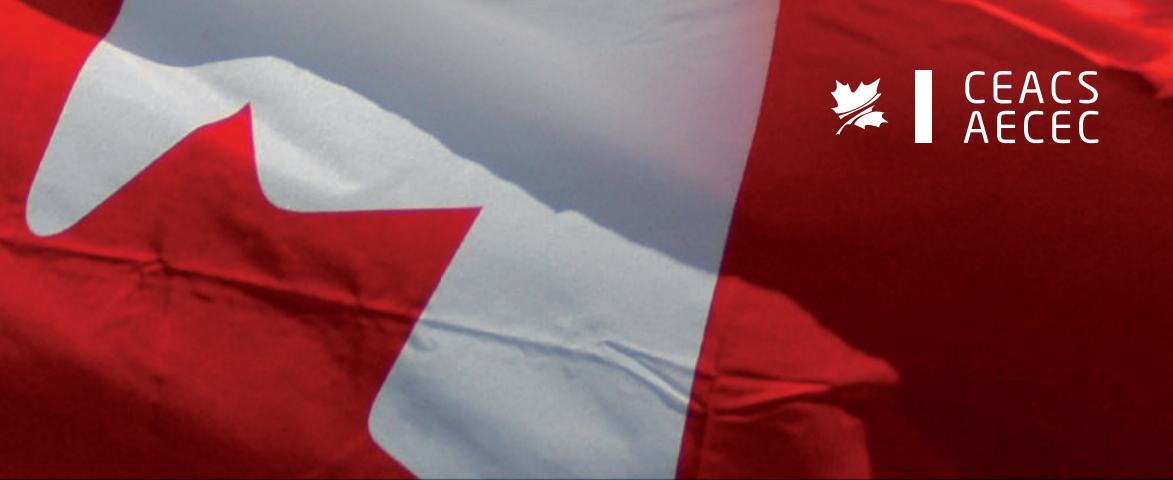

CEACS
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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale

volume 09 (2014)

CENTRAL EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES
ASSOCIATION D'ETUDES CANADIENNES EN EUROPE CENTRALE

THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF CANADIAN STUDIES
is an international, peer-reviewed scholarly journal published regularly by the Central European Association for Canadian Studies (CEACS); the first issue appeared in 2001.

REVUE D'ÉTUDES CANADIENNES EN EUROPE CENTRALE
est une revue internationale à comité de lecture, spécialisée, publiée régulièrement par l'Association d'Études Canadiennes en Europe Centrale (AECEC) depuis 2001.

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1st edition, 2015. Circulation 100 copies / 1ére édition, 2015. Tirage 100 exemplaires

Published by/Publié par Masaryk University, Brno 2015

Printed by/Imprimé par Ctrl P s.r.o., Bezručova 17a, 602 00 Brno

Published with the financial assistance of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Publié avec l'aide financière des Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada

ISBN 978-80-210-7732-4 (paperback)
ISBN 978-80-210-7733-1 (online : pdf)
ISSN 1213-7715

interview — **entretien**

articles — **articles**

reviews — **comptes rendu**

Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (5–15)

A Long-Distance Talk with George Elliott Clarke

Interviewed by Ana Olos and Crina Bud

Un appel téléphonique avec George Elliott Clarke

Ana Olos et Crina Bud

AO&CB We were honoured to have you as our keynote speaker at the 5th International Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists, in Baia Mare, Romania. You are a professor at the University of Toronto, presently visiting professor at Harvard, and Toronto's Poet Laureate (2012-15), member of the Canadian Writers' Union, winner of important literary prizes and awards (among them the Canadian Governor General's Award for your Execution Poems), appreciated by critics, with MA and PhD theses addressing your work, and still you agreed to travel thousands of miles to be here with us just for a day. What made you accept our invitation?

GEC I must be very brief – unfortunately and dismally brief, for I am leaving today for Stockholm, Sweden, and will return just before the deadline for the delivery of my responses. Please do forgive my brevity. I assure you that it is necessary. That said, I accepted the invitation to return to Romania because I am thankful for the interest that Romanians have shown in my poetry: Flavia Cosma translated my poetry into a Romanian book; Ioan Tepelea published it; *Poesis* magazine awarded me a prize; Diana Manole and (you) Ana Olos have again prepared and published translations just this past year; and, you, Ana, have published several essays on my works. So, the least I could do was reciprocate by showing you my appreciation for the steady, Romanian consideration of my poetry and scholarship. And I like Zuica!

AO&CB In March 2007, when you came to launch a selection of your poems the Romanian-Canadian Flavia Cosma had translated, you lectured to our students about the faces of Canadian democracy. This time around, your topic was "The Originality of African-Canadian Thought." Can you comment on the importance of social discourse, especially in the context of a Canadian Studies conference?

GEC Given their concern for the various traumas and challenges of transatlantic black history as well as their sometimes Romantic adoration of (Diasporic) African

styles and cultures, African-Canadian writers tend to accent history, sociology, political philosophy, psychology, economics, theology, and other humanist and social-science disciplines. Indeed, it is one of the most attractive and exciting facts about African-Canadian literature: To read it is to be plunged into negotiating Christianity, Islam, Marx, Sade, Rousseau, Sappho, Montesquieu, Fanon, Locke, De Beauvoir, Plato, and notions of aesthetics – primitivism, for instance, and modernism. You get Freud mashed up with Malcolm X. In other words, a social discourse is unavoidable in considering African-Canadian writers and texts.

AO&CB As co-recipient of the William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations from the city of Toronto (2008) you also contributed to re-defining the concept of culture. Would you clarify your standpoint for our readers?

GEC My answer here echoes my previous answer: Aesthetics – poetics – is inseparable from the historical and the socio-political. A black intellectual (and all writers are intellectuals) must respond to society as much as he or she answers to the impulses of the creative imagination.

AO&CB T.S. Eliot and many others have commented on poets having multiple voices. Would you tell us how many voices do you use as a writer and which of these voices represents you best?

GEC Maybe all writers are polyphonous? Certainly, most black writers must be. We tend to inherit at least two "voices": the Eurocentric styles of the classroom and the Academy; the down-to-earth – salty, frank, gutsy, rootsy, playful, punning, consonantal, preaching – manner of the street or the "ghetto" or the "hood" or the veldt or Black Belt rurality…. I know that I have both: An Anglo-learned voice and an Afro-ludic voice. I'm part-prof and part-preacher and – I hope – all poet!

AO&CB In your case, is there a difference between the person who writes in silence and the one who appears on the rostrum?

GEC There does not need to be a difference between the writer writing and the writer speaking. However, the public-performative writer is likely trying to move the audience directly to think a certain way or move in a certain direction; perhaps, then, the writing is pronouncedly rhetorical, though not, in any way, "false." The writer who is read silently may be just as rhetorical, so to speak (pun intended), as the public speaker, but must aim for a long-distance effect as opposed to a reaction that is up-close and personal.

AO&CB In a certain context you defined yourself as a "warrior poet." What is the driving force behind this stance? Which are your "war measures" and how far would you go in this "war"?

GEC As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the African-American literary critic, has pointed out, the black writer is locked – even "trapped" – into a discourse with all the white writers who precede us, whether we like it or not, and whether or not the white writers view black people positively or not. The result is that one must be combative in sallying forth against stereotype or in asserting one's own dignity. We are all Caliban tilting against Prospero – or Aaron against Saturninus – and we mean to "win" – finally. My models are warrior-intellectuals like Mao, Pound, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. How far would I go? As Trudeau said (in)famously during Canada's 1970 October Crisis, when he ordered soldiers onto the streets, "Just watch me!" (Smile.)

AO&CB The title of a volume of poems published after J.F. Kennedy's assassination is *Poetry and Power*. Do you think poetry can be a weapon strong enough in the contemporary world? Is poetry still "dangerous" for those in power?

GEC Poetry is dangerous when it projects scriptural forms of truth in metaphors that are directly graspable. When the former Czechoslovakia, attempting to liberalize Soviet Communism in the "Prague Spring" of 1968, adopted the slogan, "Socialism with a human face," it was a potent, poetic formulation of what they wanted to achieve, and it eventually summoned Soviet tanks to stop – temporarily – the pacific, humanitarian revolt. Similarly, when the hijacker-terrorists of anti-American "jihad" crashed their hostage-laden aircraft into various U.S. targets on September 11, 2001, people reached automatically for Auden's "September 1, 1939" – a love poem written at the dawn of World War II: they knew that they (we) were entering into another era of world-wide war, based on sneak attacks (terrorism) as well as state-sponsored invasion (the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mali, etc.). Poetry remains relevant – always – because it is "truth" expressed passionately, pithily, and memorably.

AO&CB Poets and artists had no place in Plato's Republic. In totalitarian societies, if they had not been driven out or chose a voluntary exile, they had to choose between either being used to serve the dominant ideology, or protect themselves with the shield of aesthetic evasion, learn "double talk." What do you think about the poet's social responsibility?

GEC I'm a liberal in art: the poet/artist must be free to pursue his or her notion of truth, no matter how imaginary or illusory it may be. Yet the artist also lives in a specific society, with its internal dynamics and contradictions, and he or she may feel drawn to comment on or address those problematics. The crucial point is that

he or she does so honestly – not as a result of compulsion. Picasso was a painter of personal, somewhat "macho" sexuality; but he was also a Spaniard, hating the Fascist onslaught against Spanish democracy in the Civil War, and out of that sense of "social responsibility," he gave us *Guernica*. I'd like to think that a large-minded, big-hearted artist/poet accepts the inspiration of both the personal and the political.

AO&CB Following Dionne Brand (who had immigrated from Trinidad and Tobago), you are Toronto's fourth Poet Laureate. For those of us who lived under totalitarian regimes, this might sound somehow suspect. Does the acceptance of this honour cover a peaceful compromise with the official cultural policy?

GEC The official positions of "Poet Laureate" or "Artist-in-Residence" are essentially intellectual ombudsperson offices. In other words, ideally, the occupants of such positions are permitted to be "Wise Fools" – to speak artistic or poetic Truth back to "Officialdom." The Poet Laureate is King Lear's Fool; that is to say, he or she is wiser than Lear and should say, invent, poems that reveal the realities of life and statecraft that the King cannot afford to hear from anyone else. But he or she is also a representative of the creativity of the people. Ideally, the Poet Laureate is a philosopher of the heart, bringing its fertile sensibilities into the statistic-cacti'd desert that is the political realm.

AO&CB You are proud of being a seventh generation Canadian, born in Nova Scotia. Your first volume of poetry *Salt Water Spirituals and Deeper Blues* (1983), as the title suggests, was a synthesis of the religious and profane voices coming from the very heart of your "Africadia" (Africa+Acadia), with rhythms of blues, gospel, soul, jazz and insertions of the black community's vernacular. How much did the local folklore and black music in general influence your poetry?

GEC *Saltwater Spirituals* was my first book, and I was more enthralled by T.S. Eliot and John Milton than I was by folklore or black music. I aimed consciously to overthrow Eliot and Milton and bring in blues and spirituals – conscientiously – in my second book, *Whylah Falls* (1990). When *Saltwater Spirituals* appeared I was still an undergraduate, willing to parade my absorption of the British canon. Whylah Falls came about after I was submerged deep in Africadian community again.

AO&CB *Whylah Falls* (1990) marks another stage in your creation on the background of the history of your native province. This time, on the canvas of a dramatic narrative about love and its pain, you combine varieties of tones, verse and prose species, with the infringement of literary barriers. The book was illustrated with photographs from family archives to elicit a synergistic reaction on the part of the reader. Moreover, in 1999,

Whylah Falls was published in the form of a play. This happens with other books as well. *Execution Poems. The Black Acadian Tragedy of George and Rue* (2001), a condemnation of racism in Canada, becomes a novel – *George and Rue* – in 2005. *Beatrice Chancy* (1999), a play about the (officially) unrecognized slavery in Canada is rewritten as an opera libretto. Is this process of hybridization just because the "rules" have become obsolete, or have you other reasons to experiment with the forms of your matter?

GEC I'm running out of time, so your long, rich question must receive a paltry response: the hybridization has really been accidental. *Whylah Falls, Beatrice Chancy,* and the story about my killer cousins, George and Rufus Hamilton, took different forms generally because other people wanted them in those ways: a theatre company wanted to stage *Whylah Falls*; a composer wanted an opera libretto (*Beatrice Chancy*), and a publisher wanted poems that I'd originally intended for the novel (*George & Rue*).

AO&CB When, at forty, you published the tenth anniversary volume of *Whylah Falls*, your introductory "ars poetica" invoked many names of literary theorists. Was it the voice of the professor who wanted to show his students that in order to break the rules you have first to know and master them?

GEC That essay was first written in 1991 – the first year of my doctoral candidacy at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. I was exhibiting my very own "Anxiety of Influence"!

AO&CB You are the great nephew of the famous Canadian black concert singer Portia White. So there is no surprise you have written three opera libretti. The above mentioned *Beatrice Chancy* was followed by *Québécité*, an illustration of multiculturalism, and *Trudeau*, about the artisan of the policy of multiculturalism, whom you present as a traveller on the global stage of politics , one able to exchange opinions with the young Kennedy (not yet President), Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, and Nelson Mandela. The staging of these libretti has put you in the position of collaborating with composers, stage director, singers etc. What did the poet gain and what did he lose during this experience? Did the impulse of publishing / republishing the libretti as poetic dramas come from a certain frustration of the writer and the intention to make the reader actually perceive all the subtle and various cultural references that only your verse and its echoes could suggest?

GEC Your formidable question already inscribes the response: yes! Feeling frustrated at having to omit so many ludic elements from the libretti, I had to flesh out the 'play' versions. But *Beatrice Chancy* the play is most radically distinct from *Beatrice Chancy* the opera. My other libretti and 'play' versions run closer in length and style and characters.

AO&CB When speaking of yourself as a "tyro poet," you mentioned a "suspect septet" of personalities who had influenced you: avant-garde reactionary Ezra Pound, dictator-philosopher Mao Zedong, free-speech poet Irving Layton, jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, pop bard Bob Dylan, orator Malcolm X, and the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau. How does the mature writer see them, now?

GEC They are still guiding lights! However, I do hold reservations about them all, but especially Mao and Pound. Mao was a bloody, maniacal dictator and Pound's anti-Semitism and racism mar his work indelibly. But I like the image of the intellectual/artist in combat – though I prefer humanitarian pacifism to any actual shooting and bombing and stabbing or poisoning….

AO&CB One of your articles refers to a subject very much discussed by Romanian and other Central European intellectuals: the treason of intellectuals. What exactly made you write about such a treason?

GEC Julien Benda, the French Jewish intellectual and writer, published, in 1927, a scathing denunciation of European intellectuals enraptured with Mussolini in particular and with fascism in general: he saw (rightly) the trumpeting of ethnic nationalism as a denial of intellectual freedom. Pierre Elliott Trudeau dusted off Benda and gave his book a French Canadian/Quebecois 'twist' by denouncing Quebecois nationalists as, again, anti-intellectual heathens, more-or-less. I took up these predecessors' arguments in trying to think through the attractions of Pan-Africanism and Black nationalism for African-Canadian intellectuals. I wanted us to realize that it's difficult to follow Malcolm X when your Head of State is Elizabeth II!

AO&CB Your academic book entitled *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature* was published in the same year (2002) as Linda Hutcheon and Mario Valdes, also professors at the University of Toronto, published a collection of standpoints referring to the theoretical aspects of "rethinking literary history." Could your book be viewed as a contribution to this discussion initiated by the International Association of Comparative Literature, or should it be set in a different context as intention and impact in and outside Canada?

GEC I don't think there's a conscious connection. But it's impossible to be at the University of Toronto and NOT be influenced by Linda Hutcheon!

AO&CB There are discussions about the possible similitudes between post-colonialism and post- communism. Paraphrasing Leonard Cohen's poem title, could we compare mythologies?

GEC Yes, the two stances may be compared: some post-colonialism was (democratic) socialist in orientation; some post-communism was anti-Soviet-colonialism in inspiration. However, the two stances differ in that post-colonialism was anti-Western in conception (see Fanon), while post-communism has been pro-Western (so Poland, for instance, decamped to Iraq as part of the "Coalition of the Willing"). Even so, the two intellectual positions do share a similar analysis in terms of describing the persistence of corruption, while also finding themselves disarmed before the forces of "globalization." Both post-colonialism and post-communism ask the exact same question: what is the provenance of the (nation) State in an era when "imperialism" is "economical," liquid, fluid capital/ism, able to go anywhere and do anything, to enrich some (a few) and beggar (many) others, beyond national borders, with the pressing of a few electronic keyboard keys? No longer can armies 'protect" nations against market forces. What do "national" independence and prosperity mean when international markets determine the value of your GDP and your national "cost-of-living" – and arm your military, train your police, and spy on your communications?

AO&CB You received a prize at the festival of the Romanian poetry magazine *Poesis* in 2006. Besides the volume *Poeme incendiare* (Cogito: Oradea, 2006), a number of your poems were published in translation also in other literary periodicals: *Luceafărul, Nord Literar, Viața românească.* Do you think – in comparison with your experience in other countries – that the Romanian readers and those present at your public readings here are more receptive?

GEC Yes! Heartily, I answer, "Yes!" I did have a book published in Italian last year, and I have enjoyed a good reception from Italian audiences. So, maybe my work appeals most to the spirit of the old Roman Empire!

AO&CB On the closing evening of the Baia Mare conference you performed a poetry reading on the stage of the Puppet Theatre – a performance that also included classical folk, jazz and the Iza group's "aboriginal" music. During your reciting and marking the rhythms of your poems in a kind of dance, the musicians couldn't help but accompany you. Did your collaborations with composer D. D. Jackson, who wrote the music for your jazz opera libretti, change the way you read your poems? Or was there just a spontaneous meeting of ancient rhythms?

GEC I learned, about 30 years ago, that poetry is also song. (It is a Black aesthetic?) How wonderful that the Romanian musicians and singers also have Soul! Demonstrably!

AO&CB Your opera libretti (later published as independent books) seem to become "all inclusive," joining the sounds and words of high culture with echoes and suggestions of contemporary pop culture. In your Shavian stage directions, there are also references to films, fashion, TV series, cartoons, etc. Do you think your European readers could detect and respond to all these cultural citations, allusions, parodies?

GEC I should like to think so. Then again, in this age of Google, the only mysteries remaining to us are either theological or scientific!

AO&CB Entering your works, readers experience a Borgesian "garden of forking paths," a garden with centrifugal effect, sending them out, projecting them on the information highway to look for the hypertext. Nevertheless, at the same time, they find a lot of "wrapping" stuff, which could be called perimeta-texts: epigraphs, introductions, pre- and postfaces, footnotes, bibliographies, various lists, and so on. Do you suffer the "anxiety of influence" syndrome or are there other reasons? What is your game? A kind of hide-and-seek with the readers?

GEC Jouissance! I like to think of the book as a version of the Bible: something for everyone, and all of it is (potentially) meaningful.

AO&CB Your latest book of poetry, *Illicit Sonnets*, reminds one of the eroticism of many of your earlier poems. But there is also a lot of versified violence in your books. Are these meant to challenge, undermine and subvert social prejudices? Isn't it dangerous from a moral standpoint – even if it's not your own voice and the poet speaks on behalf of a character – isn't it dangerous to put beautiful poetry in the mouth of a murderer or a rapist?

GEC Perhaps! But Shakespeare and Ovid and Dante do so! Maybe Sappho too? One follows these role-models!

AO&CB If one starts to enumerate the titles of your books of poetry, there is a series whose label-titles are colours: *Gold Indigoes* (2000), *Blue* (2001), *Black* (2006), *Red* (2011), and you say the following will be *Gold*. Does the colour in the title express the mood of the poems inside the book or is your intention different?

GEC As an intellectual "of colour," I've come to appreciate – playfully – the metaphorical nuances of various tints. For instance, in English, "blue" can refer to both sorrow (blues) or repression (blue pencil) or lasciviousness (blue movie) or intellectuality (blue-stocking); similarly, "black" can refer to hurt (black eye), evil (black heart), profits (black ink), etc. I do like playing with the various moods and notions that the associations of a particular colour present. So, I like to call *Blue, Black,* and *Red* my "colouring books." These "labels" do permit me to range all over concepts-like a kid with crayons!

AO&CB You have a wide knowledge and subtle understanding of the great poetry throughout centuries and from all over the world. Does your list include any Romanian poet?

