10

Abstract

At the onset of the Cold War, the Canadian and U.S. government sought to address perceived nuclear threats via the northpole through the establishment of radar warning systems in the Arctic. While Canadian diplomats were concerned about a U.S. military presence in the Canadian North, the region assumed a broader meaning with respect to its place and significance in Canadian history and its role in the construction of a Canadian national identity. Bringing cultural and diplomatic history in conversation with each other, this article examines how senior Canadian foreign policy officials conceived of Northern and Arctic Canada. It considers how diplomats made sense of a vast region few had ever visited in person. It asks how ideas and interpretive frameworks informed their position towards Cold War defence installations in the North. By analysing cultural representations of Northern and Arctic Canada and how they informed Canadian diplomats' conceptions, this article seeks to emphasize the role of culture and ideas about the North in the analysis of Canada's Arctic foreign and defence policy in the early Cold War.

Résumé

Au début de la Guerre Froide, les gouvernements du Canada et des Etats-Unis essayèrent de détourner des menaces nucléaires apparentes venant du pôle Nord par la construction d'un système d'alerte radar. Les diplomates canadiens ayant été inquiets d'une présence militaire des Etats-Unis dans le nord canadien, la région devenait plus importante quant à sa place dans et sa signification pour l'histoire canadienne, ainsi que pour son rôle dans la construction d'une identité nationale canadienne. En faisant dialoguer les histoires culturelles et diplomatiques, cet

article examinera la façon dont les responsables principaux des Affaires étrangères du Canada percevaient le Canada nordique et arctique et indique ce que signifiait pour les diplomates cette région que peu de personnes n'avaient jamais visitée. L'article posera aussi la question de savoir quelles idées et structures interprétatives formaient leurs positions sur les dispositifs de défense au nord pendant la Guerre Froide. En analysant des représentations culturelles du Canada nordique et arctique et en montrant comment elles influençaient les conceptions des diplomates canadiens, cet article voudrait souligner le rôle de la culture et des idées du nord dans l'analyse de la politique de la défense et étrangère du Canada pendant les premières années de la Guerre Froide.

volume
10

In a 1946 *Foreign Affairs* article on the future significance of Northern and Arctic Canada, then ambassador to the United States Lester B. Pearson wrote: "Canada is one of the few countries with an unexplored frontier, luring the pathfinder into the unknown. This frontier, with its inevitable effect on the life and habits of the Canadian people, is, however, no longer the west. 'Go North' has replaced 'Go West.'" He continued: "The Canadian Arctic is, however, no country for weaklings and its economic development will test the finest qualities of the men of the North" (Pearson, 638; 647). More than half a century later, Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, delivering an address to the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs in Oslo, declared: "The Arctic is fundamental to Canada's national identity, embedded in our history and culture and in our soul. The Arctic has always been a part of us. Still is. Always will be" (Cannon).

Pearson and Cannon's remarks speak to the enduring significance of culture—broadly defined—in the conduct of international relations. Both statements reveal that foreign policy officials conceived of Northern and Arctic Canada in less tangible terms than its military-strategic, political or economic dimension. Indeed, the North was imbued with character-moulding and identity-shaping qualities, cast as a frontier-like testing ground for perseverance and masculinity, and claimed as a key touchstone in the construction of a Canadian national identity. The role of culture in the study of international relations has been recognised by such diplomatic historians as Akira Iriye, Emily S. Rosenberg, Robert D. Dean, Andrew J. Rotter and Jessica Gienow-Hecht. Yet, as Petra Goedde notes, cultural historians continue to hold a "contested position" within the field of diplomatic history (Goedde, 767). I contend that culture as an analytical category forms a pressing and timely field for inquiry in studying international relations history.

