
Identities and Marginalities
Identités et marginalités

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Table of Contents/Table des matières

Robert Schwartzwald Introduction/Présentation	5
J. Yvon Thériault Nation et démocratie au Québec : l'affaire Durham	15
Janice Kulyk Keefer Fortunate Falls and Propitious Expulsions: Anglophone Fictions and the "Acadian Question"	29
Richard C. Davis The Accidental Explorer: Ethnocentrism and Arctic Exploration	47
Patricia Smart Weighing the Claims of Memory: the Poetry and Politics of the Irish- Canadian Experience in Jane Urquhart's <i>Away</i>	63
Anne Nothof Variant Tellings: the Reconstitution of a Social Mythology in James Reaney's <i>The Donnellys</i>	71
Eileen Boyd Sivert Jovette Marchessault and Marie-Claire Blais: Hybrids, Monsters and Ways of Knowing	87
Krishna Sarbadhikary Weaving a "Multicoloured Quilt": Marlene Nourbese Philip's Vision of Change	103
Charles Fairchild Mediating Marginality: Music and Community Radio in Canada	119
Review Essays / Essais critiques	
Louis Balthazar Reconnaissance et identité dans le contexte canadien	139

David Rayside
Sexual Diversity and the Social Sciences in English Canada 145

Introduction

It has long been a conceit of Canadian writing to invoke the margin: “Remarquez que nous, ici, nous avons la chance de vivre en bordure de l’empire. Les chocs sont beaucoup moins violents.” With tongue (barely) in cheek, so observes Dominique, the thoroughly skeptical historian, in Denys Arcand’s *Le déclin de l’empire américain*.¹ The vast majority of Canadians, we are often reminded, live along a margin, the thin strip of land comprising a miniscule portion of the country’s vast territory that’s within a few hours’ driving distance of the nearest United States port of entry. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canadians were also fond of musing about how they occupied another liminal space—a border or buffer between two superpowers whose rockets might one day cross each other over their territory as they delivered Mutually Assured Destruction. In a very real sense, Canadians have rehearsed long and hard for what Sylvia Söderlind calls “the current canonization of marginality and the view of extraterritoriality as a desirable state.”² It may have been quite legitimate to call this issue of the *Journal* “Marginality as Identity,” so closely have the two come to be associated in recent years through the discourses of postmodernism and postcolonialism.

Présentation

L’écriture canadienne s’est longtemps targuée de pouvoir évoquer la marginalité. « Remarquez que nous, ici, nous avons la chance de vivre en bordure de l’empire. Les chocs sont beaucoup moins violents. » C’est ce que prétendait, en plaisantant (à peine), Dominique, l’historienne totalement sceptique du film de Denys Arcand, *Le déclin de l’empire américain*¹. La grande majorité des Canadiens, comme on nous le rappelle souvent, vivent dans une marge, sur la mince languette d’un immense territoire, à quelques heures de route du poste frontalier américain le plus proche. De même, avant l’effondrement de l’Union soviétique, les Canadiens se plaisaient à faire remarquer qu’ils habitaient un autre espace liminaire — à la frontière de deux superpuissances, sur le territoire situé sous la zone tampon où leurs missiles risquaient un jour ou l’autre de se donner rendez-vous pour provoquer la destruction mutuelle et certaine des deux belligérants. Dans un sens très concret, les Canadiens s’exercent depuis très longtemps et avec acharnement à vivre ce que Sylvia Söderlind se plaît à appeler « la canonisation présente de la marginalité et la conception de l’extraterritorialité comme d’un état désirable² ». Il aurait été tout à fait légitime d’intituler ce numéro de la *Revue* : « La marginalité considérée comme une forme d’identité », tant on a pris l’habitude, ces dernières années, de lier étroitement les deux notions à travers les discours de la postmodernité et du postcolonialisme.

1. Denys Arcand, *Le déclin de l’empire américain* (scénario), Montréal, Boréal, 1986, p. 144.

2. Sonia Söderlind, *Margin / Alias: Language and Colonization in Canadian and Québécois Fiction*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991, p. 29.

For years, the vast majority of Canadians have depended upon minority populations within their state to represent a Canadian difference to the rest of the world. This is visible not only in impressive works of public art by Inuit and Native artists, such as Bill Reid's sculpture outside the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., but even in everyday objects: Every box of Canadian Kellogg's Corn Flakes is different from its American counterpart thanks to the linguistic resiliency of the Québécois! Of course, boxes of cereal and other commodities have also structured a comforting *internal* topography of accommodated difference while authorizing the benign view the world has traditionally held of Canada as a model of stability and tolerance. Yet, through the opening years of this decade the wry, self-knowing performance of marginalization as a central node of Canadian identity has become more fraught. The demise of the Meech Lake accord, the fiasco of Charlottetown and a federal referendum whose results foreshadowed a Tory electoral humiliation of diluvian proportions severely tried many of the older truisms and created a climate characterized by rawer sentiments. Clearly, if the *status quo* is under enormous stress in Canada, this may well be less from the impending referendum on Québec sovereignty than through a multiplicity of fractures that threaten to unsettle the conceits of marginality as we have known them. For the first time, the demand for *recognition*

Pendant des années, l'immense majorité des Canadiens se sont appuyés sur des populations minoritaires vivant sur leur territoire pour définir leur différence aux yeux du reste du monde. On le constate, non seulement en songeant aux monuments publics impressionnants que nous devons à des artistes inuit ou autochtones, telle la sculpture de Bill Reid qui se dresse devant l'ambassade canadienne à Washington, mais encore en jetant un coup d'œil à des objets d'usage quotidien : chaque boîte canadienne de Corn Flakes de la firme Kelloggs est différente de son équivalent américain du fait de la résistance linguistique des Québécois! Bien sûr, les boîtes de céréales et d'autres denrées ont également contribué à structurer une topographie *interne* rassurante d'un compromis entre les différences, tout en confirmant l'image un peu anodine que le monde s'est toujours faite du Canada comme étant un modèle de stabilité et de tolérance. Au cours des premières années de la présente décennie, la mise en scène consciente et désabusée de la marginalisation comme nœud central de l'identité canadienne s'est alourdie de significations nouvelles. L'échec de l'Accord du Lac Meech, le fiasco de Charlottetown, la défaite d'un référendum fédéral dont les résultats furent le présage de l'énorme défaite électorale conservatrice — tous ces événements ont mis à rude épreuve plusieurs de nos vieilles évidences, tout en créant une atmosphère caractérisée par des sensibilités exacerbées. De toute évidence, si le *statu quo* canadien semble craquer de toute part, c'est moins du fait du référendum imminent sur la souveraineté du Québec que par suite de l'apparition, dans notre identité

that Charles Taylor calls “the acceptance of ourselves by others in identity” and that has traditionally been seen as “belonging” to Québec has been taken up by a host of conflicting voices: From northern Cree to alienated Westerners to immigrants disenchanted with official multiculturalism, no one is any longer content to occupy a space of benevolent marginality, no longer wishes to be a “beautiful loser,” as in Leonard Cohen’s felicitous trope. Through conflicts as diverse as those that have emerged between First Nations and Québec nationalists, or Native leaderships and national women’s organizations, there has been an unmistakable tendency to motivate recognition in ways that seem to rely upon the reciprocal exclusion, or non-recognition of others. Charles Taylor has explained how easy it is for this to happen, since “[i]t is rare that a group will frame its demand as one for recognition...that is, as a demand that such people be acknowledged and valued for what they are. It is much more likely to be put in terms of injustice, discrimination, or systematic inequality that cries out for redress.”³

Indeed, many of the essays in this issue of the *Journal* are concerned with demands for recognition that, for the most part are recognizable as a series of *rendez-vous manqués*. In a spirited text, Janice Kulyk Keefer argues that the major English-language fictionalized accounts

collective, d'une multiplicité de fissures qui menacent de briser l'image de marginalité que nous nous étions faite de nous-mêmes. Pour la première fois, l'exigence de *se faire reconnaître*, que Charles Taylor définit comme « l'acceptation de nous-mêmes par les autres dans notre identité », qu'on a toujours perçue comme l'expression d'un *sentiment d'appartenance* au Québec, a été reprise par toute une série de groupes aux intérêts divergents : les Cris du Nord, des gens de l'Ouest qui sentent leur aliénation ou des immigrants déçus du multiculturalisme officiel ne se satisfont plus d'occuper un espace de marginalité bienveillante, ils n'acceptent plus d'être des « perdants magnifiques », des « beautiful losers », comme le dit si bien Leonard Cohen. À travers des conflits aussi divers que ceux qui ont surgi entre les Premières Nations et les nationalistes québécois ou entre les leaders autochtones et les organismes nationaux de défense des droits des femmes, on décèle également une nette tendance à justifier l'exigence de se faire reconnaître en invoquant des arguments qui semblent s'appuyer sur l'exclusion réciproque ou le refus de reconnaître les autres. Charles Taylor a montré comment on en arrive facilement à cela, car « il est rare qu'un groupe structure ses demandes comme une exigence de reconnaissance..., c'est-à-dire comme une exigence que ses membres soient reconnus et appréciés pour ce qu'ils sont. Il est bien plus vraisemblable que ces demandes prennent la forme d'une dénonciation d'injustices, de discrimination ou d'une inégalité systématique exigeant réparation. »³

3. Charles Taylor. “Impediments to a Canadian Future,” in *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*, Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992, pp. 190-192.

of the *Grand Dérangement* of the Acadiens in 1755 are deliberate misrecognitions. Determined in the first instance by a desire for exculpation, they rely on an interpretive strategy that refers to the traditional Christian reading of “Expulsion”: “No fall without guilt, and no expulsion without redemption and promise of return to a (new) Garden.” Keefer also maintains that this narrative has in large part been adopted by Acadians themselves, with less than satisfying consequences for more contemporary attempts at self-affirmation. In relating an episode from the early nineteenth century, Richard C. Davis convincingly demonstrates that British explorer John Franklin's inability to accommodate local knowledges that deviated from his pre-existing cultural models amounted to another instance of misrecognition that would have tragic consequences, but this time for the imperial power itself. As Franklin prepared to travel overland to the Arctic Ocean, he deliberately chose to ignore the advice of his Native guides. Because they refused to fulfill Franklin's expectations by performing as extraterritorial domestics, no Natives lost their lives. Those under Franklin's direct command were not spared, however: Many of the French-Canadian *voyageurs* he had hired on were decimated in the course of their calamitous trek, although Franklin himself survived to die on a subsequent expedition. Another two contributions in this issue that examine the fate of the Irish who fled famine and settled in Canada in the nineteenth century show how

Comme de juste, plusieurs des textes publiés dans le présent numéro de la *Revue* portent sur des demandes de reconnaissance qui, pour la plupart, apparaissent comme une série de *rendez-vous manqués*. Dans un texte plein de verve, Janice Kulyk Keefer soutient que les grands récits de fiction de langue anglaise qui traitent du *Grand Dérangement* des Acadiens de 1755 sont des *méconnaissances* délibérées. Inspirés en premier lieu par un désir de se disculper, ils s'appuient sur une stratégie herméneutique qui renvoie au thème chrétien de « l'expulsion » dans son interprétation traditionnelle : « il n'y a pas de chute sans faute, ni d'expulsion sans Rédemption accompagnée de la promesse d'un retour dans un (nouveau) paradis terrestre. » Keefer soutient également que ce récit a été, dans une large part, repris par les Acadiens eux-mêmes, avec des conséquences moins qu'heureuses sur leurs efforts plus récents d'affirmation nationale. En rapportant une anecdote du début du dix-neuvième siècle, Richard C. Davis établit de façon convaincante que l'incapacité de l'explorateur britannique John Franklin à tirer profit des savoirs locaux qui s'écartaient de ses propres modèles culturels n'était qu'un autre exemple de *méconnaissance* aux conséquences tragiques, mais cette fois-ci pour la puissance coloniale elle-même. Alors que Franklin s'apprêtait à se rendre à l'océan Arctique par voie de terre, il a tout simplement décidé de ne tenir aucun compte des conseils de ses guides autochtones. Parce que les Autochtones qui l'accompagnaient avaient refusé de se plier à ses désirs (il aurait voulu leur voir jouer le rôle de domestiques), ils ont tous survécu, à l'encontre d'un grand nombre de ceux qui étaient directement sous les

misrecognition can occur *within* a community, as well. Patricia Smart's eloquent reading of Jane Urquhart's *Away* raises questions that resonate in contemporary discussions about cultural identity and citizenship: How much of a culture will, and should, survive from old country to new? While the novel depicts a community torn between the Fenian faction's determination to carry on its struggle against British rule in a new land and Darcy McGee's vision of a new country without debts to old battles, Smart maintains that *Away* is especially significant because it "imagines new ways of blending self and other" through effecting a *rapprochement* between Celtic and Native myth. Anne Nothoff's contribution on James Reaney's *The Donnellys* also emphasizes the eponymous characters' refusal to conform to Old World" standard of behaviour, and their subsequent villification by the dominant forces within the Ontario Irish community. Nothoff suggests that in Toronto's *Théâtre Passe-Muraille*'s 1993 urban resetting of the play with a multiracial cast, spectators are invited to engage in a rereading of a local legend: The play becomes instructive of the conflicts that erupt within many different immigrant communities where allegiances to "inherited conflicts" vie with the opportunities provided by a new land. A final contribution on the nineteenth century by J. Yvon Thériault revisits Lord Durham's Report. Its assimilationist prescriptions for the *Canadiens*

ordres de Franklin. C'est ainsi que les voyageurs canadiens-français qu'il avait embauchés furent décimés pendant cette expédition désastreuse, même si Franklin lui-même a survécu, pour mourir dans un voyage subséquent. Deux autres textes se penchent sur le destin des Irlandais qui, fuyant la famine, se sont établis au Canada au dix-neuvième siècle. Ils montrent comment un phénomène de méconnaissance peut tout aussi bien apparaître *au sein même* d'une communauté. L'interprétation éloquente que Patricia Smart nous offre d'*Away*, de Jane Urquhart, soulève des questions qui trouvent un écho dans les discussions actuelles sur l'identité culturelle et la citoyenneté : jusqu'à quel point une culture peut-elle, et devrait-elle, survivre à sa transplantation dans une terre autre que sa terre natale? Le roman raconte l'histoire d'une communauté déchirée entre la résolution des partisans des Fenians à poursuivre la lutte contre la domination britannique dans leur nouveau pays et l'idéal de Darcy McGee qui rêve d'un nouveau pays entièrement délivré des fantômes du passé. Smart pense que *Away* est une œuvre particulièrement importante parce que « elle imagine de nouveaux modes de fusion de soi-même et de l'autre » par le moyen d'un rapprochement entre les mythes celtes et autochtones. De même, l'étude d'Anne Nothoff sur *The Donnellys*, de James Reaney, insiste sur le refus des personnages éponymes de se plier aux normes de comportement de « l'Ancien Monde » et sur l'hostilité à laquelle ils ont fini par se heurter au sein de la communauté irlandaise de l'Ontario. Nothoff suggère que, dans la production de 1993 du *Théâtre Passe-Muraille* de Toronto, où la

are often regarded as the principal trauma that gave rise to French-Canadian nationalism. What interests Thériault is Durham's conviction that there was a fundamental incompatibility between the view of the modern nation as an association of autonomous individuals and the *Canadiens'* loyalty to a "premodern" identity forged in France under the *Ancien régime*. Arguing for what seems like yet another case of the fateful misrecognition, Thériault demonstrates that contrary to the expectations of the nineteenth century political theory that informs Durham's assessment, collective appartenances have hardly disappeared! On the contrary, Thériault asserts that the tension *between* them and the "hypothesis of the tabula rasa" underlying notions of citizenship is **constitutive** of democratic modernity.

The contributions addressing the twentieth century are altogether more optimistic in tone, perhaps because each looks at a claim for recognition in process, rather than retrospectively. Written with the enthusiasm of personal involvement, Charles Fairchild's essay on the role of community radio in contemporary Toronto extols the virtues of a "specifically constructed public space" that unlike commercial radio, encourages a "conversation" among its staff, volunteers, programmers, and audience. The result is programming whose diversity is matched only by the expertise of its producers and consumers. The winning paradox of

pièce se déroule dans un cadre urbain avec une distribution multiethnique, les spectateurs sont invités à se prêter à une nouvelle lecture d'une légende locale : la pièce commence alors à jeter un éclairage sur les conflits qui surgissent au sein de plusieurs communautés d'immigrants où il existe une tension entre les allégeances aux « conflits héréditaires » et les occasions qui s'offrent dans la nouvelle patrie. Un dernier texte sur le dix-neuvième siècle est l'article de J. Yvon Thériault, où l'auteur rouvre le dossier du Rapport Durham. On a souvent dit que ses recommandations, qui visaient à amener l'assimilation des Canadiens français constituaient le traumatisme originare qui a donné naissance au nationalisme canadien-français. Ce qui intéresse davantage Thériault, c'est la conviction de Durham qu'il existait une incompatibilité radicale entre l'idée moderne de nation à titre d'association entre des individus autonomes et l'attachement des Canadiens français à une identité « prémoderne » qui s'était formée en France sous l'Ancien Régime. Soulignant qu'on semble avoir affaire ici à un autre cas de méconnaissance aux conséquences décisives, Thériault montre que contrairement aux attentes de la théorie politique du siècle dernier dont se réclamait l'analyse de Lord Durham, les sentiments d'appartenance des collectivités sont loin d'avoir disparu! Thériault soutient, tout au contraire, que c'est précisément la tension entre ces sentiments et « l'hypothèse de la table rase » qui fonde les concepts de citoyenneté qui est **constitutive** de la modernité démocratique.

Les textes qui traitent du vingtième siècle adoptent un ton beaucoup plus

community radio, Fairchild argues is that marginality is central to its identity, and it is even recognized for this specificity by Canada's broadcast licensing body. Eileen B. Sievert's analysis of novels by two prolific Québécoise writers, Marie-Claire Blais and Jovette Marchessault, suggests that the two works, so different in style and preoccupation, may be read in tandem as "a literary rendering of recent feminist criticism of science and knowledge production," in particular of the work of Elizabeth Fox Keller and Donna Haraway. Even though Blais' is a dystopic nightmare while Marchessault's is an exuberant celebration of "constructed affinities," both novels involve the blurring of boundaries between subject and object and emerge out of a commitment to "situated knowledge." The acquisitions of feminist theory underpinning Sievert's essay are also suggestive for the troubled relationships between liberal democratic institutions and the claims of national and cultural identities that have led many Canadian immigrant writers of colour to dismiss official multiculturalism, a policy many have regarded as a unique attempt to negotiate these troubled waters, as a "fancy piece of windowdressing." Krishna Sardadhikary's survey of poetry by Marlene Nourbese Philip takes this critique as its point of departure, and at a time when multiculturalism is largely under attack for reifying cultural identities and threatening civic space, it is sobering to read an

optimiste, peut-être parce qu'au lieu de s'attacher au passé, ils portent sur des revendications actuelles. Rédigé avec tout l'enthousiasme de quelqu'un qui s'est personnellement engagé, l'article de Charles Fairchild sur le rôle de la radio communautaire dans le Toronto d'aujourd'hui fait l'éloge d'un « espace public spécifiquement aménagé » qui, à la différence de la radio commerciale, invite le personnel, les bénévoles, les programmeurs et le public à se joindre à une véritable « conversation ». Il en découle un programme dont la diversité est fonction de la compétence de ses producteurs et de ses consommateurs. Le paradoxe gagnant de la radio communautaire, selon Fairchild, c'est que la marginalité est au cœur de son identité, à tel point que le Conseil de la radiodiffusion (CRTC) en a fait un critère d'octroi de permis de diffusion. L'analyse, par Eileen B. Sievert, des romans de deux auteurs québécoises prolifiques, Marie-Claire Blais et Jovette Marchessault, suggère que ces deux œuvres, si différentes pourtant par leur style et par les préoccupations qu'elles expriment, peuvent être lues ensemble comme « une expression littéraire de la critique féministe récente des sciences et de la production du savoir » telle qu'on la retrouve, en particulier, dans les écrits d'Elizabeth Fox Keller et de Donna Haraway. Même si l'œuvre de Blais est un cauchemar dystopique tandis que celle de Marchessault est une célébration exubérante « d'affinités électives », les deux romans traitent, chacun à sa façon, de l'effacement des frontières entre le sujet et l'objet et procèdent d'un engagement envers « la connaissance en situation ». Les acquis de la théorie féministe sur lesquels reposent l'article de Sievert

account where it is instead held responsible for perpetuating and imperializing practice of *silencing* the internal Other. Sarbadhikary sees Philip's poetry as an ongoing attempt to undermine the exoticizing, homogenizing pressures of multiculturalism through a recourse to the demotic. While Philip's project is necessarily unsettling, it holds out the prospect of an open field in which registers of language and experience interact in a process of *becoming* Canadian. The elements of play and opportunity thus extended are embodied in her whimsical question, "How many identities can dance on a maple leaf?" In fact, each contribution to this volume warns in its own way of the delusional and dangerous consequences of imagining any boundaries that could secure a form of identitarian "purity." Out of its history and in the fractured circumstances of its present, it is a lesson that Canada seems particularly disposed to offer.

Robert Schwartzwald
Associate Editor

sont également révélateurs des relations tendues entre les institutions démocratiques libérales et les revendications d'identités nationales et culturelles, qui ont amené de nombreux écrivains de minorités visibles établis au Canada à dénoncer et à rejeter le multiculturalisme officiel comme « une belle façade », une politique qui est apparue à plusieurs comme une tentative incomparable de naviguer dans ces eaux troubles. Le survol de la poésie de Marlene Nourbese Philip par Krishna Sarbadhikary prend cette critique comme point de départ. À un moment où le multiculturalisme se fait accuser de chosifier les identités culturelles et de menacer l'espace civique, il est frappant de lire une critique où on le tient davantage responsable de perpétuer la pratique impérialisante *d'imposer le silence* à l'Autre intérieur. Sarbadhikary présente la poésie de Philip comme un effort soutenu pour miner les pressions exoticiantes et homogénéisantes du multiculturalisme en recourant au démotique. Tout en étant foncièrement et nécessairement inquiétant, le projet de Philip ouvre la perspective d'un champ ouvert où les registres de langue et d'expérience se conjugueraient dans un processus de *devenir* canadien. Les éléments de jeu et d'occasion qui sont ainsi offerts s'expriment à travers sa question : « Combien d'identités peuvent danser sur une feuille d'érable? »

De fait, chacune à sa façon, les contributions à ce recueil nous mettent toutes en garde contre les conséquences illusoire et périlleuses d'imaginer des frontières qui garantiraient une forme de « pureté » de l'identité. Tirée de son histoire et du contexte de son fractionnement

actuel, voilà une leçon que le Canada
semble tout prêt à nous offrir.

Robert Schwartzwald
Rédacteur adjoint

J. Yvon Thériault

Nation et démocratie au Québec : l'affaire Durham

Résumé

L'idée d'une incompatibilité entre la défense de sa nationalité et le déploiement des institutions démocratiques libérales est encore présente autant chez les critiques du nationalisme québécois qu'au sein de ses défenseurs. Cette thèse était déjà au centre de la lecture que faisait Durham de la situation politique au Bas-Canada en 1840. L'auteur examine, à la lumière de ce questionnement, les liens entre les mouvements de défense d'une identité culturelle et l'individualisme démocratique. Il tente de substituer, à l'hypothèse d'une incompatibilité, une lecture qui tienne compte de la complexité du rapport qui s'est historiquement tissé entre la démocratie et les identités.

Abstract

Both critics and defenders of Québec nationalism still hold the idea that defending one's nationality and establishing liberal, democratic institutions are incompatible. This thesis was central to Durham's reading of the political situation of Lower Canada in 1840. In light of this problematic phenomenon, the article examines the links between democratic individualism and the evolution of defending cultural identity. It attempts to replace the theory of incompatibility by one that would take into account the complexity of the relationship that has evolved historically between democracy and identities.

Mouvement d'identité culturelle et démocratie moderne

Les nouveaux mouvements sociaux ne sont pas entièrement nouveaux. Certes, ils participent d'une nouvelle constellation historique et définissent un nouvel espace public. Ils sont des acteurs sociaux liés à la conjoncture de la haute-modernité et aux problèmes des sociétés du capitalisme avancé. Ils ne reproduisent pas le caractère centralisateur et unitaire des luttes propres à la société industrielle. Néanmoins, comme nous l'a rappelé Klaus Eder (1982), les nouveaux mouvements sociaux peuvent être perçus comme les « successeurs » des mouvements culturels et politiques propres à la modernité démocratique. Plus précisément, dira-t-il, ils forment « une seconde vague de la protestation de “l'honnête homme” et du “petit bourgeois radical et démocrate” qui a eu une influence morale et politique significative et ambivalente au 19^e siècle » (Eder 1985 : 874, notre traduction). Traversés par le populisme et le romantisme, ces mouvements semblent tantôt tourner le dos à la modernité, tantôt, au contraire, ils apparaissent être au centre de la révolution démocratique, c'est-à-dire les constructeurs d'un lien social non plus hérité, mais défini par l'action de la société sur elle-même.

Successeurs des mouvements de protestations « petits bourgeois », les nouveaux mouvements sociaux charrient leur ambivalence. La représentation du politique qui fonde leur action est ambiguë. Il en est ainsi, par exemple, du néo-nationalisme québécois comme mouvement d'identité culturelle. Malgré sa rupture au début des années soixante avec l'ancienne identité canadienne-française et sa définition ethno-culturelle de la nation, le mouvement national conserve une certaine difficulté à s'inscrire résolument à l'intérieur de la logique de l'individualisme démocratique et, par conséquent, de l'idée de nation comme association de personnes autonomes. Cette difficulté, je me dois de le rappeler immédiatement, n'est pas propre au mouvement national québécois. Elle est, comme on le verra, une tension inhérente à la modernité et liée au caractère a-social de son hypothèse fondatrice. Comme si l'idée « d'arrachement » à la base du lien social moderne et de l'humanité démocratiquement construite exigeait sa contrepartie : l'idée d'un « irréductible enracinement de l'homme » au sein d'une histoire, d'une nation, d'une culture (Legros 1990 : 45). Nous nous proposons donc ici de mieux comprendre cette double référence fondatrice, que les nouveaux mouvements sociaux rééditent, en regardant comment elle se pose et s'est historiquement posée dans le rapport du mouvement national québécois et de la démocratie.

Dans un texte rédigé à la fin des années soixante, « De quelques obstacles à la démocratie au Québec », Pierre Elliot Trudeau (1967) systématisait les arguments habituellement évoqués pour rappeler l'inexistence d'une culture démocratique au sein du Canada français. « Les Canadiens français, dira-t-il, sont peut-être le seul peuple au monde qui “jouisse” du régime démocratique sans avoir eu à lutter pour l'obtenir » (p. 110). Comme peuple, le Canada français n'aurait d'ailleurs jamais complètement adhéré aux principes démocratiques, voyant plutôt en la démocratie un simple moyen de défendre ses caractéristiques ethniques. « Ils adhèrent, précisera-t-il, au “contrat social”, mais avec des réserves mentales, ils refusèrent de se lier intérieurement par une “volonté générale” qui ne tenait pas compte du problème ethnique » (p. 111).

Au début des années cinquante, Frank Scott (1952) avait déjà appelé, dans la revue *Esprit*, ces éléments en les associant toutefois à une culture politique différente qui traverse le Canada anglais et le Canada français. Le Canada anglais, affirmait-il, a une vision libérale et procédurale de la démocratie : « Il croit au suffrage, aux droits égaux des hommes et des femmes, au principe de la liberté d'expression et d'association, à la presse libre et à la tolérance religieuse. (...) Le Canadien français possède de la démocratie une toute autre expérience. (...) La démocratie s'est tout de suite identifiée à la lutte pour ses droits religieux et linguistiques. Il s'est servi de la démocratie plutôt qu'il n'y a adhéré comme à une doctrine. (...) Il insiste donc plus fortement sur les droits des groupes, appelés au Canada droits minoritaires, que sur les libertés individuelles » (p.185). L'ambivalence historique du Canada français envers la démocratie recouperait donc une dichotomie politiquement plus significative, celle des droits individuels et des droits collectifs.

Cette incompatibilité postulée entre la revendication politique d'une spécificité culturelle nationale et les principes de l'individualisme

démocratique a franchi le mur de la Révolution tranquille. En effet, le caractère non démocratique de l'affirmation nationale des Québécois a été régulièrement critiqué au cours des trente dernières années par le Canada anglais et, particulièrement, par la minorité anglophone du Québec. Que ce soit au moment des grandes législations linguistiques (le Bill 22, la Loi 101, la Loi 178), notamment lors de l'utilisation de la clause nonobstant par le gouvernement Bourassa au nom de la spécificité culturelle du Québec, ou encore, lors des débats plus récents sur la référence, à l'intérieur des ententes constitutionnelles, à la société distincte comme clause interprétative au Québec de la Charte des droits, on a rappelé à maintes reprises, du côté canadien-anglais, la fragilité de l'adhésion du Québec moderne au principe de l'individualisme démocratique.

Du côté francophone, on a eu beau rappeler que le nationalisme de l'après Révolution tranquille était lié à une citoyenneté étatique (c'est-à-dire à la revendication d'un État représentant l'ensemble des citoyens d'un territoire, peu importe leurs origines ethno-culturelles) et que le Québec moderne s'était doté d'une Charte des droits tout aussi individualiste dans ses principes fondateurs que la Charte canadienne ou américaine; on n'a jamais réussi à faire oublier le fait que le nationalisme québécois, même moderne, est porté presque exclusivement par les Québécois francophones. La minorité anglophone et les minorités ethno-culturelles y perçoivent une revendication d'identité culturelle à laquelle ni leurs origines, ni leur identité présente ne les incitent à s'y associer.

Ce débat ne comprend pas seulement une incompréhension entre deux groupes qui tentent de redéfinir le lieu de gestion étatique de la société. Il y a effectivement référence à des formes différentes de la représentation du politique qui auraient subsisté au débat anti-duplessiste. Ainsi, dans *La question du Québec*, livre significatif dans la construction du néo-nationalisme québécois, Marcel Rioux (1969 : 55) se disait, en réaction aux critiques de P. E. Trudeau et Frank Scott, « largement d'accord » avec leur énoncé de base. Seulement, précisait-il, ceux qui ont discuté de cette question ne tiennent pas compte qu'il y a deux types de démocratie. Reprenant largement la définition de Frank Scott, il poursuivait en disant : « La démocratie anglaise est, entre autres choses, individualiste, libérale, bourgeoise, inégalitaire et propriétaire, tandis que l'autre (à laquelle adhèreraient les nationalistes québécois, notre commentaire) serait plutôt collectiviste, autoritaire, populaire, égalitaire et anti-propriétaire. »

Plus récemment, Gilles Bourque (1990) précisait comment la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés* conduit inéluctablement « à un net rétrécissement de la communauté nationale minoritaire » (p. 159). « Posant l'individu citoyen comme centre des rapports sociaux et judiciarisant les rapports de pouvoir, elle entre directement en conflit avec les droits collectifs. Bien plus, poursuivra-t-il, la Charte tend à provoquer une véritable régression des aspects communautaires de la représentation du monde. La représentation de la nation s'y réduit à celle d'une communauté panétatique. La nation ne devient guère qu'un regroupement étatique d'individus citoyens qui partagent le même territoire » (p. 158).

Ainsi, comme Marcel Rioux vingt ans plus tôt, Gilles Bourque réaffirme donc la même incompatibilité entre, d'une part, la forme de la représentation politique fondée sur l'individualisme démocratique, celle de l'individu citoyen que met de l'avant la Charte, et, d'autre part, la représentation du politique fondée sur la nation-culture, celle des aspects communautaires que met de l'avant le « mouvement national minoritaire ». Pour reprendre les mots de Jacques Dufresne (1990 : 165) dans, *Le courage et la lucidité*, « Les chartes — et c'est là un autre aspect de la subtile démagogie qui les inspire — ont pour effet de substituer un rapport direct de l'individu avec l'État à l'insertion de l'individu dans les corps sociaux intermédiaires : la famille, le village ou le quartier, la paroisse, l'école, la ville, etc. »

Le constat d'une dépolitisation de nos sociétés par l'effet d'un usage parfois excessif de la problématique des droits individuels fait certes cause commune (il suffit de penser, par exemple, à l'interprétation de la Cour suprême selon laquelle les limitations linguistiques à l'affichage commercial briment le droit individuel de la liberté d'expression). Il ne faudrait pas toutefois, à notre avis, prendre prétexte de cette judiciarisation pour proposer le retour à une représentation du politique fondée sur la prédominance de la communauté organique.

Il est vrai que pour Marcel Rioux, et probablement aussi pour Gilles Bourque, cette dichotomie ne veut pas faire appel à une vision ethnique ou archaïque de la nation-culture. Ils n'opposent pas l'ethnie à la nation comme rassemblement d'individus autonomes. Plutôt, les notions de « collectivité », de « participation » et de « social » fondent l'idéologie de « dépassement » propre au néo-nationalisme et sont ainsi opposées à l'individualisme utilitaire et bourgeois. Ils n'opposent donc pas directement le droit naturel ou positif des peuples ethniques au droit libéral moderne. Ils inscrivent plutôt leurs démarches dans le débat des droits libérés et des droits sociaux en se proposant d'inverser l'actuelle priorité des démocraties libérales envers les droits libérés.¹

Une telle distinction néanmoins n'évite pas la question de la représentation du politique au fondement d'un social ainsi identifié à la nation. Soit, en effet, que la nation engendrant des droits sociaux postule un rassemblement d'individus autonomes qui instituent la communauté nationale comme espace en perpétuel processus de construction et son État, un État de droit, et alors nous ne possédons aucun autre moyen de définir son contour que par l'énigme de l'individu-citoyen; ou que cette nation soit une inscription culturelle particulière et alors les droits collectifs et sociaux associés à celle-ci constituent des droits historiquement enracinés. L'État qui en émane est alors une *Kulturstaat*, pour employer l'expression de Herder, qui entre directement en conflit avec la représentation individualisante du politique². L'idée d'inverser la prédominance de la représentation du politique à la source de l'État démocratique moderne par une représentation sociale ou nationale communautaire exige que l'on définisse la substance de ce social, dorénavant source de droits et même, pour certains, à la source d'une possible « politique nationale » (Bourque 1990 : 159). C'est essentiellement à ce problème que se sont butés, comme on le sait, les pays du socialisme réel, ce qui a conduit à la

paralyse de leur démocratie. Le politique fondé sur une réalité substantielle autre que l'individu sans fondement entretient, répétons-le, une ambivalence avec la démocratie moderne.

Lord Durham et l'impossible démocratie

Ironiquement, cette ambivalence de la représentation du politique était déjà au centre du regard que portait Lord Durham en 1840 sur l'émergence simultanée au Bas-Canada du mouvement national et de la démocratie politique moderne. Il fut en effet le premier (et sans subtilité d'ailleurs) à postuler l'incompatibilité entre les principes individualistes de la démocratie libérale et les « objectifs nationaux des Canadiens français ». Ces conclusions sont fort connues. L'extension de la démocratie parlementaire (le gouvernement responsable dans les mots de l'époque) fonctionnera seulement, estimait-il, lorsque les Canadiens français abandonneront « leurs vaines espérances de nationalité ». Et c'est d'ailleurs vers quoi, par une politique d'assimilation, Durham se propose de les mener. La démocratie libérale exige une homogénéité culturelle et s'avère non fonctionnelle dans un contexte trop marqué par le pluralisme des appartenances culturelles.

Comme l'a rappelé fort justement Janet Ajzenstat (1988), alors que la proposition assimilationniste de Durham a été perçue par les analystes canadiens-anglais comme une incohérence ou même une perspective franchement raciste, elle a été plus correctement interprétée dans la tradition analytique canadienne-française. Pour cette dernière en effet, l'analyse de Durham confirmait l'irréductibilité entre les principes de la nationalité et les principes individuels bourgeois. Ainsi, par exemple, Lionel Groulx, en commentant la naissance d'un mouvement libéral dans les années suivant le dépôt du *Rapport Durham* pourra dire que le « démocratisme » qui animait cette jeune génération était « une “maladie” qui couvrait “un terrible esprit d'intrigue, de faction d'insubordination contre les chefs” et qui, par conséquent, menaçait les intérêts de la nationalité » (cité par Bernard 1971 : 2-3). Durham aurait certainement été d'accord, tout en inversant la proposition avec un énoncé opposant ainsi démocratie et intérêts de la nationalité.

Je ne voudrais pas faire de Lord Durham un grand théoricien du libéralisme politique.³ Le rapport qu'il rédige pour répondre au mandat d'enquête sur la situation politique dans les Colonies de l'Amérique du Nord Britannique, suite aux troubles politiques qui ont conduit à la Révolte des patriotes de 1837-1838, constitue avant tout un document politique. Le ton de l'époque y est partout présent. On y décèle trop facilement les préjugés d'un impérialiste anglais envers la supériorité de sa race et de sa société. Durham ne possède ni le détachement, ni l'extraordinaire clairvoyance de Tocqueville par exemple avec qui on le compare souvent, non sans raisons d'ailleurs.⁴ Il est moins un penseur qu'un politique. Cette qualité fait de son rapport un témoin particulièrement éloquent de la matrice politique dans laquelle la modernité politique s'est constituée au Québec. Cette matrice nous apparaît encore susceptible d'éclairer l'ambivalence de la représentation du politique dans le Québec moderne.

On croirait, en ouvrant le *Rapport Durham*, que son auteur associe les maux qui assaillent la société du Bas-Canada à un problème de conflit inter-ethnique.⁵ C'est bien d'ailleurs ce que Durham lui-même veut nous faire croire dans les toutes premières pages du rapport. « Je m'attendais, dit-il dans cette citation devenue célèbre, à trouver un conflit entre le gouvernement et le peuple, je trouvai deux nations en guerre au sein d'un même État; je trouvai une lutte, non de principes, mais de race » (p. 58). La « haine des nationalités » (...) comme « essence de toute la querelle qui divise la société », Durham nous la présente à maintes occasions comme la querelle entre deux peuples aux caractéristiques culturelles différentes que le destin a contraint de vivre ensemble, « deux populations d'origine hostile et de caractères différents » (p. 100). Bref, une haine « que la différence de langage, de lois et de coutumes suscite » (p. 58).