GEC Ovid! Or should I say, "Ovid"?!! I do look forward to reading more Romanian poetry and poets. I did have the fine experience of meeting Nina Cassian – and reading alongside her – at the World Poetry Festival in Toronto, Canada, in 1993; and I've enjoyed reading my Romanian-Canadian friends, Flavia Cosma and Diana Malone. I've also read Herta Müller, of course. What strikes me – generally – about Romanian poetry is the fervent, florid imagination, always positing tales that could be fairy tales, except that they are intensely, painfully human.

AO&CB (bonus question – within hours of the above interview, Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize in Literature; hence the final, unplanned question)**:** What were your expectations before the 2013 Nobel Prize winner was announced, and what were your feelings afterwards?

GEC I did not follow at all the media musings about potential 2013 recipients of the Nobel Prize for Literature, but the international reputations of Atwood, Munro, and Ondaatje marked them all as considerable contenders. Given the role that this trio has played in raising the profile of (English) Canadian literature globally, it would make sense that, if the Nobel Committee were to recognize an explicit (!) Canadian for the Literature Prize (I'm excepting the native-born Canadian – but American-identified – Literature Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow), it would be one of this group. I could not be surprised that one would be so honoured. That said, it would seem to me that Atwood has crafted the most fully accomplished oeuvre, given her mastery of lyric poetry, prose fiction (short and long), non-fiction (essays, memoir, literary criticism), and an opera libretto. Not only that, but she has been the preeminent literary 'face' of English Canada since the 1960s – with charity, TV, magazine cover, and newspaper-guest appearances. Ondaatje's achievements are also formidable and worthy of global admiration and award, and he is also accomplished in poetry and fiction and anthology editing (which Atwood has also undertaken). Too, he has been a public face of Canadian literature internationally, as well as domestically. I must stress my disadvantage in any discussion of the merits of Alice Munro, for I have little knowledge of her work, and what I did read was read decades ago. However, I can say that I have not been as impressed by her style as much as I have been wowed by Ondaatje's and provoked by Atwood's. Nor is her profile as commensurately larger-than-life as has been the case for her peers. I am aware that she has had dedicated (legions of) fans in both the U.S. and Canada. But I wonder if this is because she is essentially writing about small-town and bourgeois life – in the appealing manner of, say, Stephen Leacock, or even Jane Austen, though Munro's subject matter is later 20th century and so commensurately

"bleaker" than is the case for the Red Tory humourist Leacock and the Neo-Platonist humourist Austen. On the American side, I would again set Munro in the context of John Updike, John Cheever, and other blandly comic wits explicating the foibles of middle-brow, middle-class households in bourgeois suburbs or rural hinterlands. Even so, Austen has more "bite," and Leacock has more ideology. If I return to a comparison with Atwood, she, too, has more of a public presence – or sense of mission – re: environmentalism, feminism, anti-neoconservatism, and many of these themes inform her works. (Ondaatje tends to be stridently apolitical – except for issues of the autonomy of the artist, an experimentalist aesthetic, and generic freedom of speech.) I don't mean to suggest that Munro MUST – or should have – engaged social "issues" – besides the personal traumas of disease and deaths of loved ones – not at all. But I'm trying to understand why her work could – should – appeal to those who prefer to think of tragedy as being a bus crash as opposed to the waging of war or the mass murder of Aboriginal women. Of course, the domestic tragedy is just as rich a ground for serious literature as is the narrative of the 'cause celebre.' I will presume – granted the Nobel Prize and hundreds of reviewers and thousands of bookbuyers' opinions – that Munro has written at precisely this calibre about her subjects. One must say "Kudos." However, I admit that I am happier – personally – with either gaudier prose (such as that of Ondaatje) or thornier prose (such as that of Atwood).

Yet, one other Canadian writer who could have – should have – earned Nobel consideration is Mavis Gallant. I have read her work – in bulk, and while I do term it occasionally racist and almost always classist, it is also always consistently interesting, if merely to make me want to argue with her precepts and depictions. Like Munro, Gallant does not propose a direct feminism. Hers is instead complicated by class dynamics and ethnic or religious conflict. But her short stories are more like Katherine Mansfield's – exuding the splendour of irresolvable, psychological conflict: not pleasant stuff. Yet, she, like Munro, has found a ready American audience, perhaps among the Manhattanites with summer digs in Paris or Venice or Nova Scotia (for that matter). Even so, I do think that Gallant is deeper – if also more problematic (check out her protagonists' uses of race and ethnic stereotypes) – but she is also, perhaps fatally (in terms of her Nobel chances), much less representative of stay-at-home Canadianness (provincialism?) than is Munro. As a Canadian, however, I must and do celebrate Munro's receipt of the Nobel.

One last note. On the day that the award was announced, I happened to be en route to Stockholm, from Boston, via Toronto and Frankfurt. On the Frankfurt-Stockholm flight, I saw a woman reading an Alice Munro paperback: that's how I knew that my compatriot Munro had won.

Editor's note: This interview was conducted a few months before Mavis Gallant's death at the age of 91. In memory of Gallant, I hope all CEACS members will re-visit her fine stories.

ANA OLOS / born in Timişoara, educated in her native town and at the university of Cluj, is an independent scholar, translator, and writer. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature (1978) and an MA in Human Rights (2000). Before retiring, she taught English and Canadian Literature at the Faculty of Arts, North University of Baia Mare, where she founded the Canadian Studies Centre (1998). Among her books are a variety of translations to or from Romanian into or from English, as well as *Twas Nice to Meet Findley Angry* (2004) and *The Transdisciplinary Teaching of Canadian Studies* (2007). In 2014 she published the bilingual poetry collection *Circumstantial Poems, Plagiaries and Versifications*.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (17–26)

Four Poems

Quatre poèmes

George Elliott Clarke

Elizabeth Barrett Browning Recalls Robert Browning's Wooing

Against my arid, rigid self—
my supposèd unyielding *Purity*—
Mr. Browning came on, pliant,
as undulant as a libertine.

I did act coy, fey, cold;
I was smoothly difficult.
I guyed up and down staircases,
always at a remove,
one gloved hand on a banister,
the other smothering my smile.
Looked I as unconquerable as Heaven.

Mon père feared I'd prove fertile,
and bear a white spouse
"swarthy droplets,"
exposing the "sooty roots" of our ancestry,
our Afro-exotic breed.

Better that I live—
swore *mon père*—
a breathing, perfumed corpse
than that my offspring wreck

the alabaster emporium
shielding our spurious *Genealogy*.

But Mr. Browning was resolute
to have me dissolute,
and after much gallant caresses,
what had been a welter of blood—
mine heart, became a mine of gold.

(When he "Frenched" me, the feel of his tongue,
serpentine, alive, in my mouth,
had me fainting in thought of his other
intrusive *Member*,
and the two of us "Frenching"
as it eeled into my drooling sex.)

Blushes—unexpected flowers—
pinked my skin, my face,
and *Vices* seemed more like *Blessings*.

As Mr. Browning loomed into our parlour,
and leaned over me at piano or at table,
our garb became more and more relaxed,
and we lounged, almost as one,
sharing *chaise longue* or settee,

then kissing....

O! the hazards of *Leisure*!

A thousand cheerful cups of sherry
I quaffed while his hot whispers
scintillated the air.

He took on apostolic *Authority*,
as I assumed supine *Submission*—
the discipline befitting a *Disciple*.

I felt myself swooning—
like the waves
before Christ's feet.

Now, I worried Mr. Browning might prefer
thin, quivering beauties—
their prosaic busts—

decorating every London theatre balcony—

that he'd choose one lovely, refreshingly young,

not my faded *Innocence*—

my dry, drab

I.

No: He straightened my tangled nerves,
taught me that indoors should flaunt fire
and outdoors vaunt stars.

We jaunted about at dusk,
haunting the sun's gleaming, gold trail
as it trailed off, shining;

and so my own once-stale "*Opulence*"
inspired his vocal eyes.

"Silvery" was I—
because he was *Chivalry*.

Next I fretted I was too alabaster in breast,
too ivory in face,

but truly I feared my father's warning:
My privy "blackness,"
generated via generation,
could yet blacken us all.

What if my babes looked darkies?

Again, Mr. Browning eased my spasmodic titters.
He pledged that we'd wed
and away to Italy,
to drowse our days amid the warm green there
that spites English frost;
and cultivate most cheerful lines
while "Frenching" Italian wines;

and spurn the damnable looking-glass
by passing off darkling chillun
as "Sicilian"

(just as Sicilians do).

Now, Londoners chastise
"unnatural Italy, Sodomite Rome,"
but I pour Chianti out a wicker bottle,
letting redness gallop down my white throat,
while my Bobby laps my lips and tits
in most spirited consumption.

Here he's Brontë's swarthy Heathcliff,
and I'm as smug as a "fellatrix."

Immeasurable *Pleasure* teases us.

I am so constantly wet,
I must gush wine.

I'm now very fond of wine.

[Baia Mare (Romania) 21 septembre mmxiii]

Memoir of Ste. Marie d'Égypte

To Aelia Capitolina—
Olde Jerusalem—
the secret city,
the sacred city of poets,
I go,
whore—
give balm to lovelorn soldiery,
deliver em doubled and redoubled glitter,
dressed-up *Fucking*,
mimicking undressed *Love*.

My quarters' diamond-and-jewel-coloured flames
hypnotize brutes,
and render troops thralls;
my hindquarters drip
a hot and enervating liquor
that dizzies every male.

In my gleaming ex-embassy—
Alexandria—
a city as maritime as the Nile—
Venus casts even Apollo in a pall.
I was, there, as mercantile as the Chinese,
and neither harassed by gold-giving pimps,
nor gouged by em.

My practice has been to suborn Christians
via *Luxury*;
to turn "*Lewdness*"
into *Prudence*—
a prudence that ends *Toils*.

Having roamed Christendom with *Cupidity*—
seducing priests and pirates alike
(with saltwater and rum)—

even I'm surprised
to find Christ

staring me down,
pityingly.

[Cluj/Napoca (Romania) 21 septembre mmxiii]

Cleopatra Eyes Julius Caesar

I.

My *Conqueror* acts as *Justice*—
Tribune for the holy
and those wholly execrable.

Mobs balladry his victories
as luminous, Mars-granted miracles—
exterminations pleasing both to plutocrats
plus gutter folks no better than dirt.

My maybe temporarylover,
this man, I pray, only temporarily, my liege—

ought to heed the harm his countrymen
did that other "J.C.,"

that obscure, if reputedly scrupulous,
prophetic rabbi,
who became the torturers' toy:

Hammer, nails, two boards—
all that was needed
for murder most awful—
plus a Roman spear parting his ribs.

(That man's crucifixion was,
I hear, an unearthly *Torture*;
and the result—his living *Recovery*—
is, I credit, mere rumour.)

II.

I'll signal Caesar that Rome's Senators
love us not,
that their brains seethe with gory plots,
to see him—
living monument—
stabbed to the earth
while a spear is thrust up his *fundament*.

And those who hate my honey'd skin,
are apt to slather me with actual honey,
smear my tanned marble with buttermilk,
then pin—or pen—me in some site
where stinging flies, bees, and wasps,
may irritate my every inch,
digging into even my eyes
and asshole,

so I smother in a smog of bugs:
Insects cramming every orifice,
jamming even nostrils.

III.

Caesar plays "Mr. Justice,"
but Roman *Justice* breeds worms.

The Capitol smokes with disgusting pyres—
residue of Circus-act atrocities,
where lions gulp down "Christians," head-and-foot,
or stallions strain "saints'" four limbs asunder,
or the fumes of burning turds
suffocate upside-down-held "criminals."
Such-and-such a "tragedy" collapses Caesar,
tumble he into the senatorial *fidiculae*[1]

1) Latin: Claws.

Or his “allies”—his “pals”—
will impale him with the points of pens,
perforate him transfixingly,
then press him under boulders,

like a papyrus sheet—

so his blood turns ruddy ink.

Mobs whisper he’s an extreme tyrant;
they lust to rack his body, crack his brain.

I should fly—
like the child Christ—
to my Egypt.

[Peterborough (Ontario) 14 mars mmxiii]

Septimus Clarke[2] Scripts Church Minutes

Light rains and light reigns.

Its downcome snares and rinses.

Where it lives—
or alights—
it arouses—

like *Love*.

Light executes a pitiless massage.
Animal flesh can't help but preen—
even if jealous gods take umbrage.

You even see light right here
in each wine-dipped line—
iridescent as surf.

(No *Opulence*
without *Turbulence*.)

We ain't piebald beings,
but incandescent—

and indecently so

(when naked).

My gold hand jets black ink
your white hand shadows.

[Szentendre (Hungary) 15 septembre mmxi]

2) First clerk of the African Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, 1853.

Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (27–44)

Aspects of Canadian Multiculturalism: History, Policy, Theory and Impact

Aspects du multiculturalisme canadien : histoire, politique, théorie, impact

János Kenyeres

Abstract
This article looks into the history of Canadian multiculturalism by surveying its political and economic background, its roots in political theory, its implementation by policy makers and its impact on Canadian cultural life, as well as the major challenges and criticisms it has been facing since the early 1970s. The government policy of multiculturalism was not an idealistic philosophy but a political necessity which was aimed at establishing a Canadian national identity to be shared by all. Although multiculturalism played an important role in helping minority cultures become visible and recognised by mainstream Canada, the difficulties in creating such a uniform national identity based on the diversity of minority cultures is demonstrated by exactly the works and theoretical debates which arose in the aftermath of the implementation of the multiculturalism policy.

Keywords: multiculturalism, minorities, Canadian cultural life

Résumé
Cet article se penche sur l'histoire du multiculturalisme canadien en sondant son contexte politique et économique, ses racines dans la théorie politique, sa mise en œuvre par les décideurs politiques et son impact sur la vie culturelle canadienne. Ainsi, l'article examine les principaux défis et critiques auxquels le multiculturalisme a été confronté depuis le début des années 1970. La politique gouvernementale du multiculturalisme n'est pas une philosophie idéaliste, mais une nécessité politique qui tente d'établir une identité nationale canadienne pouvant être partagée par tous les Canadiens. Bien que le multiculturalisme ait joué un rôle important en aidant les cultures minoritaires à devenir visibles et intégrées à la société canadienne, les difficultés dans la création d'une telle identité nationale uniforme fondée sur la diversité des cultures minoritaires est démontrée par les travaux et les débats théoriques consécutifs à la mise en œuvre de la politique du multiculturalisme.

Mots-clés: multiculturalisme, minorités, vie culturellecanadienne

Canadian multiculturalism is a doctrine, system of thought and a government policy, extending to the area of political theory, social studies and the humanities, with a significant impact on immigration and everyday life. In recent years it has become a staple of Canadian identity and has been so closely associated with anything Canadian that it is both an unavoidable concept and a commonplace, which latter fact nevertheless does not detract from its applicability and relevance. As a term, multiculturalism is usually regarded as an ideology promoting the coexistence of multiple communities and cultures. As one definition goes, "Multiculturalism is a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity" (Song). In the Canadian context, however, the word is used to describe diverse, albeit interrelated, facts and concepts, such as:

> the demographic reality of a Canadian population made up of peoples and groups representing a plurality of ethnocultural traditions and racial origins; a social ideal or value that accepts cultural pluralism as a positive and distinctive feature of Canadian society; and government policy initiatives designed to recognize, support, and – some might argue – manage cultural and racial pluralism at federal, provincial, and municipal levels. (Troper, 997)

Indeed, the demographic reality, the social ideal and the multicultural policy extending over the various governments of Canada in the past few decades have been a means and driving force by which contemporary Canadian culture and literature have evolved, and which prominently contributed to their form today. The present cultural canon has thus been shaped within the broader context of what Elliott and Fleras call "*engaging diversity as different yet equal*" and a "package of policies and programs for managing diversity by integrating minority women and men into the institutional framework of society" (279). As multiculturalism has had a significant role in the recognition and promotion of minority artists and their work, it has been of great significance in a cultural ontological sense; had it not been for multiculturalism, Canadian culture would probably be essentially different today, with artists and authors coming from minority groups being much less visible.

Considering that Indigenous cultures displayed a great variety of traditions well before pre-contact times, Canadian multiculturalism may be conceived of as going back to time immemorial. Nevertheless, as a conscious policy and system of thought influencing social structures it has been a fairly recent development. As a term, multiculturalism was coined in Canada before it spread to other countries,[1] such as Australia,

1) The word "multi-cultural" was probably first used in writing in *Book IV, The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups* of the *Report* (1969) of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The context in which the term was used is this: "Among those of non-British, non-French origin, some accept official bilingualism without hesitation but categorically reject biculturalism. They consider Canada

and even though, as a result, it is not exclusive to Canada, in the early twenty-first century most Canadians consider multiculturalism an essential element of their national identity, a feature which distinguishes Canada and Canadians from other countries and nations. Having said this, Canadian multiculturalism has been challenged by a number of theoretical concerns and practical problems, and its opponents, such as Neil Bissoondath and Richard Gwyn, contend that multiculturalism leads to ghettoization, promoting differences between ethnic groups rather than establishing a common Canadian identity (Bissoondath 98, 110–111; Gwyn 274).

It is interesting to note that multiculturalism is not an idea which was first conceived within the bounds of philosophy and then implemented by policy makers. On the contrary, its evolution displays an opposite direction of moving from policy making to philosophy, with its direct roots going back to a 1971 policy statement made by Prime Minister Trudeau, which claimed the following:

> A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of ensuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all. (Canada 1978: 45)

The policy statement also deals with the question of "national identity," seeing a natural harmony between a person's individual, cultural or ethnic identity and his or her national allegiance to Canada: "*Canadian identity* will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed, we believe that *cultural pluralism* is the very essence of Canadian identity" (Canada 1978: 50). It was following these political statements that theories of multiculturalism were elaborated by such scholars as Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka, as discussed below.

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to be a country that is officially bilingual but fundamentally multi-cultural. In reply to this objection we wish to repeat that "in our view the term 'biculturalism' covers two main realities. The first is the state of each of the two cultures, and the opportunity of each to exist and flourish. The second is the coexistence and collaborations of these two cultures . . . ." (Canada 1970, 12). As Pat Duffy Hutcheon has remarked, "the Commissioners referred to multiculturalism as it is defined today only in order to refute the premise on which it is based" (Hutcheon, 1988). It must also be mentioned, however, that even though the *Report* claimed that "Acculturation is inevitable in a multi-ethnic country like Canada," it acknowledged that "those whose origin is neither French nor British do not have to cast off or hide their own culture. … Canadian society, open and modem, should be able to integrate heterogeneous elements into a harmonious system, to achieve 'unity in diversity'" (Canada 1970, 6–7). Thus, even with its wavering position, the *Report* was an important step in the road towards recognizing Canada as a multicultural society.

Unlike in the Canadian experience, multiculturalism in other parts of the world, especially in Europe, has proved to be rather unsuccessful. In October 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel admitted that the German model of multicultural society "has utterly failed" (qtd. in Siebold). She stressed that Germany was in need of foreign skilled workers but emphasised that immigrants had to adapt to German society and learn to speak German. In Britain, too, multiculturalism has failed to live up to the expectations. The same has happened in the Netherlands; in June 2011, Dutch Interior Minister Piet Hein Donner submitted to parliament a bill which claimed:

> The government shares the social dissatisfaction over the multicultural society model and plans to shift priority to the values of the Dutch people. In the new integration system, the values of the Dutch society play a central role. With this change, the government steps away from the model of a multicultural society. (qtd. in Kern)

By contrast, in Canada multiculturalism is viewed by many as not only the most adequate way to handle immigration and the coexistence of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but also as the only practice that has gained political support from the various governments of Canada since its introduction in 1971. In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted, whose Section 27 recognized multiculturalism as a Canadian value, which was then further confirmed and broadened by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988. Other laws were also enacted, contributing to the formation of a coherent multicultural system; the Broadcasting Act of 1991, for instance, states that Canadian broadcasting should reflect the diversity of Canadian cultures. As a result of the policy, backed by legislation and strongly supported by all levels of the educational system from preschool to university, multiculturalism has seeped into the various levels and groups of society and exerted a massive impact on all walks of life, dramatically transforming social, political and cultural thinking. In this sense, as Troper asserts, it has become

> a social ideal, a value that regards the growing Canadian pluralism as not only a positive aspect of society worth preserving but also one that reflects positively on the Canadian way of life. Accordingly, a multicultural Canada is accepted as a country in which the norms of civic behaviour and the modes of social interaction are respectful, even supportive, of ethnocultural and ethno-racial pluralism. In this way, the idea of multiculturalism carries with it visions of a society characterized by inter-ethnic and inter-racial harmony, respect for cultural differences, and a belief that ethnic group cohesion and individual fulfilment are not mutually exclusive. Rather they can best be realized when individuals and communities are enabled to define their cultural identities in an atmosphere of respect for the right of others to do likewise. (998)

Multiculturalism was officially announced by Pierre Trudeau in Canadian Parliament on 8 October 1971; however, the proclamation was preceded by a number of previous laws extending human rights within Canada. In 1947 Saskatchewan adopted a bill of rights, the first of its kind in Canada, ensuring both fundamental freedoms and equality rights, prohibiting racial, ethnic and religious discrimination in public life. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly, Canada included, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Saskatchewan's example was followed by other provincial legislations in framing anti-discriminatory laws. This process was symbolically completed when Parliament passed the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960. Thus, multiculturalism can be viewed as opening a new chapter in this lineage, expanding personal rights to collective rights to the benefit of all.