In this article, I examine how Canadian diplomats in Ottawa and abroad conceived of Northern and Arctic Canada during the early Cold War. Most senior foreign policy officials had never travelled to the North and therefore lacked first-hand knowledge of the region, its environment and people. As a result, the ideas and perceptions that guided these officials on foreign and defence policy in the North were of second-hand nature. More to the point, diplomats' conceptions of Northern and Arctic Canada were informed by cultural agents who provided frameworks through which to interpret the place of the North in Canadian history and its significance as a marker of a Canadian identity. By incorporating the works of cultural agents including painters, poets, intellectuals, historians, and others, I seek to broaden the source base of diplomatic history analysis and suggest that, in addition to other elements, Ottawa's senior diplomats' conceptions of the North were vitally shaped by culturally constructed ideas and narratives about the North. In the following, I begin with a brief sketch of Canadian foreign and defence policy in the Canadian North during the early Cold War, focusing on the establishment of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line¹, the Cold War's largest defence project in the Arctic. In a second section, I outline cultural representations of Northern and Arctic Canada from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The third section examines Canadian diplomats' ideas and conceptions of the North and seeks to demonstrate their debt to cultural constructions of this region. In the final section, I discuss the implications of my findings for Canada's continental foreign and defence policy during the early Cold War.

With the rise of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in the period following the Second World War, Northern and Arctic Canada's significance rapidly grew. From a minor theatre of war, it turned into a frontline in the ensuing Cold War confrontation. Initially, however, the American demonstration of its ultimate military superiority with the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had created a sense of security that led Washington and Ottawa to allocate low budgets for North American defence in the early postwar period. Accordingly, national security estimates did not project attacks upon the continent in the years to come (Cf. Jockel, 30-33; Winkler, 7).² The Soviet detonation of a nuclear device in August 1949, however, swiftly changed such views. American and Canadian assessments now estimated that a nuclear air attack by the Soviet Union on North American targets was possible. U.S. President Harry Truman's national security review NSC-68 concluded that Moscow

1 The Distant Early Warning Line, devised and constructed during the 1950s, constituted the northernmost part of a radar network across North America to detect and deter potential air attacks by the Soviet Union.

2 Winkler explains that "the dropping of the atomic bombs [...] restored confidence in the doctrine of offensive operations. At the conclusion of the war, all air defenses were shut down" (Winkler, 14).

was in a position to “attack selected targets with atomic weapons, now including the likelihood of such attacks against targets in Alaska, Canada and the United States” (United States Department of State). The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 further reinforced American and Canadian views about the Soviets’ hostile intentions and the need for an expansion of North American air defence: the Arctic gap moved into the focus of defence officials and with that the construction of an early warning system (Cf. Gaddis, 109; Leffler, 357; May, 14f).³

Ensuing negotiations about the Distant Early Warning Line revealed an uneasiness about a large American military presence in the Canadian North. Despite the fact that Canada was a solid ally in the U.S.-led Cold War consensus and governments in Ottawa and Washington largely concurred on the perceived threat scenario posed by the Soviet Union, foreign policy officials, with Secretary of State Lester Pearson most vocally among them, continuously raised concerns about the political implications of permitting a substantial number of American military personnel to be stationed along Canada’s Arctic border. Whereas the need for a stepped-up air defence architecture was common ground, questions about who was to construct, pay, staff and, most importantly, operate the radar chain were contentious issues within the Canadian government. Whereas the Department of National Defence argued that Canada’s resources committed to missions in postwar Europe and the Korean War were exhausted, External Affairs insisted upon a visible Canadian role. Pearson and other high ranking officials pointed towards the importance of the North in the minds of Canadians with respect to development and resource exploitation, ensuring sovereignty in view of mixed experiences with U.S. defence cooperation during World War II (Cf. Coates et al.; Coates and Morrison; Eayrs; Elliot-Meisel; Grant, 274ff) and in terms of a national project fostering a sense of unity and shared experience (Cf. Woitkowitz, 32ff).

