

**A VIEW FROM AFAR:**  
CANADIAN STUDIES IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

**UNE VISION LOINTAINE:**  
LES ÉTUDES CANADIENNES DANS UN CONTEXTE EUROPÉEN

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# Introduction

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This volume is a collection of the contributions to the 17th European Seminar for Graduate Students in Canadian Studies 2008 that took place in the Humanities Institute of Ireland in University College Dublin, Ireland, from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. The conference was organised by the Association for Canadian Studies in Ireland to promote the development of high-calibre graduate research relating to Canada among European post-graduate students. In doing so, it aimed to further the knowledge and understanding of Canada and initiate an international network of new Canadianist researchers in Europe. The conference brought together graduate researchers from over ten countries in Western and Central Europe to present and discuss their innovative findings on a wide range of issues relating to Canadian Studies. This volume presents the outcomes of this seminar.

The scope of the papers closely reflects Canada's foreign policy priorities including managing diversity, economics and democracy\* and includes research on literature, the arts, and linguistic and social portraits of immigrant communities in Canada. The range of papers is indicative of the ongoing interest in and the dynamic nature of research in Canadian Studies among young European researchers.

\* [http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/FRP\\_en.asp?shownav=4](http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/FRP_en.asp?shownav=4) (accessed 5 August 2009)

# Introduction

Ce volume rassemble les contributions au 17<sup>ième</sup> Séminaire Européen pour les Étudiants Gradués en études Canadiennes, lequel s'est déroulé au Humanities Institute of Ireland, University College Dublin. Il s'est tenu du 23 au 25 octobre 2008. Le séminaire était organisé par l'Association Irlandaise d'Études Canadiennes et avait pour but de promouvoir le développement des recherches de pointe sur le Canada par les étudiants du troisième cycle en Europe. Il visait ainsi à avancer la compréhension et les connaissances au sujet du Canada et ainsi faciliter le développement d'un réseau international de nouveaux Canadianistes en Europe. Ceci fut l'occasion de réunir de jeunes chercheurs venant de nombreux pays de l'Europe centrale et occidentale afin de présenter et débattre les résultats de leur recherches sur une panoplie de thèmes portant sur les Études Canadiennes. Ces actes sont le témoignage du dynamisme des Études Canadiennes en Europe.

L'étendue de ces communications reflète les priorités de politique étrangère du Canada, y compris la gestion de la diversité, le développement économique, la démocratie\* et viennent s'y ajouter les communications sur l'art, la littérature ainsi que les portraits linguistiques et sociaux des communautés immigrées au Canada. La large variété des communications de ce volume montre l'intérêt continu et le dynamisme des recherches en Études Canadiennes parmi les jeunes chercheurs Européens.

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\* [http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/FRP\\_en.asp?shownav=4](http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/FRP_en.asp?shownav=4) (site consulté 5 août 2009)





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**“Either I am Canadian, or the word means nothing”<sup>1</sup>:  
George Elliott Clarke’s Creation of “Africadia”  
as a Critique of the Politics of Multiculturalism**

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**Abstract**

The article discusses George Elliott Clarke’s verse-novel *Whydah Falls* (1990) as an attempt to argue for a more inclusive conceptualization of Canadianness that does not construct African-Canadians as marginal Others to a white Canadian mainstream. Clarke’s transgression of genre boundaries and his use of intertextuality are examined as strategies to establish African-Canadian culture as a significant component of any notion of Canadianness. Finally, it is demonstrated that by embracing a regional Nova Scotian perspective and by taking recourse to neglected histories of oppression, Clarke constructs patterns that allow African-Canadians to identify as both black and Canadian.

**Résumé**

Cet article voit dans le roman en vers de George Elliott Clarke *Whydah Falls* (1990) une tentative d’élargir un concept de « Canadianness » dans lequel les Afro-Canadiens ne seront plus construits comme les marginaux d’une société majoritairement blanche. Clarke dépasse les frontières du genre, il utilise des références intertextuelles comme stratégies pour faire de la culture afro-canadienne un élément significatif de la notion de « Canadianness ». Finalement il est démontré qu’en se servant d’une perspective spécifiquement régionale et en reprenant des faits historiques refoulés, Clarke réussit à ne plus considérer « Blackness » et « Canadianness » comme des concepts opposés.

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1 Clarke “Complex Face”, 279.

In a recent interview, the contemporary African-Canadian poet, playwright and critic George Elliott Clarke has pointed out that one of the main concerns of African-Canadian writers is the definition of their relation to the Canadian nation state:

We are trying to speak the unspeakable, we're trying to say what has not been said before, at least not in Canada in certain ways – trying to disturb the very idea of what is a Canadian identity. Can Canadian itself be centralized as white, or Anglo-Saxon, or Gaelic? Can it, really? [...] I think that a lot of the writing that we've been doing is an attempt to say no. (Compton/McNeilly 2004: 64)

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But Canadian identity, or rather, the notion of Canadianness, has itself been notoriously difficult to define. Regionalism, Quebec nationalism, the all-pervasive influence of the US-American neighbour and immigration have been defined as major obstacles to the construction of a coherent national identity. In this lack of a "defining essence" (Lehr 2003, 23), it is the internalization and institutionalization of diversity in the policy of multiculturalism that function as a means to construct Canadian national identity.

Can multiculturalism, then, really be the solution to issues of nationalism and an alternative to monolithic and exclusionary constructions of the nation or does it instead latently perpetuate the hegemonic structures it seems to vanquish by pressing ethnic minorities into the too narrowly confined role of the exotic Other?

This paper will first outline some of the main problems that arise from multiculturalism as state policy before George Elliott Clarke's *Whylah Falls* will be analysed as an attempt to provide alternative patterns of belonging, based on the concept of hybridity. Through the close analysis of Clarke's use of genre mixing, intertextuality, the re-mapping of geography and the rewriting of history, it will become clear that blackness and Canadianness need not be two mutually exclusive options for identity construction.

According to the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act*, Canada is a nation willing "to 'recognize and promote' as a matter of policy 'the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of [...] society' and to acknowledge 'the freedom of all members of [...] society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage'" (Ungerleider 2006, 208). Thus, the promotion of ethnic affiliation, in what seems a paradoxical turn, becomes the means through which identification with the Canadian nation is managed. However, what turns out to be a crucial factor for self-identification with an ethnic heritage is the fact that for white Canadians this is an optional choice, while for

non-whites – as the Canadian term ‘visible minorities’ powerfully demonstrates<sup>2</sup> – this choice is often less a matter of self-identification than of external ascription.

By promoting identification with ethnic identities, multiculturalism gives rise to hyphenated-identities. According to Minelle Mahtani, the hyphen in expressions of ethnic affiliations like Jamaican-Canadian “operate[s] to produce spaces of distance, in which ethnicity is positioned outside Canadianness – as an addition to it, but also as an exclusion from it” (Mahtani 2006, 168). Simultaneously – albeit in a masked fashion – multiculturalism establishes “non-hyphenated” identities that function as norms, and thereby perpetuates insider-outsider dichotomies. In the words of Donna Bennett (2005: 11):

[W]e assume a mainstream against which “other solitudes” – a minority collectively struggling against a dominant culture – define themselves, and our official attempts to legislate more complexity into Canadian culture collapse back into the Us-Them dialectic these policies sought to escape.

The idea of a Canadian mainstream into which immigrants and non-whites need to be integrated puts whiteness into the centre of the discourse of Canadianness and shows that notwithstanding the enduring proclamation of the Canadian identity crisis, a notion of normative Canadianness is well in place. As Eva Mackey (1999, 13) posits, “national identity is not so much in a constant state of crisis, but [...] the reproduction of ‘crisis’ allows the nation to be a site of a constantly regulated politics of identity”. The fact that exclusion and belonging are framed in racial terms points to the continuing failure of multiculturalism as a political strategy for genuine social equality. While multiculturalism frames and promotes identification along ethnic, i.e. cultural lines, it conceals the persistence of a racial subtext in structuring national belonging. Whiteness is rendered transparent and thus installed as the matrix for the understanding of Canadian identity. While elements of different cultural identities can be incorporated into the notion of Canadianness, “non-whiteness” is continually positioned outside of the nation. Thus, the inclusion of black Canadians into the national imaginary via the discourse of multiculturalism is problematic as multiculturalism limits the nation-state’s attention to recent arrivals and thus masks the fact that the black presence in Canada can by no means be reduced to the high influx of Caribbean, East-Indian and African immigrants since the 1960s.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Bannerji 1996, who states that “some people, [the expression ‘visible minorities’] implies, are more visible than others; if this were not the case, then its triviality would make it useless as a descriptive category. There must be something ‘peculiar’ about some people which draws attention to them. This something is the point to which the Canadian state wishes to draw our attention. Such a project of the state needed a point of departure which has to function as a norm, as the social average of appearance.”

The fact that race is and remains a central issue for identification is stressed by Anthony Appiah:

Once the racial label is applied to people, ideas about what it refers to [...] come to have their social effects. But they have not only social effects but psychological as well; and they shape the ways people conceive of themselves and their projects. In particular, the labels can operate to shape what I want to call "identification": the process through which an individual intentionally shapes her projects [...] by reference to available labels, available identities. (Appiah 1996, 78)

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As Stuart Hall (2005, 571) argues, the label 'black' has recently been adopted in Britain among people from different postcolonial contexts to refer to a shared experience of marginalization and "came to provide the organizing category of a new politics of resistance, among groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions, and ethnic identities". While the notion of blackness as a shared trans-ethnic characteristic has thus functioned as a unifying force in the resistance against racism, Hall makes clear, that simplistic reversals of essentialist understandings of blackness cannot be maintained:

What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences, and cultural identities which compose the category 'black', that is, the recognition that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category. (Hall 2005, 572)

Blackness in this view has transcended the status of a racial category and became a signifier of cultural identification. As such it collapses the differentiation between ethnicity as based on cultural identity and race as based on physical characteristics like skin colour.

In the Canadian context, George Elliott Clarke is one of the most prolific voices in the ongoing debates about the problems of national belonging. Being a representative of the Black Nova Scotian community that traces its origins back to the arrival of Loyalists after the War of 1812, Clarke has coined the term "Africadia" to describe this specific community (Cuder-Domínguez 2001, 187-191). The term derives from a combination of "Africa" with "Acadia". With this allusion to the French minority population in the Maritimes, Clarke aligns the experiences of the two marginalized groups and draws a comparison between their respective histories of struggle against British domination and colonization. At the same time the amalgam term constitutes a counter-pole

to hyphenation practices as it constructs its own "imagined community" (Anderson 1991). In an interview, Clarke has asserted the importance of claiming Africadian identity as a means to simultaneously resist generalizing constructions of Canadianness and hegemonic inscriptions of blackness:

[I]f we're marginalized within Nova Scotia and its history, we're even further marginalized within Canadian history and Canadian understandings of blackness, which are now invested much more with an understanding of blackness as related to the Caribbean and, although to a much lesser extent, to Africa, and also to Black America. (Moynagh 1996: 83)

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For Clarke, the historical development of this Africadian community assumes central importance for the construction of contemporary notions of black identity in Canada as it allows to ground a black presence within the nation. Especially his verse novel *Whylah Falls*, which was first published in 1990, can be regarded as a powerful literary construction of this imagined community. It narrates one year in the lives of the members of a community of African Canadians living in a fictional town in Nova Scotia. While it contains a multitude of different characters and individual sub-plots, the main plot lines that inform the narrative are the courtship struggles of young lovers on the one hand, and a racism-inspired murder on the other.

The following discussion will explore the literary strategies Clarke makes use of in this construction as a means to counteract the marginalization of Black Nova Scotians and their culture in traditional conceptualizations of the Canadian nation, as Clarke simultaneously lays claim to Canadianness and blackness.

Most of George Elliott Clarke's literary works are characterized by the blending of different genres, especially lyrical poetry, narrative prose and dramatic elements. This transgression of genre boundaries is generally considered to be a typical device for the negotiation of hybridity. *Whylah Falls*, while being recognized in scholarship mostly as a verse-novel, comprises large prose sections, songs, dramatic scenes and even newspaper clippings. From the very beginning, *Whylah Falls* consciously stages its textual hybridity. It begins with a *dramatis personae* (WF xxix) which lists 17 characters and thus presents the book as a dramatic text. This impression, however, is undercut by the fact that the book primarily consists of poems. Moreover, each of the seven sections is introduced by a longer prose passage entitled "The Argument", which connects the individual poems and provides relative narrative coherence. Partaking in all these genres simultaneously, *Whylah Falls* ultimately resists definite generic placement.

Moreover, music plays an important role. In *Whylah Falls* the blues influence is dominant. This is often expressed in the titles of individual poems. The section "The Witness

of Selah" includes three blues lyrics, namely "King Bee Blues" (WF 51), "Blues for X" (WF 63), and "Jordantown Blues" (WF 71). Their positioning alongside the other poems blurs the hierarchical distinction between song lyrics and poetry as low and high art and thus valorizes songs as relevant literature. This is made explicit in "The Springtime of the Innocents" (WF 89-91). Written in the voice of Pablo Gabriel, this prose passage cites several blues songs. It ends with the confident affirmation of the role of song in literature and defines this mixing of different art forms as uniquely Canadian: "And this song is Canadian literature" (WF 91).

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For George Elliott Clarke, textual hybridity assumes even greater importance with regard to the reception of his works. While he highly values lyrical poetry, he also acknowledges the deeper impact of narrative and dramatic forms on the audience: "And what about the audience? Can people read it? I still think we have a job to tell a story" (Compton 1998, 158). As Barbara Godard makes clear, "genre is always a function of particular social relations of address" (Godard 2000, 214). In Clarke's view, performative elements allow for the audience to closely identify with the fictional narrative. Identification can then establish a feeling of community which simultaneously grounds the writer in a social space and positions the community in relation to others.

I realised that, as valuable as a lyric poem is, there was something about it that wasn't allowing me to reach my audience [...]: Black Nova Scotians. So I wanted to engage a form that would allow for greater orality and greater performativity. (Cuder-Domínguez 2001, 198)

In highlighting this need to cross genre boundaries in order to reach his specific audience of Black Nova Scotians, Clarke also questions the validity of traditional European genre categories for the expression of an Africadian experience. Especially the incorporation of orality into his narratives speaks of Clarke's desire to position his Africadian literature within the larger connections of black diasporic art. Another literary technique that assumes central importance in *Whylah Falls* is the intertextual engagement with European, American and Canadian literary traditions.

Clarke self-consciously occupies the position of the postcolonial writer who struggles for artistic expression of his experience in a language and form that has been imposed on him but can be appropriated to fit his expressive needs. As he has stated in an interview:

We are forced into a kind of negotiation with master tropes, master genres, master language. In order to survive, in order to maintain some specificity for ourselves, we have no choice but to try to claim it for ourselves. (Compton 1998: 142)

Clarke's abundant use of intertextuality in *Whylah Falls* has been read as sign of a "consistent fetishism of English Literature" (Fiorentino 2003). And indeed, *Whylah Falls* abounds in references to and quotations from a plethora of literary forebears. Clarke's introduction to the Tenth Anniversary Edition of *Whylah Falls* even includes a section entitled "The Anxiety of Influence" which – apart from being a reference to Harold Bloom's famous study – names 31 international poets, stretching from Geoffrey Chaucer to Charles Baudelaire to Amiri Baraka, as literary influences (*WF* xiv). Thus, Clarke makes clear that African-Canadian poetry does not only partake in a Euro-Canadian poetic tradition, but must also reflect the reality of a New World African experience. More important than such passing references, however, is the way intertextuality is used to depict the Eurocentricity of canonical literary forms and their inability to express and address Black Nova Scotian experiences. In this way, the conscious alteration of these forms and the introduction of specifically black expressive traditions become the means to construct a "new" poetic voice.<sup>3</sup> In *Whylah Falls*, this is best exemplified in Xavier Zachary's quest for poetic individuality.

Xavier Zachary, the poet-dreamer who tries to seduce his beloved Shelley with poetry, is referred to only as "X" throughout the book. This name must be considered a "telling name" for two reasons. On the one hand, "X" bears a phonetic resonance of "exile" and thus highlights X's initial alienation from the community through his five-year absence during his studies in central Canada. On the other hand, however, "X" is also traditionally a marker of anonymity. This lack of individuality is mirrored at the beginning in X's poetic voice. The first poem he writes for Shelley, "The River Pilgrim: A Letter" is an obvious imitation of Ezra Pound's "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter".<sup>4</sup> Despite the similarities between the two poems, the inversion of gender roles is a striking feature in Clarke's text. While the speaker in Pound's poem is the river-merchant's wife longing for her exiled husband, in "The River Pilgrim" it is X who longs for Shelley and the feeling of rootedness that she stands for and that contrasts so sharply with his own experience of exile.

Shelley, however, cannot relate to X's verse. His hollow formalism and the pretentious use of abstract vocabulary seem artificial to her. This is made clear in "To X", Shelley's reply to X's letter: "Numbers reveal truth. Words always have something to hide"

3 Fiorentino (2003) here speaks of a "hybrid voice of colonial/postcolonial rhetoric".

4 Wells (1997, 60) even calls the poem "an unabashed plagiarism".

(WF 7). Moreover, she prefers a man "who doesn't know books but [...] knows good jokes" (WF 7). Jokes can be shared by the community; they are rooted in the common experience. X comes to realize that the close adherence to canonical poetic role models cannot conjure up a voice which Shelley – and with her the whole community – can understand.

This realization is reflected in "Blank Sonnet" (WF 23). With its fourteen-line form and in its use of blank verse, the poem once again draws heavily on classical English verse models. This time, however, the model is no longer drawn upon in a purely imitative manner, but rather in a critical vein to question the tradition on which it is grounded. Thus, the sonnet form is only observed on the surface through the number of lines, while the division into stanzas is not as clear-cut as the form originally demands. Instead, thematic turns occur in the middle of lines and the meter is continuously disturbed by the punctuation. These formal alterations are necessary for X to reach his audience: "I have no use for measured, cadenced verse / If you won't read" (WF 23).

In an article, Clarke has outlined the importance of vernacular speech for the assertion of identity in Africadian literature: "The challenge facing Africadian authors is to disorient the central Standard English orientation of English-Canadian literature by voicing their own *distinctive* English" (Clarke "Career", 100). X (and through him Clarke) consciously engages in this endeavour. In "Monologue for Selah Bringing Spring to Whydah Falls" (WF 57-58), X has fully embraced vernacular speech as characteristic of his artistic expression. He asserts "I cry, in the vernacular, this plain manifesto" and discredits his former attempts at poetry as lies:

But my lies lie. My college speech ripens before you,  
Becomes Negro-natural, those green, soiled words  
Whose roots mingle with turnip, carrot and squash,  
Keeping philology fresh and tasty. (WF 57)

Expressions like "sorta", "kinda", "drippin'" and "like your body do sometimes" contrast sharply with X's earlier vocabulary. Further, his "father-poets" (Davidson 1996, 266) have now been merged with the blues tradition: "After Howlin' Will Shakespeare, Blind Jack Milton, and / Missouri Tom Eliot, I'm just one more dreamer to hoist / a guitar and strum Sixhiboux Delta Blues" (WF 55). This conflation acknowledges the importance of high-canonical poets but simultaneously validates the blues tradition by placing it on an equal level. This voice, which has incorporated the environment from which it speaks, is finally accepted by Shelley as her statement in the poem "Absolution"



illustrates: "X, we are responsible / for Beauty. [...] Every word, every word, / is a lie. But sometimes the lie / tells the truth" (WF 179).

In X's quest for poetic authenticity, Clarke thus explores the difficulty of representing African-Canadian identity in literary terms. Through the merging of Euro-Canadian poetic traditions with New World African oral traditions and through the critical questioning of Standard English as a means of poetic expression, Clarke devises a way to express blackness in a Canadian voice. In this way, he challenges preconceived notions about Canadian literature in which English literary traditions are considered to be the only relevant role model. Simultaneously, he inscribes Africadian literature as an integral part of the Canadian literary canon.

Another strategy Clarke makes use of to establish the Africadian presence in Nova Scotia is the re-imagining of nature and geography. In an interview, Clarke has stated that *Whylah Falls* is the consequence of his attempt to "oppose the survival thesis, Atwood's survival thesis" (Compton 1998, 143). Accordingly, *Whylah Falls* does not represent nature as malevolent force, experienced as threatening or confining. Instead, for Clarke, the Nova Scotian Annapolis Valley offers "the possibility of gardens, as opposed to wilderness, where one is, more or less, at peace and where one can find beauty" (Compton 1998, 143). Indeed, the image of the garden is recurrent throughout the book. The prose poem "How to Live in the Garden" (WF 35-36) explicitly links the garden motif to the biblical Garden Eden. Describing Cora's kitchen and her devotion to the loving creation of food as cornerstones of the Whylah Falls community, the narrator declares that "spicy, flamboyant smells green her kitchen into Eden" (WF 35). However, it is not only in the motif of the garden that nature is celebrated in *Whylah Falls*. In a more general way, nature imagery is exuberantly used to characterize the protagonists and thus functions to establish their rootedness in the place. For example, Pablo, the Spanish blues guitarist, describes his beloved Amarantha as follows: "Her long ebony hair glistens in writhing vines; her wrist's liquid curve tumbles darkly in clouds. The stream rushes over her voice" (WF 83). Furthermore, Shelley's limbs are "scrolls of deep water" (WF 5), her hair is "hyacinthine" (WF 13) and Othello has "waterfall-hands" (WF 106).

Nature also seems to react to the protagonists' emotions and reinforces their mood in different scenes. When X tries to get in touch with Shelley after his arrival, he has to face Othello, who threatens him and warns him to leave Shelley alone. Othello's aggression and X's despair are simultaneously mirrored in nature: "That night was moist with chance, the liquid shock / Of lightning. The river crashed like timber" (WF 9). Nature and human civilization are not mutually exclusive but rather form an organic coherence: "I can see buds on the chair legs, and some are about to flower" (WF 89); "At

Cora's, Selah yields her room to the thorns sprouting from the walls and the mist rising from the floor" (*WF* 54).

For Clarke, the setting of *Whylah Falls* in rural Nova Scotia expresses a political necessity: "One happy reason for African-Canadian writers [...] to play, enthusiastically, 'provincials' rooted in *native* experience [...] is that their first duty (or expectation) is to map *blackness* where it seems either most invisible or most opaque" (Clarke 2006, 58). This mapping of blackness in Nova Scotia is achieved through the renaming of the counties:

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I'm interested in rewriting the map of Nova Scotia. I mean why should I call Hants County 'Hants County'? I'll call it 'States County,' after a black family surname. Same thing with Digby County; that's Jarvis County for me. (Moynagh 1996, 76).

But it is not only through grounding his protagonists in their natural environment that Clarke constructs this feeling of rootedness, but also through the revision of historical records. More precisely, *Whylah Falls* attempts to make sense of a specific historical event in order to translate the experience of degradation and marginalization of Black Nova Scotians into a heightened awareness of the need for the affirmation and preservation of community culture. The historical event *Whylah Falls* functionalizes in this way is the destruction of the black settlement of Africville.<sup>5</sup>

While the official historiographic discourse in the 1960s has been casting Nova Scotia's historical black settlements in exclusively negative terms as blemishes to an ideal of a socially homogenous society, Clarke draws a different picture in *Whylah Falls*. He does so, however, not in a realistic or historiographic manner but instead "reconceptualizes a people and a 200-year-old history in mythic terms" (Compton 1998, 139). Myth here becomes a means to counter the truth claims of historiography and allows Clarke to construct a positive image of Africadian community: "These poems are fact presented as fiction. There was no other way to tell the truth save to disguise it as a story" (*WF* xxviii). Because the official discourse denies the expression of minority voices,

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<sup>5</sup> Africville was one of the earliest settlements founded by black refugees who had come to Nova Scotia during the War of 1812. It was located north of Halifax and used to be the home of about 400 African Canadians, when it came to the attention of urban renewal planning in the 1960s. The idea of a racially segregated settlement that was largely underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure did not fit the picture of Canada as tolerant and integrative state. The relocation of all Africville residents to urban Halifax areas that took place between 1964 and 1970, and the ensuing demolition of the settlement were thus hailed nationwide as impressive achievements of desegregation efforts. However, the fact that the residents who were relocated received only poor material compensation and, even more importantly, the fact that no thought was given to the psychological consequences of the loss of their communal home place, have since been regarded as manifestations of institutional racism. (cf. Walker 1997, 161-62; Banks 2002, 61)

literature becomes "an act of resistance against all people who declare your community a slum, or who define you personally as ugly or ignorant or on the margin" (Compton 1998, 144). Rather than concentrate on the actual traumatic experience of the destruction of Africville and the relocation of the residents, *Whylah Falls* depicts a Black Nova Scotian community from the insider perspective in order to inscribe it as a positive pattern for identification in the collective memory of Africadians. In this way, Clarke refuses a simple victim position and instead foregrounds the community members' responsibility to oppose the erasure they are confronted with.

Clarke undermines the truth claim of the majority discourse by questioning the general attainability of objective truth. Two closely connected textual strategies are employed in this undertaking: polyphony and the foregrounding of the constructedness of language. On the dedication page of the book, Clarke states this conviction in a manifesto-like manner: "I know that this traitor language can turn / One truth into another or even / Against itself. Yet it is all we have" (*WF* [vii]). As all discourse is constructed through language, it can only be resisted through language. Thus, *Whylah Falls* self-consciously stages its status as literary construction. In the very beginning the narrator asserts that it is "the mirage of literature, how everyone uses words to create a truth he or she can trust and live within" (*WF* 4).

The multiplicity of truths that can be created in this way is displayed in *Whylah Falls* through the fragmentation of the narrative into a plenitude of different voices. While a large proportion of the poems can be attributed to X, at least nine other voices engage in the construction of the narrative. These different voices all speak with the same authority and the conflict between their different kinds of truths is played out openly. Thus, Clarke allows the voices of those formerly silenced to be heard and to assert their presence without creating a hegemonic discourse himself. Moreover, the rendering of the narrative from different perspectives leads to a largely over-determined fictional reality that displays the living experiences of the people in great detail. Clarke himself calls *Whylah Falls* "an attempt to improvise a myth" (*WF* xi) and goes on to define myth as the means to "[unify] the values and experiences of each linguistic civilization for its own time and for posterity" (*WF* xv). This is exactly what Clarke sets out to achieve in *Whylah Falls*.

Clarke resurrects the memory of Africville by constructing an alternative symbolic home place in *Whylah Falls*. As he asserts, "Africville survives, *lives*, as metaphor" (Clarke, "Africadian Nationalism", 289). Through the construction of this home place, Clarke simultaneously offers the possibility of positive identification with Africadian culture and asserts the importance of the preservation of this culture by its members as a means to counter the marginalization of Africadian identity in the larger Nova Scotian – and also Canadian – context. Thus, Clarke opposes the ostensible benevolence of

political strategies that try to erase difference and particularity. As Moynagh observes, "Clarke writes from a particular locality bringing to bear on that writing a nationalist vision that insists on tolerance, change and adaptation as much as on the preservation and promotion of cultural difference and group identity" (Moynagh 1996, 72).

In conclusion, *Whylah Falls* thus stands as a prime example of a tradition of minority writing that challenges reductive conceptualizations of Canadian identity by firmly asserting its Canadianness beyond the narrow framework of official multiculturalism. This agenda is also apparent in Clarke's other literary works, especially in his verse drama *Beatrice Chancy*, where Clarke confronts the legacy of slavery. It would certainly be interesting now to locate Clarke's work within the larger field of black Canadian writing and to compare and contrast his positions with other writers who are engaged in the project of negotiating what it means to be both black and Canadian. The reason for the continuing urgency of this undertaking has been fittingly described by Clarke himself:

[W]e need to reclaim the province because we have been disenfranchised; we've been ignored, we've been erased in a sense from the map. (Moynagh 1996: 76)

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## **Converging v. Diverging Health Care Policies in Western Canada (1990-2007)**

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### **Abstract**

In the 1990s, the four provincial governments in Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) started reforming their health care systems: the objective was to improve their efficiency and reduce the costs associated with them. However, they did not necessarily opt for the same solution, depending on their political trend: on the one hand some decided to let the private sector enter the public system while other governments tried to limit the impact of privatization.

### **Résumé**

Dans les années 1990, les quatre gouvernements provinciaux dans l'Ouest du Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta et Colombie-Britannique) commencèrent à reformer le système de santé : l'objectif était d'améliorer son efficacité et de réduire son coût. Cependant, ils n'ont pas nécessairement choisi la même solution en fonction de leur tendance politique : d'un côté, certains décidèrent de laisser le secteur privé pénétrer le système public alors que d'autres essayèrent de limiter l'impact de la privatisation.

### **Introduction**

Health care in Canada is a provincial jurisdiction but is partly funded through federal transfers. To qualify for such funding, provinces and territories must meet the five principles of the Canada Health Act (1984): public administration, comprehensiveness,

universality, portability and accessibility<sup>1</sup>. The delivery of medically necessary health services must be provided without any user fee and is therefore based on needs and not on the ability to pay.

The 1980s were a period of constant increase in the health care budgets of provincial governments with the development of new medical technologies and surgeries and with the rising cost of pharmaceuticals. At a federal level, both the Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993) and the Liberals (1993-2006) embraced a neo-liberal approach based on less government intervention in existing social policies: as a result, funding dropped particularly, especially in 1996. Provincial governments followed the ideological trend which consisted in cutting down spending to eliminate the debt and the deficit. They were also becoming aware that increasing funding does not necessarily improve health conditions which are determined by various elements such as education, wages, social relationships or housing.

As a result of those new economic, ideological and health care visions, provincial governments had to do more with less money, which led them to reform Medicare. Have their reforms been converging or diverging depending on their political stand? To answer this question, we will take the examples of the four Western provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and we will analyze the choices made by their governments from 1990 to 2007<sup>2</sup>.

On the one hand, a common approach based on wellness influenced the four governments. But, at the same time, several of them, especially British Columbia and Alberta, also implemented reforms favouring some form of privatization, while Saskatchewan in particular decided to counter the expansion of the private sector.

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1 Public administration: "The health care insurance plan of a province must be administered and operated on a non-profit basis by a public authority appointed or designated by the government of the province (8.a)." Comprehensiveness: "The health care insurance plan of a province must insure all insured health services provided by hospitals, medical practitioners or dentists, and where the law of the province so permits, similar or additional services rendered by other health care practitioners (9)." Universality: "In order to satisfy the criterion respecting universality, the health care insurance plan of a province must entitle one hundred per cent of the insured persons of the province to the insured health services provided for by the plan on uniform terms and conditions (10)." Portability: "must not impose any minimum period of residence in the province, or waiting period, in excess of three months (11. a)." Accessibility: "must provide for insured health services on uniform terms and conditions (12. a)." (Canada Health Act, 1984).

2 Alberta is traditionally seen as the conservative province in Canada: it has only had conservative governments since the election of the Social Credit government in 1935. Saskatchewan has had a long tradition of CCF/NDP governments, which are said to be more socially-oriented though they are also described as fiscal conservatives. British Columbia is an interesting case study to consider: some of its policies could be influenced by Alberta, the powerful neighbour, and the period we are concentrating on is divided between two governments of different political trends, respectively the NDP and the Liberal Party. Manitoba had a conservative government until 1999 and then an NDP government was elected.



## 1. The wellness approach

In the 1990s, a new trend developed called the wellness approach. Broadly speaking, three major elements can be associated to it: health promotion and prevention, the expansion of primary health care centres and the creation of health authorities.

First of all, the four governments became aware that it was cheaper in the long-term to promote healthy living habits: they started having education programmes, vaccination and immunization campaigns and created community centres. For example, in an inner-city neighbourhood in Regina, the Four Direction Health Centre provided milk and vitamins along with counselling and support (Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, 1997, 1995). In Manitoba, in 1995 the Conservative government of Gary Filmon (1988-1999) launched an 11 million dollar project that enabled the construction of the wellness institute at the Seven Oaks Hospital: it offered educational programmes, heart re-education or fitness exercises (Manitoba Progressive Conservative Association, 1995, 51). The NPD government of British Columbia opted for the same idea as indicated in *New Directions* released in 1993: "Health policy in the nineties must focus more on keeping people healthy and out of hospital. Health policy today must make health promotion and the prevention of illness and injury a far greater priority" (Ministry of Health, 1993). Although the Alberta government supported prevention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, until 1997, its main and only priority was to cut health spending (Dinning, 1994, 31).

With the growing importance given to prevention, there was no need to have as many hospital beds as before: some of the patients could be cured through home care schemes, in long-term care homes or could go to their nearest preventive health centre while specialized services could be centralized in a few major urban centres. As a result, several hospitals were closed and/or converted into preventive health centres or community health centres where patients can have access to teams of health professionals such as nurses, medical practitioners, dieticians, chiropractors, optometrists or physiotherapists. In *A Saskatchewan Vision for Health Care* (1992), the NDP government promoted such facilities which can save patients time and government money (Saskatchewan Health, 1992, 2). With this new approach, 52 small and essentially rural hospitals were shut down and most of them were converted into primary health care centres. The same trend was followed by the NDP government of British Columbia: "Community health centres will be located close to home, and may even be incorporated into neighbourhood schools and other public facilities, making them more friendly and accessible to all" (BC Ministry of Health, 1993). Although they did not close as many hospitals as Saskatchewan did, they reduced staff members thanks to early retirement schemes

(Government of British Columbia 1994, 2). Besides, the Liberal government of Gordon Campbell, elected in 2001, shut down some hospitals such as the Saint Mary Hospital in New Westminster. Finally, the Alberta government closed hospital beds and centralized some key services in Calgary and Edmonton.

From the 1990s, provinces decided to create health authorities: the purpose was to encourage communities to take their own decisions regarding health and to save money by avoiding duplication. Saskatchewan was the first province to move in that direction with the creation of 32 health districts (Saskatchewan Health, 1992, 2). In *New Directions*, the BC government decided to transfer some of the decision power to community health councils and to regional health boards (BC Ministry of Health, 1993). Manitoba and Alberta, the two Conservative provinces of the time, were the last to establish such authorities, respectively in 1996 and 1994 (Dinning, 1994, 31). Despite this common early trend, neo-conservative governments in the new Millennium have tended to adopt a much more centralized approach. Indeed, Alberta reduced the number of health authorities from 17 to 9 to finally amalgamate them all in May 2008 (CBC, 2008). As for British Columbia, the government of Gordon Campbell replaced the 52 health authorities by 5 geographical entities in December 2001. Saskatchewan, with the NDP at its head until November 2007, reduced its number of health offices from 32 to 12 but refused to go any further (Marchildon, 2007, 122-123). As for Manitoba, the number of health authorities has remained unchanged since their creation.

## 2. Measures in favour of privatization

One option to reduce health care spending is to avoid unnecessary medical and administrative duplication by centralizing some high-tech services and by promoting healthy lifestyles, partly thanks to further community input. Since Medicare in Canada is not supposed to cover all the costs of health services, another alternative is to expand the role of the private sector: some governments argue that they will then save money, a statement that has long been questioned. Indeed, critics have argued that it merely consists in transferring the costs of health care from governments to individuals who have no control on medical costs.

The privatization of the health system can have a wide range of meanings. It can refer to services funded by the government but offered in private facilities, to public/private partnerships or to the delisting of some services. In other forms of privatization, private facilities or medical practitioners charge patients user fees

for insured services, a practice called extra-billing, which nonetheless violates the Canada Health Act.

Alberta has long been the most famous province for its initiatives favouring the private sector in health care. For the Klein government, if both sectors exist at the same time, patients will be given more choice: with competition creating a system based on a market economy, the quality of care will be improved in the public and private systems. At the beginning of the 1990s, Ralph Klein and his counsellors indicated that the costs of health should be more and more supported by individuals (Klein 2005; Boothe 2002; McDaniel 1997: 218; McConnell: 1992). Under this government, MRI, cataract surgeries, Bill 11 and the Health Policy Framework were among the most contentious points with critics arguing that the trend was towards privatization.