In the early 1970s the atmosphere was ripe for a change in the official policy regarding minority groups for at least three additional reasons. The first can be connected to the economy. After World War II Canada became a major industrial power, and economic growth required new workforce, to be supplied by immigrants. Therefore, restrictive immigration laws, which had been in force since the 1920s, were gradually lifted, replaced by less stringent regulations, allowing a large number of foreigners to find their new home in Canada and put their talents to the boosting of its economy. As a result of the new immigration laws entering into force and a massive number of immigrants arriving in Canada, the country's ethno-cultural composition went through a significant change, requiring new approaches on behalf of the federal government.

Secondly, the proclamation of the government's multiculturalism policy can be linked to the crisis leading to the depletion and exhaustion of the national identity cherished by people of British descent, the single largest "ethnic" group of Canada. British Canadian identity before the Second World War mainly saw itself as a strong outpost of the British Empire and as a guardian of its values, surrounded by a hostile Quebec in the east, the alien forces of nature in the north and a potentially aggressive United States in the south. The feeling of being an integral part of Britain and defending British values far away in the New World was a central element of this identity. With the collapse of the British Empire and the decline of British political dominance, however, this sense of belonging lost its foothold. British values gradually became void and meaningless (cf. Troper, 1001).

Thirdly, the bicultural model as a government policy composed of the two dominant cultures of Canada, the English and the French, failed to live up to the expectations after the Second World War. This became obvious with the rise of nationalism in Quebec in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, which finally led to the October Crisis in 1970, requiring military force to be employed in Montreal and Ottawa, intensifying strains between Anglophones and Francophones (cf. Morton 281–283).

Therefore, due to the growing number of immigrants and immigrant groups arriving in Canada, the loss of the British imperial dream in which English Canada's identity used to have its moorings – now all gone – and in the face of the rising tensions between English and French Canada, demonstrating the failure of biculturalism, policy makers had no choice but to search for a different social and cultural model on which national unity and a new national identity could be based. From this point of view, the multicultural policy introduced by the Trudeau government was less an initiative than a response to the call of the times.

Practically speaking, from the point of view of the majority community, assimilation had been traditionally viewed as the most expedient tool to solve the issues of societal and cultural difference. With the huge influx of immigrants in North America in the second half of the twentieth century, assimilation (or, as it was often called, "Anglo-conformity"), as well as the melting-pot model, chiefly experimented with in the United States, which was intended to create a new, unified population out of the combination and admixture of different ethnic and cultural communities, no longer managed to resolve the challenges arising from the coexistence of various groups with diverse backgrounds. In Canada, the bicultural model emerging after the Second World War, recognizing the community rights of the two large ethno-cultural parts of Canada, the English and French, remained inadequate with the indigenous and immigrant populations left out of play. John Porter's influential study, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, published in 1965, was an important step in this realisation. The keyword in the title was not "mosaic" – an image first used to describe Canada's cultures in John Murray Gibbon's 1938 book *Canadian Mosaic* – but "vertical," pointing to the lack of equal chances for minority groups in Canadian society.

The above also serves as an explanation of the relative success and applicability of multiculturalism in Canada as opposed to European countries. Among the specific reasons, the nature of national identity is of special significance. Whereas in Canada the dominant Anglo-British identity experienced a crisis which led to its waning and crumbling away, European nations have not been exposed to a similar challenge. In Canada, the Anglo-British identity was easily and successfully replaced with the narrative that (with the only exception of Aboriginal people, but, in a sense even them) everyone was an immigrant, therefore equally a newcomer, which paved the way for the multicultural discourse. In Europe, in the absence of the weakening of national identities, the prevailing majority communities have continued to enjoy a dominant position with a national awareness of their own even after the appearance of increasing numbers of immigrant groups. Therefore, the European social context is much less suitable for multiculturalism to become the dominant social ideal.

Having said this, it is obvious that despite its general appeal and popularity, multiculturalism has received considerable suspicion and animosity in Canada, too. Both on the Anglophone and Francophone side, there were voices which considered the policy harmful to their own status as one of the two major communities of Canada. On the other hand, many thought that the policy served the interests of English-Canadian primacy by diverting the attention of immigrants, native and other minority groups from the political arena and the economy to the cultural field, barring them from power. At the same time, some representatives of minority groups decried multiculturalism as an inadequate substitute for financial aid. And of course there were those who believed, not without reason, that the policy served the immediate political interest of obtaining the "ethnic vote."[2] If we add the theoretical concerns regarding the Canadian way of "managing diversity," it is clear that multiculturalism has been through a lot of controversy to our day.

While it is true that multiculturalism as a government policy had been adopted before its specific theoretical background was elaborated in political philosophy, it must also be recognised that the constituents of multiculturalism in the original policy statement – such as the terms "freedom,""national unity,""individual identity" and "fair play for all" – can be traced back to a long tradition of Western philosophy dealing with such fundamental concepts as social justice, the social good, the social contract and human dignity. In order to see the extent to which the policy statement rests on the basic tenets of Western social theory, it is worth examining one of the key sentences of the Trudeau proclamation: "National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions." The above sentence reveals several aspects of the original idea of multiculturalism: the first is that the purpose of multiculturalism (and of its adoption by the government) was to achieve national unity. The second is that the proclamation interprets national unity from the point of view of the individual, "in a deeply personal sense," as it asserts, implying that this "deeply personal sense" is the only one which is worth considering or, alternately, which has a proper meaning. Thirdly, the proclamation claims that "confidence in one's own individual identity" is a prerequisite to the desired national unity, something in the absence of which national unity cannot be established or even imagined. Next the statement maintains that only out of the "confidence in one's own individual identity" can grow respect for the identity of other people, as well as a willingness to enter into dialogue with them. This call for a reasonable dialogue had a special significance at the time when the

2) The growing importance of ethnic voters in politics prior to the introduction of the multiculturalism policy is discussed in Champion 23–46. However, as Troper remarks, the political manoeuvrings did not work "as well as politicians had hoped or those opposed to multiculturalism feared. Individuals of non-British or non-French descent do not vote as a single bloc" (Troper 1003).

announcement was made due to the growing number of immigrants and the rising tensions and lack of communication between Anglophone and Francophone people in Canada, known as the "Two Solitudes" (as disseminated by Hugh MacLennan's 1945 novelof the same title). The policy statement thus deems multiculturalism as a means to achieve the goal of national unity, which can only be realised through "confidence in one's own individual identity," implying that individual identity cannot be complete if deprived of its constituent elements, including those which link the individual to certain cultural, ethnic or religious groups within society. It is also interesting to observe the strong bond of the original formulation of multiculturalism to the philosophy of individualism; it is the individual who is in the centre of the above line of thought; it is the individual citizen around whom the whole argumentation turns.

As mentioned above, multiculturalism as an academic theory started with some delay as compared to the government policy but quickly established itself as an autonomous branch of political philosophy. As a discipline, multiculturalism is concerned with minority rights and the just treatment of minority groups. Since western philosophy primarily rests on an emphasis of liberalism and individual rights, attention given to the rights of minorities within society is a relatively late development. For liberalism, chiefly concerned with individual rights and values, collective rights are to some extent out of focus and of secondary significance. Once the conditions for a decent and dignified human life are ensured for the individual, liberalism argues, the major goals have been achieved and there is no need for great concern.

The two prominent Canadian theoreticians of multiculturalism, Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka, belong to two different branches of theory. Taylor approaches multiculturalism from a communitarian position and offers a communitarian critique of liberalism (cf. Song). Challenging the liberal view which gives primacy to individual rights and liberties over community rights and collective goods, and rejecting the notion that the individual is prior to the community, Taylor considers social goods "irreducibly social" (cf. 1995, 136–140) and acknowledges that the need for recognition "comes to the fore in a number of ways in today's politics, on behalf of minority or 'subaltern' groups, in some forms of feminism and in what is today called the politics of 'multiculturalism'" (1994, 25). According to Taylor, diverse cultures are irreducibly social goods and should be recognised as being of equal worth: "the further demand we are looking at here is that we all recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their worth" (1994, 64). In addition, within the framework of the politics of difference, which, as he contends, is "is full of denunciations of discrimination and refusals of second-class citizenship" and which "grows organically out of the politics of universal dignity" (1994, 39), a concept he traces back to Rousseau and Kant, there comes the need for providing special rights to minority groups: "So members of aboriginal bands will get certain rights and pow-

ers not enjoyed by other Canadians, if the demands for native self-government are finally agreed on, and certain minorities will get the right to exclude others in order to preserve their cultural integrity, and so on" (1994, 39–40).

Although Will Kymlicka's philosophical thought emerges out of the framework of liberalism, his conclusions regarding multiculturalism are similar to those of Taylor. Kymlicka distinguishes between three large "group-differentiated" (or, in other words, group-specific) rights: "self-government rights (the delegation of powers to national minorities, often through some form of federalism); polyethnic rights (financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with particular ethnic or religious groups); and special representation rights (guaranteed seats for ethnic or national groups within the central institutions of the larger state)" (1995, 6–7). In Kymlicka's model, furthermore, Canadian minorities fall into two large categories: national minorities and immigrant groups. National minorities (or minority nations) are composed of the First Nations and Quebecois population, who are founding nations of Canada and have a unique role in the history of the country. Immigrant (or "polyethnic") groups are also entitled to a number of special rights in Kymlicka's system, but these differ according to their particular needs and also on account of the fact that (with the exception of refuges) they voluntarily chose to leave their homeland and relinquished having access to their native culture. In this sense, minority nations deserve stronger rights from the state than immigrant groups on account of the fact that minority nations did not choose their minority position. Whereas minority nations should be granted the right to self-government, polyethnic groups are not supposed to enjoy this right as they have come to the state of their own will and thus are responsible to adopt the standards of their new country and integrate into the new society. But they, too, are entitled to a number of rights, including exemptions from the force of certain laws (such as wearing a helmet on a motorcycle) and their special needs must also be accommodated.

When discussing the nature of Canadian multiculturalism, one is confronted with diverging views that appear to be irreconcilable. Did multiculturalism bring about social cohesion? Did it change Canadian society for the better? Did it strengthen Canada's democracy? Did it promote the arts? These questions are all related to the essence and practical implementation of Canadian multiculturalism and can be brought into connection with the concept of "immature" and "mature" societies, as formulated by Northrop Frye. According to Frye,

> A primitive or embryonic society is one in which the individual is thought of as primarily a function of the social group. In all such societies a hierarchical structure of authority has to be set up to ensure that the individual does not get too far out of line. A mature society, in contrast, understands that its primary aim is to develop a genuine individuality in its

> members. In a fully mature society the structure of authority becomes a function of the individuals within it, all of them, without distinctions of sex, class, or race, living, loving, thinking, and producing with a sense of space around them. Throughout history practically all societies have been primitive ones in our present sense: a greater maturity and a genuine concern for the individual peeps out occasionally, but is normally smothered as society collapses back again into its primitive form. (8)

The question is, therefore, whether multiculturalism has moved Canada towards a "mature" society in Frye's sense. Instead of offering a simplistic answer, the following pages are intended to examine some differing arguments on the role that multiculturalism has played in Canada in the past few decades.

Regarding the practical impact of the multiculturalism policy, it is beyond any doubt that the government statements of the early 1970s were not just fine words but led to specific cultural programs launched by the Canadian government. The idea of the state devising and implementing a "cultural policy" raises suspicion and often evokes bad memories in many; however – and especially in view of this fact – it is worth looking into the various initiatives to reveal the original plan, the way in which it was put into practice, the extent to which it transformed Canada's cultural establishment and the situation of the individual artist, and some significant reactions by intellectuals in Canada.

Since 1972, there has been a minister in charge of multiculturalism, and in 1973 the Department of the Secretary of State established the Canadian Multiculturalism Council as well as a Multiculturalism Directorate. Several specific initiatives were launched in order to support writers and artists from diverse backgrounds on all three levels of state administration: the federal, the provincial and the municipal. Out of these three levels on which multiculturalism was implemented, federal initiatives proved to be the most comprehensive and efficient. One of the contributors to these programs on the federal level was the Hungarian-born Judy Young, who spent twenty-five years directing multiculturalism and inter-ethnic relations programs for the government of Canada,[3] and her own account provides a knowledgeable and authentic source for the specific details of the initiatives which were put in place in the course of the operation of the policy.[4]

The programs extended not only to social and cultural affairs but had an influence on education, the justice system, the police, the media, healthcare, social institutions and even the economy. The principal objectives of the programs included "helping

3) Cf. Young 2008.

4) The discussion below about the programs is primarily based on Judy Young's article "No Longer 'Apart'? Multiculturalism Policy and Canadian Literature." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33.2 (2001): 88–116, which provides ample details about the specific implementation of the policy.

the full and active participation of Canadians of all origins in society; working toward social justice and the elimination of discrimination; and creating a sense of belonging and attachment to a Canada that recognizes and respects the value of diversity" (Young 2001, 95). These objectives were, in turn, aimed at creating a cohesive society which acknowledges both individual and collective identity.

The 1971 policy announcement was followed by several specific government programs assisting the implementation of the policy. The Writing and Publication Program started in 1977–78, supplementing the Performing and Visual Art Program and the Canadian Ethnic Studies Program, which supported research. According to the Program brochure, the Writing and Publication Program served two purposes: "to encourage the writing and publishing efforts of writers who use the non-official languages for their creative work as well as those writers who use the official languages but who have a specific cultural experience to convey"; and "to encourage the Canadian literary establishment and the reading public in general to view this literature as an aspect of Canadian literature" (qtd. in Young 2001, 96). In subsequent years these objectives were supplemented with the goal of integrating multicultural literature into the educational system. The examination of the range of literary works which received support at the outset in the 1970s and 80s reveals that, among other languages, German, Hungarian, Polish, Spanish, Ukrainian, Yiddish books and anthologies of prose and poetry were published with the financial assistance of the Program. In order to ensure the accessibility of minority literatures to a wider readership, translations into English and French from third languages were also supported. George Faludy's *East and West* (1978) and Modern *Canadian Punjabi Poetry* (1983) are just two examples of a whole array of translations published separately, in anthologies or as part of special issues of literary journals during the initial years. A special issue of the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* in 1980, for example, contained as many as thirty-four stories translated from almost as many languages, including Armenian, Chinese, Czech, Estonian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Punjabi, Slovak, Spanish and Yiddish, as well as Cree, Micmac, and Ojibway. In addition, several non-literary works were published, concentrating on historical and cultural topics. Contacts were made with "mainstream" writers, publishers, academics and libraries to advertise the Program and its initiatives and to promote the organization of public readings and conferences. Various organisations received financial support to invite representatives of the minority literatures to their own events and academic conferences were encouraged to discuss multiculturalism. Public readings were held by such prestigious organizations as the League of Canadian Poets and the Vancouver Writers Festival. The Program also initiated a range of studies to explore ethnic literatures so that the information gathered could be used by academics and teachers in their work. This led to the publication of works analysing the output of writers of Hispanic, Hungarian,

Italian, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu or other South Asian backgrounds, as well as black and Quebec writers of various origins. This is especially noteworthy in light of the fact that with the exception of Watson Kirkconnell,English-Canadian literary critics until the 1980s had almost completely ignored immigrant literature written in the minority languages (cf. Rasporich and Seiler 312).[5]

In the second phase of the Program the main objective was to assist minority writers and their work in becoming an integral part of mainstream Canadian literature and the Canadian cultural establishment. This took place in the mid-1980s, which was symbolically signalled by a special issue of *Canadian Literature*, the principal academic journal in the field, with the title *A/Part*, dedicated to the question of Canadian literature and multiculturalism. *A/Part* contained the papers delivered at the 1984 Ottawa Conference on Language, Culture, and Literary Identity in Canada, the first major conference on this subject, co-organised by the Program. Among already established authors such as Austin Clarke, Louis Dudek, NaimKattan, Joy Kogawa, Henry Kreisel, John Marlyn and Bill Valgardson, the work of some lesser known writers, such as Moyez Vassanji, Waclaw Iwanjuk and Magda Zalán, also appeared. One of the focal points was novelist Josef Škvorecký's keynote address. The special issue of *Canadian Literature* was a breakthrough in bringing hitherto unknown minority writers and critics (including George Bisztray) to the attention of the general reading public and critics, and was followed by additional special editions on multiculturalism.

In the period between 1973–1992, over 1,300 publications appeared as a result of Program grants, excluding writing or translation grants, and the conference, reading, promotion and research grants also awarded during those years (Young 2001, 99). As a result of this process, after the initial years writers coming from minority groups had a fair chance of winning established Canadian grants. Today many of the most renowned Canadian writers are first or second generation immigrants whose work has become an inseparable part of the Canadian literary establishment. As the Multiculturalism Program is considered to have achieved its principal goals, as of 1998–99, it no longer offers funding for literary and arts projects.

Regarding the question of the success of the multiculturalism policy and whether multiculturalism marginalizes artists coming from minority groups, Young concedes, on the one hand, that "[i]t is clear that many writers (and other artists) are still struggling to be heard and many are excluded from the recognition and active participation that is the multicultural ideal" (2001, 105) and, on the other hand, that "affiliation with an ethnic or racial or gender group may provide support and intellectual stimulation for some" while "[f]or others it is seen as a ghetto to be broken out

5) Kirkconnell published translations of poetry by émigré poets in the volume *Canadian Overtones* in 1935 and dedicated a section to "New Canadian Letters" in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* from 1937 to 1964.

of" (2001,109). Nevertheless, she is of the firm view that "Multiculturalism did not marginalize artists; marginalization was a fact of life before the Multiculturalism policy" (2001, 105). Young makes some relevant additional observations; the first relates to the ambiguous and in fact interchangeable nature of the centre and the margins, which places the above questions in a postmodern perspective:

> we can no longer unequivocally say where the centre is and where the margins. In our pluralist (post-modern? post-colonial?) society it is no longer clear who is where. Nor can we assume that the centre is what everyone aspires to or that being on the margins is all negative. It can be very positive to be on the margins and many writers prefer to be there because it is creative or because they can critique better from a position outside the centre. (2001, 106)

The second observation points to the uncertain position and inadequate nature of ethnic identity as a category to differentiate artists:

> Not only is the centre/margin distinction ambiguous, so is the ethnic identity of the writer. One cannot lump together all writers of a given origin on the basis of that origin alone, even if there are identifiable communities of writers . . . "Visible minority", writers of "colour", or Aboriginal writers are no more appropriate as artistic categories than English or French-Canadian. All such terms (often used for convenience) are inaccurate and hide not only the essentially artistic qualities but also the diversity inherent in all of them. (Young 2001, 106–107)

The third observation expands on this point, claiming that it is a fallacy to conceive of individual experience, perspective, identity and the various art forms and other categories through which works are seen as static and fixed; rather they should be thought of as fluid, altering and subject to change: "the complexities, paradoxes, and ambiguities in the experience of the writers are reflected in their work which is characterized by shifting perspectives, multiple identities, hybrid art forms, transnational connections, and a constant questioning about who we are and where is home" (Young 2001, 107). These are substantial questions inherently linked to the nature of contemporary literature, and this approach, far from exaggerating the place and role of multiculturalism, regards the multicultural reality only as one of the essential factors shaping present-day art, the others being such fundamental contexts as postmodernism and postcolonialism.

Examining the history and summarising the principal assertions of the critiques that multiculturalism has received in the past four decades, Joseph Garcea concludes that they come from three major stances: "the anti-multiculturalism perspective, the

laissez-faire multiculturalism perspective, and the reformist multiculturalism perspective" and suggests that even though they are inadequate, unsubstantiated or problematical, they should be taken seriously by policy makers as they "have considerable support among intellectuals and members of the general public" (155).[6] Phil Ryan attributes some of the current debates over multiculturalism to the fact that critics are not talking about the same phenomenon: "The wide range of passionate opinions about multiculturalism suggests that it is a concept around which clarity is lacking" (6). This view is supported by the examples invoked below.