Approved in May 1955 and in full operation by late 1957, the DEW Line not only unearthed deep divisions between the Defence and External Affairs departments. It also provided a window into the thinking of foreign policy elites. Canadian diplomats in Ottawa and Washington conceived of the Canadian North and the construction of the DEW Line in more than military-strategic terms. Beyond the Cold War rationale, the Arctic North assumed a key role in that elusive social fabric that is a Canadian national identity. The North was not merely seen as a military-strategic gap. It formed a symbolic projection space rich in cultural tropes and references about a national identity

3 Winkler emphasizes the Korean War’s effect upon U.S. reevaluations of its continental air defence system, noting that interpretations of the North Korean invasion included scenarios in which the attack served as a first phase of general war manufactured by the Soviet Union (Winkler, 24). In a similar vein, Leffler calls attention to NSC-68’s provision for the domination of air space in connection with the nuclear deterrent as a critical element in the document’s strategy (Leffler, 357).

and history. Which cultural forces then shaped the public imaginary about the North and how representations of this region framed External Affairs' officials' conceptions, eventually informing Canadian foreign and defence policy is at the heart of the following sections.

Prior to the 1950s, Canada's northern region had featured prominently in the works of numerous and diverse groups and individuals. Emerging in the 1860s with the inception of the Dominion of Canada, explorers, geographers, historians, writers, painters and comic book designers, among others, influenced public debate about the North and participated in the construction of Canadian history, heritage and identity. As Sherrill Grace has noted in her landmark study *Canada and the Idea of North*, the North depicted by these various cultural agents was a discursive formation, subject to a continuous process of negotiation and re-negotiation. Others such as Carl Berger, Daniel Francis, Janice Cavell and René Hulan have pointed out the racial, mythological and deeply nationalistic character of works about the North. Whether travel logs of daring seamen, paintings of pristine and vast landscapes or historical narratives about the North's place and trajectory in Canadian history, all these articulations contributed to a collective cultural repertoire about the North. These representations treated Canada's North as an interpretive space, one onto which a mythology of a Northern nation based on fantasies, dreams and political interests could be projected. It is in this space then that attributions associated with the North came to be conflated with a national identity (Cf. Berger, Cavell, Francis, Grace, Hulan).

volume
10

Among the most powerful groups and individuals have been the Canada First Movement, the poet Robert Service and the Group of Seven. Other influential representations of Northern and Arctic Canada include the first cinematic depiction of Inuit in Robert Flaherty's staged documentary *Nanook of the North* (1922), the comic book series *Nelvana of the Northern Lights*, the radio and later television program *Challenge of the Yukon* (renamed in 1951 to *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*) broadcasted from 1938 through the 1950s or the theatre productions by Herman Voaden who incorporated Group of Seven works in his plays (Cf. Grace, Francis).⁴

The Canada First Movement with its leading figure Robert Grant Haliburton was the first group to articulate a coherent national mythology based on Northern imagery. During the 1860s, this group lamented the lack of a national narrative, an overarching story that would celebrate the creation of this new North American entity. The formation of the Dominion needed a meaningful vision, Canada First adherents proclaimed, one that would present Canadians with a common heritage, a shared sense of

⁴ For an exhaustive discussion of cultural agents partaking in the construction of a Northern imaginary see Sherrill Grace as well as Carl Berger, Janice Cavell, Daniel Francis and René Hulan.

belonging and a distinct destiny. In order to remedy this deficit, the group turned to the Canadian North (Cf. Berger 5-9; Francis, 153f; Grace, 58f; Hulan, 7f). In his widely-publicized speech "The Men of the North and Their Place in History" at the Montreal Literary Club in 1869, Haliburton issued an emphatic call for a linkage of Canada's past and future with an alleged Northern character. Constructing a national narrative with the North at its heart, he exclaimed:

From the past we may draw upon some augury as to the future. Is the northern land which we have chosen, a congenial home for the growth of a free and dominant race? What is the stock from which we have sprung? [...] Can the generous flame of national spirit be kindled and blaze in the icy bosom of the frozen north? (Haliburton quoted in Grace, 58)

Haliburton continued:

If climate has not had the effect of moulding races, how is it that southern nations have almost invariably been inferior to and subjugated by the men of the north? (Haliburton quoted in Berger, 6)