Dans cette guerre des nationalités Durham ne cache pas sa préférence pour les « caractéristiques » du peuple anglais. C'est ici que ressort d'ailleurs, avec le plus de force, ses affinités avec l'impérialisme britannique et son sentiment de supériorité à l'égard des peuples vaincus et colonisés. « Je n'entretiens, précisera-t-il, aucun doute au sujet du caractère national qui doit être donné au Bas-Canada: ce doit être celui de l'Empire britannique » (p. 229). Et, parlant de la nationalité canadienne-française, il dira « on ne peut concevoir de nationalité plus dépourvue de tout ce qui peut vivifier et élever un peuple que celle des descendants des Français dans le Bas-Canada, du fait qu'ils ont conservé leur langue et leurs coutumes particulières. C'est (dira-t-il, ai-je besoin d'ajouter) un peuple sans histoire et sans littérature. » (p. 237)

Il y a pourtant, au delà de ces constats fort connus sur la guerre des races, une division plus significative qui hante le *Rapport Durham*. On l'a déjà souligné, Durham n'a pas que du mépris pour les Canadiens français. Il ne faut pas, précisera-t-il, « les mépriser ou les maltraiter, parce qu'ils cherchent à jouir de ce qu'ils ont sans partager l'esprit de lucre qui anime leurs voisins. Après tout, leur nationalité est un héritage ». Il ne faut pas non plus les punir parce qu'ils ont rêvé « de transmettre à leur postérité la langue, les usages et les institutions de cette grande nation qui pendant deux siècles donna le ton de la pensée au continent européen » (p. 231). La minorité anglophone du Bas-Canada n'est du reste pas toujours peinte avec comme toile de fond le charme britannique. Son esprit de conspiration et de clique poussera Durham à dire : « Je n'aimerais certes pas les soumettre (les Canadiens français) à la domination de cette minorité anglaise. » (p. 251) D'ailleurs, Durham n'est pas réfractaire à toute aspiration nationale. En tant que politicien anglais il a appuyé, au nom de « l'autodétermination », des nationalismes européens dans leur lutte contre le pouvoir aristocratique (Ajzenstat 1988 : 49-50). Une réputation qui l'a précédé dans la colonie et qui avait incité Étienne Parent dans le « judicieux Canadien », selon les mots de Groulx (1960 : 182), à s'accorder « cette platitude » : « Un nouveau messie vient donc effacer un nouveau péché originel. »

D'autre part, il est faux de penser que le libéralisme de Durham le conduise, au nom de l'homogénéité nécessaire, à nier toute place dans les régimes politiques démocratiques à la division sociale. Politiquement, Durham a toujours

défendu le régime anglais de gouvernement mixte parce qu'il est le plus apte selon lui à représenter les différents éléments constitutifs d'une société. Au Haut-Canada, précisera-t-il dans son rapport, la querelle politique a porté « sur une mosaïque de problèmes » (p. 139) et « a, en fait, donné naissance non pas à deux, mais à plusieurs partis » (p. 138). Des institutions politiques saines doivent pouvoir, à son avis, représenter une pluralité d'intérêts. Il souhaitait d'ailleurs que l'Union législative des Colonies d'Amérique du Nord Britannique active une telle pluralité d'intérêts en mettant fin à l'antagonisme interethnique qui avait paralysé jusqu'alors l'Assemblée du Bas-Canada. On comprend ainsi beaucoup mieux cette apparente déception de Durham dans les propos introductifs du rapport, où croyant trouver « une querelle entre le pouvoir exécutif et la branche populaire de la législative » il y trouve « une querelle entre un peuple..., et un exécutif » ou encore mieux, croyant trouver « une lutte de classes » y trouve « une lutte de races » (p. 60-61).

Pourquoi toutefois celui qui accepte ailleurs le principe de luttes des nationalités, celui qui considère qu'il est dans la normalité de fonctionnement des institutions politiques modernes de faire place à la revendication du peuple et à la lutte des classes, par conséquent à la division sociale, ne peut-il faire place aux aspirations nationales des Canadiens français? « Pour comprendre, dira Durham, l'incompatibilité des deux races au Canada, il ne suffit pas de nous représenter une société composée à part égale de Français et d'Anglais. Il faut aussi avoir en tête quelle sorte de Français et d'Anglais viennent en contact et dans quelle proportion ils se rencontrent. » En fait l'incompatibilité des races recoupe une incompatibilité dans les formes de la représentation du politique. La division ethno-culturelle recouvre selon Durham, dans ce Bas-Canada du milieu du 19^e siècle, deux principes de civilisation irréductibles.

La société canadienne-française est une société d'ancien régime. La conquête, et la coupure d'avec la France qui en a résulté, ont figé cette société dans un égalitarisme et un communautarisme pré-moderne. « Ils sont encore Français, mais des Français qui ne ressemblent pas du tout à ceux de France. Ils ressemblent plutôt aux provinciaux français de l'ancien régime. » (p. 67) Même les critiques les plus acerbes envers les caractéristiques nationales des Canadiens français, « les anglais ont pour eux l'incontestable supériorité de l'intelligence » (...) « je ne connais pas de distinctions qui indiquent et entraînent une infériorité plus irrémédiable » (p. 235), sont liées à des explications d'ordre idéologique.

La nationalité que revendiquent les Canadiens français est une forme dépassée de nationalité (lire, leur culture politique est non libérale). Le peuple au nom duquel leurs chefs disent parler est un « héritage » et non la « branche populaire » d'une société démocratique. Ils sont « le résidu d'une colonisation ancienne » et devront s'assimiler pour participer à la modernité nord-américaine. « Ils demeurent une société vieillie et retardataire dans un monde neuf et progressif. » (p. 67)

Au contraire, pour Durham, la nationalité anglaise ne se définit pas par un « héritage ». Elle est « une démocratie très indépendante » (p. 63). À « l'inertie » du monde canadien-français, dont on a voulu abusivement associer les soubresauts politiques à la « vigoureuse démocratie américaine » (p. 63), il

oppose le dynamisme qui anime le groupe anglais. « La supériorité de l'esprit d'entreprise des Anglais » (p. 231) est incontestable, dit-il. Ce n'est toutefois pas au nom de la supériorité de la race anglaise qu'il fonde l'argument définitif pour l'assimilation, mais au nom de l'avenir, au nom du principe civilisationnel qui construira et développera le continent (p. 231). Les institutions politiques qu'il désire voir implanter doivent participer à activer cette « ambition personnelle » (p. 156) de façon à faire des colonies de l'Amérique du Nord Britannique un lieu où, paraphrasant Tocqueville dans *La démocratie américaine*, « tout est activité et mouvement » (p. 186).⁶ La « *race anglaise* » (j'applique ce mot à tous ceux qui parlent la langue anglaise, précisera-t-il, p. 234) apparaît alors synonyme du principe de l'individualisme moderne, tel que le concevait le libéralisme anglais du 19^e siècle. Refuser ce principe condamnerait la minorité à demeurer hors l'histoire.

La division qui coupe cette société est tellement fondatrice qu'elle ne permet pas, pour Durham, l'homogénéité nécessaire au fonctionnement d'un régime politique représentatif. « Par conséquent, dira-t-il, il n'y a entre eux aucune controverse politique personnelle. Les occasions ordinaires de querelles ne surviennent jamais..., le parti anglais a ses assemblées et le parti français "les siennes". » (p. 179) C'est donc sur l'inexistence d'un espace public commun, parce qu'il repose sur deux nationalités dotées d'une représentation du politique différente et incompatible, que Durham fonde sa conviction d'une assimilation nécessaire des Canadiens français comme préalable à l'octroi du gouvernement responsable (la démocratie parlementaire). Cette scission, en regard des institutions politiques modernes, lui apparaît plus incompatible, rappelons-le, que celle opposant habituellement le peuple et le gouvernement, ou les classes entre elles.

La fausse querelle des anciens et des modernes, ou celle de l'individu citoyen et de l'individu culture

L'histoire donnera en partie raison à Durham. La querelle des nationalités rendra difficile et parfois inopérante le fonctionnement des institutions de la démocratie libérale au Canada. Cent cinquante ans après le dépôt du Rapport, la question nationale obnubile toujours le débat politique au détriment (comme le disaient Durham en 1840, les gauchistes au cours des années soixante-dix et les milieux d'affaires aujourd'hui) des « vraies » questions. La nation- culture et son héritage délimitent le contour d'un espace politique que la nation comme rassemblement d'individus autonomes n'a pas été capable de détruire.

Mais l'affaire Durham nous conduit sur de fausses pistes, lorsque celui-ci tente de lier ce fractionnement de l'espace politique à des logiques sociétales différentes. C'est en ce sens que Durham est le plus anachronique tout en étant le plus politiquement significatif. Il inaugure une lecture qui perçoit une opposition irréductible entre la défense de ses particularismes culturels et la notion moderne de la nation. Et, cette même lecture est rééditée aujourd'hui lorsque l'on interprète le mouvement national à travers le prisme déformant de l'incompatibilité entre la logique individualiste et celle des droits collectifs, ou encore entre celle des droits libérés et des droits sociaux.

La pensée libérale du 19^e siècle, comme sa critique marxiste ou conservatrice, était convaincue que l'avènement de la modernité individualiste conduirait à l'uniformisation et à l'homogénéisation. Durham, comme Tocqueville d'ailleurs, n'entrevoit aucun autre avenir à nos sociétés.⁷ Les formes traditionnelles du lien social se dissoudront pour faire place à l'individu atomisé, au pouvoir social anonyme ou encore, comme semble le projeter Durham, à la société essentiellement définie par le dynamisme du marché. Le 19^e siècle entrevoyait encore difficilement la nouvelle forme que prendra le lien social dans la modernité et le pluralisme des appartenances qu'il fera naître.

Le mythe fondateur des sociétés modernes n'est pas, à proprement parler, l'individualisme. Il s'agit plutôt, comme l'avait bien vu Edmund Burke (1790), de l'hypothèse de la table rase, c'est-à-dire l'idée selon laquelle le social n'a dorénavant d'autre légitimité que celle fondée sur la délibération entre les citoyens (d'où le détour nécessaire par l'individu). Une solidarité volontairement construite, une loi qu'on s'est soi-même donnée, voilà la matrice du lien social dans la modernité démocratique.⁸ Mais les appartenances collectives, héritage de notre inscription particulière dans une histoire ou dans une culture, ne sont pas pour autant dissoutes. Elles demeurent encore, dans la modernité, le socle substantif à travers lequel la vie en société se réalise et sur lequel s'échafaudent nos visions du monde et nos projets de société. Seulement, elles sont dorénavant soumises à l'hypothèse de la table rase, elles sont mises en tension constante avec la légitimité issue de la citoyenneté démocratique.

En créant une représentation neuve du politique, l'individualisme démocratique ne détruit pas tout lien social et n'invalide pas pour autant toutes les autres formes d'appartenance collective. L'hypothèse de la table rase travaille la réalité sociale, elle n'est pas et ne peut être le seul principe du lien social. Au contraire, et l'histoire des sociétés démocratiques l'a amplement démontré « l'hypothèse de la table rase » en refusant de légitimer le social à partir d'un principe positif (qu'il soit de l'ordre du religieux, du culturel ou du social) permet à toutes les formes d'existence, à toutes les passions et à tous les héritages de s'affirmer politiquement. La société démocratique est la société du pluralisme par excellence, car elle refuse qu'un héritage particulier soit l'étalon de la cité. Autrement dit, même « la patrie ne peut être au dessus des partis », parce que la nation est toujours le résultat de l'affrontement des partis. La société démocratique constitue aussi la société par excellence des droits sociaux, parce que les droits individuels en s'incarnant génèrent nécessairement des revendications sociales. En effet, c'est le propre des droits libérés de s'exercer et, par conséquent, de se muter en droits créances. Le paradoxe de l'incompatibilité n'est qu'apparent (Lefort 1981).⁹

L'espace public des sociétés démocratiques continue donc d'être balisé par l'appartenance des individus qui la fondent à des réalités sociales et culturelles, bref par l'héritage. Toutefois, l'affirmation politique de ces différences et de ses particularismes doit subir le test de l'humanisme abstrait. Autrement dit, il est dorénavant affirmé que l'individu concret et historiquement engendré ne peut s'opposer dans la cité moderne à l'individu abstrait, au caractère

insaisissable du fondement politique. Concrètement cela signifie qu'une citoyenneté est toujours historiquement située, mais qu'en même temps elle doit être accessible à tous les individus autonomes qui partagent l'espace où elle s'applique, quitte à rétrécir son héritage.¹⁰ La citoyenneté démocratique ne peut reposer sur des liens de consanguinité, par exemple, ou encore sur une expérience historique non partageable par l'humanité qui habite le même territoire. Ce n'est pas l'expression d'une revendication politique identitaire qui en soi pose une difficulté à l'individualisme démocratique mais leur incompatibilité postulée, autant par certains qui veulent en promouvoir l'idée que par d'autres qui veulent la rejeter.

Avant les P. E. Trudeau et F. Scott, Durham reprochait aux Canadiens français d'avoir utilisé les institutions démocratiques pour défendre leur nationalité. Donner à cette province le gouvernement responsable, donc élargir l'espace démocratique, aurait comme conséquence de vivifier l'idée de construire autour de cette nationalité une société francophone. Obnubilé par sa vision de l'inéluctable montée de l'individualisme, Durham ne pouvait voir dans ce projet qu'une dangereuse régression. Ainsi, lorsqu'il rappelle comment l'octroi en 1791 d'une chambre d'assemblée représentative avait permis aux Canadiens français de cultiver leur caractère national, il ne réalise pas qu'il décrit l'effet même de la société démocratique. Le mouvement national naissant n'était pas une logique incompatible à la démocratie, elle était l'une de ses réalisations. La création d'un espace public à travers l'émergence de la démocratie représentative a permis l'expression politique d'une revendication ethno-culturelle, non l'inverse. En opposant société d'individus à société d'appartenance, Durham s'empêche de comprendre l'aventure des sociétés modernes.

Il en est ainsi d'ailleurs de ses « successeurs » qui verront une incompatibilité entre la démocratie individualiste et la revendication nationale et entre les droits individuels et les droits sociaux, entre les droits libertés et les droits créances. Ils ne comprendront pas que c'est la dynamique même de cette opposition et non l'un de ses pôles qu'introduit l'avènement de la modernité démocratique. Leur cécité n'est pas dangereuse parce qu'elle inciterait le mouvement identitaire national à rejeter l'expérience des mouvements sociaux démocratiques et à tourner ainsi le dos à la modernité démocratique. Aucune analyse réellement sérieuse ne conduit à confirmer une telle possibilité dans le Québec contemporain. Elle est dangereuse avant tout parce qu'elle participe à perpétuer l'ambiguïté sur le rapport entre un Québec souverain, le pluralisme et les droits individuels. Elle retarde d'autant l'adhésion de l'ensemble des citoyens à un projet politique québécois.

Notes

1. En plus des textes cités ici, on se référera aux articles de Robert Vandycke, « La Charte et les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels » (1990) et « Les droits de l'homme et leur mode emploi... » (1986). Celui-ci dresse un bilan du débat, droits individuels/droits collectifs dans le contexte canadien et québécois. Il oppose lui aussi la logique individualiste des droits libertés à la logique sociale des droits créances.
2. Voir sur l'émergence de cette opposition entre la représentation constructiviste de la nation et la représentation de la nation-culture : « La première crise de la raison », Thériault, 1988.

3. S'il est pertinent à la suite de Janet Aizenstat (1988, 1990) de lire Durham à travers la philosophie politique, il ne faut pas, comme elle a tendance parfois à le faire, exagérer la cohérence théorique du rapport. Voir pour une analyse critique de l'influence de Durham, Ged Martin (1990), « Attacking The Durham Myth... ».
4. Voir à ce sujet l'excellent texte de S. Dion (1990), « Durham et Tocqueville sur la colonisation libérale ».
5. Les citations du *Rapport Durham* sont puisées de l'édition de l'Hexagone, voir bibliographie Durham 1839. Pour ne pas alourdir inutilement le texte nous n'avons indiqué que la pagination lorsque nous citons ce texte.
6. Si Durham considère le Canada anglais plus dynamique que le Canada français, il est indéniable toutefois que comparativement aux États-Unis la société canadienne dans son ensemble n'a pas, pour lui, le dynamisme de la vigoureuse démocratie américaine.
7. Marcel Gauchet (1980), « Tocqueville, l'Amérique et nous », décrit bien les conséquences pour la compréhension de la démocratie moderne de l'hypothèse uniformisante de Tocqueville.
8. Sur l'idée d'un nouveau lien social construit à travers la représentation de l'individu, voir A. Renaut (1989) *L'ère de l'individu*.
9. Nous avons poursuivi cette réflexion sur la question de la nation et de la démocratie dans le Québec contemporain dans « L'individualisme et le projet souverainiste », (Thériault 1994), et plus généralement sur l'opposition droits collectifs et droits sociaux dans « Le droit d'avoir des droits », (Thériault, 1993).
10. On trouvera chez Jean-Jacques Simard (1990), « La culture québécoise question de nous », une discussion intéressante sur la nécessité au Québec d'une réflexion qui tienne compte de l'héritage tout en étant accessible à l'ensemble de la société civile.

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Janice Kulyk Keefer

Fortunate Falls and Propitious Expulsions: Anglophone Fictions and the “Acadian Question”

Abstract

This article aims to show how literature has helped to transform an historical event of catastrophic proportions—the deportation of Acadians from their homeland in 1755, and their dispersal to parts abroad—into an ideologically charged version of a biblical myth. Anglophone writers in Canada have interpreted this myth as a “fortunate fall” by which a doomed or flawed paradise was lost only to be replaced by an improved and legitimized one. The process by which Anglophone authors, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles G.D. Roberts, Thomas Raddall and Margaret Marshall Saunders, have asserted, embellished, transformed and sometimes rejected or displaced the myth of the Fortunate Fall and Expulsion will be explored in the course of this article. Allusions will also be made to the efforts of Acadian writer Antonine Maillet to appropriate and abrogate that myth, and to create a counter-narrative as compelling as the original.

Résumé

Le présent article tente de démontrer comment la littérature a aidé à transformer un événement historique d'envergure catastrophique — la déportation des Acadiens en 1755 — en une version idéologique d'un mythe biblique. Les écrivains anglo-canadiens ont interprété ce mythe comme un « heureux événement ». Un paradis imparfait, voué à la disparition, était remplacé par un paradis amélioré et légitime. L'auteure explore le processus par lequel des écrivains anglophones comme Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles G. D. Roberts, Thomas Raddall et Margaret Marshall Saunders ont défendu, embelli, transformé et, à l'occasion, rejeté ou remplacé ce mythe d'un bannissement heureux. Par ailleurs, l'auteure examine brièvement les efforts de l'écrivain acadien, Antonine Maillet, pour s'approprier et abolir ce mythe, et créer un récit aussi imposant que l'original, mais qui contrecarre celui-ci.

Chez nous, l'histoire fut d'abord et est encore en grande partie l'affaire des autres. Depuis le temps déjà ancien où Thomas Haliburton dressait le compte statistique de la vieille Nouvelle-Écosse, on ne saurait dénombrer ceux-là que l'Acadie a fascinés et qui ont narré avec plus ou moins de succès nos tribulations anciennes et chanté notre renaissance. Venant de l'extérieur, ils avaient l'occasion d'étudier le peuplement colonial sur un spécimen isolé et d'analyser le mouvement de conquête dans son envers le plus brutal, le génocide des Français d'Acadie. [...] L'Acadie se présentait [...] en archétype, version européenne, des peuples victimes de la colonisation conquérante, dont le redressement et la renaissance justifiaient après coup les cruelles nécessités. (Roy, 1981, 11)

For us, history has been and largely remains the business of other people. From the period long past when Thomas Haliburton compiled a statistical account of old Nova Scotia, the fascination with Acadie and the attempts to tell, with mitigated success, our ancient tribulations and to sing our renaissance have been immeasurable. As outsiders, these people had the chance to study the colonial settlement of an isolated specimen and to analyze the movement of conquest in its most brutal form, the genocide of the Acadian French....Acadie appears...as a European-style archetype of a people victimized by a conquering colonization, [a people] whose reformation and renaissance subsequently justify a cruel necessity.¹

Until recently, history and literature for the Acadians of the Canadian Maritimes have been an “affaire des autres.” Popular writers such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles G.D. Roberts, Margaret Marshall Saunders and Thomas Raddall have all produced narratives dealing with the events of 1755 known to Acadians as *le Grand Dérangement*, and to most Anglophone North Americans as “the Expulsion of the Acadians.” The widely differing values encoded in the French and English terms—trauma and tumult on the one hand; efficient, even divinely-ordained movement on the other—suggest that a great deal is lost and also transformed in what becomes more an act of erasure than of translation.

This paper will attempt to show the ideological impetus of this transformation and to identify the narratological forms it takes in relevant works by the writers mentioned above. It examines how popular cultural forms, such as the historical novel and romance, re-inscribe and sometimes revise contentious master narratives of the sort employed by Longfellow to contain and excuse what Michel Roy characterizes as a form of genocide. After a brief analysis of *Evangeline*, we will examine how certain texts (once widely-read² though now obscure) by Roberts, Raddall and Saunders adapt and alter Longfellow's ideologically charged tropes and plots. Our discussion ends with a bow to two texts by Antonine Maillet that reclaim Acadian history from Anglophone writers by producing counter narratives that challenge the literary paradigms they so successfully disseminated.

* * *

For anyone raised in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the term “expulsion” inevitably evokes one of our oldest Western narratives of crime and punishment: Eve and Adam's fall from innocence (for Christians a “fortunate fall,” offering the possibility of redemption through Christ's sufferings), and their removal from Eden. The conflation of locution and myth is an ideological manoeuvre that many Anglophone writers in the Maritimes have not only employed but also propagated most notably among the descendants of Acadians thrown out of their homes and off their lands in 1755. As Eugène Cloutier observed, “It is the English that sell *Evangeline*...in the region made celebrated by the Expulsion of the Acadians. And this strikes your heart

curiously. I should not be any happier to be offered *Evangeline* by the descendants of the deported” (Cloutier, 65).

In *Evangeline* (1847), Longfellow offers the first literary articulation of the Expulsion myth which, ironically enough, proved immensely popular with Acadians themselves.³ For Longfellow, it is not historical fact but the internal logic of the biblical Expulsion myth (no fall without guilt, no expulsion without the promise of redemption and a return to the Garden) that shapes his narrative. While the popularity of *Evangeline* among Acadians stems, at least in part, from its having been for so long the only literary version of their history available to them, the poem's appeal to Anglophone readers seems to extend beyond romance to a desire for exculpation. For the deportation of the Acadians occurred in these readers' name, or at least in the name of their language, culture and political loyalties.

Certainly, some readers have resisted the suasions of *Evangeline*. Literary critic and English professor Archibald MacMechan, for example, faulted Longfellow for emphasizing “the forest primeval” instead of “the desolation of the level, wind-swept marshland,” a description of which would have produced “greater truth and deeper pathos” (MacMechan, 1927, 289). And yet truth in this text is not entirely a matter of topography: the ultimate aim of *Evangeline* is not to faithfully depict the Minas Basin and its environs, but to substitute for the lost utopia of Grand Pré, where “all things were held in common, and what one had was another's” (Longfellow, 1962, 24) the American Dream of Louisiana, in which a “ci-devant blacksmith” can instantly become the possessor of unlimited “domains and...herds” and adopt a “patriarchal demeanour” (Longfellow, 1962, 43).

Longfellow's ideological project gives a curious warp to a poem which, line for line, is as much the story of old versus new Acadie as it is the tale of star-crossed lovers. Thus, the historical context in which the deportation occurs is virtually evacuated from *Evangeline*. Subtle references are made to the good faith of Acadian neutrality, and to the four years spent by the old notary, René LeBlanc, “suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of the English” (Longfellow, 1962, 21). More significant by far is Longfellow's ahistorical explanation for the catastrophe: man's perennial proclivity for injustice—in other words, human nature. Longfellow encodes this message in a fable LeBlanc recounts, on the eve of the deportation, involving a maidservant mistakenly accused of stealing a pearl necklace. Rather than defend herself, she “patiently meets her doom at the foot of the statue of Justice” (Longfellow, 1962, 22). As her spirit ascends to Heaven, a thunderstorm smites the statue, striking its scales to the ground to reveal their contents: a magpie's nest containing the “stolen” necklace.

Lajeunesse, whose complaints that “Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the strongest!” (Longfellow, 1962, 21) the fable supposedly counters, stands “Silenced, but not convinced” (Longfellow, 1962, 22)—and with good reason. Just as LeBlanc's account of the Triumph of Justice disregards any fear or outrage the innocent victim must have felt at the foot of the scaffold, so his alter-ego, Longfellow, minimizes or entirely suppresses the sheer human suffering involved in the deportation. The inhabitants of Grand Pré march to

the boats in silence, or else sing uplifting hymns with remarkable stoicism. A mere four lines describes the “disorder” and “confusion” of the actual embarkation. By making his heroine and hero the victims of Fate rather than of British imperial policy or even of history, Longfellow shifts the guilt or blame from the perpetrators of violence to an abstract, unreachable entity. He effectively deflates the hope and ultimately any need for intervention or redress. In some ways, *Evangeline* reads like a proleptic version of *Obasan* as that novel would appear without the political presence of Aunt Emily, and the spiritual and psychological pain of Naomi.

The credo espoused by LeBlanc's fable—patience over passion, passive submission to Fate rather than active opposition to the enemy—emerges during the Chapel scene, in which Lajeunesse, shouting “wildly,” his face “distorted with passion,” offers at least verbal aggression towards “the tyrants of England” (Longfellow, 1962, 26), only to be struck to the pavement by an English soldier. As a final blow, he is rebuked by Father Felician [sic], who counsels a curious combination of forgiveness, compassion and contrition as the proper Christian response to deportation. Moreover, once the Acadians are dispersed to the southern United States, they learn unmistakably that the best policy, morally and economically, is not to kick against the pricks, but to roll where the boot has propelled them—the new Eden of Louisiana.

Though most readers of *Evangeline* remember best the sonorous, opening description of the village of Grand Pré, the equally detailed account of the American south-east in Part II also commands attention. Longfellow's sensuous presentation of this lush countryside, where the “odorous breath of magnolia” pervades the air, and mockingbirds send “floods of delirious music” over all (Longfellow, 1962, 38; 40) makes Grand Pré remembered seem like Cold Comfort Farm. Such at least is the effect of the speech addressed by Basil Lajeunesse to his fellow exiles in Louisiana:

Welcome once more to a home, that is better perchance than the
old one!
Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the rivers;
Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer...
All the year round the orange groves are in blossom, and grass
grows
More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer...
(Longfellow, 1962,43-4)

To be sure, Basil is given to passionate outbursts, and we are told that his guests smile as they listen to his encomium on Louisiana. Yet on hearing his tales of “the prairies, whose numberless herds were his who would take them,” each one thinks “in his heart, that he, too, would go and do likewise” (Longfellow, 1962, 43). This new note of rugged individualism marks a divide between old Acadie and the new, a divide as significant as the contrast in climate and vegetation. For where old Acadie was utopian in nature, all men being equal in wealth and bound to one another by fraternal love (Longfellow, 1962, 14, 24, 52), new Acadie, as personified by Lajeunesse, the blacksmith turned landowner (and even more so by his son Gabriel), is founded on the old community's dissolution and the dispersal of its members. Gabriel, rather than staying with his father and waiting for *Evangeline* to make her way to him,

seeks oblivion in restless wandering. Evangeline, too, abandons such a community of exiles as there is to roam both geographical and spiritual territories, exchanging her “earthly horizon” for “the lamps of the city celestial” (Longfellow, 1962, 51; 53). Her *imitatio Christi*, however, would seem to have a general application, rendering her a Redeemer figure whose “abnegation of self, and devotion to others” (Longfellow, 1962, 52) somehow legitimize the Acadians' embrace of a safer and far more opulent Eden than the one they knew in Nova Scotia.

Two of Longfellow's Canadian heirs, Charles G.D. Roberts and Thomas H. Raddall, hold fast to the logic of the Expulsion myth and the exculpation manoeuvres inscribed in *Evangeline*. Admission of guilt and gestures toward expiation emerge only in the prose of a contemporary of Roberts, Margaret Marshall Saunders, the first woman to tackle the “Acadian question” in fiction. The remainder of this paper examines how the key trope of Longfellow's poem (Acadie as the Garden of Eden—and the associated plots of exile, redemption and return to Eden) is exploited and extended in the Expulsion narratives of Roberts and Raddall. Finally, we will discuss Saunders' attempts to depart from the literary tradition established by the American poet and embraced by his Canadian successors, a rupture which foreshadows the definitive break by Antonine Maillet's fictions *Pélagie* and *Cent Ans dans les Bois*.

[...] ce passé impossible rêvé par les écrivains, [que nous avons pris pour la réalité.

(Roy, 1981, 81)

(... this impossible past dreamed up by writers, which we mistook for reality.)

Evangeline stands as a monument to the power of fictive constructs to displace or transform historical fact, however problematic in nature. Michel Roy has persuasively argued that the world of pre-*Dérangement* Acadie largely remains a mystery—“Nos plus savantes projections n'en feront jamais revivre que les aspects les plus superficiels” (“Even our most educated guess can only resurrect its most superficial aspects” [Roy, 1981, 81]). No case, he concludes, can be made for any remarkable prosperity or utopianism characterizing Acadian settlements prior to 1755 (Roy, 1981, 81). And yet, the Edenic properties of old Acadie have remained an imaginative imperative for many writers.⁴ Charles G.D. Roberts' two historical romances of Acadie, *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline*, present pre-Expulsion Grand Pré as a miracle of social and aesthetic harmony: orchards swoon with apple blossoms to be plucked by the exquisitely nervous fingers of his heroines; his *habitants* are touchingly eager to pay rents to their *seigneurs*, in spite of the fact that this is one feudal tie of which King George has disburdened them.

It is not only the writers of romances who conflate Acadia and Arcadia, however. No doubt for reasons of ethnic pride and pathos, Acadian historian Bona Arsenault creates his account of the social and economic conditions of pre-Expulsion Acadie by quoting whosesome from *Evangeline*, Part I

(Arsenault, 1966, 54-56). Stanley Ryerson points to the account of Acadians living “like true republicans, not acknowledging royal or judicial authority” to bolster his attempt to present variants of the political structures native and primary to Canadian experience (Ryerson, 1963, 169). Edgar McInnis uses the paradisaical paradigm to argue that the characteristic sloth of the Acadians was “an indirect tribute to the ease with which they drew their subsistence from the soil.” He then upbraids them for failing to vary their economy by fishing or shipbuilding. The Acadians, McInnis concludes, were prisoners of a Grade B paradise: “Content with a modest standard of living, and stubbornly refusing to be prodded into more ambitious efforts, the Acadians clung to their comfortable settlements with little attention to the outside world” (McInnis, 1959, 62).⁵ The implication, of course, is that the Acadians deserved just what they got. So works the proleptic innocence-equals-culpability formula which, as Michel Roy complains, post-*Dérangement* historians and writers have used to reduce “tout le substrat moral des événements” (“the whole moral substratum of events” [Roy, 1981, 80]).

If Roberts' romances portray a blissfully Edenic Acadie, Thomas Raddall's historical novel *Roger Sudden* depicts Acadie as an Eden that never was. Here is his depiction of “a typical Acadian farm”:

...a few staked fields in the wild meadows, a miserable cabin of logs (overflowing with children, dogs, fowls, and lean pigs) a crazy barn, and one or two outhouses. The people were small and lean and sharp of feature, living in a sort of dour content with themselves and at odds with the rest of the world. The women were shapeless in homespun, none too clean, and the men...were satisfied to till a small part of the tide meadows...too indolent to clear the rich soil of the upland except to get the winter's fuel....Their long and close relations with the Indians had given them a half-savage outlook which astonished Roger at times; indeed they were primitives, hating the English as the Micmacs did, yet suspicious of the *Quebecois*...and friendly only to the savages who were in fact, a part of them by blood as well as association (Raddall, 1944, 223-24).

Roger has come ostensibly to warn the Acadian Martin Muise of the disaster pending at Grand Pré; in reality, his visit simply renders the Acadians inexcusable—too indolent of mind and body to take a friendly hint and get out while they can. Later, Raddall has Roger watching the scene in the Chapel at Grand Pré where Colonel Winslow reads the Deportation Order:

There was a temptation to linger and gaze upon the tragedy in all its aspects. What would posterity say of all this? Poets and romancers would have a theme for the next five hundred years. He wondered how many would make an honest search into its causes and stab their pens where the guilt lay most. But there was work to be done! Posterity was a long way off and poets be damned! (Raddall, 1944, 228-29).

Part of Raddall's work in *Roger Sudden* is to show, from what he deems to be a purely historical perspective, how the Acadians triggered their own downfall by violating their promise of neutrality. Not only did they supply the garrison at Louisbourg and help man the fortifications at Beauséjour, but most

heinously, they abetted the slaughter of Colonel Noble's colonial troops by Captain Coulon de Villier's men at Grand Pré, in 1747. Roger's argument to Martin Muise regarding Acadian culpability in these matters echoes a statement voiced earlier in the novel: "Cajuns? They're varmints same as Injuns: and they've got to be rooted out, same as Injuns, afore there can ever be peace and plenty for the English in Nova Scotia" (Raddall, 1944, 110). Raddall seems to accuse the Acadians, not only of slothfully failing to exploit their piece of paradise, but also of obstructing others—the industrious, ambitious English, for example—from realizing the potential of Grand Pré.

Such is Raddall's work in *Roger Sudden*; his hero's is even more compromising. For Roger is at Grand Pré during the Expulsion not to muse on Destiny and History, but to exploit the Acadians in the crassest and most profitable way possible. After the Acadians have been removed on the New England ships, Roger rounds up all the abandoned cattle along the Minas Basin, drives them to Halifax, and then sells them off at extortionate prices to the British military authorities. And in the ideological equivalent of a Freudian slip, Raddall casts his hero in the classic pose of the capitalist entrepreneur who creams off the cultural as well as the economic spoils. In the parlour of Roger's Halifax house stands a "painted plaster statue of Saint Joseph, from the ravished Acadian chapel at Grand Pré," "all scratched where the rough New Englanders had thrown him down on the day of the expulsion" (Raddall, 1944, 251-2).

Roger Sudden is set during and between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War; yet what breathes through the novel is the spirit of the Battle of Britain. The last few pages are a panegyric to British courage, endurance and resourcefulness—qualities which, Raddall insists, made the British the natural masters of the North American continent, and their policies—particularly those regarding troublesome and treacherous "aliens"—beyond censure. In his history of Halifax, written some quarter century after *Roger Sudden*, Raddall continues to argue Acadian culpability in the Deportation, citing the alliances and activities of redoubtable Acadian guerilla fighters, including one "Broussard, nicknamed Beausoleil...who had led the raid on Dartmouth in 1750 and who...was in charge of the Acadian rangers fighting the British forces about Beauséjour" (Raddall, 1971, 45).

In less aggressive guise this same Beausoleil Broussard figures in Mailllet's *Pélagie* along with another historical figure given even greater account by both Raddall and Charles G.D. Roberts: that necessary serpent in the garden, the Abbé LeLoutre.

"And Abbé LeLoutre?"

"Ah, that one!"

"...Quiet now, leave religion out of it."

"His religion didn't stop him from betraying us all."

"Not betraying us...defending us..."

"Priest or no, he's a crook. If it wasn't for him and his rebel Indians, the English would have left us in peace and we'd still be planting our

turnips in the basin of Les Mines.”

“If it wasn’t for him, we’d have forgotten we were French.”

“But because of him our descendants may forget they were Acadians.”

The Girouards, Thibodeaus, and Bourgeois were well away, tearing Abbé LeLoutre into shreds, a rending of reputation that History hasn’t been able to mend to this day.

(Maillet, 1983, 65)

Implacable enemy of the British, fiendish mentor of the Indians, ruthless exploiter of the peace-loving Acadians, fiction’s Abbé LeLoutre is the answer to an Anglophile’s prayers. If one cannot hope to show that the British and Acadians were equally innocent in the matter of the Expulsion, then one can at least hope to prove that both share a portion of the guilt. And if the Acadians are cast as an Eve who disobeyed the rule of neutrality set down by the God-like British, then two more roles fall to the British: avenging angels given the thankless task of ejecting the sinners from Eden, and, because of the immitigably repellent nature of the task, a hapless Adam who becomes a partner in the suffering brought about by Eve. Why else should writers like Roberts and Raddall take pains to show the aversion of Colonel Winslow and his men as they carried out this Massacre of the Innocents, as old Louis-à-Bélonie describes the Expulsion in the first sentence of *Pélagie*? Naturally, Anglophile writers would seize upon LeLoutre—Roberts’ “Black Abbé”, Raddall’s sinister “The Otter”—as a symbolic agent of evil who compromises the Acadians just enough to exculpate the British.

The Forge in the Forest presents LeLoutre (whom Roberts names La Garne) as a dastardly, fanatic Anglophobe who blackmails the Acadians into assisting, or at least not interfering with, his devilish plots: kidnapping blond and curly-haired English boys from their madonna-like mothers, deviously plotting against the lives and honour of Acadian chevaliers, burning down the houses of those Acadians unsympathetic to his vow to exterminate every English man, woman and child on Acadian soil. Through a convoluted subplot, Roberts reveals LeLoutre to have been driven into the Church by threats against his life made by the brother of a woman he had dishonoured. This brother, of course, is none other than the mad hermit Grûl, who stalks through the pages of *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline* like a cross-dressed Cassandra, proclaiming the imminent demise of “Acadie the Fair.”

In *Roger Sudden*, Raddall presents LeLoutre as the lynch pin of the alliance between French and Micmac. Although he plays no major role in the novel, LeLoutre’s presence is a strategic part of Raddall’s ideological aim to show the ultimate worthlessness of the French cause in North America. Near the end of *Roger Sudden*, we are told that LeLoutre has slunk out of Acadie disguised as a woman; is rumoured to have been defrocked long ago by the Bishop of Québec, and has become a prisoner of the English on the Isle of Jersey (Raddall, 1944, 221; 282). As Roger reflects, “Durance in English hands, within sight of France, so near and yet so far, embittered with sour memories, what a purgatory for that man who had sent so many to hell!” (Raddall, 1944, 282). What Raddall fails to relate is that LeLoutre spent the rest of his life after his release from prison in ministering to Acadian deportees relocated in

France. He does, however, provide a foil to LeLoutre in the person of the novel's good priest, Père, later Abbé, Maillard, whom Raddall shows as instrumental in persuading the Micmacs to abandon their allegiance to the French and to make their peace with the British Crown.⁶

On se demande parfois en Acadie lequel du mythe ou de la réalité impose le conditionnement le plus irrépressible. (Roy, 1981, 299).

(In Acadie one sometimes wonders whether myth or reality produces the most irrepressible conditioning.)

While Roberts and Raddall embellish and develop the trope of old Acadie as Eden, going one better than Longfellow by introducing a serpent into the garden, their variations on his emplotment of the Expulsion myth—redemption and resettlement in a new Eden—reveal agendas far removed from the needs and achievements of the Acadians who figure in their narratives.