Opinions supporting the idea of multiculturalism maintain that both theory and practice have promoted recognition and social cohesion and created a social texture in which the principle of equal chances has been reinforced. By contrast, critics of multiculturalism, such as Neil Bissoondath and Richard Gwyn, are of the view that multiculturalism leads to the cementing of differences and the creation of cultural ghettos in society. Kymlicka disagrees with the viewpoints of Gwyn and Bissoondath, who "make very similar claims about the results of the policy" (Kymlicka 1998, 16) and refutes Bissoondath's assertions. In his book *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Bissoondath claims "multiculturalism has led to 'undeniable ghettoization'" and "[i]nstead of promoting integration, it encourages immigrants to form 'self-contained' ghettos 'alienated from the mainstream', and this ghettoization is 'not an extreme of multiculturalism but its ideal: a way of life transported whole, a little outpost of exoticism preserved and protected'" (qtd. in Kymlicka 1998, 16). By reference to empirical evidence from the past few decades, including statistical figures, Kymlicka demonstrates that, in contrast with Bissoondath's (and Gwyn's) statements, political and societal integration of immigrants into "mainstream" Canada has been largely successful (cf. Kymlicka 1998, 16–24).

Since Bissoondath has been one of the most influential critics of multiculturalism (cf. Ryan 23), it is worth expanding on his views in some more detail. Some sociologists, such as Pat Duffy Hutcheon, hear the voice of concern in Bissoondath's critique: "Bissoondath . . . expressed the fear that the policy of multiculturalism, far from promoting understanding and acceptance, has instead divided citizens by underscoring differences" (Hutcheon 1999, 188). Indeed, other claims by Bissoondath about the superficial nature in which different cultures tend to be represented at social events reveal a sense of alarm and bewilderment. As Bissoondath writes, "[t]he public face of Canadian multiculturalism is flashy and attractive; it emerges with verve and gaiety

6) In the course of a survey of the criticism Canadian multiculturalism has received, Garcea distinguishes between ten different perspectives from which it has been critiqued, grouping them into four general themes: "multiculturalism segregates the population in Canada"; "multiculturalism is problematical for the Canadian, Quebecois, and Aboriginal cultures, identities, and nationalism projects"; "multiculturalism perpetuates conflicts between and within groups; multiculturalism hinders equity and equality in society and the economy" (Garcea 152–153).

from the bland stereotype of traditional Canada 'ethnic' festivals," and compares this representation to "a folksy, Canadian mosaic version of the jungle Cruise at Walt Disney World in Florida" (Bissondath 1994, 82). Thus, Bissoondath argues:

> Our approach to multiculturalism encourages the devaluation of that which it claims to wish to protect and promote. Culture becomes an object for display rather than the heart and soul of the individuals formed by it. Culture manipulated into social and political usefulness becomes folklore – as René Lévesque said – lightened and simplified, stripped of the weight of the past. None of the cultures that make up our "mosaic" seems to have produced history worthy of exploration or philosophy worthy of consideration. (Bissoondath 1994, 88)

Much as these words are harsh and even exaggerated in light of the overall impact of multiculturalism, one should keep in mind that Bissoondath's comments are directed against some popular manifestations of the policy, which he nevertheless considers as their typical and exclusive form. Indeed his views reflect the general image of multiculturalism prevalent in the 1970s, when substantial funding was spent on colourful festivities and their advertisements, showing ethnic people happily smiling in their national costumes. In "Endings," the concluding part of his book *Selling Illusions*, Bissoondath quotes the *Report* of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which were partly replaced and partly continued by the new policy of multiculturalism, as a model which Canada should have adopted instead of multiculturalism:

> Integration, in the broad sense, does not imply the loss of an individual's identity and original characteristics or of his original language and culture. Man is a thinking and sensitive being; severing him from his roots could destroy an aspect of his personality and deprive society of some of the values he can bring to it. Integration is not synonymous with assimilation. Assimilation implies almost total absorption into another linguistic and cultural group. An assimilated individual gives up his cultural identity, and may even go as far as to change his name. Both integration and assimilation occur in Canada, and the individual must be free to choose whichever process suits him…
>
> The process of integration goes hand in hand with what anthropologists call "acculturation." Anyone who chooses Canada as his adopted country adopts a new style of life, a particular kind of existence . . . Acculturation is the process of adaptation to the environment in which an individual is compelled to live as he adjusts his behaviour to that of the community. (qtd. in Bissoondath 1994, 209)

What can be inferred from the above is that Bissoondath's views derive from the superficial, "folksy" aspect of multiculturalism and that he advocates integration and

acculturation rather than a conception of culture composed of the shallow cultural manifestations of ethnic and other minority groups. Integration and acculturation are, of course, important parts of the multiculturalism policy itself and it is easy to see that Bissoondath's disagreement with the policy stems from his putting a larger weight and stronger emphasis on these factors than what the policy does, which, in turn, attributes more importance to the expression and recognition of minority experience. On the other hand, identifying multiculturalism with its folksy aspect and ignoring those developments on the literary scene which did bring about a specific kind of integration, the integration of the work of minority writers and artists into mainstream culture, risks a biased view, that fails to consider some essential elements required for a detached position.

Another intriguing aspect of the ongoing discussion about the reality brought about by multiculturalism is connected to the fact that the official multiculturalism policy encourages writers and artists to express the immigrant experience, or at least some kind of "specific" difference, even when the individual artist would wish to do otherwise. In this way, old-time "Anglo-conformism" recurs in the form of a requirement, or the artist's belief in a requirement, to conform to the expectations of the multiculturalism policy. This is not only a problem linked to authenticity and its absence but also a fervent topic appearing in literary works and mentioned in theoretical discussions, turning this question into a meta-theme. Carrie Dawson cites several examples of such occurrences: in Rohinton Mistry's short story "Swimming Lessons," the protagonist's parents worry about what will happen to their son as a writer if "'he changes and becomes so much like them that he will write like one of them and lose the important difference'"; Dionne Brand argues that "'all black writers are expected to make signs,'" in order to make it easy for the reader to "'identify black bodies and code them'"; Thomas King regards "'the demand for authenticity'" as "'a whip [that indigenous peoples] get beaten with,'" and Fred Wah's "work also addresses the pressure to fake ethnic authenticity by considering what it means to consequently be construed and to construe oneself as a fake" (Dawson). Dawson claims that the multicultural policy of the government of Canada is responsible for these constraints, compulsions and anxieties.

Thus, in the eyes of some writers and critics, multiculturalism as an idea to reform society has fallen prey to the fate of ideals turning into ideologies and, thus, assumed the voice of authority and power which the individual feels obliged either to adapt to or resist. If some writers and critics feel and think this way, then this is "the reality" for them beyond any doubt, despite the clear intentions of the policy makers to the contrary: "The Multiculturalism policy is not intended to categorize people into different groups based on ethnicity, place of birth, religion, or colour of skin; nor does it create cultural 'ghettos' as has been sometimes suggested by critics of the policy.

Rather, both the policy and the Act are about inclusion into Canadian society on an equal basis and 'fair terms'" (Young 2001, 94). These words may be reassuring to many but might sound like empty words for those who feel subjected to multiculturalism as an ideology and power. In a sense, therefore, we are back to square one, Frye's "immature" societies.

Or are we? Much as the anti-ideological stance is attractive, the emancipatory results of multiculturalism in the cultural field and beyond should not be overlooked or underrated. The cultural and literary works created as a result of a multicultural social reality, backed by both the theory and the cultural policy of multiculturalism during the past decades, have undeniably given new impetus to Canadian literature and fortified its place in the rank of other literatures in the world.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (45–57)

Les usages de la notion de transculturel dans le discours médiatique[1]

The Use of the Notion of the Transcultural in Media Discourse

Zsuzsa Simonffy

Résumé
À l'ère de la mondialisation que nous vivons actuellement, l'identité ne peut guère être décrite en termes statiques. Le fait d'être membre d'une communauté donnée n'est plus envisagé dans les discours savants en termes d'appartenance. Ce qui promet des rapprochements avec les réalités sociales, c'est la mise en application de termes dynamiques. Le multiple évoquant la mouvance, il risque de continuer à alimenter l'idée de l'appartenance, incitant ainsi à chercher des ancrages et des enracinements. En revanche, le *transculturel*défini dans le milieu académique paraît être réservé actuellement à tous les cas defigure qui tendent à effacer la pertinence de l'appartenance. Nous chercherons donc à déterminer,par la prise en compte des discours de presse, dans quelle mesure les discours des non-initiés contredisent ou, au contraire, font écho à la façon dont le concept de *transculturel* est mis en œuvre dans le champ académique.

Mots-clés : mondialisation, l'identité, transculturel, discours de presse

Abstract
In the current era of globalisationidentity can by no means be described in static terms. In scholarly discourse, being a member of a given community is no longer considered in terms of belonging. It is the use of dynamic terms that allows one to better approach social realities.With the evocation of movement, there is a risk of continuing to feed into the idea of belonging, thereby encouraging one to seek anchors and roots. The *transcultural* defined in academia, in contrast, currently seems to be reserved for all cases which tend to erase the relevance of membership. This paper, thus, seeks to determine, by taking into consideration media (press) discourse, the degree to which discourse of non-initiated individuals contradicts or, in contrast, echoes the manner in which the concept of the *transcultural* is employed in the academic field.

Keywords: globalisation, identity, the transcultural, media discourse

1) Nous tenons à manifester notre reconnaissance à l'ICCS-CIEC pour l'appui financier accordé à notre recherche dans le cadre du programme *Comprendre le Canada*, grâce auquel nous avons pu bénéficier d'échanges personnels avec Danielle Forget, Walter Moser et Marc Angenot. Qu'ils soient ici remerciés.

Diffusion des termes *vs* circulation des discours

Ce n'est pas tellement la question de savoir comment communiquer entre spécialistes et non-initiés qui sera mise en jeu ici, mais plutôt celle de savoir comment rapporter le terme *transculturel*[2] à son usage social, plus précisément à quels discours appartenant à quels utilisateurs ou groupes. La confrontation de ces discours d'ordres différents n'a pas fait l'objet d'analyses jusqu'à ce jour dans la littérature par ailleurs abondante sur la question. À l'origine de notre intérêt se trouve fondamentalement l'ambivalence du statut de ce terme : d'une part, il relève du vocabulaire spécialisé indiquant ainsi une unité de connaissance, et d'autre part, ilporte la trace d'une interaction relevant de l'interdiscursivité, lorsqu'il est utilisé en dehors du champ académique. C'est ce que nous appellerons la théorisation spontanée.

Quant à la circulation des concepts entre le langage scientifique et le langage courant, il est fréquent de voir des cas de figure dans lesquels un ensemble de facteurs contraint les experts à utiliser d'autres mots que les termes techniques. Cependant, ce qui nous amène à des interrogations inédites c'est, à l'inverse, l'utilisation de termes propres aux spécialistes par les néophytes. Un des cas particuliers de cette utilisation, au-delà de finalités telles que la vulgarisation scientifique, c'est le discours médiatique. Nous allons nous interroger sur la possibilité d'observer une grande diversité de situations dans lesquelles le terme « transculturel » est inséré. Rien n'exclut cependant le cas contraire, à savoir la possibilité de lui reconnaître un domaine professionnel relativement restreint. Faudrait-il voir là effectivement la diffusion des termes dans des discours différents de celui au sein duquel ils prennent leur origine ? Ne serait-il pas plutôt question de la construction discursive du sens de concepts donnés ?

Notre étude s'intègre dans le cadre général de la théorie du *discours social* construite et élaborée par Marc Angenot, sur la base de l'héritage bakhtinien :

> […] le discours social n'est pas une juxtaposition de formations discursives autonomes, refermées sur leurs traditions propres, mais un espace d'interactions où des impositions de thèmes interdiscursifs et de « formes » viennent apporter au Zeitgeist une sorte d'unification organique, fixer entropiquement les limites de l'argumentable, du narrable, du scriptible. (Angenot 2006).

2) Faut-il rappeler que ce n'est pas làune invention du XXI[e] siècle ?L'usage du terme *transculturel* est mobilisé et nettement repérable, depuis les années 70 dans le domaine des études des traditions orales (Ben-Amos 1974) aussi bien que dans le domaine des études de la poétique moderne, plus précisément de la narratologie (Barthes : 1966, 1) :« […] international, transhistorique, *transculturel*, le récit est là, comme la vie ». Nous avons montré ailleurs (Simonffy 2004, 2008)que, dans le domaine de la poétique, les oppositions - historique *vs* systématique, conditionnel *vs* constitutif, culturel *vs* transculturel - permettent de rendre compte des catégorisations génériques.

Ce qui nous incite à conduire cette réflexion, c'est que dans le répertoire de thèmes du discours social nous pouvons observer que *le transculturel* réapparaît sous différentes formations dont les discours académique et médiatique ont une importance considérable. La notion d'interdiscursivité héritée de Bakhtine a été introduite pour rendre compte du fait qu'un énoncé n'est jamais seul, mais s'inscrit dans un dialogue continu avec d'autres énoncés, qui prennent leur source dans des discours hétérogènes, reflétant ainsi l'ensembledes théories de l'époque en question. C'est précisément cette interdiscursivité qui constitue le présupposé de notre investigation, notion qui rendrait également justice à la circulation des termes d'un discours à l'autre. Or, si l'on prend conscience du fait que la terminologie représente l'expression linguistique de la connaissance spécialisée, elle sert à faciliter tout particulièrement la communication scientifique, même si les termes considérés comme des unités de connaissances hiérarchisées font appel à différents systèmes conceptuels. Ce qui est propre aux termes, c'est précisément le fait qu'en circulant dans un même système conceptuel, ils nous renvoient à la représentation de connaissances qui sont implicites pour les spécialistes mais qui, de ce fait, ne sont pas accessibles aux non-initiés. Après avoir été théorisé par les sciences sociales, le *transculturel* passe au langage quotidien. Conviendrait-il d'en conclure que ses usages risquent d'être ainsi sources d'erreur d'interprétation ? Au lieu de nous engager dans cette direction, nous essayerons de montrer la manière dont les discours médiatiques contribuent à l'enrichissement du concept, indépendamment de la référence aux connaissances du champ de recherche.

Présentation du corpus

Pour pouvoir comparer les deux types de discoursafin d'observer certains phénomènes, il est indispensable de construire un corpus. Notre objectif pricipal consiste à procéder à une investigation plus ou moins systématique des occurrences du *transculturel* dans les organes de presse.[3] Ce choix s'explique par le fait que si une société est déterminée par le politique aussi bien que par l'économique et l'idéologique, le(s) discours médiatique(s) sont susceptiblesd'exercer une influence prépondérante sur son organisation aussi bien que sur les représentations du monde qui sont en circulation en son sein.

Comment recueillir des données relatives à l'usage du *transculturel* ? Pour observer les discours quotidiens, la méthode de l'enquête s'imposerait en premier lieu. Cependant, nous n'avons pas suivi cette piste,l'appel à des informateurs n'étant pas pratiquable dans des études de ce genre, en raison de son coût élevé. Puisque nous

3) Une autre démarche procèderait à l'inverse : dégager l'idée du transculturel sur la base des références et allusions plus ou moins explicites ou directes.

avons admis l'idée selon laquelle les discours médiatiques sont souvent le simulacre des discours quotidiens, l'étude de ces biais peut contribuer à réaliser notre objectif initial.

Nous avons consulté à la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Montréal l'ensemble des documents accessibles grâce à « Heureka », l'*univers discursif* pour en constituer un corpus de référence qui consiste enun *champ discursif*composé de 132 articles au total publiés entre 1983 et 2010.Faute de place, nous n'avonspas attaché en annexele *corpus de travail*. Cet *espace discursif*[4] contient cependant les passages pertinents des textes étudiés, à savoir l'ensemble des occurrences du mot *transculturel*.

Quelques précisions s'imposent. Premièrement, nous n'avons pas lancé la recherche quant au terme *transculturalité* inventé dans un contexte cubainpar Ortiz (1940), du simple fait qu'il renvoie par définition à l'idée de dominance, idée que le terme *transculturel*dans son acception contemporaine ne semble pas pour autant perpétuer. Deuxièmement, la prise en compte de la mission que le magazine *ViceVersa* a accomplie nous semble incontournable. En revanche, si le magazine peut constituer un point de repère pour développer nos propos, ce n'est pas dans le sens où il ferait partie du corpus à exploiter. Il servira de critère pour réorganiser nos données et permettra ainsi de distinguer dans notre corpus un sous-ensemble fondé sur une période ancrée dans l'existence de *ViceVersa* et un autre sous-ensemble fondé, au contraire, sur une période marquée par la disparition de *ViceVersa*. En dehors de ce facteur chronologico-temporel, si nous avons recours parmi les pratiques médiatiques à la presse, c'est parce qu'en constituant un espace de médiation pour un ensemble de représentations artistiques, politiques, économiques etc., elle n'est pas tout simplement un échantillon d'exemples mais un outil qui façonne le discours social, et qui, de ce fait, fournit également les formes des discours quotidiens. Les journaux constituent une source d'observation des configurations sociales tout en jouant un rôle décisif dans la formation de l'opinion publique. Vu notre objectif, ce qui est en jeu dans cette observation, c'est tout particulièrement la prise en compte des occurrences qui permettent d'observer une mise en relation du *transculturel* avec d'autres idées ou notion dans les espaces discursifs du corpus.

Quant à la taille du corpus, nous pouvons dire que ses limites s'imposent d'elles-mêmes dans la mesure où le nombre des organes de presse canadiens francophones est préalablement déterminé. Notre recherche concernant les discours faisant figurer*le transculturel* s'est effectuée dans l'ensemble des organes de presse canadiens francophones qui sont au nombre de 17. *Le Devoir* et *La Presse* sont les quotidiens les plus importantsdans la mesure où la différence quantitativepenchenettement en faveur de ces deux organes de presse.Le corpus est donc composé d'articles recueillis

4) Ces termes sont enpruntés à Maingueneau (1991). Pour les nuancesvoir dans Rastier (2004) encore plus de précisions : *archive*, *corpus de référence,corpus d'étude, sous-corpus de travail*.

sur une période de trente ans, qui s'étend de 1983 jusqu'en 2010[5]. Le nombre d'articles sélectionnés qui contiennent le mot *transculturel* montre une variation selon les items en fonction du facteur temporel, en revanche, aucun écart n'est observé entre le nombre d'articles et le nombre d'occurrences relatifs à un même item,dans la mesure oùun même article ne le fait pas figurer plus d'une seule fois. Ce manque d'écart s'explique certainementpar la longueur identique des articles, mais aussi par le fait que ce mot n'est pas utilisé avec une fréquence importante dans les organes de presse. *Diversité, multiculturel, interculturel* sont aussi fréquents pour remplir un rôle semblable, pourrait-on dire. Sur la base de la prise en considération de la fréquence, il est à noter que la disparition de *ViceVersa* ne laisse pas de vide ; au contraire, le concept, qui est utilisé seulement dans 6 journaux durant son existence, se répand tout en s'infiltrant dans 11 autres, après sa disparition, même s'il ne s'agit pas encore d'un fait courant dans tous les cas. Toujours est-il que ses discours continuent à œuvrer dans d'autres cadres faisant partie du répertoire du discours social.

Les discours de la communauté savante

Y a-t-il une société qui serait exempte de toute pluralité ethnique ? Y a-t-il un individu dont la réalité ne serait pas multiple ? Les discussions théoriques des années 80gravitent autour des concepts de *postmodernisme* et d'*interculturel*. Dans l'ensemble des recherches menées jusqu'à présent, nous pouvons distinguer une forte tendance selon laquelle il est nécessaire de construire un appareil conceptuel pour saisir un phénomène d'une manière cognitivement fiable. Le *transculturel* est au centre des travaux depuis une période récente sous des éclairages qui semblent cependant varier. Pour donner une image de la pensée théorique en la matière, nous avons sélectionné dans un premier temps, parmi les travaux qui font référence, ceux qui se concentrent sur l'évolution induite par le changement de préfixe. Si nous avons écarté Ortiz, nous faisons de même en ce qui concerne Welsch (1999), tout en maintenant le fondement de son concept de culture permettant de parler de flux dynamiques qui s'interpénètrent par rapport au multiculturel et à l'interculturel qui, eux, font voir la culture comme une entité stable et isolable. Néanmoins, la métaphore de réseau suggère l'idée de l'intégration.