Affirming the racial prejudice at the heart of these rhetorical questions, Haliburton drew upon an environmental determinism that was informed by contemporary social darwinist ideas. His was a Canada that was born from a morally and physically superior Anglo-Saxon race, one that looked towards its Northern climate and nature as "a form of natural selection which was constantly reinforcing the quality of the nation" (Francis, 157). As such, the North served as a signifier of a wide array of character-strengthening features and a force that distinguished Canadians from other, supposedly less worthy nations, particularly those to the South. Francis aptly summarizes Haliburton's northern mythology and his idea that

the struggle to survive in a northern climate created a set of national characteristics, including self-reliance, physical strength, stamina, and virility, which set us apart as a separate people. The northern air was supposed to stimulate intelligence and encourage initiative, qualities necessary for the creation of political freedom and democracy. [I]t was the climate which weeded out the weak and the lazy and discouraged members of the 'southern races' from settling here. (Ibid.)

Haliburton's views about a northern mythology seeking to serve as Canadians' guidepost to nationhood were no isolated outliers. Other Canada Firsters, nationalists

and public figures employed similar ideas, disseminating them through speeches, pamphlets or poetry (Cf. Grace, 59).

If Confederation and the Canada First Movement had directed attention to the North during the 1860s, the Klondike gold rush and its literary raconteur Robert Service captured Canadians' excitement and imagination about the North at the turn of the nineteenth century. His *Songs of a Sourdough*, a collection of poems which were originally published in 1907 and remain in print to this day, was an immediate success. Much of Canada Firsters' environmental determinism found its way into Service's poems and ballads. Again, the North performs the task of selecting those courageous and virtuous enough from the rest (Francis, 159). Where Haliburton imagined a rather abstract North, however, Service drew upon his time in the Yukon, creating in his writings a frontier-themed North, combining images of a rugged and dangerous yet mystically alluring hinterland. In "The Spell of the Yukon," Service conjured up the idea of a mysteriously relentless and deceptive North, one the miner or settler could not withdraw from:

volume
10

The winter! the brightness that blinds you,
The white land locked tight as a drum,
The cold fear that follows and finds you,
The silence that bludgeons you dumb.
The snows that are older than history,
The woods where the weird shadows slant;
The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
I've bade 'em good-by — but I can't. (Service, 4)

Through poems, like the one quoted above, as well as his novels, Service helped perpetuate the idea of the North as a tempting and dangerous place. Only those able to survive in the face of adversity and withstand the harsh environment would have proven themselves worthy enough to belong to and partake in the Canadian experience. In doing so, Service conflated Northern and Arctic imagery with themes of the American and Canadian West and the frontier narrative, mythologizing the North as "the new 'Wild West'" (Francis, 157ff) in the process (Cf. Grace, 90f; Hulan, 115ff).

By the time Service was successfully selling his writings, the Group of Seven emerged as an influential newcomer to the Canadian art scene. A Toronto-based loose circle of painters, the group chose Northern landscapes as part of their signature subjects. Like Haliburton and Service, the group's leading voice Lawren Harris emphasized the North's character-shaping capacity, attributing to it an almost divinely ordained moral

superiority. In the magazine the *Canadian Forum*, which served as the group's pulpit to formulate and disseminate its nationalist agenda, Harris wrote:

We are on the fringe of the great North, and its living whiteness, its loneliness and replenishment, its resignations and release, its call and answers—its cleansing rhythms. It seems that the top of the continent will ever shed clarity into the growing race of America, and we Canadians being closest to this source seem destined to produce an art somewhat different from our southern fellows—an art more spacious, of greater living quiet, perhaps of more certain conviction of eternal values. We were not placed between the Southern teeming of men and the ample replenishing of the North for nothing. (Harris quoted in Cook, 204)

volume
10

As this excerpt demonstrates, Harris saw in the North a space against which to define a Canada he envisioned to be decidedly different from the United States. Besides the racial attributions, he projected upon the North moral, spiritual and virtuous qualities which, *qua* Canada's proximity to Northern and Arctic regions, would mold a collective Canadian character. Haliburton's environmental determinism and his construction of the North as a marker of racial and moral superiority echo firmly in Harris conceptions.