For Roberts, myth presses reality into the service of a nationalist (and centrist) vision of history. Though the two lovers in his *A Sister to Evangeline* evade deportation, they do not settle safely in either Longfellow's Louisiana, or New Brunswick, successor to Nova Scotia's Grand Pré as the stronghold of Acadian society and culture. Rather, the couple valiantly struggle over the snow to Quebec where Paul joins the French forces for the last battle, and Yvonne waits to embellish his life after the Conquest on his "little estates beside the Ottawa"—estates "confirmed" by his pledged allegiance to the British (Roberts, 1900, 285). Paul Grande's exceedingly nominal Acadian identity (he has spent all but his earliest childhood in Quebec) is subsumed by his role as French-Canadian, for Roberts *the* French presence in Canada. Most Acadian readers would view the repatriation of their deported ancestors in Quebec as a triumph of assimilation rather than preservation of cultural and even linguistic difference. Acadians see themselves, one could argue, as equally distinct a society as the Québécois.

Moreover, the final chapter of *A Sister to Evangeline* effects yet another dubious translation. It presents the public myth of a whole people's expulsion from Eden into a private fiction of redemption and re-entry into Paradise, with Roberts' Yvonne playing Blessed Damozel to that Rossetti in gallant's clothing, Paul Grande. Roberts provides a doubly happy ending for his lovers: not only do they end up in one another's arms while still young enough to do more than expire, unlike Longfellow's lovers, but they do so in Canada. The basic premise of his romance holds that Acadie is not a specific and historical site but a universal, mythic condition. Being Acadian and violently deprived of both birthplace and birthright are no more integral to the identities of his lovers than a change of clothes.

For Raddall, reality fulfills the purposes of myth. In the 1966 novel *Hangman's Beach*, he picks up the story of the Acadians where he had left off in *Roger Sudden*. In doing so, he achieves the same formulaic resolution of the

Expulsion myth as did Roberts, although with significant variations. Where Roberts casts Yvonne de Lamourie as a Pre-Raphaelite Redeemer who leads her lover into the paradise of conjugal bliss, Raddall takes the historical figure of Abbé Sigogne as guarantor and guardian Angel of the less-than-lush paradise of Saint Mary's Bay. In doing so, Raddall follows a Maritime literary tradition: Joseph Howe's *Western and Eastern Rambles*, for example, extolls Sigogne's efforts in "controull[ing]" [sic] the Acadians of Clare (Howe, 1828-31, 111). His sympathetic portrait of an aristocratic Sigogne ends with the following entreaty: "May he long be spared to fill an office which he so highly honours; and when he departs for a better world, may the precepts he has taught and the example he has given live in the memories of those over whom he has so kindly ruled" (Howe, 1828-31, 113).

One of these fictive subjects is the hero of *Hangman's Beach*, Lieutenant Cascamond, a French prisoner of War at Halifax during the Napoleonic Wars. Cascamond falls in love with a young Scotswoman living on McNab's Island, and desperately seeks asylum after escaping from the prison. He finds it in Abbé Sigogne's parish of St. Mary's Bay, the place which Sigogne tellingly nicknames "Arcadie, the land of simple plenty, of innocent pleasures, of peace without end" (Raddall, 1966, 417). The Abbé himself is the guarantor of that peace and plenty, which he has secured in part by political means. As agent of King George, Sigogne shows himself the true counter to LeLoutre, and a capable Redeemer. As he makes clear to Cascamond, his "understanding with the Governor at Halifax" ensures that any escaped prisoner of war wishing to settle among the Acadians of Clare must first "give up, under the most solemn oath, [his] allegiance to France" so as to become "a citizen of Nova Scotia, a peaceful subject of King George, entitled to every protection that the law gives to His Majesty's subjects anywhere" (Raddall, 1966, 417). This, then, is Raddall's true paradise as opposed to the false one of a French-dominated or -threatened Nova Scotia: its chief ingredients are the assurance of English law and a *Pax Anglica* established by the sheer imperial might of the British.

* * *

The preceding pages have analysed three crucial stages of the Expulsion myth as developed in the historical fiction of two prominent Maritime writers—Charles G.D. Roberts and Thomas H. Raddall. These stages include a view of "old" or pre-Expulsion Acadie as either an Edenic world or a fool's paradise; the election of a controversial historical figure, Abbé LeLoutre, as the Serpent in the Garden; and, lastly, the re-entry of the "fallen" into a new, all-Canadian and effectively de-Acadianized paradise. Redemption is achieved through the agency of a pure and beautiful woman, or an equally pure and venerable figure, the Abbé Sigogne.

Yet two years before *A Sister to Evangeline* and forty-six years before *Roger Sudden*, an English-language literary work expressed a direct consciousness of guilt rather than any Candidean self-satisfaction or -exculpation in the "Acadian question." What is most astonishing about Margaret Marshall Saunders' strangely bifurcated romance, *Rose à Charlitte* (1898), is its concern to de-mythologize the Expulsion of the Acadians and to represent the events of

1755 in terms more suggestive of “*le Grand Dérangement*” than the Fortunate Fall. In fact, Saunders' portrayal of the Acadian's ongoing struggle to survive as a people, and her suggestion of strategies to counter their social, cultural and political marginalization within the social collectivity of Maritime Canada, become increasingly peculiar bedfellows of the conventional love story she constructs between the descendants of a villain and a victim of the Expulsion.

The nominal protagonist of *Rose à Charlitte* is a Bostonian named Vesper Nimmo, the great-grandson of a New England sea captain whose murder of an Acadian prisoner brought to a curse on generations of the Nimmo family. Vesper's discovery of this curse (via a transcript of a death-bed repentance) leads him to take personal responsibility for his ancestor's actions, and to redress the ancient wrongs as much as his sickly state will permit. An interestingly feminized hero—languid, mother-dominated, hyper-aestheticized—Vesper drops out of the story half-way through. He is replaced by an Anne-of-Green Gables prototype,⁷ the orphaned Biddy-Anne, descendant of the Acadian murdered by Vesper's forefather. So Anglicized has Biddy-Anne become that she reviles the Acadian French as even lower on the social scale than herself and the “poor-white” relations with whom she lives.

In the course of the novel, Vesper's most important challenge is not to win the heart of the faithful, submissive and pure Acadian matron, Rose—“she was born to cook and to obey” (Saunders, 1898, 119). Rather, he must rescue Biddy-Anne Black from a rejection of her ethnos and native social group, and take her to France to observe the glories of French culture, learn the language and thus transform herself into Bidiane Le Noir. In this guise, she returns to Nova Scotia as a strong and outspoken enthusiast for the cause of the Acadian French. She demands active, effective redress for the racial slurs cast against the Acadians by an Anglophone candidate for the provincial parliament. She more or less forces Agapit, a lawyer and *littérateur* obsessed with the fate of the Acadians, to run for parliament, defeat the racist and take up the cause of the Acadians in Halifax, most notably through demanding assistance in educating Acadians, to enter the professional class, and positions of social and cultural power within the province.

Though *Rose à Charlitte* ends conventionally, with Rose married off to Vesper, and Bidiane to Agapit (whereupon she deflects her energies from politics to pastry-making), its departures from traditional Anglophone writing about Acadians are nevertheless significant. It deconstructs the Evangeline figure through its depiction of Rose, deserted by a boorish, adulterous Acadian husband and won by the charms of a cultured and chivalrous New Englander. It dismisses the tropes of the Grand Pré Expulsion myth, and works through embedded narratives dealing with such events as the march from Annapolis Royal to Grosses Coques by Acadians who escaped deportation and refused to leave their *patrie* (Saunders, 1898, 136-140, 154-55) to displace its plot. By viewing the events of 1755 from the victims' rather than the conquerors' perspective, by giving the rights of those victims priority and making them the motivating force of the romance, this text is exemplary. The fact that it is dedicated to Dr. T.H. Rand, who as Elizabeth Waterston points out, had been “in his days with the Department of Education in Nova Scotia and New

Brunswick...a strong supporter of the Acadian revival of the 1880s” (Waterston, 1993, 149), indicates the ideological and political causes which Saunders, a fervent supporter of such causes as Temperance and what we would now call “Animal Rights,” wished her text to serve. And finally, the Acadian-French title of the work (at least in its North American edition), and the inclusion of a significant portion of Acadian words and phrases in the text (however cloyingly mis-spoken the Acadians' English is) draws attention to one of the greatest battles which post-*Dérangement* Acadians have had to fight: the battle for the very survival of their language and for its recognition as a language and not some comic or bastardized variant of *français standard*.

However, although this self-designated “Acadian romance” seeks to address the wrongs suffered by the Acadians and to reform the attitudes of Anglophiles towards them, it insists that the Acadians are worthy of such actions on class grounds: only the “best blood of France,” we are told, settled Acadie (Saunders, 1898, 179). Moreover, Saunders valorizes the French at the expense of various “othered” groups on the margins of social, political and aesthetic discourse in the Maritimes of her and, until very recently, our day. Blacks are present only as stereotyped servants. One of the most strained characters in the text, a hypersensitive child named Narcisse, avers a marked dislike to black skin—presumably a sign of his refined sensibility. Natives fare somewhat better: Bidiane's exuberance and energy are attributed to the “Indian strain” in her blood (Saunders, 1898, 373), and a greedy, superstitious half-English, half-Acadian wife of a “pure Indian” is made to realize that her husband is the “more civilized being” in their marriage (Saunders, 1898, 392). Nevertheless, silence reigns over the historical injustices suffered by some Micmacs of Nova Scotia at the hands of the English, and no hint is made that Maritime Native people might be entitled to the kind of redress sought by the Acadians. Even the one politically enabled character, Agapit, is hardly subversive. In a nervous bow to tradition, Saunders makes him confess his undying love and loyalty towards England, “the greatest nation in the world”; his contempt is reserved, we are told, for “low-born upstarts and their colonial accomplices” (Saunders, 1898, 112).

* * *

The educational reforms for which Saunders' Agapit fought were, however, slow in coming. The Acadians of Clare featured in *Rose à Charlitte* did not win the right to French-language schooling for their children until some seventy years after her romance was published.⁸ And yet, until comparatively recently, some Anglophone writers in the Maritimes continue to represent Acadians as the tranquil inhabitants of a homey kind of paradise. In a travel book published in 1959 and reprinted in 1974, Will Bird describes the exemplary Acadians of Pubnico:

There is no crime, no local taxes, no jail, no police force, no poverty, no great wealth, no divorce, no lawsuits, race prejudice or class distinction, and everybody is bilingual (Bird, 1974, 85).

In 1994, in New Brunswick, the descendants of Acadians deported, dispersed and displaced in 1755 gathered from around the world to celebrate the survival and resurgence of Acadie. It might seem that Bird's optimism if not his utopianism about the state of the Acadians of Pubnico could apply to Acadians everywhere. After all, the devil's advocate might argue, without this tragic burden of history, without this consciousness of injustices suffered and trials nobly borne, the Acadians might have assimilated in even greater numbers, and the significance and value of celebrating their resurgence might have been lessened. This reasoning of course, takes us straight back into the arms of the "Fortunate Fall."

The adaptation of archetypal myth by Anglophone writers to account for and redeem historical atrocity is a phenomenon termed by Michel Roy as "l'exploitation littéraire, jusqu'à l'usure, d'une paysannerie châtrée" ("the literary exploitation, to the point of usury, of a gelded peasantry"). Roy further warns of the dangers inherent in appropriating myth to recreate an ethnic identity, or to produce a counter-identity and counter-narrative to the myth entrenched by the marginalizing, dominant group:

Déjà la création [...] d'une mythologie parallèle accroît le mirage et réduit infiniment le degré de notre emprise sur le réel. L'effort de mise en train d'une mythologie est sans doute nécessaire. Mais en ce domaine rien n'est moins pardonnable que la complaisance et la facilité. (Roy, 1981, 229)

(Already the creation of a parallel mythology increases the mirage and infinitely reduces our grasp on reality. The effort of starting off a mythology is doubtlessly necessary. But in this area, nothing is less pardonable than complacency and pliancy.)

* * *

Il y a des peuples sans épopée. Il y a aussi des épopées qui hantent l'histoire à la recherche des peuples qui les ont mises dans la mémoire du monde. (Roy, 1981, 299)

(There are people without epics. There are also epics which haunt history in search of the peoples who have put them into the world's memory.)

Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie* energetically subverts the Expulsion myth set down in *Évangéline*, calling upon Rabelais and the oral and folk traditions native to Acadie to dispell Longfellow's ghost. One of the most powerful and resonant scenes in *Pélagie* concerns the brutality with which the English forced the Acadians off their lands and into the waiting ships, using the recalcitrant for target practice, and permanently damaging the most vulnerable, such as the child Catoune. One could hardly imagine a more vivid contradiction of Longfellow's placid, peaceful deportation. And, in a sequel of sorts to *Pélagie*, *Cent Ans Dans les Bois*, Maillet continues her project to produce texts which not only demystify and displace Anglophone appropriations of Acadian history, but also contribute to the Acadians' struggle to attain cultural and historical validation of their region, in their own tongue and on their own terms, above and beyond mere survival.

In these epic novels, Maillet's characters actively create a new Acadie out of poverty, isolation, hardship, and the qualities these inspire: a robustly sensuous delight in the world and the stories people can tell about it; an indefatigable sense of hospitality, generosity and openness to kin and strangers. In *Cent Ans*, Pélagie-la-Gribouille, like her namesake, abandons the dream of a return to Eden; whereas the first Pélagie surrenders the fiction of a Gabriel-and- Evangelinesque reunion with her lover under the apple trees at Grand Pré to the reality of her own death, her grand-daughter grudgingly relinquishes her schemes to find a semi-magical treasure chest and acknowledges the true good fortune represented by her daughter's marriage to a man of her own choice.

Moreover, Maillet keeps her readers constantly aware that if Acadie has survived in a diminished and impoverished state, it has done so in the teeth of the British. A refrain which resounds through *Pélagie* with all the violence of a shattered taboo could serve as the epigraph for both novels and a fitting end to our examination of the pious fraud which conspired, through the myth of a fortunate fall and a propitious expulsion from paradise, to cast the victims of that fraud in an untenable and blatantly unjust subject position:

And shit to His English Majesty
Who declared his war on you and me!⁹

(Maillet, 1983, 184)

Notes

1. All translations of Roy are mine.
2. One exceptional example of an Anglophone writer who views the Acadians' breaking of neutrality as a result of the "narrow policy pursued [by Britain] towards a subjugated people," and the Expulsion as wholly unjustified, is Douglas Huyghue, the author of *Argimou* (1847), an historical romance lamenting the destruction of the Micmacs by the same kind of narrow imperial policy. Huyghue praises the Acadians for their tactfulness in learning to live with the rightful possessors of the wilderness, the Micmacs; the intermarriages between Micmac and Acadian that Raddall views with such revulsion in *Roger Sudden* represent to Huyghue a consummate example of racial harmony and true human solidarity. Because *Argimou* never achieved the popularity of Roberts', Raddalls' or Saunders' works dealing with Acadie, however, I have omitted it from my present consideration of "Expulsion" texts; for a discussion of *Argimou*, see my chapter on "Fictive Histories" in *Under Eastern Eyes*.
3. Many Acadians still have an affection amounting to reverence for this poem, which, as Marguerite Maillet has shown, acted as a catalyst for Acadian recognition of cultural self-worth and political identity (Maillet, 1983, 52). Interestingly enough, Léon Pamphile Lemay's French translation significantly alters the emphasis of *Evangeline*. Where Longfellow's preamble stresses the mysterious emptiness of a Grand Pré depopulated according to a law of nature, Lemay places the blame squarely on "La haine des méchants" ("the hatred of the wicked") [Lemay, 1865, 59] who chased off the Acadians. And where Longfellow's conclusion returns us to an Acadie abandoned save for the presence of "a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from exile / Wandered back to their native land to die in its bosom" (Longfellow, 1847, 56), Lemay makes it clear that the Acadians who return to Nova Scotia possess a vitality and even a gaiety that makes them not a doomed but rather a recovering race (Lemay, 1865, 126).

The force and currency of the Expulsion myth has, nevertheless, profoundly affected those Acadians who, surviving the destruction of their once strong and settled communities, returned to rebuild on barren seacoasts rather than the fertile farmlands they had been forced to surrender. For all that, they managed to survive economically as fishing people, and for all

- that they practised the “revenge of the cradle,” these revenants found themselves marginalized within the culture of the Maritime provinces and of Canada in general. Many of them were assimilated into Anglophone communities, losing both their language and their historico-cultural identity.
4. Antonine Maillet’s novel *Pélagie* also touts the horn-of-plenty quality of life in Grand Pré and its sister settlements before the *Dérangement*. When Pélagie attempts to wean her people from the seductions of *Acadie-en-sud*—Longfellow’s Louisiana—she speaks of a Grand Pré in which granaries were always full to bursting, apple trees cracking under the strain of their fruit, and a superabundance of wild strawberries and maple syrup to be found.
 5. Barry Moody’s *The Acadians* effectively refutes McInnis’ aspersions. Moody emphasizes the skill, labour and intelligence required for the construction and maintenance of the dykes and aboiteaux or sluice gates which the Acadians constructed in the Fundy marshlands.
 6. Readers of Raddall and Roberts may conceive of pre-Expulsion Acadie as a priest-ridden society, whereas Roy claims there were, for some 10,000 Acadians and 1000 Micmac converts, six missionaries, of whom only three were fit to carry out their priestly duties. Roy insists that the “donnée religieuse” of Acadian history be exposed for the fallacy it is, not so much to right the historical record as to deconstruct the authority assumed by the church in post-Expulsion Acadie, a church he describes as “trempé dans le sang de la Révolution... [et] appliqué[ant] sa trame puissante sur une société qui n’avait jamais connu pareille organisation interne”: (“soaked in the blood of the [French] Revolution...[and] applying its own powerful webs to a society that had never known a parallel internal organisation” [Roy, 1981, 115]).
 7. See Elizabeth Waterson’s essay on Saunders in *Silenced Sestet*.
 8. If in a nominally bilingual country like Canada you are what you speak, then in the case of the Acadians, you are not only your language but even more so your history. If that history has been distorted to fit within the frame of a myth your conquerors have devised for you, and if your language is under assault by the English-language media (film, radio, but most insistently television) and the ascendancy of English as the “language of business,” then you become an endangered species, indeed. The Acadians with whom I taught at Université Sainte-Anne, in Pointe de l’Église, in the 1980s, for example, had had no choice but to do their primary and secondary schooling in English only; this was true not only of people then in their forties and fifties, but of those in their thirties as well. Their children were the first Acadians on Nova Scotia’s “French Shore” to enter a French-language school system—most of whose teachers, however, had received their schooling and intellectual training in English.
 9. An extended discussion of Maillet’s *Pélagie* can be found in my chapter on “Fictive Histories” in *Under Eastern Eyes*.

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The Accidental Explorer: Ethnocentrism and Arctic Exploration

Abstract

John Franklin's 1819-22 overland expedition to the shores of the arctic ocean ended disastrously, with over half the men dying of starvation or exposure. While previous explanations have focused on difficulties Franklin experienced in obtaining supplies of European origin, this paper proposes that a more serious factor was inadequate support from aboriginal populations. Although Franklin recognized the need to enlist the aid of the Yellowknife Indians, and the Yellowknives were willing to render their services, Franklin could not achieve a productive cooperation. The cultural differences between imperial Britain and the Yellowknives presented insurmountable obstacles to Franklin. Had Franklin been able to view issues from a more culturally-sensitive perspective, he would have avoided many of the problems that led his expedition to disaster.

Résumé

L'expédition terrestre de John Franklin en 1819-1822, qui devait le mener aux rivages de l'océan Arctique, se termina en désastre; plus de la moitié des hommes moururent de faim ou de froid. Les explications antérieures du sort de l'expédition ont toutes porté sur les difficultés qu'avait éprouvées Franklin à obtenir des provisions d'origine européenne. Le présent article propose plutôt que le manque de soutien de la part des peuples autochtones constituait un facteur déterminant. Bien qu'il reconnaissait la nécessité de recruter des membres de la tribu des « Yellowknives », qui, de fait, était prête à porter son aide, Franklin ne put conclure d'entente avec ceux-ci. Les différences culturelles entre l'empire britannique et les « Yellowknives » s'avéraient, pour Franklin, un obstacle insurmontable. Eût-il su discerner avec plus de sensibilité les différences culturelles, Franklin aurait pu éviter les maints problèmes qui entraînèrent son expédition au désastre.

In 1819, British Navy Lieutenant John Franklin led an unusual Admiralty expedition to the arctic coast of North America. He was ordered to chart the mainland shore between the mouth of the Coppermine River and Hudson Bay, and to collect geological, biological and geomagnetic data en route.¹ Unlike any previous Admiralty expeditions, his was an overland—not a marine—undertaking. At the same time, a more conventional ancillary expedition, commanded by William Edward Parry, set out with instructions to penetrate the arctic archipelago by sea as far west as possible. The Admiralty desired Franklin and Parry to meet up somewhere along the arctic coast, thereby significantly advancing the centuries-old quest for a Northwest Passage.

Furthermore, improved knowledge of northern geography would enhance British trading opportunities in North America.

Before Franklin's explorations could begin, he had to journey overland from York Factory on Hudson Bay to Fort Providence on the northern arm of Great Slave Lake. Travelling by snowshoe and canoe, according to the season, Franklin, his four British companions and a small stock of supplies were shunted across the continent from one trading post to another, entirely through the efforts of the rival North West and Hudson's Bay companies. Arriving at Fort Providence (then the most remote trading post in the Athabasca District) in the late summer of 1820, Franklin's party travelled up the Yellowknife River to Winter Lake, where he and his men constructed Fort Enterprise. There, they spent the winter of 1820-21, attempting to gather a supply of provisions that would carry them through the following summer as they pushed on to the coast, which they intended to follow eastward as far as Hudson Bay. In June of 1821, Franklin and his party began the eastward survey of the coast. Before they could reach the Bay, however, signs of a rapidly approaching winter forced them back at Point Turnagain.

That Franklin did not reach Hudson Bay or meet up with Parry should not be taken as evidence of the expedition's failure. Other more disturbing signs of failure had marred the undertaking by the time Franklin returned to England in 1822: a Navy midshipman had been murdered, the expedition's surgeon-naturalist had executed an Iroquois voyageur, an Inuit interpreter had wandered off in search of food, never to return and nine of the original eleven voyageurs had been left dead or dying out on the barrens. In short, out of an original party of twenty, eleven lives were lost.²

Of course, this exploratory disaster has been vastly overshadowed in the popular imagination by the mystery of Franklin's disappearance with 128 men a quarter of a century later. Historians have attempted, nonetheless, to account for what went wrong with the 1819-22 expedition, most of them focussing on supply problems. Inadequately equipped with provisions and ammunition by the North West and Hudson's Bay companies, so the argument goes, few of Franklin's men were able to withstand the desperate retreat across the barrens, given the scant local sources of food and fuel.³

This essay takes a different tack, based not only on Franklin's public account,⁴ but on his journals and selected correspondence, now being published by the Champlain Society.⁵ While recognizing that Franklin faced unanticipated shortfalls of supplies, the fact remains that the expedition could only transport a limited quantity over portages, across half-frozen lakes, down the Coppermine River and along the coast in fragile bark canoes. On several occasions, the party abandoned meat it could not carry. Clearly, from this perspective, the men died because of the scarcity of meat and fuel available along the route Franklin chose, and because the aboriginal population refused to guide or hunt after the expedition turned east from the mouth of the Coppermine River. The ensuing disaster resulted not only from the shortfall of goods of European origin (rum, tobacco, flour, ammunition), but also from Franklin's inability to value the knowledge of his aboriginal companions and to win their full support and confidence.

Without the support and confidence of local inhabitants, Franklin's party was doomed in three ways. First, on its departure from Fort Enterprise after the winter's preparations, the party had managed to accumulate only a small quantity of meat. Secondly, Franklin was unable to persuade any aboriginal hunters or guides to accompany him along the coast to the east of the Coppermine River. Thirdly, when the starving remnants of Franklin's party straggled back to Fort Enterprise, they found the buildings abandoned and unstocked with the provisions that the aboriginal hunters had been requested to supply in the event of their return.

The aboriginal population on whom Franklin depended were Yellowknife or Copper Indians who inhabited the northwestern shores of Great Slave Lake.⁶ No longer an identifiable group, the Yellowknives were Dene and, at the time of Franklin's visit, lived a hunting and gathering existence between the lands of their Dogrib and Hare counterparts to the west and the barrens to the east. With the assistance of local fur traders, Franklin struck a bargain with the Yellowknives because they inhabited the region around the Yellowknife and Coppermine rivers, the watersheds by which he sought to reach the arctic coast. Akaitcho, leader of the largest of three bands comprising the Yellowknives, arranged for seven of his young men to hunt for Franklin's party. As well, Akaitcho accommodated Franklin's desire for local guides by supplying Keskarrah and Annoethai-yazzeh (or White Capot). Furthermore, during the winter at Fort Enterprise, he organized Yellowknife women to prepare hides, dried meat and clothing for Franklin's men. In return, Franklin would compensate the Yellowknives with goods supplied by the fur companies at the Admiralty's expense.

Franklin's recognition of his dependence is well documented. However, less attention is focussed on how he negotiated the vast gulf between his own objectives and those of the people on whom he so clearly depended. The evidence presented here suggests that the imperial vision of nineteenth-century Britain prevented Franklin from accepting local knowledge when it clashed with his own cultural model. That inability to respect and learn from the very people whose guidance he sought created an environment that led to the disastrous outcome of the 1819-22 expedition. Franklin simply ignored much of the advice he solicited about the practicability of his undertaking and which regions to avoid. Indeed, one reason the Yellowknives did not provision Fort Enterprise during Franklin's absence was their doubt that even one person would survive the ill-advised undertaking. Furthermore, mourning rituals for three of their dead kinsmen took precedence over the needs of an outsider who had demonstrated so little concern or respect for their own people.⁷

Secure in his own culture's sense of identity and superiority, Franklin, like many other nineteenth-century Englishmen, found it intellectually impossible to embrace the wisdom of a culture so foreign to his own. He instinctively privileged his own culture's objectives and knowledge, and dismissed those of the Yellowknives as marginal at best, valuable only to the extent they promoted the scientific agenda of the Admiralty. Given the dynamics of Britain's colonial empire, Franklin's actions are unsurprising.

However, some unusual dimensions of the expedition warrant special attention. While history offers many accounts of peoples devastated by a dominant, colonizing power, in this instance, the marginalized Yellowknife culture did not suffer from Franklin's ethnocentrism. No Yellowknives died, if only because they refused to be lured away from the dictates of survival on the edge of the barrens. Unfortunately, yet another marginalized group—the voyageurs, mostly of French origin—paid the highest price. Of the eleven voyageurs who set out, only two returned, compared to the five Britons, all but one of whom survived. This essay attempts not only to answer practical questions about why the 1819-22 expedition ended in disaster, but to explore the complexity of cross-cultural communication and to show that the expanding or dominant culture is ultimately responsible for ensuring effective communication.

Many other Britons had confronted similar situations in subarctic North America without suffering the disastrous consequences prompted by Franklin's leadership. How did they reconcile New World values with their European attitudes? Late in the previous century, for example, both Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie undertook exploratory journeys parallel to Franklin's in terms of their reliance on aboriginal peoples as they travelled through foreign environments. Much of their success hinged on the superior relationships they developed with their native guides and hunters, perhaps as a result of their own experience in the fur trade. Certainly, the 1819-22 expedition's overland route and heavy dependence on local support was a stark departure from Navy practice. Franklin's training had taught him nothing about bush travel—much less, and more importantly, about working with people from vastly different cultures.

The Admiralty seemed to assume that Franklin would enjoy the same cooperation from aboriginal people as did the fur industry. However, this assumption neglected to realize that Indians and fur traders had been evolving a mutually advantageous relationship for many years. Harold Innis writes that “[e]ssential to the trade under all conditions but especially under conditions of competition was the personal relationship of the trader with the Indian. The fur trade demanded a long apprenticeship on the part of its personnel in dealing with Indians.”⁸ To think the fur traders could simply transfer that cooperation to the expedition because the Admiralty willed it so was both naive and presumptuous. The will of the Admiralty could not provide Franklin with the “personal relationship” so important to the trader.

Unlike Franklin, Hearne and Mackenzie had greater experience with cultural diversity and, as fur traders, were perceived more favourably by aboriginal North Americans, who clearly understood the benefits they derived from traders. Franklin had no such advantage.⁹ In addition, his military training had prepared him to meet with differences of opinion in ways widely different from those practised by fur traders. Where traders sought to negotiate mutually agreeable rates of exchange between parties possessing resources of value to one other, Franklin's Navy background had schooled him in ways to assert power and authority. His professional instinct was to protect property, not to assess the relative value of what others had to offer. From the protective

insularity of his military position, Franklin embodied the narrowest ethnocentric ethos of imperial Britain.

Yet, in spite of Franklin's military background, the 1819-22 expedition was never envisioned as a "pillage and burn" manoeuvre. On the contrary, were it successful in locating a harbour on the northern coast to shelter trading vessels, both the British and aboriginal North Americans stood to benefit materially. The trading companies' costs for distributing goods would fall,¹⁰ and access to items of European manufacture would vastly improve for Inuit and northern Indian groups. To the European mind, such mutual advantage was sufficient reason to assume that aboriginal people would be eager to assist Franklin's geographical work.

While the thought of such a prospect would have interested most aboriginal peoples, to assume their immediate support was premature. For one thing, the notion of establishing a trading depot that would attract both Inuit and Yellowknives ignored long-standing animosities between the two groups. As well, the assumption that aboriginal people would abandon their way of life to gain improved access to European goods presumed a dissatisfaction with patterns and behaviours they had evolved through many generations.¹¹ Nor was this only a matter of conscious choice for aboriginal peoples. Regardless of any desire to accommodate Franklin's wishes, many of their cultural practices were non-negotiable, for European goods or otherwise, because they were adaptive behaviours that enabled them to subsist in a sparse and marginally habitable land.

The local wisdom underlying these adaptive behaviours is precisely what Franklin failed to respect and accommodate. The vastly different modes of travel developed by the Admiralty party and by the Yellowknives graphically illustrates one of the "adaptive behaviours" of the two cultures. The trip up the Yellowknife River from Fort Providence to Winter Lake offers a prime example. The voyageurs were heavily burdened, a condition which seems to have constantly impeded Franklin's progress. The route between the river's mouth and the site selected for the winter establishment of Fort Enterprise included 21 1/2 miles of portage around rapids and shallows. In order to transport all of their supplies over the portages, the voyageurs had to make four trips, carrying 180-pound loads each time. After struggling across with this burden, they would then return for the next load, which meant retracing their steps three times. Thus, to portage the supplies 21 1/2 miles, the men had to walk more than 150 miles. The Indians, in contrast, walked only the 21 1/2 miles.

Here, it is fairly easy to counter with excuses for the slow pace. First, Franklin's party had to transport canoes for a coastal journey that would take them far beyond the most distant point reached by any Yellowknife. As well, they had to carry bulky and delicate instruments—sextants, chronometers, dip needles, books and charts, preserving jars and fluids for specimens—to accomplish the Admiralty's scientific goals. It would be unreasonable to blame the expedition's failure on the Europeans' desire to learn more about the wider world. But the Admiralty—perhaps even the course of western philosophy—placed Franklin at the centre of a conflict that would have required a very

remarkable genius to surmount. And whatever admirable qualities Franklin possessed, he was no genius.

Among other objectives, the expedition was designed to collect scientific knowledge about the geography and geomagnetic workings of the universe. Just as the Empire involved the expansion and protection of a commercial trade network, it involved the expansion of a way of thinking. Much of the bulky and considerable equipment lugged over those portages was essential to Britain's goals. That scientific baggage, which largely contributed to the snail-like pace, was the physical embodiment of European empiricism. To leave the instruments and equipment behind would mean abandoning a certain view of the universe.

Franklin's mission was an extremely empirical one; it fit like a carefully turned cog in a vast scientific machine designed by European philosophy to analyze a universe perceived in equally mechanistic terms. His mission involved not only determining interstices of latitude and longitude on a topographical model of the earth, but also gathering data about geomagnetic forces and electrical impulses to be analyzed by scientists back in England. A clear sense of rational purpose motivated the undertaking, a rationality more akin to the eighteenth-century Age of Reason than early nineteenth-century Romanticism.

In contrast, the Yellowknife Indians were hunters and gatherers inhabiting the region in which Franklin wished to collect his empirical evidence. The Yellowknives had evolved their own concept of the universe and their own epistemology, out of their long experience on the land. Generally content with their lives, they agreed to assist the expedition so that they could exchange some of their local knowledge and skills for useful items of European manufacture.

Because of his culturally-blinkered vision, Franklin likely saw a different picture. He was conditioned to view the Yellowknives' nomadic way of life as an insignificant hand-to-mouth existence with little to contribute to an understanding of the universe. Indeed, Franklin was a product of the same people who had only a few years previously declared New Holland a *terra nullius*—unused land. Only recently overturned by the Australian Supreme Court, this declaration freed the British government to assign sections of the “newly discovered” continent to well-connected men of British origin, on the assumption that the land was not currently used or inhabited.¹² Why should Franklin—inexperienced as he was with the New World—have responded any differently to the aboriginal inhabitants of this continent?

No doubt, Franklin's need for such extensive equipment eluded the Yellowknives as much as the purpose of the Yellowknives' existence and value of their knowledge escaped Franklin. However, as both the outsider and the one ostensibly soliciting their expertise, it was up to Franklin to make some concessions. To win the genuine support and confidence of Akaitcho, he would have to realign his own agenda to accommodate native practice and wisdom, as Hearne and Mackenzie had done. His failure to do so demonstrates his lack of respect for what the Yellowknives could teach him. In turn, they had

no reason to risk their lives by hunting on a coastal journey that they considered impossible, or to inordinately concern themselves with provisioning Fort Enterprise—either during the winter before the expedition set out, or as insurance against Franklin's return the following summer—when their own group practices demanded they spend their energies otherwise.

Instances of Franklin's inability to surmount his empirical vision abound. During the winter at Fort Enterprise, one example of inevitable cultural differences arose when Franklin succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in ousting some 40 Yellowknives—mostly women, children and elderly—from the fort.¹³ He repeatedly urged their departure to prevent them from depleting the provisions brought in by Akaitcho's hunters during October 1820, and which Franklin had been stockpiling for the next summer's journey. The Indians, it seemed to Franklin, were prolonging their residence at the fort only because he had established a food supply there. Although Franklin was absolutely correct in his assumption, he was mistaken to view the Yellowknives' residence as somehow less important than his own.

Franklin saw his residence at the fort as purposeful and planned. Fort Enterprise was a temporary establishment constructed expressly so that his party could seize the earliest spring advantage in travelling to the northern coast, and the primary occupation at the fort was to build food stocks in preparation for that journey. He said that the residence of so large an aboriginal party produced “a serious reduction in *our* stock of provision”¹⁴ (my italics), and that the Indians “appear unwilling to leave our Quarters even for the Winter Months.”¹⁵ These remarks reveal Franklin's one-sided view of the situation. Failing to understand why the Yellowknives remained at the fort, he viewed their presence as nothing but aimless dependence. Franklin, the product of a rational society, set adrift these unreasonable beggars.

He overlooked that the Yellowknives were living on their own land according to their own custom and eating game killed by Yellowknife hunters. As hunters and gatherers, they had no reason to leave so long as food was forthcoming. Members of a culture familiar with such concepts as private ownership and contract law can readily grasp Franklin's objections: he had contracted the Indian hunters to hunt for his expedition. Seen from a European perspective, the scenario makes perfect sense. Problems arose, however, because Franklin was rarely able to view the situation from the other culture's perspective. In Yellowknife society, not only were hunters obliged to share their kill, but the more they gave, the more others became connected to them, thus elevating their social status.¹⁶ To Akaitcho and his hunters, it seemed not only sensible but desirable that everyone in Akaitcho's band stay at the fort as long as the meat held out.

The interactions between Franklin and Akaitcho, leaders from two different societies, help us explore this impasse. First, however, some of Franklin's comments about his elderly guide, Keskarrah, provide valuable insights into a pattern of thinking that offers a fuller appreciation of Franklin's relationship with Akaitcho and its influence on the ultimate course of events.

Having witnessed the expedition's slow progress up the Yellowknife River and observed signs of an unusually early winter, Akaitcho withdrew an offer made at Fort Providence to lead an autumn reconnaissance to the coast in 1820.¹⁷ As a result, Franklin and one of his midshipmen, George Back, headed separate, brief excursions to the upper Coppermine River that season instead. Guided by Keskarrah, Franklin's party of four set out on September 9th. They reached Point Lake on the 12th and returned immediately to Fort Enterprise, which was then under construction. Several of Franklin's remarks about that short journey are instructive. For example, Franklin's *Narrative* records frequent complaints that Keskarrah routinely took them over all the hills instead of around them.¹⁸ Perhaps Keskarrah sought the benefit of elevation to plot his next move or knew that the unfamiliar, low-lying ground would be muskeg and a hindrance to travel. But Franklin made no allowance for such possibilities in his journal or his *Narrative*. Rather, he implied some perversity or perhaps even stupidity on the part of his guide.¹⁹

At other times, Franklin expressed frustration that Keskarrah would sometimes digress from his formal responsibilities as guide to wander off in pursuit of caribou.²⁰ Here, he mirrors the Admiralty's desire to impose a distantly- conceived and pre-defined plan onto a local problem. While Franklin wanted Keskarrah to guide him directly and immediately to the banks of the Coppermine River, Keskarrah had learned to set flexible goals in response to the physical demands of his environment. Long cultural practice had taught him to hunt whenever the opportunity arose; this essential task took precedence over all others.

The fact that the *Narrative* twice articulates Franklin's irritation at Keskarrah's hunting,²¹ while the journal only once mentions being detained by Keskarrah "stripping a Reindeer which he had killed,"²² suggests that, even with the terrible experience of 1821 behind him, Franklin still failed to grasp the necessity and wisdom of this aboriginal practice. One might expect to see Franklin's frustrations with Keskarrah's hunting voiced in the journal, written during that brief autumn reconnaissance, but not in the *Narrative*, which he composed after the barrenland crossing had presumably taught him the need to make hunting a priority of travel in these regions. Surprisingly, the reverse is true: Franklin complained more in the *Narrative* about delays arising from Keskarrah's hunting than in the journal. This would suggest that Franklin never made the connection between Keskarrah's pattern of constant hunting and his own disaster in crossing the barrens. Otherwise, he surely would have removed his grumbling about minor delays caused by hunting before telling the public story. Clearly, while Franklin recognized the importance of local knowledge when he hired Keskarrah to guide, his myopia denied him the true benefit of that knowledge.