In 1993, Alberta became the first province to authorize MRI in private clinics paid for by private interests. In the years after, the number of scans in the private sector kept increasing. As a result, in 1995, the federal Health Minister indicated that Alberta was violating the Canada Health Act by refusing to pay for some medically-necessary CT scans and MRI: the province received financial penalties in 1995 and was threatened with additional ones in 1996 (Pedersen, 1995). In 1996, due to federal pressure, the Alberta government reimbursed the patients who had paid for medically-necessary MRI between 1993 and 1996 (Mehra, 2008, 90) and invested an additional \$3.2 million to pay for scans being performed in private clinics until seven new MRI scans were operational in the public sector (Cairney, 1997, 1438-1440). Seven years after the first attempt at privatizing MRI clinics, most of the services had returned into the hands of the public sector. Between 2003 and 2007 no new MRI scan in private facilities opened in Alberta (Lang, 2008). However, although the government decided to reverse the trend, it was the result of federal pressure and not of an ideological change: never did the government mention that the public sector was more egalitarian or more efficient than the private system in the case of MRI or CT scans. From October 1<sup>st</sup> 1996, private clinics were allowed to offer medically-necessary cataract surgeries as long as they were paid for by the government (Hryciuk, 1996).

Those two examples can endanger the public sector in various ways. First of all, more surgeons may be willing to move into the private sector: the less serious cases are contracted out in private facilities, thus reducing the medical risks for professionals who also have to deal with fewer case loads (Armstrong, 2000, 2). Since Principle 11 that Alberta passed in 1995, the same physician can practice in both the public and private systems if he/she is offering insured services which are fully paid for by the public system and non-insured services which are paid for privately. As a result, medical

practitioners can have financial interests in a private clinic: they may be willing to send their patients to such facilities, encouraging them to pay for additional services for them to jump the queue 'legally' (Armstrong, 2000, 2). Finally, privatization has not reduced the waiting-lists: cataract surgeries waitlists have been longer in areas with higher rates of privatization.

Bill 11 or The Health Statute Amendment Act was put forward in 2000 by the Klein government: health care authorities were going to be allowed to authorize private facilities to perform some surgeries covered by Medicare as long as they were paid for by the government. Theoretically, queue-jumping, extra-billing, private hospitals, night-stays in clinics were forbidden. Despite much criticism, after some minor amendments, the Bill was passed in September 2000. Indeed, several critics have highlighted the negative sides of the system and the dangers for the public sector (Rachlis, 2000). First, the bill does not limit the size or the number of private facilities: the province may end up having bigger and more numerous private than public facilities. As previously mentioned, medical practitioners in private clinics may be tempted to charge patients for extra non-insured services. If members of health authorities, staff from the Ministry of Health and medical professionals have financial interests in those private clinics, their decisions may be prejudiced. Finally, Bill 11 does not give any detail as to how to demonstrate that a service must be contracted out in a private facility.

In February 2006, Alberta tried to move one step further. Indeed, it released a document entitled Health Policy Framework: physicians were to be given the possibility to work in the private and public systems without necessarily being paid for by the government, which, critics have argued, would have led to medical practitioners to reduce their numbers of hours in the public sector, thus expanding waitlists (Alberta Department of Health, 2006, 6). Due to province wide protests, the government decided not to push for that bill to be implemented.

The Alberta government has not been the only one to encourage an intrusion of the private sector into the public system. Since the 1990s, in British Columbia, the private sector has played a growing role with the pace accelerating since the election of the Liberal government of Gordon Campbell in 2001: services have been contracted out or delisted and clinics for MRI and cataract surgeries, boutique physician clinics and Public Private Partnership Hospitals (P3) have developed.

When the NDP was in power, its elected members were against the intrusion of the private into the public sector. In 1996, they implemented the Medicare Protection Act whose aim was to strengthen the principles mentioned in the Canada Health Act to make sure that access would be based on needs and not on the ability to pay (BC

Medicare Protection Act, 1996)<sup>3</sup>. However, beyond that, there was a definite lack of coercive actions. For example, physicians, who had opted out of the public system, charged patients extra-fees for medically-necessary services and private clinics for non-medically necessary MRI paid for by individuals started to develop in the mid-1990s (Moran, 1994, 645).

The expansion of the private sector went further after the election of the Liberal government of Gordon Campbell: the province continued to violate the principles of the Canada Health Act and was sanctioned by Ottawa notably in 2007, 2006, 2005 and 2003 (O'Neil, 2007).

Contracting-out insured health services became a much more common approach than it had been in the past. For example, in 2001, the Lions Gate Hospital contracted-out services with the Northmount Eye Surgery Centre to carry out 620 cataract surgeries a year (Fayerman, 2001, A7) and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority wanted to be allowed to contract out thousands of surgeries (*Vancouver Sun*, 2003, C6). In December 2006, the first urgent health care center opened in Vancouver, the False Creek Urgent Care Centre, which has signed contracts with the government. Some of British Columbia's private facilities, whose number has been greatly expanding, are called boutique physician clinics because of the wide range of services they offer at prices that the majority of inhabitants cannot afford: the Cambie Surgery asks patients between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for a knee replacement and between \$500 and \$750 for an initial medical assessment. Mehra (2008) argues that this trend endangers the public sector: patients have been treated unequally depending on their ability or will to pay for additional services, conflicts of interests for medical practitioners have happened and no real solution for the waiting-lists in the public sector has been provided (Mehra, 2008, 44).

Finally the province has signed partnerships between public hospitals and private investors called Public Private Partnerships or P3 hospitals: the government pays for health professionals and for the medical services they offer but the rest is paid and managed by private investors, slowly letting a market economy enter the public sector. In April 2005 the Abbotsford Hospital was the first to work under such a partnership (BC Health Coalition, April 2005). In October 2008, P3 projects were being planned at the Kelowna general hospital and at the Jubilee Hospital.

Those various examples show similarities in the approaches chosen by the Conservative and Liberal governments in Alberta and British Columbia. Both provinces also

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3 17 (1) : "A person must not charge a beneficiary (a) for a benefit, or (b) for materials, consultations, procedures, use of an office, clinic or other place or for any other matters that relate to the rendering of a benefit" (BC Medicare Protection Act, RSBC 1996, Chapter 286).

have health care premiums which their inhabitants must pay to partly fund the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHIP) and the British Columbia Medical Services Plan (BCMSP). If an individual does not pay those premiums, s/he will not be able to have access to the public health care system. The NDP in British Columbia refused to abolish them, though more and more people could apply for financial support. In 2002, the Liberal government increased the health care premiums by 50%. In Alberta, they kept rising through the 1990s and the early years of the New Millennium, from \$39.5 a month in 1990 to \$88 in 2002 for a family of four (Cohn, 2005).



Manitoba had a Conservative government until 1999. Throughout this period, several initiatives whose importance remains smaller than in Alberta and British Columbia were implemented: the two key elements are the development of a private clinic, the Pan Am clinic in Winnipeg, and MRI and CT scans offered to the inhabitants who did not want to wait. (O'Hallarn, 1995)

Though the scope of some health care programmes was reduced under the NDP government, Saskatchewan implemented no private project of significant importance.

### 3. Rejecting the private sector

Major initiatives favouring the intrusion of the private sector into health care have been implemented in Alberta throughout the government of Ralph Klein including during the so-called period of reinvestment from 1997 and in British Columbia at a faster pace since the election of Gordon Campbell in 2001.

Although Saskatchewan reduced funding for health care to tackle its deficit up until 1995, the province did not reach the same proportion as Alberta did and tried to protect the public sector through various measures. A similar trend has been followed by the NDP in Manitoba since its election in 1999.

The key text showing that Saskatchewan does not support the privatization of the health care system is the 1996 *Health Facilities Licensing Act* whose aim is "to better manage the development of private sector health facilities, and prevent the development of a two-tier health system" (Government of Saskatchewan, 1996). In August 2000, the province reinforced the principles enunciated in this act (O'Connor, 2000).

In 2002, Saskatchewan did not let private clinics open for MRI and CT scans (*Star-Phoenix*, 2002). There are now three MRI, all in public facilities: two in Saskatoon and

one in Regina. The province has seven CT scans in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert and a mobile unit in Moose Jaw and Swift Current (*Star-Phoenix*, 2002, A6) and none belong to the private sector. However, the trend may be reversed with the election of the Saskatchewan Party in November 2007: indeed, Brad Wall, the new Premier, indicated that MRI scans do not necessarily have to belong to the public system (Hall, 2008).

Finally, in 2007, the NDP in Saskatchewan created a Seniors' Drug Plan, capping the prescription drug costs of Saskatchewan seniors at \$15 per prescription within the province's formulary. In its 2007 election platform, the party was in favour of a universal drug plan, "capping all drug costs at \$15 per prescription in the Saskatchewan formulary for everyone, saving hundreds of dollars for families and seniors each year" (NDP Election Platform, 2007).

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In Manitoba, shortly after being elected, the NDP government showed its opposition to the intrusion of the private sector into the public health care system. First of all, it bought the PanAm clinic for 4 million dollars and spent 3.3 million dollars to modernize and expand it (Fayerman, 2001). The creator of the PanAm clinic, Wayne Hildahl, remained the director but this facility now belongs to the public sector, which has reduced the costs while expanding the range of services that are offered (Mehra, 2008, 14). All the benefits must now be reinvested for patients whereas they mostly benefitted the well-being of the director<sup>4</sup>.

In May 2001, the government passed Bill 25 or the Health Services Insurance Amendment Act: private clinics cannot have beds for patients to spend the night. In 2005, the NDP government threatened to impose financial penalties to the Maples Surgical Centre, a private clinic, which wanted patients to pay for medically-necessary MRI, enabling them to jump the queue of the public sector for \$695. The government first decided to contract out some MRIs with the clinic in December 2006. But the contract ended shortly afterwards because the government was not satisfied with the services offered (Lambert 2006).

In Alberta, despite some efforts through the Child Health Benefits, a programme which offers additional health services for children from low income families, strengthening the role of the public sector has not been among the top priorities of the government.

Another element worth mentioning is the end of health care premiums in January 2009: however, such a change may not be perceived as a commitment to the public sector but more as the need to constantly reduce taxes.

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<sup>4</sup> "Before the buy-out, I could have taken the money and gone on vacation. Now the surpluses are used to treat more patients" (cited in Mehra, 2008, 25).

## Conclusion

Provinces all reformed their health care programmes in the 1990s with the aim of reducing costs. Government spending was however in different proportions depending on which party was in power. Alberta slashed public spending to balance its budget and the ideology regarding health care became much more market-oriented, which was not the case under the NDP government in Saskatchewan. The four Western provinces reduced hospital funding and their number of hospital beds but proportions and time-scopes varied. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, analyzing health care budgets can be another interesting element to highlight the priorities of government.

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The wellness approach was strongly supported in Saskatchewan as part of the second phase in the evolution of Medicare. Though all governments wanted to reduce their health care budgets, Saskatchewan and Manitoba demonstrated much more community-oriented reforms, which can be considered a key element in social democratic policies.

The Alberta government has always tried to encourage a further intrusion of the private sector into health care. Bills and laws were numerous under the Klein government. British Columbia has followed a very similar approach though the Liberal government of Gordon Campbell has probably been less vocal about it. Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the two NDP provinces, constitute two exceptions or counter-examples. The NDP government in Saskatchewan has constantly tried to limit the expansion of the private sector and the NPD government in Manitoba has even reversed the trend on which Gary Filmon had set the province.

Although differences may not be very obvious partly due to the federal framework that constitutes a strong limit to decentralization, health care policies have been diverging. In practice, differences may only amount to a few services insured or not. However, such small divergences do represent differences in the ideologies of the governments of power. Other explanations may have to do with the political culture of each province and with the economic potential. Indeed, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are less likely to attract private clinics simply because they have fewer potential wealthy customers. Finally the strong social-democratic culture in those two provinces can also explain why their governments have been less willing to let the private sector enter the public system.



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## The Italian Community in Canada and Ireland: Language Practices

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to compare some features of Italian migration to Ireland and to Canada. Even though an Italian presence had been recorded both in Ireland and Canada prior to the Second World War (Reynolds 1994,46; Rosoli 1989,13 Villata 2003,177), the most significant migration wave occurred after that time. With respect to the Canadian situation, some of the data reported by Gianfranco Rosoli (Rosoli 1989, 13) in his article "Italians Overseas" show that the Italian community in Canada totals 700,000 people. The migrants arrived in Canada at different stages throughout the last century. 500,000 moved after the Second World War, particularly between 1951 and 1961. The kind of language spoken (mainly English in Ireland; English and French in Canada) as well as the kind of Italian maintained – if it is maintained – within the Italian community will be examined. Finally, some recent initiatives among the Irish-Italian community with respect to language maintenance and transmission will be discussed.

### Résumé

Le but de cette présentation est de comparer certaines caractéristiques de la migration italienne en Irlande et au Canada. Même si une présence italienne a été observée en Irlande et au Canada avant le Seconde guerre mondiale (Reynolds 1994, 46; Rosoli 1989, 13; Villata 2003, 177) la vague de migration la plus significative a eu lieu après cette période-là. Pour ce qu'il en est de la situation au Canada, certaines données de Gianfranco Rosoli (Rosoli 1989, 13) dans son article « Italians Overseas » montrent que la communauté italienne au Canada compte 700,000 personnes. Les migrants arrivèrent à différents moments tout au long du siècle dernier. 500,000 personnes ont immigré au Canada après la seconde guerre mondiale, surtout entre 1951 et 1961. Non seulement le type de langue parlée (surtout anglais en Irlande; anglais et français au Canada) mais

aussi le type d'italien – qui a été maintenu ou non – au sein de la communauté italienne seront examinés. Enfin, certaines initiatives récentes dans la communauté Irlando-Canadienne vis-à-vis de maintenance et de la transmission de la langue seront discutées.

The aim of this paper is to compare some features of Italian migration to Ireland and to Canada. The main focus of this paper will be on the Italian immigrants in Ireland and a comparison will be drawn between the initial and the more recent waves.

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Both the kinds of language spoken (mainly English in Ireland, English and French in Canada) and the kind of Italian maintained – if it is maintained – within the Italian communities will be examined.

In respect to the Canadian situation, some of the data reported by Gianfausto Rosoli (1989) in his article “Le popolazioni di origine italiana oltreoceano” show that the Italian community in Canada totals some 700,000 people. The migrants arrived in Canada at different stages throughout the last century. 500,000 moved after the Second World War, particularly between 1951 and 1961. Nowadays, Italians are the fourth biggest community in Canada, after the English, the French and the Germans. The vast majority of Italians and their descendants can be found in Ontario (560,000), followed by Quebec (174,000) and British Columbia (73,000). Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are the most attractive destinations (Rosoli, 1989, 13).

Reynolds states that “The Italian community in Ireland today is [...] the longest-established and most widely recognized group of foreign residents in the country”(1994:59), its uniqueness residing both in the migrants’ geographical provenance and in their occupational homogeneity – as opposed to Canada, where Italian migrants came from many different regions in Italy; i.e., Sicilia, Campania, Molise, Lazio, Calabria, Basilicata, Abruzzo, Veneto e Friuli (Iacovetta, 1993:4-5; Villata, 2003:178). Indeed, the first Italian migrants in Ireland were almost all involved in the same business, i.e. catering. The vast majority of them ran fish and chip shops, while some others (very few) opened ice-cream parlours. This migration had peculiar features. Firstly, the vast majority of Italians who, after the Second World War, chose Ireland as their destination to make a better living came from the same place in Italy, specifically the Comino Valley in Latium and, more precisely, a little village in the province of Frosinone called Casalattico, which is and has generally been a poor and marginalised region. Secondly, the migration flow was towards to a country of major emigration itself, and finally, as stated earlier, they all engaged in the same business, one that, according to Reynolds, “the native population either had not thought of exploiting or – more likely – was unwilling to enter” (Reynolds 1994:59).

The first wave of Italians to Ireland represents, thus, a very strong case of 'chain migration' (Reynolds 1994:49), which occurs when the first immigrants set up their own business and, usually after 2 or 3 years, call their relatives and friends to join them and the cycle continues. Interestingly, 14.6% of the sample interviewed by Reynolds while carrying out his survey stated that they left their jobs in Casalattico because of the call from Ireland (1994:102).

The fact that Italian catering businesses were family run accounts for the 41.3 % who gave family as their motive for moving to Ireland. This percentage is made up of women, those who left Italy together with their husbands, sometimes with children, or joined them later. Although much lower rates of women migrants have been reported for Canada, where the phenomenon of Italian migration was – at least until the 1930s – overwhelmingly male, it was really Canada, after the Second World War, which was the target of the biggest immigration of women from Italy (Iacovetta, 1993:3).

As a result, the Italian community in Ireland has been – and still is – a unique case of immigration within the Irish society and of a very poorly integrated group of migrants in the host country. That has happened for different reasons: the particular nature and hours of their job, the primary role played by the family, seen as an economic unit (Reynolds 1994:110), and “the strong pressure on the younger generation to marry among their own people in order to perpetuate the system” (Reynolds, 1994:110).

The outcomes of Reynolds' questionnaire show that more than three-quarters of spouses were of Casalatticese origin. This not only confirms the strong ties maintained within the community of Casalattico in Italy and within the emigrant community in Ireland, but also the importance of family support in the fish and chips business and the fact that women worked with their husbands and they did it for the same amount of time as their husband did. Marrying Irish girls was not even considered, because “they don't know how to work” (Reynolds, 1994:100). In this respect, a comparison with Canada will show, as stated before, that Italian women played a key role in helping their families with integrating in the new social and economic context. They were offered different job opportunities, according to the regions and the cities in which they were living and different legislation, but they almost all were either employed in some kind of paid work, or engaged in some other jobs requiring the skills they already acquired as peasants and /or housewives in Italy (Iacovetta, 1993:5-7).

In the same respect, a movie recently released, on *Chippers*,<sup>1</sup> by an Italian director, Nino Tropiano, supports the information already obtained from Reynolds' questionnaire. Not only do the vast majority of the interviewed state that dating (and marrying)

1 Nino Tropiano, *Chippers*, Ireland 2008, produced with funding from the Irish Film Board (IFB)

Irish boys and girls was not accepted by the community, but also that doing so very often meant being excluded by the community both in Ireland and in Casalattico<sup>2</sup>.

Before examining immigrants' linguistic practices, the more recent Italian migration to Ireland will be briefly considered. The new wave is made up mostly of professional figures – bankers, academics and others. Compared to the first Italian community, they have emerged from very different social, economic and linguistic contexts, and have chosen Ireland in consequence of the massive changes (mainly economic) that the country has undergone in the last 15 years. This is in fact in line with migration across Europe which is currently taking on a different aspect from former manifestations.

In addition, while the first Italian migration to Ireland can be regarded as a very strong social network or even a community of practise (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999), when we look at the recently arrived Italians, according to some scholars – Carla De Tona among others – “the notion of an Italian community in Ireland needs to be cautiously considered” (De Tona 2005:33). She points out how, according to her research,

Different groups of Italian migrants remain most separated from each other, attached and entangled through complex feelings of belonging and communitarian attachments; their clubs, activities, interests, life styles do not meet, as much as they themselves do not meet together. (De Tona, 2005:32)

De Tona's point is reinforced by the fact that, although there are “only” 6,400 officially estimated Italians in Dublin (10,000 according to non-official sources), they are so diverse that they have organised themselves into two different clubs. Moreover, the Italian Cultural Institute is not a recognised “meeting place” for any of the groups.

It is worth mentioning that the more recently arrived Italians are far more open to the host community and to the other foreign communities living in modern Ireland than the older community was. Many of the students who enrol every year at the Italian Cultural Institute to learn Italian state they do so because they are engaged or married to Italians living in Dublin. They are not only Irish, but Polish, Spanish Czechs and so on.

The *Club italiano di Dublino* was founded in 1971 by some of Casalatticesi and aimed to “keep alive the feeling of the community among compatriots through common activities, pursuing in any case a wider integration within the host community” (quoted from Zanna, 2005: 53, my translation)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the case of one member of the Cafolla family, who, after having married an Irish woman did not keep any contacts with the community of Casalatticesi nor did he return to Casalattico until he closed his shop and retired (Tropiano).

<sup>3</sup> Wider integration never achieved, according to Reynolds (109).



The *Club di Dublino*, on the other side, was created in 2002 and strongly promoted by the previous Italian ambassador Alberto Schepisi. Doctors, lawyers, university teachers and bankers are among the members. Its main goal was to cast light upon the contribution that younger Italians have been making to Ireland's economic growth in the last few years (Zanna, 2005:54) and a very important activity is fund raising for charities. Nevertheless, a hint of polemical intent to be distinguished from the Chippers seems to be present as well.

A third group of Italians can be added to the others. Paolo Zanna, for example, refers to what the Italian ambassador Schepisi called the *floating community*; i.e. young people (under 40s) spending short-time periods of time in Ireland – usually between 3 months and 1 year – for studying or working purposes and statistically not easily quantifiable (Zanna, 2005:48).

From the point of view of immigrants' linguistic practices, it appears absolutely clear from the data collected by Reynolds that, among older Italians, almost everybody (97.3%) spoke the dialect of Casalattico, with no knowledge of standard Italian, and considered it his/her first language before emigrating (Reynolds, 1994:101). When they need to code-switch, the majority of respondents to Reynold's survey stated that they switched from dialect to the language of the host country (Reynolds, 1994:103).

The dialect from Casalattico can be broadly defined as Ciociaro with its own features. This type of Ciociaro, thus, was the language spoken at home, at work and within the Casalatticesi's communities, both in Ireland and in Italy. With respect to the language of the host country – English in our case – Reynolds' findings show that only over 40% had some difficulty in reading the language of the country they have moved to, and even fewer stated having had some problem with the spoken language. However, a quarter of the sample did (Reynolds, 1994:108). It happened because, as already pointed out, the Casalatticesi spent the vast majority of time together with other people of Casalattico, at work and at home, so there was not a real need for a fluent knowledge of English. Moreover, Reynolds refers to many people who, even after having spent some time in Ireland, still have difficulty in using English to express themselves (Reynolds, 1994:108).

In addition, the tendency to speak a dialect at home passed on to the second and even the third generation Reynolds 1994:109). If language, as emphasised by Tosi<sup>4</sup>, can play a crucial part in successful emigration and has very important implications not only for level of integration achieved abroad, but also for the passing-on of values to one's children, especially in relation to attachment to one's roots, it is easy to

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4 Tosi 1984 quoted by Reynolds 1994:101

understand how that affected both the first Italians' level of integration in the Irish society and their linguistics practices. Some of the second and third generation members for example talked about having the feeling of being neither fully Italian nor fully Irish. When questioned about their loyalty during a soccer game, though, they felt Italian at once (Reynolds, 1994:109).

Drawing a comparison between Ireland and Canada, it can be said that both countries show the same picture, but with some very interesting differences. In fact, as stated above, Italians who immigrated to Canada after the Second World War came from many regions in Italy; hence, they needed a *vehicular language* to understand each others. This *pidgin* was made up of words from local dialects, a little standard Italian and neologisms created from a mixture of the latter and the two strong languages they were in contact with every day, i.e. English and French. It was very often used to express objects, relationships and concepts characteristic of the new social context in which they lived but absent in the old one (Villata, 2003:179). Italians in Ireland were not in need of such a pidgin, because they all were from the same dialect speaking region.

In this respect, another good example can be found in the already mentioned Tropiano movie on chippers. One of the people interviewed, the *Club italiano di Dublino's* main promoter, born in Scotland from Italian parents, involved in the ice-cream parlour trade, and moved to Ireland with her family later on, when asked whether she considers herself either Italian or Irish, she stated, in perfect English, that she is one hundred per cent Italian. She spoke English every time she was interviewed in the movie and, when she was addressed by me for a short chat, she asked me to speak in English. She said that, even though she knows Italian, she prefers to speak in English.

Schooling and education are closely connected to language matters. The level of education achieved while abroad was, according to Reynolds' survey outcomes, "on the whole, rather low". Only one respondent reached leaving certificate level – secondary school diploma (Reynolds, 1994:100). It certainly happened for different reasons. One being the difficulty of the host country language, another one – perhaps the most determinant – the family business context in which they lived. Although the parents very often stated that they didn't force their children to take up the business but, on the contrary, they recommended that they to go on with their education, this is what happened in the vast majority of cases (Tropiano, 2008).

Back to Ireland, it has to be underlined that, unlike other European communities (the German and French, for instance), Italians do not have their own school in Ireland. Recent arrivals thus they send their children to 'normal' secondary school, to Irish immersion schools, or to French and German schools. The acquisition of English by the

recent Italian arrivals children, thus, mediates other L2 language learning (even Irish in a few cases) and it is mediated by them, whereas for the first Italian community the only spoken languages were English (where spoken) and the dialect of the place of birth.

With respect to this matter, Carla De Tona reports a very interesting fact; in the early 1980s an Irish state agency proposed to the *Club italiano di Dublino* that they would open an Italian national school, but the offer was declined. The terms of that offer are not known, but it would be useful to know what they were and the reason for which the community of Chippers declined this offer (De Tona, 2005:37).

The Italian Cultural Institute, jointly with the *Club italiano di Dublino*, made some attempts to organise Italian classes for Italian children born in Ireland, but they were a failure. Two main reasons for this failure can be detected. The first seems to be that classes were organized on Saturday morning. The Italian children felt that they were sent to school when all their friends could enjoy their free time. These classes were seen as something they were obliged to do in their spare time and obviously they could not enjoy it and learn much<sup>5</sup>. The second reason resides, particularly in Canada and in other European and non European countries in which the Italian community was wider and more geographically diversified, in the kind of languages students were taught and how they were taught. Standard Italian was the language offered in schools, regardless of young Italians' cultural and family background. In addition, the main focus was on written Italian, as if students were living in Italy. Finally teachers, especially if they were sent by Italy, disregarded the pidgin spoken by their students as a bad linguistic habit to be rectified and purified, humiliating and discouraging them.

What should have been their mother tongue or their ancestors' language, ended up being a foreign language to them. This is true especially for the Montreal area, where immigrants' children already had to deal with two foreign languages, i.e., French and English (Villata, 186, 187).

Finally, I would like to mention a very interesting and fruitful project going on just now in Dublin. Two Italian teachers at the Italian Cultural Institute – Francesca La Morgia e Alessandra Di Claudio – felt the need to set up a project to encourage Italian and Italian-Irish children to learn Italian. There was no specific request<sup>1</sup>, but to date this project has been welcomed by many parents. The project consists in a play group – that may develop in the future to become a crèche – open to children of any nationality; it takes place every Saturday morning in a public library (the Central Library) and it lasts 90 minutes. Children play, learn children's rhymes and songs, in other words, they

<sup>5</sup> See Tosi 1994 and Balboni 1994 for similar attempts in other countries.

learn Italian through play. The project authors won the European award for languages last year. Parents are expected to take an active role within the Italian playgroup; unfortunately, this has led to a lack of participation from the second and third generation of Italians, due to their poor knowledge of standard Italian.

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## Language Policy and Planning in the Context of Immigration in Canada and Quebec<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Language Policy and Planning (LPP) and immigration policy are often inter-connected in Canada and Quebec. Canada has two official languages at a federal level, French and English, which share equal status under the Canadian Constitution. This paper is an exploration of how the Federal government employs LPP to support the official status of French and English at a federal level. The paper also examines LPP in Quebec which is used to promote French, the sole official language of the province. Quebec largely uses legislative instruments to implement its LPP. Quebec is chiefly concerned with the promotion and protection of the French language while the Federal government is constitutionally obliged to promote and protect both languages; this paper outlines how this has led to a difference in their respective LPP approaches. The immigration policies of the Quebec and Federal governments have been influenced by their LPP aims. This is especially true in Quebec where immigration is treated as an opportunity to target Francophone immigrants. The effect of LPP and its consequences for immigration policy upon allophones<sup>2</sup> immigrating to Canada or Quebec is also assessed in this paper.

### Résumé

La politique linguistique et la politique sur l'immigration sont souvent liées, l'une à l'autre, au Canada et au Québec. Le Canada est un pays à deux langues officielles au niveau fédéral, l'anglais et le français, lesquelles ont un statut égal sous la constitution canadienne. Ce document examine la

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1 I would like to thank Dr Maeve Conrick for her comments and feedback on the earlier drafts of this article.

2 Statistics Canada define allophones as "Persons of a mother tongue other than English or French" (Statistics Canada, 2007c: 5).

façon dont le gouvernement fédéral utilise la politique linguistique pour soutenir le statut officiel du français et de l'anglais au niveau fédéral. Cette communication analyse également la politique linguistique au Québec, dont le but est de favoriser le français, seule langue officielle de la province. Le Québec utilise en grande partie les instruments législatifs pour mettre en œuvre sa politique linguistique. Le Québec est principalement concerné par la promotion et la protection de la langue française tandis que le gouvernement fédéral est obligé par la constitution canadienne de promouvoir et de protéger les deux langues; ce document étudiera comment ces prises de position ont conduit à des approches différentes en ce qui concerne la politique linguistique. Les politiques de l'immigration du Québec et du gouvernement fédéral ont été influencées par les objectifs de leurs politiques linguistiques respectives. Ceci est particulièrement vrai au Québec où l'immigration est considérée comme une opportunité pour viser les immigrés francophones. Les effets de la politique linguistique et de ses conséquences sur la politique de l'immigration et sur les immigrants allophones au Canada et au Québec sont également évalués.

## Introduction

Language Policy and Planning (LPP) and immigration are inter-related in Canada and Quebec to the extent that both federal and provincial governments use immigration to advance their LPP initiatives. In recent decades there has been a surge in immigration to Canada and Quebec. In Canada, allophones currently represent 19.8% of the Canadian population and this figure is predicted to rise in the coming years (Statistics Canada, 2007a, 5). Among allophones over 150 different mother tongues are spoken (Statistics Canada, 2007a, 11). In the province of Quebec 13.8% of the population are foreign-born. In fact immigrants chose to settle in Quebec at a faster pace than in any other province during the years 2001-2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007a, 14-15). In contrast to this the weight of the Francophone population continues to decline at 22.1% while that of the Anglophone population remains steady at 57.8% (Statistics Canada, 2007c, 5). This article will briefly examine the theoretical frameworks of LPP before addressing the main aim of this paper which is the effect LPP has on immigration and how Quebec and federal authorities use immigration to support their LPP.

Immigration and language policy are closely linked in Quebec. Many elements of Quebec's immigration policy support the Quebec authorities' LPP by emphasising the importance of French in Quebec and by also putting measures in place which favour Francophone immigrants. In 1978 Quebec gained some autonomy over immigration when the Canada-Quebec Immigration Accord was signed. This agreement allowed

Quebec to form an immigration policy, within the federal framework, that supports its Francophone population and LPP activities. As a result of this agreement Quebec was able to develop demographic objectives which targeted immigration by francotropes.

LPP and its effects on immigration cannot be discussed without first defining LPP. The Norwegian linguist Einar Haugen was among the first to provide a definition of language planning, describing it as “[...] the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogenous speech community” (Haugen, [1959] 1968, 673). More recently Spolsky and Shohamy classify language policy as “[...] an explicit statement, usually but not necessarily contained in a formal document, about language use” (Shohamy and Spolsky, 2000, 2). In the simplest terms LPP creates goals for a language and then implements guidelines to meet these goals. The integrative framework of LPP as proposed by Nancy Hornberger will provide the basis of this paper’s review of LPP in Quebec and Canada. LPP is usually broken down into three components, status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. Hornberger articulates three major areas in LPP. Firstly status planning as “[...] those efforts directed toward the allocation of functions of languages/literacies in a given speech community”. Secondly corpus planning is defined as “those efforts related to the adequacy of the form or structure of languages/literacies” and lastly acquisition planning is “efforts to influence the allocation of users or the distribution of languages/literacies by means of creating or improving the opportunity or incentive to learn them or both” (Hornberger, 2006, 28).

## Quebec language policy and planning

The cornerstone of Quebec LPP is the *Charte de la langue française* (Quebec, 2006a, [1977]). The *Charte* was introduced in 1977 and makes French the sole official language of the province. It is a fundamental component of status planning in Quebec and its regulations concerning education are those which perhaps most affected the language transfer patterns of allophones in Quebec. The *Charte* made education through the medium of French a legal requirement for all Francophone and allophone children with only Anglophone parents were afforded any choice in the matter. The language transfer pattern of allophones has changed significantly in Quebec since the introduction of the *Charte* in 1977 as Table 1.1 illustrates.

Period of Immigration	Transfer to English	Transfer to French
<b>Before 1961</b>	75.2	24.8
<b>1961-1970</b>	60.8	39.2
<b>1971-1980</b>	38.3	61.7
<b>1981-1990</b>	30.1	69.9
<b>1991-2000</b>	28.0	72.0
<b>2001-2006</b>	24.8	75.2

**Table 1.1** Language Transfer Patterns of Allophones in Quebec  
 (Source: Statistics Canada, 2007c, 22)

The 2006 census also showed that for the first time in Quebec the majority of allophones using an official language at home adopted French as their main home language. This 51% majority represents some success for the *Chart*. However it is still a slim margin of difference between transfers to English at 49%, despite the prevalence of French at every level of Quebec society. French is the language of public life in the province and also the language of business, thus there is an economic advantage to learning it. The education provision ensures that most children of new citizens in Quebec will learn French. All of these factors have probably led to an increase in integrative motivation among new citizens. In previous decades it may have made more economic and cultural sense to acquire English; though the same is not necessarily true today.

Quebec continues to target Francophone immigrants to boost its declining Francophone population but as Table 1.1 illustrates the large majority of recent allophones to Quebec have acquired French. In light of this, more efforts could be made to attract those who have no linguistic allegiance to either official language as it appears likely that they too would transfer to French once in Quebec. Potential immigrants could be made aware of Quebec's strong, vibrant economy and the opportunities it could provide. Another economic advantage is the Quebec education system as third-level education is much more affordable in Quebec than in other Canadian provinces. The Federal government also has a role to play in promoting French to allophones.

Corpus planning is an important activity in Quebec and bodies such as the *Office québécois de la langue française* and the *Secrétariat à la politique linguistique* which work to provide terminology for new concepts that emerge rather than relying on anglicisms. While these activities relating to the expansion and evolution of the lexis may not have a direct impact on allophones they do support Quebec French and underline that the French spoken in the province is standard Quebec French.



Acquisition planning is probably the language planning activity that most impacts upon allophones. In Quebec, provisions are in place to provide immigrants with French language classes. However their availability is limited and not all those who wish to are able to obtain any formal training in French. Also as it is not obligatory many allophones choose not to avail of it even where it is readily available. A 2005 study by Statistics Canada showed that 42% of immigrants to Quebec had taken some language training in French since their arrival in the province while 37% had done so in English and 16% in both official languages. The results showed that 57% of those who had engaged in language training had moved up one level in their language usage compared to 35% of those who had not engaged in training. 55% of those who undertook training found it very useful and a further 35% found it useful (Statistics Canada, 2007b, 19). Adjusting to life in Canada was given as a reason for accessing language training in French by 51% of respondents compared to 37% in English. The figures show that language training is beneficial. However if an individual does not wish to engage in language training they cannot be forced to do so. It is for this reason that status planning is very important; if Quebec French is perceived to be an important asset allophones will be more integratively motivated to learn French. It is clear that an integrative approach to LPP as suggested by Hornberger could increase the likely success of linguistic integration by allophones.