Albeit representing only a selection from the wide array of cultural representations of Northern and Arctic Canada, the above examples indicate a profound proclivity towards romanticised, essentialised and gendered depictions. In addition, a conflation of tropes and images of the American and Canadian West with the North forms a recurring element within these conceptions. As such, cultural constructions of Northern and Arctic Canada provided meaningful frameworks to interpret this region's significance in the Canadian experience, past and present.

Just as Canadians at large, Ottawa's foreign policy elites were exposed to these cultural representations and their racialised and gendered concepts. Diplomatic and cultural historian Andrew Rotter aptly insists: "Decision makers are creatures of culture" (Rotter, xx). Diplomats and foreign policy officials devise strategies and policies that are imbued with ideas, images and narratives that exist around them. Not unlike others they are consumers of interpretive frameworks and paradigms that shape their perspective and views on international issues. This notion is even further compounded when first-hand experience about a subject is lacking and officials consequently draw on existing templates through which they seek to make sense of their government's interest and policies on a given issue. Canada's foreign and defence policy in Northern and Arctic Canada during the early Cold War forms a case in point.

Senior officials at Ottawa's Department of External Affairs identified the North's potential as a unifying and identity strengthening element following the Second World War. Deputy Under-Secretary of State Escott Reid and External Affairs official R.A.J. Phillips were both advocates of this notion. Reid, fearing Canadians might suffer from a lack of direction or sense of purpose in the aftermath of the war, saw the North as a meaning-giving object upon which Canada's energies and efforts had to be concentrated. Reid explained accordingly:

After the emotional debauch of the war there is going to be a bad hangover in all the former belligerent countries. In order that people's lives will not feel too empty, some peacetime equivalents to the exciting national objectives to the war must be found. The opening of a new frontier in the Canadian north can, I think, become a national objective. [F]rom the point of view of securing the highest possible national income, the Canadian North is not worth a large expenditure [...], a very large expenditure might nevertheless be justified in an effort to realize *an inspiring and somewhat romantic national objective*. (Reid quoted in Morrison, 70, emphasis added)

volume
10

R.A.J. Phillips in charge of the Arctic Sovereignty portfolio at External Affairs during the 1950s acted as a proponent of Northern and Arctic engagement. Having in contrast to most of his colleagues completed tours to the Arctic, he still drew upon the North's potential as an identity-shaping space when delivering his call for greater attention and resources. In an August 1956 *Globe and Mail* article, he intimates:

Psychologically, the opening of the North through 4,000 miles from our southern border is more likely than any single conscious scheme to *develop a sense of national entity and national purpose*. ("Canada Urged to Aid Labor In Far North", emphasis added)

The way in which this national objective had been appropriated before by writers, intellectuals and artists did not go unnoticed by External Affairs officials. The Group of Seven's northern mythology provides an apt example. Canadian Ambassador to the United States A.D.P. Heeney wholeheartedly embraced the Group's northern nationalism. At the opening of a Canadian art exhibition in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1956, Heeney glowingly acknowledged the Group's role in the Canadian quest for a national identity. He saw them as uniquely Canadian since their works featured a "strong national flavor [through their] emphasis on the magnificence of our northern landscape and the dramatic features of geography." The Group therefore, Heeney explained, offered a particularly fitting cultural example of 'Canadianness'. It showed "how we give

expression to what we see and feel. Painting [...] is best suited to this purpose.” (LAC, Heeney, “Exhibition of Canadian Abstract Art”, 4). By the same token, Lester Pearson’s wife Maryon Pearson revealed in numerous radio-interviews that the Pearsons were long-time art collectors. Talking about the Group of Seven, Maryon insisted that it was Canadian paintings they owned, intimating that Canadians “have done best in the arts, in painting, than anything else” (LAC, Pearson, “Transcript of Interview with Mrs. Pearson”, 5). It does not come as a surprise therefore when Lester Pearson biographer John English describes her as “ever the cultural nationalist.” (English, 265)