With this in mind, we can turn to the relationship between Franklin and Akaitcho. When the expedition arrived at Winter Lake, Franklin fell into what might best be described as a power struggle with the Yellowknife leader. Any information or opinion from Akaitcho that diverged from the Admiralty's plan, Franklin seemed to view as a deliberate obstruction. Perhaps his military background had conditioned him to meet any differences of opinion by locking

horns rather than engaging in the consultation and collaboration necessary to a successful outcome.

The first power struggle set the tone for virtually all future negotiations and seriously affected the expedition's chances of success. Essentially, this struggle involved respective posturing over whether the Indians would accompany the expedition if it pushed on to the arctic coast that same season. Franklin claimed that Akaitcho had agreed to guide and support him; Akaitcho insisted it would be foolhardy, noting the signs of an early winter and the unexpectedly slow progress of the expedition as it moved up the Yellowknife River.²³ Franklin countered with claims that his instruments could measure the weather, that he would turn back at the first sign of substantive change, and that the expedition could travel beyond Fort Enterprise with few encumbrances.²⁴ Ultimately, Franklin gave in, but probably not for the best reasons. Rather than cancel his proposed dash to the coast that autumn on the advice of local inhabitants, Franklin surrendered the idea because he could not manipulate Akaitcho into accompanying him.

A disinterested party might suggest that Akaitcho changed his mind based on new information: the winter seemed unusually near, geese having already been seen flying south and the leaves beginning to fall. Franklin's *Narrative* clearly shows that he had been informed of the dangers of being caught on the barrens in a blizzard, where there was little fuel for warming fires apart from moss, and where, at this particular season, even the moss would be wet from recent rains. Accordingly, signs of an early winter should have been a substantial concern to Franklin and Akaitcho alike. And not only was the winter approaching with unusual speed, but the expedition's slow progress up the Yellowknife River prompted Akaitcho to reassess the wisdom of trying to reach the coast and return—not only before winter arrived in earnest, but before the caribou had migrated south to the shelter of the forest.²⁵

Franklin, however, viewed Akaitcho's changed opinion as an adversarial challenge. Rather than consider Akaitcho even as a minor partner contributing to a joint venture, Franklin viewed him as a necessary evil and his opinions, when they did not suit the Admiralty's plan, as something to defeat.

Once established, the pattern subsequently grew worse. Perhaps his sense that he had lost the first round—Franklin gave up all hope of visiting the coast that year—made him defensive and inflexible. At any rate, when Akaitcho came to Fort Enterprise at the end of May the following year, Franklin seemed positively set against him. Already troubled by a scanty supply of provisions for the journey to the coast, Franklin saw Akaitcho as completely antagonistic to the proposed expedition. According to the *Narrative*, the Indian leader's demeanor had altered remarkably from the time of his visit to the fort the previous March. Franklin wrote that Akaitcho continually demanded marks of public respect from the Naval leader, and brimmed with complaints about his past treatment and suspicions concerning the practicability of the proposed undertaking.²⁶

Is it possible that Akaitcho's complaints were grounded in issues of substance and not, as Franklin claimed, prompted by the Indian leader's whining and

obstructionist personality? Certainly, one issue involved remuneration for the services rendered. Franklin had paid some hunters with promissory notes to be drawn on the North West Company. When they tried to exchange the notes at Fort Providence, however, the trader refused to honour them.²⁷ The source of the problem can undoubtedly be traced to the extreme hardship faced by the fiercely competing fur companies, to Franklin's inability to comprehend the general shortage of stores, and perhaps to some more personal aspect of the individual trader's character. Whatever the cause, the hunters were left with worthless promissory notes in exchange for services already rendered. Nevertheless, Franklin refused to see Akaitcho's attempt to protect his people's interest as anything but groundless and petty complaining. Franklin's only concern was his own poorly provisioned party, and he held Akaitcho partly responsible for the expedition's shortages. Franklin seemed oblivious to other people's problems, even if they were a direct result of his presence. Akaitcho's efforts to seek restitution or express dissatisfaction with previous engagements were perceived as base and groundless complaining.

When the scanty supply of meat stockpiled during the winter prompted Akaitcho to question the advisability of a journey to the coast, Franklin viewed it as another fabricated bit of whining. He saw the new focus as a ploy by Akaitcho to save face because—to Franklin's thinking—the Yellowknife leader's complaints about the promissory notes had been soundly defeated by the logic of Franklin's rebuttal.²⁸ Two factors of special importance emerge in the disagreements between Akaitcho and Franklin that spring. One concerns business, the other the nature of leadership in Yellowknife society. Let us begin with the less complex of the two: business.

Although it seems to have eluded Franklin, he and Akaitcho were engaged in the most straightforward of business transactions. Franklin needed to contract a service that the Yellowknives were able to provide. Representing His Majesty's Government, Franklin was responsible for striking an agreement that would enable him to survey the northern coast. Akaitcho, as leader of a band of Yellowknives, was responsible for negotiating the best possible deal for his people. Those were the terms of the exchange to be negotiated.

However, Franklin's sense of cultural superiority kept interfering with the simple laws of supply and demand. He did not view Akaitcho and himself as equals, engaged in negotiating a matter of trade. On the contrary, Franklin expected service from the Indians. Even when his promissory notes to the hunters had proven worthless, Franklin continued to expect service. During that May meeting between the two leaders, Akaitcho hesitated to provide what he viewed as the contracted services in light of Franklin's questionable ability to pay for them. Franklin's response is interesting. In his *Narrative*, he accused Akaitcho of "obstinacy,"²⁹ of making "injurious accusation[s]" and "effrontery,"³⁰ and of "importunity,"³¹ a word that connotes strong moral censure and persistent begging. Immediately after the passage describing Akaitcho's seemingly incomprehensible and reprehensible behaviour, Franklin warns future travellers who must deal with Yellowknives of their "avaricious nature," pointing out that "little reliance can be placed upon

them.”³² Significantly, Franklin's indictment of Akaitcho is rife with the vocabulary of moral censure, not the language of trade.

Another statement in the public *Narrative* confirms that Franklin did not view his negotiations with Akaitcho as a matter of economics. He wrote that Akaitcho “aimed at getting every thing he possibly could, and leaving us without the means of making any presents to the Esquimaux, or other Indians we might meet.”³³ Finally, at this late stage in their talks, Franklin realized that the Yellowknife leader had been bargaining for the best possible deal for his people. That this realization came so late is revealing of Franklin's culturally-biased attitude.

One must also question why Franklin should have expected Akaitcho to accept less from these foreigners who appeared to have so much, but who clearly needed meat and guidance. In particular, why should he have expected Akaitcho to be concerned that sufficient goods would remain for distribution to the Dogrib or Inuit, traditional enemies of the Yellowknives? Franklin's view of affairs was firmly entrenched in his own narrow perspective, which ultimately imposed a high cost on the expedition in the currency of human lives.

While one aspect of the wide gulf separating Franklin and Akaitcho concerned business, another concerned leadership. Franklin often misunderstood Akaitcho's role as leader. He assumed leadership among the Yellowknives was comparable to his own experience, when nothing could have been further from the truth. Franklin's advancement within the Naval hierarchy had come from above. Individuals in higher ranks judged Franklin worthy of advancement, and so he moved up, which put more men under his command. Franklin's life-long courting of influence was always directed upward to “superiors,” not downward to the people he sought to lead.

The Yellowknives had evolved different ideas about leadership. Akaitcho led his band by virtue of his personal successes and the benefits of this success for his followers. Band members esteemed his wise decisions about when and where to hunt, his ability to solve complex domestic issues, and so forth. They chose to follow him so that they, too, could share his success. He was not elected nor did he inherit the position from his father. He was not appointed by some superior or external governing body. Rather, he led because, at the time, people chose to follow him. A study of leadership among the subarctic tribes of Canada concludes that “[m]en of wisdom, supernatural powers, and hunting ability attracted followers, but as ‘the first among equals.’”³⁴ There were several other bands of Yellowknives, and any member of Akaitcho's band who grew disenchanted with the leader was free to join one of them instead.³⁵

But Franklin never understood the vast gulf separating the two varieties of leadership. When several members of the band did not drive as difficult a bargain as Akaitcho attempted, Franklin took a special delight in watching what he considered to be the collapse of Akaitcho's authority. He wrote in his *Narrative*, for example, that he “was somewhat pleased...to find, that Humpy and Annoethai-yazzeh censured their brother's conduct.”³⁶ In Franklin's system of leadership, such expression of contrary opinion would be evidence

of shattered authority, and Franklin's perspective erroneously led him to conclude that the same was true for the Yellowknives.

An interesting variable in the Yellowknives' more egalitarian leadership is that Akaitcho had not only to negotiate with Franklin, but also to monitor and accommodate the will of his fellow band members. June Helm observes that, among traditional northern peoples, "the recognized leader does not presume the right to dominate others. Rather, there is a feeling-out of one another's wishes and needs, and an assessment of group requirements and possibilities, in order to arrive at consensus when action must be taken. Concordance of interest and the assumption that the right thing for the group will not be in conflict with what is right for the individual mean that the practice of 'democracy' as an explicit majority rule is alien to the northern Indians."³⁷ Hence, when Humpy and Annoethai-yazzeh voiced their dissent, Akaitcho listened. And after listening, he closed the deal—explicitly with Franklin, and implicitly with his followers. As leader, Akaitcho had to ensure that his own goals matched those of his people, and this sometimes required modifying his expectations. By contrast, Franklin's continued success as leader depended on how well he met the goals passed down by his superiors. Thus, the concepts of leadership were substantially different, and blindness to these differences repeatedly interfered with the two leaders' ability to work together.

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At the close of the twentieth century, as global communications have brought once-distant societies into almost daily contact, we are keenly aware of the bias that culture lends to perception. Franklin's understanding of this bias in the early years of the nineteenth century was less enlightened. The cultural void separating Admiralty officer from Yellowknife was immense, and bridging it would have required unique skills. Given Franklin's background and the Admiralty's expectations, we cannot reasonably condemn Franklin for not possessing such skills.

Nevertheless, other men also products of Britain's empire succeeded where Franklin failed. As we have seen, both Hearne and Mackenzie led successful exploratory expeditions even though both relied heavily on aboriginal support. While neither Hearne nor Mackenzie escaped the ethnocentric ethos of their era—often considering aboriginal people to be foolish, superstitious and ignorant—their experience as traders enabled them to properly assess the wisdom and possessions of another culture. Based on that assessment, they could negotiate appropriate compromises that allowed them to achieve many of their European objectives. Franklin's less yielding brand of ethnocentrism—perhaps a condition of his military background—prevented him from valuing anything different, and ultimately led to the deaths of over half his party.

His unwavering confidence in British values blinded him to emerging frictions and misunderstandings with the Yellowknives. By the time he became aware of a problem, a cooperative solution was no longer possible. As well, his secure *Weltanschauung* kept him from realizing that many Yellowknife cultural

practices were, in fact, adaptive behaviours vital to subsistence in a marginally habitable environment, rather than the indulgences of a lethargic and slothful people. Had Franklin realized the importance of these practices, he might have been able to harness them to his own objectives. And finally, Franklin's evident lack of respect for Akaitcho, his people and his customs no doubt contributed to the Yellowknives' refusal to risk their lives by guiding and hunting for the expedition along the coast, or to supply Fort Enterprise with provisions during Franklin's absence. Played out on the subarctic barrens, Franklin's inability to come to grips with the wisdom of the very people whose assistance he solicited created a scenario ripe for disaster.

Notes

1. See Public Record Office CO.6/15, fo 3-10.
2. The demographics of the cultural backgrounds of those who died and those who survived is in itself troublesome. While only one of the original five British Navy men paid the ultimate price, 10 of the 15 who were *not* British died, even though they were far more accustomed to the life in Rupert's Land. The 11 voyageurs—9 of whom died—were primarily of French backgrounds, but also included an Iroquois (Michel Teroahauté) and an Italian (Vincenza Fontano). Of the two Inuit on the expedition, only one survived.
3. See, for example, M.A. Macleod and Richard Glover, "Franklin's First Expedition as Seen by Fur Traders," *The Polar Record*, Vol. 15, No. 98 (1971) 669-82; Vilhjálmur Stefánsson, *Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic*, 1938 (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd., 1962), p. 12 and pp. 45-46; L.H. Neatby, *The Search for Franklin* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1970), p. 47-48; H.D. Traill, *The Life of Sir John Franklin, R.N.* (London: John Murray, 1896), p. 72; Clive Holland, "Sir John Franklin and the Fur Trade," in R.C. Davis, ed., *Rupert's Land: A Cultural Tapestry* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).
4. John Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819, 20, 21, and 22* (London: John Murray, 1823). Subsequent page references are to the widely available reprint edition (1969) by M.G. Hurtig Ltd., Edmonton.
5. *Sir John Franklin's Journals and Correspondence: The First Arctic Land Expedition, 1819-22*, Richard C. Davis, ed., (Toronto: The Champlain Society). The volume will be published in 1995. This article contains some of the ideas that will appear in the Introduction to that volume, although the Champlain volume will include a far more comprehensive examination of Franklin's ethnocentric vision in his dealings with fur-trade personnel, with the voyageurs and with the mixed-blood interpreters.
6. The Yellowknives, who have not survived as an identifiable group, were a part of the Dene or Athapaskan-speaking peoples of northern Canada. The traders usually distinguished them from the Chipewyan, but they were more accurately a division of the Chipewyan. The name Yellowknives or Copper Indians was based on their use of copper to make tools.
7. See letter from Willard Wentzel to John Franklin, copied in Franklin, *Narrative*, pp. 492-93.
8. Innis, Harold A. *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p. 39. Innis acknowledges that "[m]any authorities have insisted that the trade required little experience," (p. 39, n. 71), but he contends the contrary. Elsewhere, Innis says: "Constant reference to the Homeguard Indians in various journals was an indication of the dependence of the Company on the native population. The difficulties with which the English adapted themselves to new conditions were shown in the amount of sickness and the mortality rate. The borrowing of Indian cultural traits was important to the elimination of these difficulties and to the success of the Company" (*ibid.*, p. 140).
9. That the Yellowknives had some difficulty comprehending exactly why Franklin's party were in the region if they were not fur traders is evident from Franklin's journal. In the entry for Tuesday, 5 December 1820, Franklin tells of a rumour that "we are not King's officers but a dependent set of [Cheap?], who had not the means of supplying their wants, without assistance, and that we should probably deceive the Indians, by turning them off unrewarded, when we found they could be no longer useful." (SPRI MS 248/278)

10. Very recently, with the expansion of the fur trade into the Athabasca, the location of the HBC's main point of supply on Hudson Bay had given them an important competitive edge over the rival NWC, who had a much lengthier delivery route from Montreal to the Athabasca. The possibility of establishing a point of supply accessible to the Athabasca, as well as by ships from Britain, would be extremely efficient.
11. The Yellowknives, in fact, resisted the traders' desire to convert them to a trapping economy much longer than most aboriginal inhabitants of northern North America. Instead, the Yellowknives sold their services as meat hunters, which allowed them to maintain more of their traditional economy as hunters and gatherers.
12. The *terra nullius* proclamation was overturned because it is now clear that Aborigines indeed used and inhabited the land, even though they did not do so according to European practices of use and habitation. Years later, Franklin would serve as governor of the penal colony of Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania, Australia), where he would be a strong advocate of penal reform. Franklin's position—with ample encouragement from his wife, Jane Franklin—was liberal, even radical, in his expressions of compassion for the suffering and injustice he observed in the penal system. This image well suits the construction of Franklin as a gentle, benevolent Christian. But it is significant that Franklin's compassion is for men and women from his own culture, even members who had broken the law. When circumstances forced him to look beyond his own cultural boundaries, however, Franklin is seen to have been cut from the same cloth as the colonizing power that deprived Aborigines of their land because they did not use it in the same ways the colonizers did.
13. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 253.
14. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 253.
15. 5 December 1820. SPRI MS 248/278.
16. See June Helm's discussion in "Leadership Among the Northeastern Athapaskan." *Anthropologica* 2 (1956): 131-63. A special note of thanks is due to Dr. Robert Janes, Director of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta, for his considerable guidance in issues related to Dene culture.
17. See pp. 9-10 of this paper for a discussion of Akaitcho's refusal.
18. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 232.
19. Of course, Franklin's sense of superiority is so unshakable that he would never entertain the moment of self-doubt that might question why he followed a person he considered so stupid.
20. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 232-33.
21. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 232 and 233.
22. Journal, 10 September 1820. SPRI MS 248/278. This manuscript and others with "SPRI" in the catalogue number are located in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, U.K.
23. Journal, 10 September 1820. SPRI MS 248/278.
24. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 225.
25. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 224. See also Journal, 21 May 1821. SPRI MS 248/277.
26. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 302-03.
27. Journal, 21 May 1821. SPRI MS 248/277.
28. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 304.
29. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 305.
30. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 307.
31. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 308.
32. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 311.
33. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 308-09.
34. June Helm and E.B. Leacock, "The Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada" in *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*, Leacock, E.B. and Lurie, N.O., eds. (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 347. See also June Helm's "Leadership Among the Northeastern Athapaskans," *Anthropologica* 2 (1956): 131-63.
35. Helm and Leacock, "Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada," pp. 361-69. Although I have used the phrase here upon numerous occasions, it is probably a misnomer to refer to "Akaitcho's band," as the phrase suggests a variety of possession and control that is a construction of a Euro-Canadian consciousness, not of Akaitcho's.
36. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 306. See also Journal, 26 May 1821. SPRI MS 248/277.
37. Helm and Leacock, "Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada," p. 368.

Patricia Smart

Weighing the Claims of Memory: the Poetry and Politics of the Irish-Canadian Experience in Jane Urquhart's *Away*

Abstract

*Jane Urquhart's poetic novel *Away*, an account of the Irish settlement of central Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century, raises questions of cultural identity relevant to today's debates about multiculturalism and Canadian identity. A woman-centred narrative spanning three generations, the novel counterposes the displacement of the Irish from their lands under British rule with that of the native peoples of Canada by European settlers, and interrogates the claims of competing nationalisms in its portrayal of the 1868 assassination of D'Arcy McGee, one of the Fathers of Confederation in Canada. While grounded in ethnic, race, gender and class identities, the novel transcends all these categories, proposing a post-modern fusion of identities within an imagined nation reminiscent of D'Arcy McGee's vision of the country.*

Résumé

*En dépeignant la colonisation de l'Ontario par les Irlandais vers le milieu du 19^e siècle, Jane Urquhart dans son roman, *Away*, met en lumière les questions de l'identité culturelle par rapport au débat de l'heure sur le multiculturalisme et l'identité canadienne. D'une perspective féministe, ce récit qui s'échelonne sur trois générations met en contraste le déplacement des Irlandais de leurs terres sous l'autorité britannique avec celui des peuples autochtones du Canada par les colonisateurs européens et examine les revendications des nationalismes rivaux par sa représentation de l'assassinat, en 1868, de D'Arcy McGee, un des pères de la Confédération canadienne. Bien que ce roman étudie les identités fondées sur l'ethnie, la race, le sexe et la classe, il transcende toutes ces catégories et propose une fusion postmoderne des identités en une image de la nation qui rappelle la vision que D'Arcy McGee avait du Canada.*

Then she saw the world's great leavetakings, invasions and immigrations, landscapes torn from beneath the feet of tribes, the Danae pushed out by the Celts, the Celts eventually smothered by the English, warriors in the night depopulating villages, boatloads of groaning African slaves. Lost forests. The children of the mountain on the plain, the children of the plain adrift on the sea. And all the mourning for abandoned geographies.

“And you,” she asked, “will I take you with me?”

“Yes and no,” he said.

Jane Urquhart – *Away*, 128.

Many of the important works of contemporary Canadian fiction have addressed issues of identity through the experience of immigration or their protagonists' the cultural heritage. The novels of such writers as Margaret Laurence, Robertson Davies, Adele Wiseman, Michael Ondaatje, and Rohinton Mistry immediately come to mind. Given the Canadian preoccupation with origin, displacement and settlement, the relative absence of fictional representations of the Irish-Canadian immigrant experience is surprising, particularly in Ontario, whose roots are inextricably linked to Irish emigrations during the potato famine of the 1840s. Recently, however, in Jane Urquhart's novel *Away*,¹ the richness and pathos of this saga have found an important literary voice.

Urquhart's presentation of the Irish-Canadian experience is a story of extremes: of material poverty and imaginative, mystical richness, of the stark beauty of the rocky coast of northern Ireland and the overwhelming power of the Canadian forest, and of the political passion of the Irish settlers who clung to the Fenian dream of nation after centuries of British oppression. Centred on the Celtic myth of being “away,” or possessed by an otherworldly lover, the novel evokes the poetry of the Irish cultural heritage within the struggle for Irish survival in the centuries preceding emigration to America. Transported to Canada, this heritage of passion and struggle confronts the dream of a new *Canadian* nation in the person of D'Arcy McGee, the famous Father of Canadian Confederation, assassinated by Fenians who believed that he had betrayed *their* national interests.

The highly-charged atmosphere of present-day academic and political discussions of multiculturalism, sometimes produces an a-historical and somewhat simplistic vision of the white male “oppressor” based on the perceptions of various racial, ethnic or gender minorities. Such a vision portrays the original English-speaking settlers of Canada as a monolithic group of colonizers who, once they had seized the land from its aboriginal inhabitants, evolved a system of power and privilege which excluded not only the original Indian and Inuit peoples but, subsequently, other immigrant groups. Urquhart's novel adds complexity to this vision in a number of important ways. First, it reminds us of the extreme poverty, starvation and dispossession of the Irish immigrants who settled the area north of Lake Ontario, between Port Hope and Peterborough, in the pre-Confederation era. But, far more than a simple addition, however valuable, to the trove of Canadian immigration narratives, it challenges the competing voices of the Canadian literary mosaic, each asserting its racial, ethnic or gender-based legitimacy, to imagine new ways of blending the claims of “self” and “other.” Urquhart's vision, although woman-centred and grounded in both ethnic and national “imagined communities,”² transcends or expands these identitarian categories, asserting the universality of the experience of exile and the displacement of peoples (a reality dramatically visible in the late twentieth century). It also denounces the “power-over” mentality that has wrenched groups of people from their homelands through colonization and wars

throughout history. In the stunning parallel between Celtic and North American Indian mythologies and attitudes to the land, the author seems to offer hope for a new harmony between peoples, founded in identities that, while passionately bound up with place and community, shift and merge in new and unexpected ways.

One of the best of the Canadian writers who began publishing in the 1980s, Urquhart had already achieved distinction before *Away* for the poetry, fantasy and brilliant visual descriptions of her first two novels, *The Whirlpool*³ and *Changing Heaven*⁴, and for her imaginative juxtaposition of the Canadian present with its colonial origins in the culture of Victorian Britain. In *Away*, these elements translate into a far more powerful mixture. Grounded in place (Port Hope and Colborne on Lake Ontario, where Urquhart wrote the novel and has spent every summer since she was born, and the rocky shores of County Antrim in Northern Ireland, where her ancestors lived) and spun from real and imagined elements of the author's own family story, the novel embraces the intertwined histories of Canada and Ireland. It follows three generations of women both blessed and cursed by their passion for the claims of an "other" world (be it mythological, political or poetic). One senses the importance to the author of the advice given by the second of these women, Eileen, to her grand-daughter Esther: "Be where you are... No more of this drifting" (355); "The place where you stand is the centre of the world." (349)

Urquhart's female characters are dreamers and rule-breakers who cannot or will not be contained within the traditional boundaries of identity. In the opening scene of the novel, set on Rathlin Island off the northern coast of Ireland in 1842, the character Mary falls passionately in love with a shipwrecked sailor who dies in her arms after being washed ashore. Before he dies, the young sailor whispers the word "Moira," and Mary believes that her name has been changed and her identity stolen by the "others," or faeries, who sent him to claim her. Although she marries the kind and loving Brian O'Malley, a teacher in one of the illegal Catholic "hedge schools" of the period, gives birth to a son, Liam, suffers with her family through starvation and approaching death when potato crops wither throughout the country, and emigrates with them to pioneer life in Ontario where her daughter, Eileen, is born, she will forever after be "away," tempted to flee everyday reality by the call of her otherworldly lover and his watery realm. Shortly after Eileen's birth, Mary disappears. Fifteen years later, her family learns from an Indian named Exodus Crow that she followed a river running through the family's property to Moira Lake, a site sacred to the Ojibway and Algonquin Indians of the region, and where she lived in communion with the spirit of the lake until her death. A generation later, her daughter, Eileen, raised by her father on the heart-rending ballads of a suffering Ireland, repeats her mother's experience, falling passionately in love with a political activist involved in the conflicts between D'Arcy McGee and the Fenians. Eileen's grand-daughter, Esther, the last in this line of passionate women and a figure of the artist, preserves the traces of her ancestors' lives by telling their story, even as the world they built and inhabited fades with the rise of capitalist industry and technology:

Past midnight, when the lake is calm, Esther has, for the last ten years, been able to hear huge machines grinding closer and closer to the finish of her world. [...] One evening a week she walks past the twisted unpruned trees in the orchard, past rotting snake-rail fences, past the obsolete nineteenth-century farm equipment that lies like the scattered skeleton of an extinct animal in the long grass. This evidence of decay the property of a cement company, and soon the evidence itself will be eliminated. (10)

Juxtaposed in the novel with Canada's emergence as a nation a century earlier, this imminent disappearance can perhaps be likened to a national culture and identity fast disappearing under the levelling force of modern technology and capitalism. In this regard, the richness and strength of the culture preserved by the Irish through many centuries of British oppression offer a model to their Canadian descendants. No culture, suggests the author, can hope to survive without treasuring and striving to preserve its past against all odds. Her own novel—like the artistic works she celebrates as key to the survival of the Irish people—is itself an attempt to connect past and present by retrieving this important strand of the Canadian cultural heritage. Like the medieval Irish bards who knew that “[n]othing should escape. Line after line must be circulated by memory among the folds of the brain,” (133) she uses imagination to revive the faint trace of landscapes and lives that have shaped us: a farm fallen into ruin, a disintegrated jetty whose pilings, “waterlogged and green, waver [...] beneath the surface like an unconscious memory.” (9) The most precious things, she shows us, are those taken from us or those we must struggle to keep: the touch of a faery lover, the dim memory of the departing sail of a father lost at sea, or—on the collective level—the language, religion and right to education denied to the Irish by the English Penal Laws of the eighteenth century. The beauty of Irish culture is inseparable from its recurrent themes of sorrow and loss. Its preciousness lies in the very struggle to preserve and transmit culture against great odds. In Brian O'Malley's hedge school, barefoot children hide under the hawthorns to recite their Greek and Latin verb declensions. The treasured, four-volume *Supplement to Address the Defects of the 5th, 6th and 7th editions of the Encyclopedia Britannica*, bought from Brian's landlords at a reasonable price when the eighth edition became available, is systematically read and discussed by Brian and his friend, Father Quinn, with Brian starting at the A volume and Father Quinn at Z.

In Canada, the threat of losing the treasure of the past seems less a result of oppression than of a kind of cultural amnesia represented by Liam, the son of Brian and Mary. Unlike his sister Eileen, Liam is more interested in building the future than preserving the past. After his father's death, the adolescent Liam visits the schoolhouse where his father had taught, and sees for the first time a map of Upper Canada with slanted lines marking the area from Hudson's Bay south to the location of their own farm. On realizing that the farmland his father has wrested from the wilderness sits on the solid rock of the Canadian Shield, he angrily rejects not only his father, but what he sees as the poverty and unending struggle of the Irish heritage, preferring to emulate those entrepreneurs who subdued the land through technology:

Liam looked up from the map and was confronted with the Irish word for famine; [his father]'s handwriting, stark and white, on a black slate board. He closed the book with a snap, thinking of men more enterprising than his father, men who had started iron mines, who had burned acres of forest for potash, who talked about machines while waiting for their grain to be ground at O'Hara's Mill. None of them was Irish. [...] Liam snatched a cloth from the top of one of the desks and reduced the final remnants of his beloved father to a grey smear. (209)

While readers may be tempted to associate Liam with the destructive forces of capitalism and technology, and to idealize Eileen as the dreamer and conservator, Urquhart's story defies reduction to such simplistic binary oppositions. Instead, she raises difficult questions about national identity and the relationship of immigrants to their culture of origin—questions of considerable relevance in present-day debates about Canadian multiculturalism.⁵ How much of a culture will survive the move from the old country to the new, and how much *should* survive? At what point is it wiser and more constructive to shed the past and create something new? Mary is tormented on leaving Ireland by the idea that her faery lover may not follow her across the ocean, but he does, and she dies of it. And while the image of Brian O'Malley departing from the prescribed Upper Canadian curriculum to teach his rural schoolchildren about the injustices imposed on Irish Catholics is moving, Urquhart also shows how the continued rivalry and hatred between Orangemen and Catholics, and the transportation of Fenian extremism from Ireland to Canada, are ultimately destructive. Chilled by the resemblance of his red-haired and green-eyed daughter, Eileen, to a mother she never knew, Brian wonders “if it were wise to tell the stories of the old sorrows deep in this forest so far from home.” (167) Believing in the influence of landscape on the formation of temperament,⁶ however, he hopes “that the tales were as divested of power, far from their native soil, as the German and French and Danish fairy tales that the children at his school were beginning to learn in their Upper Canadian readers.” (167)

It is through Eileen, as her father had feared, that the destiny of being “away” repeats itself in a New World setting, and that the romantic clinging to old political passions unfolds into a tragic conclusion. In this section of the novel, the conflicting claims of ethnicity and nation come into violent confrontation in an event which merges Urquhart's fictional narrative with historical fact: the assassination of D'Arcy McGee, the golden-tongued, Irish-Canadian orator who renounced his former Fenian (Irish nationalist) beliefs to embrace the vision of a Canada that would seek to transcend all racial and religious factionalisms. The image of Eileen as a child, cheerfully singing revolutionary songs about “the hanging of brave young men, [...] the curse of Cromwell, cruel landlords, the impossibility of requited love, and the robbery of landscape” (199) as she builds snow castles in the January sun, is a charming example of the fusion of old and new cultures. However, her romantic passion for the Irish cause as a young woman leads her into a web of confusion and political intrigue by which she unwittingly contributes to McGee's assassination.

Urquhart's fictionalized account of this real event in Canadian history is above all a story of misunderstanding and lack of communication. As such, it is an apt political allegory for Canada. In spite of its ambiguity, it also clearly warns against the comforting seductions of extremist national or ethnic politics. Motherless since birth, Eileen is particularly vulnerable to the temptation of an ideology based on a nostalgia for origins and collective identity ("The idea of the oneness of the tribe, the imagined collective voice, calmed her. There were no uncertainties"). She fails to understand the true nature of her taciturn lover's politics, even when he contradicts her passion for the Irish cause by pointing out "We're in Canada now." (330) Believing McGee a traitor to Ireland as she hears him speak in the House of Commons, she closes her mind to his vision of a country "in which there would be no factions, no revenge for old sorrows, old grievances. Everything about it was to be new, clear; a landscape distanced by an ocean from the zones of terror. A sweeping territory, free of wounds, belonging to all, owned by no one." (337-8) And yet, in a distant part of her memory, McGee's words awaken a recollection of the words of Exodus Crow, the Ojibway Indian who returned the frozen body of her mother back to the family after her death by the lake, and who had told Eileen "there were no lords of the land." (338)

In the surprising parallel she dares to make between the oppression of the Irish and that of the Indians, and the similar displacement of their earth-centred and poetic mythologies by a Christianity based on hierarchy and law, Urquhart fills out her vision of culture. As recounted by Exodus Crow, the Celtic legends he learned from Mary bear a remarkable resemblance to Indian legends: the Children of Lir who lived as swans on the waters of the Moyle for three hundred years; the poet Oisín who disappeared into *Tír na nÓg*, the land of the young, and returned centuries later to defend the old beliefs against Patrick of the Crooked Crozier; and her own spirit lover from the deep, who corresponds to the aboriginal manitou, "that is part of everything." (175) Crow's explanation of how he received his name (his mother, who was taught to read by a churchman, lost interest in the Bible halfway through the Book of Exodus, but loved its name) suggests that Christianity too originated in such earth-centred myths, but gradually lost touch with them:

Genesis, [his mother] said, was full of many stories: the man with the boat full of animals, the woman whom Snake made bite the apple, and many dreams and vision quests. There is a great deal of manitou in this book called Genesis. This book called Exodus, she said, was not worthy of its name because it was filled with battles for the land and the making of laws. (175)

As well, what Mary has told Exodus Crow about the ravaging of Irish land and culture by the English corresponds to his own people's experience at the hands of the Europeans:

After she had been in the forest for several winters she told him dark things; about the time of the stolen lands of her island, and of the disease, and of the lost language and the empty villages and how the people who once sang were now silent, how the people who once danced were now still.

“It is true,” said Brian bitterly. “Those who haven't died are scattered, and their voice is broken, their words are gone.” (184)

While Urquhart's portrait of Ireland's experience under British rule corresponds with historical fact, its juxtaposition with the fate of the aboriginal peoples may seem politically naive in its apparent neglect of the power relationship between whites and Indians in Canada. However, in a brilliant and simple series of images related to the idea of “landlord,” the author demonstrates that the brutalities committed in the quest for power and ownership of land and capital institute a class hierarchy that supercedes cultural difference. In the first section of the novel, the lovable but paternalistic Anglo-Irish landlords, Granville and Osbert Sedgewick, trek through County Antrim recording the folkloric traces of the Irish culture they love, ignoring the reality that their tenants are dying of starvation. Much later, Osbert seeks out his former tenants, the O'Malleys, in Upper Canada, finally aware of his debt of guilt to them. When Liam buys land on the shore of Lake Ontario and decides to evict the half-Irish half-Indian Doherty family residing there, Eileen points out that now *he*, the son of oppressed Irish tenants, has become a landlord: “you're going to evict some people from land you never would have had in the first place if the English hadn't stolen it....” (279) In this novel, so attentive to the power and beauty of landscape, it is the land—and the Indian belief that “there [are] no lords of the land” (330)—that poses the ultimate challenge to hierarchy and war, and to the injustice and cruelty of all the colonialisms and forced migrations in history. The limestone plateaus extending into Lake Ontario remind Eileen of “the maps in the geography book, the continents lying like oddly shaped tables on the floor of the ocean, each shoreline implying the form of the land mass opposite so that the whole world seemed unfinished—frozen in a state of perpetual separation—longing for reunion.” (266)⁷

Ultimately, while firmly grounded in the realities and often conflicting claims of various ethnic, racial, gender and class identities, Jane Urquhart's novel explodes those categories with the possibility of a world governed by values other than competition, rivalry and domination of people and lands. It is a vision that is both poetic and political; one that, even as it transcends the boundaries of any single nation or collectivity, arises from the knowledge that “[t]he place where you stand is the centre of the world.” (349) And that centre, the Canada her novel imagines into existence, is not unlike the one envisaged by the Irish-Canadian D'Arcy McGee, who, according to Urquhart's description of his last speech, presented himself “not as the representative of any race, any province, but as the forerunner of a generation that would inherit wholeness, a generation released from fragmentation.” (338)

Notes

1. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1993.
2. Benedict Anderson's term for nations and nationalisms. (See his *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso 1991.)
3. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1986.
4. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 1990.
5. See Neil Bissoondath's recent and controversial *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Penguin 1994), in which he argues that the Canadian

government's policy of multiculturalism has weakened the national cultural fabric, and that immigrants should be more strongly encouraged to identify with the history and culture of their new nation. Bissoondath's book has met with numerous expressions of disagreement, including that of Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, Sheila Finestone. For a critique of Bissoondath's position, see Andrew Cardozo, "Fuelling the Backlash: Neil Bissoondath and the selling of illusions," *The Canadian Forum* LXXIV, 834 (November 1994), 29-32. For articles and an editorial supporting him and disagreeing with Sheila Finestone, see Michael Valpy, "Button your lips, says Ms. Finestone," *The Globe and Mail*, 29 Nov. 1994, A2; and "A fresh look at multiculturalism" on p. A20 of the same issue of *The Globe and Mail*.

6. The shaping and almost magical pull of landscape, and particularly of the forest (the forests destroyed to build English ships lamented in the Irish ballad "Bonny Portmore"; the forests that overwhelmed and terrified the original settlers of Upper Canada), a recurrent theme in the novel, constitutes an important link between the Irish, Canadian and Indian ways of seeing that it portrays. For an interesting reflection on the relationship between landscape and the Canadian temperament, see Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1985.
7. An image that recalls Québécois playwright Robert Lepage's "tectonic plates"—also an image of shifting nationalisms and identities in a post-modern world.

Anne Nothof

Variant Tellings: the Reconstitution of a Social Mythology in James Reaney's *The Donnellys*

Abstract

*In *The Donnellys*, James Reaney reconstitutes a social mythology from “Canada's missing history,” the stories of strong-willed individuals who resist the repression of personal and social freedom. He tells a “better” story of the infamous Donnelly family to suggest that the sectarian feuds which followed the Donnellys from Ireland, and which are replayed in Lucan, Ontario, did not wholly determine social and individual parameters. Group consciousness is also shaped by individual decisions and actions: James Donnelly swore he would stay in Biddulph township forever; he is still there. His story was recently revisited at Théâtre Passe Muraille from an “urban” perspective with a multi-racial cast reflecting the communal reality of contemporary Toronto, in which an immigrant population attempts to integrate new cultural and social traditions without being wholly determined by them. The Donnelly story is again interrogated for its current sociological implications and possibilities.*

Résumé

*Dans la pièce de théâtre *The Donnellys*, James Reaney rétablit une mythologie sociale à partir d'« événements absents de l'histoire du Canada », c'est-à-dire les récits d'individus résolus à résister à la répression de leur liberté personnelle et sociale. Reaney raconte une version améliorée de l'infâme famille Donnelly en suggérant que les querelles sectaires de l'Irlande qui suivirent cette famille et qui furent reprises à Lucan en Ontario ne déterminèrent pas complètement les paramètres qu'établissent la société et les individus. Les décisions et les gestes de quelques individus peuvent aussi façonner la conscience d'une collectivité : James Donnelly jure qu'il ne quittera jamais le canton de Biddulph; et c'est ce qu'il fait. Récemment, la troupe de théâtre Passe Muraille a adapté l'histoire de cet homme en la plaçant dans un contexte « urbain » et en distribuant les rôles à des joueurs de races diverses. Cette adaptation reflétait la communauté actuelle de Toronto dans laquelle les immigrants essaient de trouver un moyen d'intégrer de nouvelles traditions culturelles et sociales sans que toutefois celles-ci ne les définissent pas totalement. L'histoire des Donnelly justifie un autre regard sur sa signification et ses conséquences sociologiques contemporaines.*

In his epic Canadian trilogy, *The Donnellys*, James Reaney recasts a sensational horror story as a community tragedy. He tells a “better” story of the infamous “Black Donnellys” to suggest that integrity and courage can

shape the history of a place: community and individual life are not wholly determined by patterns established in the past. The sectarian feuds which emigrated with the Irish to the township of Biddulph in Ontario in the early nineteenth century were replayed, but they were also resisted. In *The Donnellys*, Reaney suggests that group consciousness may be shaped by individual decisions and actions, although the individuals may be destroyed as a consequence. James Donnelly swears that he will never be driven from Biddulph as he was from Country Tipperary, and the “relics” of the Donnelly family are exhumed in southwestern Ontario as markers of a social mythology of freedom and self-expression.