## Federal language policy and planning

Quebec is chiefly concerned with the promotion of French. In contrast to this the main premise of federal LPP is that Canada is a bilingual nation. The federal authorities largely use legislative instruments to implement and support their LPP activities. The first Official Languages Act was introduced in Canada in 1969 following the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Conrick and Regan, 2007). The report advocated the extension of bilingualism to the Federal government which had operated almost exclusively in English up to that point. This Act also introduced the position of Commissioner of Official Languages. The Official Languages Act 1988 (Canada, 1988b) was a further expansion of the 1969 Act and consolidated the position of Canada as an officially bilingual state. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada, 1982) also underpins federal commitment to bilingualism; section 20 of the charter states that:

Any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any head or central office of an institution of the Parliament or government of Canada in English or French, and has the same right with respect to any

other office of any such institution where there is a significant demand for communications with and services from that office in such language. (Canada, 1982, Art.20.1)

Significant demand has been defined as at least 5% of the population of a province or in a Census Metropolitan Area at least 5,000 people must belong to the linguistic minority for federal services to be provided in that language (Canada, 2008a). In 1999 the federal Action Plan for Official Languages was introduced. One of the main aims of this plan was the doubling of the numbers of bilingual young Canadians. The most recent report issued by the Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, showed that not only did the plan fail to meet its target but that bilingualism actually decreased between the 2001 and 2006 census. In 2001 24% of the population reported themselves as bilingual compared to 22% in 2006 (OCOL, 2008, 19). The Commissioner is critical of the budget cuts that were made, especially in 2006, but he is still in favour of an Action Plan which promotes linguistic duality. The Commissioner's main recommendation in his 2007/8 report is the renewal of the Action Plan for the 2008-2013 period with an emphasis on the importance of linguistic duality in public places, particularly for "newcomers and young people" (OCOL, 2008, 29). This reference to newcomers recognises the need to stress the bilingual status of Canada in order to encourage and support more allophones to learn French. The *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013* was announced by the Federal government in June 2008. The plan provides \$1.1 billion to support linguistic duality. One of the main goals of the plan is to 'emphasize the value of linguistic duality among all Canadians' (Canada, 2008b, 9). Its renewed emphasis on linguistic duality helps to disseminate the idea that French is as important as English in Canada. With regard to immigration, \$20 million is allocated to encourage francophone immigrants to settle outside Quebec in minority francophone communities. The Roadmap does not make specific reference to the linguistic integration of allophones but instead concentrates on official language minorities. The promise of additional funding by the Federal government is welcome but perhaps more could have been done to support the linguistic integration of allophones who have been largely overlooked in the new Roadmap.

## Language policy and planning and immigration in Quebec and Canada

This article has already outlined how LPP is undertaken in Quebec and Canada and some of its possible effects on allophones. Focus now shifts to immigration policy in

Quebec and Canada. The *Loi sur l'immigration au Québec* was introduced in 1968 and continues to form the basis of Quebec immigration policy. In the Act much reference is made to the French language and its importance in Quebec. Section two of the Act outlines the objectives of the Quebec government with regard to immigration, as follows:

La sélection des ressortissants étrangers souhaitant s'établir au Québec à titre permanent ou temporaire se fait dans le cadre de la politique gouvernementale relative aux immigrants et aux ressortissants étrangers. Cette sélection a notamment pour objets de : Contribuer à l'enrichissement du patrimoine socio-culturel du Québec, à la stimulation du développement de son économie et à la poursuite de ses objectifs démographiques. (Quebec, 2008 [1968])

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This reference to “*ses objectifs démographiques*” is an obvious indication of how Quebec uses immigration policy to pursue demographic objectives, namely the promotion and protection of the French language. The importance of having the ability to speak French in Quebec is evident throughout the Act. It is apparent from this Act that Quebec views immigration as another tool to support its LPP objectives of securing the position of French in the province and in Canada.

When a potential immigrant applies to immigrate to Quebec or elsewhere in Canada he or she is awarded points based on certain criteria. The points awarded by Quebec and Canada for certain categories differ. Under the current Canadian system an applicant must score a minimum of 70 points to be considered for immigration while in Quebec a minimum of 65 points is required. Table 1.2 illustrates the differences that exist between federal and provincial policies.

Quebec	Points	Canada	Points
<b>Knowledge of French</b>	15	<b>Knowledge of French or English</b>	15
<b>Knowledge of English</b>	6	<b>Education</b>	16
<b>Training</b>	11	<b>Training</b>	18
<b>Employment</b>	15	<b>Personal Suitability</b>	10
<b>Work Experience</b>	15	<b>Demographic Factors</b>	10
<b>Age</b>	10	<b>Bonus for Entrepreneurs/ Investors</b>	30
<b>Adaptability</b>	5		

**Table 1.2** Immigration Points System  
 (Source: OCOL, 2002, 8)

Under the federal system up to nine points are awarded for knowledge of either official language with a further six points available to those with knowledge of both official languages. In contrast to this Quebec allocates fifteen points maximum to those with knowledge of French but a mere six points maximum to those with knowledge of English. Under the Quebec system those with knowledge of French have a distinct advantage over those with knowledge of English and a particularly strong advantage over allophones who have no knowledge of either language. In the federal system if one discounts the bonus available to entrepreneurs language is the third most important criterion for immigrants. In Quebec knowledge of the French language carries most points along with secured employment and relevant training (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2002, 14). This positive discrimination in favour of French speaking immigrants may help to secure the position of French in Quebec but it may also discourage those who cannot speak French from settling in Quebec.

Canada's federal immigration policy does not place emphasis on one official language above the other as under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada, 1982) both French and English have equal status. This is reflected in the federal points system for immigrants where applicants are given equal points for knowledge of either language. The federal immigration law, *Loi sur l'immigration et la protection des réfugiés 2001* (Canada, 2001) outlines federal immigration policy. There are 275 articles in total but only three refer to language which outline some of the objectives of the Act with regard to immigration:

- 3.(1) b) d'enrichir et de renforcer le tissu social et culturel du Canada dans le respect de son caractère fédéral, bilingue et multiculturel;*
- 3.(1) b.1) de favoriser le développement des collectivités de langues officielles minoritaires au Canada;*
- 3.(3) e) de soutenir l'engagement du gouvernement du Canada à favoriser l'épanouissement des minorités francophones et anglophones du Canada.*

These three references reinforce federal language policy of a bilingual nation and perhaps more importantly they serve to remind all citizens of Canada that French is as important as English in Canada.

## Conclusion

The linguistic integration of allophones is a complex issue, especially in Quebec where the need for increased immigration must be balanced with the need to protect the Francophone community. This conflict of interest has led to some differences in the way Quebec and Canada approach immigration. The aim of Canadian Federal government LPP is the promotion of the bilingual status of Canada. In contrast to this, Quebec has used LPP to protect and promote French and is not especially interested in promoting the bilingual status of Canada except where it is constitutionally obliged to do so. The differing approaches adopted by the federal and Quebec governments has led to the allophone community being somewhat disregarded.

In terms of immigration policy the federal authorities do not concern themselves with the origin of arriving immigrants, unlike Quebec which shows a preference for Francophone immigrants resulting in a divergence in how the population of Canada less Quebec and the population of Quebec have developed. The province of Quebec has an above average rate of immigration by Francophone immigrants and a below average rate of immigration by allophones. Quebec's policy of favouring Francophone immigrants could be discouraging allophones from settling in the province. There are many ways in which the Quebec government could create a language policy targeted at allophones which might help them integrate linguistically into French Quebec. However Quebec might first re-examine its immigration policy with a view to reviewing its policy of positive discrimination towards Francophone immigrants. The immigration authorities could reduce the points it awards for knowledge of the French language so that it is no longer the most important criterion for potential applicants. If it were to adopt this policy it could lead to increased immigration by allophones in Quebec though this would represent a considerable political shift in the province. An increased presence of allophones in the province need not make Quebec less distinct within Canada. The French language is a major factor in what makes Quebec special within Canada and if allophones were to linguistically integrate into the Francophone community the number of French speakers would grow and support for the French language would likely increase.

Another factor to be considered is that each year the Quebec government sets immigration targets; the target for 2008 is 49,000 while for 2010 it is 55,000 (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008, 223). In 1998, the Quebec government had a target of only 26,500 immigrants, the 2010 total of 55,000 immigrants represents a 107% increase on the 1998 figure and this upward trend is likely to continue in the coming decades. To support these targets Quebec would need to focus not only on Francophone areas but also

other source countries where immigrants may have little or no knowledge of French. It is clear that immigration is important for the future of the province as it will help to support its declining population. While it is evident that the French language is at the heart of Quebec identity, this paper does not suggest that Quebec abandon its Francophone identity in order to increase its level of allophones in the province to match that of the rest of Canada which has a burgeoning allophone population. Nevertheless it does suggest that increased immigration by allophones could yield many positive results for the province and perhaps most importantly increase the numbers of French speakers in Quebec and Canada.

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Allophones need to be convinced of the advantages learning French could bring to them. In terms of status planning Quebec has adopted a status plan which is effective in its protection and promotion of the French language. Status planning by the Federal government focuses on both official languages; the new Roadmap provides funding to increase bilingualism in both official languages. The Roadmap may lead to a rise in bilingualism and consequently a rise in immigrants interested in learning French.

*Je me souviens* is the motto of Quebec; it is an indication of the importance Quebec attaches to its past. Present demographic circumstances provide an opportunity for Quebec to look forward and take account of countries such as the People's Republic of China that have rapidly expanding economies. The linguistic integration of allophones in Quebec could bring benefits to the province and also to the immigrants. Allophones would have the opportunity to live a province that has a strong economy, below average living costs, a policy of Interculturalism and some facilities in place to assist their linguistic integration. An increased number of allophone immigrants to Quebec could increase the French speaking population in Quebec and Canada thereby increasing Quebec's influence. The statistical data referred to earlier shows that recent newcomers to the provinces are linguistically integrating into the Francophone community; there is no evidence to suggest that this trend is likely to discontinue nor that an immigrant's ethnic background makes a difference in transfer patterns. Thus it is apparent that the linguistic integration of allophones in Quebec is achievable and perhaps also desirable.

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## Culture, cultures ou Transculture? – Les romans de Lise Tremblay dans le système littéraire franco-canadien

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### Abstract

Lise Tremblay's novels owe their quality to the perfectionist use of a simple but compact language and the complexity of her stories that can be read on different levels.

Regarding the content, the stories are based on the multi- and transcultural Canadian society of which Lise Tremblay underlines the question of identity. All the characters of her novels find themselves on a search for it in a hybrid world between multiculturalism, nordicism and Americanism. While constantly walking or waiting, they are passing from one point, from one moment or one state of mind to another. It is not only the content but also the narrative structure of the novels that readers have to re-construct: there is hardly any chronological or logical order, and various discourses overlap. Finally, the author puts into her novels many dichotomies and stereotyped descriptions.

### Résumé

Lise Tremblay (\*1957) est une écrivaine québécoise qui a écrit jusqu'à présent cinq romans : *L'hiver de pluie* (1990), *La pêche blanche* (1994), *La Danse Juive* (1999), *La Héronnière* (2004) et *La Sœur de Judith* (2008). La qualité de ses romans réside dans l'usage d'une langue claire mais dense et dans la complexité de ses romans qui peuvent être lus à différentes échelles. Ses romans ont pour arrière-plan une société canadienne multi- et transculturelle dont est soulignée la question identitaire. Tous ses protagonistes sont à la recherche dans un monde hybride entre multiculturalisme, nordicité et américanisme à propos des États-Unis. Lors de cette recherche, ils marchent ou attendent, mais passent constamment d'un lieu à l'autre, d'un moment à l'autre

et d'un état à l'autre.<sup>1</sup> Ce n'est pourtant pas seulement l'histoire mais aussi la structure narrative que le lecteur doit reconstruire : il n'y existe guère d'ordre chronologique ou ordre logique, et des discours variés semblent se superposer. Finalement, nombreuses sont les dichotomies et descriptions stéréotypées que l'auteure intègre dans ses romans.

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Les cinq romans de Lise Tremblay, qui ont été publiés dès 1990 et jusqu'à aujourd'hui, sont l'expression d'une œuvre postmoderne et innovatrice. Ils rompent avec la conception traditionnelle du roman franco-canadien et cela pour plusieurs raisons : L'auteure n'y raconte plus des histoires ou des personnages concrètement définis auxquels le lecteur arriverait à s'identifier ou qu'il pourrait comprendre. Pourtant, quant à la langue des romans de Tremblay, elle semble être claire, simple et compréhensible, du moins au premier abord : un lexique restreint, une syntaxe sans virtuosité. Cependant, en parcourant ses livres, nous pouvons constater que sa langue se révèle être dense au fur et à mesure de la lecture : l'accumulation des demi-tons et l'usage déconcertant de certaines expressions néologiques. Qui plus est, malgré la brièveté relative de ses romans en terme de pages, ceux-ci atteignent une complexité narrative sans égal. Cette dernière est surtout due au fait qu'il y existe premièrement (1) une variation de sujets différents qui sont traités, puis (2) un traitement du temps narratif qui ne connaît guère d'ordre chronologique, et enfin (3) une oscillation permanente entre une présentation de faits et de jugements de valeurs, de raisonnements et de sentiments.

Tout cela a des répercussions sur la réception de ces romans: les romans engagent le lecteur à participer de façon active, et exigent qu'il entre dans la réorganisation textuelle en pensée, afin de pouvoir s'orienter dans l'univers tremblayien. Toutefois, il est probable qu'il ne s'y repère néanmoins plus à un moment donné. Curieusement, l'auteure thématise cela également dans une de ses œuvres, quand un des protagonistes constate que « [...] Je n'arrive plus à me concentrer. Je reste avec des personnages et des mots dans la main sans histoire. Je suis incapable de retenir l'histoire. Je dois souvent recommencer des chapitres et cela m'embrouille encore plus » (*La Pêche Blanche*, 30f).

La tâche du lecteur consiste par conséquent à essayer de réorganiser et à regrouper les éléments de ce désordre narratif pour clarifier sa complexité. Bien que variés, les romans de Tremblay laissent percevoir deux concepts thématiques 'clés' autour desquels ils sont organisés : d'un côté, il est question de la notion de « culture » et, de l'autre, de celle qui est étroitement liée avec l'identité (et la mise en question de celle-ci). Par la suite, nous examinerons de plus près quelques domaines afin de répondre aux questions

1 Renate Hildebrand et Clément Moisan, p. 208.

que nous nous posons au regard de l'œuvre de l'auteure. Ces domaines sont le contexte, le contenu et les conséquences. Tout d'abord, nous allons voir de plus près dans quel courant littéraire s'inscrivent les romans de Tremblay, courant littéraire qu'ils dépassent même. Comment peut-on définir cet intertexte servant de clé à l'approche des romans de Tremblay (Contexte) ? Ensuite, il va être question de la nature du discours de ses romans. Est-il possible de cerner (et si oui comment) les propos principaux des romans, et quel est leur enjeu (Contenu) ? Finalement, nous allons prendre en compte les effets qu'ont ces éléments et propos sur l'organisation interne des romans, aussi bien qu'au niveau plus élargi que constitue le courant littéraire contemporain (Conséquences). Ces trois domaines nous aideront ainsi non seulement à mieux situer les romans dans la littérature, mais aussi à explorer leur caractère particulier et innovateur qui façonne à sa manière les nouveaux champs dans l'entreprise littéraire.

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Premièrement, regardons de plus près le contexte. Comment pouvons-nous définir le contexte dans lequel les romans de Lise Tremblay s'inscrivent ? Tout d'abord, il paraît important les placer dans le courant des écritures migrantes, étant donné qu'ils nous fournissent la base sur laquelle ses romans sont construits. C'est en 1983 que Robert Berrouet-Oriol introduit ce terme afin de désigner un phénomène de la littérature québécoise qui a pour sujet l'immigration : des auteurs qui thématisent surtout la problématique du changement d'un pays à l'autre, et la question d'origine. Au premier abord, Lise Tremblay semble y échapper : née à Chicoutimi dans le Nord de la Belle Province, l'auteure n'a pas fait l'expérience directe d'une immigration au Québec. De même, dans ses romans, nous ne trouvons pas de personnage qui serait concerné par ce phénomène. Comment ses romans passent pourtant dans ce mouvement que constituent les écritures migrantes ?

Avant de répondre à cette question, jetons un regard sur la genèse des écritures migrantes. Moisan et Hildebrand ont reconnu quatre phases dans l'évolution des écritures migrantes qui sont étroitement liées à la compréhension identitaire du Québec, et au développement de celle-ci avec comme arrière-plan les événements historiques. Selon eux, la littérature migrante aurait atteint dans la dernière décennie du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle une phase de transculturalité. Tandis que dans la phase précédente de l'interculturalité, la culture d'origine et la culture cible était à considérer séparées l'une de l'autre (et ainsi thématisées littérairement), cela n'est plus le cas pour la phase de transculturalité. Les frontières entre les cultures, en voie de disparition, commencent à se brouiller. C'est ce qui transforme essentiellement le paradigme pour les auteurs dans leurs romans. Entre donc cette nouvelle situation qui est celle d'être au milieu, de se retrouver entre identité et altérité, de n'appartenir entièrement ni à « ici », ni à « là », devient donc un

sujet d'observation. Or, les appartenances multiples prennent une place plus importante en dépit des identifications culturelles précises qui ne sont plus possibles. Cette dissolution des points de repères précis a eu également son impact dans la littérature : des romans qui se dissolvent également. « Il n'y existe pas d'ordre, ni chronologique, ni logique, ni logis. »<sup>2</sup> Autrement dit, c'est dans la transculturalité que l'expérience de l'identité qu'on ne peut plus saisir précisément est centrale. Elle est représentative de plusieurs romans et peut être considérée en tant que phénomène de la littérature post-moderne. En même temps, elle constitue le point de départ pour les romans de Lise Tremblay.

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## Que pouvons nous dire du contenu des œuvres de Lise Tremblay ?

A la lecture de ses romans, nous constatons que la recherche d'identité et la « culture » peuvent être considérées comme les sujets clés des romans. Dans ces derniers, il est question des protagonistes qui se cherchent dans un entourage qui leur paraît à la fois étrange et familier. Lors des réflexions entreprises de la part des protagonistes, ceux-ci découvrent que non seulement eux leur entourage est différent mais qu'ils le sont aussi d'une certaine manière. Néanmoins, il semble exister des valeurs, codes et habitudes dans cet entourage culturel qu'ils partagent avec d'autres. Un paradoxe alors ?

Pour voir plus clair, il nous faut regarder de plus près le contexte et le concept culturel dans lesquels Tremblay place ses personnages. Ces derniers sont à la fois entourés d'une culture et font partie d'une culture qui puise sa spécificité dans la diversité. Comment vivent ces protagonistes alors cette culture dans un endroit marqué par la migration des personnes issues de cultures différentes ? N'y a-t-il dans une culture de diversité qu'une seule culture ? Ou bien plusieurs ? Ou est-ce que cette diversité des cultures sert-elle finalement de base pour générer une toute nouvelle culture ?

Il paraît que nous devons élargir le sens que nous donnons au terme de « culture ». L'idée de « un pays = une culture » est dépassé et douteux si nous considérons que « culture » ne peut pas être pensé comme quelque chose de stable. Ainsi le philosophe Wolfgang Welsch souligne que croire dans la stabilité et l'homogénéité des cultures ne serait qu'une illusion car une « fiction des cultures ». Avec son concept de *transculturalité* Welsch essaye de déconstruire les mythes culturels homogènes ayant pris la forme des « îles » dans la perception des gens. D'après lui, les cultures se caractérisent

<sup>2</sup> Régine Robin, p. 15.

(intérieurement) par une pluralisation des identités possibles et n'ont pas des frontières (vers leur extérieur) ; elles sont plutôt liées à d'autres cultures et s'échangent avec ces dernières. En résulte une complexité dont sont organisées les sociétés modernes. La transculturalité, elle, ne se montre non seulement au niveau des cultures et manières de vivre mais va jusqu'à la structure identitaire des individus ; ainsi Welsch renvoie à l'idée de l'hybridité des cultures et de leurs individus.<sup>3</sup>

A propos l'hybridité dans les cultures : permet-elle encore d'avoir un cadre de références commun à tous ceux qui vivent « dans » cette culture ? Une telle culture marquée par l'hybridité peut-elle avoir affaire seulement avec une histoire d'un collectif ou avec plusieurs histoires (migrantes) que racontent ses individus ?

C'est ce que font les protagonistes tremblayiens : En tant qu'individus dans une culture de diversité, ils se voient dans un processus constant d'identité et d'altérité. Une fois, ils semblent avoir trouvé un point de connexion à l'autre, et la prochaine fois ils découvrent au sein même de leur entourage, « leur culture » des habitudes qui leur paraissent étranges. C'est dans leur monde quotidien qu'ils découvrent un autre monde, dont *ils ne connaissent pas les codes*, comme l'affirme la protagoniste de la Danse Juive par exemple. Lise Tremblay thématise dans ces romans la recherche et la mise en question du propre et de l'autre, le déracinement culturel et l'appropriation de l'autre, l'intégration et l'exclusion, bref : l'identité et l'altérité.

Malgré la diversité culturelle au sein même de la culture, ce qui unit les protagonistes sont les choses suivantes: la découverte de l'entourage et de l'espace par leur corps et les concepts géographiques (nordicité et américanité) qui caractérisent les protagonistes au-delà de leurs différences mutuelles.

De manière générale, nous pouvons trouver trois sujets dans l'univers romanesque de Tremblay qui parsèment tous ses romans et qui ont un lien avec l'identité et la culture : le corps (1), la nordicité (2) et l'américanité (3).

En ce qui concerne la thématisation du **corps** chez Tremblay, nous pouvons observer que le fait de mettre en scène le corps (décrire/écrire le corps) nous renvoie tout de suite à la question de ce qu'est une personne ou de ce qu'elle n'est pas, c'est-à-dire à la question identitaire. Proche de l'idée d'Élise Turcotte, Tremblay peint le corps également comme une « maison » que quelqu'un habite. Chez Tremblay, le corps devient une sorte de point nodal, car les histoires des protagonistes s'y croisent. Comment et dans quels domaines le corps est-il mis en abyme dans les romans ? Dans les romans de Tremblay, il est possible de distinguer principalement deux façons de mettre en scène le corps: celle qui renvoie à la dimension de son fonctionnement, et celle qui concerne sa fonction primaire. La représentation littéraire du fonctionnement corporel est mise

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, pp. 83f.

en scène dans deux domaines qui représentent des motifs vitaux de tout être humain : c'est le domaine de la faim/l'alimentation et celui de la sexualité.

A part cette thématisation du corps en ce qui concerne le fonctionnement, le corps constitue également le point de départ et le but visé d'une recherche de sens. Ainsi, nous pouvons parler du corps et de la fonction que celui-ci peut obtenir. Pour les personnages des romans, le corps remplit trois fonctions : il est témoin de son 1) histoire personnelle (« Ma graisse renferme aussi toutes les histoires que je n'ai pas pu raconter » (*La Danse Juive*, 105) ; il témoigne de leur 2) enracinement dans le monde, et il est 3) moyen pour incorporer ou être incorporé. Ce dernier propos nécessite une explication plus concrète : Selon Merleau-Ponty, la digestion est l'expression du mouvement du corps et symbolise – si elle réussit – que le corps arrive à prendre, à absorber ce qui se passe autour de lui. Il peut quasiment avaler son entourage et se l'incorporer. Appliqué au roman *La Danse Juive*, nous trouvons un passage révélateur sur l'attitude qu'a la narratrice vis-à-vis de son entourage :

Un énorme buffet est placé au centre de la salle : cela passe de la cuisine italienne jusqu'au chinois américain. Dans un coin, quelques plats mexicains. [...] Je me dirige vers l'Italie, sur le gril, je mets deux grosses tranches de pain enduites de beurre à l'ail. Tout est abondant, pantagruélique, une sorte de all you can eat de banlieue américaine. [...] Je me régale. (*La Danse Juive*, 68f.)

Nous pourrions interpréter la capacité de la narratrice – qui vit d'ailleurs dans un milieu urbain (Montréal) où se croisent différentes cultures – de s'incorporer l'autre et sa culture par le biais de la nourriture.

A part le corps, qui est un élément clé de l'œuvre de Lise Tremblay, nous trouvons également une dimension de lecture géographique bien que culturelle (**nordicité, américanité**) dans ses romans. Elle reprend dans ses œuvres la position géographique du Québec et la thématise littéralement en les chargeant sémantiquement. Les deux points cardinaux majeurs qui s'opposent dans son œuvre sont le nord et le sud. Ces deux espaces opposés sont décrits à travers un inventaire culturel. Le nord y prend la place d'un espace où il existe de la pureté, du silence, la propreté, la neige, l'origine, le froid et la lumière. Le Nord constitue également un souvenir d'enfance des personnages des romans et est représenté en tant que condition de vie : « Comme si l'hiver était un état. On le porte à l'intérieur de soi » (*La Pêche Blanche*, 13). Contrairement au Nord, le sud pour elle est lié à un concept d'américanité. L'américanité dans les œuvres de Tremblay comprend le *pursuit of happiness* et l'*American dream*. Cette américanité que

l'auteure veut montrer est surtout à saisir au niveau de la consommation/l'abondance et de l'importance des médias. Pour peindre cela littéralement, Lise Tremblay a recours à beaucoup de stéréotypes et lieux communs, et décrit donc en plus de l'entourage le plus proche de ses personnages (qu'est le corps) également l'entourage géographique et culturel, hybride, par lequel les individus sont entourés et dans lequel ils habitent.

Oscillant entre ces deux espaces, nous pouvons dire que les personnages dans les romans de Lise Tremblay sont généralement des personnages passifs. Marcher joue un rôle important pour les personnages. Et marcher est aussi thématique. Ils marchent pour oublier que la vie est absurde. « Ceux qui marchent s'aperçoivent de loin ils ont le temps de s'éviter. Ils ont honte. Ils ne parlent pas. Je pense maintenant qu'ils marchent pour trouver un sens à leur vie » (*L'Hiver de Pluie*, 26).

Souvent, ils passent leur temps à attendre. Leur être dans le monde ne provoque pas vraiment de nausée, et c'est pourquoi ils ne s'engagent guère. « C'est la vie qui est de trop, ses émanations, sa sueur, sa peur » (*L'Hiver de Pluie*, 37). Ils attendent. Ils errent dans le temps et l'espace, l'un après l'autre : le décor, l'inventaire culturel des McDonalds et dîners à l'américaine, les rêves restent les mêmes, ce sont uniquement les personnages qui changent d'endroit. Lise Tremblay nous donne ainsi une vision plutôt pessimiste de l'être humain dans son entourage culturel hybride : Il erre et il s'enfuit, il est marqué par le désespoir, le mal de vivre, l'incommunicabilité et la marginalité, la déchéance et la mort. Il est à la recherche des fantasmes et souvenirs de son enfance qu'il a du mal à retrouver. Ses personnages se sentent déracinés et oscillent entre ville et village, entre un entourage multiculturel et le rêve du retour aux sources de l'enfance.

C'est là que se situe la particularité de l'œuvre de Lise Tremblay : La description de la tristesse, la désespérance et le tragique de la vie quotidienne de ses personnages qui sont comme des nomades modernes.<sup>4</sup> Ceux-ci ne se sentent plus à l'aise ou alors ils sont ne savent pas à quoi ils appartiennent. Ils ne sont plus des héros qui brillent par leurs actions, mais plutôt par l'absence d'action.

Nous avons dit plus haut que Lise Tremblay continue la voie des écritures migrantes. Ceci nécessite encore une précision. L'auteure, avec son œuvre, a ouvert une autre voie dans l'écriture migrante. En effet, bien qu'elle ne soit pas immigrée, qu'elle n'ait pas une histoire d'immigrante, elle éprouve néanmoins le besoin d'écrire, tout en étant née dans un pays et vivant toujours dans le même. Un pays qui est multiple. Chez des auteurs comme Gérard Etienne ou Naïm Kattan, le besoin d'écrire vient de leur migration d'un pays à l'autre. Chez Tremblay, c'est le besoin de migrer d'un pays...au même. La volonté ne vient plus d'un fait extérieur (le fait d'immigrer dans un pays), mais de

4 Aurélien Boivin et Cécile Dubé, pp 97f.

l'intérieur. Une volonté de l'intérieur qui voit dans la littérature la possibilité de garder une mémoire des lieux. Ainsi, la littérature devient elle-même un lieu du souvenir. Le potentiel de son œuvre réside là-dedans.

Nous avons constaté que les romans de Lise Tremblay s'inscrivent dans le courant littéraire des écritures migrantes à l'intérieur de la littérature francophone. En tant que tel, il fait de la question culturelle et de la question identitaire (non seulement de ses personnages, mais aussi du Québec) des questions centrales. Les personnages dans ces romans marchent pour trouver un sens, pour se comprendre, ils prennent conscience d'eux-mêmes par leur propre corps (et l'exploration par celui-ci) et par leur positionnement géographique. Ce dernier se veut entre les deux pôles du nord et du sud. La nordicité n'y sert pas seulement comme lieu d'imagination, mais également de lieu concret des véritables souvenirs d'enfance des personnages. Le Sud avec son américanité sert également comme lieu d'imagination, de projection de fantasmes, et offre le décor d'objets de la société de consommation dans lesquels les personnages agissent. Le point commun des deux, c'est que les personnages n'arriveront jamais à joindre entièrement ni l'une ni l'autre : ils restent entre cette culture du Nord et celle du Sud. Ils n'atteignent pas la réintégration dans leur Nord d'origine (ils ont pris de la distance par rapport à lui en allant à Montréal), et ne peuvent pas entièrement s'intégrer à l'américanité vu que c'est la nordicité, l'hiver qu'ils « portent » en eux, une sorte de condition vitale et « leur » particularité. Ils se voient obligés de marcher pour oublier ou d'attendre et de contempler pendant qu'ils se trouvent dans cet état au carrefour des cultures, celle du Nord et celle du Sud, ainsi que toutes les autres cultures apportées par des migrants et qui façonnent toutes ensemble ce qu'est la culture du Québec et l'univers des romans de Tremblay.

Des personnages qui marchent ou qui attendent et qui voient la vie passer, qui manquent de repères et qui n'agissent plus vraiment, le temps et leur vie qui s'écoulent au fur et à mesure, où tout coule finalement, comme un fleuve qu'ils regardent de la berge (comme un protagoniste dans la Pêche Blanche) et dont il ne se lassent pas... Peut être que Lise Tremblay évoque le fleuve en tant que symbole de la vie. On peut le comprendre en tant que symbole de la vie même, une vie où tout est flou, ou *pantha rei*, ou tout coule... arrive-t-elle finalement à donner un nouvel sens au concept du « roman-fleuve » ?

Pour conclure, nous pouvons dire que les romans de Lise Tremblay contiennent un caractère moderne à double égard : leur forme, d'un côté, et leur contenu, de l'autre.



D'abord, la forme : Étant donné les structures narratives et l'organisation formelle de ses romans, nous n'avons plus à faire avec de textes « traditionnels » racontant une histoire de taille plus ou moins grande. Des critères d'ordre, une logique de narration, un fil conducteur manquent, bref, presque tout ce qui structure le récit est abandonné chez Tremblay. C'est la raison pour laquelle le lecteur est demandé de s'engager de manière attentive à restructurer où il y a besoin et à lire ce qui n'est pas dit. Ces blancs, si chers à Flaubert, représentent la technique à laquelle Tremblay a recours constamment. Finalement, le contenu : le monde fictif des cinq romans est parsemé des références à une culture de plusieurs cultures, où les protagonistes sont parfois familiers et parfois étrangers aux habitudes et codes des cultures. Ce monde fictif des protagonistes est un monde transculturel : Leurs explorations et découvertes de ce monde, leur migration dans cet espace géographique (bien que littéraire, comme témoigne le style épistolaire de quelques protagonistes dans la manière de raconter leur histoire) sont bien plus qu'un simple déplacement d'un lieu A à un lieu B. Leur migration dans l'espace devient une migration à travers l'espace, à travers les cultures qui génèrent une nouvelle culture : une transculture.

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**Culture, cultures ou Transculture? – Les romans de Lise Tremblay dans le système littéraire franco-canadien**

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## **Savez-vous parler neuf langues ? Les connaissances linguistiques et les chances sur le marché du travail des migrants qualifiés vivant en Allemagne et au Canada**

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### **Abstract**

*Language is the key to integration.* This political assumption – based on scientific studies in Germany and Canada – ascribes language skills in the official national language a primordial importance for the positioning in the receiving society and in its labour market. However, this perspective does not take into account the manifold language repertoire of migrants which often incorporates more than one language. Rather it aims to protect the linguistic markets against other languages than the legitimate, official ones. Based on a qualitative comparative research on academically qualified migrants in Germany and Quebec, the article analyses the consequences of linguistic policies which focus on competencies in the official national language/s. It will underline the linkages between integration policies, the use of linguistic competencies and the stabilization of linguistic markets.

### **Résumé**

*La langue est la clef de l'intégration.* Cette affirmation, reposant sur des recherches scientifiques, accorde une importance primordiale aux connaissances de la langue nationale lorsqu'il est question du positionnement des migrants dans la société et sur le marché du travail. Cependant, cette approche ne tient pas compte de toute la gamme des capacités linguistiques des immigrants, qui possèdent souvent des connaissances en plusieurs différentes langues. Cette politique d'intégration a pour visé de protéger le marché linguistique de la langue légitime contre les langues étrangères. Basé sur une recherche qualitative comparative menée auprès des académiciens immigrants

en Allemagne et au Québec, l'article traite des conséquences qu'une politique d'intégration, résolument centrée sur la maîtrise de la langue nationale, pourrait avoir sur la mise en œuvre du répertoire linguistique des immigrants qualifiés et sur les marchés linguistiques.

## Savez-vous nager ou parler neuf langues?

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L'image nous montre que la personne à gauche présume que la natation est le seul moyen approprié de sauvetage en cas de naufrage. Contrairement à lui, son collègue propose un autre moyen de sauvetage qui se réfère à des compétences autre que la natation. Il juge son répertoire linguistique apte à être profitable dans une telle situation. En utilisant les neuf langues, il pense se faire entendre par des nageurs sauveteurs de connaissances linguistiques différentes et donc initier son sauvetage. Dans cette perspective, le traducteur imagine la société comme un système complexe dans lequel une multitude de produits est légitime et peut devenir profitable dans l'interaction. Comme le sociologue français Pierre Bourdieu (p.ex. 1970, 1979, 2001) l'a démontré, différents produits ne tirent pas le même profit. En effet, les marchés sont dominés par certains produits qui s'imposent comme système de sanctions. Les produits dominants sont donc légitimés et tous les autres sont valorisés selon la distance qui les séparent des prédominants.

Dans une société complexe caractérisée par la diversité, la question est de savoir qui sont les porteurs de produits dominants et donc les détenteurs du pouvoir ? L'article traitera cette question du point de vue de l'immigration et du positionnement des nouveaux arrivants. Au centre de l'attention se trouve la légitimité des langues parlées par des immigrants ayant une formation académique lors de leur positionnement sur le marché du travail en Allemagne et au Canada/Québec.<sup>1</sup> Dans une première partie le marché linguistique dans chaque pays sera analysé sous l'angle de la politique linguistique. Les conséquences que cette politique pourrait avoir sur la pratique linguistique des académiciens seront démontrées dans une deuxième partie en fonction d'une recherche qualitative faite auprès d'immigrants qualifiés.

1 La recherche a été menée en association avec le projet de recherche « Cultural Capital during Migration. Towards the relevance of education titles and residence permits for the status passage into the labour market » qui a été financé par la Fondation Volkswagen. Pour plus d'informations cf. [www.cultural-capital.net](http://www.cultural-capital.net).



## La politique linguistique concernant l'immigration

Dans la nouvelle loi sur l'immigration<sup>2</sup> qui a été ratifiée en 2005, l'état allemand intègre, pour la première fois de son histoire, des droits pour l'immigrant concernant son intégration dans la société. Il offre un « Integrationskurs »<sup>3</sup> ce qui peut être traduit par « Cours d'intégration ». Ce cours est essentiellement l'apprentissage de l'allemand. Sans souligner le titre « cours d'intégration » qui peut être lu comme expression de l'orientation de la politique allemande au niveau de l'immigration et de l'intégration, ceci est une offre masquée car elle sous-entend une obligation de participation. En effet, si l'immigrant refuse d'en faire usage, il se verra confronté à des restrictions liées à son statut d'immigration : par exemple il court le risque de se voir refuser la résidence permanente ultérieurement.<sup>4</sup> Considérant le fait que le cours d'intégration est en majeure partie un cours de langue, la politique d'immigration et d'intégration devient de cette façon une politique linguistique.