volume
10

In his diary, Lester Pearson spent a lot of ink casting himself as a cultural connoisseur. Not unlike Maryon who had vowed to refurnish the Canadian embassy in Washington with specifically Canadian paintings, Lester Pearson deemed the works of A.Y. Jackson, a Group of Seven member, as representative of Canada. On a diplomatic visit in 1955, in fact, he presented Indian Prime Minister Nehru with a Jackson painting, implicitly bestowing upon the group the status of cultural ambassador of ‘Canadianness’ (Cf. LAC, Pearson, “Visit to Pakistan”, 60). In doing so, Pearson along with Heeney appropriated the group’s overt Northern nationalism and provided a rare glimpse into those cultural forces that informed their ideas and conceptions of Northern and Arctic Canada.

Diplomats and foreign policy officials’ cultural awareness, however, went beyond the Group of Seven’s nationalism. Racial and gendered conceptions which marked the cultural productions of the time constituted central themes in the world of international politics as well. These conceptions can be traced through Lester Pearson’s speech material, talks and publications on Canada’s North. In his writings, Pearson viewed the North through nineteenth century images of the settler opening up an unknown and empty land, overcoming hardship and prevailing in the face of adversity. Through a character-building process the pioneer would eventually reveal the true essence of his courageous and resilient nature. Echoing Haliburton’s racialised ideas of the North, Pearson wrote: “But it is no country for weaklings and its economic development will test the finest qualities of the men of the north” (LAC, Pearson, “Canada and the Arctic”, 6). Referencing Haliburton’s ‘men of the north’, Pearson embraced the notion that Canada’s North served as a selective and character-shaping element, producing a masculine, iron-willed and superior people. Pearson continued: “The spirit of the pioneer still lives on in these parts. That spirit is contributing vigour and vitality, both physical and psychologically, to our national development” (ibid., 2).

A final theme in diplomats’ statements about the Northern and Arctic Canada, is that of the West, the explorer, the pioneer and the settler pushing the frontier ever northwards. Comparisons to the American frontier as well as the Canadian West are ubiquitous. Again, foreign policy as well as government officials employed the frontier

theme as a template through which to interpret and communicate conditions in Canada's North. Similar to his 1946 *Foreign Affairs* article mentioned earlier, Pearson recounted a story of a traveller in 1937 explaining: "We still have a frontier, then, in Canada with all that this implies in the life of a nation. That frontier, however, is no longer the West. 'Go West' has been replaced by 'Go North' as the call to adventure" (ibid., 1). Pearson thus likened Canada's increased interest in its North with the period of Western expansion referencing a mid-nineteenth century American newspaper editor who had coined the phrase 'Go West, young man!'. In a 1954 Dominion Day broadcast, Canada's Ambassador to the United States Heeney declared:

The history of Canada has been an exciting story—the heroic, peaceful conquest of a vast new land. It is the story of the explorer, the missionary, the trader and the settler—the great thrust westward to the Pacific and north to the Arctic. It is the story of the railroad-er and the bushpilot, the prospector and the engineer (LAC, Heeney, "WGAY – United Nations Broadcast", 3)

Heeney, like Pearson, conceived of Northern and Arctic Canada's development through tropes and images of Western expansion. While Heeney denied the indigenous peoples a presence, not to mention a role, in the history of Canada, he projected ideas of technological and social progress and innovation upon the North. This notion sought to confirm the region's supposed inspiring and stimulating effects upon Canadians. What is more, the North served as a national project in which the Canadian story, a succession of courageous, noble and peaceful episodes, according to Heeney, found its continuation. Its historical place and future trajectory as an empty, yet auspicious space rich in identity-shaping qualities was solidly embedded in the language of nineteenth century frontier imagery.