James Reaney sees all of his writing as the construction of a story or “mythoi” from fragments of the past or present. (*Stage Voices*, 156) His telling of the Donnelly story is not simply an alternative version to that of popular culture, but an attempt to subvert it. Violence and horror become means to revision the deaths of the Donnellys as tragic and redemptive, thereby constructing positive images by which a community or a nation can see itself. For Reaney, a social consciousness defines itself through the imaginative truths of its symbols and myths. His retellings of localized stories and his reconstitution of legends with national implications are similar in several important respects to W.B. Yeats's dramatization of Irish mythology. In fact, supervised by Northrop Frye, whose mythopoeic vision also informs Reaney's works, Reaney's doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto examined the influence of Spenser on Yeats. (J. Stewart Reaney, 1) Like Yeats, Reaney wanted to establish a National Theatre, and he looked to the Abbey, with its roots in the folk stories and heroic legends of the country, as a model which would “strive for nothing less than a vanguard position in expression of national ideals and international humanism.” (“Ten Years at Play,” 29) And like W.B. Yeats, John Millington Synge and Lady Augusta Gregory, Reaney has built his poetry and plays on mythic framework to invest a particular place with wider implications for the evolution of a community and country, “where a highly sophisticated and often symbolic art combines with a deep and tragic understanding of the land as a force which shapes human destiny, and with an experienced ear and eye for strictly regional colouration.” (Parker, 153) To promote his concept of theatre as an articulation of regional and national consciousness, Reaney wrote a series of “Occasional Theatre Letters.” In the first one, he expresses his sense of theatre as a force which shapes and articulates individual and community consciousness, using relics of the past to form new images for the future. His regional focus is particularly appropriate to Canadian drama, given the country's size and diversity, comprising many distinct communities. The story of one group, however, can become woven into the fabric of the nation; the nation, in turn, may achieve a certain cohesion in the process of telling its “regional” stories. (Leggatt, 116) Reaney constructs a social mythology in the Donnelly trilogy by staging a regional story which evokes a larger “national” struggle for individual freedom against repressive forces inherited from other places and other times. He dramatizes what Rick Salutin has called Canada's “missing history,” “the history of those who stood against entrenched interests and forces that sought to limit personal and social freedom and progress.”¹

James Reaney grew up near Stratford, Ontario, a few miles from Lucan in Biddulph Township where the Donnelly family lived for about thirty-five years until the brutal murders of the parents, two sons and a niece in the early morning of February 4, 1880. The story of the Donnellys was popularized as the “Biddulph Horrors” in two sensationalistic novels by Thomas P. Kelley—*The Black Donnellys* (1954), and *The Vengeance of the Black Donnellys* (1962).² In both, the Donnellys are depicted as the scourge of the community—murdering, vandalizing, fighting and stealing—and the murder of six family members is their final nemesis. Thomas Kelley undertakes to dispel the assumption that Canadian history is boring in his version of the Donnelly story, which, according to him, rivals even the most gruesome American tale:

The terrible Donnelly feud, by far the most notorious and violent in the annals of Canada, was a series of depredations showing human depravity at its worst...

For sheer savagery the notorious Hatfield-McCoy affair or the lawless exploits of Jesse James were as a Victorian tea party compared to the Donnelly feud.

Not that such a record of past violence should come as a surprise. Canada's history of crime and criminals is by no means as placid as many believe. For much more than a century, Canada has had criminals as ruthless and crimes as macabre as you will find anywhere in the world. But there was only one Donnelly feud. Fortunately for Canada, it stands alone. (7 and 8)

In his Introduction to *The Black Donnellys*, Kelley vouches for the historical authenticity of his work, the material being “gathered from old newspapers, police and court records, as well as other unimpeachable sources and from several trips to the Lucan area.”(9) Near the conclusion, he reveals that his primary source was his own father, “one of the mobsters” who murdered the Donnellys. (183) His narrative is “heightened,” however, by an exaggerated rendition of colloquial speech and epithets, and by heavy moral editorializing, most of which is directed against the Donnellys, but with the occasional slippage when they are construed as possible victims. Reaney parodies Kelley's version in his account of the genesis of *The Donnellys* in *Stage Voices*:

they were horrible, their shanty had no doors because squatters have no doors, don't you know; they cut out the tongues of horses; they were barn burners and it was only justice that a mob should lynch them one night. (*Stage Voices*, 154)

Furthermore, he undermines the veracity of Kelley's account by playing it as a travelling medicine show in “Sticks and Stones,” the first part of his trilogy, casting the characters as grotesques, “the Grand Guignol persons of folklore.” (47) Since the “viciously biased melodrama” (46) they enact is enclosed by Reaney's story, and the “false” and “real” Donnellys juxtaposed, Kelley's story of the “Black Donnellys” is exposed as nothing more than a ludicrous form of popular entertainment.

James Reaney was more sympathetic to a second version of the Donnelly story, written to counter Kelley's travesty by a local minister, the Reverend

Orlo Miller, which introduced the possibility of “a double point of view! A mystery.” (*Stage Voices*, 154) *The Donnellys Must Die* (1962) interprets the story as a tragedy: the family deaths are seen as the inevitable consequence of events which began in Ireland centuries before, namely, the sectarian feuds between Protestants and Catholics, Whiteboys (Catholic vigilantes) and Blackfeet (Protestants or Catholics who refused to join the Whiteboys, such as the Donnellys). The events which shaped the life of a community in southwestern Ontario are traced back to Tipperary. For twenty years, Miller researched the thousands of legal documents, letters and journals, newspaper accounts and Irish source materials related to the story. His account meticulously examines social and political history, family genealogy, and immigration and settlement patterns to show how “the Donnellys must die” in Lucan in 1880. In the “Foreword,” Miller distinguishes between the legend and the “truth”:

The story has been told so often that it is now almost in the realm of legend. Legend has been recited as fact for so long that the truth lies buried fathoms deep.

I have attempted to reveal the truth. (Miller, ix)

Intrigued by the radical differences in these two versions of the Donnelly story, Reaney was compelled to do his own research, believing that “no biographer of the Donnellys has quite done them the justice they deserve in certain areas of their lives no matter how favourable they may seem to them.” (“They are Treating us like Mad Dogs,” 247) For eight years, he immersed himself in the source material which became a “swamp of legal MSS, newspaper microfilm, and archival vigils.” (Reaney, quoted in Parker, 154) Like W.B. Yeats, in his approach to the heroic legends and folk stories of Ireland, Reaney tried to reach down “low enough—below the newspapers” (Yeats, quoted in Parker, 156) to locate and nurture a story of courage, defiance and the “curious permanence of the Donnellys.” (Leggatt, 118) Despite the inevitable tragic conclusion presaged by the map of Ireland which serves as a backdrop in Act One of the first play of the trilogy, “Sticks and Stones” (1973), Reaney sees the lives of the Donnellys as an assertion of will, an exercise of the freedom of choice which helps determine the social parameters of the community in which they live and die, and which comprises one aspect of the mythology of the country. As Reaney explained at a meeting of the Association for Irish Studies in Ottawa in 1991:

once you get addicted to their astounding situation, you cease not to admire their will, in spite of all, not to be afraid, but to go on living—despite all the mobs and gossip and hatred that furiously marshall themselves against them. And go on living, they have! (“They are Treating Us Like Mad Dogs,” 252)

Reaney's story is a series of overlapping and intersecting “variant tellings,” a “vortex” of material: “structural devices such as the Mass, the catechism, the newspaper fall in and are devoured by acid; the Donnelly family become something they could never have possibly been to those who knew them (knew them!)—magnets you could write about forever. (*Stage Voices*, 154-155) The story is told from various points of view by members of the Donnelly family,

primarily the mother, Johannah, the second son, Will, and the daughter, Jennie. Yet because it is enacted by eighty members of the community, played by fourteen actors as the Donnellys, their friends and their enemies, the story develops into a matrix of events and personalities, conflicting, contradictory points of view which replay the salient events in the community leading up to the burning of the Donnelly home. Moreover, Reaney alludes to the events in Ireland, outlined in detail in Orlo Miller's text, and which are conspicuously missing in Kelley's works. Their Irish history haunts the Donnellys like the oracle in *Oedipus Rex*: a political and a personal past reasserts itself in the present. The Whiteboy and Blackfoot feud is replicated in Ontario, and the seven sons of Johannah and James Donnelly become entangled in the same sectarian violence their parents had sought to escape in 1846. In the first play of the Donnelly trilogy, "Sticks and Stones," Will, the second son, has been called "Blackfoot" by a new boy at school. But his mother, while realizing that the sectarian hatred has followed them "across the sea" (15), attempts to teach Will the importance of individual character, "which lasts forever" (15), and which he must assert in order to survive with any integrity. She explains the meaning of the secret society of Whiteboys and of the name, "Blackfoot", by telling him about of the burning of the home of their neighbours, the Shea family, by the Whiteboys in Tipperary, ironically presaging the fate of her own family. The Donnellys also experienced Whiteboy intimidation in Ireland, and this, too, is reenacted on the stage: the threats against Mr. Donnelly, and his refusal to swear allegiance to the society, his assertion that he will not kneel. The actors who play the Whiteboys in Ireland then lie down on either side of the stage, and become the "roads" of Biddulph in the next scene. The Donnellys are planted in rows of people they cannot escape. (28) An attempt to grow into a new life is again constrained by transplanted bigotry and hatred.

Reaney graphically establishes the geographic, political and religious parameters of the lives of the family in Biddulph Township through imagery, language, character and action. His story maps out the limitations which circumscribe a family for whom free will is a necessity of life. The "wild lands" of Canada are cut into concessions, cut into farms. The surveyor's lines are governed not by social considerations but by geometry, signified by the intersecting lines of ladders and ropes imposed by the chorus of actors at significant moments in the play, physical metaphors for the confinement of the individual within fixed social limitations:

the trap of the map's geometry which fixes the settlers into new versions of a virtually inescapable old country pattern. Sectarianism, in the old world the product of poverty and repression, becomes in the new the instrument of greed and ambition. (Bessai, 200)

The roads—The Roman Line, The Granton Line, the Swamp Line—are rigid demarcations of the territories occupied by Catholic and Protestant families. In Act One of the second play in the trilogy, "The St. Nicholas Hotel" (1974), a map of the roads and communities of Biddulph Township extends around the walls of the theatre, delineating the battleground for control of the community. In a poem representing three points of view on the Donnelly story, published in 1982, Reaney again demonstrates how the roads of Ireland and Canada intersect, and the extent to which the present is circumscribed by the past:

Around Borrisokane, in Eire, the roads twist
After cowherd with willow gads, after wise woman's spells,
After chariots and the widest go-around found in a mare's skin.
But in Biddulph, Canada, in Mount Carmel's brooder stove,
St. Peter's fields,
The roads cross at right angles, a careful Euclidian net, roads,
rods
Spun by surveyors out of Spider stars — Mirzak, Spicula,
Thuban Antares.
Like serpents, twitchgrass roots, dragons—the Irish roads twist,
The old crooked roads twist in the cage of the straight new.
("Entire Horse," I)

Moreover, Reaney shows how Irish history is replicated in Canada as a struggle over land ownership. The Surveyor's prophecy of the history of the township in "Sticks and Stones" comes all too true: the Irish will fight their Paddy neighbours and then "move on somewhere else and repeat the process." (22) In "Sticks and Stones," then, Reaney constructs a social mythology by establishing the historical and geographic context for the feud and its climax in the murder of the Donnellys, which haunts almost every scene of the play. In the next two plays of the trilogy, he explores the political and religious determinants which ensnare the family in events beyond their control. In this respect, his version of the story approximates that of Orlo Miller. Both provide a complex portrait of a community internally divided and expressing its division through recurrent violence—barn-burnings, sabotage, fights, even murder—in which everyone seems involved: shopkeepers, doctors, court officials, law officers. As Orlo Miller points out in Chapter IV of *The Donnellys Must Die*:

The murderers of the Donnelly family were by no means morons, misfits or maniacs. They were farmers and businessmen, stage coach owners, carpenters and peace officers. Furthermore, they performed their grisly task in no moment of emotional unbalance, but deliberately, coldly, savagely, with malice aforethought... the murders were the work of an organized body of men acting, however falsely, in the name of law, order and the Roman Catholic Church, and stylizing themselves... a Vigilance Committee. (20)

"The St. Nicholas Hotel" traces the feud through the second generation of the Donnelly family, through the story of Will's stagecoach business and the fierce competition with the rival companies, which sometimes quite literally reduced their stages to fragments of wood and their barns to burned-out shells. This competition, fed by the feud and compounding the community rivalry, is another manifestation of the lines drawn for political reasons in Biddulph Township. Catholics and Protestants have aligned politically behind the Conservative or the Reform Party, and during an election year, each family's affiliation is carefully scrutinized. The Donnellys again refuse to conform to expectations, throwing behind the Reform Party or the Grits the weight of the votes of a father and seven sons, and thus contributing to the narrow defeat of the Conservative candidate. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church in Ontario

encourages its parishioners to vote for the Tories, and so the Donnellys find themselves doubly damned.

In the last play, "Handcuffs" (1975), Reaney shows how the community further tightens the grip of repression and terror around the Donnelly family with the collusion of the church. The Parish priest, Father John Connolly, aligns himself with the Whiteboy faction or "Vigilance Committee," stating that there is only one side to a story, and that is his. ("Handcuffs," 215) However, Reaney demonstrates that the Donnellys believed that there were "two sides to every story": his newspaper sources indicated that "the Donnellys were aware of their terrible reputation and tried to counteract it with letters to the newspapers, after they had been called "the Donnelly Tribe." ("They Are Treating Us Like Mad Dogs," 247) Reaney tells the other side of the story, incorporating not only the Donnelly perspective, but also the complex personal, religious and political intersections which determine any social mythology.

Against the formidable opposition of church and state, Reaney pits the strong wills of the Donnelly family—husband and wife, seven sons and one daughter, to show how the words and deeds of a few can inform the life of a community, and colour a social mythology, according to how their stories are told. He begins his trilogy with the words of the mother to her son, Will—her refusal to be intimidated into persecuting others, to participate in communal hysteria, even if her own life is endangered. Reaney calls her variously Johannah, Judith, and Julia—as if evoking the names of a pagan goddess or the matriarchal head of a legendary dynasty—in radical contrast to Kelley's demonized portrait of her:

When she met her future spouse Johannah was eighteen, had stern and swarthy feature, big hands, broad shoulders and agate-hard eyes. She looked like and should have been a man, her sex undoubtedly robbing the bare-knuckle prize ring of a prospective champion. In later years she sported a miniature Vandyke, wore red flannels and said she had never been "much of a beauty". Her picture shows the words to be a gross understatement. (18)

According to Kelley, Johannah was the driving force for evil in the family, a variation of the Medusa archetype.

Johannah Donnelly was the primary instigator of the thirty-three year Donnelly feud. She taught her sons that she could never look on them with true motherly pride until, like their father, each had killed at best one man. (17)

Similarly, Orlo Miller describes Johannah Donnelly as "black Irish'— thick-set and swarthy, by no standards a beauty then or later." (34) Reaney, however, repeatedly refers to her as tall and stately. Like the female personification of Ireland's heroic values, Cathleen ni Houlihan, she has the walk of a queen and can inspire men to courageous action. Johannah can outface any man with her calm courage, including the bully Cassleigh when, using Whiteboy methods, he is intent on torturing a neighbour who insists on "fair play" over some property. Moreover, she identifies the essential tragedy of the feud which has

torn apart the Ontario community, just as internecine strife has devastated Ireland:

There's fields of grain to garner with bread for you all and you'd rather be thorns to each other. There's tables of food for you to eat and you won't sit down at them. Well, you won't come and sit down at them. Get back to work, you fools. You tribe! ("Sticks and Stones," 77)

In Reaney's reconstitution of a social mythology through allusion to Celtic myth, Johannah also recalls the warrior queen, Maeve, another of Yeats's "fair, fierce women" whose spirit walks the mountains of Connacht, with "a sword by her side and a dagger lifted up in her hand... dressed in white, with bare arms and feet... very strong, but not wicked" (Yeats, "The Celtic Twilight," 57):

She could have called over the rim of the world
Whatever woman's lover had hit her fancy,
And yet had been great-bodied and great limbed,
Fashioned to be the mother of strong children;
And she's had lucky eyes and a high heart,
And wisdom that caught fire like the dried flax,
At need, and made her beautiful and fierce,
Sudden and laughing.

(Yeats, "The Old Age of Queen Maeve")

When her husband is imprisoned for accidentally killing their antagonistic neighbour, Farl, Johannah walks forty miles from Lucan to Goderich to present a petition against his execution. During his imprisonment, she sustains a family of ten, including Farl's son, for seven years. The light she places in the window of her home in anticipation of James' return is a clear manifestation of a fortitude and endurance which become part of local mythology: as Reaney suggests in "Sticks and Stones," her light shines into the future life of the community—"past the borders of life.... Past life. Past death" (82):

Moon, you hold your lamp, stars: I hold mine... I stand. I'll stand here years after tonight—a seal in the air—long after my house and my gate and my curtilage have become dust. A lamp hanging in the air, held by a ghost lady. (81)

The ghosts of the Donnellys which haunt Biddulph are not demonic; in fact, in "Handcuffs," Reaney suggests just the opposite—that their persecution and murder resonate with the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, and their free spirits are envisioned as the wings of birds. In Act One of "Handcuffs," Jennie compares her mother's long arms to wings which reach higher than any man's, arms which have written many letters in defense of her family. After Johannah's flesh is consumed in the "fiery furnace" of her home, Jennie keeps a bone from her mother's arm as a relic—a surviving memorial of a mother who loved and protected her. Mrs. Donnelly taught Jennie to dance, and this she will continue to do as an act of celebration and commemoration. It is Mrs. Donnelly's vision of freedom in Canada which sustains the family and informs the trilogy. After the murder of her fifth son, Michael, in a bar room fight, and the death of her eldest son, Pat, from tuberculosis, she reasserts her beliefs:

I told him what I tell you now—to look straight ahead past this stupid life and death they've fastened on you—just as long ago your father

and me and our first born walked up over the last hill in Ireland and saw, what you will see now—for the first time in our lives we saw freedom, we saw the sea. (“The St. Nicholas Hotel,” 179)

In the first scene of “Sticks and Stones,” the title of which suggests the verbal and physical abuse which the Donnellys will endure, Johannah gives her son, Will, a fiddle for his twelfth birthday, believing that in Canada they are “free as it is to play all the tunes” (21). There is some truth to this belief, even though she will die as a consequence of playing her own particular tune. Will, however, does learn to play the instrument to the extent that he can drive away his enemies from his door with his manner of playing: his music, like her words, is a positive assertion of self against mob violence: “one fiddle [she] gave [him] a lame boy of twelve, has been worth forty men with rifles and clubs. (“The St. Nicholas Hotel,” 176) Will is an Oisín figure³ in *The Donnellys*, a Celtic bard whose ardent love of music and women was curbed by the imposition of ascetic catholicism on Ireland. Will has the gift of music and of words; he is the most literate of the brothers and the most feared, despite his physical disability. In Kelley’s account, Will’s club foot has demonic associations, and he is regarded as “the worst of the whole damn lot” (20), whereas Miller merely notes it as a deformity which does little to slow Will down. For Miller, as for Reaney, Will assumes heroic proportions, a Blakean satanic force breaking through the limitations of social repression and religious bigotry:

From the first his enemies feared and hated Will; they feared him for his savage tongue, his extravagant gestures, his natural leadership. They hated him because he was handsome, because he was popular; but mainly they hated him because his name was Donnelly. (Miller, 65)

In *The Donnellys*, Will rides a black stallion named Lord Byron; his is the dynamic energy of a free spirit expressed through action and words. He writes daily letters to Mary, his first love, in which he describes how he drives a stage coach which is a bird “with wheels for wings.” (“The Nicholas Hotel,” 116) When Mary is locked away in a nunnery by her father, he marries another free spirit, Norah, who also defies the wrath of her authoritarian father and brother. He survives the many attempts on his life to prosecute one of his family’s murderers, Jim Carroll, and again, he exercises the power of language to assert his rights.

You smeared our name for all time so that when children are naughty their mothers still say to them... be quiet, or the Black Donnellys will get you... Isn't that what most of you in this room think of us as being? Because of him my mother was turned into a witch who rode around burning down sheds and barns, because of him... but there's one thing, Jim, that some people coming after will remark on. And that is—the difference between our handwritings. There is my signature. There is his. Choose. You can't destroy the way my handwriting looks, just as you can never change the blot that appears in every one of your autographs and the cloud and the smudge and the clot and the fume of your jealousy. There! the living must obey the dead. (158)

Reaney also confronts the audience with these words, to challenge its perception of the past, and to affirm the necessity of looking again at the “handwriting,” to “choose” a story as the Donnellys have chosen the way in which they lived. Only Will and his mother can detect the writing on the blade of an old sword which survived for centuries in Ireland, only to be used as a turnip knife in Ontario by an ignorant woman who grinds away the letters.

The father, James Donnelly, first appears in the trilogy as “*a small a square chunk of will*” (18), who refuses to be intimidated by the Whiteboys, a posture which he maintains until his death. He maintains his personal integrity and that of his family in the face of community pressure to compromise or conform, asserting that “Donnellys don't kneel.” (“Sticks and Stones,” 92) He *chooses* to be a Donnelly, an act of courage which also establishes him as a convenient target for social and religious frustrations—a scapegoat for the community. James Donnelly's self-assertion is echoed by other family members, including the daughter, Jennie, who finds in her parents' example the courage to continue after their deaths:

Because from the courts of Heaven when you're there you will see that however the ladders and sticks and stones caught you and bruised you and smashed you, and the bakers and brewers forced you to work for them for nothing, from the eye of God in which you will someday walk you will see... that once, long before you were born,... you chose to be a Donnelly and laughed at what it would mean, the proud woman put to milking cows, the genius trotting around with a stallion, the old sword rusted into a turnip knife. You laughed and lay down with your fate like a bride, even the miserable fire of it. So that I am proud to be a Donnelly against all the contempt of the world. I am proud that my mother confirmed my brother in the forest with the fiddle, long before the bishop and the friar could get hold of him, and I wish now I had shared my mother's fate beside her. (“Sticks and Stones,” 93)

As J. Stewart Reaney notes in his biography of his father, James Reaney places important choices within the context of the family, showing “the indestructibility of the family... in the face of the most destructive plots.” (90) In *The Donnellys*, the family functions as a social paradigm for cohesion and loyalty, countering the divisive and fragmented community which threatens it. The seven shirts which Johannah hangs on the line outside of the home are flags of family pride and solidarity. However, neither Orlo Miller, nor James Reaney idealizes the Donnellys in their stories. The youngest sons, Robert and Thomas, are often engaged in inflammatory pranks or violent reprisals. They are shown to be stubborn, arrogant and aggressive in protecting their interests. They do not make friends easily, nurturing a small circle of close family friends rather than extending themselves into a wider community. Moreover, they are finally betrayed by Thomas's blood-brother, Jim Feeny, who leaves the door of their home open to their murderers. Reaney's view of the complexity of the feud in his version of the story is similar to Miller's:

As with all affairs of men, the lines of demarcation were never so rigidly drawn as this line-up would imply. There was a “twilight zone”, a frequent shifting of allegiances which, however, did not

affect notably the broad general pattern. (*The Donnellys Must Die*, 133)

This “broad general pattern” in Reaney’s reconstruction of the Donnelly story is one of resistance against social tyranny through the lives of individuals who choose to live and act freely.

Reaney also counters the “false” story of the Donnellys as agents of evil by incorporating in “Sticks and Stone” the popular song which Kelly’s account replicate as chapter headings:

So hurry to your homes, good folks.
Lock doors and windows tight.
And pray for dawn. The Black Donnellys
Will be abroad tonight.

(Kelley, 7)

Reaney raises these spectres in the medicine show of “Sticks and Stones” in order to exorcise them:

Oh all young folks take warning
Never live a life of hate,
Of wickedness or violence, lest
You share the Donnellys’ fate.

Their murdered bodies lie today,
A mile from Lucan town
But the memories of the awful feud
Time never will live down.

(“Sticks and Stones,” 80)

Reaney begins the first play with another song, in which violence and death are the means by which the Donnellys are regenerated and reaffirmed, the ballad of “John Barleycorn,” verses of which recur in the trilogy to punctuate action or dialogue:

Oh, three men went to Deroughata
To sell three loads of rye.
They shouted up and they shouted down
The barley grain should die
...
Then the farmer came with a big plough,
He ploughed me under the sod.
Then winter it being over
And the summer coming on,
Sure the barley grain shot forth his head
With a beard like any man.
...
Then they sold me to the brewer
And he brewed me on the pan
But, when I got into the jug
I was the strongest man.

In his program note for the 1975 production of “Handcuffs” at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Reaney included a simple statement: “it’s hard to handcuff wheat.” (187) Vitality, courage and determination will prevail, despite repression and brutality, or the “mind-forged manacles” of bigotry and

ignorance.⁴ James Donnelly swore that he would never leave Biddulph; he is still there—in the stones which mark where his family lived, in the wheat sown by his sons, growing green under the snow. As Gerald Parker has noted in his comprehensive analysis of Reaney's plays, the final scene is a confirmation of a social mythology which celebrates harmony and growth:

Then the pall bearers, the company of actors, who in the course of the trilogy have played the various members of the Donnelly family as well as the farmers, merchants, priests, bankers, and the politicians of Biddulph, abandon all personal and social identity and return to the stage to mime the “growth of a wheatfield”, evoking the seasonal design that, like the structure of the Mass, finally informs and encloses the story of the Donnellys.... At this point, the stage directions tell us, a “golden light sweeps the stage. We should feel that around the Donnelly farmyard lies a big field of wheat ready for harvest.” (*How to Play: The Theatre of James Reaney*, 110)

The Donnellys are resurrected through Reaney's reconstitution of their story, as James Donnelly suggests: they are alive in the present as long as their words are spoken and their actions replayed.

The story of the Donnellys was again revisited in dramatic form by Théâtre Passe Muraille in October, 1993, this time from an “urban” perspective with a multi-racial cast. *The Urban Donnellys*⁵ is a collective creation directed by Paul Thompson, whose work demonstrates a recurrent preoccupation with enacting a social mythology. In 1974, he worked with Rick Salutin on *1837: The Farmers' Revolt*, another collective drama which revisits Canadian history in order to deconstruct the assumption that this rebellion of wilful individuals against repression and privilege was entirely lost—and suggesting that the battle has only just begun. Paul Thompson dramatized the Donnelly story three times during the 1970s, including the collective productions, *The Donnellys* and *Death of the Donnellys*. For *The Urban Donnellys*, he collaborated with Colin Taylor, artistic director of Theatre WUM, which has as a mandate “the exploration of African continuities” and “racial retrieval, in a context of imagistic, formally innovative, and intellectually challenging theatre.” (*Theatre Beyond Walls/Theâtre Passe Muraille Newsletter*, 10) *Urban Donnellys* reflects the community reality of contemporary Toronto in which an immigrant population attempts to find a way of integrating cultural and social traditions without being wholly determined by them. The play is set in a seedy bar on the Queen West strip in Toronto, frequented by an assortment of marginalized immigrants who react against the dominant culture by venting their frustration and rage through violence. The individual stories are connected to the Donnelly legend by a vagrant who functions as a variant of the Delphic oracle; he wanders through each scene whispering or declaiming appropriate narrative fragments from the Donnelly story, and pointing out the parallels between the Donnellys' fate and the lives of these contemporary “outcasts,” eventually assigning to them Donnelly “roles.” Appropriately, the vagrant, Clare, was played by David Fox, who also undertook the role of James Donnelly, “father of the tribe,” in the 1970s Donnelly collectives. In *Urban Donnellys*, the father is again cast as an outsider. According to Colin Taylor, the play explores “the dynamics of tribalism and the role and ritualization of

violence. Like the Donnellys, our characters are outlaws who have been rejected by the powers-that-be.” (Harrison, *Eye Theatre*) The evocation of the past as a comment on the present points to the significance of cultural memory. As David Akin points out in his review of *The Urban Donnellys*:

Cut off from our roots, our myths, and our archetypes we surely lose our collective sense of identity and purpose and find new confusion and fear about our future.... Losing your cultural memory is a particular problem among many second-generation immigrant Canadians. (*The Packet & Times*)

The Donnelly story thus becomes a paradigm for the ways in which social parameters imported to Canada can either restrain and inhibit, or strengthen and validate, depending on how they are perceived and reenacted in the new environment. The way in which these patterns work themselves out determines the social fabric of a community—urban or rural—which may in turn inform the evolution of a national mythology. The press release from Théâtre Passe Muraille suggests just this:

By laying claim to the myth of the Donnellys and making it their own, the collective of *Urban Donnellys* is planting its own seed in the mythological landscape of Toronto, a “world-class city” with a seething underground.

Moreover, as Reaney suggests in his trilogy, it is essential to revisit the circumstances under which current mythologies are formed, to interrogate their validity, and to determine their potency for the present.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Don Perkins' Ph.D. Thesis, *Revisionary Drama: A Study of the Contemporary Canadian History Play*, a comprehensive study of the dramatization of Canada's “missing history,” for this reference to Salutin's article, and for the perception that Reaney placed the story of the Donnellys within a “pattern of determined and continued resistance” (201).
2. On the cover of the 1986 edition of *The Black Donnellys* is the advertisement, “over 1 million copies sold,” which like a McDonald's ad testifies to the popularity of the product. In fact, the book has been reprinted every year by a succession of four publishers since its initial publication by Harlequin Books in 1954.
3. The pagan joy in life, in contrast to the asceticism of Christianity, is expressed in the Oisín-Patrick Dialogues, and is basic to an Irish literary tradition which extols the freedom of imagination and protests against the spiritual repression of organized Christianity. See Chapter IV “The Burden of Oisín” in Anne O'Grady, *Patterns of Mythology in Modern Irish Drama*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta, Department of English, 1974.
For W.B. Yeats, Oisín was another symbol of Ireland's former glories:
Put the staff in my hands; for I go to the Fenians, O cleric, to chaunt
he war-songs that roused them of old; they will rise, making clouds
with their breath,
Innumerable, singing, exultant; the clay underneath them shall pant,
and demons be broken in pieces, and tramped beneath them in
death. (“The Wanderings of Oisín”)
4. Not surprisingly, Reaney's social mythology is coloured by William Blake's vision of a New Jerusalem.
5. I have drawn on newspaper reviews and synopses for this account of *Urban Donnellys*, since I was unable to attend a production, and there is no available script. I am indebted to Théâtre Passe-Muraille for providing copies of reviews and the newsletter

. The reviews ranged from enthusiastic to disparaging, some judging the Donnelly correlations to be inspirational, others concluding that they were “tenuous and forced, and largely irrelevant, except insofar as they both touch on violence, fear, family and the immigrant experience” (H.J. Kirchoff, *The Globe and Mail*, Oct. 18, 1993, C3). Even Colin Taylor has indicated that the play’s title “comes close to being a misnomer,” since it is more about urban life than the Donnellys (*The Metro Word*, Oct. 1993).

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Eileen Boyd Sivert

Jovette Marchessault and Marie-Claire Blais: Hybrids, Monsters and Ways of Knowing

Abstract

*This article explores the unusual connections between two seemingly disparate Québécois novels: *Le Sourd dans la ville* by Marie-Claire Blais, and Jovette Marchessault's *Comme une enfant de la terre I/ le crachat solaire*. While apparently dissimilar in style and content, both manifest a desire on the author's part to stretch or exceed limits, an interest in the uncertain or the indeterminate, and an insistence on intersections, crossings and exchanges. The texts are studied here in view of recent feminist criticism of science, particularly that of Evelyn Fox Keller and Donna Haraway, to show how Blais and Marchessault address general questions of power and the production of knowledge in a particular context.*

Résumé

*Cet article examine les liens insolites entre deux romans québécois très différents : *Le Sourd dans la ville* de Marie-Claire Blais et *Comme une enfant de la terre I/ le crachat solaire* de Jovette Marchessault. Dissemblables en apparence, tant dans leur forme que dans leur contenu, les deux récits témoignent de la part de chaque romancière d'un désir d'excéder ou d'outrépasser les limites, d'un intérêt à tout ce qui est incertain ou indéterminé, et d'un besoin de valoriser croisements et réciprocity. L'auteure étudie les deux textes à partir de la critique féministe de la science, s'appuyant surtout sur les écrits d'Evelyn Fox Keller et de Donna Haraway, pour montrer la manière dont Blais et Marchessault traitent, dans un contexte particulier, des questions générales liées au pouvoir et à la production du savoir.*

At first glance, a parallel reading of two so seemingly dissimilar novels as the brooding, foreboding, death-filled *Sourd dans la ville* by Marie-Claire Blais and the celebration of joy and life recorded in Jovette Marchessault's *Comme une enfant de la terre I/ le crachat solaire* may seem unusual. Yet the structure and imagery of both texts invite such comparison. The switching back and forth between the variously dissimilar literary texts should be no more jarring than the continual shifts of consciousnesses that fill Blais' novel; and the odd coupling which seems to make the texts more powerful in combination than either alone, echoes Marchessault's evocation of unusual copulations that combine very distant species to generate imaginative hybrids. Yet the choice is not arbitrary. As this article attempts to show, the texts in question represent a tendency in Québécois literature written by women: the insistence on intersection, cross-over, or exchange, while retaining an awareness of linguistic and cultural background. Whether exploring them or resisting them,

Francophone Canadians have always operated on borders: between Anglophone and Francophone Canada, between Canada and the United States, between the French and English languages.

The borders, boundaries and intersections that are established, interrogated and crossed in these works question the very idea of boundaries and borders themselves. The first to be displaced are those between literature and criticism. This article suggests reading the two novels in question as a literary rendering of recent feminist criticism of science and knowledge production. In other words, it approaches the novels of Blais and Marchessault through Evelyn Fox Keller's *Reflections on Gender and Science* and Donna Haraway's more recent "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and The Privilege of Partial Perspective."

Science, scientific knowledge and everything associated with producing it or other kinds of knowledge, as knowledge has been perceived traditionally in western society, is challenged by the texts examined here. Evelyn Fox Keller notes that "to both scientists and their public, scientific thought is male thought, in ways that painting and writing—also performed largely by men—have never been." (76) Keller's concern, like that of many feminist object-relations theorists, is the historical and cultural association of the masculine with separation and objectification and of the feminine with the blurring of boundaries between subject and object. In science, this translates into a relation of distance and separation between the knower and the known. Donna Haraway's interests are similar, suggesting that feminists have "shied away from doctrines of scientific objectivity in part because of the suspicion that [for science] an 'object' of knowledge is a passive and inert thing" (591). While Keller seeks to replace traditional scientific objectivity with a "dynamic objectivity" that draws on the shared aspects of mind and nature, Haraway advocates "embodied objectivity" and suggests that feminist objectivity means quite simply "situated knowledge."

What Blais and Marchessault contribute to the discussion is a novelistic version of the kind of location or situation of knowledge urged by Haraway. They explore the problem of knower and known, of subject and object, in a particular (Québécois) context from one or several localized, though changing, points of view. Briefly, *Le Sourd dans la ville* is told through a shifting consciousness, linked in some way to that of Florence Gray, a middle-class, middle-aged woman, apparently abandoned by her husband, who has come to the run-down *Hotel des Voyageurs* in Montreal to commit suicide. Other presences touch on the final day of her life: the old Irishman, Tim, and his dog, Tim; Gloria, the sensuous hotel proprietress and her family, especially her son, Mike, who is dying of cancer; and Judith Languais, called Judith Lange, a philosophy teacher, who befriended Florence and, until this particular day, had persuaded her not to take her life. *Comme une enfant de la terre / le crachat solaire* is the story of a journey told on several levels by a narrator travelling by Greyhound bus from Mexico City, across the United States, to her native Montreal. The journey is at the same time an internal voyage of self-discovery and a movement to her mythic as well as her historic past, to her

origins in the snow-covered land of the north she repeatedly evokes as well as in the myths of her ancestors, Native and European.

Both novels are a critique of post-industrial North American society, and both center their attack on the kind of ordered, regulated society fostered by institutional knowledge production, especially by scientific discovery and high technology. The novels, like much of the criticism of science that informs this reading, are not blindly anti-technological, but argue the misuse of science and technology as forces of oppression, particularly when technological oppression coincides with cultural, racial or gender oppression. Criticism is clearly directed at patriarchal Quebec society, but even more at the Anglo-American influence on Quebec, and at the traditionally dominant Anglophone culture. It is especially directed at sectors of that culture connected to science, technology and commerce, since even educated Francophones were discouraged from those fields by their own cultural traditions as much as by external obstacles.

In *Le Sourd*, Florence Gray, a member of the dominant class (at least by association), has been living in an ordered, regulated, world in which she individually, and others in society, depend on men like her husband, a physicist, and her son who will become one. Florence's thoughts about her family are revealing. The following example is taken from one of the seemingly endless sentences that make up this text and whose syntax defies rational and orderly expression. Listening to Judith Lange agonize over society's atrocities, Florence notes that "son fils ne lui avait jamais parlé des meurtres de l'Histoire, c'est peut-être qu'il était né pour en commettre d'autres, Florence tremblait devant le pouvoir de la science, la science, lorsqu'elle ne consolait pas les hommes, c'était une forme d'art, mais l'art de la terreur, pensait-elle, elle avait eu peur du cerveau de son mari, elle avait tremblé de peur en imaginant l'abstraite montée vers la terreur qui se préparait là, sous ce front calme, il y avait, sous ces yeux gris, une pensée d'homme, une armée d'hommes, tous les mécanismes de la Grande Terreur dont l'avenir serait fait" (58). The view corresponds to what Paula Gilbert Lewis reads in Blais's *Visions d'Anna*: "A world... decaying in urban metropolises where men, avoiding relationships, are still free or absent, and women are still concerned with each other and the fate of the earth" (97). Perhaps most frightening is the scientist's isolation or separation from everyone else, that is, from those in whom he has induced dependency, especially women: "c'est que son savoir devait être redoutable puisqu'il ne le partageait avec personne," Florence remembers, "et il disait, pourquoi ne vas-tu pas t'amuser au soleil, tu es ici pour te reposer" (68). Florence originally accepted the kind of world perceived and indeed produced by men like her husband, a world in which the connection between knower and known, between subject and object, between one human and another is lost. She, who has been "si longtemps indifférente aux femmes, à leur vie" (176), lacks the confidence in her own autonomy to accept that of others. She remains trapped in a mode of constant vigilance and control that Keller would say reflects "not so much the security of one's ego boundaries as their vulnerability. It betrays particular fears of dependency, loss of self-control, and loss of self" (102). A surprising insight into the lives of two

women Florence meets by chance is quickly forgotten, “pour son propre confort” she admits (177).