Dans la perspective transaméricaine actuelle, un colloque intitulé *Trans-inter-multi-culturalité*, *trans-inter-multi-disciplinaritéetAmériques plurielles*(novembre 2011) trace une voie porteuse tout en suggérant de confronter les changements impliqués par la

5) Cette étude sur le *transculturel* pourra être suivie d'autres études fondées non seulement sur un corpus encore plus vaste mais aussi dans une nouvelle perspective que nos travaux ultérieurs explorerons, perspective que l'ont peut formuler de la manière suivante : Comment les discours parlent-ils de transculturel sans utiliser le mot même ?

modification qu'a subie le préfixe. Sans parler d'autres nuances précisées par Benessaieh (2011a, 2) : « La transculturalité correspond à l'identité de l'objet examiné, la transculture à ce même objet, la transculturation au processus par lequel les résonances (culturelles) continues et les imbrications mutuelles se déroulent. »Les numéros 45-46, 2012 de la *Revue internationale des études canadiennes*, n'ayant pas recours au *transculturel* maintiennent cependant le terme *interculturalité* dans le contexte de francophonies. En synthèse, il nous convient de faire remarquer que le *transculturel* joue à plusieurs échelles : dans le sens de dépasser les limites de sa propre culture,il est relatif à l'individu, alors que dans le sens d'effacer toutes les frontières entre cultures impliquant l'universel, il est relatif à la communauté. Une communauté ne se façonne pas cependant avec des individus mais avec des groupes divers, en fonction de leurs pratiques et formes de vie.C'est cette communauté qui ressent à ses frontières souvent la pression des groupes qui sont, pour elle, à l'extérieur. À l'échelle communautaire, par rapport à *multi-*, ne désignant que 'grand nombre',les préfixes *inter-*,et *trans-*, à première vue, signaleraient les différents degrés d'intensité de l'échange entre cultures. La multiplicité reproduit la bipolarité inclusion *vs* exclusion, majorité *vs* minorité, alors que l'accent mis sur l'échange tend à la mettre définitivement entre parenthèses. Le concept de transculture proposé par Chamoiseau sert souvent de référence.

> Dans le multiculturel, on a la présence dans un même espace de plusieurs imaginaires, alors que, dans le transculturel, on a une corrélation, une inter-rétro-réaction aux différents imaginaires. On peut donc avoir dans un espace un processus de multiculturalité juxtaposé, et on peut également avoir un espace et des mécanismes de transculturalité dans lesquels une culture est mise en relation ouverte et active, est affectée, infectée, inquiétée, modifiée, conditionnée par l'autre. (Peterson 1993-1994, 44-45).

Dans le prolongement de cette idée , la place centrale du transculturel est également justifiée en dehors de nos pratiques quotidiennes :

> […] nos pratiques quotidiennes sont multi-transculturelles ; il en est ainsi de nos populations, de notre culture, des langues parlées et entendues dans notre milieu, des médias, de l'éducation, de nos expériences du monde : tout est hybride, pluriel, hétérogène, multiple. Ces espaces de transculturalité dans lesquels nous baignons – autant par le corps que par l'esprit ou l'imaginaire, surtout si on s'y laisse emporter – sont aussi des lieux de résistance, ou des lieux refoulés ou repoussés par les tenants d'une vision moderniste, c'est-à-dire ceux qui conjuguent les choses aux référents du passé. (Dubé2009, 28).

Contrairement au *multiculturel,* coexistence de cultures différentes au sein d'une même communauté, l'*interculturel*est choisi dans tous les cas où on veut renvoyer à une

relation entre les cultures, dans l'objectif de construire une formation harmonieuse. Or, dans les deux citations précédentes, le *transculturel* recouvre l'idée de la mise en relation. Leur assimilation n'est pas étonnante à cause de cette imbrication. Dans les deux cas, il s'agit d'une interpénétration réciproque qui correspond à l'hybridation. Ce qui peut être complémentaire dans le *transculturel*, c'est de dépasser cette phase réservée à l'effacement de la polarité et d'aller, dans la« traversée de langues, de cultures, d'expériences, de mémoires »,acquérir « la capacité de faire leur propre histoire » (Thériault 1994, 20).En somme, il inclut un projet de société, produit d'une construction discursive, fondésur les imaginaires de la diversité dans le sens chamoisiendu terme. Ainsi, la culture n'est pas donnée mais construite.

Dans une autre perspective, et avec des objectifs différents de ceux de la philosophie, ou de la sociologie, ou de l'anthropologie, il semble aussi indispensable de redéfinir la notion de culture non plus en termes d'objets et de stocks mais en termes de flux et d'interfaces (Buci-Glucksman, 2001).

Tout compte fait, le *transculturel* est tantôt posé comme objet théorique, tantôt il sert d'outil pour aborder et décrire d'autres objets théoriques. Dans ce qui suit, nous allons voir plus précisément que la plupart des usages du *transculturel* portent une connotation esthétique. Dans d'autres cas, il est d'usage métaphorique ou il inclut l'idée d'une activité sociale tantôt dans sa réalisation, tantôt dans son état de projet.

Quelques aspects de la théorisation spontanée

La simple consultation de ces journaux nous a permis d'observer qu'il s'agit rarement de l'intention de définir *le transculturel* de manière explicite. Ce qui n'est pas étonnant, puisque c'est le propre des domaines de la littérature produite par la communauté savante comme nous l'avons remarqué dans la partie précedente. Néanmoins certaines occurrences témoignent du souci et de la recherche d'explications ou de clarifications sur la notion : dans le corpus, nous en avons trouvé une seule qui s'apprête à définir explicitement le transculturel, alors que cinq autres nous le fournissent comme exemple d'une réalité mentionnée à titre d'illustration ou de paraphrase.

1) « transculturel » signifie que tous les Canadiens doivent écouter le plus souvent possible les mêmes programmes, traduits ou faits en commun. Et « régional » implique la multiplication des contributions de toutes les régions canadiennes. (*L'Actualité*, no. Vol:17 No:15 1 octobre 1992, p. 24)
2) L'idéal transculturel, explique M. Veilleux, c'est qu'on dise à un réalisateur ou à un producer: Concevez votre produit en fonction d'un marché bilingue. (*La Presse Opinions*, samedi, 5 décembre 1992, p. B3)

3) Ici, le vidéo de Gran Fury -on se rappelle encore des affiches de ce collectif d'artistes conçues dans le cadre de «Pour la suite du monde» joue la carte du transculturel: toutes couleurs unies, des couples hétéros, gais, lesbiens s'embrassent tendrement, amoureusement, fougueusement. C'est joyeux et direct et cela court-circuite toutes les rumeurs qui courent sur le sida. Les phrases courent sur l'écran: Kissing Doesn't Kill, Greed and Indifference (*Le Devoir Le Cahier* du Samedi, samedi, 7 novembre 1992, p. C14)
4) Nous avions ainsi découvert le oud transculturel ! Transculturel parce qu'arabisant de facture et parce qu'impliquant des improvisateurs de haut niveau, issus de différentes nations [...] (*La Presse Nouvelles générales*, mardi, 6 juillet 1993, p. A10)
5) Ce n'est pas faute de savoir ce qu'il veut : le mot « transculturel » revient dans chacun de ses discours : il signifie la mise en commun des ressources et des énergies de CBC et de Radio-Canada pour des projets de coproduction.(*Commerce*, no. Vol: 103 No: 12 , p. 75)
6) être un bon manager transculturel, c'est savoir s'adapter et cela demande de se connaître, se respecter, être en paix avec soi-même, avoir une très grande confiance en soi, et une très forte base familiale(*Les Affaires Management*, samedi, 9 juin 2007, p. 32)

Considérons les résultats. Dans ces formulations, le mot *transculturel* demeure irrémédiablement un mot de la langue quotidienne, c'est-à-dire vague et imprécis. Sur la base de ces timides tentatives d'explicitation, nous pouvons conclure, malgré tout, sur un continuum allant de l'homogénéïsation et de la faculté d'adaptation en passant par du bilingue et de la coproduction jusqu'au multinational et au bariolé. Quels sont encore les apports issus des données du corpus? En tenant compte de la distribution du terme, nous allons dégager l'ensemble des contextes dans lesquels il apparaît, et surtout l'ensemble des concepts avec lesquels il est mis en relation. Nous allons l'explorer dans l'implicite. Pour ce faire, il n'est peut-être pas inutile d'envisager d'abord ce que qualifie *transculturel*.

Premièrement, dans le vaste domaine des arts, nous avons repéré une occurrence relative à l'*artiste* (1996/4), mais ce qui est davantage caractéristique, c'est la distinction de plusieurs sous-domainesspécifiques tels que :

1) la littérature : livre (1983/1), écrivain (1993/13), œuvres (1995/1), iconosclaste et chantre (1997/1 ; 1997/2), lecteur (2002/1), système littéraire (2002/2),esprit (1993/6) ;
2) la musique : jazz (1988/1 ; 1988/2 ; 2000/3), langage (1988/4), groupe (1989/1), band (1999/4), contenu (1989/2), album (1992/7), art moyen-oriental (1993/10), hip hop (2000/5), orchestre (2002/4), hommage (2008/10), musique indienne (2009/1), saxophoniste (2009/2), pont (2010/4) ;
3) le visuel : spectacle (1994/2, 2010/3), metteur en scène (1995/6), show (1995/4), théâtre (1999/2 ; 1999/3), projet (2004/5 ; 2008/5 ; 2008/6 ; 2008/7 ; 2008/9), monde (2009/3, 2010/5) ;
4) tout autre : la mode : design (1988/3), média : portrait hypermédia (1993/14) ;

Deuxièmement,parmi les domaines qui se situent en dehors des arts, nous avons relevé :

1) soins de santé : rapprochements (2007/2), psychiatre, clinique (2007/7), congrès de santé (2008/4) ;
2) philosophie : droit (1997/3) ;
3) finance : financier (1997/4) ;
4) engagements et positions : parti pris (1992/3), geste (1993/8), modèle (1994/1), idéal (1995/5), pensée (1995/5) ;
5) individu et société : être (1994/4), (2002/6), lieu de rassemblement (2010/1), événement (2010/2), société (1994/3) ;
6) activités et manifestations : programmations (1993/11),université d'été (1993/12) ;
7) facteurs spatio-temporels : avenir (1992/13),espace (), creuset (1993/7),highway (1994/5), pays (2000/1), Le Querrec (2000/2) ;
8) conceptsetnotions:postmodernisme(1996/1),mondepostmoderne(1997/6),humanisme (1998/1), genre (1996/2), échange (1999/5), processus (2002/3), produit (2007/3), jugement de valeur (2007/8), travail (2007/9), contexte 2007/10 ;
9) métaphorique : pèlerinage (2007/6), paradis artificiels (1993/8), broder (1999/1), voyage (1993/5) ;

Dans les exemples de notre corpus, c'est l'expression *droit transculturel* qui est la plus intéressante dans la mesure où en dehors de la portée universelle que *transculturel* laisse entendre, il est clairement mis en relation avec le principe de tolérance qui se met en œuvre face à ce qu'on ne partage pas.Or, l'idée du transculturel en tant que synonyme de portée universelle paraît peu compatible avec le thème de la tolérance. Cependant, cette mise en relation possède un intérêt autre puisqu'elle illustre comment se construit discursivement le sens.

Troisièmement, dans son usage métalinguistique ou mention, ce sont des programmes, manifestations, expositions portant un nom dans lequel figure cet adjectif : rencontres transculturelles (1992/2), Rendez-vous transculturels (1992/4), magazine transculturel (1992/5 ; 1993/2 ; 1993/4 ; 1995/2 ; 1995/3 ; 1997/5 ; 1997/7 ; 2000/4), bimestriel transculturel (1996/3), revue transculturelle (2007/1), Pour la suite du monde. Transculturel. (1992/9 ; 1992/14), « contenu transculturel » (1992/8), « fonds transculturel » (2007/4 : 2008/1 ; 2008/2 ; 2008/3 ; 2008/8), « production transculturelle » (2008/1 ; 2008/2 ; 2008/3)

La fréquence des domaines tels que littérature, musique, théâtre, spectacle, suggère que le fait de prendre la voie des arts peut conduire à bâtir une société sans mettre en cause véritablement la société ou sa composition. Ce qui frappe cependant à l'examen du corpus, c'est que malgré la gamme relativement large que les journaux mettent en

évidence, il se dessine un domaine privilégié avant tout, et c'est la musique. Ce n'est pas un hasard. Pour illustrer les nuances conceptuelles Benessaieh (2011b) a recours à l'image de la performance. Dans une performance monoculturaliste, un musicien joue un genre musical traditionnel d'un instrument etson solo incarne une forme musicale dans son état pur, sans la moindre influence d'autres genres. Dans une performance interculturaliste, ce musicien adepte de la musique propre à sa culturejoue avec un autre musicien qui, lui aussi, tient à sa tradition culturelle spécifique. Deux traditions juxtaposées font entendre deux solos successifs, sans qu'ils aient la moindre influence l'un sur l'autre. Dans la performance multiculturaliste, on assiste déjà à une dynamique dans la mesure où un troisième musicien, issu d'une autre tradition, intervient pour chercher à trouver, ensemble, une certaine harmonie commune. La performance transculturelle permet de créer « de l'inédit qui ne ressemblerait plus vraiment à aucune des traditions de chacun, qui s'en nourrirait certes, car ils identifieraient voire inventeraient des résonnances faisant qu'elles ne se présenteront plus tant dans leurs différences que dans leurs affinités ». (Benessaieh 2011b, 61).

La musique considérée non seulement comme un des domaines de l'esthétique mais aussi comme simple divertissement échappe à toute frontière et peut servir d'exemple emblématique pour illustrer la manière dont les traditions sont en mouvance continuelle et la manière dont le métissage s'élève au satut de composante constitutive.

Cependant, l'enseignement à tirer, c'est que le mode relationnel et transformationnelque le mot *transculturel* est censé saisir, a tendance à se dissoudre dans la pluralité à laquelle c'est cependant l'interculturel qui s'accorde davantage. Dans certains cas,le transculturel est encore à l'état de projet, alors que dans d'autres,il est déjà une pratique. Si le transculturel correspond à des pratiques sociales, administratives, médicales, il est loin de désigner la transformation ; il l'implique lorsqu'il est lié aux projets. Pour les acteurs sociaux, il est une nécessité.

À ce point, il n'est peut-être pas inutile de reconsidérer la mission de *ViceVersa* qui, comme le remarque Wilson (2012), culturellement parlant est une réussite, en revanche, politiquement parlant, un échec. Ce mouvement intellectuel contre l'idéologie nationaliste, par ailleurs en contraste avec le multiculturalisme, n'a pas eu d'impact sur le plan politique. Il a néanmoins contribué de toute évidence à une meilleure communication entre les communautés.L'analyse de notre corpus correspond à la grande diversité des sujets traités à travers ces pages : artistiques, littéraires, musicaux, politiques, scénographiques. Cependant, nous n'avons pas pu l'identifier en tant qu'espace de la parole, nous n'avons pas pu reconnaître le désir d'être transformé par l'Autre. Si l'idée de la transformation n'est pas manifeste,dans certains cas, elle s'avère toutefois inférable. Un autre point à faire remarquer : le transculturel ne diffère pas réellement du multiculturalisme qui consiste, pour les non-initiés, à « …

renvoyer à un certain folklorisme (danse, plats traditionnels, événements culturels) » (Wilson 2012, 265).

Certaines occurrences repérées dans le corpus suggèrent l'idée d'une société qui se composerait d'individus transculturels.Cependant le groupe d'individus est relativement restreint, ce sont des artistes, la plupart musiciens, qui se construisent une identité en intégrant différents aspects de toutes les cultures qui les attirent : *eux* transculturels en face de *nous* qui ne le sommes pas,ou pas encore.

Dans certains cas, les deux discours se font écho l'un à l'autre : c'est dû certainement au laxisme se manifestant dans la définition du concept. En effet, on observe un manque de critères permettant de décider effectivement quand il y a transculturel.

En guise de conclusion

À la lumière de notre rapide parcours, comment considérer le changement de préfixes attachés au mot culture ? Nous pouvons en dégager un mécanisme qui œuvre à la circulation des discours. Les termes tels que *multiculturel* et *interculturel* – indépendamment du contenu conceptuel qu'on leur attribue – ne paraissent plus adéquats dans les discours académiques à partir du moment où ils se chargent d'une axiologie négative qui ne disparaîtra qu'à condition de s'attacher à une nouvelle conceptualisation précise, conceptualisation précise qui implique l'introduction d'un nouveau terme, dans notre cas, celui de *transculturel*.

Ce qui nous intéresse dans ce travail s'intègre donc aisément à un cadre plus général qui renvoie au fonctionnement et à la diffusion sociaux des termes, cadre dans lequel la circulation des concepts est étudiée dans l'objectif d'aborder d'une manière inédite les phénomènes qui affectent les êtres humains, indépendamment de tout engagement qui soit lié aux principes et hypothèses d'une discipline déterminée.

Si l'objet de nos investigations a été les occurrences du *transculturel* dans un corpus constitué à ce propos, c'est qu'il ne s'observe pas à l'état isolé, et, même quand on fait des efforts pour l'isoler, reste toujours relatif à un discours. En nous fondant sur l'analyse de notre corpus, nous avons fait porter une réflexion sur les sens que le mot prend dans différents secteurs du discours social.

S'il est vrai que la notion d'interculturel a connu un succès remarquable dans les années 80, il est aussi vrai que celle de transculturel favorise la pensée relationnelle, au point d'être devenue incontournable dans l'analyse des discours ordinaires, aussi bien que littéraires.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (59–71)

The Intricate Nature of the Cross-Town Journey in Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*[1]

La nature compliquée du voyage à travers la ville dans *Cockroach* de Rawi Hage

Judit Molnár

Abstract
My intention is to explore the unnamed protagonist's search in Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* for cultural acceptability in North America as he positions himself in a psychic trip in Montreal's underground world. The Montreal that is "infested with newcomers" is seen through the existential exploration of the immigrant's life as he tries to situate himself in liminal spaces, be they geographic, linguistic, cultural, religious or sexual. In the novel, the spaces under and above the ground support or defy each other in their own idiosyncratic ways, with hope, survival and an ambiguous kind of displacement existing side by side. I focus on how the story unfolds through different places and maneuvers in a cryptic space of displacement. The narrative shifts between multilayered cinematic scenes suggesting the existence of a metropolis (Montreal) that is transformed into an alien example of a topography filled with phantasmagorical elements. My aim is to disclose the novel's spatial and spacious dimensions, trusting that it can add to the understanding of the literary immigrant's imaginary text.

Keywords: the Canadian novel, Rawi Hage, space, Montreal

Résumé
Dans la présente contribution, nous nous proposons d'étudier la quête de son acceptabilité culturelle en Amérique du Nord par le protagoniste anonyme de *Cockroach* par Rawi Hage, qui se positionne dans un voyage psychique à travers le monde souterrain de Montréal. Le Montréal qui est « envahi de nouveaux-venus » est vu à travers l'exploration existentielle de la vie d'immigré, cet immigré essayant de se situer dans des espaces à caractère liminal, qu'ils soient géographiques, linguistiques, culturels, religieux ou sexuels. Dans le roman, les espaces en-dessous et au-dessus du sol se soutiennent ou se défient mutuellement, à leurs manières idiosyncrasiques, où coexistent l'espoir, la survie et une sorte de déplacement ambigu. Nous montrerons comment l'histoire se déroule à travers différents lieux et

1) * Research for this article was funded by TÁMOP 4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-0024, as part of the new Széchenyi Plan, and by a Faculty Research Grant given by the *International Council for Canadian Studies*, 2012.

manśuvres dans un espace cryptique de déplacement. La narration oscille entre des scènes cinématographiques ayant des couches multiples, ce qui suggère l'existence d'une métropole (Montréal) qui est transformée en un exemple de topographie aliénée, remplie d'éléments fantasmagoriques. Il s'agit ici de dévoiler les dimensions spatiales et spacieuses du roman, dans l'espoir que cela peut contribuer à une compréhension plus profonde du texte imaginaire de l'immigré littéraire.