While it may appear ironic that diplomats, intent on articulating a distinct Canadian experience from that of the United States, revert to ideas closely resembling themes of the American West, it is important to examine their statements in light of contemporary historiography. During the interwar period, University of Toronto historians Harold Innis and Donald Creighton wrote national histories that placed a staple economy coupled with the waterways of the St. Lawrence River system front and centre of Canada's historical evolution. In this interpretation, the Western expansion, driven by the search for and exploitation of natural resources, constituted a natural extension of the Laurentian heartland.⁵ In his 1944 *Dominion of the North*, Creighton closely

5 Harold Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930) and Donald Creighton's *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* (1937) and his *Dominion of the North* (1944) represent the seminal works of this nationalist school.

adhered to this framework and seamlessly placed developments in Northern and Arctic Canada in a tradition of Western expansion turned northward. This Laurentian framework proved to be a powerful and influential reading of Canadian history through the 1950s and provided Canadian diplomats with a template through which they sought to make sense of Northern and Arctic Canada's significance. Given their educational history, it may seem all the more probable to find Pearson and Heeney imagine the Canadian North in terms of this Laurentian concept. Before they joined the diplomatic service, both earned graduate degrees in history at Oxford University during the mid-1920s. More importantly, it was there that Heeney and later Pearson at the University of Toronto made the acquaintance of an aspiring graduate student and colleague: Donald Creighton.⁶

Canadian diplomats involved in discerning a course for the country's early Cold War foreign and defence policy in Northern and Arctic Canada revealed themselves to be conversant with Northern imagery of the day. They were creatures of culture indeed. As a result, senior foreign policy officials conceived of Canada's North not only in military or geopolitical terms. The North also carried a symbolic significance in the construction of a Canadian national identity. This cultural significance had been given voice by a variety of cultural agents who contributed to the formation of a Northern mythology by the mid-nineteenth century. Such cultural representations about Northern and Arctic Canada were characterised by racialised, gendered and romanticised ideas which cast the North as a virtuous, spiritual and hardening place, often grounded in frontier imagery. Canadian diplomats negotiating the establishment of the DEW Line were not only conscious of these interpretive frameworks. In fact in private communications, public appearances and internal documents, they embraced and disseminated such notions themselves, pointing to the North's character-moulding capacity forming a masculine, resilient and morally superior nation. It is at this moment that cultural constructions of Northern and Arctic Canada informed foreign policy officials' understanding of the North's significance and entered the government's policy formulation and communication process.

Having established the socio-cultural context which constituted the backdrop to the Canadian government's decisions about foreign and defence policy in the North during the early Cold War provides a much-needed basis for in-depth investigations of the intersections of power, diplomacy and culture in Ottawa's Arctic policy. It is necessary to

6 Pearson taught history at the University of Toronto for two years before leaving for the diplomatic service the year Donald Creighton joined the university's Department of History in 1927. Although both disagreed on several occasions, as John English notes (English, 241, 266), Pearson's diary indicates that he continued to see his former colleague during his time as Ambassador to Washington at the close of World War II (LAC, Pearson, "Sunday, April 1", 30).

analyse specific instances and discern how stories, art and historical accounts—either unintentionally absorbed or actively employed—served to invoke authenticity, legitimise authority and project power. Further pursuing this path of inquiry into the role of cultural narratives in international relations history would enable a more comprehensive appreciation of Pearson, Heeney and other senior diplomats’ insistence that the Distant Early Warning Line be staffed and operated by Canadians—or as Canada Firster Robert Haliburton had phrased it in 1869 and Pearson reiterated almost a century later: by the men of the north.