It is exactly this “confort” that Judith Lange refuses for herself and denies to others whenever possible. Through Judith, Florence becomes aware of her blindness but remains paralyzed by it and by a vision of the world through the “unmarked” position of her husband, a vision that sees itself as unbiased and unmediated and that separates the viewer from the viewed: “parce qu'elle ne voyait...que lui, qu'elle ne vivait qu'avec lui, pour lui, et que tout le reste se mouvait sans elle, sans eux, dans le glissement de la foule aveugle, mais la plus aveugle ce n'était pas cette humanité dont elle n'avait jamais pénétré la souffrance avant ce jour, c'était elle” (176). As Haraway notes, “the eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity...to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power” (581).

Judith Lange sees it as her purpose to destroy that kind of vision. She personalizes and locates vision and knowledge by insisting on her own complicity in, and responsibility for, whatever knowledge she has. Yet her effort is both individual and global. On one level, her treatment of Florence as an autonomous subject creates ties between the two that postpone, if only temporarily, Florence's death. Her larger effort is to tease out links between the individual and questions that affect the entire world, to enable others, especially her students, to see the world in terms of connections rather than the distance and isolation that lead to the greatest of crimes. In the context of the Holocaust, we read: “Peut-être Judith avait-elle raison aussi de croire que les plus grands criminels étaient des êtres qui aimaient l'ordre, la sagesse, parfois même la bonté, qu'ils avaient isolé leurs crimes dans cette cellule chimique où tout n'était qu'ordre et réalité pure, la réalité pure du devoir” (60). She attempts to turn her students from this kind of isolation, helping them to conceive of a community of souls between humans separated by time and space, by life and death.

A different, but similarly terrifying, post-industrial society is evoked in Marchessault's *Comme une enfant de la terre I/ le crachat solaire*. This society's view of the other is produced by xenophobia and racism, where “les phoques parlent de nous, de notre science, de notre avidité, de notre cécité, à voix basse, en pleurant” (49). While extolling the magnificence and beauty of technological feats such as the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, celebrated throughout a large part of **Chant Trois**, Marchessault depicts the consequences of misguided, unthinking uses of technology: “des usines géantes de désintégration, de poisons, de montage fonctionnent nuit et jour à produire des mutants” (48). These mutants are examples of the “être urbain” which has definitively replaced the “être humain” in the world. Like Blais, she aims her remarks at the ways in which knowledge is generated and used, and blames universities in particular, where knowledge is produced and disseminated, noting that: “La pègre ignoble va chercher ses avocats, ses ouvriers sur les campus” (49). As an autodidact not produced by a system of higher education, Marchessault might attempt to criticize from the point of view of the innocent, yet she does not. Though her criticism is quite broad, her response, like that of Judith Lange, is individual and particular. Here, the

opposition between the general and the particular resembles that between theory and practice. As a practicing writer, she knows that the production of knowledge is not limited to universities. As a human being who finds herself perilously close to becoming an “être urbain,” she is aware that no one is innocent. The “avidité” she condemns is preceded by the word “notre” and it is “*nos bouchers, nos médecins, nos juges*” (48, my emphasis) who are sharpening their knives. She, too, evokes the horrors of the Holocaust, but not to link past and present. For Marchessault the past *is* the present, and as much her responsibility as that of anyone else. She notes with fear a society in which “il y a de moins en moins de gens à lyncher... il reste assez de juifs pour un pogrom, un beau pogrom d'artistes car tous ces maudits juifs sont peintres, musiciens, écrivains avec génie, avec passion et que notre haine semble n'avoir aucune prise sur eux” (50). Danger is not somewhere “out there,” to be blamed on someone else. Marchessault assigns responsibility on an individual level, to someone who does not actively cause pain, or separate herself from other humans and the world, but who, from her own limited perspective, can see evil and so must be implicated in it. As with Blais, she fears order more than anything else and, consequently, the kind of knowledge that produces order, that insists on order, and that does violence by generating uniform “mutants”: “L'Ange-de-la-Mort, celui qui est couvert d'yeux et d'écaillés viendra mettre de l'ordre dans l'Amérique et nous ne saurons plus écrire les mots pain, arbre, eau, et nous ne pourrons plus rien prononcer” (52).

Of interest here is not so much the condemnation of modern society, by now almost a cliché, but the way these two Québécois authors write that condemnation, as women and members of what has been historically an underclass, indeed a “disordered” underclass, whose cultural existence is threatened by the dominant society. Each author proposes a different, partial, subjective view of the world seen from that underclass, a way of perceiving the world that does not amount to dominating it, a view that sees its own limitations and so opens itself to other views.

Some may suggest that using literature to criticize the “masculine” culture of scientific objectivity is a cop-out. After all, literature has always been considered subjective, interpretive, soft, even, as we noted above, feminine. But literature has not escaped “objectivity.” It is another way of knowing—in many ways a controlling, dominating way of knowing. While storytelling has traditionally been seen as a way of making sense of chaos, and narrative as imposing order on a disordered world, the two Québécois novels under discussion do no such thing. They represent the unpredictable world of those who do not rule. *Le Sourd*, in particular, not only resists narrative logic, it reproduces, or better yet, allows, the disarray of ordinary life to flow through its pages, moving unobstructed from one perspective to another. The novel's form mimics its content: there are no separations into chapters or even into paragraphs—indeed there are very few sentence breaks in the entire book; a sentence can continue for 40 or 50 pages, with commas offering the reader a place to hesitate, but never to stop.

And while *Comme une enfant* at first seems to insist on a formal separation, the novel blends fable, lyric and epic into a genre-shifting form. Moreover, the

motif of music as subject matter and the appellation “Chants” instead of “chapters” suggest similarities to a piece of music whose constant reprises joyfully defy any separation between sections and undo any notion of chronology or linearity. In the same way that Marchessault replaces chapters with songs, she blurs yet another boundary: that which separates the author's body from her words. In a *mise-en-abîme* in which she describes the storytelling of a group of travelling actors and singers who revive for the Québécois their forgotten history, she insists on the physicality of her own language as well as theirs and on its necessary connection to a body: “Vous mettiez les mots dans vos bouches; vous les imprégnez avec le phosphore de votre salive; vous le mâchiez, vous le déchiriez en mille morceaux avec vos dents; vous l'exposiez ensuite à l'air libre des vents des quatre horizons avant de le tremper dans le sang de nos rebellions” (145). Marchessault, like Haraway, argues for the particular, for “the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above” (Haraway, 589).

The narrative form appears to imitate the lack of boundaries found on other levels in the two novels. The sinuosity of Blais's form can be seen in the continuum of her characters.¹ They are not clearly delineated, and the lack of sentence breaks often makes the reader unsure where one character's thoughts leave off and another's begin; some thoughts are shared by several characters at once. In her comments on this novel, Jacqueline Viswanathan remarks: “Le passage de conscience à conscience est le substitut du dialogue impossible” (95). This continuity shown to the reader offsets the solitude expressed by the characters themselves and highlights the impossibility of absolute, objective autonomy, of separating ourselves from our fellow beings. “The knowing self is partial in all its guises” says Haraway, “never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another” (586). In Blais's work, only the women and some male children sense the partiality of their own being enough to open to another and see that other as a subject, whether or not they manage to communicate. Judith Lange expends the energy and attention needed to understand another and so elicits a response from Florence who finds, for the first time, that “on l'écoutait avec application” (58). This is the same attention and energy Judith devotes to Mike, or to the young man dying from self-inflicted burns, or to Gloria, or to those who perished in the death camps at Mauthausen. Because of the way in which Judith alters her perception, Florence ventures beyond the protective gates of her apartment on the hill, makes her way out of the world made by her husband and begins to understand others as subjects, though she is never able to act on this understanding.

The novel's lack of sentence breaks recognizes the kind of slippage we encounter in life. The narrative logic and structure imposed on a story are as arbitrary, Blais suggests, as our efforts to separate subjects and objects. Gloria's infant daughter, JoJo, cannot be separated from Judith in our minds when they are united in a sentence; Tim the dog and Tim the man are indistinguishable, words and images pass back and forth between the two, intercepted by Florence; Florence and Mike exchange thoughts and visions of

death without speaking to each other; Gloria inhabits Mike's mind as much as he does himself.

The form of the novel even blurs the distinction between people and things. In a sentence in which connections are at once metaphoric and metonymic, it is difficult to separate Gloria, Mike's always dependable mother, from the tree he contemplates, "l'arbre, l'arbre qui demain ou plus tard, sous la pluie ou la neige, serait toujours là, Mike revoyait sa mère" (22). Nor, in a darker moment, can the mother, whose thoughts constantly intermingle with his, be separated from the night terrors that also inhabit his mind. When the texts tells us, "C'était bien elle, Gloria, qui avait soudain incliné sa lourde forme sur son lit de fer" (23), the word "elle," because of the lack of sentence breaks, also refers back a few clauses to his nightmares to become "elle, la redoutable, celle qu'on ne pouvait pas nommer qui venait de rentrer en lui" (23). This is one of many moments in which Gloria becomes a menacing presence as the uninterrupted sentence structure reveals simultaneous fear and love.

The child, Mike, first clues the reader to go beyond the limits we erect not only between human beings, but between humans and the objects in the world around them. A shoe, discarded by a young boy, reveals more to Mike than does the boy: "seule cette chaussure battue et attristée que contemplait Mike contenait pour lui une existence propre, car cet objet tourmenté et vaincu par son maître connaissait plus que Mike celui qu'il avait chaussé et protégé du froid, il avait bu de son propriétaire les sueurs de la joie comme de la peine, il avait aimé, pleuré, ri aussi, et soudain c'était un objet déjà vieux qu'on délaisserait bientôt pour un autre, et il gisait là, tout près de Mike qui le regardait vivre au soleil ses derniers moments de révolte" (17). Mike's "conversations" with objects suggest the kind of dynamic objectivity Keller advocates in the scientist, employing, "a form of attention to the natural world that is like one's ideal attention to the human world: it is a form of love" (117). Keller's remark on scientific discourse applies to the relation to objects that narrative produces, that is, narrative attention to the purely narrative object.

The owner of the shoe may fall into the trap of objectification, but Mike does not, nor does Florence who is troubled by her almost painful understanding of objects in their own right and by the inability of others, in Keller's words, "to focus on objects as separate and distinct from one's own needs, desires, and individual perspective" (119). Fixing her eyes on the "vomissures du tapis," she sees the rug as "un objet que nous avons substitué à nos besoins, à nos nécessités, à nos veuleries, comme tant d'autres" (61). She watches Gloria's negligence as she knocks over a kitchen chair. "Gloria elle-même avait observé la brusquerie de ce geste, mais c'était là quelque signe désespéré de sa nature inconsciente que nul ne pénétrait, elle n'avait pas cherché à redresser la chaise, elle avait plutôt regardé cet objet avec dédain, le confiant à la rudesse de son désespoir dont elle ne parlait à personne, et cet objet attaqué par une injuste colère ne disait rien, il ne parlait que de Gloria mais silencieusement, dans son abaissement (91-92). Florence recalls thousands of similar gestures: all the objects she never saw clearly, all the movements of irritation, of despair, towards objects that disappeared into a huge nothingness until she contemplated them differently, until she accepted their agency: "Mais

Florence le sentait maintenant, leurs empreintes en nous étaient terribles, même en elle, Florence, qui avait été si souvent une femme indifférente et froide, le savon, la chaise fracassaient le silence, ces objets eux-mêmes pleuraient et gémissaient, mais il fallait devenir, comme Florence, une âme incarcérée pour sentir tout près de soi ces cris, ces hostiles gémissements, cris de revendication ou de lassitude...Et Florence pensait à cette espoir que nous avons tous d'être compris, rassurés, consolés par la nature" (92). It is not surprising that Mike himself is lying on the ground when he contemplates the shoe. He and Florence figuratively, if not literally, place themselves on the same level as the objects they regard, not above them. Their attempts to know reflect Haraway's who says: "Situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a ground or a resource, never finally as slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of 'objective' knowledge" (Haraway, 592). Blais's location of characters and objects on the same physical level positions them as narrative equals, revealing a narrative whose aim is not power or conquest but, perhaps, reciprocal knowledge.

Comme une enfant is less hallucinatory, more allegorical in its joining of beings and objects. The narrator reveals what Haraway calls the "split and contradictory self...who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history" (586). Her literary voyage from Mexico City to Montreal is also a journey within to study her own possibilities and limitations as well as those of her country and her ancestors. The book opens with the narrator's mythic and split view of herself: "Je suis d'origine céleste et je suis née à Montréal" (11). Because she sees herself as not wholly formed or fixed, she is able, in her own "fantastic imaginings," to reduce herself to nothing and to be reborn, not as an autonomous individual, not even as a person at all, but as a hybrid. The hybrid referred to in my title is Marchessault's answer to the dangerously uniform mutant previously mentioned. Hybrids are diverse, not "uniformisés," and liberating rather than limited. "J'imagine d'amples variations, d'amples copulations," she tells us: "par exemple la copulation d'un mille pattes (en vérité, en vérité ils n'en ont jamais plus de 170 et jamais moins de seize) et celle d'un morse avec ses défenses d'un bel ivoire, souriant dans ses moustaches. Ou celle d'une alouette, pas l'alouette huppée, ni celle des arbres, non, une simple alouette des champs qui chante très avant dans la nuit et un barracuda, un barracuda de six pieds de long, chasseur, sportif, aux belles dents carnassières..." (31). Wondering if the hybridized results of such copulation would have trouble adapting, or if the order of the universe would be disturbed, she speculates that such might be the case if the adaptation is organic and biological, but perhaps not if the adaptation is not only organic, but "surtout magique, à base d'incantations, de miracles, de signes, en vertu de l'énergie cosmique que diffuse chaque créature" (32).

In Marchessault's case, we are dealing with more than the effort of individual subjects to understand other subjectivities. The writing subject here encompasses the earth and the sky, opens herself to everything ("Toutes mes bouches sont ouvertes, et mes pores, mes oreilles, mon nombril" [19]), and accepts her own incompleteness and lack of mastery over her surroundings and

herself: “Je me lamente mais ne garde pas la maîtrise sur les incantations de ma bouche” (19). Indeed, her mythic view exceeds the notion of the self as partial and open to others, as suggested by Haraway, to hint that there is no “other” subjectivity to understand; we are all descended from the same female ancestor “la Grande-Oursonne” (11) and there can be no separation, no individual, no whole apart from others. Seeking more than a commonality between herself and nature, she herself *is* nature, and nature for her is her native land. What she studies, what she questions finally, is herself: “J’interroge les pierres de mes terres, l’eau qui mange mes rives, ce qui se glisse en nous sans laisser de traces” (12). Her return to Montreal is a voyage “jusqu’à mes embouchures, là où je commence, où je finis” (21).

These comparisons to other texts place this journey in a context which some might construe as a misreading of Marchessault. However, such an objection would apply to any *single* reading of Marchessault’s writing, which Anthony Purdy characterizes as a place of conflict and contradiction. Barbara Godard sees *Comme une enfant* itself as “une logique de contradiction” (105). Much of the poetic searching that comprises *Comme une enfant* at first glance seems far removed from the violence and anarchy sometimes presented by Blais as the only possible response to the modern world. This article suggests that the contradictions within the text itself in some ways link it to other texts and invite odd and unexpected joinings. The journey undertaken in *Comme une enfant* is a spiritual as well as a geographic movement. Quebec is represented as an origin as much as a destination, sometimes revealing the desire to recover a “pure” nature, a “true” history, both obscured by the modern world; it reflects the desire for a kind of Eden whose inhabitants are more attuned to their “natural” surroundings than the “mutants” the narrator describes as city dwellers. Nothing could be further from the post-modern commentaries of Donna Haraway here compared to Marchessault, except that this desire for “wholeness,” “innocence” and “purity,” is combined with a sense that nothing is pure, that everything is constructed and random. Even within a single sentence the “true” and the “arbitrary” vie with each other when, as the narrator suggests: “Nous donnerions leurs noms véritables au hasard, à la coïncidence sans crainte de nous compromettre” (100). The myth of origin in *Comme une Enfant* falls apart given the multiplicity of proposed origin myths and deities. While writing wistfully of a “natural,” “original” world lost to constructed everyday reality, the narrator’s alternative offers another or several other constructs—varied mythic poetic tales which suggest many possible readings. Indeed, while parts of the novel evoke a mystical, others a metaphysical, view of human life, repeated interventions point to a post-modern, multiple notion of the subject, countered by a strong desire for a more traditional view.

Because of the searching that leads to movement in different directions, to contradictory and inconclusive “conclusions,” we can read the journey back to Quebec as more than a return to an Edenic origin. It is a journey of self-knowledge, cultural as well as spiritual. In this reading, Quebec is more than a myth: it is a specifically located and historically contested space. A voyage back to Quebec is the narrator’s attempt to situate herself within her native language, culture and land, to know herself as a product of a particular past

which she chooses to explore by looking beyond historical documents, most of them written not from her own viewpoint, but from that of the dominant class.

Donna Haraway's partial or located knowledge is often found at the site/sight of the subjugated, but not because the standpoints of the subjugated are innocent. "On the contrary" she writes, "they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge" (584). It is no surprise to find this kind of knowledge in Francophone Canadian writers. Historically and even today, they have been made painfully aware of their situation or location outside the norm. The so-called "norm" criticized in my reading of the Blais and Marchessault novels is linked broadly to institutionalized knowledge production and more specifically to the scientific community, traditionally seen as a masculine community. The place from which this community speaks is the place of the knower, the master, the conqueror. Clearly, in the particular, located, view of these modern feminist Québécois novels, the entire notion of domination and submission of subject and object is informed by a particular, local history. Both novels link the institutional elite to the historically controlling Anglophone society. Both express the anguish of Francophone subjects who sometimes forget their location, and whose attempt not to communicate with, but to be a part of, the dominant class necessarily results in alienation and the destruction of their own heritage. The result of attempted assimilation is a subject who has no situation, who is located nowhere, whose ties have been severed from her/his origins and who will never be able to forge new ones in a culture that is known not for seeking ties between cultures and classes, but for separation. This dilemma is seen in *Le Sourd's* Berthe, the oldest daughter of Gloria (proprietress of the *Hotel des Voyageurs*), who is separated graphically from her family in the *Hotel* by one of the very few sentence breaks in the book (101). Berthe situates herself as far away as she can, "dans une université anglaise, ainsi ils ne la retrouveraient pas, à quelques pas de leur demeure elle se terrait en pays étranger" (137). She finds that the only way to avoid becoming the slave to someone else's master, the subjugated object to the dominant class's subject, is to attempt to infiltrate that class and to renounce her own. She tries to move from a marked to an unmarked position: "alors, si on était d'origine humble, afin de ne pas être victime de leur destruction systématique, ...il fallait emprunter d'eux la froideur et l'absence, n'exigaients pas de vous cette amputation de soi, qui les bouleversait si peu?" (138). She is aware that those who claim superior knowledge do not possess it. Those who inhabit the institution that claims to produce knowledge know only in a very limited manner, "car ils n'avaient pas vécu, rien compris encore" (102). But it is not knowledge and understanding that she seeks in the "université anglaise," it is power.

Berthe finds herself heavy with knowledge she will never use, and she barely understands what she studies: "mais était-ce essentiel de comprendre, son but n'était que la réussite" (137). Unlike Florence, Judith, and especially her brother Mike, Berthe does not perceive other subjectivities. Not only does she deny agency to objects, she mimics the ways of the dominant class by negating their subjectivity as they negated her, and she copes by reducing them to objects. The community she seeks among the Anglophones, especially that of

the university where she lives, is “anonyme, d'une essence qui n'était pas humaine, d'origine minérale, peut-être... parfois il lui semblait qu'il y avait sur terre beaucoup de ces poids minéraux qui n'avaient d'humain que leur apparence” (137-38). Her use of a neuter pronoun underlines the designation of people as objects: “chaque matin *cela* ouvrait ses yeux bleus, froids, vers vous, *cela* parlait, prononçait des phrases embaumées” (138, my emphasis). Berthe is the reverse of the kind of knowing subject who is never completed and so always open and able to join with the other. She looks forward to becoming “whole” and “finished” after her exams, when she, Berthe Agneli “appartiendrait à son tour à ce monde des minéraux, ainsi elle serait toute sa vie libre et intacte” (138).

Marchessault's story of the subjugated deals with the same intersection of cultures, but tells a more amusing and encouraging tale. Her narrator engages and resists the ways of knowing offered by the dominant class and, instead of joining them, asks them to join her. While the entire text portrays a series of moves in which the narrator situates herself within her culture, her geography and her history, *Chant Sept* is most striking in this respect. Here she recounts the fable of a mysterious disease that struck her native country “du Pré-Nord au Grand-Nord” (157), a disease whose symptoms are a paralysis of the larynx and the jaws. Everyone is affected except children under six. The government response is simple: “On légifère! On proclame! On ordonne, on donne des ordres!” (158). The Francophone population's reaction is somewhat more peculiar: they desert their villages and hide in the woods, and mostly, in an attempt to disinfect or purify, “on brûle des buffets, des coffres, des bahuts, des armoires à plis de serviettes, des beaux meubles aux larges planches de pin, aux panneaux chantournés par des mains aimantes qui ont conversé longtemps avec le bois” (159). Like Berthe Agneli, they destroy their heritage, their art, their culture, their past. They have also lost any connection which they, or more accurately their ancestors, had with their surroundings, and hide in the forest where they “meurent de froid, de faim, d'isolement en terre subarctique” (161) while the animals take back the land.

The narrator ironically suggests that the powerful and educated producers of knowledge must know a cure for the peculiar silence that has befallen the people. If not the dominant English-speaking class, then surely the scientists of England itself: “Nos éminents législateurs ordonnent à nos éminents médocastres de consulter les éminents spécialistes du silence qui, tout le monde le sait, sont anglais” (163) The “éminents spécialistes anglais” are quite familiar with this sneaky disease which appears often, they say, in their colonies. They announce the only cure possible: “couper la langue” (164). But Marchessault's tale goes on to tell how people respond to the threat of having their tongues cut out, a response linked to their Québécois past and to Francophone cultural and political resistance of the sixties and seventies. People again desert their villages, but not to die in the cold: “Puisqu'on ne pouvait plus parler, puisque le muscle de la parole était malade, il fallait développer d'autres muscles: ceux des bras en bûchant sur les arbres, ceux des jambes en prenant la fuite en patin ou en raquettes. Les muscles de la résistance furent rapidement des muscles sûrs qui vous mettaient à l'abri de tous les éminents législateurs” (165). Meeting clandestinely in the evening, they begin

to experiment with the strange sounds they had kept hidden away in their kettles for so long, and find themselves convalescing, carefully relearning to speak. It should be noted that they look ahead by beginning cautiously with the future of the verbs “être” and “avoir,” though very unsure of themselves, “parce qu'on était depuis trop longtemps le sujet de la Reine d'Angleterre” (165).

If “situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals,” and if “the only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular” (Haraway, 590), then Marchessault's fable addresses this larger vision. For in taking back their culture and their language by joining together in small groups to resist the alien, imposed, culture, the Francophone Québécois regain much more than their cultural heritage. “On avait oublié beaucoup de choses, comme le cri du huard qui a trois yeux,” Marchessault recounts, “l'épopée du caribou, le nom du mangeur d'arbres” (166), and so they begin to reestablish links with other animal forms.

Furthermore, the Francophone population is not seeking a simple reversal. In Marchessault's legendary fiction, they do not wish to become the class that rules from a position of superior knowledge or singular vision. The text's repeated mocking of the Catholic Church clearly refuses to retain one patriarchy while rejecting another. The people understand their multiplicity, their differences, their many voices and accept them as they do their connections to the northern land they inhabit: “Faut pas s'en étonner car par chez nous on est mélodique par vocation: chacun à trois ou quatre voix qu'il peut revendiquer la tête haute. Quelquefois il utilise une de ces voix pour un solo de guitare, ou pour une évocation contagieuse et magique, ou pour donner la parole au vent, aux arbres, à l'hiver, ou encore pour rire de lui-même. Comme les violons nous sommes l'instrument le plus mobile de l'orchestre universel. La musique est en nous comme le sang dans l'artère, le sirop d'érable dans le printemps” (167).

A recovery of the culture which the colonized takes back from the colonizer is accomplished largely through language itself. Marchessault's own fable of recovery contains the story of the travelling singers, the minstrels and actors I mentioned earlier who teach the Francophone population their own past through song and story which they tell differently than those who have controlled official history and knowledge in Quebec. Of the travelling storytellers the narrator says: “Vous n'aviez pas seulement la mémoire des faits précis que relatent les documents, les textes, vous étiez aussi à l'aise dans la légende que dans l'histoire, l'épître, que dans les preuves et les titres” (149). Marie-Claire Blais's work also sees the end of domination by one culture over another, of knower over known, of subject over object. But her version suggests a tragic outcome. Blais's narrative voice, in which one consciousness cannot be separated from another, in which everything flows together in a continuous linkage, proposes a world without hierarchy. But this world is utopian. The links between characters happen, as a number of critics have noted, not on the level of dialogue and interaction, but on that of narration (Stephens, Visvanathen). Judith's efforts come to very little, Florence begins to understand when it is too late for action, and Mike, the only character who

appears ready for a new way of perceiving, is too fragile and cannot survive at the present time. But does this novel offer a better future? Ironically, the end of hierarchy lies in the self-destructive hands of the ruling class. The scientific mind will bring about its own terrifying end. Berthe knows that she has nothing to fear from the “êtres minéraux” of the educational establishment, “car sous le couchant nucléaire toutes les vies seraient anéantis, à quoi bon cette méfiance, cette douleur, l'Olympe qu'était l'université, tous ces temples interdits aux pauvres seraient anéantis, à quoi bon lutter?” (102).

The explosion envisioned by Marchessault is of quite another order. It is an explosion of limits, of old ways of knowing, and a celebration of continuous transformations. Her far-fetched narratives, in this article called fables because of their moralizing stories of animal or human experience drawn from popular culture, are clearly the antithesis of traditional university discourse. They propose another kind of knowledge production. The histories, songs, and legends offered by the travelling actors open the chests and armoires of the past which the Québécois thought they had burned. Storytelling also creates connections among peoples and among species, resulting in the kind of mythic copulation and attendant hybrids the narrator had advocated earlier. She tells the actors that “la chenille de nos patates en vous écoutant se transforma en sphinx couleur de l'orange, du citron et de la framboise. Un grand paon-de-nuit venu de Chine copula avec une de nos mouches-à-feu à éclair synchronisé et à lumière froide. Un doryphore des Montagnes rocheuses embrassa une puce mexicaine venue aux nouvelles; un carcajou invita un renard polaire” (168). The newly-formed connections are not limited to the animal order, but continue in a series of conversations “avec les gens, le minéral, le végétal” (171).²

Marchessault's novel proposes a temporal movement in two directions. The first is toward a future informed by science fiction rather than science. The other is a move back in time and provides one of the most curious moments of Marchessault's novel. It concerns the narrator's discussion of her ancestors' arrival in “Kébec.” Her choice of pronouns clearly situates her on the side of her French ancestors, overlooking her own biological link, evoked in earlier and later “Chants,” to the natives who welcomed her European forebearers. At the same time, she insists that her position is that of the subjugated. The “conquête” to which she refers is that of the English over the French, and ignores the role of the French as colonizers themselves who were then colonized. Perhaps she purposely positions herself to speak as subjugated and not subjugator instead of legitimately claiming Native ancestry to make her place at the bottom of the colonized heap. Rather than linking the French and the Amerindians through herself, which would be perhaps a bit too facile and not signify beyond herself, she links them through location, through resemblance, through position. Her biological ties to Amerindians are undone and replaced by constructed affinities.

The narrator of *Comme une enfant* divides the early Québécois population in two. On one side are found the governors and the Church, those who ruled or later helped the English rule and whose arrival devastated Native culture. On the other side, she locates the explorers and fur traders who worked with the

Natives, often intermarried with them, and led similar lives. This latter group she claims as direct ancestors and calls them “la tribu des Dos-Ronds” (182), who lived “de la chasse au gros gibier, de la pêche, de la cueillette comme les Montagnais, les Agniers, les Onontagués, les Tsonnontouans. De la peur, de la soumission tombant à pic comme les Hurons. De la course en canots, en bateaux, des mariages, des baptêmes comme les Micmacs” (182-3). Marchessault explains that the subjugated are varied but together offer a multiple rather than single-minded understanding of the world.

The world-vision of Marchessault's narrator is not just varied in its voices, it is open and welcoming rather than elitist and hierarchical. “La terre amérindienne nous a assimilés et nous sommes blancs et nous sommes rouges, et nous sommes tannés de peau et tassés de froid” (184), she claims. In keeping with this view, no one voice dominates. Jovette Marchessault's open vision here is more like Donna Haraway's “science of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision” (589) that is feminism. And at the end of her lyrical *Chant Sept*, Marchessault echoes Haraway's advocacy of “the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood” (589) when she describes today's stumblings and their necessity in reaching tomorrow's vision. Exhorting her compatriots to study themselves instead of imitating another, she tells them to dig deeply into their native Québécois soil in order to locate themselves in their own past. But above all, she suggests that, stumbling as it may be, language is the site at which they must begin to situate and to know themselves. “Nous sommes chose vivante, relative au Grand-Esprit, comme la chasse, la pêche, la parole et l'écriture,” she explains. “Ce pays d'arbres immortels a mis un larynx d'or dans nos gorges. Pour l'instant... nous bafouillons le quotidien, nous radotons dans nos verres de bière mais les temps viendront où, cuirassés de peaux de langue, nous parlerons de nos visions” (185).

Notes

1. The notion of sinuosity in Blais's work is well developed by Élène Cliche.
2. This is apparently a continuing project of Marchessault, who said in a 1991 interview: “D'une façon peut-être plus évidente dans *Des cailloux blancs pour les forêts obscures*, le `je' tente de s'imprégner d'une nouvelle conception des relations humaines et des liens qui nous unissent au monde animal, végétal et minéral” (Potvin, 225).

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Weaving a “Multicoloured Quilt”: Marlene Nourbese Philip's Vision of Change

Abstract

In a post-colonial world, erstwhile colonizers are having to adjust to the concept of a multiethnic society. Although Canada has experienced colonization to some extent, and subscribes to multiculturalism, it continues to practice its own subtle version of racism and cultural imperialism. Marlene Nourbese Philip is one of the most vocal of the Black women poets of Canada. Her writing is her response to some of the problems and issues arising out of the phenomenon of ethnicity / gender marginalization and multiculturalism. Philip challenges the canons, ideologies and oppositional dichotomies of the existing Eurocentric worldview. She attempts to present an alternative stand and vision.

Résumé

Dans un monde postcolonial, le colonisateur doit s'ajuster au concept d'une société multiethnique. Bien qu'il ait subi, à un certain degré, les conséquences d'une colonisation et qu'il se soucrive aux politiques du multiculturalisme, le Canada pratique néanmoins, à sa façon, une forme subtile de racisme et d'impérialisme culturel. Marlene Nourbese Philip est l'une des voix les plus fortes des poètes de race noire au Canada. Ses écrits constituent une réaction aux problèmes et aux questions engendrés par le phénomène du multiculturalisme et de la marginalisation basée sur le sexe et la race. Marlene Nourbese Philip conteste les canons, les idéologies et les dichotomies oppositionnelles de la vision « eurocentrique » contemporaine. Elle tente de présenter un point de vue et d'adopter une position qui soient différents.

Two notable events of consequence to Canadian and Western culture in the last two decades are the rise of feminist consciousness and the growing number of ethnic minority writers, poets and artists. Some of these writers have dealt a body blow to many established canons and preconceived notions about literature. The upsurge of minority artists and writers in Canada, and in the West generally, is a global phenomenon reflecting the rise of multiethnic societies. In a post-colonial world, erstwhile colonial societies are coming to grips with this social reality as new groups of immigrant and minority writers emerge, their works informed by racial and gendered subjectivity and by experiences of colonization in their native countries. Canada, which to some extent has experienced colonization, subscribes as we all know, to an official policy of multiculturalism. However, an historical overview of the United States and Canada shows that the colonial ideology of the past continues. This

ideology places the whites in a superior, dominant position and Native, Black and Coloured persons, in a subordinate one.

Coloured minority groups, including Black women poets, have exposed the “myth of our happy multicultural family” (Philip, *Frontiers* 112) in Canada. Their writing has attempted to deal with issues arising from the phenomenon of ethnicity and multiculturalism. This very active and vocal group includes Marlene Nourbese Philip, a first-generation immigrant of Afro-Caribbean origin. Philip dismisses multiculturalism as a “fancy piece of window dressing” (*Frontiers* 186) which fails to tackle the present-day reality of racism in Canada and its “greatest tragedy,” the waste of human lives and potential. Philip, and others like her, invert the usual hierarchy of feminist resistance, by identifying colonialism, capitalism and racism as the primary forms of oppression which give rise to gender and other forms of marginalization. Lillian Allen talks of “sticking pins and carving hairlines in the barricades created to keep us in or down, in other words, assaulting the capitalist patriarchal structures” (Allen 63).

The colonization experience of political subjection through conquest, subservience to the interests of a foreign economy, language, culture and religion, and relegation of Native languages, cultures and religious practices to an inferior status, “almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination and a suppression often violent of the heterogeneity of subject(s) in question” (Mohanty 330). Colonization, in this sense, has been experienced in Canada only by Natives. The colonization experienced by settlers of British and French origin in Canada, and their cultural suppression over a long period by British and American influences, cannot be equated with the qualitative and quantitative violence in all its forms experienced by Natives in Canada and the United States, or by South Asians and people from Africa and the Caribbeans in their own countries. This experience continues for immigrants and minority writers in Canada as well.

Women of colour also use the term “colonization” to define the appropriation of their experiences and struggles by the hegemonic, white feminist movement(s) and their exclusion in the area of publishing, getting texts reviewed and finding an audience. They find themselves enclosed in a limited space; their access to speech delimited and controlled by a network of textual politics which determine literary value and publishable quality. For the Black artist, the problem arises if, while working in her own tradition, she works against the mainstream traditions of art forms or challenges the “straight-jacket of writing right” (Godard “A Writing of Resistance” ms 96). Philip and other ethnic minority writers often focus on racism in funding and on difficulty in getting works published. In this connection, a distinction can be drawn between “folk” or “heritage” art and art which engages or attempts to engage deeper issues. The “folk” type gets labelled “multicultural,” and with its “exotic” element usually has more entertainment value (*Frontiers* 112, 116). It is when an artist/writer/poet seeks to draw on her cultural idiom, in an attempt to create something new, and seeks acceptance of this transformative work that challenges and even criticizes a system, that she confronts issues of “high culture versus low culture” (*Frontiers* 121). These artists and writers

overcome the institutionalized control by creating alternatives: founding magazines and publishing houses as well as producing and selling their own publications and tapes, etc. Black women's writing in Canada has been a chronicle of challenging and resisting the canons, ideologies and oppositional dichotomies of the existing Eurocentric standards.

While the Black feminists' dominant approach is the "triple oppression" of race, gender and class, today's feminists acknowledge that these terms are inadequate taken separately as analytical categories. It is the intersections of these divisions, and the structural location of ethnic groups as determinants of their social relations, that command attention. It is important to contextualize any struggle; even feminism has its "ethnic context, its own specificity and priorities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 103).

The terms "ethnic," and "ethnicity" relate primarily to "exclusionary inclusionary boundaries that groups or collectives form around the idea of a common origin" (103). In its earliest use, the word had connotations of "heathen," or "pagan." Around the nineteenth century, however, it acquired implications of "race" and "nation." The term is usually evoked today as a way of differentiating between the socio-cultural dimension of ethnicity and the essential biological determination of culture linked to race (Gunew 8). Racism takes "its historical metaphor from the justification for slavery," and "ascribes 'natural,' 'biological' inferiority to various groups at various times" (Brand 222). Both race and ethnicity are social and cultural constructs. The referent of racist discourse may be any group that has been socially constructed as having a different origin, whether cultural, biological or historical. The assumption of "naturalness," in the relationship between race and ethnicity is often used to justify economic and class subordination in white patriarchal society. The term race has become an "ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application" (Gates 5). The everyday use of language wills this sense of "natural" difference into language formulations which worsen rather than redress the complex problem of cultural and ethnic differences.

An interesting phenomenon of recent times is that references to race are not always being used in a negative sense. Gender and ethnic divisions are being used as a "rallying point" for political struggles against multiple forms of inequality present in white-dominated societies (Anthias and Davis 111). Black power movements, Black nationalism and identification with Africa, and more recent culturalist and religious revivalist movements by Black minorities in Canada and elsewhere, are manifestations of this phenomenon. Philips' foregrounding of her name "Nourbese" can be seen as a way to strengthen links with her African ancestry. Signifiers such as "Africans of the diaspora" or "Africans of the New World" acquire a strategic force. They make up larger discursive communities of minority women who challenge the dominant language group's politics. Black becomes more of an "unifying trope," linking the diversity of Black communities in their attempts to dismantle white privilege and identity (Godard ms 99), resist assimilation and pursue autonomous cultural differences. In Canada, the term "ethnic groups" primarily refers to non-British, non-French groups having an immigrant background, particularly from the Third World. They are "marginal" or

“unofficial” cultures. However, the Caribbean immigrant who already speaks English or French is sometimes excluded from the category “ethnic writer,” which is then “linguistically defined” (98), and seen in terms of physical and cultural difference.