Mots-clés : le roman canadien, Rawi Hage, l'espace, Montréal

By way of introduction, I would like to place Rawi Hage on the literary map of Québec within Canada. He is of Lebanese origin, was born in Beirut in 1964 and grew up in Lebanon and Cyprus. He moved to New York City in 1984 and later to Montreal, in 1991. He has become known as a writer, a photographer, a visual artist. His first novel, *De Niro's Game* (2006), won the lucrative International Impact Dublin Literary Award, the award that is given annually to the best English-language book published anywhere in the world. His work has been translated into 20 languages. Though he writes in English, he is trilingual, equally at home in Arabic, French and English, and multivocality is present in his fiction as well. His work falls into the overlapping categories of immigrant literature, ethnic literature, minority literature, multicultural literature and emergent literature. As one of the allophone writers in Québec – that is as neither "English" nor "French" – he belongs to what Linda Leith calls the "Anglo Literary Revival" in Canada's French-speaking province. More specifically, the term refers to the renaissance of English-language writing in Quebec that started roughly in the 1990s and that has been part and parcel of literature produced in Quebec ever since then.

Hage has certainly introduced a new and unique voice to the English-language writing scene in Montreal, in more than one ways. If the reader expects to find the familiar alluring cityscape, he or she will certainly be disappointed with the novel *Cockroach* (2008). Matthew Fox notes, "*Cockroach* depicts a Montreal unfamiliar to most Montrealers and a Canada unfamiliar to most Canadians" ("A Man"). The portrait of the city is indeed in accordance with what Hage says – "Just because a city has some culture and looks nice, doesn't mean it hasn't got an undercurrent of violence. Montreal is a large military industrial complex. Under all that beauty there is something very ugly" (Tabar "existential"). We see the city through the eyes of a character that is from an unnamed Middle East country. Through him, "The bustling metropolis [is transformed] into an alien topography of menial jobs, mysterious accents, insect infestations and class hostilities" (Redekop "Stranger"). The dark perception fathoms the grievous situation of the narrator and that of his fellow immigrants, mainly from

Iran, in the bitterly cold winter to be endured by each and every soul exposed to it. The narrator, the exotic foreigner, is contemptuous of the world around him. He sees himself in the following way: "The exotic has to be modified here – not too authentic, not too spicy not too smelly, just enough of it to remind others of a fantasy elsewhere" (20). When he is not meeting his court-mandated female psychiatrist he spends his life in the subterranean world of the metropolis. Even during the therapy sessions in which his disturbing past, his violent childhood, including the death of his sister, for which he feels partially responsible, is revealed, this deranged man is further confused by the claustrophobic atmosphere of the small office in a public health clinic: "Maybe all these formalities, these thick clothes, this claustrophobic office, these [i.e. the therapist's] ever-closed thighs and pulled-back hair are making me reluctant to open my innermost thoughts" (97).

His bleak history in an unidentified war-torn country involving domestic violence and his inability to protect his sister is partly disclosed in the form of transgressive monologues which recur as flashbacks rather than in dialogues for and by "a well-meaning but wildly naïve counselor who is a stand-in for the Anglo-Canadian establishment that champions diversity but has little real understanding of or interest in difference" (Dawson 153). With his dark and degraded past, he is not able to gain a foothold in the unwelcoming society of Québec. He is one of the many underdogs without a sense of belonging; at best he can only be part of the outlandish netherworld of refugees. However, he feels basically dislocated among them, too. Being a social outcast, his sphere of life is rather limited. He is "an immigrant living in an expatriate-heavy Montreal neighbourhood" (Whitlock "Down and out") and he has to find the means for a possible survival. Not long after his arrival he learns from a Jehovah's Witness lady that "Only the cockroaches shall survive to rule the earth" (7). Though he is still young and fit, this anti-hero can only strive for mere survival. One cannot help being reminded of the continued relevance of Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), prescient in its observation that "We are all immigrants to this place […], in the parts unknown to us we move in fear, exiles and invaders" (62). Her comment resonates with that of Arnold Itwaru: "Enter the immigrant embodied in dreams and fears, torn between yesterday and tomorrow, walking the terrain of a new culture. For this person the need to understand what he or she has left behind and what is experienced here is crucial to survival" (13).

The recent immigrant who is the focus of the novel meanders, after his failed suicide attempt in a park on Mont Royal, through the unsettling world of the dispossessed and the despairing. As James Lasdun sees it, "Crisis is certainly the defining condition for the narrator of *Cockroach*" ("Half man"). Naturally, this unhappy man has a desire for a space in which he can cope with his special human condition. Hage tells us about

him: "[the narrator] seeks an identity, a space, and a life at the border of physical and psychological death" (qtd. in Sakr "interview"). His social status separates him from the privileged elite (both francophone and anglophone) that he severely criticizes. Smaro Kamboureli observes that "he expresses absolutely no longing to belong either to a Lebanese community or to Montreal, let alone Canada" (145). He frequents the downtown emigré cafés on Blv. St-Laurent. As Sherry Simon notes, "[...] *Cockroach* replays an old story – giving St. Laurent an important role as a street of immigrants – of cheap bars and poets holding forth, and desperate newcomers trying to steal from one another" (n.p.). Simon subsequently emphasizes "the continued power of the myth of the St Laurent as a liminal space of contradictions" and as a "zone of marginality" (n.p). The protagonist is always on the road and rarely stays in his own apartment that he describes as a "shithole of a rundown place" (17) in a "crumbling building" (7). His paranoid sense of existence, summed up in the novel's title image of a cockroach, unites the war traumas he has left behind with the immigrant's unofficial war in the streets.

> I had that strange feeling of being chased. So I ran as if I was being hunted by giants who could pick me up and ponder me, then drop me and make blood splatter like roadkill, like an insect splashing on a car windshield. I zig-zagged, frantic, scanning the sky for any shadow of a giant's shoes rolled-up newspapers that would suddenly land on my head like a collapsed roof, like ten layers of sky falling to earth. I sucked in the coldest winds, the cruelest air, and jumped like a storm in front of car tires cutting the wet asphalt, the red light, the brick houses, the curling Montreal stairs [...]. (230)

This is what Simon describes as "the unsituatedness of the immigrant [...] [in a city that] is divided against those who have no entitlement" (n.p.). The narrator, always on the edge of a troubled and miserable existence, keeps running away from places that limit his freedom and threaten his state of living. The welfare office is no consolation of any kind; it only burdens him with remorse: "Well, yes, yes indeed, I should be grateful for what this nation is giving me. I take more than I give, indeed it is true" (65).

In his solitary and hopeless contemplations he tries to orient himself. "Where am I?" he asks, "And what am I doing here? How did I end up trapped in a constantly shivering carcass, walking in a frozen city with wet cotton falling on me all the time"? (9) Decades earlier Northrop Frye reminded us, "Canadian sensibility [...] is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I ?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" (222). Hage's protagonist, though not a Canadian by passport, is puzzled by both questions. In his distressing predicament he turns to his fancy. Hage asserts, "when my characters are in some kind of trauma, psychosis, or disillusion they try to escape. [...] And the way they escape is through fantasy. In a way, it's another kind of madness,

of course" (qtd. in East "the ground up"). Both in fearful reality and in his bewildering fantasy the protagonist converses with cockroaches; he hates and admires them, and he even turns temporarily into one of this species. According to Jesse Hutchison "the novel offers the concept of the liminal space between human and cockroach as a space of possibility for the immigrant" (n.p.) More often than not the narrator willingly looks for their companionship: "There were no cockroaches to be seen today. The brutal temperature must have driven them down south to the boiler room, looking for warmth and comfort" (75). "What are these insects in my kitchen up to at this hour? I wondered. I walked to the kitchen but no one was there" (195). He implies that he and the cockroaches stand on the same ground, be it above or under street level.

The titular metaphor, the *cockroach,* vigorously portrays the main character over the course of the narrative. The insect motif certainly brings Kafka to mind. However, Hage does not ascribe any credit to him: "He's not an influence at all. In my view Kafka doesn't and can't have a monopoly on acts of metamorphosis" (qtd. in East "the ground up"). Hage claims: "The fact that I chose this image of a cockroach is simply because they're the closest thing to the ground" (qtd. in East "the ground up"). Besides Kafka, Hage has been compared to many other writers including: Burroughs, Camus, Céline, Dostoevsky, Fanon, Genet, Houellebecq, Rimbaud and Sartre (Lasdun "Half man," Beattie "Cockroach"). He admits that he wears the combined influences of Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky and Turgenev on his sleeve (Wagner "A tough"). Moreoever, he has been described as a surrealist, postmodern, magic realist, and existential writer. The dilemma confronting the possible conditions for a particular kind of existence is indeed at the heart of the novel. In the very beginning it is clearly stated: "The question of existence consumed me" (4). The destitute young man has to place himself in the world surrounding him; he has a frenzied and instinctive desire for lodging in a stabling space. Hage's genuine interest in spatiality is evident. He tells us, "I […] tend to situate myself in the space I am describing, or imagining. There is a close proximity, a need for an almost physical presence that I notice while I am writing" (Hammoudi "Interview"). Strangely enough the comforting space the protagonist finds is provided for him through his provisional metamorphoses into a cockroach in his fantasy. This peculiar hybrid psychic space suggests potential foresight for the misanthropic man to escape from the immeasurable void he experienced earlier. He says:

> There is existence and there is the void; you are either a one or a zero. Once I was curious about the void. If I had died on that tree branch in the park, I would have experienced the other option. Although […] experiencing it would have meant that I could see and feel, and that would have thrown me back into existence, which would eliminate the notion of the void. The void cannot be experienced. The void should mean perishing absolutely without any consciousness of it. It is either a perpetual existence or nothingness, my friend. (122)

The choice between the blank void and the "cockroach existence" is a rather intriguing one. We would tend to think that turning into a cockroach of all insects implies a state of being that is repulsive and is not to experiment with. In this case, however, this imaginary state consoles the protagonist by opening up domestic-social possibilities that seem to be plausible for refugees underground. According to Kryzsytof Majer:

> In opposition to the sterile world of order and hygiene, Hage constructs the idea of the underworld. It is imagined as an underground space [...] where immigrants hide, like insects, seeking the safety and warmth which the institutions and citizens refuse to provide. Consequently, the novel operates on a series of ingenious reversals. In the phantasmagoric, icebound Montreal, verticality, brightness and existence on the ground all indicate a certain death-in-life. Conversely, life-giving forces are to be found in the warm, waste-nourished underworld, whose dark reaches hum with agile, horizontal creatures, continually threatening to rise to the surface. At the moment, however, the surface is deadly, lifeless: public pay phones are 'vertical, transparent coffins.' (n.p.)

At the same time, however, it is also true that the character's in-betweenness is manifest in a constant shift between "the conforming exotic immigrant" and the "non-conformist cockroach" (Hutchison n.p.). He never fully commits himself "to the world of the cockroach or the world of the human" ("Hutchison n.p.); he says, "I was split between two planes and aware of two existences, and they were both mine. I belong to two spaces" (119). As Kamboureli remarks, "His double condition encapsulates his profound sense of abjection and the disjunctive tension he experiences throughout the narrative [...]" (142). We also have to bear in mind that he had a close relation with and even a strong affinity for cockroaches already in his childhood when he liked to play underground. Later on "The underground, at once hiding place and refuge, a space that stands for disempowerment but also for revolt and general upheaval, is the ambivalent ground the protagonist occupies" (Kamboureli 145). In his adulthood he becomes "the master of the underground," which is a space he often escapes to. He is the master of escape: "I reminded myself that I can escape anything. I am a master of escape (unlike those trapped and recurring pink Buddhists)" (23). He does not want to escape the albino cockroach that he meets on more than one occasion. In one of his hallucinations, he has a long dialogue with him/her. The equivocal and long conversation evolving between the narrator and his imagined other self visualized in the "gigantic" cockroach is of seminal importance as it helps to elucidate the daring ambitions of the cockroaches swirling in the novel. Their power is stressed; in the future they will be the "ruling race" (201), we are informed in this phantasmagoric scene. The narrator is told:

> You are one of us. You are part cockroach. But the worst part of is that you are also human. Look at you how you strive to be worshipped by women, like those jealous, vain gods. Now go, and be human, but remember you are always welcome. You know how to find us. Just keep your eyes on what is going on down in the underground. (203)

Here the protagonist's human self is under hostile scrutiny and is mercilessly criticized. He becomes educated by the insects surrounding him in his apartment, and he is even stimulated by them so much so that in his phantasmagorias he turns into one of them.

> To cross the line under the bald man's gaze would require an even more experienced *cockroach than myself*. And what if I managed to pick up the phone? What would I say? Under the circumstances. Shohreh would never understand or detect my *ultrasonic insect sounds*. I could rub my feet for hours, send loud signals and *wave my whiskers*, she would still never understand. (265)

He benefits from his recurring dreamlike states of being; in his fluctuating consciousness he is being taught by the roaches. During his periodic hallucinations he feels closer to his cockroach self than to his human self. It is basically at times like these that he feels "deep disgust" for "humanity," for the "moneyed elite" (Ben "the ground"). Hutchison accentuates the primary importance of "the liminal space between human and cockroach as a space of possibility for the immigrant" ("Immigrant").

The text suggests that the possibilities are realized in the psychic space that the narrator penetrates on his various psychotic trips in the course of which he gets to know and befriends his "cockroachian" self. This troubled man sees more clearly during his hallucinogenic flights than he does on his clear-minded quests. In his mental confusion often verging on the edge of madness he sees more comprehensively than otherwise. Hage assumes:

> Maybe we all flip between reality and madness [...] I kind of alternate between the two when I write, and sometimes weave them both in at the same. Even the act of writing is madness in a way. Think about it: to write literature you have to create things from nowhere and truly believe them – and make other people believe them. I acknowledge and cherish that. (qtd. in East "the ground")

The borderline between madness and sanity in the narrator's case is rather thin. He thinks, "All one has to do is substitute one sensation for another. Changes. Life is all about changes" (277). Change for him is also a process of "becoming." As Hutchison asserts "the narrator is forever embracing a process of becoming" (n.p.). Yes, indeed,

but the question remains: becoming what? I assume that more often than not he has a peculiar urge to grow into a cockroach in order to develop his own multifaceted self; after all the roaches are the creatures that will be able to exhaust all the possibilities they envisage. Atwaru's observations about immigrant experience can be applied here for revealing the intricate nature of this kind of situational awareness.

> There is a becoming here, a willed as well as an unwilled transformation, a movement towards a possible consciousness which will emerge within the contexts of continuing redefinitions in a milieu of changing meanings, the fusions and confusions [...] of an unfamiliar and evolving culture. (13)

In this hallucinatory story it is the "evolving" culture of the cockroaches that will transform the life of the Montreal underworld by moving upwards from an existence close to the underground and gradually taking over the place of the settled, the affluent, the comfortable, in more ways than one.

Oddly enough, the protagonist's racing thoughts become more connected when his senses are distorted. His existential anxiety prevails much less when his mind is unsound, when he wanders about in his phantasmagorical illusions. His irritability is increased when his mind is sound. This bug-man is inspired not by what the city can offer but by what the ambitious cockroaches may offer instead. He enjoys his roach self; he crawls like these insects and, like them, invades people's houses in order to investigate their fridges so that he can feed himself. However, as Kamboureli notes, "This verb [crawl], that punctuates the text with disturbing frequency, speaks to his willful transformation but also dehumanization, his desire to crawl in the underground but also his vision 'that a grand change is coming, a fatal one that is brewing from underneath the earth'" (117) (145). His petty thefts include stealing lipstick, slippers, letters, etc. On occasions when he is transformed into his imaginary vermin self his intention is to explore other people's inner lives rather than to enjoy their fabulous wealth. Hage notes, "The cockroach is a survivor, not very welcome, resilient and a creature that penetrates people's homes very easily" (qtd. in Wagner "A tough"). He meticulously scrutinizes pieces of furniture hoping that he will find objects that will disclose the past, the secretive thoughts and, maybe the intentions of people he knows vaguely or not at all. His break-ins are described in minute detail.

> His drawers held a bunch of knick-knacks, objects he must have kept from his Paris stay – a Paris subway man, a few postcards he had received from an old acquaintance, a woman [...]. This must have been the professor's *grand amour.* Then I found a wealth of correspondence. A treasure! I stole some of his letters [...]. In the professor's closet I found an old green

> suitcase [...] I opened it in no time. The locks almost rusty, sprang upward like eyes opening in a bad dream. Inside papers, and envelopes were organized in bundles [...]. (150-1)

These lines bring to mind Gaston Bachelard, who relates that "drawers and chests" and other "hiding places" become spaces where "human beings, great dreamers of locks, keep or hide their secrets (74). The narrator rummages through strange houses, and this is what he, in his converted form, is mainly interested in. He considers cockroaches joyously industrious and he is convinced that "only [these] insects will survive. They shall inherit the earth [...]" (53). By extension he imagines that those people who are in exile at present will be free and they will govern. This powerful awareness of a hitherto unheard future frightens and comforts him at the same time.

What also soothes are the frequent and meditated visions that are in sharp contrast with the "unflinching urban reality" (East "the ground") of the demiworld of Montreal. T.F. Rigelhof describes him as someone "with a large imagination" ("Fiction Howls"). This "damaged individual" (Powell "Insect") resembles a poet when he flees into the realm of words. The text is shot through with poetic delineations.

> Late at night in this city, the snow is pasted just above the street like a crunchy white crust that breaks and cracks under your feet. There is a sound to the cold, a constant quiet, a subtle permanent buzzing. It is not the vibration of the long-shadowed fluorescent city lights tracking the trajectory of falling snow, nor is it the wind, nor the people. It is something that comes from underground and then stays at the surface. (127)

Describing his style, Hage admits that he is indebted to Arabic poetry: "The way I write is very intuitive. It is sometimes visceral, emotional. [...] I suspect a lot of that comes from Arabic poetry" (qtd. in East "the ground").

In Ben East's view, the author's real achievement in *Cockroach* is that "he may be torn between poetry and prose but it's mirrored in his narrator's battles with being human or primitive in order to survive" ("the ground"). The narrator, who has grown in strength, is making efforts to leave behind his socially dysfunctional life and directs his endeavours to an end that would make him benefit from his "cockroachian" experiences. Powell notes, "He [the narrator] certainly behaves like a cockroach [...]" ("Insects"). There are instances when he explicitly identifies himself as a cockroach, for example: "I was the insect beneath them" (89), or: "Look at my wings straight and hard, look at the shine of their brown colour, look at my long whiskers and my thin face, look at all my beauty" (284). As mentioned earlier, of the many cockroaches he meets, the one he converses with at length is an albino (basically white) and it grows to the size of the narrator. There are many convincing similarities between the narrator

and a cockroach. Powell also notices, "Hage is too successful in making the narrator akin to a cockroach [...] ("Insect"). The anonymous protagonist's pseudonym may as well be the hardly-subtle "Cockroach," which challenges Hutchison's assumption that "The refusal to fully accept either identity [cockroach or human] is reinforced by the namelessness that marks both the narrator and his country [...] ("n.p). She confirms the following observation by Adam Carter: "Namelessness may be indeed a space of freedom and plurality, a generative place" (n.p.). In my view the narrator gained the space of freedom that finally triggers him to act through strengthening his cockroach character. I agree with Taheri that "Hage's anti-hero [...] builds the cockroach aspect of his persona willingly and as a key element of a mechanism of self-defense in a hostile world" ("Forgetting"). What is more, he does so in a very persuasive way. Hage's creature is a compelling one and, as Norton observes, "It takes idiosyncratic courage to turn a man into a cockroach after Kafka" ("On Cockroach"). But Hage does not disappoint the reader despite the fact that the last pages turn into a kind of "revenge narrative" (Beattie "Cockroach") similar to a thriller in a sudden and unexpected way. However, it is here that the narrator can apply the "mechanisms" he was introduced to by the albino cockroach:

> Yes, we are ugly, but we always know where we are going.
> We have a project.
> An evil, oppressive one, if I may add. I shouted.
> A change. A project to change this world, the creature corrected me, and waved his whiskers.
> And to subordinate and kill all those who do not conform all those who do not conform to your project. (202)

Raging in anger, the protagonist defends his Iranian lover, Shohreh, when he shoots her former jailer, who tortured and raped her many times. Earlier, however, he was unable to save the life of his sister, who suffered from her extremely brutal husband. Despite the somewhat ambiguous ending the narrator undoubtedly accepts the cockroachian components that are fully integrated into his new state of consciousness. As Geoff Pevere sees it, "The cockroach does not survive because it struggles and resist, but because it surrenders to circumstances and thrives in whatever filth is available. It obeys the drain" ("The cockroach"). The last lines in the novel suggest a smooth transition in a fluid space:

> I dropped the gun and walked back to the kitchen. I looked at the water that gathered and rushed towards the drain.
> Then I crawled and swam above the water, and when I saw a leaf carried along by the stream

> of soap and water as if it were a gondola in Venice, I climbed onto it and shook like a dancing gypsy, and I steered it with my glittering wings towards the underground. (305)

Carrie Dawson notes that in the end the narrator "turns towards his underground home with a sense of new possibility" (154). Indeed, in the final transformation the unique psychic space that continues in the underground is considerably enriched by the decisive victory achieved above ground; with the knowledge the narrator gained from the cockroaches he has managed to save a human being's life. Being fully aware that he is awaited, he descends and returns back to them for further advice and enlightenment.