Au Québec, la politique d'intégration agit aussi comme politique linguistique. En effet, dans le processus de demande d'immigration, les compétences linguistiques sont

2 Bundesgesetzblatt, Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung und des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz), Jahrgang 2004 Teil I Nr. 41, ausgegeben zu Bonn 5. August 2004

3 Pour plus d'informations cf. le site du Ministère fédéral pour l'immigration et les réfugiés (BAMF) [http://www.bamf.de/nn\\_433420/EN/Integration/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-node.html?\\_\\_nnn=true](http://www.bamf.de/nn_433420/EN/Integration/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-node.html?__nnn=true) (25.11.2009)

4 Cf. le Bundesgesetzblatt, Zuwanderungsgesetz, § 44a

un important facteur, lors de l'évaluation d'amissibilité. On accorde au demandeur des points pour la connaissance des langues nationales, français et anglais, qui peuvent même dépasser les points attribués au niveau de formation.<sup>5</sup> L'état canadien, respectivement la province du Québec, initie l'immigration des personnes ayant la connaissance des langues officielles. L'accent est mis sur ces deux langues et dévalorise, par ce fait, les autres. Cette politique a pour but et conséquence d'attirer, premièrement, des Francophones ainsi que des Anglophones au dépend de personnes au répertoire linguistique varié. Autant qu'en Allemagne, la politique d'immigration devient au Canada, précisément au Québec, une politique linguistique. Le but de ces politiques semble être l'initiation et la cimentation de la légitimité des langues officielles et, de cette façon, la domination des marchés linguistiques. Cette politique vise à assurer la permanence de la langue légitime pour laquelle il faut, selon Bourdieu (2001, 87), reproduire les « conditions nécessaires [...] pour que les groupes qui la détiennent soient en mesure de l'imposer comme seule légitime sur les marchés officiels ». Dans le cas de l'immigration, les détenteurs de la langue légitime sont les classes dominantes des pays d'accueil.

## La légitimité de la langue dans l'immigration

L'article présent cherche à analyser les conséquences de la politique linguistique des pays d'accueil sur les immigrants ayant des qualifications académiques. Ceci sera fait à base d'une recherche menée auprès des immigrants en Allemagne et au Canada/Québec. Cette recherche se concentre sur la signification de tout le répertoire linguistique des immigrants et sur l'utilisation des langues dans le contexte du travail. Dans la ligne de mire de cet article se trouve l'analyse de l'effet de cette politique sur la possibilité d'utilisation du répertoire linguistique, ainsi donc l'influence de la politique sur la création – appelé par le sociologue Pierre Bourdieu (2001) – d'un marché linguistique.

Pour étudier l'enjeu des langues sur le processus d'insertion, il faut considérer divers facteurs qui affectent les conditions linguistiques préalables. Premièrement, les individus diffèrent selon leurs répertoires linguistiques. Chaque répertoire est fonction du nombre de langues dont il est constitué et la maîtrise de chacune d'elles. Le profit et la valeur de ce répertoire ou de certaines langues de ce répertoire sur le marché linguistique ne dépendent pas seulement de la compétence permettant de former des « phrases susceptible d'être comprise » parce qu'elle « peut être tout à fait insuffisante

5 Ainsi le système de point au Québec accorde un maximum de 13 points pour le niveau d'éducation et un maximum de 22 pour la connaissance des deux langues officielles (16 pour le français 6 pour l'anglais) c.f. <http://www.canadavisa.com/quebec-skilled-worker-immigration.html> (26.11.2008).

pour produire des phrases susceptible d'être *écoutées* » (Bourdieu 2001, 84). Deuxièmement, le profit d'une langue dépend de sa proximité avec la ou les langues qui sont dominantes sur ce marché. Plus la forme d'expression est proche de la langue légitime, plus la chance d'être écouté est élevée. Troisièmement, cette dominance est générée par le statut de la langue, par exemple avoir le statut officiel, mais aussi par la divulgation d'une langue qui promet d'être profitable dans plusieurs contextes linguistiques.

En immigrant, la personne quitte sa structure linguistique habituelle et entre dans une nouvelle, qui fonctionne différemment. Elle sera donc obligée de s'orienter et de se positionner sur un nouveau marché qui est dominé par une autre langue ou une autre qualité de langue. La question serait : dans quelle mesure la structure linguistique entre en jeu alors que l'immigrant se positionne dans le pays d'accueil et quel est le destin des compétences linguistiques autre que les langues légitimes ?

Pour l'analyse de ce sujet, les personnes interviewées se distinguent non seulement par rapport à leur répertoire linguistique mais aussi par le contexte du pays d'accueil. L'Allemagne et le Québec présentent deux contextes linguistiques opposés: alors que l'Allemagne est un pays monolingue, dont la langue n'est parlée que dans peu de pays ; le Canada, quant à lui, utilise deux langues officielles transnationales. Transnationale, car le français et l'anglais sont parlés et appris dans plusieurs pays comme langue d'origine et/ou langue académique<sup>6</sup>. La recherche a été menée auprès des immigrants en Allemagne qui ont appris l'allemand comme langue étrangère, dans la plupart des cas dans le but de l'immigration et de l'intégration. Contrairement au Québec où les interviewés étaient des immigrants qui parlaient déjà le français comme langue d'origine et/ou langue académique.

## Note méthodologique

L'approche pour aborder la question sur l'importance et la valeur de la langue au cours du positionnement sur le marché du travail du pays d'accueil est qualitative et plus précisément biographique. L'entrevue narrative biographique selon Fritz Schütze (1983) a été choisie pour collecter des données auprès des immigrants ayant fini leurs études universitaires avant l'immigration. Cette méthode a pour but de considérer l'individu avec son histoire de vie et son processus d'immigration et d'insertion dans l'ensemble de sa biographie sans isoler des événements clefs ainsi que des décisions importantes de son contexte individuel.

6 « Langue académique » signifie la langue dans laquelle les cours scolaires et universitaires etc. sont donnés.

L'analyse qualitative a été faite par la méthode documentaire -selon Ralf Bohnsack (2008) et Arnd-Michael Nohl (2008)– qui suit plusieurs étapes. Alors que les premières étapes restent dans le cadre d'orientation du cas individuel et satisfont à la complexité d'une biographie, les suivantes visent plutôt une analyse comparative de plusieurs cas. À la fin de l'analyse, on élabore des stratégies typiques de traitement des sujets et des événements qui surmontent l'individualité d'un cas mais qui tiennent toujours compte du fait que les décisions de la vie sont influencées par de nombreux facteurs et donc difficiles à généraliser.



## Examen d'évaluation comme instrument de la politique linguistique

Par la suite, la signification du répertoire des diplômés universitaires immigrants au cours de l'insertion sur le marché du travail sera abordée par deux entretiens faisant parti du même type.<sup>7</sup> Cette présentation sera accentuée sur le rôle des compétences linguistiques pendant le positionnement sur le marché du travail et l'influence de la politique linguistique sur la création de la légitimité des locuteurs immigrants.

L'analyse sera basée sur deux médecins, la première à l'anonymat appelée Mme Se-manova, qui a immigré en Allemagne et le deuxième, Monsieur Duani, qui a immigré au Québec. Les deux médecins cherchent à se positionner sur le marché du travail par leurs titres obtenus avant l'immigration. En Allemagne et au Canada, la condition primordiale pour pénétrer le marché du travail en tant que médecin est une reconnaissance formelle et ainsi donc une légitimation du diplôme amené de l'étranger.<sup>8</sup> Cette légitimité est, dans les deux cas, contrôlée sous la forme d'examens de niveau. La mise en œuvre des examens diffère entre les deux pays –et en Allemagne même entre les régions. Mais le principe est le même : la légitimité des titres étrangers est remise en question. Ceci n'est pas le cas des titres qui ne font pas partie des métiers réglementés, par exemple le diplôme d'ingénieur en Allemagne et le diplôme en éducation au Québec. Ces diplômes peuvent être soumis à une évaluation formelle qui atteste l'équivalence avec les titres québécois, respectivement allemands. Les diplômés peuvent ainsi trouver un emploi, basé sur la reconnaissance de leurs diplômes et de leurs savoirs, chez un employeur

<sup>7</sup> Des informations plus approfondies sur ce type sont données dans Henkelmann (2008).

<sup>8</sup> Pour plus d'informations cf. Henkelmann (2007).



qui les engage même s'ils ne sont pas inscrits à l'ordre professionnel.<sup>9</sup> Les médecins quant à eux, n'ont aucune possibilité de travailler sans la reconnaissance formelle par le Collège des médecins au Québec ou le 'Ärztekammer' en Allemagne. Donc, les médecins étrangers doivent se soumettre à une procédure pour la reconnaissance. Cette procédure attribut alors à tout les diplômés qui ont été obtenus hors du Canada et des États-Unis pour le Canada et hors d'Allemagne et l'Union européenne qu'ils n'attestent pas le même niveau de connaissances théoriques et/ou pratiques, et présente donc une remise en question totale. Les candidats ont, par la suite, la possibilité d'enlever les doutes en prouvant qu'ils sont aptes à être médecins. Ceci se fait par des examens qui ressemblent, dans les deux pays, aux examens finaux de diplôme de médecin national. Pour passer les examens, la connaissance de la langue, dans laquelle les examens sont offerts, est indispensable. Les compétences linguistiques sont donc la condition pour le transfert du capital culturel<sup>10</sup> d'un contexte mondain à un autre, car sans connaître la langue de l'examen le savoir ne peut pas être exprimé.

Le premier cas que je veux présenter a dû subir cette coagitation. M. Duani est né en Tunisie où il parlait avec sa famille en arabe et en français et où il apprenait le français comme langue académique (étant donné qu'il faisait ses études dans le système français). Comme langue étrangère, il apprit également l'anglais et l'hébreu. Pour entreprendre les études en médecine, il immigre en Belgique. Après avoir fini, il décide d'immigrer au Canada et s'inscrit à l'examen de reconnaissance qui est valable pour toute l'Amérique du Nord et tenu en anglais.

D: je présentais les examens pour aller au Canada; //hnh// ou aux Etats-Unis; alors il faut passer un examen qui s'appelle le ESFMG. *examination for medical graduates*; (1) //hnh// alors ça j'avais pas réussi mais il me manquait pas beaucoup; alors si je vais passer pour le Québec, c'est en français; (1) j'ai réussi l'examen du Québec; //hnh//

Dr. Duani s'est cru capable de faire valoir ses connaissances et son savoir-faire, dans une langue étrangère afin de répondre aux exigences de l'examen prévu à cet effet. Ce projet n'ayant pas réussi, il décide de repasser le même test en français, une des ses langues d'origine et dans laquelle il a poursuivi ses études de médecine. Dr. Duani n'a donc aucun doute sur ses compétences. Il suppose plutôt que son savoir linguistique en anglais n'est pas assez approfondi pour démontrer ses compétences médicales. Pourtant, il se pense capable de le réussir en français. Cette hypothèse se trouve confirmé

9 Pour une comparaison plus détaillé des différents procédures de reconnaissances au Canada et en Allemagne cf. Nohl (2009).

10 Pour le concept du « capital culturel » cf. Bourdieu (1992a).

quand il réussit l'examen en français. La structure linguistique du Canada comme pays bilingue, lui offre une seconde possibilité de passer l'examen, en français. Dr. Duani peut ainsi faire recours à des compétences linguistique dans la langue qu'il a apprise comme langue d'origine et académique.<sup>11</sup>

Cette possibilité ne se présente pas à Mme Semanova. Jeune médecin, elle immigre sous le statut de réfugiés juifs accueillis dans le cadre d'aide humanitaire («Kontingentflüchtlinge») de la Russie en Allemagne. Étant donné qu'en Allemagne les épreuves de reconnaissances des diplômes médicaux sont conceptualisées en allemand, elle se trouve contrainte de les passer dans une langue qui n'est pas dans son répertoire linguistique.

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S: et après, en 2002 j'ai déménagé en Allemagne, //hnh// ((aspire)) et tout de suite à Berlin ? et ici j'ai fait deux cours de langue intense, une fois allemand comme langue étrangère; et une autre fois (1) hm, alors langue technique médical alors de Otto-Benecke-Stiftung? //hnh// ((aspire)) et après, j'ai commencé tout l'histoire avec la reconnaissance, alors c'est-à-dire au fond j'avais déjà commencé à prendre quelques renseignements en Russie ((respire)) comment tout fonctionne ici, et il y avait d'abord l'information que, il y a pas d'examen, et je suis arrivée en 2002 et depuis 2000– deux là il y a cet examen d'équivalence et je devais aussi, le passer, et après, j'ai fait un stage, ici dans la clinique à Berlin la Charité, //hnh// huit mois et après là cet examen, (traduit par YH)<sup>12</sup>

Mme Semanova, de parents russes, a grandi en Russie et a donc poursuivi son parcours scolaire dans ce système où le russe est parlé comme langue académique. Elle parle donc le russe comme langue d'origine et académique et l'anglais comme langue étrangère à un niveau approfondi. Lorsqu'elle décide d'immigrer en Allemagne, elle sait naturellement que la langue officielle sera à apprendre. Mme Semanova l'imagine, en effet, comme seul moyen d'intégration dans cette société d'accueil et sur le marché du travail. Elle accepte alors la langue officielle comme élément structurant pour le processus de reconnaissance de ses acquis et donc, comme unique langue légitime. Sa réaction

11 Une analyse de cas approfondi est présenté dans Henkelmann (2007).

12 L'originale : « S: und dann, in 2002 bin ich nach Deutschland gezogen, //hnh// ((atmet ein)) und gleich nach Berlin? und dann habe ich hier zwei intensive Sprachkurse gemacht, einmal Deutsch als Fremdsprachen; und dann einmal (1) hm, also medizinische Fachsprach also von Otto-Benecke-Stiftung? //hnh// ((atmet ein)) und dann, hab diese ganze Geschichte mit der Anerkennung angefangen, also das heißt ich hab mich eigentlich schon in Russland ((atmet aus)) ein bisschen erkündigt wie das hier so alles geht, und das hieß erstmal dass, da keine Prüfung gibt, und ich bin 2002 gekommen und seit 2000– zwei gibt es halt diese Gleichwertigkeitsprüfung und die sollt ich die auch, halt machen, und dann, hab ich ein Praktikum gemacht, hier am Uniklinikum in Berlin Charité, //hnh// acht Monaten ((atmet ein)) und dann halt diese Prüfung.»

devant cette structure est d'envisager l'apprentissage de la langue officielle, l'allemand. Seulement après avoir accumulé certaines compétences en allemand, elle entreprend le processus d'évaluation. Comme M. Duani, Dr. Semanova ne remet pas en question la compatibilité de son savoir et de son savoir-faire mais ajuste les moyens de les démontrer. Au cours du processus d'évaluation, reconnaissance et légitimation, le connaissance linguistique de la ou de l'une des langues officielles devient essentielle. D'autres compétences linguistiques n'entrent pas en jeu et n'ont pas de signification pour ce premier pas de positionnement sur le marché du travail dans le pays d'accueil.

Étant donné que la reconnaissance formelle ne débouche pas automatiquement sur un emploi, le titre qui certifie un certain savoir et savoir-faire n'est pas automatiquement un capital culturel<sup>13</sup> sur le marché du travail. Avant que la personne ne puisse vivre de son métier, le diplôme reste un papier, accepté par l'état ou des ordres professionnels mais sans bénéfices. Si et seulement si le titre, ainsi que les compétences dans le domaine médical sont reconnus par des employeurs qui embauchent les immigrants à titre de médecin, ou par des patients qui recourent à leurs services médicaux, le savoir-faire est légitimé par les autres membres de la société et a le statut de capital culturel sur le marché de travail.

Dans les deux cas, M. Duani et Mme Semanova, arrivent à s'établir comme médecins. M. Duani est devenu travailleur autonome en ouvrant une clinique en coopération avec d'autres médecins et Mme Semanova a pu obtenir un emploi dans un hôpital à Berlin. Dans leur travail, ils ont seulement recours à la langue officielle respectivement aux langues officielles. Mme Semanova a poursuivi la même stratégie que pour l'examen d'évaluation. Elle a admis que seule la langue officielle et légitime peut être le moyen d'insertion sur le marché du travail. Ceci est une conséquence de son habitus qui a eu sa genèse dans un pays monolingues et son cadre d'orientation dans lequel elle prend ses décisions. La structure linguistique de l'Allemagne et son marché du travail amplifie ce centrage sur les compétences dans une langue du répertoire, qui est en l'occurrence la langue officielle. L'Allemagne a instauré une politique linguistique qui cherche à propager la langue officielle comme seul moyen d'insertion en prônant que la langue allemande est « la clé de l'intégration » (BAMF 2007, Bureau Fédéral de la migration et des réfugiés). Être monolingue avec la « bonne » langue –l'allemand– est un comportement voulu. La politique linguistique explicite qui se manifeste dans le cours d'allemand obligatoire n'est pas la seule mesure. On pourrait démasquer entre autres des réglementations gouvernementales, tel que la reconnaissance des diplômes des médecins comme soutien de la mise en œuvre de cette politique. Pour revenir au cas de Mme Semanova, l'obligation de faire le test d'évaluation comme condition préalable pour travailler en

13 Cf. Henkelmann (2008), Nohl (2009), Weiß (2001).

tant que médecin implique qu'elle doit apprendre la langue officielle. Car, pour pouvoir passer le test, seule la langue officielle est acceptée, en dehors du fait que celle-ci pourrait occuper une place négligeable dans le travail quotidien. Le test impose à Mme Semanova, et à tous les étrangers qui veulent exercer comme médecin, des compétences approfondies dans la langue officielle.<sup>14</sup> D'un côté, l'apprentissage prend du temps et ne permet pas aux médecins d'être actifs sur le marché du travail, engendrant une perte d'argent pour l'immigrant et l'économie du pays d'accueil. D'un autre côté, le fait que les médecins étrangers soient obligés de parler la langue à un niveau qui permet d'exprimer le savoir en médecine, transmet un message à la société qui sous-entend que seul l'allemand est la langue légitime dans tous les domaines de la vie. Étant donné que la langue est déjà apprise à un bon niveau, elle devient le seul moyen d'expression. Les autres langues ne sont plus employées et ne peuvent pas être profitable dans la vie quotidienne, notamment au travail. Le fait de parler plusieurs langues – qu'on déclare comme étant une richesse auprès de nos enfants en les initiant à apprendre le plus de langues possibles – n'est pas valorisé et devient inutile. Cette inutilité n'est pourtant pas un produit naturel causé par la sélection des locuteurs, mais imposé par une politique qui évite avec force la création d'autres marchés linguistiques. Donc la langue ou les langues officielles monopolisent le marché linguistique.

Le même constat peut s'observer dans le cas de M. Duani et d'autres immigrants ayant une qualification académique au Québec. Avec la politique d'immigration qui distribue des points supplémentaires pour la connaissance des langues officielles, les nouveaux arrivants ainsi que les habitants reçoivent le message que seules les langues officielles sont le moyen d'intégration. De plus, le Québec qui lutte fort pour la survie de la langue française comme langue légitime, proclame le français comme étant le facteur le plus important pour réussir mais surtout pour créer un sentiment d'appartenance à la province. Les examens d'évaluation présentent alors un moyen de renforcer cette perspective. Pour exercer le métier de médecin, l'examen est tenu en français et la réussite d'un test de français est obligatoire pour recevoir le permis régulier.

Le marché linguistique, dans le champ<sup>15</sup> du travail, est donc créé par la politique linguistique explicite et renforcé, ou plutôt, mis en œuvre par des instruments tel que les examens d'évaluation. Ce marché permet aux locuteurs de la langue ou des langues officielles de faire du profit et il empêche que d'autres langues soient utilisées. Une telle politique évite que le potentiel soit épuisé et que tous les habitants se réalisent et

14 On pourrait imaginer que ce niveau approfondi n'est pas nécessaire pour la pratique quotidienne d'un médecin, par exemple pour le travail dans un laboratoire qui pourrait se faire dans la langue transnationale : notamment l'anglais.

15 Pour le concept du 'champ' voir par exemple Bourdieu (1992b).

bénéficient. D'un côté, l'insertion sur le marché du travail est retardée, ce qui engendre un manque à gagner pour l'immigrant et la société d'accueil. De l'autre côté, le potentiel amené par l'étranger reste au niveau de l'individu sans avoir la possibilité de le faire valoir. Il est donc du devoir de l'individu de s'approcher de la société d'accueil –néanmoins sur le plan linguistique.

Si les compétences autres que ceux qui sont jugées légitimes ne sont pas acceptées, le traducteur sur l'image montré ci-dessus se noiera malgré toutes ses compétences linguistiques. La natation resterait le produit dominant sur ce marché spécifique et tous les autres produits seraient dévalués. La question « Savez-vous nager ou parler neuf langues ? » devient dans cette perspective une question vitale. Pour valoriser tous les membres de la société quelques soient de leurs origines, une structure permettant de mettre à profit une multitude de compétences est indispensable. Pour arriver à cette fin, une contribution de la politique et la pratique quotidienne de tous les membres de la société est une grande nécessité.

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## **"A Courageous Project": Publishing Margaret Atwood's Work in Romania between 1978 and 1995**

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### **Abstract**

During the 1950s and 1989, the communist regime in Romania negatively impacted upon book publishing and distribution and upon translation of literatures in English. In this paper, based on Margaret Atwood's archived correspondence with European publishers, editors and translators, and on qualitative interviews with Romanian academics, I focus on the Romanian translations of *The Edible Woman* (1969) and of *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), namely *O femeie obisnuita* (1989) and *Galaad 2195* (1995). Drawing upon Mark Cohen's study of censorship as a thematic marker in Margaret Atwood's fiction, I argue that, by the late 1990s, editorial censorship and marketplace censorship infringed upon the formation of readerships of Atwood's work in Romania. Thus, this study aims to advocate a re-examination of pre-1989 Central Eastern European translations of Margaret Atwood's work as a non-innocent cultural transfer and a re-conceptualization of Central Eastern European readerships of her work.

### **Résumé**

Dès 1950 le régime communiste en Roumanie a eu une importante influence sur les publications et sur la distribution des livres, notamment sur les traductions des littératures en anglais. En m'appuyant sur l'archive de la correspondance d'Atwood entre des éditeurs européens, des rédacteurs et des traducteurs, ainsi que sur les entretiens avec des académiciens roumaines, j'analyse l'environnement culturel des premières traductions roumaines tel que *La femme comestible* (1969) [*O femeie obisnuita* (1989)] et *La servante écarlate* (1985) [*Galaad 2195* (1995)]. En me basant sur l'étude de Mark Cohen sur la censure comme une thème primordiale de l'œuvre

de Margaret Atwood, je soutiens que l'étude du cas de la Roumanie communiste demande une réévaluation des traductions de son ouvrage en l'Europe de l'Est Central comme un transfert culturel non innocent, et aussi une réexamen des communautés des lecteurs d'Atwood dans l'Europe de l'Est devrait être faite.

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In a series of interviews in the late 1980s, following the publication of *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1985, Margaret Atwood consistently referred to Romania as a significant source of inspiration for this dystopian novel,<sup>1</sup> mainly due to the political violation of human rights, and of birth and abortion policies during Nicolae Ceasescu's regime. Further, the writer herself acknowledged the impact of *The Handmaid's Tale* on the formation of extended readerships of her work outside Canada. While the novel also registered a considerable success in several non-English speaking countries, most scholarly studies have referred to this dystopian novel as the breakthrough Atwood text onto European publishing markets. In this sense, Canadian cultural institutions and numerous critics<sup>2</sup> hail the thirty-five languages which her work has been translated into as a particular marker of the writer's global reach. Further, scholarly studies of Atwood's work foreground her readerships in Western Europe; they either exclude Eastern European readerships altogether or, render them as *invisible*. In turn, this invisibility raises questions about the correlation between Atwood's writings and the cultural representations of her Central Eastern European readerships; and troubles the relationship between national cultural policies and translations of Atwood's work.

In this essay, I evaluate the powerful position which censorship held in the textual production and distribution of the Romanian translations of Margaret Atwood's work between 1978 and 1995. I examine both the cultural environment which shaped the first Romanian translations of *The Edible Woman* (1969) and of *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and the formation of readerships for Atwood's work in this context. My analysis is based on qualitative interviews with Romanian academics, translators, and publishers of Atwood's poetry and fiction.<sup>3</sup> My commentary also engages with the Margaret

1 Several interviews with Margaret Atwood, mainly published between 1984 and 1986, referred to Romania as one source of inspiration for aspects in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

2 A number of studies (e.g. Cooke, 2000, 2004; Ferguson, 2007; Huggan, 2001; Moss, 2006; Nischik, 2000, 2007; York, 2006, 2007) employ a quantitative approach to translations of Margaret Atwood's work, without examining specific translation contexts and projects.

3 During May 2007 and February 2009, I interviewed Romanian academics and translators Monica Bottez, Florin Irimia, Ana Olos, Margareta Petrut; and editors Antonia Kacso, Mirella Acsente (i.e. Leda Press), Diana Crupenschi (i.e. Univers Publishing House) and Alina Bratu (i.e. Rao Press).



Atwood Papers, available at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto.<sup>4</sup>

The first section of this essay provides a brief history of censorship during pre-1989 Romanian publishing industry and introduces politically-imposed censorship and market place censorship as two distinctive cultural practices which characterized Romanian book production and translations until the mid-1990s. The second section proposes to supplement both Mark Cohen's argument that censorship constitutes a thematic marker in *The Handmaid's Tale* (2001, 49-87) and Stefan Ferguson's examination of the censored East German translation of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (2005; 2007, 93-110).<sup>5</sup> Firstly, I suggest that, like the publication of Atwood's fiction in East Germany before 1990, the censored Romanian translations of *The Edible Woman* and of *The Handmaid's Tale* infringed upon the formation of an Atwood readership in a communist context. Secondly, I argue that these Romanian translations complicate the concept of Margaret Atwood as a literary celebrity and advocate the re-conceptualization of Margaret Atwood's European readerships.

## Under Eastern eyes: censorship in communist Romania

The history of book production in communist Romania can be told as a story of silencing contemporary writers and political regulations about publishing strategies. During a system which severely punished any form of freedom of speech, censorship was clearly performed with the intention of shielding Romanian readers from anti-communist ideas. Institutionalized censorship restricted book production and distribution, and operated via limited marketing strategies, long lists of banned books,<sup>6</sup> state-controlled book shops and special library holdings. Under the directives imposed by the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), different interrelated types of censorship shaped pre-1989 Romanian publications and readerships: ideological censorship, thematic censorship (i.e. editorial censorship and self-censorship), and financial censorship. Book production existed within three main spheres: the state-controlled publishing houses; a sphere of texts produced within dissident circles; and, a third sphere of exile books, which were printed abroad.

<sup>4</sup> In March-April 2008, I accessed Margaret Atwood's archived correspondence with European translators, editors and publishers of her work.

<sup>5</sup> In 1979, the German translation of *Surfacing* was published by Claassen Verlag in West Germany and by Reclam Leipzig in East Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Since 1989, several studies of censored books during communist Romania have been published (e.g. Cris-  
tea, Király and Radosav, 1995; Király, 2001; Santimbreaun and Anghel, 2000; and Marino, 2000).

With the nomination of Nicolae Ceausescu as the president of Romania in 1965, *ideological censorship* took a surreal turn, due to political and economic restrictions in all fields of cultural production. Following Ceausescu's visit to China in 1971, Romanian authors and translations had to address the masses according to the communist ideology. The Central Publishing Committee ensured that national presses respected the state five-year plan, the type of proposed publications and their corresponding print-runs (Toma-Macrea, 2006, 226), while diverse "reading," "pre-reading" and "post-reading" censoring filters infringed upon the publication, distribution and dissemination of manuscripts (Goma, 1978, cf. Schöpflin, 1983, 166). Further, publishing Romanian translations involved a severe control of the texts' literary themes and the erasure of positive textual representations of capitalism. Whereas Romanian presses published 5,000 titles in 1971, a drastic decline registered 1,000 titles in 1989 (Angheliescu, 2001, 242). However, turning the communist principle of instructing reading audiences to their favour, Romanian presses such as Albatros, Minerva and Univers managed to publish translations of classic authors, and, occasionally, Western contemporary authors, in print-runs of up to 30,000-40,000 copies in a first paperback edition (Kacso, interview 2008). In order to enforce post-publication censorship, nominated censoring bodies regulated book distribution and dissemination via state-regulated book shops; produced lists of banned books;<sup>7</sup> and monitored state-controlled library acquisitions and national "library secret funds" (Király, 2001, 185-192; Angheliescu, 2005, 437), which marked the delineation between ideologically favoured and censored authors/writings.

Meanwhile, since *thematic censorship* re-iterated communist party ideology, literature published in Romania promoted nationalism and equality among communist citizens, while social realism constituted the literary norm between 1960 and 1990. Firstly, this thematic form of censorship translated into *editorial censorship*. On a textual level, editors and translators had to erase allusions to economic constraints during the regime, such as "meat," "cold," "food lines," "food shortage," "famine," "coffee;" any religious terms such as "God," "angel," "cross;" any negative references to the communist regime and its leaders, such as "dictator," "red," "dark;" general references to the lack of freedom of speech, including political jokes;<sup>8</sup> or any taboo words such as "homosexual," "breasts," or "abortion" (Manea, 1992, 70; Sorkin, 2002, 888-889). Secondly, thematic censorship resulted in *self-censorship*, which challenged Romanian readers' competence in deciphering coded

7 In their examination of how politically enforced censorship operated in the former Czechoslovakia, Poland or in East Germany, Jirina Smejkalová (2001, 87-103), Oskar Stanislaw Czarnik (2001, 104-115), Sonja Fritzsche (2006, 471-487) and Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth (2007, 93-116) considered prescriptive book lists as a significant means by which the political regime controlled the literary realm.

8 In his study of Romanian communism, Lucian Boia emphasizes that anecdotes with anti-communist hints could trigger sentences to hard labour or to prison (2001, 121).

terms or textual "lizards" (cf. Vianu, 1998, 87). With regard to translations, Romanian presses restricted their publications of international authors to politically approved Soviet literature, classic writers (e.g. Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac), and to "literature for children" (e.g. Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe), which rarely represented a threat to the RCP propaganda. On a para-textual level, editorial censorship left little freedom for the writers themselves to select the design of book covers, to provide an introduction to or comments on their publications, or to market their own work.

Firstly, *financial censorship* operated on the principle that the twenty-four national presses (Angelescu, 2001, 243) continued to be state-funded provided that they published writers who acclaimed the regime. Secondly, the publication of contemporary Western writers was regulated by the non-payment of royalties in foreign currency, an ineffective copyright legislation, and little contact with foreign publishers. Under these circumstances, and in common with other Eastern European publishers, Romanian presses were allowed to pay for royalties and rights in non-transferable Romanian currency only.<sup>9</sup> Thirdly, Romanian presses had to restrict the annually approved publication titles according to state-regulated paper supplies. These financial measures turned publishing contemporary international authors in Romanian not only into exceptional cases but also into non-lucrative projects.

Considering all of the ways that these political and cultural factors challenged the translation of Western authors into Romanian, the publication of the first Romanian translations of Margaret Atwood's work between 1978 and 1989 can rightfully be described as a "courageous project" (Kacso, interview 2008) which involved censors, but also translators, publishers, editors and academics who understood themselves to be acting as cultural mediators in a (post)communist context.

## "Charming and effective publishers": publishing Margaret Atwood's work in communist Romania

In "An End to Audience," Margaret Atwood acknowledges that "in any totalitarian take-over, whether from the left or the right, writers, singers and journalist are the first to be suppressed" ([1980] 1982, 350). Throughout this essay, the writer prefers the term "suppression" over "censorship" in that the latter implies banning the publication of

<sup>9</sup> Before 1989, Polish publishers acknowledged the non-transferable payment for royalties in zlotys, which might have jeopardized the Polish translation of *Survival*.

a book. The two works of fiction by Atwood that are overtly concerned with censorship are *Bodily Harm* (1981) and *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), although the topic re-occurs in *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003). In *Bodily Harm*, Atwood offers a critique of "marketplace censorship," the suppression of certain writings through economic pressures applied to the writer. Pornography represents the other form of censorship which Atwood opposes. For Atwood, the relationship between censorship and feminism mainly involved the anti-pornography feminists of the late 1970s and early 1980s. While *Bodily Harm* critiques pornography as a type of censorship enforced for patriarchal reasons, *The Handmaid's Tale* explores the power of censorship as the taboo on expression, and draws extensively upon birth and abortion policies in communist countries. According to Mark Cohen, the few cases in which some of her novels were banned from American high-school curricula, due to some readers' uneasiness with the fictional content, convinced Margaret Atwood to take "a kind of pride in these incidents, as if being censored is a mark of recognition of her accomplishment as a writer" (2001, 50).

While censorship has been examined as a thematic marker in Atwood's fiction, it has not been investigated as a consistent cultural practice which shaped some pre-1989 Eastern European translations of Atwood's writings. For instance, Mark Cohen conceptualizes censorship as an intra-textual feature of *The Handmaid's Tale* (2001, 49-87). However, through his analysis of the East German translation of *Surfacing* (1972), published as *Strömung* (i.e. "Current" or "Flow") as opposed to *Der Lange Traum* (i.e. "The Long Dream") in West Germany, Stefan Ferguson pointed out how editorial changes and political restrictions in marketing the East German translation determined a small readership of Margaret Atwood's work in the German Democratic Republic.

Coupled together, the publishing case studies of East Germany and of Romania indicate that *extra-textual censorship*, that is, political and market censorship of Atwood's work pertained in communist contexts. By the late 1990s, censorship infringed upon the formation of an Atwood readership in several Eastern European countries, due to the lack of freedom of speech; a limited access to contemporary publications; academic curricula regulated by the government; and repressive economic measures imposed upon the publishing industry. Further, I suggest that the Atwood readership in pre-1989 Romania got "lost in translation," more precisely, in *censored translation*. In the remainder of this essay, I investigate how censorship operated via editorial decisions on *how* and *which* of Atwood's novels got published in Romania. To this end, I focus on the first Romanian translation of Atwood's poetry, and on the Romanian translations of *The Handmaid's Tale* and of *The Edible Woman*, which were first published ten or twenty years later than the originals.

In a letter to Margaret Atwood, dated 10 May 1975,<sup>10</sup> a Romanian editor introduced Albatros press as a well-established national publishing house which mainly focused on children's literature, on national and world classics. Yet, the Bucharest-based publisher expressed its interest in translating six of Atwood's poems, initially published in *The Animals in That Country* (1968). However, the Romanian publishing house silenced the repressive cultural policies it had to serve and represented the project of publishing Atwood in translation as a censored-free process. Instead, Romanian editor Ion Caraion foregrounded the young readers for whom the anthology was intended and the duty of the text to educate them. The letter thus followed the ideological framework which Romanian publishers had to employ in order to embark on state-approved publication projects. Nevertheless, documents available since 2006<sup>11</sup> reveal that Ion Caraion's role of political informant for the Romanian national security agency, coupled with his cultural authority, facilitated this translation project. Published in 1978, the anthology included thirty representative Canadian poets<sup>12</sup> and registered a print-run of 2,000 copies and a 40-cent price per copy. Since the communist regime did not allow for any marketing strategies which would have promoted Margaret Atwood as a representative Canadian writer whose work had been published in the US and in Western European countries, this early publication of a selection of Atwood's poems failed to successfully introduce the writer to a wide Romanian readership.

Similar political and cultural constraints characterized the Romanian translation of *The Edible Woman* (1969). In a letter to the writer on 6 June 1985, while Margareta Petrut expressed her intention to translate the novel for the Bucharest-based Univers publishing house, it becomes apparent that Romanian translators, editors and publishers had to overcome a series of unfavourable circumstances. Not only does the translator acknowledge the difficulty in obtaining access to any novels written in English, but she also draws Atwood's attention to the fact that Romanian publishers had to pay for royalties in non-transferable national currency:

Owing to the economic situation in recent years none of the publishers in our country is able to pay copyright in hard currency. As a result, all the foreign authors whose books are translated now into Romanian gave their consent to receive their rights in Romanian lei which unfortunately cannot be exchanged for hard currency and therefore must be spent in Romania.