Cultural difference then becomes the contentious issue for Afro-Caribbean and other ethnic minority writers demanding a greater inclusiveness within Canadian culture. The “migrant writer” or “ethnic writer” simply indicates otherness from the mainstream. In this context, the term “multicultural” homogenizes the different cultural and linguistic groups, and erases differences and specificities. Philip’s and other minority writer’s experience leads them to view multiculturalism as a configuration of power. The two recognized cultures, English and French, occupy the centre, orbited by the “lesser satellite cultures” (*Frontiers* 181). The “non-English” or “non-French” terms present a negative definition, “as though these writers lacked something instead of having something extra to offer, another language, an intimate and insider’s access to other cultures” (Gunew 5). Through their writing, the Black women poets continuously attempt to penetrate Canadian culture which differentiates between immigrant culture and language. Foucault’s analytics of power points to the potential for change in any prevailing discourse. Discourses are not “once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are.” However, due to certain complex and unstable processes, “discourse can be an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opening strategy” (Diamond and Quinby 201). Philip makes language her site for struggle and grounds her ethnicity in her “national language” (*Frontiers* 36), a variant of standard English. She authenticates Black women’s experience and identity through forms of writing which set up reversals, counter discourses and counter identifications and which constitute varied and multiple points of resistance to dominant discourse. Striving to find a central position from which to voice her concerns, she attempts to transform social perspectives and attitudes, offering an alternative vision and worldview which allows and respects differences.

After more than a quarter century of living in Canada, Nourbese Philip remains an immigrant “in a profoundly psychic sense” (*Frontiers* 29). Not legal citizenship, but the writer’s deep sense of alienation in a hostile and indifferent society is the issue. Strictly speaking, in Canada, all Canadians other than Natives are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. All too often, however, the term is used by whites to signify non-whites. Two important phases of immigration account for the Black presence in Canada. The short history of slavery in Canada was a result of the need to import cheap labour in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Upper and Lower Canada. Some Blacks also escaped from slavery in the United States. In the last twenty to thirty years, economic and educational opportunities have prompted immigration from the Caribbeans. In both these phases, Dionne Brand points out, “Black women figure prominently” (Brand 223).

Through her two works, *She Tries Her Tongue: her silence softly breaks*, and *Looking for Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence*, Philip examines some areas

of concern shared by immigrant writers. Her innovative use of language and form inserts discontinuity into the field of dominant Euro-Canadian discourse, forcing movement and transformation toward the goal of changing current discriminating socio-cultural perspectives.

One of the major concerns of the immigrant writers is their condition of "exile." Philip sees this as a "legacy of colonialism and imperialism" (*Frontiers* 5), and a global experience shared by all Blacks. Africans have been exiled from all expressions of their ethnicity: language, culture, religion, education and family patterns. The remembrance of their loss, one that remains unrepaired, leads to a sense of dislocation. For Afro-Caribbeans, this experience relates to a double diaspora: from Africa to the Caribbeans and from the Caribbeans to the New World. Besides non-negotiable space heralding a separate history, another "phantasmagoric dimension" of history is that, along with diaspora, myths of origin are also created by the immigrants. These include the concept of mother tongue as the key factor in identity. The focus, in other words, is on language rather than "originary territory" (Gunew 10). Philip's subversive use of "my only mother tongue, the Caribbean demotic" (*Frontiers* 20), challenges concepts of singular, national literature and culture. "The politics of language in a post-colonial paradigm overlaps with those of ethnicity, in a multicultural country" (Godard, *Major Minorities* 154). The search for origins leads thus to an inevitable search for language, for words to express the writer's feelings of alienation. Philip's constantly searches for an exile idiolect/discourse that would authenticate her experience as a Black woman poet writing in Canada. Displacement, however, is not necessarily negative. It is "potentially an enabling condition, for it mediates the immigrant's crossing over from familiar to unfamiliar territory" (Kamboureli 147). In a post-structural, post-modern world where homes and identities are provisional constructs, "the exile passes a life creating a world..." (*Major Minorities* 151). Nourbese Philip creates this world through language and writing.

In *She Tries Her Tongue*, Philip exposes the assumptions and presuppositions of the dominant discourse, the kind of hierarchization and nexus between institutionalized power, knowledge and social practices and their effects on the African races. The form and structure combine intertextuality, repetition, displacement of patriarchal discourse and meaning.

Philip chafes against the irony of having to work in a language which has been like an "abusive parent" (Carey 19), and while recognizing its advantages, she cannot forget its historical underpinnings of colonialism and exploitation. Her struggle with language is all about coming to terms with the irrefutable truth that English is the only language for the Caribbean poet. She voices this in a chant full of reluctance, pain and a defiant claim:

and english is
my mother tongue
is

my father tongue
is a foreign lan lan lang
language
l/anguish
anguish

(“Discourse on the Logic of Language,” *She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence Softly Breaks* 58, henceforth STHT)

The difficulty and tongue-tied quality in the child's learning the language is seen in the poem. The use of “Broken English” (*Major Minorities* 153) focuses on the difficulty of the “ethnic” to learn a foreign tongue. It can also be seen as violence done to discourse. The constant repetitions and reversals disrupt meaning and challenge notions of singularity, uniformity and presupposition. The lost connection with matriarchal ancestry is sought through a first person narrative running lengthwise down the page on one side of the central set of stanzas. This relates the birth of a child who begins to access language through the mother's tongue purifying her of any leftover substance. Though in a marginalized position, the mother-daughter bonding continues. Competing for linguistic space on the page, in a perpendicular position, is a patriarchal edict manifesting fear of insurrection, anticipating the chance appearance of the disruptive powers of localized discourses, “Every slave caught speaking his native language / shall be severely punished” (STHT 58). A page later the edict recommends removal of the slaves' tongues. In other instances, Philip integrates her poetry with nineteenth century texts and, by relating both, tries to break the authority of the historical texts. In her experiments with space and page, she tries to subvert the way literature and poetry were taught in the Caribbean, which she sees as another form of colonization. Afro-Caribbean poets have spoken of their “foreign indoctrination,” of “learning about odes to nightingales / forget humming birds...” (Harris 117), and the “universal” truths of the English poets and British history. She rejects any talk of universal values.

Philip's poems can not be read in the traditional sense. She introduces the element of discontinuity by juxtaposing discourses, and by resisting hegemonic cultures and discourses. She is caught “in a border dialogue between mimicry, alterity and silence” (*Major Minorities* 151). The concept of mimicry in colonial discourse represents an “ironic compromise” between the demand for static, unchanging identity and for change or difference. It is the desire for a reformed “Other” as “a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhaba 235). The “menace” of mimicry lies in this ambivalent quality, which has the power to disrupt authority (237). Nourbese Philip's writing is an example of this disruptive power at work, and her writing seems to proclaim, “so here we are, ethnics who are pagan or heathen in the sense that we are not part of the dominant ethos of this culture—hence we mimic its character at times in order to produce our own performative gestures of a different aesthetics, a different rhetoric” (Gunew 11).

The problem faced by ethnic writers is that they think in one cultural idiom and write in another. The deprivation of their African culture and language has resulted in the fragmentation between word and image and has silenced the

Blacks. Philip searches for a new language in which the "fractured equation" between word and image would be balanced again (STHT 21). The Black experience for centuries has been isolation, inequality and negation. This experience continues in Canada, where:

You plus I equals we
I and I and I equals I
minus you

("African Majesty" STHT 48)

This sense of absence and voicelessness and the ensuing search for an identity are pervasive themes in Black women's writing. As Philip says, "The paradigmatic mystery for the New World African is who am I? and all the resonances that question generates around issues of culture and language and place" (Carey 20). Philip's strategy to forge Black identity is to use the Caribbean demotic, with its qualities of resistance and transformative potential. This Caribbean "National language," as Philip calls it, is "the trace of post-colonial revolt" (*Major Minorities* 153), entering Canadian territory to challenge and re-make culture. However, while decentering the father tongue, she does not posit a centering of the mother tongue or demotic, which would limit the experience of the Black woman poet. For Philip, "It is in the continuum of expression from standard to Caribbean English that the veracity of the experience lies" (152).

The use of the demotic, the spoken language of the ordinary people in the Caribbean, has always been dismissed as "bad English" or patois. Philip expresses the White reaction in her poem as:

this chattel language
babu english
slave idiom
nigger vernacular
coolie pidgin
wog pronunciation

("The Question of Language is the
Answer to Power" STHT 73)

In using the demotic she tries to capture the oral speech, the African rhythms, musical tone and pitch of the ordinary people in the Caribbean. *She Tries Her Tongue* records her journey towards the goal of decentering and subverting the father tongue. In a case of counter appropriation, she seeks to leave the imprint of African culture on European civilization. In one set of poems, she casts the Greek myth of Demeter / Kore in a Caribbean setting. The mother's search for the daughter, which takes her from the South to the North, becomes a metaphor for the abduction and appropriation of the mother tongue, and the sense of alienation or "craziness" of being forced to survive without cultural roots, which led to the "deculturation" (*Frontiers* 14) of Africans. The common female experience sees the body as a site of exploitation and demands. Philip often uses images of forced birthing, abduction, rape and confinement. In her poetry, Philip crosses boundaries between high and folk cultures and also interrogates Western civilization, in this effacing of margins.

where she, where she, where she
 be, where she gone ?
 where high and low meet I search,
 find can't, way down the island's way
 I gone - South :
 day-time and night-time living with she,
 down by the just-down-the-way sea

(“Questions ! Questions” STHT 28)

The continuing search for the lost daughter leads the mother to Canada. But the “Call and response in tongue and words” (31) being lost, it is difficult to retie the severed knot. One component of the Afrocentric feminist epistemology is the belief in the appropriateness of emotion in dialogue; it seeks to remove the separation between emotion and intellect. An example of this interaction arises in the call and response discourse made in Black church services (Collins 216). It is also a formal strategy which asserts the collective voice of African spirituals and work-songs rather than the singular, subjective, Romantic lyric voice seeking synthesis with object nature (*Major Minorities* 166). In the Black church, both the minister and the congregation use vocal inflections and voice rhythms to convey meaning as they engage in a dialogue of reason and emotion. Philip often incorporates this mode in her work, stressing that one cannot separate the abstract and cognitive aspect of a word's meaning from its sociocultural and emotional aspects. Black women's “ethics of caring” involves an interactive nature (Collins 216).

The search for the mother tongue, new language and identity that would balance the “lost equation” brings Philip and Afro-Caribbeans like her to Canada. They feel keenly their sense of alienation and marginalization, and long for Canada to begin its “M/Othering of us” (*Frontiers* 16). The ethnic writer's dislocation and duality is seen by her as something monstrous and aberrant. Philip refers to the loss of voice, mother tongue and ancestral speech as that:

monstrosity
 obscenity
 tongueless wonder
 blackened stump of a tongue
 out
 withered
 petrified
 on the pyres of silence

torn
 burnt

(“She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence
 Softly Breaks” STHT 92).

From this silence she tries to wrench the power to articulate.

The call and response pattern, and the forceful address of text and discourse centered on a contradictory doubling of language and meaning are again evident in Philip's subversion of Christian religious traditions and her construction of a counter discourse of African goddess worship. The young girl's transfiguring ceremony of white, celebrating her entry into

subtler form of destruction; Philip aims to achieve this kind of change, working within the tradition of “Al-Kimiya” Arabic for alchemy (Carey 21). In search of empowerment, she toys with the idea of co-habiting with the opponent and breeding:

- a new breed
 - a race
 - a warrior race
- of words
 (“Testimony Stoops to Mother Tongue” STHT 81).

The colonial discourse with its power over the “word” and to the right to its truth, invests the word with negative connotations for all Blacks. For centuries it is the European's word that:

- kinks hair
- flattens noses
- thickens lips
- designs prognathous jaws
- shrinks the brain

(“Testimony” STHT 78)

Philip examines the historical, sociological and etymological reasons for the negative association of words and the perspective that diminishes the intelligence of negroes and deems negroid features ugly. She recreates the images behind the words, “to unleash the promise / in ugly / the absent in image” (82).

Philip tries to counteract the generically masculine standard English associated with goodness and power by introducing the demotic, with its associations of badness, powerlessness and related concepts of nothingness, boundary and margin. Philip once commented that, for the Black writer, Canada offers “a void, an emptiness, a space from which to write” (Carey 18). Canada's lack of tradition has been a mixed blessing for them. On one hand, Black women poets feel they, too, are contributing to creating a tradition of Black women's writing. On the other, the feeling of void and nothingness can become overwhelming. For the ethnic writer, “Wilderness” does not denote the “I-it” or culture/nature dichotomy. Rather, it connotes an “I-you” relational tension which does not enforce sameness. The margin or boundary can be a negative place for the Black writer, but she seeks to transform it. “Marginality is in the eye of the beholder,” after all (*Frontier* 42) and Philip exploits the “other” meaning of margin which is “frontier.” The place of margin, loss and nothingness where Philip positions her membership in two groups, “Blacks and Women” (41), becomes the launching pad for the self:

- with the fate of slingshot stone
 - loose from the catapult
 - pronged double with history
 - and time on a trajectory of hurl and fling
 - to a state active without and unknown
 - i come upon a future biblical with anticipation
- (“She Tries Her Tongue” STHT 84)

Philip continues groping towards the new language, which would emerge Philomel like out of the ashes of nothingness / loss / silence, impelled towards “pure utterance.”

Philip's preoccupation in her earlier poems centred on language. In *Looking For Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence*, her major concern is to explore the concept of silence itself; to discover whether silence necessarily had a negative meaning or if it had a positive side also. In a sense, the work continues where the earlier collection of poems left off. A narrative of prose and poetry, this work like the earlier one juxtaposes poetry with texts documenting the exploitation and rape of a continent. In this case, however, the interruptions are greater and take the form of an entire story. It is a cleverly-handled, witty expression of a woman traveller's odyssey to find the source of her silence. Initially, however, she is unsure of what she is seeking. At the outset of her journey of exploration she adopts Livingstone's motto “I will open a way to the interior or perish” (*Looking for Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence* 7, henceforth LFL). In the course of her travels, she soon realizes that she is really looking for Livingstone, the silencer/oppressor. On her journey, she meets several matriarchal tribes whose names are all anagrams of “silence.” She undergoes several rituals of passage and endeavours to solve puzzles and succeed skill tests. She learns that “the Fall” was caused by the birth of the patriarchal “word,” which “banished silence.” The infection of the patriarchal word spread, with detrimental effects on women's lives. The word had power to dichotomize and label: “nigger-woman,” “whore-wife,” “virgin-slut” (13).

After having travelled through a timeless landscape, the Traveller finally comes face to face with Livingstone and confronts him with his role of silencer. Livingstone perceived and exploited the integral link between securing Africans as a cheap labour force and destroying their cultural life, and this led to a “two pronged” onslaught. A lack of resources or cultural bases would make the people “more pliable and less rebellious” (*Frontiers* 13). Questions are raised regarding “and whose words are you – am I – powerful with?” (LFL 65) and about the “Livingstone-I-presume” (62) misreading and arrogant inferences concerning Africans' lack of history or need for civilizing. On meeting the silencer, she confronts her own silence and understands how “silence could speak and be silent...” (54) at the same time. Philip here differentiates between “silence” with a small “s” which comes from being silenced, a passive state, and what she claims as her own “Silence” with a capital “S”—something not discovered by the “Other,” in this case the European, something she is trying to recover which has always been there. This is the integrated, collective silence and wisdom of the African people. It is this “Silence,” which has “a future rampant with possibility” (40). This “Silence” has the potential of transforming the negative, passive, silenced state into something affirmative and active. For this metamorphosis, both are necessary—the Colonizer's word and the African's silence:

Sharing the pull in attract
Word

and Silence
 balance in contradiction
Silence and Word
 harmony of opposites
double planets
 condemned
to together.

(34)

Philip believes that the challenge facing all Canadians—whites and non-whites, is to discover what each can offer the other, and become co-creators in building an integrated society. Both must lose their fear of the unknown / other, the nothing that is beyond the margin, and cross the boundary that separates and makes each the other's "other." Philip wants to re-make boundaries, to transgress and cross borders, so that culture does not remain locked in binaries nor is the "otherness" abolished; she strives for a "process through which culture circulates, continuously producing change through contact(s)" (*Tessera* 23). During her journey, the traveller recovers some of the "ancient and collective wisdom. No longer was body separate from mind and spirit..." (LFL 42). Here one sees reflected Philip's attitude towards the two traditions in which she claims to work. Two "archetypal figures" permeate her work.

One is represented by the white, Anglo-Saxon colonial tradition, the other is Abiswa, representing the Afro-Caribbean context and also the collective African race memory (*Frontiers* 26-27). She is constantly trying to learn more about the Abiswa tradition which demands trust in the body, the body and mind forming one intelligence. The WASP tradition does not subscribe to this integration. The two forms of Abiswa's heritage subvert the "old order" and also the "new old order" in Black women's art, writing and music (48). Of late, Philip has been privileging the Abiswa position, which can be equated to an Afrocentric position. This position often affects the choice of subject matter. The ethnic writer's imagination may be free to wander, but it is unfree so far as it is affected by social and political realities. The Afrocentric position rejects binary oppositional models.

Toward the end of her odyssey, the Traveller stays with a tribe of needlewomen and weavers, and gains valuable knowledge through debates on the problems of aesthetics and creativity. To weave anything, one must first separate the two strands, of equal importance, word and silence. Having found her Silence / History / Past, the Traveller discovers her power of creation. Philip and other Black women's poetry emphasize the need to remember historical realities. These cannot and should not be erased or forgotten by either the oppressor or the victim. Then only can the past be redeemed. Memory plays a "subversive role." More than mere nostalgia, its "Kinetic Quality" impels to action (*Frontiers* 29). For them, "memory is as active in constructing an imagined life as in reconstructing a lived life" (*Major Minorities* 154). For Black women poets, there can not be an "unambivalent" acceptance of Canada; knowledge of the past mediates their Canadian identity.

In weaving a colourful tapestry, the Traveller had "pieced together a multicoloured quilt—of Silence—my many silences—held together by the

most invisible of stitches—the invisible but necessary word” (55). One of the most suggestive models for an Afro-feminist aesthetic is quilt-making (Collins 88). Nourbese Philip takes this model to foreground some of her important concerns on the marginalized position of the Black artist and other ethnic minorities in multicultural Canada. She offers an alternative model of a society where there could be a “harmony of opposites” and space for overlapping difference. There is no uniform colour scheme in the quilt woven by a Black woman quiltmaker. A strong colour is contrasted with another equally strong or weak one. Symmetry is achieved through diversity. Alice Walker, commenting on the quilt woven by an unknown Black woman, spoke of the theme of Black women's creativity as “the transformation despite opposition, of the bits and pieces allowed to her by society into a work of functional beauty” (Collins 89). The dual emphasis on individual uniqueness juxtaposed in a community setting and on functional beauty has the potential to heal the binary oppositions inherent in Western thought. In accepting the underlying assumption of the either/or mode of thinking, one misses the connection among controlling images dichotomous thinking and unequal power relations. The Afrocentric aesthetic evident in music, dance, language or quiltmaking counters the ideology of domination. Individual differences do not detract from each other, but enrich the whole (Collins 215).

Philip opposes the “White Supremacy” policy of multiculturalism which enforces “Sameness” (*Frontiers* 20). The solution to racism is neither sameness nor “pure difference” (Loriggio 65). Canada can no longer take for granted the homogeneity of one language and one culture. Homogeneity “reinforces the myth of a tolerant egalitarian society” and blames the very victim it excludes for failure to fit into that society (*Tessera* 15). What Philip and other Black women poets seek is “an open system of exchange or field of relational differences” (16). Philip's juxtaposing of the father tongue with the functional beauty and uniqueness of the demotic, is part of her tensional strategies in balancing opposites. Through this balancing, she seeks to impress the collective impact of the African languages on the English tongue. The “internal dynamics” of ethnic texts challenge the ideals of coherence and conformity set by mainstream cultures. The “simultaneous tangencies” within the language and culture of ethnic writing seem to demand recursive patterns of “co-existence” and “co-presence” (Loriggio 61). Though the Black woman writer realizes the importance of reaction, her writing should not be seen as reaction alone. Philip and others are trying to create their own space from which to look out and transcend the various social categories of gender, race, class, etc., without disowning them. Philip attempts to avoid the danger of what Edward Said referred to as the “fetishization and relentless celebration of ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’...” (Stasiulis 54). The ethical responsibility of the different voices of resistance, highlighted by Gloria Andalusia, could well be Philip's own view, “We have come to realize that we are not alone in our struggles nor separate nor autonomous but that we—white—black—straight—queer—female—male—are connected and interdependent. We are each accountable for what is happening...” (Diamond and Quinby 202-203). The Afro-Canadian poets engaged in the process of re-making and transforming culture are themselves in a dynamic state of

becoming, with limitless possibilities. As newer ethnic minority groups come to Canada and produce literary texts, they enrich the Canadian corpus, ensuring “a perennial beginning” (Loriggio 57). In this rapidly changing Canadian fabric, Nourbese Philip continues to engage in debates and discussions about how to belong and become Canadian. She echoes other Afro-Caribbean Canadian poets in asking “How many identities can dance on a maple leaf?” (*Frontiers* 16) and as she waits for a positive response, persists in her effort to “transform this place from a stranger place to one of true be/longing” (*Frontiers* 25).

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Charles Fairchild

Mediating Marginality: Music and Community Radio in Canada

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between music and community formation at two radio stations in Toronto, CIUT 89.5 FM and CHRY 105.5 FM. It will be argued that marginality is a central value of cultural defence against the subtle domestication of cultural communication at these stations. Further, it will be argued that music is used in specific ways to maintain this marginality while simultaneously acting to affirm individual and group identities within these organizations.

Résumé

L'auteur examine la relation entre la musique diffusée par deux stations de radio de Toronto, CIUT 89,5 MF et CHRY 105,5 MF, et la composition de la communauté qu'elles desservent. Il maintient que, à ces deux stations, le phénomène de la marginalité constitue une valeur essentielle qui sert de défense contre une domestication subtile de la communication des valeurs culturelles. En outre, il démontre que la musique est utilisée de façon très précise pour, à la fois, maintenir cette marginalité et affirmer les identités individuelles et collectives à l'intérieur des ces organisations.

For us radio represents one of our history's most continuous and living voices. It is not a relic, in other words. It is a connection. (Berland, 1990/91: 17)

Opinions about radio and its place within the North American media complex vary drastically in Canada and the United States. One thing is clear, however: radio has almost inherently been a communal, musical and powerful cultural force. As McLuhan poetically notes:

Radio affects people intimately, person to person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer-speaker and listener. That is the immediate aspect of radio. A private experience. The subliminal depths of radio are charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique drums. (McLuhan, 1964:261)

Radio was the first medium to centralize cultural expression regardless of previously drawn borders or physical impediments; as the saying went, it "annihilated space and time."¹ Its implications as a medium of cultural communication are intimately linked to notions of national identity and destiny across this continent.

For the American government and newly emerging industrial giants, like Westinghouse and R.C.A., calculated inaction and convenient policy decisions were designed to scrupulously protect the interests served by the ravenous form of state-sponsored capitalism that has shaped the history of the radio industry. Furthermore, radio was a vehicle for previously articulated visions of hemispheric mission related to internal control and external hegemony. Bruce Barber notes the results:

The emancipatory potential of the new communications medium had been denied in favour of its limitless capacity to order information in such a manner as to ensure the unilateral demonstration of power. (Barber, 1990:110-1)

In Canada, similar commercial interests emerged long before the uniquely Canadian public broadcasting infrastructure was even conceived, and have since come to dictate the ideological assumptions and practical parameters of most communications policy.² Early on, however, the dominant English-Canadian political class sought a greater sense of national communion and cohesion through radio. Given the lack of “sufficient private capital” to compete with the popularity and volume of American programming, authorities decided they “had to build this infrastructure with public funds under public control or be instantly dominated by the Americans.” (Berland, 1993:60) Since most of what is currently called “Canadian culture” evolved through various forms of electronic mediation in an alarm response to the rising southern colossus, the conception of this culture “was instantly conservative and defensive.” (ibid.:60-3)

One particularly interesting, contemporary example of cultural defence is Canadian community radio.³ This odd, often hybridized, often forgotten and consistently marginal entity operates on the fringes of a centralizing medium, carefully maintaining its marginality in the service of an often stunningly heterogeneous public. This paper attempts to distill two years of work at two Toronto stations—CIUT 89.5 FM on the campus of the University of Toronto and CHRY 105.5 FM on the campus of York University—to provide some insight into how the mediated, marginal identities of these stations are maintained and to show how this marginality is key to both the institution and individual programmers. The radio programs presented here demonstrate that marginality is considered a valuable means of defending identity against the often subtle domestication and reification of cultural communication. Music, long the staple of the medium, provides the most compelling examples.

The marginality of community radio is both self-conscious and necessary. At least three key factors work to maintain it: current broadcast regulations, the internal organization of each station, and the cultural and economic context of each station. In Canada, the regulatory definition of “community radio” implies more than it defines. “Community radio” is a blanket term subsuming a broad range of cultural practices centered around a specific technology. What distinguishes it from the commercial and public broadcasting sectors is a poorly defined legal and regulatory status which merely describes it as “important” and “community-oriented” in both process and product. Broad strokes set limits on advertising time, stipulate local content levels, and

suggest community access procedures. Most definitions are vague enough to allow individual stations to pursue specific agreements with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). In a welcome bow to local conditions and contexts, two categories of licenses are granted depending on existing local services. (CRTC, 1988) Some stations in less populated areas “have become scarcely distinguishable from commercial stations.” (Canada, 1986:493)⁴ The specific agreements of the stations examined here allow for limited advertising, a vast majority of “non-hit” music, strong Canadian content, and a mandate to serve the local community in a manner not available elsewhere. These rules enable each community radio station to adapt to local conditions by creating a licensing agreement with the CRTC that is unique to that station. The station's very existence, therefore, hinges on its ability to forge its own identity by creating and maintaining programs for people not served elsewhere.

These regulatory requirements clearly affect the internal organization of each station. At CIUT and CHRY, for example, decision-making processes feature extensive and open periods of public comment, consensus in problem solving, and constant interaction both formally and informally between volunteers and staff on pressing issues. The two stations are democratic and participatory, volunteer-based organizations, whether through internal pressure or external statute. In general, community radio in Canada is the only broadcasting sector where a wide range of practices matches an equally wide range of social and cultural contexts. This fact relates directly to its prescribed operating methods. As Salter (1980) notes, because producers are drawn from the audience, they cannot disappear inside the station, pride internal processes over public programming, or get trapped within a narrow, rigid agenda. Otherwise, “they get cut off from the needs and aspirations of their audience as their audience understand them.” (Salter, 1980:113) In this sense, the community radio station's self-concept hinges on the incorporation of “multiple dimensions of perception and experience,” without which “marginality disintegrates.” Marginality arises from the multitude of social contexts represented by community radio generally, and the multiplicity of perspectives which each individual station must accommodate. No other sector of the broadcasting industry can be as diverse as community radio, and this fact cements the democratic and community-based character of the various stations. The democratic identity of the station erodes if it adopts commercial-or public-sector practices, or if “internal conflicts set the agenda for the station and the audience is forgotten.” (ibid.:114)

The above realities exist within a specific economic and cultural context which largely maintains and defines marginality. To risk an unscholarly caricature, the cultural industries in general, and commercial radio in particular, make money through a significant degree of economic rationalization: computers supply playlists and audience projections, dominant attitudes are pandered to in a relentless effort to increase market share, and the repeal of public interest regulations is continually sought (with partial success in recent years). The dominant commercial radio stations in Toronto present one genre of programming to capture a specific part of the audience, segmenting and targeting their listeners according to demographic characteristics in order to

access the advertising revenue. Few stations ever define their mission in terms other than financial solvency.

Recent changes in the radio and recording industries highlight these solvency concerns. Two contemporary trends which have yet to play themselves out are key: 1) the substantial deregulation and subsequent consolidation of radio broadcasting and the cultural industries; and 2) the movement of major corporations into previously marginal areas of cultural production, especially certain areas of popular music. This has had two distinct results: the rise of the economic center and the dissipation of the cultural center. Thus, commercial radio has become less public-minded as its profits fall and the programming itself has become similarly constrained. As the recording industry consolidates, it is beginning to subsume a broader range of materials under more ambiguous catch phrases (i.e., “world music” and “alternative” or “modern” rock).⁵

The role of community radio in maintaining the marginal position so crucial to its identity is highlighted by this economic consolidation and cultural shift. Explored later in this article, CIUT in particular has departed farther from the mainstream, embracing not only a wider variety of music, but in a much more specific way, by taking the time to examine in greater detail how music is actually constructed, how it works within itself, and within the larger society. While musical analysis or extreme diversity in programming are not necessarily marginal practices, few Toronto radio stations have the time to be diverse or analytical, for obvious reasons. These are important (although certainly not isolated) examples of how cultural context helps to define social position. In a truly democratic and participatory institution, economic concerns mitigate against the centralization of a broad range of community concerns. In fact, the distinct lack of economic imperatives in the regulatory and organizational structures of community radio inherently centralizes concerns other than solvency.

Finally, this brings up the issue of community radio's cultural identity which depends on a necessary and constructed marginality. Three factors are broadly useful in assessing the identity of community radio within the public sphere: public culture, collectivity and mediation. Clearly, any radio station is a public entity and a producer of public culture. Yet, with uniquely open and comparatively democratic structures, community radio is founded on and motivated by public interests to a greater extent than most media organizations. Its public nature is therefore more central. This forces audience priorities ahead of financial ones. Also, it produces a very specific kind of public culture that is technologically mediated and based on a collective effort of the will and the imagination. This serves to create a public space that binds its participants together and, as Turner (1990) notes, evolves a social identity based not only on interior definitions, but exterior ones as well and their obvious relatedness to a public sphere. (Turner, 1990:104) While Turner also argues that a meaningful public space affords us “dialogical resources” rather than “semiotic gestures,” it seems more plausible, at least in this case, that it is the public sphere which mediates between the “semiotic gestures” or surface emblems of the programming and their related dialogical resources.

Programmers have their programs, their emblems of identity and their constituencies; in between are the dialogical resources mediated through the organizational and technological entity of the radio station. Within this mediated discussion we find the identity of the organization. Clearly, the identity of any station varies depending on how one listens to it, and one's level of involvement, engagement and interaction. The soul of community radio exists in the richness of the interaction between its staff, volunteers, programmers and audience when each forms a crucial and indispensable part of the conversation within this specifically constructed public space.

Technology, Community and Political Economy

Radio, upon its introduction to Europe, argues Innis, “appealed to vast areas, overcame the division between classes in its escape from literacy, and favoured centralization and bureaucracy.” (Innis, 1991:82) This centralization enforced a center whose processes and expressions were grafted onto an occasionally resistant margin. McLuhan's “resonating echoes” began to connect the members of various groups. Regardless of its scale, radio has continually proven itself to be uniquely adept at forming a variably cohesive sociality. Audiences, however, within the current North American political and cultural economy, have a paradoxical relationship with their chosen stations. As Berland notes:

For broadcasting, listeners are both present and absent. In commercial radio, for which they are conceived as both subject and economic means, listeners are present as the target of research whose formulated identity is drawn into combinatory creation of the sound itself. For such radio each lateral division of the dial represents the sound of democracy in its most absolutist, most rationalized form: for each is no more than the continuous mixing of choice and selection, identity and sound, listener and commodity ... (Berland, 1990/91:11)

Technology has made this description accurate regardless of the disposition of the audience, or even the producers. Radio stations of all kinds exist within a cultural ground which partly determines their practice. Non-commercial radio stations, like their commercial counterparts, target their audiences rigorously (if occasionally informally), present their schedules in an orderly fashion, and appeal to a public body in a dynamic cultural environment through familiar cultural referents. This situation presents the greatest challenge to the marginality of any station. The best defence is an aggressively pursued difference, rooted primarily in working processes and a specific array of cultural affiliations. Community radio “represents a process in which sociality is to be considered actively and variously across the same temporal space” as commercial radio. These stations remain, like their commercial counterparts, “a choice motivated by taste or disposition, another temporary location which can be selected or rejected in a moment.” (ibid.)

Radio, when conjoined with its closest and most obvious technological relation, the sound recording, creates its own system for measuring time which itself becomes a marker of power. Only through this grid can it become a marker of identity:

Like the radio schedule itself, with its clocked rotation of current and past hits, its advance promotion of the new release, the playlist functions as a kind of meta-language, a language of temporality which draws the listener in, and produces her as a temporary member of a stylistic community. (Berland, 1990:187)

Here, musical style and taste are the primary determinants of audience cohesion. Music helps “to produce a whole new set of social spaces while the new grammar of radio ... shape[s] a larger more mediated morphology of musical meaning.” (Berland, 1990/91:12) This technocultural context often overpowers music and, while radio ensures its wide spatial dissemination and consistent availability, its cultural power, once an inherently social, interactive and physically participatory contract, is often reduced to an economic identifier of class and social strata. The commercial radio model, widely imitated and historically static, is a route of access:

... it is music that draws the listeners in terms of desire and identification, and music which makes desire and identification precisely calculable. Yet its listeners are also absent—an accidental body encountering its own measured image, a demographic cipher finding its identity momentarily materialized in sound. (Berland, 1990/91:11)

Music plays this role whether to solicit listener pledges, request the audience's creative participation, encourage product consumption, or display corporate sponsorship.

But cultural referents and technologies do not create communities, people do, and within Berland's “stylistic community,” with its own “mediated morphology of musical meaning,” music on the radio can spring vigorously to life. When music becomes an emblematic referent of identity it evokes some part of its life as a participatory contract. While this is not dependent on any particular media or technological or social form, community radio calls up this musical social contract with a peculiar tenacity within the public collective effort at the core of its existence. Further, those on the margins often construct their communities as survival camps rather than leisure retreats; the surface emblems become shields of meaning in a hostile world.

Although the ground rules set by the commercial radio industry by no means completely dictate priorities, here is where the relationship between the center and the margin becomes extremely problematic. Organizations like CIUT or CHRY are marginal in terms of process and motivation, but there is agency in their social position. To put it simply, a “small independent cultural producer ... deliberately privileges the cultural significance of its music over the commercial significance.” (Gray, 1988:119) In other words, the margin can occasionally be claimed by choice, which reduces the centrifugal power of the center and, in essence, marginalizes *it*. As Herman Gray suggests:

In contrast to the dominance of commercial values and the attendant social organization that defines and organizes the conditions of production in order to maximize profits and maintain efficiency, these small companies represent *another way of creating culture*. (ibid.:16; my emphasis)

This other way must be inherently participatory and democratic and reflect a view of culture that is politically contingent, tied to struggle and negotiation, rather than an imposed homogeneity. It must be viewed as a dynamic relationship between various agents and actors, and this crucial dynamicism as the key. For if, as Clifford notes, in contemporary societies “[d]ifference is encountered in the adjoining neighborhood while the familiar turns up at the ends of the earth” and the relationships between various social groups, far from being essential determining characteristics of those groups, are instead matters of “power and rhetoric,” then our ability to view cultural activities in terms of “distinct, whole ways of life” is simply not possible. (Clifford, 1988:13-4) Any adequate assessment of the negotiations of everyday reality requires a considerably more flexible perspective:

Cultural participation consists to a very great extent in the seemingly insignificant decisions that [we] make by the score every day when [we] engage in individual acts of consumerism. Cultural identity is not arrived at generically, nor is it only the result of learning. We define ourselves culturally every day in our seemingly involuntary and intuitive responses to a closed circuit of cultural representations. (Deitcher, 1990:35)

This definition retains an appropriately central place for cultural and political economies and the struggles contained therein; community radio exemplifies a populist incarnation of this struggle specifically because, as Lewis and Booth note, it “tries to offer the listeners the power to control their own definitions of themselves, of what counts as news and what is enjoyable or significant about their own culture.” (Lewis and Booth, 1990:9) This kind of definitional control is not a feature of most media organizations. The balance of this article will attempt to present several distinct yet related enactments of the power of mediated musical definition.

The Musical Mediation of Marginality

For two years (1991-92), I worked as a technical assistant at CIUT 89.5-FM on the campus of the University of Toronto, in downtown Toronto, and as a program co-producer at CHRY 105.5-FM on the campus of York University in the northwest corner of Metropolitan Toronto. During my tenure at these radio stations, I had the opportunity to observe the production of numerous radio shows and to discuss, both formally and informally, how these volunteer radio producers viewed their craft. Almost invariably, the producers I talked to recognized their marginality, and in many cases, consciously attempted to maintain it. In this inherently public forum, music mediated between numerous groups within the organization, the stations' participant groups and the audience.

Before presenting programming examples from CIUT and CHRY, a brief outline of FM radio in Toronto will place community radio in a sharper contextual contrast. The most popular FM stations in the city are CHFI, CHUM, CKFM and CILQ; essentially, with the exception of a slight emphasis on either the lighter side of music (CHFI) or a greater density of rock tunes (CILQ), all play the same music. This music is variously described as “contemporary hit radio,” “adult contemporary,” or Top 40, formats which

have been drifting into what is called “MIX” radio. MIX radio is a consolidation of several varied formats and subsumes the most popular selections from perhaps three or four charts instead of one or two. The programming mixes a wider variety of hits from the Soul, R&B and “Urban” music, or dance charts, while still relying heavily on the Top 75. According to John Parikhhal, CEO of Joint Communications, “[i]t's a name not a format ... It's a good term. It connotes variety, it works for all age groups and it's easy to remember.” (Kirchoff, 1991) The variety, however, exists within a very confined world of musical taste. The rest of the FM band is more varied. There are two other public radio stations in Toronto, CJRT, an educational station in the traditional sense of the term, and CBC-FM. There is also one other community radio station, CKLN, at Ryerson Polytechnic. With the exception of CHIN, a heavily commercial, multicultural station, the balance of the dial consists of commercial stations devoted to presenting one genre of music. Taken as a whole, the commercial stations capture the vast majority of the listening public.