Rawi Hage's novel is a disturbing piece of fiction that focuses upon the intricate nature of the immigrant experience of deterritorialization. The protagonist's cross-town journey in Montreal is both vertical and horizontal; neither dimension suffices for him. The main character, a social outcast, envisions himself as a giant cockroach, which allows him to experience realities that otherwise would be impossible for him. His constant shift between real and dreamlike states of consciousness – in his case a bizarre combination – results in a kind of mental confusion. Nevertheless, through his self-willed altered state of consciousness he familiarizes himself with the cockroaches' aggressive energy, which turns out to be to his advantage. Upon his visits to the underground, where he is immersed in the extreme reality of a troubling psychic landscape, he goes through a critical transition. His anxiety and disorientation is somewhat lessened and the experience of exile is relieved to some extent. Yet his imagined metamorphosis is certainly not a guarantee that he will not continue to live on the periphery of society. Hage's imagery, in short, conjures up phantasmagorical elements that constitute the precarious state of immigrant existence.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (73–83)

From Animal Story to Animal as Symbol

De l'histoire sur les animaux à l'animal comme symbole

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Abstract
This paper starts with an analysis of a representative Canadian naturalist animal story, Charles Roberts' "Do Seek Their Meat from God," and then passes to a discussion of two more short stories in order to demonstrate that in the modern Canadian narrative discourse animal images usually work as symbols. For example, in Margaret Laurence's "The Loons" the bird images in the title appear as a symbol of a character's state of mind and fate, while in Guy Vanderhaeghe's "Dancing Bear" the bear image illuminates the protagonist with a feeling of brotherhood with all God's creatures. This makes him experience a strong psychological identification with the bear, which thus becomes a symbol of his humiliated dignity and pride, before finally becoming a metaphor of death.

Keywords:
animal story, Margaret Laurence, Charles G.D. Roberts, Guy Vanderhaeghe

Résumé
L'étude part de l'analyse du récit naturaliste avec des animaux intitulé "Do Seek Their Meat from God" ["Et ils cherchèrent la nourriture de Dieu"], représentatif du Canadien Charles Robert, pour poursuivre avec l'analyse de deux autres nouvelles afin de démontrer que, dans le discours narratif moderne, l'image de l'animal fonctionne d'habitude comme un symbole : dans "The Loons" ["Les Huards"] de Margaret Laurence, l'image de l'oiseau du titre apparaît comme un symbole de l'état d'esprit et du sort d'un personnage, tandis que dans "Dancing Bear" ["L'Ours qui danse"] de Guy Vanderhaeghe, l'image de l'ours illumine le protagoniste d'un sentiment de fraternité avec toutes les créatures de Dieu et lui fait ensuite vivre une forte identification psychologique avec l'ours devenu ainsi le symbole de sa dignité et fierté humiliées, avant de devenir finalement une métaphore de la mort.

Mots-clés: l'histoire sur les animaux, Margaret Laurence, Charles G.D. Roberts, Guy Vanderhaeghe

The wilderness is the image that comes to most people's mind even now when they think of Canada, but, because it was a significant aspect of the Canadian landscape, it was also the stereotypical image that was almost exclusively associated with this country a century ago. That is probably why "the realistic animal story was the first original genre developed by Canadian writers" (Watson 8). Wildlife and pristine forests were the background of the childhood experiences of two gifted late-19th-century Canadian writers, Charles G. D. Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton, who wrote about their boyhood experiences – Roberts in New Brunswick and Seton in Ontario. They are generally credited with having established the form and tradition of this genre, which is represented by such remarkable later writers as Grey Owl, Roderick Haig-Brown, Farley Mowat, Fred Bodsworth, Cameron Langford and David Allenby Smith. It is also worth mentioning that in Romania, too, the first translations from Canadian literature (1929) were from Seton's best known book, *Wild Animals I Have Known*.

I have chosen to analyze "Do Seek Their Meat from God" (1892) as a representative Canadian animal story because this frequently-anthologized piece is Roberts' first story of this type and it thus sets the tone and possibly a pattern for subsequent creations; at the beginning, however, its innovative vision created great problems for its author in that it was difficult to get it accepted by any publisher (Seifert 44). Also, because this novelty is suggested by the ambiguity contained in the title, for there the verbal form – which may be read as Simple Present elliptical of subject,but also as an imperative – seems to urge the reader to understand that wild animals are not cruel but obey the law of their nature (of God's creation), and thus it challenges the reader to understand upon reaching the end of the story that man had been just as cruel to the panther cubs, who were thus doomed to starvation. After all, the panthers would have been good providers had they been successful hunting down the man cub and feeding it to their offspring.

Roberts provides a classical structure for his short story (exposition, rising action, climax and denouement), where the narrative voice is that of an external agent endowed with the attribute of omniscience. The central structuring principle is that of contrast between man and nature, or culture/civilization and nature, an antithesis that the author eventually deconstructs. Thus, the setting described in the exposition foregrounds from the beginning this opposition, as it is the liminal zone between "the ancient unviolated forest" (19) and "the settlements [that] had been making great inroads on the world of ancient forest" (20). The time frame is a pitch black night. The darkness, with its archetypal associations with danger, evil, and death, creates a suspenseful, mysterious and romantic atmosphere that is gradually brightened by the rising moon. But this brightness that "lit *strangely* the upper portion of the opposite steep" only enhances the frightening eerie atmosphere with its "*elvish* decolorizing rays" that lent a "*spectral* aspect" (19, my emphasis) to the first

animal hero of the story: a male black panther. The visual images that have prevailed so far are now complemented by the first auditory image, the acoustic element also holding a central place in the narrative: it is "a shrill cry…terrible, at once plaintive and menacing, …a summons to his mate, telling her that the hour had come when they would seek their prey" (19). This cry that seems to ring a note of doom will later be echoed by the five-year-old boy's shrill wailings "crying long and loud, hopelessly" (20) when he finds himself alone in the cabin.

The second animal actor is now introduced, the female panther suckling her two very young cubs. Having gone practically without food for the last two days, the two parents are fierce with a hunger "now grown savage" (20).The narrator hints that the blame for this situation goes to the settlers' "inroads on the world of the ancient forest, driving before them the deer and smaller game," thus anticipating the eco-critical attitude of such a writer as Farley Mowat.

In his description of the wild animals' conduct, Roberts relies on "anthropomorphic assumptions about animal behavior" (Moss 310), adopting their perspective. For instance, "[t]hey purposed to steal upon the settlements in their sleep" (19) reveals at least "something akin to reason" (Seifert 46). But in one particular passage the narrator clearly uses the male panther as a focalizer. It is a passage rendered in Free Indirect Thought that can be read either as disclosing the dam's reasoning that the male agrees to, or, most likely, his own reasoning for letting his mate devour the little food they had slain in the last two days, "for had she not those small blind cubs at home to nourish, who soon must suffer at any lack hers?" (20)

Also, upon hearing the child's desolate cry they are perceptive enough to discern in it the boy's loneliness and vulnerability, as it sounded "as if there were no one by to comfort it" (20). I would like to call attention here to the poetic quality of the description and narrative lent by the imagery but also lent by prosodic means such as alliteration: "Thither they bent their way, fired with fierce hope. Soon would they break their bitter fast" (20). The alliterative word string beginning with "f" suggests the beasts' smooth noiseless progress, whereas the next alliterative phrase suggests the explosion of hope in the panthers' stream of consciousness.

Next the narrator resorts to an analepsis in order to explain the present situation and to introduce the human actors. They are also an antithetic pair along class lines: one is "a shiftless fellow" (20) given to drinking and using "unsavoury language" (21) and father of a seven-year-old boy, the other is a prosperous pioneer "master of a substantial frame-house on the midst of a well-tilled clearing" (20) and father of a five-year-old. The two formed a friendship that was soon forbidden by the prosperous farmer, on account of the bad influence of the drunkard's son. But the little boy had that day surreptitiously gone to visit his friend without knowing they had left the solitary cabin they had occupied in the thick of the woods, a cabin that

was at least a mile away from the nearest road. Finding nobody there and besieged by the gathering dusk, the boy had been afraid to go back, taking shelter in the cabin, where after a while he started crying with fright.

Now the prosperous farmer is returning wearily on foot from a shopping day in town and hears the lonely boy's wailings. It is a coincidence that can be called Hardyesque (Seifert 48). He immediately indignantly blames the drunken squatter for his neglect of the child, hesitates in his progress, but decides to trudge on, foot-sore and driven by his hunger and the anticipation of the good meal prepared by his wife. Although the Victorians considered man superior to nature because man is "with safe conscience blest" (to quote Matthew Arnold's "In Harmony with Nature"), it takes the prosperous farmer quite some time to overcome his selfishness and decide to stumble back and then off the main road for a quarter of a mile. It is significant for the parallel Roberts draws between beast and man that they are both motivated by hunger, but in the beast's case it is a matter of survival, not only their own, but that of their offspring as well – that is, that of the species. Yet eventually the empathetic thought of his own son being in such a dangerous situation melts his heart and he returns to rescue the child.

By giving an internal view of the farmer's mind, Roberts now facilitates the reader's identification with the man. However, before giving an account of the encounter between the feline hunters and the human hunter, the thus far covert narrator pauses to make an overt, if not downright obtrusive, didactic comment:

> It would be thoughtless superstition to say the beasts were cruel. They were simply keen with hunger and alive with the eager passion of the chase. They were not ferocious with any anticipation of battle…Theirs was no hideous unnatural rage, as it is common to describe it. They were but seeking with the strength, the cunning, the deadly swiftness given them to that end, the food convenient for them. On their success … depended not only their own, but the lives of their blind and helpless young, now whimpering in the cave on the slope of the moonlit ravine. (22)

The verb "seek" that is recurrently used to refer both to the beasts and humans, sends us repeatedly back to the title, which is an intertext, a fragment from line 21 of Psalm 104: "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." Moreover the passive "given them" calls to mind line 24 of the same Psalm, which praises God's creation: "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

The Darwinian presentation of the dark forest, where the weaker or less swift are "devoured" (19) by the stronger and swifter, is now followed by a discursive outburst that echoes Blake's wonder at the sublime mystery of creation:

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
[…]
When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

For Blake the Tiger is a counterpart to the Lamb, and though many think of it as a manifestation of evil, it merely symbolizes fierce energy (external but also internal); it is still a manifestation of God's energy that can, and should, be revered.Roberts' outburst may also remind us of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner's conclusion, similar to it in its didacticism, even if somewhat different in content: "He prayeth well, who loveth well/Both man and bird and beast" (613-14) and "For the dear God who loveth us, / He made and loveth all (617-18).

But when the narrative is resumed, in the account that follows the focalizer is again the farmer, and the effect of this strategy is to make the reader naturally identify with him against the beasts: "He had a vision of his own boy, at home with his mother, safeguarded from even the thought of peril. And here was this little one left to the beasts! 'Thank God! Thank God I came!', murmured the settler, as he dropped on one knee to take sure aim" (23). And next the mangled farmer is overwhelmed with happiness to find out he has saved his own child. It is a situation that again reminds us of Hardy and his vision of "Life's Little Ironies." It is ironic that the mother panther cuts a better figure than the settler's wife, whom the latter regards as a loving nurturer, but whose eye has definitely not been as vigilant as it should have been.

The narrative does not end here, though. In a neutral reportorial tone, the narrator recounts the settler's discovery a few weeks later of "the dead bodies, now rapidly decaying, of two small panther cubs" (23). And, unsentimentally, the reader has been shaken into realizing man's cruelty – albeit unwitting – and a new wave of sympathy with the panthers sweeps the reader.

The remarkable originality of Robert's story lies in "its mixing of Darwinian insight and Romantic sensibilities in an innovative fusion of the scientific and rational with the mysterious and the inexplicable" (Seifert 50). We may conclude that in the realistic animal story, the animal plays a character's role and is endowed with a specific psychology. It is not a symbol, nor does it allegorically embody human features as in the traditional fable genre.

Animal symbols are similarly crucial to Margaret Laurence's "The Loons," the second short story I have chosen to dwell on. It is part of the volume entitled *A Bird in the House* (1963), which may be read as an autobiographic episodic novel or as "a collection of eight interconnected stories set in a small prairie town during the Great Depression" (Xiques 47). By choosing this form "Laurence shows a profound knowledge of how childhood works, for the very nature of growing up is fragmentary, fractional, segmented" (Huggan: 193). The title foregrounds the image associated with a certain place and moment that has led the protagonist narrator to an epiphany "of adult social guilt" (Morley 46). The narrator Vanessa MacLeod has the comfortable station of a doctor's daughter. The father takes pity on a young girl named PiquetteTonnerre, a "half-breed" girl of thirteen whom he has been treating for tuberculosis of the bone at the hospital in which he practices. As the mother had abandoned her family, Piquette has to work hard to keep house for her father. The doctor proposes they should take Piquette on a family vacation to their cottage on Diamond Lake one summer.

A central theme of the short story is racism, with the half-breeds' marginalization being reflected geographically too: they are ostracized to live in a miserable shanty outside Manawaka, as they don't belong in the Cree reservation, and neither do they belong among the Scots-Irish and the Ukrainians of Manawaka. When she hears the doctor's suggestion, his prejudiced mother promptly refuses to share the cottage with somebody that has no recognized identity in society, being "neither flesh, nor fowl, nor good salt herring" (143), and his wife objects because she is sure "she has nits in her hair" (144). The mature narrator remembers her younger self's neutral attitude to her classmate, as the girl's "vaguely embarrassing presence" left her outside her circle of friends, but also her subsequent efforts to please her father by making friends with Piquette during the summer they spent together. However, her efforts where in vain: the girl kept aloof from her, preferring the mother's company, but always keeping silent and shut up like a clam. Vanessa's approach is all wrong. As she has the revelation that the half-breeds are also Indian, she recalls all her historical knowledge about Big Bear, Poundmaker, Tecumseh and the Iroquois who ate Father Brébeuf's heart and her bookish romantic images derived from Longfellow and Pauline Johnson and engenders the stereotype that an Indian is "a daughter of the forest, a kind of junior prophetess of the wilds" in possession of secrets of the woods. But when she asks Piquette about the woods, the girls feels insulted, thinking Vanessa had referred to their wood surrounded shack. The Tonnerre youngsters are all "Unfamiliar with laughter" (143) and Piquette has "dark unsmiling eyes" (147). Piquette refuses to come to the lakeshore to listen to the loons' cry, and Vanessa does so only in the company of her father, who prophesizes the loons will be scared away by the numerous holiday makers in a few years. The unforgettable ululating, peculiar sound of these "phantom birds" gets imprinted on Vanessa's memory: "Plaintive, and

yet with a quality of chilling mockery, those voices belonged to a world separated by aeons from our neat world of summer cottages and the lighted lamps of home" (147-48). Moreover it is only at the end of the narrative that the reader makes out the anticipatory symbolic hint at death suggested by the phantomatic aspect of the birds.

Vanessa's next encounter with Piquette takes place when the girl is 17, totally changed into a more forward person with a striking slender body, boasting of her engagement to be married to a fair, tall, handsome English stockyard worker. Vanessa has a glimpse of the real Piquette as "her defiant face momentarily, became unguarded and unmasked, and in her yes there was a terrifying hope" (150). This is the hope of the pariah to become integrated in a society that previously had only heaped scorn on her and her folks. But when she last hears of Piquette, her mother tells her of the girl's dreadful death at the age of twenty: her marriage had come to nothing, and she had returned to live at the shack with two children and had taken to drinking. She had internalized the stereotype of the Native as "drunk and disorderly, of course," and was frequently taken to court (151) for, as Charles Taylor has underlined, a person or group "can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (Taylor 75). In winter the shack caught fire from an unprotected stove and the mother who had been drinking all day, burned to death with her children.

Haunted by the look of terrifying but illusory hope in Piquette's eyes, when she returns the following summer on the shore of Diamond Lake, now renamed Lake Wakapata, Vanessa realizes that the loons were no longer there, and they had vanished, as her father (now dead) had anticipated. She imagines that "perhaps they had gone away to some faraway place of belonging. Perhaps they had been unable to find such a place, and had simply died out, having ceased to care any longer whether they lived or not" (151). And she has an empathetic epiphany of the symbolic analogy between the fate of the loons and that of Piquette, and maybe her people. The "neat" orderly dominant society has turned the Indian into a tourist attraction, appropriating their old geographical toponyms but does not care a whit about the actual people. The last paragraphs of the narrative reveal a personal feeling of shame, which may also echo a sense of collective guilt, at having failed to reach out to a miserable human being belonging to a racially oppressed people. Now she suddenly understands the symbolic analogy between the plaintive cry of the birds and Piquette's self-pity, between their mocking sounds and her defiant attitude, their need to withdraw from encroaching invaders and her withdrawal, yet their common need to find a place of belonging. Thus, embedded in Vanessa'a realistic narrative, the recurrent auditory image of the birds plays a central symbolic role in conveying her retrospective intimation of a significance that had been a "mystery" (148) to her as a teenager.

The third short story that I have chosen to discuss is Guy Vanderhaeghe's "Dancing Bear" (1982), where the Canadian writer explores the protagonist's subjectivity and keeps wholly within the boundaries of psychological realism, while using the image of the bear, with rich metaphorical or symbolical valences. The protagonist is DieterBethge, an old man of German stock whose parents had been German colonists in Romania, before emigrating to Canada. Old age has brought Bethge a lack of control over his muscles, so he has to put up with the indignity of having a rubber sheet placed on his bed by Mrs. Hax, the housekeeper his son has hired for him.

Mrs. Hax treats DieterBethge as if he were a child under her total authority as he no longer has the capacity to do things for himself. Thus, when she helps him sit up on his bed she encouragingly coaxes him with an "upsy daisy" (405); she menacingly warns him: "complainers' noses fall off" (405) and talks to him about projected actions using the irritating pronoun "we." That she behaves as if he were a child to be firmly treated but also humoured now and then is likewise emphasised by her remark when tidying up his room: "the old bugger made more work than a whole tribe of kids" (404).

Like most elderly people, Bethge relives significant moments of his past, the ritual of rocking himself gently helping him to leave the ignoble present behind and start travelling back in flashbacks of revelatory scenes. The first flashback carries him to an epiphanic moment he had experienced at the age of five. Using the child secretly hidden in a manger as a focalizer, the narrator recounts an innocent boy's witnessing of his father skinning a bear. Though he knows the bear had been a marauder and a killer, the child's heart goes out to him, corroborating Margaret Atwood's remark in *Survival* that Canadian animal stories are almost always failure stories, ending with the death of the animal; but this death, far from being the accomplishment of a quest to be greeted with rejoicing, is seen as tragic or pathetic (74). Seeing the body stripped of its furry skin, the child suddenly intuits that that shape is not a bear. "Two arms, two legs, a raw pink skin. A man. Under all that lank, black hair a man was hiding, lurking in disguise" (407). Moreover, when, frightened by his sudden discovery, the boy cries for his father, the man who appears in the doorway to soothe him is "covered in grease and blood, a murderer" and the child feels like "an unwilling accomplice to murder" (407). The feeling of brotherhood with all God's creatures that the boy experiences is of a religious quality, also directly suggested by the recurrent image of the manger in which the child hides (406, 407), whereas the description of the skinned bear's body reminds us of the Crucifixion. This religious streak in Dieter Bethge's psychological make-up has not been lost with time, as the depiction of his eyes in old age testifies: "they shone with the dull glazed intensity of the most devout of worshippers" (406).

It is perhaps the protagonist's feeling of oneness with all creation that accounts for the rich animal imagery that pervades this short story. From the very first paragraph the old man's helplessness is suggested by the omniscient narrator's comparing him

with a butterfly that is about to be placed in a glass case: "The old man lay sleeping on the taut red rubber sheet as if he were some specimen mounted and pinned there to dry" (404). The image, at once reminiscent of victimization and even perhaps of the spearing on the cross, also implicitly suggests the old man's inner beauty. But numerous central animal images evoke a Darwinian, predatory universe as they mostly reflect Mrs. Hax's perspective: the relationship between Mrs. Hax and Mr. Bethgecan be appropriately depicted as cat and mouse play (Mrs. Hax actually describes herself feeling "like a drowned cat", 414). To Mrs. Hax's eyes Mr. Bethge's tongue "flickered angrily, darting and questing like a snake's" (405); at other times she indirectly calls him a pig ("I stepped in and saved your bacon" (410)); elsewhere she deems him "crazy like a fox" (408) or similar to "the cat who swallowed the canary" (409).