Works cited

Primary Sources

- “Canada Urged to Aid Labor In Far North”, *Globe and Mail*. August 11, 1956. Microfilm.
- Cannon, Lawrence. “Address by Minister Cannon on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy to Norwegian Institute of International Affairs”. *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Speeches 2010*. 14 September 2010. Webpage. 19 December 2010.
- Library and Archives Canada (LAC)
- Heeney, Arnold D.P.
- “Exhibition of Canadian Abstract Art”, MG 30, E144, Vol. 11, File: Speeches as Ambassador to U.S. Sept. 1956 – Mar. 1957.
- “WGAY – United Nations Broadcast”, MG 30, E144, Vol. 11, File: Speeches as Ambassador to U.S. Apr. 1954 – Dec 1954.
- Pearson, Lester B.
- “Canada and the Arctic”, MG 26, N1, Vol. 60, File: Speeches & Speech Material – Arctic Question – 1937.
- “Sunday, April 1”, MG 26, N8, Vol. 1, File: Diaries and Personal Papers (N8 Series) Bound Diary 1943-45.
- “Transcript of Interview with Mrs. Pearson”, MG 26, N8, Vol. 10, File: Biographical material 1922-1967.
- “Visit to Pakistan”, MG 26, N8, Vol 1, File: Diary and Notes on Trips, 1955.
- Pearson, Lester B. “Canada Looks ‘Down North’” *Foreign Affairs* 24 (1946): Print.
- Service, Robert W. *The Spell of the Yukon*. Whitefish: Kessinger Publications, 2004. Print.
- United States Department of State. “A Report to the President Pursuant to the President’s Directive of January 31, 1950”, April 7, 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, Vol. I. Print.

Secondary Sources

- Berger, Carl. "The True North Strong and Free." In *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell, 3-26. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966. Print.
- Cavell, Janice. "The Second Frontier: The North in English-Canadian Historical Writing." *Canadian Historical Review* 83, No. 3 (2002): 364-89. Print.
- Coates, Ken S., P. Whitney Lackenbauer, William Morrison, and Greg Poelzer. *Arctic Front. Defending Canada in the Far North*. Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008. Print.
- Coates, Ken S., and William R. Morrison. *The Alaska Highway in World War II*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. Print.
- Cook, Ramsay. *Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986. Print.
- Creighton, Donald G. *The Commerical Empire of the St. Lawrence*. Reprinted ed. Toronto: Macmillian, 1956. Print.
- . *Dominion of the North. A History of Canada*. 2nd revised ed. London: Macmillian & Co., 1958. Print.
- Dayrs, James. *In Defence of Canada. Peacemaking and Deterrence*. Vol. III. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. Print.
- Elliot-Meisel, Elizabeth B. *Arctic Diplomacy. Canada and the United States in the Northwest Passage*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998. Print.
- English, John. *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson. Volume One: 1897-1948*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1989. Print.
- Francis, Daniel. *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History*. 4th ed. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2005. Print.
- Gaddis, John L. *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Print.
- Goedde, Petra. "'Thick Description': An Assessment of FDR, LBJ, and Henry Kissinger", *Diplomatic History* Vol. 32, No. 5 (November 2008): 767-71. Print.
- Grace, Sherrill E. *Canada and the Idea of North*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. Print.
- Grant, Shelagh D. *Polar Imperative. A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010. Print.
- Hulan, Renée. *Northern Experience and Myths of Canadian Culture*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. Print.
- Innis, Harold A. *The Fur Trade in Canada. An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*. Revised ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1956. Print.

- Jockel, Joseph T. *No Boundaries Upstairs. Canada, the United States, and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Print.
- Leffler, Melvyn P. *A Preponderance of Power. National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. Print.
- May, Ernest R. *American Cold War Strategy. Interpreting NSC 68*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. Print.
- Morrison, William R. "Eagle over the Arctic: American in the Canadian North, 1867-1985." *The Canadian Review of American Studies* 18, no. 1 (1987): 61-76. Print.
- Rotter, Andrew J. *Comrades at Odds. The United States and India, 1947-1964*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000. Print.
- Winkler, David F. *Searching the Skies: The Legacy of the United States Cold War Defense Radar Program*. Langley AFB, VA: Headquarters Air Combat Command, 1997. Print.
- Woitkowitz, John. "Arctic Sovereignty and the Cold War: Canada-U.S. Relations and the Establishment of the DEW Line". MA Thesis. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 2009. Print.