10 On 19 December 2008, in an e-mail to the author, I was granted Margaret Atwood's permission to quote from this selected correspondence.

11 *Cazul "Artur" și exilul românesc. Ion Caraion în documente din Arhiva CNSAS*, București: Institutul Național pentru Memoria Exilului Românesc, 2006.

12 Caraion, Ion. *Poeti canadieni contemporani (de limba engleza)*. Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1978.

Despite not being explicit about the consequences of censorship as a cultural practice in Romania, at the end of the letter, Margareta Petrut kindly asked Atwood to send her reply to two addresses: one in Romania and the other in the UK. To an informed reader, this request alludes to the fact that correspondence with anyone in "the capitalist West" was under severe surveillance. Along with her comments on the unavailability of contemporary literature in English to be translated, Petrut was hinting that the translation of *The Edible Woman* did not constitute an innocent, that is, uncensored project. As later confirmed by the translator herself and by Romanian academics who have been teaching Atwood's work since the 1990s (Bottez, Irimia, Olos, interviews 2007; Petrut, e-mail 2008), the first Romanian translation of *The Edible Woman* included several politically-imposed editorial changes. Firstly, in 1989, Univers press published the novel under the title "An Ordinary Woman," since a title faithful to the original would have jeopardized its chances for publication (Petrut, e-mail 2008) by alluding to taboo topics:

*The Edible Woman*, the novel about the consumerist society, was translated into Romanian; the translation of the Romanian title: an ordinary woman. Thus, an ordinary woman was the edible woman [laughter] and the meaning of the title was lost. The translation was good. That was the first book [by Atwood] I read. As you know, there were political events that preoccupied Romania, everything was forbidden before 1989, from opening Western books to Western information about books. But after 1989, Romanian bookshops were flooded by British or American authors, with a lot of significance...and a lot of things brought about changes about the way women were treated. (Bottez interview, 2007)

In turn, the original title and the translation's title signaled two different types of readerships: Western readerships related the novel to Atwood's previous work and to the literary prestige it brought to the writer herself; conversely, the title of the Romanian translation interpellated Romanian academic readers interested in Margaret Atwood's work, who rarely had access to the original versions. Secondly, the politically imposed censorship resulted in an uninspired book cover which minimized the size of Atwood's name; maximized the picture of a blurred feminine face; and included the images of a spoon and a fork. Within a Romanian book market invaded either by foreign classics or by communist propaganda, the title and the somewhat abstract cover illustration operated as clues that prompted readers to unravel 'lost' meanings. Thirdly, although the translation registered a 100,000 print-run (Crupenschi, e-mail 2007), *O femeie obisnuita* faced a restricted circulation in book shops and in public libraries<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Academic libraries in Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest hold the German and the French translations of the novel, *Die essbare Frau* and *La femme comestible*.

(Olos, interview 2007), which, in turn, impacted upon its accessibility within the book market. Hence, the first Romanian translation of the novel which had generated Atwood's iconic status as a feminist in Canada, in the UK and in West Germany by the 1980s, limited Romanian readerships of Atwood's work mainly to academic communities of readers. Furthermore, Margaret Atwood's archived correspondence with Andre Deutsch Ltd<sup>14</sup> reveals the dissemination of her work in communist Romania as a non-lucrative project.<sup>15</sup> Despite the early initiation of Romanian readers into Atwood's work and Margareta Petrut's interest in translating *Survival* (1972) in 1986, the Romanian translations of Atwood's fiction were interrupted until 1995. Thus, this delayed translation, further complicated by political events in Romania in December 1989, represents a significant disadvantage in the reception of Atwood's fiction in this specific (post) communist context before 2006, when Leda press started to (re)launch the Romanian translations of the writer's novels.

Even though censorship operated on another level in this particular case, the Romanian translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* reproduced both the time delay and censorship disadvantages of *O femeie obisnuita*. As part of its editorial censorship, *Galaad 2195* (i.e. "Gilead 2195") mainly addressed science-fiction readers and inscribed Atwood's fiction within the realm of this genre (Bottez, Irimia, Olos interviews 2007). Published within a science-fiction collection and with the central image of a cyborg featured on the book cover, this translation (re)presented the novel as science-fiction. Moreover, Univers marketed the novel as a winner of the Arthur C. Clarke literary award for science-fiction. Through these para-texts, the translation mainly targeted a male or sci-fi-genre-focused audience. This was contrary to Atwood's claim that the novel should be read as speculative fiction. In this sense, the Romanian translation finds common ground with the East German translation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, whose title, *Der Report der Magd*, according to the German translator, alluded to pornographic novels (Pfetsch, interview 2008). In addition to failing to appeal to Romanian readers who might be conversant with the genre of dystopian fiction, the para-texts of *Galaad 2195* did not allude to inter-textual relations between Atwood's own work and other dystopian texts, which had facilitated a favourable response to *The Handmaid's Tale* in Western contexts, both among academic and non-academic readers.

On the other hand, the play on words, similar to Orwell's 1984 (Petra, e-mail 2007), turns the *Galaad 2195* title into a powerful oxymoron. "Gilead 2195" alludes to inter-

14 Ms.Col.335.138.9 and MsCol.335.140.3. include Margaret Atwood's correspondence with Romanian publishers and translators.

15 According to Phoebe Larmore's correspondence with Ann Wall and Sarah Lutyens' correspondence with Margaret Atwood (MsCol.335.140.3), Univers paid 8,000 Romanian lei, the equivalent of approximately 1,350 pounds in royalties, which could not be transferred outside Romania.

textual relations with the Bible and signals that the novel challenges both traditional dystopian settings and a supposedly predominant male readership. Furthermore, the year, 2195, interpreted as a possible decodable disguise for the (communist) present, indicates a dystopian literary tradition. What complicates the reception of *Galaad 2195* is the fact that, during the 1960s and 1989, Romanian literature existed within a political dystopian reality but lacked a generic tradition in the genre of utopia/dystopia writing. Finally, in pre-1989 Romania, literary celebrity was often understood in terms of communist political activism rather than in the Western terms of commercial and critical success. Since literary reviews and critical essays could not appear in print uncensored, the solitary reader in Romania was not granted the chance to become part of a wider "imagined community" of readers (Anderson, 1983).

In my analysis of the Romanian translations of Margaret Atwood's work between 1978 and 1995, I have argued that the Atwood project had little chance of succeeding in Romania before 2006. Firstly, the lack of a tradition in publishing Atwood's novels and poor marketing strategies failed to effectively address a rather uninformed reading community as far as Canadian literature was concerned. Secondly, the translation project had to challenge a complicated Romanian literary canon stigmatized by a "personality cult" which had predominantly served the communist regime rather than the commercial and critical success afforded to literary celebrities in Western contexts.

Contrary to the case studies of Western European countries, the publication and marketing censorship of the Romanian translations of Atwood's texts minimized the impact of sales and hampered the creation of a body of scholarship about Atwood's work in this particular communist country. Further, the poor circulation of *O femeie obisnuita* in Romania indicates that, since the early 1990s, Atwood's work has been read mainly by academics in university English departments rather than by 'common' readers outside the academy. The Romanian academics who I interviewed confirmed that they had read Atwood's texts un-chronologically, and that several research grants enabled them to buy books by and about the author from Canada, the UK, and Germany. This un-chronological reading of Atwood's work hindered its interpretation within feminist and postmodernist frameworks. Secondly, this haphazard evolution in reception and reading practices limited the impact of Atwood's new novels on a Romanian readership. To conclude, this mini case-study demonstrates that the Romanian translations of Atwood's fiction, which had been published by 1995, did not propel Atwood's dystopian fiction "into bestseller-dom and an increasingly international reputation" as Atwood's Western critics have proclaimed (Ingersoll, 2006, vii). On the contrary, they triggered representations of Atwood as a contemporary (Canadian) "international" writer but only "under Western eyes." In Romania, the country which supposedly inspired aspects



of *The Handmaid's Tale*, her novels were read only by Canadian literature experts, students and (academic) fans. Not insignificantly, censorship as a regulatory network resulted in the delayed formation of an Atwood readership in (post)communist Romania and, more broadly, constituted a constant and troubled cultural politics that shaped the marketing of Margaret Atwood's fiction in Eastern European contexts.

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## The Artist in a Media-Driven Society: Theory and Practice of Neo-Avant-Garde Art in the Interpretation of Marshall McLuhan

volume  
9

“I have always, as I read a great man’s life, compared it to my own up to now and as it may be. I experience odd and inexplicably involved sensations of jealousy etc. Generally it leaves me with a hopeless feeling of incompetence. These men have always been precocious or gifted, yet I wish that I may one day attain their heights”.

*Marshall McLuhan, journal excerpt, 7 January 1930*

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to show the author’s PhD project concerning McLuhan’s art theory. The article is an attempt to summarise previous research and interpretations. That is the reason why the presentation shows not only the doctoral dissertation’s structure, but also a short profile of McLuhan, as well as his fundamental concepts.

### Résumé

Le sujet de ce document est de montrer le projet de doctorat de l’auteur concernant la théorie de l’art de McLuhan. L’article a pour but de résumer des recherches précédentes et des interprétations. C’est pourquoi la présentation ne contient pas seulement une dissertation de doctorat, mais aussi le profil de McLuhan et ses concepts fondamentaux.

Generally, the main aim of my doctoral dissertation is to present the postulated and realized roles of neo-avant-garde artists in a media-driven (audiovisual) society. This particular artistic formation (dating between 1960 and 1980) is inseparably connected

with the socio-cultural changes which took place worldwide at the time. The expansive development of new technologies and means of mass communication, and the interconnected coming of the audiovisual epoch are above all referred to here. Furthermore, in a media-driven society, which came into being as a result of these, the traditional status of art had undergone a total change: art had been freed from its all confines and limitations. Neo-avant-garde art, exemplifying an artistic movement, which adopted every new means of mass communication and tapped the opportunities created by modern technologies, played a significant role in the above mentioned changes. Although providing a clear-cut definition of the highly diversified neo-avant-garde verges on the impossible, its fascination with novelty and technical inventions is one of its most important determinants. Nevertheless, the progressing technologisation of life, which constituted the major inspiration for the neo-avant-garde movement, provided not only unlimited possibilities for art but also new challenges requiring great effort. The artists, by introducing new forms and means of expression, took on a special mission in the society. They were not only to present novel modes of perceiving and understanding reality, but first and foremost to warn against the ubiquitous and often pernicious influence of the media. Therefore, the crucial dilemma of the neo-avant-garde artist stems from the very essence of modern media: their awe-inspiring, unlimited possibilities for human creation on the one hand, yet fear of them and the necessity of countering their influence on the other.

Considering all above mentioned phenomena, I would like to present those roles which neo-avant-garde artists wished to fulfil – and those they actually carried out – in a society shaped and dominated by mass media in view of Marshall McLuhan's conceptual framework<sup>1</sup>. This author is interesting for me both as a theoretician and creator of art.

McLuhan, probably the best known media theorists and culture critics of twentieth century, is also one of the most multifaceted thinkers of the last half of century: the academic, the philosopher, the writer, the showman, the satirist, the exploring pioneer of the electronic world. For decades, his eccentric prose inspired and/or infuriated generations of intellectualists. It isn't surprising that his theories still have been come in question. Though controversial, his candid and often shocking philosophies of the „electronic media” has provoked a contemporary discourse on the mass media, society

1 McLuhan formulated his hypotheses on the basis of examples first of all taken from the neo-avant-garde movement, and this is most probably the reason why there appear many similarities between the mode of defining art by neo-avant-garde artists and theoreticians, and McLuhan's statements and writings. This concerns for example the artists' already mentioned feeling of mission in the society or their critical depiction of reality. To understand the importance of this statements we have to noticed that, in McLuhan's opinion, communication is always a new mode of art, not science. Thus, the artist – not the scientist – is playing the most important role in a media society.

and culture. Yet, despite over fifty years of McLuhan's views being part of international scientific and popular discourse, there still remains (almost untouched by commentators) a sphere of his interest – namely his conception of art – which, for two reasons, can be named *communication*. Firstly, in McLuhan's opinion art is inseparably connected with communication systems, especially with these media which are dominant at a given time. Secondly, art is understood literally as a language – simply as a means of communication. Obviously, McLuhan's communication concept of art isn't a homogenous theory with a properly organised structure (the author is renowned for his lack of advocacy of scientific systematization<sup>2</sup>), but rather an unordered set of thoughts and views carelessly placed in various publications. However, through attentive and patient reading we can piece these fragments together (not, though, to a degree constituting a cohesive composition) so as to render them devoid of internal contradiction.

My analysis has been focusing on McLuhan's media theory, concerning various aspects of creating and modifying the mass media as well as their impact. This concept is the starting point for his whole scientific and artistic activity and constitutes the basis of all hypothesis formulated by him. According to McLuhan, the origination and impact of ever more advanced and complicated communication techniques entail transformations not only in the reality we live in, but also in our way of perceiving and understanding it. The human world has constantly been shaped by series of dominant means of communication. This statement is in accordance with the doctrine of technological determinism which states that the invention and coming in to use of every new communication mechanism led always not only to changes in human relations, but also to the creation of new forms of culture. McLuhan professes that media never affect any culture directly, but through the transformation of individuals' psychological structures. This means that when new technology creates another extension of man (in the process making changes in the balance of his senses), this leads to a rapid and simultaneous translation of culture. Recognition of these relations, says McLuhan, is an essential condition for creating a solid theory of cultural change. Furthermore, "if a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture. It is comparable to what happens when a new note is added to a melody. And when the sense ratios alter in any culture then what had appeared lucid before may suddenly be opaque, and what had been vague or opaque will become translucent"<sup>3</sup>.

2 In *Final Thoughts: A Collaborator on Marshall's Methods and Meanings*, Bruce Powers writes: "One way to appreciate Marshall McLuhan is to realise that he had no love for set structures of thought" *Journal of Communication* 31/1983, p. 189.

3 M. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Toronto 1962, p. 54

In McLuhan's opinion, the most amazing stage of human development is the epoch of electricity and the culture of electronic media. The uniqueness of the electronic phase lies in the opportunity to achieve (or rather come back to) synesthesia, that is, the natural state of affairs. McLuhan took over this notion from Ernst H. Gombrich, who in the book *Art and Illusion*<sup>4</sup>, defines it as the impressions transferred from one domain to another. "Synesthesia is simply totalism in the use of the senses" McLuhan explains in *Verbi-voco-visual explorations*<sup>5</sup>. He goes on to state that it is the process of the human senses' interaction – the response of our body and mind to multisense experiences<sup>6</sup>. This natural (though often unconscious) desire for synesthesia causes a mutation of the relevance of art in the electronic era. Notions of synesthesia created insomnia in generations of artists. "Synesthesia (or unified senses and an imaginative life) had long seemed an unattainable dream to Western poets, painters, and artists in general. [...] They were not prepared to have their dreams realised in everyday life by the aesthetic action of radio and television. Yet these massive extensions of our central nervous systems have enveloped Western man in a daily session of synesthesia. The Western way of life, attained centuries ago by the rigorous separation and specialisation of the senses with the visual sense atop the hierarchy, is not able to withstand the radio and TV waves that wash about the great visual structure of abstract Individual Man"<sup>7</sup>.

According to McLuhan, due to the possibility of 'programming' sensory balance by new media, the process of returning to the natural form of the human psyche is accelerated. What is more, through synesthesia electronic media create new man: intuitive, collective and emotional. There comes into being a global network of mutual influences and relationships, which "[...] has much of the character of our central nervous system. Our central nervous system is not merely an electric network, but it constitutes a single unified field of experience"<sup>8</sup>. Thus, electrical technology constitutes a specific extension of the human nervous system and its ability to process data immediately. It makes possible a return to life in a more-than-individual community: a "global village" similar to preliterate tribal society. Owing to the effect of electronic media a new reality comes into being (with a natural sense of unity as its main feature). "Individual talents and perspectives don't have to shrivel within a retribalised society; they merely interact within a group consciousness that has the potential for releasing far more creativity

4 E.H. Gombrich, *Sztuka i złudzenie*, Warszawa 1981, p. 354.

5 M. McLuhan, *Verbi-voco-visual explorations*, New York 1967, p. 12.

6 Thirty years later Eric McLuhan adds that it is not a linear or sequential process but rather a simultaneous one, not logical but analogous, structured rather more by differences than interrelations. E. McLuhan, *Electric Language. Understanding the Present*, Toronto 1998, pp. 160-175.

7 M. McLuhan, *Television. The Timid Giant*, [in]: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 315.

8 M. McLuhan, *Automation: Learning a Living*, [in]: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 348.



than the old atomised culture. Literate man is alienated, impoverished man; retribalised man can lead a far richer and more fulfilling life – not the life of a mindless drone but of the participant in a seamless web of interdependence and harmony”<sup>9</sup>.

In the descriptions of this ideal community, McLuhan frequently refers to the roles fulfilled by artists in social and individual life. Undoubtedly, this is not a coincidence: in his opinion art can create powerful bonds between an individual and his environment, and this is the main factor of the rebirth of the global village. Moreover, this quasi-tribal reality means a definitive end of the traditional boundary between art (*sacrum*) and everyday life (*profanum*): everything is a work of art, and at the same time something quite ordinary. However, art itself as a semi-magical instrument of social control constitutes an element of the reunion of individuals with their environment. More broadly, McLuhan explains this issue in *Through the Vanishing Point*<sup>10</sup>: man of the electronic era treats the whole environment as a piece of art. This fairly unclear idea is well illustrated by one of McLuhan’s more well-known propositions: (supposedly) the citizens of Bali assert that they had no ‘art’ but simply did everything as well as possible<sup>11</sup>, and through these efforts they shaped the whole environment (not only its content)<sup>12</sup>. In this kind of community the main function of art (to whatever activity we attribute this name) is a multidimensional integration with Nature (or Cosmos). Art in the traditional Western understanding doesn’t exist since every member of society is equally engaged in its creation, while the whole environment is experienced as a oneness<sup>13</sup>. By distinction the main role of art in contemporary society shouldn’t consist of bonding an individual to his environment, but quite the contrary: it should consist of its perception and its being freed from its impact. The invention of the phonetic alphabet and its consequences caused a painful divorce from Nature. In the electronic media age, the era of the instant, and rapid environmental changes, we react to our reality only in a kind of stupor<sup>14</sup>. What does this mean? Creating his idea of a global village, McLuhan was sure that contemporary man’s world is dominated by the development and influence of modern technologies in an unprecedented manner. McLuhan (who as we’ve already seen, was convinced that in civilisation man – more or less consciously – creates extensions for all the functions of his body) considers

9 *Playboy Interview. A Candid conversation with the high priest of popcult and metaphysician of media*, [in]: E. McLuhan, F. Zingrone (Ed.) *Essential McLuhan*, 2001, p. 244.

10 M. McLuhan, H. Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting*, New York 1968, p. 7.

11 “We have no art. We do everything as well as possible”, for example cited in: M. McLuhan, *The relation of environment to anti-environment*, [in]: F.W. Matson, *The Human dialogue. Perspectives on Communication*, New York 1967, p. 42.

12 M. McLuhan, *Counterblast*, New York 1969, p. 31.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

14 E. McLuhan, W. Kuhns, *Poetics on the Warpath*, [in]: E. McLuhan, W. Kuhns, M. Cohen (Ed.), *Marshall McLuhan: The Book of Probes*, Corte Madera 2003, pp. 419-421.

electronic media as the apogee of human extension. These kinds of media effect change in not only the process of man's "self" forming, but also that of his repertoire of interactions. Therefore, the origination and impact of ever more advanced and complicated communication techniques entail transformation not only in the reality we live in, but also in our way of perceiving and understanding it. In this context the most important role of art in contemporary society lies in the capacity for real (that is "non-numbered") perceiving of the world. In *Understanding Media*<sup>15</sup>, McLuhan writes that every technique which is an extension of ourselves, becomes a collective surgical operation carried out on the body of society without any disinfectant. Thus, we have to reconcile ourselves to the inevitable infection of the entire organism, which defencelessly gives in and changes our sensory balance<sup>16</sup>. Obviously, we're incessantly searching for methods of avoiding those disadvantageous changes, or at least for taking control of them. Gradually, we realise that this kind of immunity is provided only by art: it gives us not only detailed information about the reorganisation of the human psyche, but also clues about the effects of future extensions. Therefore, the essential role of the artists in contemporary society is to teach people new modes of perception (in keeping with new technologies) and to lead them into the future painlessly. In this context, the author (using the name of a Second World War radar defence system) defines art as an *Early Warning System*, indispensable in coming to appreciate the psychical, social and technological consequences of every new medium, as well as the transformation of man in the environment made by it<sup>17</sup>. This kind of prophetic activity isn't simple prediction of what will or won't happen. Instead it is an interpretation of the present and prognosis of the future, something that is only possible with artistic sensibility. Who is the artist then? It's quite easy to define "artist" in McLuhan's terms, using some of his famous, well known dichotomies, for example: "environments – anti-environments", "figure – ground" or "cliché – archetype". In each of these cases, action mechanism is the same: the main duty of the artist is to create the contrasts<sup>18</sup>. In McLuhan's opinion, artistic calculations referring to such changes "usually anticipate the science and technology in these matters by a full generation or more"<sup>19</sup>. Polish artist Ewa Kuryluk, (in passing on McLuhan's speech during "the seminar on video theory and

15 M. McLuhan, *Challenge and Collapse: The Nemesis of Creativity*, [in]: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 64.

16 In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan writes that "Every technology contrived and outered by man has the power to numb human awareness during the period of its first interiorization". M. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, p. 187.

17 M. McLuhan, *Art as anti-environment*, *Art News Annual*, 31/1966, p. 55.

18 McLuhan was certain that: "Comparison and contrast have always been a means of sharpening perception in the arts as well as in general experience which can demonstrate true nature of all matters". M. McLuhan, H. Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting*, New York 1968, p. 238.

19 M. McLuhan, *Television: The Timid Giant*, [in]: McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 323.

practise organised in Venice'77"<sup>20</sup>) notices that it isn't a new idea. In her brilliant essay *Artsta sygnalem alarmowym* (*Artist as an alarm system*) she writes that a prophetic character has been attributed to art since ancient times, while various versions of this concept are given in many artistic theories (especially in twentieth-century avant-garde circles). McLuhan himself refers to Ezra Pound who, in his essay *The teacher's mission*<sup>21</sup>, named artists "the antennae of the race". According to McLuhan "Art as radar acts as an early alarm system, as it were, enabling us to discover social and psychic targets in lots of time to prepare to cope with them. This concept of the arts as prophetic, contrasts with the popular idea of them as mere self-expression. If art is an 'early warning system' [...] has the utmost relevance not only to media study but to the development of media controls. [...] Art as a radar environment takes on the function of indispensable perceptual training rather than the role of a privileged diet for the elite. While the arts as radar feedback provide a dynamic and changing corporate image, their purpose may not be enable us to change but rather to maintain an even course toward permanent goals, even amidst the most disrupting innovations. We have already discovered the futility of changing our goals as often as we change our technologies"<sup>22</sup>. In *The Mechanical Bride*<sup>23</sup> McLuhan states that art is our special equipment which provides us essential tools for analyses of reality (both present and future). As a "store" of human values as well as "antennae" of new awareness art makes possible links between new and old, certain and experimental. The artist is the only member of society who perceives the signs of technological challenge in advance of the shock induced by it beginning to transform the society. "Whereas the ordinary person seeks security by numbing his perceptions against the impact of new experience" writes McLuhan in *Through the Vanishing Point*, "the artist delights in this novelty and instinctively creates situations that both reveal and compensate for it. The artist studies the distortion of sensory life produced by new environmental programming and tends to create artistic situations that correct the sensory bias and derangement brought about by the new form. In social terms the artist can be regarded as a navigator who gives adequate compass bearings in spite of magnetic deflection of the needle by the changing play of forces. So understood, the artist is not a peddler of ideals or lofty experiences. He is rather the indispensable aid to action and reflection alike"<sup>24</sup>.

20 E. Kuryluk, *Artysta sygnalem alarmowym? Garsc refleksji o McLuhanie i Nam June Paiku*, [in]: E. Kuryluk, *Podroz do granic sztuki*, Krakow 1982, p. 144.

21 E. Pound, *The Teacher's Mission*, [in]: T.S. Eliot, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, London 1954. Whereas McLuhan quotes him in *Introduction to the Second Edition*, [in]: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extension of Man (Critical Edition)*, Corte Madera 2003, p. 16.

22 M. McLuhan, *Introduction to the Second Edition*, p. 16.

23 M. McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride. Folklore of industrial man*, New York 1951, p. 87.

24 M. McLuhan, H. Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point*, p. 238.

In McLuhan's opinion, communication, creativity and development either appear together or don't appear at all. Art as an early warning system provides us with a dynamic and variable image of the society in which we live while simultaneously enabling the realisation of its aims. "Art is new perception", writes McLuhan in *Culture is Our Business*<sup>25</sup>, and goes on to say that it has the "power to impose its own assumption by setting the human community into new relationships and postures. Art. [...] is a translator of experience. What we have already felt or seen in one situation we are suddenly given in a new kind of material"<sup>26</sup>.

We've already seen that McLuhan doesn't conceive of art in traditional categories (for example as a means to catharsis or escape from reality), but as a fundamental element of the "real" attitude towards the world and the simplification of our understanding of the place where we live.

However, according to McLuhan, the most important function is that of art understood as language. In an interview conducted by Wiktor Osiatynski<sup>27</sup>, McLuhan says that art is one of the media, which means that in his understanding it affects people through its essence and not through content. "In the arts the particular mix of our senses in the medium employed is all important." writes McLuhan in *Understanding Media*, "The ostensible program content is a lulling distraction needed to enable the structural form to break through the barriers of conscious attention"<sup>28</sup>. This phenomenon can be interpreted in two ways: art as language – a carrier of important social values, and art as technology – another extension of man. Art treated as a medium is a method of observation of our reality and foreseeing changes in the future. McLuhan was sure that there is a huge gap between the natural equipment of man (especially his perception capacity) and the technology created by him. This idea comes from the Simeons book entitled *Man's Presumptuous Brain*<sup>29</sup> in which the author claims that human biological equipment (adaptation to the new environment) stopped developing (more or less) half of million years before the appearance of modern technology.

Fortunately, the language of art could eradicate this discrepancy, adjusting our sensory apparatus to the rate of development of the environment. In the process of the development of technology art makes possible the practice, adjustment and updating of our perceptual abilities (as quoted by Derrick de Kerckhove, in conversation McLuhan

25 M. McLuhan, *Culture is Our Business*, New York – Toronto 1989, p. 46.

26 M. McLuhan, *Games. The Extensions of Man*, [in]: M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 242.

27 W. Osiatynski talks with Marshall McLuhan, *Biora mnie za kogos innego niz naprawde jestem*, Kultura, 17/1975, p. 6.

28 M. McLuhan, *Games*, p. 242.

29 A. T.W. Simeons, *Man's Presumptuous Brain: An Evolutionary Interpretation of Psychosomatic Disease*, New York 1960.

says that art was the true school of perception<sup>30</sup>). Continuing this plot, if we agree with McLuhan that Sputnik converted the Earth into piece of art and its residents into actors living in a theatre without an audience, by analogy we must also consider his statement that art (just as was the case with the satellite) could convert every environment into a piece of art<sup>31</sup>.

Although in *Understanding McLuhan*<sup>32</sup>, Donald F. Theall accuses him of converting our planet into multimedia artwork by force McLuhan was sure that it is a fact (with really surprising consequences). As a form of art the Earth (like a time machine) brings us to the situation of tribal man: from the world of the eye dominated by print, we come back to the world of the ear, the acoustic world, in which we receive all incentives at once<sup>33</sup>.

Even though McLuhan treats art as a unique technology with special social functions, there is some inconsistency. Art itself is a medium, but at the same time it is a form of understanding and in conflict with the effects of other media. Tom Wolfe writes about this in his famous essay *What if he is right?*<sup>34</sup>. According to Wolfe, in McLuhan's opinion art is on the one hand an "early warning system" as regards changes in society's sensory balance, while on the other hand every kind of contemporary art is one step behind the dominant technology. What this means is that in the era of electronic media artists (McLuhan's contemporaries) are fifty or even seventy years behind the times, living in the era of mechanisation discovering Cubism (and other forms of abstraction) and having the conviction that they create the avant-garde. This contradiction can be easily explained through the concept of useless art. McLuhan states that every kind of art that simply projects and intensifies old or new environments (concurrently avoiding the creation of its contrasts) is socially useless<sup>35</sup>. This pertains to the majority of popular art which consists in repeating the technological effects of the environment.

Regardless of our opinion on McLuhan's art theory, it is worth paying attention to this aspect of his work. Contrary to all appearances, there's still much to say about McLuhan's views, but "proper" understanding of his theories needs a change of perspective: we should start treating them not as solid science but as a unique artistic vision, his prophecy of the future which will become our present.

30 D. de Kerckhove: *McLuhan and art*, Vies des Arts, 73/1973-1974, p.91.

31 D.F. Theall, *McLuhan's aesthetic explorations*, Vies des Arts, 73/1973-1974, p. 91.

32 D. F. Theall, *Understanding McLuhan*, p. 30.

33 D. de Kerckhove: *McLuhan and art*, p. 92.

34 T. Wolfe, *What if he is right?*, [in]: G. Stern (ed.), *McLuhan: Hot & Cool*, pp. 26-27.

35 M. McLuhan: *Art as anti-environment*, s. 56.



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## Canadianité et américanité dans le cinéma de David Cronenberg

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### Abstract

It can be argued that Canada lacks a strong sense of identity. This lack is probably the direct consequence of a policy of assimilation that neglected in some ways the originality of each of the cultures which composes the Canadian community. Moreover, this huge territory, trapped between two cultural hegemonies – the francophone province of Quebec and the United States – is in constant competition with its American neighbor. Canada has therefore a very ambiguous status as far as its identity is concerned. In actual fact, it tries to distinguish itself, but it is simultaneously fatally subjected to external influences. David Cronenberg clearly illustrates this cultural paradox. Even though he emphasises his originality and proclaims to reject the Hollywood film industry, he is often included in the global category of American directors, and is labeled “the Baron of Blood”. Through a corpus of five Cronenberg movies – *Rabid*, *The Brood*, *Videodrome*, *The Fly*, and *Dead Ringers* – I wish to inscribe this atypical filmmaker in the context of his native country, Canada. I focus on the themes of identity, mutation, dissemination, contamination, and the relationship between the mind and the body, in order to highlight Cronenberg’s cinematographic objectives by comparing his work with biographical elements and prominent elements of Canadian popular culture. I also study his way of treating horror as a means to assert his own Canadian identity. My research has allowed me to emphasize fundamental external influences that have contributed to building Cronenberg’s cinema and to help the filmmaker redefine the horror genre.

### Résumé

Le Canada est en mal d’identité, mal-être issu d’une politique multi-culturaliste assimilatrice qui s’est faite au détriment des originalités de chaque culture composant la communauté canadienne.

De plus, cet immense territoire, « pris au piège » entre deux hégémonies culturelles, hégémonies francophone du Québec et américaine, est en constante concurrence avec les États-Unis voisins. Le Canada a donc un statut identitaire très ambigu, cherchant à la fois à se distinguer tout en subissant irrémédiablement les influences extérieures. David Cronenberg illustre de façon tout à fait appropriée ce paradoxe culturel. En effet, bien que revendiquant une originalité et un total rejet du système hollywoodien, celui-ci se trouve bien souvent assimilé à un réalisateur américain, et reste stigmatisé « maître de l'horreur », à l'instar de cinéastes concurrents provenant des États-Unis tels que John Carpenter, Wes Craven ou George Romero. A travers un corpus de cinq films de David Cronenberg, à savoir *Rabid (Rage)*, *The Brood (Chromosome 3)*, *Videodrome*, *The Fly (La Mouche)* et *Dead Ringers (Faux-Semblants)*, mon intention est d'inscrire ce cinéaste atypique dans le contexte de son pays natal, le Canada. En me focalisant sur les thèmes de l'identité, de la mutation, de la dissémination, de la contamination, et de la relation corps-esprit, qui sont des thèmes chers à Cronenberg, j'ai tenté d'apporter un éclairage du point de vue cinématographique mais également biographique sur les objectifs du cinéaste, tout en insérant des références culturelles canadiennes, et je me suis interrogée sur sa façon de traiter l'horreur dans un but de revendication identitaire. Mes recherches, qui se situent donc entre les domaines des études filmiques et canadiennes, m'ont ainsi permis de mettre au jour des influences extérieures fondamentales ayant contribué à construire l'œuvre de Cronenberg, et par là-même à définir et sans cesse redéfinir le genre de l'horreur.

Pierre Véronneau, éminent spécialiste en cinéma canadien, révèle dans l'introduction de *L'Horreur intérieure : les films de David Cronenberg* : « De tous les cinéastes canadiens, David Cronenberg est celui qui connaît le plus de succès, bien que ses films soient tournés principalement au Canada. » Cette affirmation est symptomatique de plusieurs problèmes concernant l'industrie cinématographique canadienne, ainsi que l'œuvre même de David Cronenberg. En effet, la nuance « bien que » alimente des doutes quant à la crédibilité du cinéma canadien, ainsi que sa visibilité : en quoi le fait que David Cronenberg parvienne au succès en tournant au Canada est-il surprenant ? Les propos de Pierre Véronneau marquent incontestablement l'existence d'un malaise concernant l'identité culturelle canadienne, dans laquelle s'inscrit tant bien que mal le cinéma de David Cronenberg. Si le Canada n'est a priori pas un endroit propice au développement du septième art, Cronenberg a malgré tout réussi à s'y imposer en tant que réalisateur reconnu. De quelle façon est-il devenu une référence dans son domaine et doit-on nuancer l'étendue de sa notoriété ?

Cet essai s'efforcera donc à mettre en exergue la portée l'œuvre de David Cronenberg dans un pays où l'identité cinématographique est sans cesse remise en cause par



l'ostensible pression hollywoodienne. Le réalisateur lui-même s'est investi d'une mission salvatrice, celle de défendre le cinéma canadien en s'imposant comme un auteur à part entière. Cet aspect fera ainsi l'objet d'une première partie intitulée « le syndrome Cronenberg ». La deuxième partie, « un processus schizophrénique », s'attellera à décrypter la quête d'une identité par le réalisateur à travers ses films. Enfin, une troisième et dernière partie intitulée « Survival » analysera les thèmes de la marginalité et de l'altérité dans l'œuvre de David Cronenberg.

## I. Le syndrome Cronenberg

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Selon les dires de l'acteur comique canadien Mike Myers, le Canada serait « l'essence même du non-être »<sup>1</sup>. Le comédien, célèbre pour ses rôles burlesques et sa vision décalée de la société, nous livre néanmoins un regard intérieur – et donc subjectif – sur son pays. À travers cette citation, il implique que le Canada et les Canadiens ont des difficultés à affirmer une identité nationale. En effet, cet immense pays représente un tout hybride, prisonnier géographiquement et historiquement entre plusieurs cultures, radicalement différentes les unes des autres. C'est une confédération territoriale et économique, vouée à absorber les identités dont elle est composée afin de survivre et d'évoluer. Il est ainsi difficile pour le Canada de s'imposer comme une puissance culturelle mondiale. Dans l'introduction de *A la Recherche d'une identité*, une étude sur la représentation de l'identité du Canada à travers son cinéma, Pierre Véronneau regrette que l'identité nationale canadienne soit parfois considérée comme une chimère stérile, vouée à l'échec, pris dans l'étau impitoyable des cultures françaises et américaines extrêmement influentes. Ces pressions culturelles externes s'appliquent entre autres et avant tout aux productions de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne. Pierre Véronneau met ainsi au jour dans le même paragraphe les difficultés du cinéma canadien à s'imposer auprès du public nord-américain :

Peu de Québécois [et les Canadiens en général] ont une connaissance correcte du cinéma canadien. Quand il passe en salle, ce qui n'est pas souvent le cas, il faut beaucoup de détermination pour aller le voir.<sup>2</sup>

L'expert montre ainsi l'impitoyable réticence des spectateurs canadiens à se déplacer pour voir les productions de leur propre pays. Il sous-entend par cette affirmation un

1 « Canada is the essence of not being. Not English, not American, it is the mathematic of not being ».