The programs at CIUT and CHRY are as broad a collection of themes, issues, and interests as one is likely to find in any community organization in the city of Toronto. Three programs, “Caribbean Swing,” “The Latin Beat” and “New Powers,” at the time presented concurrently on CIUT's Sunday night schedule, are good examples. “Caribbean Swing,” no longer in production at CIUT, was produced by Denise and Alan Jones, also the directors of “Jones and Jones Production,” an organization that promotes and sponsors concerts by artists primarily representing the African popular musical traditions of the Caribbean basin, such as Denis Brown and Culture. Their program consisted of news, interviews and music, primarily geared towards a specific segment of Toronto's Caribbean community. The music featured was mostly reggae and ska, genres with which the Jones' have obvious expertise. As the Jones' were responsible for a large segment of Toronto's reggae concerts generally, they had great knowledge of the subject and a very strong and visible position in their community. Their program seemed to create a kind of forum, with the hosts acting as moderators for frequent call-ins, requests, giveaways and substantial interview segments. The show, however, strongly advocated on behalf of its constituency, which often raised the elusive problems of racism and classism both inside and outside of the station. The stridency of the messages could often disenchant people, a fact occasionally mentioned inside the station although rarely articulated in clear terms. It became plainly obvious outside, however, during a particularly difficult period for community relations in Toronto, as Caribbean-Canadians often became the focus of contentious social issues such as crime, immigration and employment equity. The program concentrated on presenting a specific point of view for a specific community without speaking for others or attempting to subsume numerous identities under any unified banner. It was reggae and ska, both familiar yet somewhat ghettoized styles, that seemed to act as a glue, holding the diverse and often contentious program together. “The Latin Beat,” in a similar vein, was also hosted by a very knowledgeable person, Memo Acevedo, a well-known Latin and jazz percussionist. This program was strictly music, mostly concentrating on Latin and South American jazz artists, like Gonzalo

Rubalcabo or Tito Puente, with a few more “pop” artists, like Tania Maria, mixed in on occasion. Acevedo’s knowledge of the music as well as his personal relationships with innumerable musicians formed the basis of a show geared towards educating a general audience while providing specific community information about goings-on in the city. (Waxer, 1991: n.p.) Shows often concentrated on upcoming community events. Acevedo presented an interview with Tito Puente before his May 1992 concert in Toronto, conducted a percussion seminar and concert with Alex Acuna, and devoted an entire show to a conversation with Manteca, one of Toronto’s better known bands. Latin jazz and Latin popular styles again are both somewhat familiar to North Americans, yet they remain somewhat isolated and ghettoized. Acevedo helps to link this music to a wider audience by addressing the enthusiast and layperson.

“New Powers” is a show created and hosted by Chris Towney, whose record store of the same name was once located just down the street. The music he plays is decidedly non-commercial and often a particularly harsh variant of the technologically dependent “industrial,” “experimental,” or “ambient” music which emerged in the 80s and 90s. This description includes music with very strong percussive backbeats, with noise guitar and electronic noise, or “found” sound accompaniments, ranging to very quiet and minimal music, by artists such as Harold Budd or Jon Hassell. The music can be pure noise, absurdist tape collages, sermons on sexuality, or tracts on the fundamental nature of perception, performed by groups such as The Hafler Trio, Laibach, Cop Shoots Cop and others. The political undertones range from anarchism to fascism to paganism coupled with a strong voice of dissent often couched in mocking tones reminiscent of Dadaism and surrealism.⁶ Even though “New Powers” is a substantively different variety of music program than those described thus far, it differs only in content. This “community” itself is a very self-conscious political construction, very fluid and not particularly specific. Towney knows his materials and provides a space for a marginal identity to exercise and present itself. The community members are unified by attitude and acquired taste.

The conjunction of these three programs in such close proximity on the Sunday night schedule brings several important aspects of CIUT into sharp focus. First, it suggests that the station’s programming is a reflection of the particular confluence of quotidian procedural factors within the station, and as such is based more on relations of “power and rhetoric” than on any theoretical ethnic or cultural “essence.” (Clifford, *op.cit.*) Secondly, it suggests that the often inscrutable community radio audience is not conceived as a homogeneous mass, a particularly endowed community, or an abstract, distanced yet ever-present entity, but as a varied and active social constituency. In my experience of listening to call-ins and talking to those calling the station, few easy assumptions about the make-up of a particular program’s audience were ever borne out.⁷ Thirdly, this programming conjunction highlights how music both mediates and differentiates between strong identities and ideologies within the organization itself. “Caribbean Swing” presents a strong and specific identity, and music solidifies its various aspects. The Jones’ are concerned with a community suffering from poor representation (outside of community media)

if it is represented at all. “The Latin Beat” negotiates between the Latin community and the city at large, just as Acevedo alternates between Spanish and English during interviews, public service announcements and song descriptions. The identity of the program depends heavily on the listener’s background and interests. “New Powers” uncompromisingly asserts a powerful, singular identity, specifically opposed to mainstream popular music and culture. These points highlight the organizational capacities of CIUT; the audience is not viewed through its demographic characteristics, but through its intentions which, in this case, is to listen.

At CHRY, two Tuesday night programs further amplify and modify this mediation of marginality. “Confunktion” and “Fast and Bulbous on the Spot” both forged a common sociality around specific genres of music. “Confunktion” is not at all a radical departure from current programming traditions. In fact it is a unique enactment of a common practice. “Confunktion” is a dance, hip-hop and “techno” program. There is a host and a D.J., both very adept at conjoining dance tunes from all over the urban map and from all over the historical map of the form. The show forged an identity from an odd mix of disco, soul, hip-hop, techno and dancehall styles. The music is fairly standard in sound, with a technologically driven beat, ranging only from about 110-120 beats per minute, all seamlessly mixed, one tune into the other, continuing in an unbroken pattern for a solid hour or more. However, there seemed to be a conscious effort to connect current dance or hip-hop tunes with the disco tunes from the seventies and eighties, connections which are often conveniently forgotten by others. The tunes were often personalized for the audience and unpredictable in sequence, concentrating on the creation of an hour and a half program made up of audience requests and inspired choices from underground, forgotten tunes, sprinkled with a healthy selection of more popular mixes. They took their programming freedom very seriously and used it to maximum effect; not surprisingly, playlists and charts had no controlling role in the music selection process. The entire program was generally unpredictable and often hilariously exciting.

“Fast and Bulbous on the Spot” seemed to create its identity from the simple fact of its existence and the fact that it presented a genre of music which is so thoroughly (perhaps inherently) marginal. “Thrash,” “hardcore” or “punk rock” is difficult and unfriendly music and the instrumentation is simple: guitar, bass and drums. The tempi are insanely, often threateningly, fast and chords are smashed out in rapid succession, with screamed, incomprehensible vocals and a driving backbeat in standard time anchoring the tune. In essence, this is pure sonic and political dissonance. Only community radio plays this music in a public forum precisely because the resistant nature of each form of cultural production is so ideologically suited to the other. The most interesting facet of this program was the incredible wealth of materials its creators seemed to have, week after week. The hosts had tapes from all over the Western world and recordings from the most obscure labels, many owing their existence to one or two products. The hosts had an obvious command of and attachment to the vast and generally unknown subterranean networks of the underground music scene which extends to every population center in North America and Europe.

The broad similarities of the above programs resulted from their producers' abilities to offer a specific service to a community based on a key aspect of the inner workings of each station: individual programmers who possess a great deal of acquired knowledge and experience which they convey within a politically contingent, extremely diverse and decentered programming schedule and production environment. Within these two separate programming blocks, the actual musical materials are remarkably distinct hour to hour without sacrificing their overall, common desire and purpose, inspired less by inherent harmony than recognized cooperation. The result is an enhancement and enactment of a marginalized, local and generally decentralized cultural form. CIUT's 1992 Programme Guide states the ideal:

CIUT is programmed by and for the various communities it reaches throughout Southern Ontario. "Diversity" is the best way to describe the programming at CIUT. Simply expressed, our purpose is to provide a forum for people from all walks of life to talk to each other, and to learn from this experience. (CIUT, 1992)

In contrast to a music industry in which an avalanche of fortuitously chosen "products float undifferentiated" (Attali, 1985:107-8), everything at CIUT and CHRY is differentiated, but within the embrace of the overall organization. The diversity of each stations' programming and the often remarkable expertise and knowledge of the individual programmers are the keys to their scrupulously maintained marginal identities and, as noted before, their survival and success. The five aforementioned programs further show how music acts simultaneously to mediate and differentiate ideologies and identities inside and outside the station. Each program attempts to orient its listeners to its "stylistic community" through its individual cultural form and its way of reflecting reality, while the station as a whole, with its unique methods of operation, tries to orient listeners to its juxtapositions and conflicting messages in the pursuit of an existence as a dialogic resource through the use of a multitude surface emblems.

Motivation and Commitment

In the cases of two individual music programmers, CIUT's Music Director, Ken Stowar, and jazz show host, Lise Waxer, a real passion for the expression and transmission of the kinds of musical knowledge usually ignored by other broadcasters drives the motivation and commitment to maintain a critical distance from mainstream cultural industries. These two programmers firmly believe in their responsibility to convey the truths of their materials with detail, accuracy and enthusiasm.

In addition to being CIUT's music director, Ken Stowar also hosts "Global Rhythms," a three-hour program devoted to as many styles of non-western popular music he can find. As both music director and show host, Stowar continuously seeks out music unfamiliar to him and others to fulfill CIUT's commitment to use 90% of its music programming time for the presentation of "non-established" artists. Stowar articulates his strategies for dealing with the numerous styles he presents:

I try my utmost to appeal to as many people as I possibly can in one show, which I feel should be the philosophy of any music programmer regardless of what they're doing; introducing people to new music, unfamiliar music to their ears. But I also believe that music is just simply sound, right? ... Sometimes you will really push the boundaries. At other times you'll pull back, so as to lead people, slowly and gradually, into hearing something that they otherwise might not have the tolerance to listen to ... it keeps them hooked.⁸

Stowar is not easily swayed by “exotic” music or superficial approaches to popular music styles. His program, on a very fundamental level, is educational. He describes the music, its origins, the performers, the broad social context, conveying a sense of the music's meaning in addition to its sound. He displays a broadness of interest and fascination with the music's ability to convey numerous meanings, much of which he has learned from his audience and the music itself. He describes this quite explicitly:

Educating the audience is part of the criteria of any program here and you are supposed to give at least, within every hour, twelve minutes of verbal enrichment ... I could have been accused of, and rightly so, when I first started the program three years ago, of being insular. I was focusing primarily on African and Caribbean music. And it was through one listener calling me up, in fact he was Jamaican, a taxi driver who had pulled to the side of the road. And in his opinion, and later I certainly agreed with him, he said to me, “I think you're playing too much reggae.” He said “Let me say it sounds strange coming from me,” and I took that comment to heart.

He goes on to describe how he evolved as a programmer since that time.

I made a conscious effort to spread out even further, and, I'll be the first to admit it, playing a lot of music that even I was unfamiliar with. I was being educated as I was doing the program, but nonetheless it forced me and pushed me to go a bit further. And at times I do get caught up in things; I could be dealing with I don't know how many languages and I can become quite tongue-tied at times if I haven't prepared properly ... The music is really the force that is attracting them to the program and whatever I say is supplementing it.

Stowar presented an enormous variety of music at CIUT long before other Toronto broadcasters were interested in anything even remotely “foreign” or obscure. In particular, the so-called “Worldbeat phenomenon” and the industry usurpation of North American pop music designated as “alternative” have both attained a mostly superficial cachet among broadcasters and some record stores recently. As with most things in this industry, a sustained interest in the roots, histories, development and social conditions surrounding music receive little attention. For Stowar, as he negotiates between the mainstreaming of music and his own interest in presenting a fuller representation of his favorites, the music affects him personally:

I know when I'm programming, that I'm doing my utmost to find material and music where lyrically, there is a social and political message in it. If not, at least the performer is sincere, and you certainly learn how to weed out the insincere performers. I like artists

that really have a passion for what they are doing and how they present it.

Generally, the music industry seeks to “discover” and use the practices of the margins for their own ends, a danger of which Stowar, speaking here as the music director of a station mandated to present “alternative” and “non-hit” music, is clearly aware:

I certainly make it a point, on an on-going basis, to review all of the music industry charts and so on for a number of reasons. One, I feel that in a number of cases, what would be considered alternative today is not necessarily alternative tomorrow because we do, believe it or not, tend to push commercial radio to a certain degree ... They'll take ideas that we're presenting on the air and homogenize them ... As an example, three years ago, I used the terminology “Worldbeat” or “World Music” which at this time I detest. Now I call the music for what it is and where it comes from ... there's no reason whatsoever to put all this music from around the world under the same umbrella term ... We have to go beyond and I have to refer back to the fact that we as programmers, have to keep pushing the boundaries constantly and I believe that there are more people than commercial radio's administrators would admit that do want to be challenged and pushed as listeners.

Lise Waxer, a former jazz and world music programmer at CIUT, also draws on a vast amount of musical experience to shed some light on her desires and strategies in her programming. Waxer began at CIUT programming world music:

I felt it was important to provide an educational, yet entertaining forum, especially for traditional world music on the air ... For a while it would be a theme for a show, like tonight we're going to look at this instrument from this area of the world. When I would do an instrument, I would do a cross cultural perspective. I'd look at guitars in a number of different cultures and after a while I would do a series. From November of 1989 until March 1990, I did a series on the music of North Africa, looking at each country.⁹

Waxer also hosted “rhythm-a-ning,” in a traditionally “jazz” time slot. She describes the experience as the show evolved and changed:

I officially enstated the central hour of this three hour jazz show solely for Latin music ... and I was getting so heavily into Latin music and realizing that there was a lot of Latin influence in jazz that really has been wiped out of the history books. So I wanted to have a forum where I could share all this amazing stuff I was being turned on to and also give credence to the fact that Latinos have been written out of the history books and I've gotten a lot of criticism for that. Jazz listeners can be really picky and there has been a lot of resistance. But there are also a lot of people who are really into Latin music and who have no idea of the connections.

Waxer, who has worked at CIUT since its inception as a public broadcaster, found that her academic interest as an ethnomusicologist affected her motivations:

The way I've always looked at the work I've done with radio is that it's been a balancer, because otherwise I feel that I would go too far into the academic role and hole off in the ivory tower. Radio has been a way for me to keep my feet on the ground and keep in touch with people ... I've felt that it's really important to demystify other cultures and try to remove that barrier of otherness or at last examine why we look at things as different ...

For Stowar and Waxer, music acts as a bridge between a variety of communities whose primary connection, in this context, is music. When Stowar says "it works," he is talking not only about the mixing of sounds, but the mixing of identities. He seems to consciously negotiate between the familiarity and the fascination of music and, as he suggested above, "it keeps them hooked." Waxer states that she wants nothing less than to mediate, negotiate and overcome "that barrier of otherness" through music. Her presentation of the important and needlessly obscure connections between jazz and Latin American music seems to attempt to redefine each form in relation to the other; as she mentions above, this accomplishment has raised some hackles with those vying to maintain the distinctness of their own musical traditions, but it has also affirmed an important reality too long ignored.

Stowar uses a subtle subversion of expectation to attract and hold his listeners. As he stated above, he wants to appeal to a broad range of listeners and lead them "slowly and gradually" into a world of music with which they may or may not be familiar. Waxer, similarly, wants an "educational" and "entertaining" program that reflects the music she loves as well as her considerable knowledge and expertise. Music can connect the otherwise unconnected and, to some extent, even the most obscure music program, like "Fast and Bulbous on the Spot," can provide a connection to a wider world contained within a larger, embracing institution which encourages connection and interaction.

Conclusion

To use Berland's suggestion that radio can "map our social and symbolic environment" (Berland, 1990:191), it is clear that community radio has its own symbolic terrain where differences and conflicts are not glossed over, but publicly mediated and respected. It creates a "mediated morphology of musical meaning" through the specific use of an established cultural technology; that it does so with a greater clarity of purpose and interest in the human dividends of cultural communication is a simple reflection of its marginality, and through that a reflection of its identity. This unique use of music is firmly based in the specific collection of personal experiences and knowledge from which the programs grow, evolve and die. This kind of presentation and definitional power survives only on the margins:

What is being disappeared in that foreign country which is our history is not only a large familiar construction of a large familiar state. It is also a not yet realized (and once again radically endangered) possibility: a collective sound creation of/in public space. (Berland, 1990/91:18)

The stories, realities and motivations of those cited here are testament to the fact that, while community radio must to some extent remain marginal to preserve its core values, such marginality does not cripple the organization, lessen the importance of the programming, or render the enterprise lifeless or meaningless; in fact, the opposite is true.

Notes

1. This phrase was etched into the south wall of the Communications Building at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. (Zim, 1988:57)
2. Vipond (1993) chronicles this early period with some deference to the commercial apparatus. Raboy (1990) offers a more critical account.
3. I am using the blanket term "community radio" as a catchall to describe an extremely diverse collection of broadcasting practices. A more detailed outline of Canadian community radio practice is contained in Fairchild (1993).
4. See Stiles and Lachance (1988) and their case study of a station in the Îles de la Madeleine.
5. This discussion could be expanded greatly. I have examined these precise issues in Fairchild (1993).
6. For an overview of Towney's concerns please see his essay in Lander and Lexier (1991).
7. Little is known about the audiences of CIUT and CHRY. Both stations have solicited information about their audiences through fundraising activities, but since only a small percentage of the audience ever pledges money, the returns have been very general. Of the 699 listeners that gave money and returned demographic information cards to CIUT in 1992, about 60% were between the ages of 25 and 40, 84.1% were employed, 43.5% were professionals, 51% earned between \$15,000 and \$40,000 a year, and about 24% earned over \$60,000 a year. Clearly this cannot be considered a representative sample.
8. All the quotes from Stowar come from an interview conducted with him at CIUT in June 1992.
9. The quotes from Waxer come from an interview conducted with her in 1991.

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Review Essays
Essais critiques

Louis Balthazar

Reconnaissance et identité dans le contexte canadien

Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition". An Essay by Charles Taylor, with commentary by Amy Gutmann, Editor, Steven C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer and Susan Wolf. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1992. 112 p.

La question identitaire au Canada francophone. Récits, parcours, enjeux, hors-lieux. Sous la direction de Jocelyn Létourneau, avec la collaboration de Roger Bernard, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1994, 292 p.

Voici deux livres très différents qui traitent tous deux d'identité dans un contexte canadien, l'un dans une perspective philosophique, l'autre selon diverses approches où domine nettement celle de la sociologie. Disons-le tout de suite, la réflexion du philosophe m'est apparue plus éclairante et stimulante que celle des sociologues. Ceux qui connaissent Charles Taylor ne s'en étonneront pas.

Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition est un ouvrage d'à peine cent pages dont la pièce de résistance est un texte de Taylor sur le phénomène de la reconnaissance. Partant du caractère fondamentalement « dialogique » de la vie humaine, c'est-à-dire d'un besoin de communiquer et d'établir des relations, Taylor démontre que la vie en société repose sur une quête de reconnaissance par les autres, au mieux par l'ensemble du corps social. Entendons la reconnaissance d'une identité considérée comme un attribut essentiel de l'être humain.

Le libéralisme moderne a cherché à combler ce besoin de deux manières différentes. La première, qui s'est affirmée davantage et qui trouve son expression la plus saisissante chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau, est celle que Taylor nomme « la politique de l'égalité », en d'autres mots la reconnaissance des droits individuels et universels chez tous et chacun sans aucune discrimination, sans aucun égard aux différences entre les citoyens. La seconde, identifiée comme la « politique de la différence », vise au contraire à reconnaître, au-delà des droits universels, des caractéristiques particulières à certaines communautés. Dans le premier cas, on s'abstient, au niveau du corps politique, de définir la « bonne vie » ou les conditions concrètes d'épanouissement des citoyens. Dans le second, on établit au contraire certains objectifs communautaires, comme, par exemple, le maintien et le développement d'une culture ou d'une langue.

Les oppositions qui se sont fait jour au Canada, en particulier à l'occasion des accords du lac Meech, s'inscrivaient bien, selon Taylor, dans la ligne de ces divergences philosophiques. Le libéralisme cher aux Canadiens de langue anglaise relève surtout de la première catégorie. Il consiste en un libéralisme procédural, c'est-à-dire appliqué à reconnaître des droits égaux à tous les citoyens canadiens (voire à plusieurs groupes identifiés comme tels) et à toutes les provinces canadiennes considérées sur un pied d'égalité. Le libéralisme québécois vise, en revanche, à la reconnaissance particulière d'une société distincte au Québec et de la possibilité pour le gouvernement de poursuivre des objectifs culturels *sui generis* en conjonction avec la protection des droits individuels de tous les citoyens.

Taylor fait l'apologie de cette approche québécoise en prenant soin de souligner qu'une définition partielle de « la bonne vie » ne déroge en rien à la reconnaissance des droits fondamentaux. Tout au plus, des droits mineurs (comme ce droit bien relatif à faire de la publicité commerciale au moyen d'affiches dans une langue autre que le français) pourront-ils être subordonnés aux droits collectifs eu égard à la préservation du français dans le contexte anglophone nord-américain.

D'ailleurs, le libéralisme procédural lui-même, dans sa prétention de neutralité absolue, ne recèle-t-il pas une conception culturelle particulière? C'est là du moins la revendication des adeptes de la politique de la différence :

The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture (p. 43).

C'est justement ce que croient plusieurs Québécois. Cette fameuse « nation » canadienne, soi-disant ouverte à toutes les cultures (y compris la culture canadienne-française) ne se présente-t-elle pas comme une anglophonie particulière? Cela est bien évident quand les nationalistes canadiens revendiquent eux-mêmes l'exception culturelle à l'endroit des États-Unis. Ceux-là même qui refusent une « politique de différence » au Québec se font fort d'en proposer une aux Américains.

D'autre part, les Québécois qui sont jaloux de leur autonomie dans l'ensemble canadien pratiquent parfois un libéralisme purement procédural à l'endroit de communautés particulières au Québec, comme les Autochtones. (Notons toutefois que la « différence » des Premières nations a été officiellement reconnue par l'Assemblée nationale en 1985 et par le gouvernement Parizeau à plusieurs reprises en 1994 et 1995.)

Taylor poursuit sa réflexion relativement aux diverses communautés culturelles. Tout en favorisant la reconnaissance de ces communautés, il se refuse à établir de nouvelles hiérarchies ou même à souscrire à un parti pris de l'exotisme ou de la valeur culturelle. Ce qu'il faut, selon lui, ce n'est pas une présomption favorable envers les « autres » cultures, mais l'admission que nous ne sommes pas en position de juger de leur valeur.

Donc, le partage entre les nécessités du corps politique, de la société globale et celles de la reconnaissance de communautés particulières ne se fait pas facilement. Il existe tout de même une distinction fondamentale entre la

revendication d'une société distincte québécoise qui se voit comme une nation ou tout au moins un ensemble politique, un lieu de reconnaissance de droits universels, et les revendications des minorités culturelles, que ce soit au Québec ou ailleurs au Canada.

La cause du multiculturalisme est aussi traitée par les autres auteurs du volume. En introduction, Amy Gutmann analyse la question de façon fort équilibrée dans le contexte américain en renvoyant dos à dos les traditionalistes et les « déconstructivistes » à tout crin. Steven Rockefeller témoigne d'une incompréhension totale du cas québécois, en y voyant, même après avoir lu Taylor, une subordination des droits universels à l'identité ethnique. Michael Walzer, fort heureusement, s'accorde beaucoup mieux à la perspective taylorienne.

L'ouvrage publié sous la direction de Jocelyn Létourneau est beaucoup plus hétérogène que le précédent. Cela se comprend bien car il est le fruit d'un colloque organisé par la Chaire pour le développement de la recherche sur la culture d'expression française en Amérique du Nord (CEFAN). Le colloque s'adressait surtout à la condition des minorités francophones au Canada. Mais il comportait aussi une réflexion théorique sur la question de l'identité. De la théorie à la pratique (ou à la « praxis » comme on dit encore), le lien n'est pas toujours évident. D'où la diversité de l'ouvrage.

Si on ne voulait le lire que pour prendre le pouls des minorités francophones du Canada, on pourrait se contenter des quatre premiers chapitres qui sont fort instructifs. On pourrait même y ajouter le cinquième qui ouvre une perspective originale sur le Québec. Pour le reste, divisé en trois parties intitulées « parcours, enjeux et hors-lieux », on y trouve de tout : beaucoup de théories plus ou moins valables, des aperçus éclairants, des intuitions originales et surtout un traitement négatif de l'identité. J'y reviendrai.

Le premier chapitre traite de l'Acadie. L'auteur, P. D. Clarke, y insiste beaucoup sur « l'invention » de la tradition orale et écrite, sur l'exploitation de certains mythes comme celui d'Évangéline et sur la redécouverte du sens de la déportation de 1755. Mais, somme toute, l'Acadie y apparaît comme bien réelle, fidèle à elle-même à travers son évolution et ses mutations.

François Paré traite de façon fort intelligente d'une identité franco-ontarienne détachée d'un Québec qui l'aurait abandonnée à elle-même. Ses analyses se terminent sur la constatation d'un terrible cul-de-sac où se serait fourvoyé l'anti-intellectualisme des créateurs franco-ontariens (pp. 57-58).

Raymond Hébert présente une image beaucoup plus optimiste de la vie culturelle franco-manitobaine. Tout en reconnaissant l'omniprésente menace de l'assimilation, il fait état de la remarquable vitalité culturelle de cette petite communauté dont le pari est de vivre une identité francophone dans une quotidienneté sociale anglophone. Il est seulement regrettable que l'auteur se croit obligé d'appuyer sa thèse sur une critique virulente et injuste (il ne donne qu'un seul exemple) du nationalisme québécois où il ne voit que « purification linguistique » et implicitement ethnique.

Malgré ce qu'Hébert appelle « les démarches autoritaires et exclusivistes de la majorité francophone au Québec » (p. 66), il n'en demeure pas moins infiniment plus aisé (et ce le sera toujours) de fonctionner en anglais au Québec que de vivre en français au Manitoba.

Le quatrième chapitre porte sur les Franco-Albertains. En dépit de certains progrès réalisés au niveau des institutions, l'auteur, Paul Dubé, se doit d'affirmer qu'il est « impensable de vouloir constituer socialement et culturellement un groupe fort et dynamique autour d'une langue seconde, peu valorisée réellement dans le milieu ambiant » (p. 86). De plus en plus, ce n'est pas comme francophone qu'on se définit mais comme bilingue. « L'altérité linguistique et culturelle serait-elle la condition *sine qua non* de notre survie? », se demande Dubé en terminant.

Il est déplorable qu'on ne fasse aucun cas des possibilités nouvelles de solidarité qui se manifestent entre Québécois et membres de ces communautés francophones minoritaires. Même le cinquième chapitre, écrit par Nicolas van Schendel, qui fait grand état de la nouvelle identité des « Québécois plus » du boulevard St-Laurent à Montréal, n'ouvre aucune perspective sur l'horizontale d'un réseau francophone qui déborderait les frontières du Québec.

Le reste de l'ouvrage s'interroge de façon fort critique sur l'identité. Citons Létourneau qui donne le ton dans l'introduction :

En terme clairs (sic!), illustrer comment les pratiques identificatoires débordent continuellement les parcours tracés et les matrices représentationnelles octroyées, et montrer comment ces pratiques apparemment éclatées, à cheval et labiles, loin d'exprimer une confusion identitaire, reflètent précisément ce qu'est le sentiment d'appartenance, soit une situation embrouillée, instable et en devenir qui mérite d'être acceptée, reconnue et théorisée comme telle.

Le moins qu'on puisse dire, c'est que les sociologues contemporains ne sont pas tendres pour les revendications identitaires. Ils y voient des dangers d'essentialisme, de substantialisme, de fétichisation, de rigidité, d'enfermement, de tribalisme et que sais-je encore. « L'homme a droit de se désidentifier... La pire menace pour son activité pensante est l'identité... » (R. Lafont, cité par W. Moser, p. 243).

Pourtant, certains d'entre eux reconnaissent que le nationalisme peut correspondre à des besoins psycho-sociaux, à « un besoin fondamental d'appartenance à une communauté » (Chanady p. 182) et que « l'horizon d'un projet de société » est bien plus acceptable que la multiplicité des appartenances communautaires (Robin, p. 225).

Mais on redoute par dessus tout les dangers d'une identité qui serait posée comme un absolu, comme un fétiche, comme une nécessité, comme une prison. D'où la tendance de ces auteurs à poser un épouvantail (dont on se demande à quoi il correspond aujourd'hui) et à lui asséner les coups les plus vigoureux. Cela en amène plusieurs (Grondin, Locher, Robin, Moser, Chiasson) à valoriser soit l'absence totale d'identité, soit l'identité marginale ou encore la possibilité de se faire caméléon et de passer d'une identité à l'autre.

Il est bien vrai que notre époque nous permet de plus en plus de vivre au niveau de multiples identités et que nos identités elles-mêmes sont en mutation constante. Mais n'est-ce pas une attitude de riches ou d'intellectuels privilégiés que de mépriser ceux qui fondent encore leur existence et leur vie sociale sur une communauté, sur une région ou sur une nation? N'est-ce pas une forme déguisée d'hégémonie culturelle que de refuser aux petites cultures le droit de s'affirmer et de s'organiser?

L'ouvrage comporte un chapitre fort éclairant de Jane Jenson sur la « déconstruction » de la dualité canadienne et sur l'éclatement des identités dans le Canada issu de la Charte de 1982. Mais cette auteure omet de parler de la trajectoire « nationale » qui préside à ce nouveau Canada, à une nouvelle prééminence du centre autour duquel gravitent les diverses allégeances particulières.

De même, il est remarquable que dans un livre où on fait beaucoup état de la manipulation des identités par les pouvoirs politiques, on ne dise pas un mot de la manipulation des identités francophones hors-Québec par le pouvoir fédéral.

On n'a pas fini de parler « identité » et reconnaissance au Canada et ailleurs. Ces deux livres alimentent notre réflexion.

David Rayside

Sexual Diversity and the Social Sciences in English Canada

To survey major social science and legal studies of sexual diversity in English Canada is to face a stark reminder of how marginal lesbian/gay studies are in this country's academic life. (A parallel survey of French-Canadian scholarship would yield similarly discouraging results.) A full quarter century after the modern-day gay liberation movement exploded into view, and years after gay and lesbian communities established visible presences in Canada's major cities, scholarly engagement remains scattered, taken up almost entirely by gays and lesbians themselves, often on the margins of the academic world.

The continuing reluctance of mainstream academic departments to incorporate issues of sexual diversity into their curriculum is part of a broader inertia in most of the social science departments. A perusal of course syllabi and core texts in most social science courses would surprise those who believe that the traditional canons have been overthrown.

Canada has produced and is producing gay and lesbian literary figures of international stature—Jane Rule, Michel Tremblay and Thomson Highway come to mind. In the academic humanities, particularly in literary and cultural studies, increasing numbers of young academics addressing questions related to the experience of sexual minorities (although proportionately fewer than their American counterparts who seem in the midst of a virtual explosion of “queer studies”). My focus here, though, is on the small collection of works in history, sociology, politics and law that deal with the Canadian experience in some detail. This omits most of the social science work, such as that by Canadian psychologists or social psychologists, which may well use Canadian respondents or subjects but which does not deal with Canadian distinctiveness.

Most of those who do write on gay/lesbian issues from an academic base consider links with cultural and activist networks as integral to their intellectual work, and several of them published in the gay press before they appeared in academic print. Not surprisingly, almost none of this scholarship is disinterested, and almost all explicitly considers the question of what contributes to progressive social change.

As in women's studies, Native studies and Black studies, there have been strong community roots in the study of sexual diversity. Historical scholarship has usually been undertaken by independent or part-time historians and archivists rather than university-based academics. The work of Ross Higgins on Montreal's gay past, and of Robert Champagne on English-Canadian gay history, are examples of this tradition. A number of writers commenting on

contemporary issues have also worked independently of academia, with strong roots in gay/lesbian community activism. They include Gerald Hannon (now a regular contributor to mainstream media), Michael Riordon (with published work on the United Church and work in preparation on small town gays and lesbians), Tim McCaskell and Chris Bearchell (both having chronicled gay/lesbian political activism). The early work of these writers, and of many others, is compiled in an indispensable collection of writing from *The Body Politic* edited by Ed Jackson and Stan Persky, filled with fiction and commentary powerfully evocative of the first decade of the modern gay and lesbian movement.

Our understanding of contemporary gay and lesbian experience has also been enriched by writers with activist ties to feminist networks and labour unions. Articles on sexual minority organizing appeared in works on Canadian feminism published in the early 1980s by Toronto's Women's Press (*Still Ain't Satisfied*, on Canadian feminism, and *Union Sisters* on feminist organizing in Canadian unions).

Like those collections, much of the gay/lesbian-related social science literature in Canada is heavily influenced by feminist and class analysis. Two of the relatively early books largely devoted to gay-related themes, both authored by sociologists, reflect these tendencies. Barry Adam's 1987 book, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (incorporating information about a variety of countries), celebrates the radical challenge that he sees embodied in activism for sexual liberation, though he sees formidable obstacles rooted partly in capitalist-sustained family ideology.

Gary Kinsman has been another important figure in Canadian gay scholarship for close to a decade, his considerable writings focusing entirely on Canada. His *Regulation of Desire* is not restricted to lesbian/gay matters, and exemplifies the historical-sociological approach so shaped by Dorothy Smith at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and so influential in Canadian analysis of sexual diversity. This approach views sexual minorities at the subordinate end of deeply-embedded "relations of ruling"—an approach which dovetails the Foucaultian notion of a (sort-of) hegemonic discourse that controls and marginalizes sexual and gender deviation. It also speaks of sexuality as socially constructed, not fixed across either historical time or cultural space.

Although both Adam and Kinsman are attentive to gender issues, Sharon Dale Stone's collection on *Lesbians in Canada* further increased the visibility of such issues. Its chapters range from theoretical treatments of sexuality to practical surveys of legal issues to powerfully evocative commentaries on Afro-Caribbean lesbians. The quality of the contributions varies, but its strengths lie in the very diversity those contributions acknowledge (along lines of class, culture and region), and the voice they give to lesbians of colour. Indeed, the book's substantial engagement to the issue of race marks an important shift in the activist and scholarly worlds in even the few years distance from the publication dates of Adam's and Kinsman's major works.

There have been other works by lesbian scholars, a number of them educated in OISE's sociology department. Mariana Valverde has applied her considerable insight to a variety of topics, from the contemporary debate over pornography to the early twentieth-century social purity movement. She has deliberately sought to avoid restricting her purview to lesbian/gay experience, in keeping with a larger politic that challenges assumptions about clear and fixed identities. Becki Ross shares that view, but has focused her ethnographic energies on trying to understand recent Canadian lesbian activist history, creating in the process extremely valuable and bravely honest accounts of that history.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a few of these and other writers were given space in notable collections of articles on contemporary social movements published by progressive houses like Garamond, Between the Lines and Lorimer. This small wave reflects the engagement of the wider scholarly left with the radically-transformative potential of what some would call "new" social movements. These collections contain articles by Tim McCaskell on police raids of gay bath houses, George Smith on policing the gay community in general, Sharon Stone on Toronto lesbian organizing, and Gary Kinsman on AIDS politics. All are valuable additions to our knowledge about political activism and its relationship to the state, although some of the case studies seem excessively hewn to fit a class analytical framework.

A couple of volumes dealing with gay/lesbian experience focus more directly on sexuality than the bulk of the scholarly literature, celebrating its liberatory potential or its capacity to challenge heterosexual stability. Brian Pronger's book points to the presence of gays and lesbians, as well as a good deal of homo-eroticism, in the world of sport, though accompanied by heterosexist enforcement of traditional gender roles, particularly in male-dominated sport. The empirical point is powerfully documented, although some issue can be taken with parts of Pronger's theoretical apparatus.

Stan Persky authored a book that stands in a category of its own. Set in a Vancouver bar, it reads as a lyrically captivating meditation on gay sexuality. He is an academic, but has written more powerfully when beyond the usual constraints of scholarly discourse.

A survey of gay-related writing must include AIDS, even though the epidemic is by no means an exclusively-gay issue. Here, too, the relative paucity of analytical writing is striking. A couple of biographies written by independent writers on people who have lived with and died from AIDS are *Jim*, by June Callwood, and *Affirmation*, by Daniel Gawthrop, both of which remind us of the power of individual stories. Michael Ornstein has written one of the few contributions from the scholarly mainstream: a brief volume based on his own quantitative survey of Canadian adults concerning the transmission of HIV and related issues. A more ethnographic approach is evident in Ruth Murbach's treatment of AIDS patients' relations with doctors in Montreal, and in a number of the articles in Diane Goldstein's Newfoundland-based volume, *Talking AIDS*. James Miller's *Fluid Exchanges* provides a vehicle for a number of writers, most of them young, and some influenced by the newly emergent frameworks of cultural studies. The collection of articles edited by Christine

Overall and William Zion, along with an earlier volume by John Dixon, take on ethical issues raised by AIDS, though in a broadly theoretical rather than particularly Canadian manner.

Ivan Emke and Guy Poirier are among the young scholars who have written perceptively on political aspects of AIDS from the critical perspectives so common in more strictly-gay analysis, though mostly in unpublished form. That perspective is also evident in work by Alan Sears, and of course in the AIDS research of Gary Kinsman and Barry Adam. My own collaboration with Evert Lindquist produced a few published articles on AIDS policy and activist mobilizing that has some links with political economy and feminist sociology tradition, though not as fully. (Those pieces, in addition to a couple of others I have authored or co-authored, are isolated breaks in the virtual silence of Canadian political scientists on gay-related topics.)

The one part of the political system that has provoked an important stream of intellectual inquiry relates to equality rights. A number of scholars in law faculties and social science departments (Cynthia Petersen, Shelley Gavigan, Bruce Ryder, and Douglas Sanders) have written about the struggle for and the attainment of rights under the Charter, most of them raising critical questions about rights strategies or couple-based objectives.

The single most ambitious publication from this school of critical legal studies is *Rights of Passage*, by Didi Herman. This significant work applies a framework that is sceptical of rights strategies to the “Mossop” case (a case ending in the Supreme Court, challenging heterosexual family definitions) and to the struggle over adding sexual orientation to the Ontario Human Rights Code. The analysis embodied in Herman's work is similar to much of the scholarly literature on gay-related issues published over the last several years in Canada by its wariness of equality rights and “essentialist” identity politics, though it is perhaps more direct in its criticism of social movement activists.

Questioning the strategies and goals that can be adopted all-too-unthinkingly by activists struggling from crises created by legislative cowardice and Christian-right onslaught is a valid exercise. But there are signs of an increasing divide between scholarly critics and the grassroots bases that created space for them to do their work. While this literature avoids the politically-paralytic obscurantism of much post-modernist cultural and literary studies, some academic writers still tend to treat activists in the field as the helpless victims (or pawns) of dominant discourse or of state-centred regulation.

Common to much of this literature is the stated or implied claim that apparent gains in legislation or court judgements in fact amount to little or nothing. Indeed, engagement with state institutions can be powerfully absorptive, and legal gains can be hollowed out by administrative practice or by their simple marginality to everyday existence. But much has been gained by activists with a subtler appreciation of what they were doing and the limits of their gains than scholarly observers (even those who are also activists) are prepared to admit.

A number of these authors were courageous pioneers, particularly those who worked as independent scholars without academic employment, choosing

scholarly areas long marginalized and supported at first only by publishers outside the mainstream. They have contributed to recording the history routinely overlooked in the education of our young, and to an understanding of social movements largely ignored by scholarly professions. For all of its recent growth, this literature comprises only a smattering of books and articles, leaving far too much unexamined and undisclosed.

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