2 In *A la Recherche d'une identité*, p.7.

ennui latent du public devant un cinéma intimidant ou rébarbatif, ne répondant ainsi pas aux critères commerciaux qui attirent les cinéphiles dans les salles. De plus, le cinéma canadien souffre terriblement d'une piètre médiatisation. Au sein du Canada, un large fossé se creuse entre cinéma francophone et cinéma anglophone, créé par les producteurs eux-mêmes qui ne les rendent pas accessibles pour l'une ou l'autre partie de la population. En effet, le dispositif de sous-titrages est si peu développé qu'un Québécois anglophone aura peu de chance de voir un film de Denys Arcand adapté en anglais. Cela est également vrai pour un francophone d'Alberta désirant voir un film de Cronenberg en français. Cependant, au-delà de cette « barrière des langues », c'est tout le processus de distribution commerciale qui présente de larges défaillances. L'expérience même de David Cronenberg montre de façon significative cette faiblesse du système cinématographique canadien. En 2001, il avoue :

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Cela fait longtemps que je n'ai pas vu un film canadien. C'est en partie de ma faute et en partie parce que la plupart des films canadiens ne sortent pas sur les écrans, ni même dans les salles.

En effet, il n'y a presque aucune production canadienne figurant au box-office national, qui est essentiellement constitué de films réalisés aux États-Unis. La concurrence américaine est donc un facteur déterminant dans la visibilité réduite du cinéma canadien.

C'est dans ces conditions que le jeune David Cronenberg choisit de faire carrière dans la réalisation cinématographique. Il s'intéressa tout d'abord au cinéma underground, en réalisant par exemple un film expérimental intitulé *From The Drain*, en 1966. Ce court-métrage, tourné dans une salle de bains à l'aide des techniques minimalistes, met en scène deux hommes assis dans une baignoire, absorbés par leur discussion philosophique quand soudain une sorte de vrille monstrueuse émergeant de l'évacuation les interrompt. Cependant, bien qu'il se complût dans une création assez intellectuelle et quelque peu élitiste, sa carrière prit rapidement un autre tournant. En effet, après un voyage à Cannes, ville où le cinéma devient pendant une semaine synonyme d'une débauche de faste, de luxe, et de célébrité, il prit conscience de son désir de notoriété, mais également du fait non négligeable qu'il devrait un jour commencer à vivre de son art, et orienta alors son œuvre vers une direction plus lucrative, se détachant ainsi d'un cinéma expérimental pour se diriger vers un cinéma plus populaire. S'éloignait-t-il de la même façon d'un cinéma que l'on peut qualifier « d'auteur » ? Pas selon la définition qu'en donne Pierre Véronneau :

Comme nous parlons de cinéma d'auteur, nous nous intéressons à des personnes qui privilégient une communication médiatique originale.<sup>3</sup>

D'après lui, les films d'auteur sont le reflet de la vision artistique d'un réalisateur qui souhaite travailler de façon indépendante, quelque soit la teneur du budget, même si Pierre Véronneau reconnaît que « certains [il fait notamment référence à la horde de critiques « intellectuels » réfractaires à un cinéma dit commercial] considèrent que la dimension industrielle va à l'encontre de l'expression personnelle originale ». David Cronenberg semble tout à fait correspondre à la définition de Véronneau. En effet, celui-ci est un des rares réalisateurs à être également le scénariste de la plupart de ses films, ainsi que l'auteur de l'œuvre originale pour certains. Parfait autodidacte (c'est en lisant des revues telles que *The American Cinematographer Magazine* qu'il apprit durant son adolescence le métier de réalisateur), il offre une vision artistique personnelle et cohérente, qui rend ses films remarquables et reconnaissables parmi tant d'autres. Cette fascination pour l'organique et le viscéral, visible à travers presque tous ses films, est caractéristique d'un « genre Cronenberg. »

Cependant, dans *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, il déclara : « Je considère que mes films sont avant tout fondamentalement canadiens, guidés en dernier lieu par ma vision personnelle de l'âme canadienne. »<sup>4</sup> En effet, bien qu'il fût un auteur à part entière, David Cronenberg s'inscrit néanmoins dans une tradition cinématographique typiquement canadienne. Le réalisateur est fortement influencé par la tradition documentaire, un genre largement exploité par les réalisateurs canadiens (notamment par l'éminent Pierre Perrault), et hautement respecté par les critiques, car considéré comme « sérieux ». Le statut de la voix narrative dans les films de Cronenberg est caractéristique du genre docu-fiction. La narration distancée de l'action et des personnages, comme dans *Crimes of the Future*, rend l'identification des spectateurs aux personnages assez problématique. De plus, l'environnement aseptisé qui teinte ses films est un autre signe de la « canadianité » de son œuvre. En effet, à l'instar de l'immensité du territoire canadien, les environnements sociaux et géographiques de ses films sont déshumanisants et aliénants, car ils ne favorisent pas les interactions humaines. A travers le cadre filmique, David Cronenberg tente une représentation allégorique du cadre social canadien, en montrant que le Canada, étant une sorte de terre neutre et paisible, politiquement et culturellement, ses habitants (les personnages de Cronenberg en sont des reflets aliénés et isolés) font l'expérience du chaos et du désordre à une échelle personnelle. L'individualité et la canadianité sont finalement mêlées dans ses films de façon schizophrénique : les

3 In *A la Recherche d'une identité*, p.6.

4 In *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, n°557, p.54.

héros de David Cronenberg sont simplement à la recherche d'une identité, tout comme le réalisateur qui les guide et parfois les déroute dans cette quête désespérée.

## II. Un processus schizophrénique

La schizophrénie ambiante dans l'œuvre de Cronenberg est tout d'abord flagrante d'un point de vue générique. En effet, la bataille des genres est une question ontologique dans les films du réalisateur. Il n'est pas aisé d'apposer une étiquette catégorique sur le réalisateur (même s'il fut surnommé « Baron du Sang » par certains critiques à cause de son usage outrancier du gore), puisqu'il exploite différents genres filmiques. En effet, entre réalisme sanglant et cinéma fantastique, il mélange les conventions, utilise des thèmes appartenant à l'une ou l'autre veine cinématographique. Il s'approprie notamment des motifs appartenant à la science-fiction tels que les pods télétransporteurs de *La Mouche*, ou fait usage des normes du film de gangster dans *A History of Violence* et *Les Promesses de l'ombre*. Le spectateur éprouve ainsi quelques difficultés à cantonner le réalisateur à un cinéma unique.

La bataille des identités et des genres est également un thème majeur largement exploité dans son œuvre. J'emploie ici le mot « genre » dans le sens du mot anglais « gender ». Tandis que « sex » renvoie à une définition biologique du féminin ou du masculin, « gender » désigne la construction culturelle et sociétale du sexe. La société patriarcale occidentale est originellement fondée sur une peur viscérale du sexe féminin. En effet, certaines légendes ancestrales racontaient que le vagin était doté de dents castratrices. Ce mythe du *vagina dentata* est revisité à travers l'œuvre de Cronenberg, car la femme y est souvent considérée comme une menace, par exemple avec le personnage de Claire Niveau qui s'interpose entre les deux jumeaux Mantle de *Faux-Semblants*, sorti en 1988. Celle-ci hante les cauchemars de l'un des deux frères, Beverly, qui craint qu'elle ne détruise la relation fusionnelle qu'il entretient avec son jumeau Elliot. Les deux hommes préfèrent recourir au suicide et être unis dans la mort avant que la femme carnassière ne les sépare (le rêve de Beverly où Claire Niveau déchire à coups de dents le cordon ombilical monstrueux unissant les deux frères est assez révélateur). L'exemple de Nicki Brand dans *Vidéodrome* nous apporte un autre éclairage sur la représentation du sexe féminin chez David Cronenberg. Ce personnage joué par Debbie Harry (la chanteuse du groupe à succès Blondie) est dépeint comme une femme mystérieuse et sadomasochiste : elle est à l'image des femmes tentatrices, menaçantes pour la gent masculine, mais également pour elles-mêmes, que l'on rencontre à plusieurs reprises dans les films du réalisateur.

Outre la lutte des sexes, une autre sorte de bataille identitaire est en jeu chez Cronenberg, et notamment dans *La Mouche*, sorti en 1986. Ce conflit peut être qualifié de schizophrénique, puisqu'il se joue au sein d'un seul être. En effet, ce film, dont l'intrigue est fondée sur la mutation d'un homme en insecte, met en scène la lutte de l'humain contre l'animal sur le point d'envahir son propre organisme et d'en prendre le contrôle. La schizophrénie est néanmoins représentée de façon plus manifeste dans *Faux-Semblants* par le binôme des deux jumeaux, qui partagent tout, leur métier de gynécologue, leur appartement, mais également leurs conquêtes amoureuses. Les deux frères, magistralement interprétés par l'acteur britannique Jeremy Irons, sont psychologiquement extrêmement différents, mais leur relation fusionnelle et destructrice les rendra peu à peu similaires et les conduira à la mort.

La schizophrénie peut être également synonyme d'ambiguïté dans les films de Cronenberg : ambiguïté sexuelle dans le sens de « sex » et ambiguïté sexuelle dans le sens de « gender ». En effet, le réalisateur fait appel aux parts féminines et masculines présentes dans chaque être. Ses héros masculins sont souvent des êtres androgynes, mal à l'aise avec leur propre corps, et entretenant des relations conflictuelles avec le sexe opposé. Ainsi, dans *M. Bovary*, le héros tombe amoureux d'une femme qui se révèle être un homme, humiliation qui le mènera à sa perte ; dans *Vidéodrome*, Max Renn le personnage principal se voit doté d'un orifice ventral aux allures de vagin où il insère divers objets, tels que des cassettes vidéos ou un revolver, symbole phallique par excellence. L'héroïne meurtrière mutante de *Rage* développe quant à elle un pénis sous l'aisselle grâce auquel elle se nourrit du sang de ses victimes.

Si les deux sexes sont à l'origine une menace l'un pour l'autre, ils finissent néanmoins par se fondre l'un dans l'autre après une bataille acharnée. En effet, à l'issue de cette lutte sans pitié, la capitulation se fait évidence et la mutation devient alors une évolution naturelle, donnant naissance à un nouvel être hybride, et souvent monstrueux. L'exemple du scientifique de *La Mouche* est édifiant. En effet, Seth Brundle est davantage le témoin passif de sa métamorphose qu'un combattant actif et acharné du parasite. Sa propre dégénérescence représente pour lui une fascinante expérience, un phénomène qu'il considère comme une évolution logique de son propre corps. Il se résigne cyniquement à son sort, assiste à son démantèlement, fasciné par chacun de ses organes perdus qu'il conserve méthodiquement dans des bocaux, tels les reliques d'un organisme désuet.

Dans les films de Cronenberg, chaque organe (même s'il fait originellement partie d'un tout, d'un organisme) a une fonction propre et peut vivre indépendamment des autres. Ceci constitue une représentation métaphorique de la vision « cronenberguienne » du Canada. En effet, ce pays ne forme pas une entité foncièrement unie, car chaque province fonctionne selon un système différent des autres. A travers cet antagonisme

organes vs organisme, Cronenberg déplore le manque d'unité et de cohérence culturelle au sein son propre pays.

Cependant, cette faiblesse est accentuée par le phénomène d'américanisation de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne. Le réalisateur est en effet tiraillé entre deux systèmes : le cinéma canadien et le « Hollywood North ». Ce terme, employé pour la première fois en 1981 par une journaliste canadienne, Judy Steel, fait référence à l'industrie cinématographique présente en Colombie-Britannique. Un très grand nombre de films et de séries américaines y est réalisé, tourné par des équipes de production canadiennes moins onéreuses et pléthore d'acteurs canadiens. Ce système est symbolique de la relation ambiguë entre les Etats-Unis et le Canada dans laquelle David Cronenberg se retrouve emprisonné. En effet, même si celui-ci désapprouve l'américanisation de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne et a toujours refusé de travailler au sein du système hollywoodien, il n'échappe cependant pas à une influence américaine inévitable. Une volonté manifeste de travailler en autonomie et une canadianité néanmoins latente sont mêlées dans son travail de façon schizophrénique, mais au fur et à mesure que progresse son œuvre, les signes d'une américanisation graduelle émergent peu à peu dans ses films. Ce phénomène n'est cependant pas aisé à définir : est-il inconscient ou sous contrôle ? L'exportation de plus en plus grande de son œuvre à l'étranger, ainsi que l'intégration d'un nombre important d'acteurs non canadiens sont-elles révélatrices de l'acceptation croissante d'une culture « mainstream » par David Cronenberg ? Cette évolution n'est peut-être simplement qu'une réaction naturelle à une volonté de s'adapter et survivre en « milieu hostile. »

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### III. Survival

Les échanges culturels et influences extérieures constituent ainsi un enjeu particulièrement important dans l'œuvre de Cronenberg. Les thèmes de la dissémination et de la contamination, s'ils imprègnent la totalité de sa filmographie, sont également omniprésents dans le parcours personnel de David Cronenberg. Le réalisateur a souvent révélé au fil des interviews que sa propre vie influençait la plupart, voire l'intégralité, de ses films. Ainsi, des éléments biographiques contaminent presque constamment les intrigues. L'exemple de *Chromosome 3*, sorti en 1979, prouve à quel point la vie privée peut agir sur la création artistique. En effet, l'intrigue de ce film est centrée sur le personnage de Nola, qui, suite à une thérapie révolutionnaire, accouche d'enfants asexués et monstrueux, autant de symptômes de ses traumatismes enfouis. La

femme en furie protégeant farouchement sa progéniture est un portrait détourné de la propre épouse de Cronenberg alors que le couple était en plein divorce et se disputait la garde des enfants. La réalisation de films devient une catharsis qui permet à Cronenberg d'expulser ses propres démons en les injectant dans son art. Non content de laisser sa propre vie contaminer ses films, David Cronenberg accepte aussi volontiers les influences d'autres domaines artistiques. Il n'a par exemple jamais caché son admiration pour Andy Warhol, maître du pop'art américain (il fut d'ailleurs le commentateur d'une exposition consacrée à l'artiste en 2006 à Toronto), ou pour des écrivains tels que J.G. Ballard et William S. Burroughs (auteurs dont il a adapté certains romans).

Cependant, bien que David Cronenberg admette des influences artistiques extérieures, il est néanmoins un fervent défenseur de son originalité artistique, quelque peu réticent à reconnaître une quelconque inspiration provenant du domaine cinématographique. Cet état d'esprit incarne l'illustration de ce que Northrop Frye appelait « garrison mentality », la mentalité de garnison, notion que Margaret Atwood a reprise dans son anthologie de la littérature canadienne, *Survival*. Thème récurrent dans la littérature canadienne, il est révélateur d'un mal-être identitaire, de la crainte du vide représenté par la « wilderness » canadienne, et de la pression exercée par d'autres pays, notamment celle des Etats-Unis. Ce thème est clairement représenté dans les films de Cronenberg, où les personnages cherchent souvent à se construire un mur métaphorique contre le monde extérieur menaçant. Cette « garrison mentality » est également applicable à la mentalité de David Cronenberg lui-même, qui résiste à une dictature hollywoodienne écrasante. Cronenberg construit une barricade contre « l'envahisseur américain » pour protéger son originalité et son individualité au sein de son propre art. Plusieurs exemples au travers de sa carrière ont montré qu'il s'insurgeait contre le système hollywoodien, en tant que cinéaste indépendant respecté. Ainsi, alors qu'il présidait le Festival de Cannes en 1999, il rendit hommage au cinéma indépendant et attribua la Palme d'Or à *Rosetta*, le film belge à petit budget des frères Dardenne. De plus, il déclina plusieurs propositions lucratives, celles de tourner des blockbusters américains, tels que *Total Recall*, *Robocop* ou *Top Gun*.

David Cronenberg veut ainsi protéger son originalité artistique, mais il essaie également de choquer son public. Ainsi ne résiste-t-il pas seulement aux pressions externes, c'est aussi un innovateur qui s'efforce à d'aller au-delà des règles établies en les transgressant dans ses films.

[...] as an artist the responsibility is to allow yourself complete freedom. [...] When I write, I must not censor my own imagery or connections. I must not worry about what

critics will say, what leftists will say, what environmentalists will say. [...] By being irresponsible I will be responsible.<sup>5</sup>

Cronenberg est donc très conscient des devoirs qui lui incombent en tant qu'artiste, ce qui lui a permis d'apporter une certaine modernité au cinéma canadien et au genre gore. Comme Kenneth Wilson le dit: "His films thematize the transgression of boundaries of all kinds – biological, psychological, emotional, sexual, social and political."<sup>6</sup> Certains de ses films sont notamment imprégnés de réflexions sur la relative existence de la réalité, tel que dans *eXistenZ*, sorti en 1999. Les limites entre virtualité et réalité sont atténuées au point que les deux fusionnent, si bien que les frontières de l'existence sont totalement effacées dans ce film. La définition du « moi » est également en jeu à travers celle de l'existence. Chaque film de Cronenberg traite de l'interchangeabilité des identités. Les jumeaux de *Faux-Semblants* échangent leurs rôles, le comportement de Seth Brundle dans *La Mouche* peut à la fois être celui d'un insecte ou d'un humain selon la situation. Nikolai, l'espion infiltré dans le milieu mafieux russe de Londres des *Promesses de l'ombre*, est tiraillé entre ses origines et la police londonienne pour laquelle il travaille. Le grotesque et l'humour noir peuvent aussi être considérés comme une transgression du genre gore. En effet, les spectateurs sont en proie à un sentiment ambigu et contradictoire : ils éprouvent une irrésistible envie de rire tout en éprouvant du dégoût devant la débauche de sang et de viscères apparentes. Ils se sentent coupables d'une telle réaction et se demandent si elle est légitime. La comédie se traduit fréquemment par un traitement burlesque de la sexualité. Humour et sexe sont des motifs essentiels à tous les films d'horreur, mais sont exploités différemment dans ceux de Cronenberg. En effet, l'humour et l'ironie y sont intentionnels (tandis que la plupart des slashers ne prennent une dimension drolatique qu'à leur insu), et la sexualité n'est pas un moyen de stimuler l'imagination des spectateurs ou de les exciter, mais plutôt de les choquer. De fait, plusieurs de ses films sortirent dans des salles spécialisées, avec le label pornographique. Le sexe n'y est pourtant pas omniprésent. Ce qui de fait choque la censure est le traitement de l'acte sexuel, qui est toujours représenté de façon clinique, aseptisée, méthodique et froide. Il est complètement dissocié de toute émotion ou désir, comme pour les deux personnages d'*eXistenZ* qui sont uniquement poussés l'un vers l'autre pour les besoins d'un jeu virtuel. La représentation du sexe et de la sexualité par David Cronenberg est difficilement acceptée par la conception populaire traditionnelle de l'acte sexuel, et une évolution des mentalités est nécessaire pour une appréhension adéquate de la vision du réalisateur.

<sup>5</sup> Cronenberg on Cronenberg, p.158.

<sup>6</sup> www.davidcronenberg.de



## Conclusion

David Cronenberg utilise l'ambiguïté dans un but précis, mais son opinion quant au comportement des critiques à son égard est quelque peu subversive :

“You want people to respond to a total entity. Dissecting my films to look for one little thing is killing them in the process. That’s what I resent. That’s what special-interest groups do: cut them apart.”<sup>7</sup>

Ce discours est surprenant de la part d'un réalisateur habitué à mettre en scène des corps disséqués, les découpant dans le but de voir et de montrer leur constitution. Cependant, cette investigation est devenue plus mentale et spirituelle au fil du temps. Peut-être David Cronenberg craint-il le traitement infligé à ses héros car il a peur de révéler le fond de son esprit, de se mettre à nu. Faire des films est un processus cathartique pour un réalisateur qui essaie à la fois d'assumer sa canadianité tout en intégrant des influences étrangères.

Pierre Véronneau affirme que « Cronenberg est un cinéaste de l'horreur, doublé dès le début d'un moraliste, d'un fabuliste même. »<sup>8</sup>. Car, en effet, quel est le rôle d'un réalisateur, si ce n'est avant tout de raconter des histoires, faire réfléchir le public, susciter des émotions, des réactions, des interrogations ? Comme Cronenberg le dit lui-même, son but est de transmettre un message ; la façon la plus pertinente pour lui était de le faire à travers son domaine de prédilection, c'est-à-dire la réalisation de films d'horreur. Son rôle est donc avant tout celui d'un artiste plutôt que celui d'un maître de l'horreur, et il a d'ailleurs influencé de nombreuses personnes de tous âges dans divers domaines. Ainsi, récemment, un groupe de musique britannique a choisi le nom de « David Cronenberg's wife » et a été qualifié par la presse d'« aussi sombre et torturé que leur nom le suggère ». David Cronenberg est donc sur le point de devenir une icône et son nom est assez significatif pour être porteur de références à des notions telles que l'ambiguïté, la sexualité, la dissémination et la transgression.

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<sup>7</sup> *Cronenberg on Cronenberg*, p.68.

<sup>8</sup> *L'Horreur intérieure, les films de David Cronenberg*, p.155.

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## Issues of Regulation of Social and Economic Development of Regions in Canada

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### Abstract

Regular activities aimed at equalizing the levels of regional economic development were launched by the Canadian government in the early 1960s and are of high national priority up to the present moment. These activities are being carried out through direct financial transfers within the framework of assistance to economically depressed regions (first of all to the Atlantic ones) and through the implementation of targeted nationwide programs which provide for the development and improvement of all kinds of infrastructure, encouragement of private investment in the less developed regions by granting tax and other privileges, subsidies, and support to local businesses.

A way to solve the imbalance problem is a flexible financial system which would reflect the distribution of powers within the federal system. Intergovernmental financial agreements were exposed to multiple essential changes since the times of signing the British North America Act. In the days of confederation, Ottawa was given the main powers to ensure the collection of revenues in order to be granted permission for future funding of provinces, while the powers and sources of revenues were rather restricted for the provinces. Today Canada is a decentralized federation from the point of view of both power sharing between two levels of government and of revenue distribution. According to the Canadian financial federalism, the provinces are independent in introducing their own types of taxes, which are not the same across the different provinces.

### Résumé

Depuis les années 1960, l'activité systématique du gouvernement du Canada axée sur l'égalisation du niveau de développement économique des régions a une priorité incontestable. Cette

activité s'effectue par les transferts directs dans le cadre de l'aide aux régions peu développées et en premier lieu dans les régions atlantiques ainsi qu'à la réalisation des programmes d'Etat aux objectifs prévoyant le développement et le perfectionnement de tous types d'infrastructure, d'encouragement de tous les investissements privés dans les régions peu développées par le biais des impôts, des subventions et du soutien des entreprises locales.

La politique fédérale du Canada par rapport aux régions restant la même du point de vue de ses objectifs a subi beaucoup de changements du côté des approches et des méthodes appliquées. Depuis 2001, les relations entre l'Etat et les régions s'effectuent dans le cadre des accords bilatéraux entre le centre fédéral et les régions (les provinces). Une des raisons du déséquilibre reste le système financier souple, qui reflète la répartition des pouvoirs dans le cadre du système politique.

Les accords financiers entre-gouvernementaux ont subi de multiples changements essentiels depuis l'adoption de l'Acte sur l'Amérique du Nord britannique. A l'époque de la confédération, on a attribué à Ottawa le pouvoir de financer les provinces. Les pouvoirs des provinces et leurs sources de revenus ont été limités. Puis le système a subi une quantité de changements et de réformes.

De nos jours, le Canada est une fédération décentralisée du point de vue de la répartition des pouvoirs entre les deux niveaux du pouvoir, et celui de la répartition des revenus. Conformément au modèle canadien du fédéralisme financier et budgétaire, les provinces sont autonomes dans la fixation des taux de leurs différents impôts.

Issues of regulating the social and economic development of regions persist to be in the center of attention of governments, regional authorities and communities of all developed and rapidly developing countries worldwide irrespective of their state structure, size and level of economic development.

Regular activities aimed at equalizing the levels of regional economic development were launched by the Canadian Government in the early 1960's and are of high national priority up to the present moment. These activities are being carried out through direct financial transfers within the framework of assistance to economically depressed regions (first of all to the Atlantic ones) and through the implementation of targeted nationwide programs which provide for the development and improvement of all kinds of infrastructure, encouragement of private investment in the less developed regions by granting tax and other privileges, subsidies, and support to local businesses.

While remaining unchanged in terms of the objectives stated, the federal policies of Canada in relation to regions have been the subject to numerous revisions in terms of applied approaches and methods. Beginning in 2001, relations of the federal and regional governments are carried out within the framework of bilateral agreements between the federal center and each region (province).

A way to solve the imbalance problem is a flexible financial system which would reflect the distribution of powers within the federal system.

Intergovernmental financial agreements were exposed to multiple essential changes since the times of signing the British North America Act<sup>1</sup>. In the days of confederation, Ottawa was given the main powers to ensure the collection of revenues in order to be granted permission for future funding of provinces, while the powers and sources of revenues were rather restricted for the provinces.

The inter-budget relations of the federal government and constituent entities in Canada are based legislatively on the 1985 Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act with subsequent amendments and alterations<sup>2</sup>. The main component of these relations is the system of federal payments to the provinces aimed to tackle the important national problems in the social and economic areas. The basic payments from the Federal Government received by the provinces' budgets are health and social transfers, fiscal equalization payments and payments to territories (Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories as administrative units having no inherent jurisdiction).<sup>3</sup>

After Ottawa's 1995 reform of the system of federal payments to provinces, the Canada Health and Social Transfer became a uniform universal system of funds allocated for funding health care, post-secondary and university education and welfare. The percentage distribution of funds between these three areas is not stipulated, while the procedure for their usage is determined by the regions themselves in accordance with their priorities, subject to observance of two criteria as required by Ottawa: compliance of the health care program of each province to the uniform federal standards fixed in the 1984 Canada Health Act and no period of minimum residency in a province as a qualifying condition for granting social benefits. The health and social transfer is composed of "real cash", that is, the amounts transferred directly from the federal treasury and "tax points", that is, a part of federal tax receipts reimbursable to the provinces.

In 2005/2006 the federal government provided a total of \$42.3 billion in cash to the provinces and territories. This presents a little over 17% of the revenues raised

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1 Cf Savoie.

2 See the Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Conduct of Economic Stabilization Policy in the 1980's. Canada. Ottawa, 1992.

3 Cf Nemova.

independently by the provinces.

The Canada Health Transfer, which stood at \$20.3 billion in 2005/2006, represents nearly half of total federal government cash transfers. The next largest transfer is Equalization, which totaled \$10.9 billion and represented a little over one quarter of all cash transfers<sup>4</sup>

While granting the provinces with an opportunity of more flexible approach to the formation of their social programs and encouraging them to combine the welfare assistance to low paid categories of employees with other forms of social benefits (earlier, the first group of payments was not the subject of equal funding from the center and the provinces), the public and social transfers do not nevertheless provide for the mechanism of adapting to cyclic changes in the employment market. It is planned to find the way to solve this problem through federal-provincial coordination bodies, in particular, through meetings with participation of the Prime Minister of Canada and heads of provincial governments, and at the level of the Ministers of Finance.

According to the Constitution 1982 (clause 36) the Program of equalization payments to provinces is carried out «to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation»<sup>5</sup>

Allocations under this program are calculated using a special formula established by the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and are recalculated every five years. The subjects of the federal financial aid under this clause are provinces, whose revenue base is below the national average five-province (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia) standard (this calculation does not include Alberta and four Atlantic provinces having revenue bases with respectively greatest and least potentials). The formula specifies the revenue base for each of the 33 revenue sources used by provinces. Further on, calculated is the per capita revenue yield that a particular province would obtain using each source at national average rate of tax. Provinces, whose aggregate tax revenues per capita are below the standard (now it is \$5,000 per capita a year), are paid the difference in the form of the federal aid. These are currently seven provinces out of ten, except for Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. The aggregate amount of payments is limited by ceiling and bottom: it cannot grow more quickly than the gross national product of Canada and cannot fall as compared to previous year by more than 5%, 10%, or 15% depending on the potential revenue base of a particular province. Based on the formula described above, total equalization payments depend on the degree of variation in provinces' revenue-generating capacities. The wider is the

4 Federal Support to Provinces and Territories <http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/mtp-eng.asp>

5 The Constitution Act 1982 [http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/Const/annex\\_e.html#III](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/Const/annex_e.html#III)



spread between rich and poor provinces, the more money is paid out in equalization. Conversely, the close is the gap, the less is paid out.

In 2003-2004, the federal government made equalization of \$8.69 billion to the provinces. Seven provinces qualified for equalization that year – Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia and the four Atlantic provinces. The \$8.69 billion in equalization payments was the lowest rate since 1995-1996 and the highest rate was in 2000-2001 at \$10.95 billion<sup>6</sup>.

It is important to note that since equalization is a formula-based program, there was no active “decision” on the part of the federal government. Each province’s entitlement depended on two factors: its own tax base and the tax base in the “national standard” provinces.

Understanding this imbalance, federal and local governments take efforts to adjust the program to current requirements. At the First Ministers’ Meeting on October 26, 2004 the Prime Minister announced a departure from the strictly formula-based funding and made a commitment to increase equalization and territorial financing formula (TFF) fund by \$33 billion over 10 years. Growth in equalization accounts for about \$28.7 billion of total increase. Expert Panel was set up to determine terms of funds distribution among provinces.

Payments to territories (Territorial Financing) are the federal aid intended for assistance to local authorities in the provision of services to the population of the northern regions of Canada. The amount of payments calculated using the special formula is fixed in federal-territorial agreements and includes a social transfer; however it is not the subject of equalization payments.

Other common purpose transfers to provinces are: grants at a rate of the taxes due from a property of federal government and foreign diplomatic (consular) representative offices located in their territory, funds to support the activities of provinces’ legislative assemblies; grants calculated per capita and some other.

A separate category of the federal aid is special purpose transfers. They currently include:

- Allocations for funding the national program of infrastructure renovation (with equal contribution of Ottawa, provincial governments, and municipalities);
- Transfers to provinces and municipalities to ensure sea transport services in the coastal zone, for construction and operation of airports, equipment for railway transportation, funding the learning of the Canadian second official language, partial coverage of expenditures for the juvenile crime control program provided for in the Young Offenders Act;

<sup>6</sup> Equalization Reforms: potential impact. Michael Holden Economics division. Library of Parliament, 2002.

- The financial aid within the program of legal assistance in criminal cases and compensation programs for victims of violent crimes;
- Joint financial participation (together with provinces and farmers) in the uniform program of insuring crop yields and revenues from agricultural produce (Gross Revenue Insurance Plan).

After a sustained effort, an agreement has been reached on the interaction in the social sphere between Canadian federal and provincial governments. On February 4, 1999 in Ottawa, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and First Ministers of provinces (except the Premier of Quebec) signed an Agreement “A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians”, establishing a new system of federal-provincial interaction and cooperation for the development and funding of social programs. The agreements achieved is a compromise on a number of problems appreciably impeding the relations between the center and the constituent entities of Canada in recent years, especially under drastic reduction of federal funding for social programs (by \$6 billion in 1995-1997). These agreements are intended to tackle the issues of:

- Harmonization of spending powers of Ottawa and provinces;
- Maintenance of the approximately same level of social security for Canadians, wherever they are located in Canada;
- Creation of mechanisms to avoid and resolve intergovernmental disputes.

The document signed in Ottawa reflects an attempt to initiate a mechanism of federal-provincial interaction which would smooth the certain contradiction in the Canadian Constitution, in accordance with which provinces have exclusive powers in the spheres of education, public health services, and social security, but have no sufficient taxable base.

According to the existing judicial interpretations of the Constitution, the federal Parliament is entitled to make allocations for any purposes irrespective of the sphere of its jurisdiction. This right being treated by Ottawa as an important tool of federal state-building was used by it in recent decades for the establishment, together with provinces, of large nationwide social programs (for instance, unemployment insurance), and for ensuring the approximately equal baseline parameters of post-secondary education, health care, social assistance and social services throughout the country.

Under the new Agreement, the federal government reserves the right to introduce and independently fund new programs in the social sphere. It undertakes to give at least three months’ notice to provinces of corresponding plans and involve them in the making of relevant political decisions. New programs of joint federal-provincial funding will be

introduced by Ottawa only with the consent of a majority of provincial governments and only after joint discussion of objectives, tasks and funding capabilities of these initiatives; each province will independently determine the practical detailed design of implementing such programs. In case a province refuses to join this program, it loses the right to receive its share of federal funding. Conversely, a province which already has a similar program can use the federal funds in the same or a related priority area.

To ensure the federal funding predictability, Ottawa undertakes to consult with provincial and territorial governments at least one year prior to enter any significant changes in the funding procedure.

The Agreement says that its participants will eliminate, within three years, the existing barriers to social mobility (they are forbidden by the Canadian Constitution), that is, residency-based discrimination in provinces in access to education, training, health, social services and social assistance. Federal and provincial governments should inform the population on the progress of social programs on a regular basis. A decision has taken that disputes in various spheres and fields will be resolved with possible engagement of third parties for advice or mediation. The Agreement is valid for three years, after which period it may be reviewed with due account for the parties' interests.

The government of Quebec refused to sign the Agreement by referring to the need of strict observance by the parties of their constitutional prerogatives, that is, non-involvement of Ottawa in the provinces' field of competence. Another reason for such an approach of Quebec authorities was a disregard by this Agreement of Quebec's asserted position that a province which has not entered into a joint social program should nevertheless be granted full funding from the center provided that the federal funds will be used by it for the same purposes.

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## **Semantics of the South: A Cognitive Semantic View of the Concept of South as Illustrated in Two North American Gothic Traditions: Davies's *Fifth Business* and McCullers's *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter***

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### **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to use Conceptual Metaphor Theory to interpret social and cultural issues coming from a comparative literary and cultural study named "Provincialism, Gothic, Grottesque: Davies's *Fifth Business* and McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*". The subject novels of the study have a set of common issues that can be connected by the fact that they are "products" of the two southern communities presented in these novels, one belonging to Southern Ontario and the other to the Southern States of the USA. Therefore, a cognitive semantic analysis of the concept of SOUTH contributes to the understanding of the problematic issues we meet in the novels. The paper begins with a general introduction and the discussion of the term SOUTH. After this, a semantic approach is proposed and SOUTH is connected to the concept of DOWN, which allows it to be subjected to further analysis. What follows is a set of illustrations coming from the previous analysis of the two novels – they illustrate links between DOWN and other concepts as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*.

### **Résumé**

Cet article est un essai d'interprétation des questions sociales et culturelles émanant d'une étude comparative littéraire et culturelle nommée « Provincialisme, Gothique, Grottesque : *Fifth Business* de Davies et *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* de McCullers » par la théorie conceptuelle de la métaphore. Le sujet des romans de cette étude est un ensemble de questions communes qui

peuvent être connectées par le fait qu'ils sont un «produit» de l'une des deux communautés du sud présentées dans ces romans, l'un représentant le sud de l'Ontario et l'autre les Etats du Sud des Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Par conséquent, une analyse sémantique cognitive de la notion de SUD contribue à la compréhension de la problématique que nous rencontrons dans ces romans. L'article commence par une introduction générale et la discussion du terme SUD. Après cela, une approche sémantique est proposée – où SUD est lié à la notion de BAS – ce qui lui permet d'être soumis à d'autres analyses. Ce qui suit est un ensemble d'illustrations provenant de la précédente analyse des deux romans – ils illustrent les liens entre BAS et d'autres concepts tels que proposés par Lakoff et Johnson dans *Metaphors We Live By*.



## Introduction

Many literary studies end up turning into studies of culture – this is an inevitable process which stems from the fact that (a vast majority of) literature actually comes from cultures and represents a response to various cultural, political, historical and social issues. This paper is the aftermath of something planned to be a comparative literary study of two novels. The Master's thesis entitled “Provincialism, Gothic, Grotesque: Davies's *Fifth Business* and McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*” was started in early 2008 with only one goal – to compare the two novels by the authors coming from two similar “Southern” genres – Southern Gothic (characteristic of the Southern states of the USA) and Southern Ontario Gothic. The results of the comparison demanded a cultural, political, historical and social analysis, which ought to have shed light on the reasons that influenced the similarities and differences between the two communities described in these novels. The main aim of this paper is to take the mentioned analysis to another level – that of semantics. The concept of *south* seems to be the main link connecting provincialism, gothic, grotesque, Robertson Davies, Carson McCullers, their novels and the places described in them, including cultural, political, historical and social issues. That is why a semantic analysis of this term can be very useful when we try to grasp the problematic nature of the two southern regions.

## South

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term *south* as follows:

Towards, or in the direction of, that part of the earth or heavens which is directly opposite to the north; With reference to place or location; spec. (U.S.), in or into the southern states; That one of the four cardinal points which is opposite to the north; The southern part of a country or region; The southern lands of Europe; The southern states of America. (OED, 2002)

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When used with the definite article and a capital S, *the South* usually refers to the region of the United States lying to the south of the Mason-Dixon line, i.e. the Southern United States and mainly the Deep South, in a general historical context. *The South* is also used for “the developing nations of the world”, i.e. The Third World. When comparing “the souths” of various countries, or at least comparing literature and other arts coming from those regions, another meaning of these terms might emerge. There are quite a few countries where *the South*, being the poorer part of the country, tends to develop certain traits specific to that piece of the land only. These countries include the USA, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Serbia and many others. The “souths” of these countries seem to share a number of features, some of which will be presented in this paper. For the purpose of illustrations that will follow in the final part of this paper, the list should also include Southern Ontario small-towns and villages in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> In these countries, we can identify a cultural “climate” that could be labelled *the southern cultural space*. This space seems to create a specific kind of atmosphere and a social and psychological framework for the development of issues encompassed by the term provincialism. When talking about the South in any of these countries, we usually refer to economically under-developed regions. This economic depravity, lack of financial stability and distance from the cultural centres affect all spheres of life and block the arrival of new knowledge, people and ideas. The presence of provincialism and other social and cultural issues caused by poverty and lack of education seems to have created fertile grounds for a number of literary genres and sub-genres. The authors belonging to these genres managed to draw inspiration from southern communities and, in the process, a large number of similarities between these authors have emerged.

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1 On the other hand, there is a set of countries (such as England, Germany, Uruguay or Sweden) where the southern part of the country is more developed – in these countries, *the southern cultural space* simply does not exist, or it represents something totally opposite to the one presented in this paper or in the thesis which inspired the paper.

After reading the biographies of Robertson Davies and Carson McCullers, one would say that the works of two people with lives so different could never bear too many similarities. However, drawing parallels between *Fifth Business* (Davies, 1970/1990), describing a Southern Ontario's community, and *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (McCullers, 1940/2000), which describes a town in the South of the USA, brings the two writers closer to one another. Primarily, these similarities come from the fact that the authors picked similar environments to be the settings of their novels. Namely, both Davies's Deptford and McCullers's unnamed town are small and situated away from their cultural centres. They are both southern, one being placed in Southern Ontario, the other in the Deep South of the USA, which may be a pure coincidence, but the similarity of the issues present in both of them make the reader believe that the geographical position really has something to do with the appearance of various problems. McCullers belongs to Southern Gothic – a macabre writing style native to the South of the USA. Southern writers have interpreted and illuminated the history and culture of the region through the conventions of the Gothic narrative, which provided insight into the horrors institutionalized in societies and social conventions. Like its parent genre, it relies on supernatural, ironic, or unusual events to guide the plot. It uses these tools not for the sake of mere suspense, but to explore social issues and reveal the cultural character of the South. (Ringe, 1982; Punter, 1996; Lloyd-Smith, 2004; Stamenković, 2008) Davies, on the other hand, belongs to Southern Ontario Gothic – a sub-genre of the Gothic novel genre and a feature of Canadian literature that comes from Southern Ontario. Like the Southern Gothic of the USA writers, Southern Ontario Gothic analyzes and criticizes social conditions such as race, gender, religion and politics, but in a Southern Ontario context. Southern Ontario Gothic is characterized by the firm realism set against the stern small-town Protestant morality stereotypical of the region, and often has underlying themes of moral hypocrisy. Actions and people that act against humanity, logic, and morality are all portrayed unflatteringly, and one or more characters may be suffering from some form of mental illness. Some (but not all) writers of Southern Ontario Gothic use supernatural or magic realist elements. (Edwards, 2005; Stamenković, 2008)



## A cognitive semantic approach

Meanings we tend to attach to certain social and cultural issues highly influence the manner in which we approach these issues in various spheres of life and the consequences of our moves are essential to the social modes of function – the way that we think contributes to the way that our society “thinks”. A suitable semantic way to move towards the issues embodied in the term “south” would be to view it from the perspective of *cognitive semantics*. In order to reach the point where we could start viewing “south” in a cognitive semantic manner, we should concentrate on *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (CMT), which is one of the main vehicles of cognitive semantics. However, one should not forget that cognitive semantics cannot be reduced to the studies of metaphor – it is a much broader scientific field. (Taylor, 2002, 487; Antović, 2007, 150-151) According to Joseph Grady, the most fundamental notion of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is ontological *mapping*. This term (borrowed from mathematics) refers to systematic metaphorical correspondences between closely related ideas. In CMT system, the features of the *term A* are said to “map” onto the ontological, cultural, political, historical and other kinds of features of the *term B*. Other elements of the conceptual domain of the *term A* (*the source domain*) are likewise “mapped” onto elements of the conceptual domain of the *term B* (*the target domain*). (Lakoff, 1993; Grady, 2007, 190-191) The constancy with which different languages employ the same metaphors, which often appear to be perceptually based, has led to the idea that the mapping between conceptual domains corresponds to neural mappings in the human brain. (Feldman and Narayanan, 2004, 385-392) According to CMT, metaphors provide rich evidence about the ways in which some aspects of our lived experience are associated with others, for reasons that reflect basic aspects of perception, thought and neurological organization. Within cognitive linguistics, the term metaphor is understood to refer to a pattern of conceptual associations, rather than to an individual metaphorical use or a linguistic convention. (Grady, 2007, 188-189) Lakoff and Johnson describe the essence of metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 5)

The first step in the cognitive analysis of the concept SOUTH will be to connect it to one of what most authors call the *primary metaphors*. (Grady, Taub and Morgan, 1996; Grady, 1997; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Grady, 2007) These metaphors are simple patterns which map fundamental perceptual concepts onto equally fundamental but not perceptual ones. According to Jerome A. Feldman, “these primary metaphors allow one to express a private internal (subjective) experience in terms of a publicly available event; this is one crucial feature of metaphorical language.” (Feldman, 2006)

Source concepts for primary metaphors include UP, DOWN, HEAVY, BRIGHT, BACKWARD, FORWARD and other simple concepts labelled as “force-dynamic”. (Talmy, 1988) These simple source concepts have corresponding target concepts such as DOMINANT, SAD, HAPPY, EASY, DIFFICULT, ILL, HEALTHY, GOOD, BAD, SUCCESS, THE PAST, COMPULSION, APPEALING, etc. (Grady, 2007) There is an obvious connection between the target concept of SOUTH and a source concept for primary metaphors – DOWN. According to Western conventions, the bottom side of a map is south and the southern direction has the azimuth or bearing of 180°. True south is the direction towards the southern end of the axis about which the earth rotates. However, in terms of Western conventions and mapmaking connected to it, SOUTH is inevitably considered DOWN, not only in the domains of geography, cartography and compass usage, where the arrow pointing to South is always turned towards the bottom, but also in the domain of our language. The way that we comprehend our use of language may not only lead us towards understanding the operational principles of the psychological structures and the biological functioning of the brain (Vidanović, 1989, 5), but it can also contribute to explaining the way that these psychological structures govern our acts in the process of building and maintaining social and cultural conventions. In many Indo-European we can find a phrase corresponding to the English phrase “down in the South”. Another example connected to the link between these two concepts is the one that can be found in economic terms – if one says that, for instance, “dollar demand pushes rupee further south,” this means that the demand for the dollar has pushed the value of the rupee further down. Moreover, this phenomenon exists in many non-Indo-European as well. In the region called Mesoamerica (the region extending approximately from central Mexico to Honduras and Nicaragua), we find a number of languages in which “south” actually means “down” (the same word is used for both). (Suaréz, 1983) All these facts tell us that humans tend to conceptualize SOUTH in a spatial arrangement that links it to a direction pointing downwards (at the same time making NORTH directed upwards and connected to the concept of UP). This spatial set-up brings about a number of consequences which all emerge from the fact that being linked to the concept of DOWN seems to be quite adverse when we come to analyzing cultural issues. Grady, Taub and Morgan (1996) have shown that complex metaphors are conceptual combinations of primary metaphors. Even if one chooses to use this approach (to view SOUTH as a complex metaphor), then DOWN seems to be one of the most important constituent primary metaphors in it.

## Orientalional metaphors and illustrations

In viewing the orientational metaphors connected to the concept of DOWN, we can see that DOWN (and therefore SOUTH) is permanently linked to a number of corresponding target concepts which represent real disadvantages in the domain of culture. The fact that there is a physical, social or cultural basis for each of these concepts (deeply rooted in our cognition) makes the re-definition of the concept of SOUTH practically impossible (SOUTH being one of these target concepts). Orientalional metaphors are those in which concepts are spatially related to each other and organized in a manner in which a whole system of concepts is presented with respect to one another. Lakoff and Johnson describe these metaphors as follows:

We will call these orientational metaphors, since most of them have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral. These spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. Orientalional metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation; for example, **happy is up**. The fact that the concept **happy** is oriented **up** leads to English expressions like “I’m feeling up today.”

Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary. They have a basis in our physical and cultural experience. Though the polar oppositions up-down, in-out, etc., are physical in nature, the orientational metaphors based on them can vary from culture to culture. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 14)

Lakoff and Johnson proceed with listing various orientational metaphors, predominantly linking UP and DOWN with other concepts, some of which are very important when we come to interpreting SOUTH as a concept closely connected to DOWN. In order to connect these metaphors with the cultural consequences relevant to the southern issues brought up in the two novels in question, we should notice the relations proposed by Lakoff and Johnson and then illustrate them with conclusions derived from the comparative analysis and the cultural and social study of the master’s thesis cited above. This should provide a clearer picture of how cognitive semantics can contribute to understanding cultural, social, and historical issues we find in literature. Lakoff’s and Johnson’s list of orientational metaphors can be divided into several groups, each of which can be illustrated with examples found in the novels’ analysis:

a) **HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN** I'm feeling up. That boosted my spirits. [...] Thinking about her always gives me a lift. I'm feeling down. I'm depressed. He's really low these days. I fell into a depression. My spirits sank. Physical basis: Drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state. [...]

**GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN** Things are looking up. We hit a peak last year, but it's been downhill ever since. [...] Physical basis for personal well-being: Happiness, health, life, and control – the things that principally characterize what is good for a person – are all up. [...]

**VIRTUE IS up; depravity is down** He is high-minded. She has high standards. She is upright. She is an upstanding citizen. That was a low trick. Don't be underhanded. I wouldn't stoop to that. That would be beneath me. [...] Physical and social basis: **good is up** for a person (physical basis), together with a metaphor [...] **society is a person** [...] To be virtuous is to act in accordance with the standards set by the society/person to maintain its well-being.[...]

**HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN** He has a lofty position. She'll rise to the top. He's at the peak of his career. [...] He's at the bottom of the social hierarchy. She fell in status. Social and physical basis: Status is correlated with (social) power and (physical) power is up. [...]

**HAVING CONTROL OR FORCE IS UP; BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL or force is down** I have control over her. I am on top of the situation. He's in a superior position. He's at the height of his power. [...] He is under my control. He fell from power. His power is on the decline. He is my social inferior. He is low man on the totem pole. Physical basis: Physical size typically correlates with physical strength, and the victor in a fight is typically on top. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 14-21)

In these metaphors, DOWN is linked to SAD, BAD and DEPRAVITY. That these links can be applied to SOUTH as well we can see both in *Fifth Business* and *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. In these novels, we find locations where economic and cultural depravity is omnipresent – both Davies's Deptford and McCullers's unnamed town are small and situated away from their cultural and economic centres. In these small communities, only few people live easily and jobs are hard to find. All this, in turn, frequently makes the inhabitants of these towns sad and their opportunities bleak. This is particularly the case in the novel coming from the USA – the overall atmosphere created by McCullers in this novel is gloomy and almost depressive. While Davies tends to mix grotesque with humour, McCullers leaves no space for laughter, while most of her grotesque characters seem to be tragic and hopeless. The difference between the two "souths" makes us able

to see why one of them is labelled “Deep South.”<sup>2</sup> This region, located in the USA, is usually delineated as being those states and areas where things most often thought of as “Southern” exist in their most undiluted and concentrated form. This is easily seen when comparing McCullers’s town to Deptford. Whatever we find in Deptford exists in McCullers’s town in an extreme mode. The Columbus-inspired small town not only isolates those who differ, but it also goes as far as to fragment them on the inside. We can see this with Biff Brannon, one of the major characters, who is torn apart by the everlasting loneliness and sadness. Perhaps the major and the most terrifying difference between the Deep South and Canadian South is the presence of severe racism in the former. Racial discrimination in this region affects primarily African Americans and Native Americans. Although racial discrimination contradicts many of the United States declarations, we are stunned by the fact that racism in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is institutional. Although not racial, institutional discrimination is present in Deptford as well – Mr. Mahaffey, the magistrate of the town, degrades Mary Dempster. However, in the Deep South of the 1940s, as presented in McCullers’s novel, African Americans are still in the process of fighting for basic human rights. (Stamenković, 2008)

At one point, Jake Blount (one of the main characters of McCullers’s novel) attaches various attributes to the South, calling it “The strangled South. The wasted South. The slavish South.” (McCullers, 1940/2000, 296) In the dialogue which incorporates the mentioned lines, he gives a social overview of the South and claims that in terms of status, the South of the USA is far below the northern states. The fact that both authors chose to approach the communities in a gothic manner (including grotesque) contributes to the general adverse attitude that readers tend to build towards the communities in question. It places SOUTH even more DOWN in the presented frame.

**b) HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP; SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN** He’s at the peak of health. Lazarus rose from the dead. He’s in top shape. As to his health, he’s way up there. He fell ill. He’s sinking fast. He came down with the flu. His health is declining. He dropped dead. Physical basis: Serious illness forces us to lie down physically. When you’re dead, you are physically down. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 15)

One of the important gothic elements is the presence of physical and mental illness, so it can be considered quite normal that both writers dedicate large parts of their novels to sickness and death. Both of these southern communities face their own tragedies

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<sup>2</sup> The fact that the attribute used to modify the original term “the South” is “deep” confirms the notion that SOUTH is firmly linked to the concept of DOWN. Thus, SOUTH has its position on the vertical axis and can move up or down, depending on its “southness”.

and deal with them in their own ways. Canadian Deptford, although a very small community, faces a number of strange events that are connected with sickness and death. First of all, the event that triggers the whole novel – Boy Staunton (the main character’s friend and arch-rival) hitting Mrs Dempster with a stone-laden snowball – invokes at least four linked events: a) Mrs. Dempster’s believed mental illness, which also has its own diagnosis and a special name in the Deptford world – “a condition to which the psychiatrists gave a variety of scientific names but which had been called simple in Deptford.” (Davies, 1970/1990, 222); b) Paul Dempster’s premature birth; c) Dunstan’s life-long sense of guilt (Dunstan is the main character); d) Mrs. Dempster’s eventual death. Willie, the brother of the main character in *Fifth Business*, dies and is “resurrected” the same day. Prior to this event, we can see Willie sick for a long period. In the same novel, we also face the death of Leola and Boy Staunton, the death of side characters named Orph and Miss Shanklin, and many other deaths during Dunstan’s military service in World War I. During the war, Deptford is struck by an epidemic of Spanish flu. The whole event is described in a manner that is reminiscent of horror movies: “The flu beat everything though. Spanish Influenza, they called it, but I always figured it was worked up by the Huns some ways. Jeez, this burg was like the Valley of the Shadda for weeks [...] people just dropped like flies.” (Davies, 1970/1990, 101-102)

McCullers’s town seems to have an equally long sickness and death roll. Sickness, both of body and mind, as an essential gothic characteristic, pervades throughout the novel. The most memorable episodes dealing with sickness are the ones involving Doctor Copeland. He is the doctor of the poor and underprivileged, predominantly of African American ancestry, who live their lives in unbearable conditions. They are, thus, incapable of stopping the illness spreading around and the percentage of the population struck by various sorts of diseases is extremely high. Later on, Dr. Copeland himself is sent to live on a farm, as he is too sick to take care of himself. The section describing circumstances surrounding the death of Alice Brannon (the wife of Biff Brannon) is one of the more disturbing parts of the novel. Namely, Alice develops cancer, which seems to stay undiagnosed until after she dies. Spiros Antonopoulos, Mr. Singer’s best friend (Singer being the central character of the novel) develops both a mental and a physical disease and is sent to an asylum. The episode concerning Willie’s suffering in the state prison is another instance of the presence of sickness in its two forms: the mental sickness of the guard capable of leaving three human beings in a room where they almost freeze to death and the physical sickness caused in these three people (especially Willie, as gangrene sets in his feet) due to this action. Portia explains that “They quickly taken Willie and them boys to the sick ward and their legs were all swolled and froze. Gangrene. They sawed off both our Willie’s feet.” (McCullers, 1940/2000, 254-255) Overall,

the descriptions found in both novels confirm that SICKNESS and DEATH, as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson belong to (the) SOUTH.

The list of DOWN metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson presented in this paper could have been even longer. For instance, “RATIONAL IS UP; EMOTIONAL IS DOWN” and “CONSCIOUS IS UP; UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 15-17) could equally be illustrated and linked to southern issues presented in these novels. Various events and characters bordering on reality and the authors’ use of dreams could easily confirm that whatever applies to down is at the same time connected to south.

## Conclusion

The benefits of the parallel overview of the metaphoric links proposed by Lakoff and Johnson and illustrations from *Fifth Business* and *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* are two-fold. Firstly, the examples taken from the novels confirm that SOUTH is firmly bound to the concept of DOWN. Secondly, the set of metaphors taken from *Metaphors We Live By* help us understand *why* the concept of SOUTH has so many adverse concepts linked to it. The link in which SOUTH IS DOWN, makes SOUTH the target concept of DOWN (in this case the source domain). Other target domains of DOWN are SAD, BAD, DEPRAVITY, LOW STATUS, BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL, SICKNESS and DEATH. The target domains are mutually connected and reflect each other; in this manner, SOUTH seems to be the target domain which encompasses many other target domains of DOWN, at least in those cultures to which we can apply the notion of southern cultural space.

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## Les créations de Réjean Ducharme

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### Abstract

The present paper revisits the key concepts of Petr Vurm's PhD thesis on the creation and creativity of Réjean Ducharme. Having emerged from the effervescence of the Quiet Revolution, this Quebec writer epitomizes the *enfant terrible* and the ghost person (never appearing in public) of the 1960s in the Francophone province. His works bear a remarkably particular style of writing, are very playful and ironic at the same time, to the point that it is not easy to pinpoint single unequivocal meanings. Therefore, a more creative approach has to be adopted, composed of novelty, game/play and aesthetic considerations. We explain these successively in the light of the general discussions of artistic creativity and of the historicity of the Quiet Revolution.

### Résumé

L'article présent revient sur les concepts clés de la thèse de doctorat de Petr Vurm, laquelle porte sur la création et la créativité de Réjean Ducharme. Ayant émergé de l'effervescence de la Révolution tranquille au Québec, cet écrivain québécois personnifie l'enfant terrible et l'écrivain-fantôme (n'apparaissant jamais en public) des années 1960 dans la province francophone. Ses oeuvres véhiculent un style d'écriture très personnel, elles sont très ludiques et ironiques à la fois, à tel point qu'il est impossible d'y saisir des significations univoques. Ainsi, une approche plus créative doit être adoptée, comportant la nouveauté, le jeu et des considérations esthétiques. Nous expliquons celles-ci à tour de rôle, à la lumière de discussions générales sur la créativité artistique et l'historicité de la Révolution tranquille.

Réjean Ducharme représente un des grands auteurs de la littérature québécoise, dont l'apparition fulgurante a marqué l'imaginaire littéraire des années 1960 jusqu'à l'écriture contemporaine. En plus, son style particulier attire de nombreux imitateurs et sa manière d'écrire originale et turbulente est à son tour remarquable. Le présent article résume les points clés de notre thèse intitulée *Création et créativité de Réjean Ducharme* terminée en octobre 2008 et soutenue en février 2009. Nous nous sommes ici posé la question de la relation entre la création et la créativité littéraire, qui semble bien correspondre avec le *modus operandi* de Ducharme, artiste multiple, dont la création littéraire va de l'écriture romanesque, passe par le théâtre, scénarios de films, paroles de chansons, pour aboutir à la création de collages rassemblés sous le pseudonyme Roch Plante. Nous proposons de suivre la structure de notre thèse et d'exposer ici une des nombreuses manières possibles d'aborder Réjean Ducharme.

Dans nos considérations, c'est l'équivoque qui représente le principe de base de l'écriture de Réjean Ducharme. L'équivoque va de pair avec les paradoxes ducharmiens, que nous essayons de structurer de plusieurs points de vue. L'ensemble des paradoxes constitue un enjeu herméneutique de l'interprétation et la position du lecteur s'y avère critique. D'où la proposition de résoudre cette aporie par l'exploration de la créativité, champ fécond pour la création et pour la réception de l'œuvre littéraire. La créativité comme terme scientifique prend son origine aux États-Unis dans le contexte de la production en masse et surtout de l'instigation au développement d'idées nouvelles. Son acception première n'est donc pas appropriée à l'encadrement du milieu des arts, c'est pourquoi il semble propice d'adapter les grands traits de la créativité scientifique au champ des arts et au champ de la création linguistique et littéraire en tant que partie de celui-là. Il appert que la créativité, quelle que soit sa définition, comporte plusieurs composantes caractéristiques. Il s'agit d'abord de l'idée du *Nouveau*, de quelque chose qui vient au monde *ex nihilo*. Nous questionnerons ce concept dans une partie consacrée à l'enfant-porteur de la nouveauté. Le deuxième concept est très large et il couvre tout ce qui est jeu libre des éléments avec lesquels on joue pour arriver à un résultat surprenant ou imprévu. La troisième partie est complémentaire au jeu, parce que toute recherche sur la créativité pose également la question de la valeur de l'objet créé. C'est pourquoi nous avons jugé utile de nous pencher sur la relation entre l'aspect esthétique et éthique et nous concentrer notamment sur l'esthétique de l'erreur ducharmienne.

## Paradoxes ducharmiens

L'œuvre ducharmienne se pose dès son début comme un défi constant au critique, caractérisée qu'elle est par la méfiance absolue que cette œuvre pratique envers les textes et les mots, les personnages, les sentiments, les idées, somme toute, envers l'institution littéraire dans son entier : « Ducharme réfute la croyance jusqu'à une infinie suspicion vis-à-vis des mots ».<sup>1</sup>

Le personnage ducharmien hésite entre la recherche de l'amour et les passions destructrices, entre la complicité avec le lecteur et son refus complet. Il y a trop d'incohérences dans le texte pour qu'il s'agisse d'un hasard ou simplement d'une hésitation de la part de l'auteur sur la voie à emprunter. Ainsi, l'équilibre du récit est sans cesse rompu et rétabli par un jeu de va-et-vient, jeu de contraires et antithèses, une équivoque au sens le plus large du terme. La pratique de l'équivoque, annoncée presque comme un programme par le roman *Le nez qui voque*, s'inscrit, et là réside peut-être sa plus grande force, dans le mot-clé qui va hanter et séduire le lecteur, « maghané » en plus par le jeu de mots ducharmien :

Ils ont des tâches historiques. Sans accent circonflexe, nous obtiendrons: ils ont des taches historiques. C'est une équivoque. C'est un nez qui voque. Mon nez voque. Je suis un nez qui voque.<sup>2</sup>

Il est évident que ce jeu de mots gratuit propose au lecteur un contrat, qu'on pourrait appeler le contrat de l'équivoque et qui se résume ainsi : « moi, le narrateur, en bonne conscience des règles linguistiques et littéraires, je vais utiliser tous les moyens que me donnent la langue et mon écriture pour obscurcir le message et le rendre ambigu, pour te tromper, « mon cher lecteur ». À toi de refuser de lire immédiatement ou de continuer mais dans ce cas-là, il faut accepter mon contrat. En acceptant, tu acceptes en même temps que ce qui suit ne sera pas conforme à la réalité que tu connais, ni aux livres que tu as lus auparavant. »

Il semble donc que la disparition de l'auteur-fantôme derrière son texte corresponde à une qualité intrinsèque de son écriture, qui est à la fois opaque et équivoque comme si les mots n'étaient faits que pour cacher, évacuer le sens. Par contre, le lecteur peut, à chaque instant, se rendre compte de leur matérialité, de tout ce qui constitue le côté « signifiant » de l'échange communicationnel, les mots étant non seulement des témoins, mais de véritables « racoleurs » de la fonction poétique de Jakobson. La

1 Gilles McMillan, « Ducharme ironiste », *Conjonctures*, no. 26, 1997, p. 53.

2 *Le nez qui voque*, p. 13.

matérialité des mots est souvent soulignée par le discours des personnages qui s'effacent pour laisser la place aux mots-protagonistes, qui deviennent des vedettes grâce aux métaphores et aux comparaisons avec des objets réels :

Un livre est un monde, un monde fait, un monde avec un commencement et une fin.  
Chaque page d'un livre est une ville. Chaque *ligne* est une rue. Chaque *mot* est une demeure.<sup>3</sup>

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La relation entre le signifiant et le signifié peut être interprétée à la lumière du réalisme littéraire inverse: comme si les mots étaient plus réels, leur apparition plus opaque que transparente et comme si la réalité était par ce fait même plus virtuelle. Le procédé du discours opaque est justifié par l'introduction d'un narrateur à la fois peu fiable mais d'autant plus autoritaire et arbitraire dans le choix de ses mots. Par exemple, c'est Mille Milles qui affirme :

C'est le dix octobre. C'est le dix septembre. Ce n'est pas le dix octobre du tout. Pauvre Mille Milles ! Tout mélangé dans ses dates !<sup>4</sup>;

un autre moyen est la négation pure de ce qui vient d'être dit, formulée comme une tautologie ou un paradoxe logique :

Pourquoi le premier enfant trouve-t-il le loup beau ? Parce que le loup est brun, a les yeux brillants et les oreilles pointues. Pourquoi le deuxième enfant trouve-t-il le loup laid ? Parce que le loup est brun et a les yeux brillants et les oreilles pointues. C. Q. F. D. J'ai détruit d'avance par ce petit exemple tous les arguments que tu pourrais produire pour détruire ma théorie.<sup>5</sup>

L'exemple précédent remet en question le sens de la communication et des éléments qui y participent : car la tautologie et le paradoxe, ces énoncés qui prétendent communiquer, sans le faire réellement, ébranlent toutes les autres données du processus communicationnel, y compris les récepteurs : le critique ou le lecteur. D'ailleurs, l'écriture ducharmienne, par tous ses aspects, semble ne pas se soucier du critique ni du lecteur parce qu'elle ne fait aucun effort spécial pour être facilement abordable et pour expliquer clairement son propos, comme si elle se résignait, devant la page blanche, à ce

3 *L'Avalée des avalés*, p. 107.

4 *Le nez qui voque*, p. 16.

5 *L'Océantume*, p. 167.

que le jugement final sur tel ou tel roman ducharmien ne puisse être que mauvais. Plus généralement parlant, un autre paradoxe consiste dans un va-et-vient constant entre le sérieux et le non sérieux : le léger, le frivole, le ludique, le puéril, etc.

Des procédés d'ironie, d'auto-ironie, d'ambivalence et de mise en cause de la crédibilité du narrateur évacuent donc le sens de toute remarque qui serait destinée à être prise au sérieux par un lecteur moins averti.

« L'auteur sollicite l'indulgence pour la qualité de cette production. » (Léandre Ducharme).<sup>6</sup>

« Plus ça va plus mes quatrains empirent. »<sup>7</sup>

« C'est très joli, ça (N. de l'E.) »<sup>8</sup>

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De plus, Ducharme entre souvent dans le domaine du paratexte, en louant par exemple sa propre traduction :

« Traduit par un bon traducteur. »<sup>9</sup>

La sous-estimation se joue surtout autour du processus de la crédibilité du narrateur, elle sape ses bases. Par ce processus, le narrateur peut chercher un complice ou une victime de son discours pour duper ou être dupe, comme dans la communication ironique, ou tout simplement chercher une excuse pour ses constructions fantaisistes. La sur-estimation, à son tour, est un sentiment de supériorité et souvent de solitude, exprimé face au monde (à la Milliarde, dirait Bérénice).

Dans la veine de ce jeu de la moquerie envers le lecteur et de l'autodépréciation se situent également les procédés qui déjouent la convention et la tradition littéraire : la confusion générique, le non-respect de la typographie, l'abus d'épigraphes, de mises en exergue, de notes infrapaginales, ainsi que de toute autre convention paratextuelle. Dans les parties suivantes de cet article, nous résumons les idées principales posées par la créativité et liées aux sus-dites variations du paradoxe : l'enfant, le jeu et l'erreur.

6 *Le nez qui voque*, p. 7.

7 *Le nez qui voque*, p. 33.

8 *Fille de Christophe Colomb*, p. 45.

9 *Le nez qui voque*, p. 77.

## L'enfant révolté

Même si l'idée d'introduire l'enfant en littérature n'est pas nouvelle au sein de la tradition littéraire occidentale, selon Philippe Ariès, l'intérêt réel pour l'enfant dans le monde occidental est un phénomène relativement récent.<sup>10</sup> Par exemple, l'enfant est dédaigné par La Bruyère comme source de vices et mauvaises passions. Ce n'est sans doute qu'avec les Romantiques français que s'instaurerait un véritable culte de l'enfance. Par la suite, nous pouvons reconnaître au moins deux courants opposés dans la littérature moderne ou contemporaine. Soit la figure de l'enfant permet à l'auteur de se remémorer avec nostalgie l'enfance perdue, et le souvenir de cette enfance se radoucit forcément par la capacité d'oublier les choses désagréables. L'enfant y représente soi-même et les valeurs classiques qu'on reconnaît à l'enfance. L'autre grand courant est l'enfant inversé, « paradoxal » – le plus souvent un enfant avancé sur son âge biologique, génie et révolté. L'enfant ducharmien est sans doute plus proche de Zazie que du Grand Meaulnes qui représente le premier type, mais il est en même temps plus complexe.

Cette classification de base des enfants littéraires est raffinée par celle de Marina Bethlenfalvay, qui distingue trois grands types d'enfants en littérature française moderne – l'enfant venu d'ailleurs (romantique), l'enfant victime eou révolté, et l'enfant du monde.<sup>11</sup> Chaque modèle de cette typologie incarne selon ce critique un aspect particulier de l'enfant réel, et les types enfantins qui, à partir de l'époque romantique, dominent la littérature française, non seulement se définissent par opposition à l'adulte, mais ils lui sont supérieurs.<sup>12</sup> Dans la typologie proposée, il manque pourtant une étude approfondie du type d'enfant crucial pour nos recherches. L'auteure ne fait que quelques remarques sur l'enfant-génie et l'enfant-révolté lorsqu'elle esquisse des tendances plus récentes et ouvre ainsi le champ de recherches sur le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, celui de « l'enfant nouveau » qui reste encore « figure incertaine ».

Or, l'enfant-personnage est désormais solidement établi en littérature et pour cela, il subit une transformation nouvelle avec l'arrivée du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et les écrivains modernes. Si certaines œuvres mineures mettent en scène des passages anecdotiques de l'enfance de ses protagonistes – « des scènes enfantines, qui ajoutent au jour le jour [...] les menus faits et gestes d'un enfant, ou des enfants d'une famille »<sup>13</sup>, ces épisodes annoncent une souffrance, psychologique plutôt que physique, comme c'était le cas au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. C'est

10 Ph. Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Seuil, 1973, p. 17.

11 Marina Bethlenfalvay : *Les Visages de l'enfant dans la littérature française du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Genève, Droz, 1979, p. 18.

12 Bethlenfalvay, *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

13 M. Bethlenfalvay, *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

soit la taquinerie des adultes, mais encore davantage un dosage savant d'un désintéret complet ou d'un intérêt surprotectif des mères monstrueuses, qui est à la source de cette souffrance.

Un autre courant de la représentation enfantine, d'ailleurs assez proche de celle de Ducharme, est repérable chez les surréalistes, qui confèrent à l'enfant le pouvoir de l'imagination illimitée et du regard nouveau, insolite, doués par cette qualité d'une immense potentialité créatrice, voisine de celle de l'inconscient. Le surréalisme est aussi le domaine de l'évasion vers des mondes imaginaires créés par les enfants, comme par exemple dans *Les Enfants terribles* de Cocteau.

Un troisième degré de la lecture littéraire de l'enfant-victime se trouve chez Lautréamont, qui introduit un véritable « culte » de l'enfant brutalisé et qui coïncide avec certains côtés des enfants chez Ducharme.<sup>14</sup> L'auteur des *Chants de Maldoror* fournit un répertoire riche bien que non-exhaustif de tout ce qui peut arriver à un enfant. Il explore les limites du scriptible du subconscient et du fantasme en littérature : une des raisons qui lui vaudra l'admiration des surréalistes. C'est Ducharme qui sera également attiré par les abîmes de la violence verbale. L'importance de l'intertexte lautréamontien chez Ducharme est primordiale, notamment dans le renversement de rôles : le brutalisé s'insurge contre le brutalisant, au moins verbalement. Ici et là, il s'agit d'une violence imaginée, rêvée, mais qui dans le champ littéraire peut déborder vers son exécution lorsque Bérénice se décide à tuer Mauriac, le chat de sa mère.

Ainsi, aux antipodes de l'enfant qui subit passivement les peines se trouve l'enfant révolté, qui est en quelque sorte son corollaire. C'est l'enfant qui correspond le mieux aux héros et aux héroïnes ducharmiennes, qui refusent de souffrir et ce refus ne peut être racheté que par la souffrance des autres.

Or, nous proposons d'ajouter à la typologie de Bethlenfalvay l'enfant révolté et de l'enfant moderne, qui s'avèrera pertinente lors de notre regard sur l'enfant de Ducharme. Au lieu de rentrer davantage dans le détail de chaque modèle de la typologie, nous allons reprendre, en guise de conclusion, l'observation de Brigitte Seyfrid-Bommertz, qui résume le mieux la position complexe de l'enfant du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour présenter ensuite comment se traduit la complexité du renouveau enfantin chez Réjean Ducharme :

De façon générale, il semble que plus on s'avance vers la période contemporaine, plus le profil passionnel de l'enfant se fait complexe, déroutant, voire inquiétant. L'enfant

<sup>14</sup> Ainsi, Bethlenfalvay a dressé chez Lautréamont une statistique d'enfants **abandonnés** I, 9 II, 4, **séduits** II, 5, II, 6, VI, 5, **emprisonnés** I, 12, IV, 7, **violés** I, 11, III, 2, **torturés** I, 6, II, 5, III, 2 IV, 8, VI, 9 et 10. Bethlenfalvay, *Op. cit.*, p. 66; les chiffres romains indiquent le chant, les chiffres arabes la strophe dans *Les chants de Maldoror*.

acquiert de multiples visages, se mue en un être polymorphe plus difficile à saisir. [...] L'enfant est [...] saisi à travers ses zones d'ombre, son côté satanique, ou encore il se fait étrange, irréel, fantastique, être incompréhensible sur lequel on n'a plus de prise.<sup>15</sup>

À quel type de la typologie proposée, l'enfant ducharmien ressemblerait-t-il le mieux ? En fait, l'œuvre de Ducharme est tellement conditionnée par la présence et la conscience enfantines qu'il s'avère difficile d'imaginer ce qui resterait de ses textes sans ces personnages et sans leur discours intérieur. De plus, la conscience enfantine semble nous fournir la clef d'une des interprétations possibles de son œuvre et déplace l'interprétation au niveau symbolique. L'ambiguïté et le paradoxe liés à la question de « qui parle ? » est alors central et sa symbolique va au-delà d'une simple représentation réaliste de l'enfant vu du dehors.

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## Le jeu

Après la clarification de la position de l'enfant dans l'univers ducharmien, il nous revient de préciser comment ces éléments, un fois inventés et créés, sont développés dans le mouvement créateur et créatif. Le premier pas d'un homme créateur consiste dans l'invention des couleurs ou des mots ; il est clair qu'il ne peut pas s'y arrêter sinon cela ne mériterait pas d'être nommée créativité. Elle doit être prolongée dans un procédé qui, d'une manière générale, s'appelle combinaison, et qui dans la rhétorique prend le nom de la *dispositio*, ou, en musique, en photographie, en peinture – celui de la composition. Mais quelle est exactement la nature de cette composition dite créatrice ? L'examen du problème de la composition nous ramène vers le phénomène du jeu et de son corollaire, la combinatoire ludique.

Premièrement, il y a la question de la possibilité de trouver les qualités principales de la composition d'une œuvre créatrice et qui caractérisent une telle œuvre, qu'elles soient imprimées dans l'œuvre même ou qu'on les constate uniquement dans le processus créateur. Ces qualités existent-elles et sont-elles perceptibles ? Deuxièmement, nous pouvons poser la question des *a priori* de la composition créatrice, identifiables déjà dans l'activité du créateur. Il existe deux pôles principaux de cette activité : le premier pôle suppose une activité créatrice comme distraction et fantaisie, activité qui se déroule au gré de l'auteur libre dans ses choix. L'autre pôle est celui des règles qui précèdent, donnent des consignes à respecter, pour arriver à la créativité.

<sup>15</sup> Seyfried-Bommertz, *Op. cit.*, p. 20.



À notre avis, l'un ne peut exister sans l'autre. La créativité artistique et littéraire naît précisément de la rencontre et même de la confrontation, voire du combat de la liberté de création avec des règles de la création transmises par les générations et par la tradition, ainsi que par un entraînement individuel du créateur. Si l'on accepte cette constatation, on voit également beaucoup de ressemblances avec le jeu. L'art, existant comme une activité libre et en même temps représenté par des ensembles de règles, permet un passage au jeu, où jouer se scinde en deux activités, jeu libre de l'enfant et jeu à règles. Ou bien, pour prendre l'exemple de l'anglais comme langue qui permet cette distinction lexicale, entre *play* et *game*. Cela nous amène à aborder le jeu selon deux grands théoriciens de ce concept du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Johann Huizinga et Roger Caillois qui ont tenté de mieux cerner l'étendue définitionnelle des jeux en général. Par exemple, pour Huizinga, le jeu se situe dans un univers tout autre que celui de la réalité, il a ses limites et sa durée et il existe une affinité étroite entre le jeu et la *poiesis*, dans la mesure où celle-ci se déroule dans l'espace délimité par la pensée du créateur/poète; Huizinga affirme qu'une partie de la fonction poétique consisterait à créer une tension qui envoûte le lecteur et le tienne sous un charme. Caillois précise que le jeu est discret, incertain, improductif, dirigé par des règles ou soumis à la fantaisie.

Réjean Ducharme exploite plusieurs des aspects définitionnels du jeu relevés par Huizinga et Caillois. Souvent, la présence du jeu en tant qu'activité libératrice va de pair avec la rupture du cliché. Donnons quelques exemples, en procédant des subversions plus faciles à celles qui constituent le micro-univers du micro-contexte. La rupture du cliché la plus fréquente consiste dans la substitution ludique d'un cliché linguistique par un autre. Cependant, ce procédé facile, employé à la fois dans les jeux de mots quotidiens ainsi que dans les jeux poétiques des surréalistes ou des oulipiens a pour conséquence plus que la simple substitution :

1. Nos efforts ont déjà porté des *légumes*.<sup>16</sup>
2. *Diable* merci.<sup>17</sup>
3. Nous n'avons par la chair de *poule* mais la chair d'*autruche*.<sup>18</sup>
4. Quand la *reine* dort, les souris dansent.<sup>19</sup>
5. Tout ce qui brille n'est pas *ordure*.<sup>20</sup>
6. Pas plus bête que lui, je prends la boutade *au pied du hétéroglphe*.<sup>21</sup>

16 *L'Océantume*, p. 38

17 *L'Océantume*, p. 64.

18 *L'Océantume*, p. 31.

19 *L'Océantume*, p. 83.

20 *L'Océantume*, p. 136.

21 *L'Océantume*, p. 139.

La rupture ludique du cliché est chez Ducharme présente à tout niveau de la langue, elle rompt en même temps l'horizon d'attente du lecteur, qui, dans un contexte communicationnel courant n'aurait pas du tout besoin des termes en italique, car il pourrait les reconstituer à partir du contexte. Selon les théories de l'information, une telle redondance élevée est caractéristique notamment dans des systèmes communicationnels à grand bruit<sup>22</sup> ou là où la redondance fonctionne comme un « dispositif du confort de décodage » – la communication serait possible sans elle mais avec un effort beaucoup plus grand. L'effet de surprise de la rupture est d'autant plus efficace lorsqu'il s'agit d'un cliché, ce que confirme la réaction du lecteur idéal bafoué devant une locution quasi familière, pourtant jamais rencontrée (exemples 2 ou 6).

De plus, même des exemples aussi faciles à créer que l'exemple 3 embrayent le micro-contexte de la phrase dans le macro-contexte de la connotation et des différences culturelles, car la simple transposition remet en doute le fonctionnement de la langue et l'adaptation du cliché et des locutions figées à ces « nouveaux mondes », ce qui apporte une autre qualité aux aspects de la nouveauté discutés ici. Étant donné que la langue française a servi non seulement comme outil de communication mais aussi comme outil de colonisation, force nous est d'imaginer que Ducharme souligne ici la nécessité de transposer tout le système linguistique, à travers la forme des expressions figées, vers des réalités existant en dehors de la France.

Même des exemples plus élaborés, comme ceux ici-bas, se situent dans la logique d'une rupture complexe à plusieurs niveaux :

1. [...] sens dessus dessus et sens dessous dessous<sup>23</sup>
2. armé de patience jusqu'aux dents<sup>24</sup>
3. Il vente par bourrasques. Il pleut des coups de fouets. Il tonne. Il éclaire.<sup>25</sup>
4. Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent à mes pieds ?<sup>26</sup>
5. Elle a vécu ce que vit toute douceur, l'espace d'un malentendu.<sup>27</sup>

Le jeu de mots chez Ducharme se soumet en partie aux caractéristiques d'ordre général, communes aux jeux de mots, mais comporte aussi ses spécificités, notamment parce qu'il représente non seulement un objet linguistique mais parce que la surabondance de jeux de mots inscrit le jeu de mots dans une structure plus vaste de la communication littéraire.

22 Par le *bruit* nous entendons le terme technique de la théorie acoustique et de la communication.

23 *L'Avalée des avalés*, p. 106.

24 *L'Océantume*, p. 96.

25 *L'Océantume*, p. 101.

26 *L'Océantume*, p. 83.

27 *L'Avalée des avalés*, p. 110.

Le jeu de mots a donc chez Ducharme trois fonctions. La première fonction est liée à l'intentionnalité ludique. La surabondance de jeux de mots (dans *Les Enfantômes*, on en compte parfois une dizaine sur une page) veut signifier l'intentionnalité de l'auteur de jouer. Elle sert de clin d'oeil au lecteur attentif.

Deuxièmement, le jeu de mots marque les personnages et leur milieu : il peut imiter, d'une façon fantaisiste, le parler de l'enfant (krankile), il évoque la couleur locale et par là, il est une analogie ducharmienne du joul (dj'appelle, etc.).

Troisièmement, le jeu de mots souligne la mise à distance critique ou ironique du narrateur vis-à-vis du milieu intellectuel où il n'appartient pas ou de la société comme telle. De tels jeux de mots abondent dans *Les Enfantômes* : académie sans fraise (française), un poing sait tout (un point c'est tout), les hommes de bonne volonté qui se sont illustrés en se réunissant à Charlottetown pour sécréter, comme des guêpes infatigables (sécréter/secrétaire), folie égalomane (mégalomane), etc.

Résumons les traits principaux du jeu de mots et des calembours chez Ducharme dans un tableau récapitulatif avec quelques exemples dépouillés à travers les romans ducharmiens à titre d'illustration :

Aspect sémantique	Exemple(s) : combinaison ludant/ludé
<b>Idee de contraste (le ludant et le ludé s'opposent)</b>	
Charnel/spirituel	sangsible/sang+sensible, absang/sang+absent, intéressang/sang+intéressant
Grotesque/officiel (solennel)	Académie française/sans fraise, sécréter/secrétaire
Ancien/Nouveau monde	huronie / ironie (concept grec) +huron (désignation amérindienne)
<b>Idee d'intensification (le ludant et le ludé coopèrent)</b>	
Erotique (plutôt concret)/poétique (plutôt abstrait)	éroginal/érotique+original, sans ziziter/zizi + hésiter, cygne de notre île immatérielle/cygne +signe
Être/paraître	paraïsse/paresse+paraissent (faire semblant)
Poétique de la nature/sentiment humain	être aux petits joiseaux/oiseau+joie
Caractéristique objectif/subjectif (évaluatif)	interminables, minables tout court/interminable+minable

Sans vouloir réduire le jeu de langage à la seule équivoque, force nous est de constater que l'équivoque phonétique ou l'équivoque lexicale constituent le principe d'une grande partie de tels jeux.

## L'erreur

Les considérations ludiques évoquées dans la partie précédente ne font que suggérer la possibilité de la rupture et de l'altération qui accompagne chaque jeu. Pourtant, il existe chez Ducharme une rupture toute particulière appartenant à tout un système d'altérations négatives dont les éléments sont plus ou moins visibles, et ce système se situe à son tour dans ce que nous pourrions appeler l'esthétique de l'erreur : erreur qui commence comme une faute d'orthographe, mais qui dépasse largement son sens premier pour finir comme erreur de communication tout court.

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Nous avons emprunté cette piste sémantique de « tout ce qui va mal »<sup>28</sup> pour en déduire des conclusions qui, en apportant un complément nécessaire aux réflexions précédentes.

Commençons d'abord par l'orthographe française. Celle-ci devient plus qu'un système normatif, pour les Ferron de *L'hiver de force* elle représente aussi un métier. Est-ce parce que Ducharme a travaillé comme correcteur d'épreuves qu'il ressent un penchant pour ces « ouvriers de la lettre » ? Rappelons que le seul métier qu'on connaisse aux protagonistes André et Nicole à travers *L'hiver de force* est précisément celui-là. D'une manière humoristique et ironique, ils mentionnent l'ouvrage obligatoire pour tous les élèves français, *Le bon usage*, comme une preuve anodine, voire grotesque, de la compétence.

Le peu de vie que nous gagnons, c'est comme correcteurs d'épreuves. Les éditeurs et les imprimeurs de Montréal ont tous notre numéro de téléphone. Il n'y en a pas des tas qui nous appellent, certes, il n'y en a même qu'un ou deux, mais ça ne prouve pas que nous ne soyons pas compétents. Nous connaissons par cœur la grammaire Grevisse. (*Le bon usage*, Duculot, Gembloux, 1955)<sup>29</sup>

Pourtant, accepter ce métier n'est pas se compromettre par le travail. Corriger les épreuves représente également la possibilité de travailler indépendamment, chez soi – dans cet espace-jeu, ne pas se soustraire au *rat race* de la carrière. Ce gagne-pain renforce le sentiment élitiste d'André et Nicole sans les empêcher de poursuivre leur visée principale – la grandeur et la recherche de la plénitude.

Le premier symbolisme de la faute est alors scolaire. Il fait métaphoriquement surgir l'image du sang, d'une page mutilée par le crayon rouge ou décorée par les signes du correcteur, hétérogènes à l'écriture. Chez Ducharme, cette symbolique de l'erreur se

28 On parle du mal au sens de toutes les remarques qui parsèment ses romans : « On voulait pas te le dire, mais ça va mal. Y a plus rien qui marche. Tout se morpionne » (*L'hiver de force*, p. 119).

29 *L'hiver de force*, p. 50.

situe aux antipodes de l'idéal de l'enfance discuté précédemment. Elle est portée par la figure de la maîtresse d'école dominatrice :

Iode Ssouvie !

Pour la troisième fois la maîtresse crie mon nom. Je fais comme si elle n'avait rien dit. [...]

Tu peux toujours crier, grosse valétudinaire. Ta voix n'est pas de taille à côté de mes voix et mes voix me commandent de ne pas bouger.<sup>30</sup>

Notons ici encore une des variantes de l'isotopie sémantique de la faute originale comme manque et privation, et de la volonté des personnages de s'y soustraire à l'aide de leur intégrité. La définition de l'erreur comme un manque (à la règle, à la fidélité, etc.) est évident. Selon Franca Marcato-Falzone,

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l'enfance porte en elle le signe de l'intégrité et de la pureté, par opposition à la réalité, qui consume et corrode, qui corrompt et se corrompt. Céder à cette réalité – répondre aux questions de la maîtresse – équivaut à perdre sa propre capacité d'imagination, à se conformer au monde tel qu'il est, à renoncer à le réinventer – à le modifier –, à s'insérer dans le tracé d'autrui.<sup>31</sup>

Au prolongement de cette symbolique scolaire, immédiate, nous trouvons le travail du correcteur qui est rempli d'une triple signification. Successivement, il passe d'une fonction de simple caractéristique de la modalité d'existence d'André et Nicole à la représentation de l'attitude envers la société et, dans un troisième temps, elle assume une fonction symbolique que nous allons expliciter plus loin.

Pour l'instant, revenons au deuxième point. Nous constatons que le métier de correcteur correspond à un plus haut degré au rapport que les protagonistes entretiennent avec la société. La faute d'orthographe fournit ici un important critère de sélection : elle permet de discriminer en appliquant le critère de la simple connaissance de l'orthographe et de la grammaire. Cette connaissance n'est réservée qu'à un nombre limité de personnes, à l'élite des correcteurs, qui ne sont d'ailleurs pas tout seuls en cela, car parmi ceux que André et Nicole acceptent pour égaux, il y a le personnage marginal du bonhomme Bolduc qui est l'un de leurs seuls adjuvants:

On n'a pas engueulé le bonhomme Bolduc, on lui a juste dit non. Ça aurait été écœurant d'abimer une perle pareille. Délicat comme une femme, droit comme l'épée du roi, curieux,

<sup>30</sup> *L'Océantume*, p. 19

<sup>31</sup> Franca Marcato-Falzone, *Du mythe au roman : une trilogie ducharmienne*, Montréal, VLB éditeur, 1992, p. 14.

attentif. Il ne fait jamais de fautes de français, même quand il demande un hamburger all-dressed pas de relish [...] Il dit qu'on est les seuls correcteurs de Montréal à qui il fasse confiance les yeux fermés. On se sent *valorisés* quand on travaille pour lui, *importants*.<sup>32</sup>

Curieusement, le bonhomme Bolduc est celui qui s'attire l'évaluation positive des protagonistes, autrement très critiques. La connivence rédactionnelle qui s'établit par le biais d'une confiance mutuelle en la pureté de l'orthographe incite même André et Nicole à s'écrier « L'amour c'est ça ! Eros c'est le bonhomme Bolduc. » La désignation de perle et d'Eros lui revient grâce à un français impeccable, ce qui le place du côté des protagonistes, qui pourtant joualisent souvent à cœur joie. La verve de correcteur du bonhomme Bolduc, qui n'hésite pas à « recomposer le paragraphe s'il n'y a pas assez de place dans la ligne »<sup>33</sup>, est appréciée aussi grâce au fait qu'elle s'inscrit au sein de l'isotopie de la liberté et de la quête interminable du large, de l'évasion qui caractérisent l'univers ducharmien dès la première phrase qu'il a écrite : « Tout m'avale. Quand j'ai les yeux fermés, c'est par mon ventre que je suis avalée, c'est dans mon ventre que j'étouffe. »<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

Nos analyses ont abordé plusieurs grands thèmes ducharmiens dont l'enfant, le jeu et l'esthétique de l'erreur. Si nous croyons avoir trouvé une caractéristique commune à la créativité artistique et littéraire, elle repose sur le principe de précédence qui se trouve à la base de la créativité même et qui peut être comparé à l'« existence précède l'essence » sartrien selon lequel l'homme apparaît d'abord dans le monde, puis il existe et finalement il se définit par ses actions dont il est pleinement responsable. En créativité, ce principe fonctionne sur plusieurs plans et touche plusieurs couples de sujets : le général et l'accidentel, le créateur et son critique, le créateur et son œuvre.

La précédence de l'occasionnel sur le général est le principe directeur que nous discuterons d'abord : la créativité comme phénomène observable consiste surtout en une expression artistique de traits subjectifs individuels de l'artiste qui entrent dans son œuvre. Cette expression est, de par son caractère imprévisible, fortuite et irrégulière et l'irrégularité constitue sa caractéristique essentielle.

32 *L'hiver de force*, p. 110.

33 *L'hiver de force*, p. 110.

34 *L'Avalée des avalés*, p. 9.

Cependant, la créativité comme discipline doit viser la généralité en se proposant d'esquisser des lois générales qui dirigent une telle irrégularité à partir des faits particuliers. Similaire en cela à toute méthode inductive qui sous-tend la science occidentale, la créativité comme méthode se heurte pourtant à un obstacle important : tandis que pour la méthode scientifique, les faits particuliers, occasionnels, sont souvent interchangeables entre eux, car n'importe quel fait peut servir au procédé de l'induction, ce n'est pas le cas de l'expression particulière de l'artiste. L'unicité des manifestations artistiques n'est ni moyen ni outil, mais un objectif en soi. Pour cette raison, le fait occasionnel, le fait d'art précède la théorie générale de la créativité.

Une telle précédence influence de nombreuses manières la relation entre l'artiste et son œuvre et celle entre l'artiste et son récepteur. Par exemple, la personnalité complexe de l'artiste précède la création de l'œuvre et constitue ainsi un réservoir riche d'expériences qui fournissent les fragments occasionnels pour la création. D'une manière analogue, la personnalité de l'interprète précède l'œuvre, pas toujours au sens chronologique car il existe des œuvres écrites avant notre naissance, mais la constitution de la personnalité de l'interprète, son expérience bâtie au cours de la rencontre avec des éléments occasionnels est essentielle pour une compréhension générale du fait artistique particulier.

Cette constatation est d'autant plus valable pour Ducharme, chez qui le caractère liminaire de particularité et d'individualité représente la pierre angulaire de la création, qu'il s'agisse du parti pris de ses personnages, des procédés choisis ou des fragments glanés au fur et à mesure des promenades littéraires et urbaines.

Ainsi, notre article s'est voulu avant tout hommage au caractère unique de la création ducharmienne au sein de la littérature mondiale et québécoise, celle de la Révolution tranquille et contemporaine. Il s'agit là d'une unicité qui persiste malgré le caractère cyclique et répétitif des formes et de la conscience intertextuelle de l'auteur. Nous espérons avoir ainsi entrouvert quelques portes vers la richesse inépuisable de ce « château des unicités » de la création et de la créativité ducharmienne, tout en étant conscient que c'était au prix d'avoir laissé fermées beaucoup d'autres grandes portes mystérieuses du château ducharmien.

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LÁSZLÓ ZSOLT ZSÁGER

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## **Paleo-Eskimo Shamanism – Miniature Carvings in the Canadian Dorset Culture: Some Problematic Issues and Possible Additional Interpretations to the Dorset Bear Cult**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, I will attempt to summarize some of the debates related to the last Paleo-Eskimo culture of Arctic Canada and Greenland, and in addition, draw attention to some remarkable analogies and give a complex picture about the Dorset bear cult. Topics like the origins of magic-related Dorset Art, Pre-Dorset and Dorset transition and possible Dorset-Thule contacts are of paramount importance in the reconstruction of the Dorset belief system. However, on the basis of archeological finds and remote ethnographical analogies, the totality of the Paleo-Eskimo belief system and shamanic complex can never be understood. This does not necessarily mean that comparisons and analogies cannot prove to be fruitful in deciphering the meaning of the tiny Dorset carvings. Here, I will also provide some interesting analogies and a summary-like (possible) description of Dorset bear ceremonialism.

### **Résumé**

Mon document est un résumé des débats sur la dernière culture Paléo-Esquimaude du Canada Arctique et du Groenland, en attirant l'attention sur les remarquables analogies de ces deux lieux je brosse une image assez complexe sur le culte de l'ours à Dorset. Les sujets comme celui des origines de l'art magique de Dorset, celui de la transition des temps du Pre-Dorset au Dorset, et celui des éventuels contacts entre Dorset et Thule ont une importance primordiale dans la reconstruction du système des croyances de Dorset. Quelle que soit la base des découvertes

et des lointaines analogies ethnographiques, la totalité du système des croyances Paléo-Esqui-maudes et chamanes ne sera jamais comprise. Cela ne signifie pas nécessairement que les comparaisons et les analogies ne peuvent s'avérer fructueuses dans les recherches de signification des plus petites sculptures de Dorset. C'est ici que je fournis quelques analogies intéressantes et comme une description de tout un rituel de l'ours de Dorset.



## Introduction

If one takes a look at the occupants of the Canadian Arctic during the course of history, one can make a distinction between Paleo-Eskimo populations and Neo-Eskimo populations. The term Neo-Eskimo refers to the recent occupants of the Arctic, whereas Paleo-Eskimo pertains to preceding populations and cultures. The term Arctic Small Tool tradition (ASTt) comprises the Denbigh Flint Complex, Independence I, Saqqaq, Pre-Dorset and Dorset cultures. Dorset culture is considered to be a late Paleo-Eskimo culture because of its distinctive technological and artistic achievements enabling more efficient ways of hunting a wide range of species, the almost sedentary way of life and the emergence of an artistic style called Dorset Art.

Around 1500 B.C. deteriorating weather conditions made their influence felt throughout the Arctic impacting crucially on the Paleo-Eskimo way of life. As a consequence of these dire circumstances, sea animal populations were restricted due to the thicker ice-cover, the movements of migratory animals became unpredictable, and the number of species harvested dropped drastically because the tree line had retreated southward. These harsh conditions forced Paleo-Eskimo populations to leave Greenland and the High Arctic and establish themselves close to the Barrenlands. However, regions like Baffin Island and Hudson Bay were still inhabited by the Arctic Small Tool tradition peoples; furthermore, they developed more effective hunting techniques and the ability to adapt to the deteriorating circumstances (McGhee, 1988, 14). These populations were known as the Dorset culture named after the remains unearthed at the Cape Dorset Site, which were the first indicators of the existence of this culture. Shortly, this culture spread throughout the Arctic as Dorset people reoccupied the High Arctic islands, Labrador and Newfoundland. Dorset domination lasted for almost two thousand years, and this culture suddenly disappeared from archaeological record around 1000 A.D. It is hypothesized that their disappearance could have been attributed either

to the arrival of the Thule people, which could have intensified the competition for limited resources, and/or to the warming weather conditions which affected the availability of animals putting “the Dorset way of life under considerable stress” (Robert Park, <http://anthropology.uwaterloo.ca/ArcticArchStuff/dorset.html>).

Dorset-Thule contact has been in the focus of long-standing debates which have not yet been resolved since “current evidence provides little proof of contact and claims that nature of interaction would be difficult to detect archaeologically” (Suzanne B. Milne)<sup>1</sup>. If there was no contact at all, what is it that results in scholars identifying the Dorset people with the so-called *Tuniit* appearing in Inuit oral historical record testifying Dorset-Thule contacts (Bennett-Rowley, 2004, 143-150)? Robert Park contends that there was no need for face-to-face contact for the Thule to know that earlier peoples had lived there because Dorset site remains were visible on the surface. The Thule people were able to tell that Dorset artifacts were antique and different from their own, thus they created *Tuniit* as a way to explain that these earlier peoples had lived where they had (Park, 1993, 232). Taking Inuit oral tradition into consideration, I do not think the uniformity of stories mentioning the *Tuniit* perfectly supports the aforementioned statements unless the latter cultures had good communication channels and forums to share their observations and cultural achievements.

## Dorset art – dominant themes and distinctive features

Dorset people excelled in harvesting sea mammal populations including larger species like the walrus and narwhal. In addition to these, they harvested caribou populations on a seasonal basis. Caribou was an excellent source of meat and clothing, and caribou bone – along with driftwood – served as a good material for the carvings Dorset culture has always been famous for. These miniature artifacts have been the cause of academic debate and have given rise to numerous speculations on the cosmology, religious beliefs, and healing practices of Dorset people as well as the role these carvings might have played. In my opinion, these disputes are unlikely to be settled for a number of reasons: firstly, constraints in the archaeological evidence and in ethnographic knowledge (even the diversity of) of northern shamanic practice and secondly, archeology cannot reconstruct the totality and the complexity of an ancient culture (Sutherland,

1 Milne, Suzanne B. – personal communication with the assistant professor from the University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology, Arctic Prehistory course, fall term 2006/07.

2001, 136). Moreover, it is not entirely apparent which cultures (Siberian cultures or recent Eskimo cultures) would help scholars to explore the Dorset way of thinking, which on the basis of the variability of artifacts does not appear to be a uniform entity as stated by Swinton and Taylor in their paper published in 1967 (Sutherland, 2001, 135). Therefore, it is also quite problematic to ascertain the function of the miniature Dorset carvings carved in ivory, driftwood, antler, bone and soapstone.

Most portable Dorset art pieces represent animals, humans and spirits, while the rest can hardly be identified due to the high degree of stylization (like on the spatula-like objects) or simply because those creatures and objects were not present in comparable cultures. The broad consensus is that the vast majority of these artifacts are hypothetically connected to shamanism. This would justify the setting up of two categories, but I suggest we set up three categories for Dorset carvings: The first includes ceremonial and ritual objects used by spiritual specialists mainly for preventive (prophylactic) and sympathetic (propitiatory) magic; the second comprises magical objects (amulets mostly worn as pendants in particular) used by individuals in everyday life (this is supported by the distribution of these artifacts within Dorset dwellings); finally, the third is made up of household utensils or other utilitarian objects such as toys, dolls and so on. The first category can further be divided into three subcategories based on the three interrelated shamanic themes displayed on them: 1. *human-animal transformation*, 2. *shamanic flight* and 3. *skeleton as an avatar of the soul* (Sutherland, 2001, 138).

As was pointed out earlier, most – though not all – of the Dorset artifacts are zoomorphic, anthropomorphic or zoo-anthropomorphic portrayals and have incised skeletal and ‘X-ray’ motifs on them. Representations of animal species of economic and spiritual significance (polar bear, musk-ox, caribou, fox, falcon, owl, loon, walrus, seal, etc.) either in naturalistic or in abstract ways make up the overwhelming majority of artifacts (The Brooman Point assemblage is a good case in point.). It is beyond doubt that the figure of the bear is the most domineering, whereas – interestingly enough – the frequency of the portrayals of the walrus declined. As Patricia Sutherland points out in her paper, this phenomenon can be explained by the dispersion of Paleo-Eskimos into different areas where the walrus was no longer the primary food resource (Sutherland, 2001, 137). Consequently, Sutherland concludes that economic, environmental and historical factors must have had an influence on regional and temporal variants of Dorset art (Sutherland, 2001, 137).

As far as representations of humans (portable and parietal art pieces alike) are concerned, these can be interpreted as portrayals of living persons who may have lived in the close proximity of the ‘craftsmen’ or most likely different spirits. Most of the time, the depictions of humans do not display the full-size person but the face only. The

most common portrayals of faces are masks, maskettes, multiple face carvings (wands or sacred places, for instance, Qajartalik petroglyph site in Québec), sculptures (often representing women) and other schematic carvings. Faces “portrayed on most late Paleo-Eskimo pieces clearly exhibit distinctive Asiatic characteristics” (Helmer, 1986, 196) such as almond-shaped eyes and high cheekbones. The most peculiar facial type displayed on Dorset artifacts is a “triangular shape with rectangular upper face and strongly pointed chin” and “round in outline with accentuated cheekbones and under-emphasized chins” on multiple face carvings (Helmer, 1986, 196).

## Carvings with unknown function

Unfortunately, in the Dorset assemblage there are artifacts which are not easy to interpret. This is a problem in the case of the small, flat disks cut from bone. These disks have perforated holes, which serve as the starting point of radiating lines. Objects like these were very popular among Siberian peoples, and were commonly associated with the shaman’s clothing (Jochelson, 1933, 108). Sutherland suggests that these can be interpreted as representations of a cosmological plane with a central opening, which is actually a channel between different worlds (Sutherland, 2001, 141). We have comparable imagery from Alaskan cultures contemporaneous with Dorset culture. As for the number of radiating lines, one can recognize the importance of the number four and its multiples. This numerological hint may also be justified by multiple-face carvings with e.g. forty faces carved on them (Lantis, 1947, 98; Weyer, 1932, 318).

Besides these, there are bone tubes in the corpus which are believed to be soul catchers (McGhee, 1985, 24). This hypothesis is based on Siberian analogies. These tubes – originally unadorned – end in open mouth-like endings frequently representing the mouths of two opposed animal heads with incised skeletal motifs. The presence of opposed forces (represented by the two opposed animal heads) may have increased the efficiency of the tube through which shamans are thought to have sucked the spirits/ malevolent beings which caused illness out of the body (<http://www.civilization.ca/archeo/paleoesq/pew01eng.html>).

## Bear cult and ceremonialism

As has been pointed out earlier, in the overall inventory of portrayals those of the bear are numerous. Most of these carvings have etched skeletal patterns on them, but depictions of crouching, swimming, standing, sitting and flying bears are also to be found. These carvings best support the thesis according to which Dorset culture could be classified as an Arctic culture, which puts bear cult or ceremonialism at the focus of spiritual life. Bear cult is a circumpolar phenomenon. Thus, in my view, it would be fruitful to examine analogies of bear ceremonialism. We have to refrain from assuming direct continuity among these cultures, though.

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One of the distinctive features of Dorset (not exclusively bear) carvings is the incised skeletal and X-ray motifs, which show both circumpolar and Eurasian distribution (Sutherland, 2001, 140), because we have analogies ranging from Asia Interior through Siberia (Devlet, 2001, 43-46) to Europe. These motifs appear on Siberian shamanic coats (Prokofyeva, 1963, 138) or even in Asian rock art. Devlet interprets this motif as a way of protecting the individual from evil. She also adds that this could have a lot to do with “the dismemberment occurring during the initiation process” (Devlet, 2001, 44). The same idea was coined by Taylor and Swinton concerning the dismemberment of the body (Siberian-Aleutian tradition) at the joints, which are marked by X-s to protect one against the evil power of the victim’s spirits (Swinton, 1967, 41). Moreover, Alan McMillan points out that designs resembling skeletal elements and joints may also represent shamanistic vision: “powerful shamans among the historic Inuit were supposed to be able to divest themselves of flesh and blood, flying through the air as skeletons” (McMillan, 1988, 245).

During the Late Dorset period one can recognize a tendency of increasing abstraction and stylization resulting in “flat and spatula forms of abstract bear figures” (Sutherland, 1997, 291). This might imply the mass production of these carvings which quite possibly testifies to an increased concern for spiritual life. This increase might have been a response to the unusual weather conditions experienced around 1000 A.D.

Some of these carvings, for example, the one found by Meldgaard near Alarnerk (Igloodik) dating back to 500 A.D., have a hollowed out ventral groove and some traces of red ochre. Larsen came up with the possible interpretation that this aforementioned carving represents the skin of the polar bear. His theory is based on the skin treatment practice of the *Netsilingmiut*. Larsen also emphasizes the special attention given by the Eskimo to the head and the skin of the bear: for example, on the top of the head there were gifts meant for the bears or other utilitarian objects placed to be imbued by the spirit (Larsen, 1970, 32). The tiny Dorset harpoon heads analyzed by Maxwell and Park

(Maxwell, 1974; Park-Mousseau, 2003) might have been used in the practice of hunting magic in the same way that Larsen described in his account or the way the Ainu did with their ceremonial arrows during the Bear Festival (<http://www.bears.org/spirit/>). Besides these, there is a great deal of evidence from several Dorset sites showing the special treatment of the bones (especially the skull and the paws) of bears. On Dundas Island for instance, there were selected bear bones in the midden and on the rocks around the Dorset settlement. In addition, in the so-called “Maze village”, separately treated bear heads and paws were found (McGhee, 1974, 143-144).

Many bear carvings have perforated holes making it possible to wear them as pendants, or possibly as amulets attached to garments or belts. As Dorset culture is known to be a hunting culture, it seems possible that not only shamans, but individual hunters also wore such pendants to ensure a successful hunt or simply propitiate the preys’ ‘souls’ to ward their vengeance off as seen in other Eskimo cultures. The broad distribution of amulets (McGhee, 1974, 143) and stylized skeletons found on utilitarian artifacts (Sutherland 1997, 292) are also indicative of their common usage. It is beyond doubt that there are carvings (representing flying bears, in particular) that can exclusively be associated with shamans and shamanic practices, like shamanic flight. In the Inuit shamanic complex, bears were not powerful just because of their robust bodies, but they were also believed to be great transformers (Christopher Trott)<sup>2</sup>. In the Inuit *Nuliajuq* legend (reported by Knud Rasmussen), the magical power of the polar bear skin (spirit) enabled Nuliajuq’s father to adapt to an aquatic way of life. Thus, it seems probable that a polar bear helping spirit would enable a ritual specialist to undertake a flight to distant points of the universe. Sutherland brings up a carving of a flying polar bear as a possible representation of a helping spirit. Referring back to helping spirits, in the Dorset corpus there are other carvings associated with shamanic flight, namely carvings of birds with the faces of humans staring from the abdominal cavity of the birds. One can find analogies for this ornithomorphic nature in Central Asian and Siberian shamanic complexes (Devlet, 2001, 45).

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2 Trott, Christopher – personal communication with the assistant professor from the University of Manitoba, Department of Native Studies, Inuit Culture and Society course, fall term 2006/07.

## Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, the complexity of the Dorset art corpus cannot totally be understood for several reasons, among them the lack of archeological evidence and the diversity of analogies from all over the Arctic. In my paper, I intended to draw the reader's attention to different analogies other than those found in Siberia. There are several remarkable similarities and analogies that cannot be ignored: the skeletal and 'X-ray' design showing Eurasian and American distribution and the act of shamanic flight, in particular.

In the Dorset art corpus, representations of the (polar) bear – which has been known as the most powerful spirit helper – is the most numerous, possibly emphasizing the importance of bear ceremonialism in the Canadian Dorset culture. The veneration of certain body parts of the polar bear which has been testified to by a series of archeological finds and the number of carvings depicting bears (perforated items and non-perforated sculptures alike) support the following hypothesis: bear cult was a significant component in the spiritual life of the Dorset people.

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**Jenny Bingold** in “Either I am Canadian, or the word means nothing”: George Elliott Clarke’s Creation of «Africadia» as a Critique of the Politics of Multiculturalism” discusses George Elliott Clarke’s verse-novel *Whylah Falls* (1990) as an alternative framing of Canadian identity that does not view African-Canadians as marginal to a white Canadian society.

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**Petr Vurm** pose la question de la relation entre la création et la créativité littéraire, le modus operandi de Réjean Ducharme.

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