The second bear flashback is triggered by the word "tune" that Mrs. Hax recurrently uses in order to imprint on Mr. Bethge's mind her position of power. He is enraged by her vindictive retaliation of cutting off all his cigarettes that day, and his feeling of humiliation is acute. So he tries an act of rebellion and a gesture of authority, telling her she is fired. But Mrs. Hax ironically reminds him that "he who plays the pipe calls the tune" (409) and therefore she can only be fired by the man who has hired her – that is Mr. Bethge's distant son.

Mr. Bethge remembers a sunny day when he was a boy of twelve back in his native Romania and he witnessed a scene of great cruelty on a market day. A dancing bear led on a chain attached to a ring through his nose gave a performance to the tune played by his master. But the pace of the tune was too lively and at a certain moment the bear could no longer maintain his human posture, and fell on his back, refusing to stand up again and continue his dance. Yet when the initially admiring crowd turned away sniggering, the bear's pride was offended and he started dancing again, to an imaginary tune. But the bear's master, furious that he had raised no money, twisted the bear's nose ring, punched his head and kicked his belly until the bear squealed with pain. The boy experienced a strong psychological identification with the bear, like a reverberation of the epiphanic moment of yore. Bethge projects his sense of humiliation upon the bear, his awareness of being in a subaltern position (having to dance to a tune imposed by the people in power), his sense of sexual impotence (he notices how "[t]he pink tip of his penis jiggled up and down in the long hair of his loins," 412).

The boy would have liked to explain to the trainer that a bear was a man in masquerade – perhaps even a judge, but at the very least a brother (413). For him the bear was an embodiment of dignity and pride, a symbol of majesty and power. That is why he resented the man's humiliating behaviour and imagined the bear would stand up for himself, would rebel and take revenge. Although nothing had happened then and he had simply left in dismay, the image of the bear dancing when he willed, rather

than when ordered to fills the old Dieter with a spirit of rebellion. Therefore, when Mrs. Hax leaves the house to get something from the store, he petulantly locks her out in the rain. Exhausted by the effort, but happy with his gesture of defiance he has a third vision of the bear: he dreams of the dancing bear performing a dance only for him, a gift freely given (416). We become aware that the bear has now changed into a tutelary spirit, a mythical figure (he is growing larger and larger) offering Dieter what he most needs: freely given warm affection and friendship. In a fourth appearance in the narrative, the bear comes to free Dieter from a life of humiliation, with a welcoming warm embrace, becoming a symbol of death. Death is thus euphemized and the bear turns into metaphor of brotherly love and support.At the same time Bethge knows that the bear is the holder of a truth that he had intuited himself, the truth of the brotherhood of all creation. The bear also acquires the protective qualities that Indian mythology ascribes to him (Chevalier, Gheerbrant: ours) and becomes a psychopomp animal.

By way of conclusion, I would like to draw attention to just how frequently the bear image or even motif appears in Canadian literature. A mythical beast in Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John,* Rudy Wiebe's*The Temptations of Big Bear*, or Robertson Davies's *The Manticore,* this animal becomes in Marian Engel's *Bear* a metonymic symbol of nature, instinct and natural behaviour as against the artifice and shallow rationality of stereotyped behaviour in contemporary society. As a general remark deriving from my analyses of the three short stories, I would like to conclude that animals are not frequent actors in modern and postmodern fiction but the recurrent symbolic animal images reveal them as a rich hormone of writers' imagination, a remarkable example to this effect being RawiHage's*Cockroach* (2008).

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (85–94)

Reimagining Canada: Sharon Pollock's *The Komagata Maru Incident*

Réimaginer le Canada : *The Komagata Maru Incident* de Sharon Pollock

Tanja Cvetković

Abstract
The paper focuses on the way Sharon Pollock, a renowned Canadian playwright, reimagines and reconstructs Canadian history and national identity in her one-act historiographic docudrama *The Komagata Maru Incident*. Based on a real event – namely, the May 23, 1914, incident when a group of 376 East Indian immigrants who were British subjects arrived in the Vancouver harbour aboard the *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese freighter, and appealed to the Canadian government for refuge – the play represents Pollock's successful rewriting of a neglected story from history. It proves that her imagination does not "serve the ruling ideas of the time." Further, in this play Pollock expresses her critical view, primarily through her marginalized female characters – two prostitutes and a Sikh woman – of the white masculinist Canada shaped by racist and sexist attitudes. The play reminds us that the construction of Canada is an ongoing process and that past constructions should be re-examined and reinvented.

Keywords: Canadian theatre, identity, immigration, Sharon Pollock

Résumé
Ce travail traite la façon dont Sharon Pollock, célèbre auteur dramatique canadien, imagine à nouveau et reconstruit l'histoire canadienne et l'identité nationale dans son docu-drame historiographique *Komagata Maru*. L'action du drame est basée sur un événement réel, l'incident du 23 mai 1914 quand un groupe de 376 immigrants de l'Inde de l'Est, sujets britanniques, arrive au port de Vancouver sur le bateau japonais *Komagata Maru* et demande asile au gouvernement canadien. Ce drame représente une nouvelle écriture réussie de l'histoire et de cet événement oublié que Sharon Pollock réalise en prouvant que son imagination « ne sert pas des idées régnantes de l'époque ». Dans ce drame, S. Pollock exprime sa vision critique du Canada blanc fondé sur les préjugés raciaux et sexistes. Il le fait principalement à travers les personnages féminins marginalisés, deux prostituées et une immigrante sikhe. Le drame rappelle que la création du Canada est un processus en cours et que les constructions du passé doivent être révisées et réinventées.

Mots-clés : *théâtre canadien*, l'identité, l'immigration, Sharon Pollock

In the interview "The Many Voices of Sharon Pollock" conducted by Kathleen Flaherty, Sharon Pollock states that in her creative artistic work she starts from the raw material of life (Grace 2008: 396). By using the events from the past, she is not so much "re-creating as creating what the past was" (Grace 2008: 395). When Pollock turns an event into a story, she rewrites it, adding new meaning. Many of Pollock's stories have a basis in history, bringing into awareness significant events of the past, speaking not only to history but also to the Canadian national character. When Pollock tells a story, what matters for her is the meaning of the story, the act of telling a story, "the order how [she is] going to tell [...] the parts of the story ..." (Grace 2008: 406). In this paper I will explore how Pollock presents the story of the *Komagata Maru*, in what way she reimagines and restructures the event in the play in respect to the setting, how she reimagines characters, and how she turns facts into fiction.

Since a story can be told from many points of view, Pollock uses the image of a diamond to show different possibilities of telling a story. In "Illuminating the Facets," an interview with Anne F. Nothof, she explains the use of the diamond image in the following way:

> It's as if truthfulness when you're writing about life is a big multi-faceted diamond. I am standing in one place, and I am the result of a certain time and place and experience, and I have a flashlight. If I never try to expand those boundaries I can only hold my flashlight one way, shine it on one part of the diamond. By being aware of how I do see through certain eyes and in a certain way, I get to expand, I get to be able to move the light. (Nothof, 7)

By crossing the boundaries of storytelling, by seeing an event through different eyes, she expands her vision, casting a different light on the event. She rewrites and reinterprets stories, changing and re-imagining reality in a new creative way.

Pollock gives multiple perspectives on historical events, as in the case of *The Komagata Maru Incident,* and at the same time she conveys her angle of observation. She explains,

> I think that I can write a story so long as I find a way within the structure of the story to acknowledge my angle of observation. I'm the result of my middle-class, white upbringing in a conservative part of the country, in a racist country, in a colonist country, next to the largest, most powerful country in the world. (Nothof, 8)

The awareness that her angle of observation might result from her personal and educational background gives rise to a different perspective than the one expected. Directing attention to the neglected aspects of events, Pollock makes her presentation of the *Komagata Maru* event in her play completely anti-racist.

The Komagata Maru Incident (1976) is a history play and belongs to Pollock's early plays,[1] along with *Walsh* (1973), another history play of that period. Both plays deal with facts, with real historical events which Pollock started researching as soon as she realized that there were things that "the historians hadn't told [her]" (qtd in Grace & La Flamme 2008: 14). Both plays deal with the peaceful settlement of the Canadian West and they both have a central character whose inner conflict is explored. *Walsh* concentrates on Major Walsh of the Northwest Mounted Police, who attempted to prevent Sitting Bull and the Sioux from being sent from Canada back to the United States to stand trial for the death of General Custer and his men at the battle of Little Big Horn. The main subject of *The Komagata Maru Incident* is the racial injustice and inhumanity related to the 1914 historical event when a group of East Indian immigrants arrived at Vancouver harbour.

On May 23, 1914, the Japanese-owned steamer *Komagata Maru* entered Burrard Inlet with 376 passengers, most of them Sikhs carrying British passports and therefore eligible for settling in Canada. In 1914, Vancouver was a "white" city and its authorities did not give permission to the immigrants to disembark. Actually, the passengers were blocked by special Orders-in-Council from the Office of Canadian immigration. One of the Orders stated that a legal immigrant had to arrive in the Vancouver harbour after a non-stop voyage from his or her port of embarkation; this, however, was impossible to make in 1914. According to the other Order, a head tax of $200 was imposed for an immigrant to land – an impossible sum for the people on the ship. The authorities and the public sentiment were against the immigrants. As the supplies on the ship ran out, the immigrants on board, facing starvation after two months, had to leave on July 23, 1914. Only 24 of them were allowed to enter Canada.

The man who was charged with handling the crisis, inspector William Hopkinson of the Immigration Department, is the central figure of the play. He undergoes a psychological ordeal regarding the issues of racism he faces in the play. The real Hopkinson was murdered on October 21, 1914, by Mewa Singh, who was arrested and executed in 1915, by which time the events of World War I obliterated the 1914 Vancouver Harbour incident. Sherrill Grace notes that "the story of the *Komagata Maru* was not widely reintroduced to Canadians until Sharon Pollock's play opened at the Vancouver Playhouse in January 1976" (Strong-Boag, Grace et al. 1998: 86). This adds to the significance of the play in reinterpreting the event.

The Komagata Maru Incident has been approached and discussed from various points of view and has been given a significant prominence in respect to other Pollock's plays.

1) Sherrill Grace classifies Pollock's plays into three stages: the early plays *Walsh* to *Whisky Six Cadenza* (from 1973 to 1993), the Garry years (1993 to 1997), when she and her son Kirk Cambell founded the Garry Theatre in Calgary, and the third stage from 1998 to 2007, a more reflective, philosophical stage in which she assessed the artistic life and challenged contemporary issues (Grace 2008: ix).

While Anne Nothof in her essay "Crossing Borders: Sharon Pollock's Revisitation of Canadian Frontiers" explains the politics of exclusion in Canada and demonstrates how Pollock shatters the myth of Canadian moral superiority by revising Canadian history, Erica Kelly in her essay "'This is not where we live': The Production of National Citizenship and Borderlines in Sharon Pollock's *The Komagata Maru Incident*" interprets the whole play in terms of borders and border questions raised by the arrival of the *Komagata Maru*. Kelly argues that Pollock focuses her drama on borderlines and borderzones so that her characters are caught "between India and Canada, between sea and land, on the brink of World War One, a global threshold moment" (Kelly, 2), including the idea of border crossing which Pollock pays special attention to in the play. On the other hand, when talking about the existence of borders in the play, Nothof suggests that "borders are imposed – between countries, between individuals, in the interests of securing or protecting property" (Nothof, 81) and that the protagonists attempt to cross the border or are obliged to defend it (Nothof, 84). Both essays seem to send the same message: that the existence of borders is necessary because they raise questions and provide answers; but the idea of going beyond borders opens up the space for recreation and creativity.

Both Diane Bessai and Sherrill Grace & Gabriele Helms in their essays discuss the play in terms of opposing the dominant system. Bessai, in her essay "Sharon Pollock's Women: A Study in Dramatic Process," discusses the role of women in Pollock's play, including *The Komagata Maru Incident*, and stresses that Pollock's women challenge the system and that "there is something brave in their head-on-challenge to the system" (Bessai, 53). In a similar vein, in "Documenting Racism: Sharon Pollock's *The Komagata Maru Incident*" Grace & Helms discuss the play while interrogating racism and sexism, and "how it exposes the mechanisms through which race and gender support the construction of a white, masculinist construction of Canada" (Strong-Boag, Grace et al. 1998: 87). At the same time, Grace & Helms' criticism points to the important role of the play in the ongoing process of the construction of the nation. Actually, what Pollock does in the play is to deconstruct an event which is based on anti-Asian sentiments and discrimination, turning it into an anti-racist play.

While reinterpreting the event, Pollock sets the play in a brothel in Vancouver harbour with the two prostitutes and their lovers. According to Kelly, the space of the brothel provides a fitting setting for the "peripheral perspective to the main events" (Bessai in Kelly, 48) and the voices of two prostitutes, Evy and Sophie, remind us "that society silences those it marks as other within as well as without" (Kelly, 6). A brothel is part of the whole carnival atmosphere in this play where the central theatrical metaphor is the circus (Strong-Boag, Grace et al. 1998: 87), a play in which the carnivalesque figure of the Master of Ceremonies, T. S. (The System) (Strong-Boag,

Grace et al. 1998: 92), comments on, explains and directs the characters, playing many different roles and incorporating a number of public opinions. Pollock merges serious historical data with the circus in an entertaining way. By explaining how she builds this highly imaginative structure around historical fact, she says that:

> With *Komagata Maru Incident* there were a number of reasons why I chose the circus. [...] When I read the newspaper accounts of the day I discovered the wonderful circus or carnival atmosphere of the dock area with the marching bands and popcorn, the apples and balloons. That is the image that began to dominate my mind. Then I thought, if this is a carnival, or circus, I could have a Master of Ceremonies. (Wallace & Zimmerman, 119)

At the opening of the play, T.S. speaks directly to the audience, setting the scene:

> Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Right this way, ladies and gentlemen! First chance to view, the *Komagata Maru*! At this very moment steaming towards picturesque Vancouver Harbour! (Pollock, 113).

And when he addresses the house, he also speaks to the audience, to us:

> Mr. Speaker; Prime Minister; Honourable Members! Today I am opening my heart to you. I am telling you my fears – fears that affect each and every Canadian today. ... I fear for my country, and I fear for my people. ... I am not ashamed, nor should you be, to state that this is white man's country! (Pollock, 122)

T.S. is firmly in control, pulling all the strings; he is omnipresent and, by commenting on what is going on, he turns out to be manipulative as well.

When Kelly emphasizes the fact that T.S. stands for the system and the state, that he is "the framing voice of the play" (Kelly, 4), she also stresses T.S.'s entertaining role when connecting the audience to the stage and adding to the circus atmosphere (Kelly, 3-4). Both Kelly and Grace & Helms discuss T.S. as "a politician of Mephistophelean proportions" (Strong-Boag, Grace et al. 1998: 87), who, by controlling the stage, reminds us that everything is theatre in the style of Shakespeare's "all the world's a stage." As such it is liable to change, construction and reconstruction (Kelly, 7).

Apart from T.S., the play focuses on five other characters: William Hopkinson, the two prostitutes Evy and Sophie, and Georg, a German immigrant. And while T.S. and the circus troupe appeal to our intellect, as Grace and Helms notice (Strong-Boag, Grace et al. 1998: 94), the character of Hopkinson invites emotional identification and pity. Seeing Hopkinson as "a far finer man than Walsh" (Wallace & Zimmerman, 121),

Pollock considers him not as a despairing character but rather as "a tragic potential" (Bessai in Zimmerman, 70):

> I am very fond of Hopkinson; I see him as a far finer man than Walsh. Hopkinson is a person who has a guilty secret that is used against him by people in power. He atones for his actions by the manner of his death. When he says, yes, I'll testify, he accepts fatalistically the manner of his death in the nature of a Sikh, his mother's religion. He accepts responsibility for it and, to me, that's not despairing; that's a high point. (Wallace & Zimmerman, 121)

In fact, Pollock treats the whole incident in the play by centring on William Hopkinson.

Hopkinson led a double life, as an Immigration Department official and a spy who had his own informants within the East Indian community. As mentioned, he himself was of East Indian origin on his mother's side – the part of his self that he repudiated – and throughout the play his inner conflict between his duty and humanity is displayed. As a representative of the government, Hopkinson experiences a deep racial conflict, opposing and denying the admission to the Sikhs. He conducts spying operations from the brothel against the Sikh community who want to help the landing of the *Komagata Maru* passengers. At the same time, Evy, "his" prostitute, serves as a foil to Hopkinson's figure in the play, revealing the impact of the incident on his personality. While undermining certainties about his origins and the past, Evy reveals him to be a divided man: in rejecting the Sikhs, he rejects his Sikh heritage and his past. His deepest conflict arises from the fact that he fights on the side of the government against his Sikh self.

As far as his background is concerned, Hopkinson displays a profound knowledge of India:

> Hopkinson: I know India, and I know its people. When I was a child, my father was stationed in the Punjab. He had only to shout "Quai Hai" to summon a slave – a servant – no, goddamn it, a slave, to summon a slave, to scrawl his initials on a chit, and there was a felt carpet from Kashmir, brass ornaments from Moradabad, silver for pocket money, cigars, a horse, a dog, anything he wanted. Show him your brooch, Evy. It belonged to my father. Wonderful craftsmen, the natives. (Pollock, 118)

Though Evy cannot influence and change Hopkinson's opinion about the *Komagata Maru* passengers, she constantly undermines him by asserting the fact that his mother was Sikh:

> Evy: And Billy's mother's brown.
> HOPKINSON *throws EVY down, kneels and shakes her.*
> Hopkinson: Don't say that. Don't say that! I'll kill you if you say that to me! (*slowing down his attack on her*) Evy, don't say that. Please don't say that … (*stopping*) I … I love you, Evy, don't say that to me … (Pollock, 130)

At one point they confront their opposing views about the Sikhs on the ship. Hopkinson expresses his racist viewpoint, and Evy her antiracist views:

> Hopkinson: All I know, Evy, is my father didn't die in the service for the world to be overrun by a second-rate people.
> Evy: You don't make sense. Who's second-rate when you run out of brown people? (Pollock, 122)

Thus Pollock rewrites the whole incident by juxtaposing the attitudes of those on the side of the government to those who oppose them and who are marginalized.

In discussing Pollock's play in terms of border zones as "sites of continual negotiation and redefinition" (Kelly, 1) where Pollock questions issues of national citizenship, belonging and national identity, Kelly explains that Hopkinson "provides the most localized exploration of borders in Pollock's production" (Kelly, 4). As a "borderline Canadian of mixed parents" (Nothof, 89), who carries the conflict within himself, Kelly explains Hopkinson's "repressed identity" (Kelly, 5) which verges on the border zone. Since he could not accomplish the blending of his British and his Sikh self, he exercised white racial stands which ultimately became self-destructive. Moreover, explaining Hopkinson's death in the play, Kelly argues that "Hopkinson does not reject one half of himself for the other, nor does he achieve a utopian blending of identities," adding that Pollock leaves this character "on the border between the pieces of his identity, and suggesting that a closed border can be a deadly place to situate oneself" (Kelly, 5).

Sophie also contributes to the characterization of Hopkinson, though not as much as the Sikh woman with her child on the ship. According to the stage directions, the Sikh woman is seated behind "an open grill-like frame" which gives "both the impression of a cage, and of the superstructure of a ship" (Production Note in Pollock, 113). As Kelly points out, this woman caged on stage "challenges the border as an impossible space" (Kelly, 2). When the Sikh woman says "This is not where we live" (Pollock, 127), she alludes to the impossibility of living between borders, in the in-between space the passengers of the ship find themselves in. The Sikh woman representing all the other passengers on the ship adds to the moral perspective of the event, further maintaining the polarities between justice and injustice. The woman and the child act as victims of

the injustice inflicted upon them by the imperialist rule. In contrast, Hopkinson has chosen the side of power, though he cannot entirely live it. He denies supplies to the people on the ship and as a result of a skirmish between the Immigration party and the passengers he is struck by a lump of coal the Sikh woman on the ship throws at him, and struck down.

> Hopkinson: Our policy of disallowing the supplying of the ship is sound. It weakens their morale. It's only a matter of time till they question their leadership…
> T.S.: Continue.
> Hopkinson: As … conditions deteriorate, we could, at some future date, offer supplies as an incentive to leave. (Pollock, 120)

At the end of the play, Hopkinson is shot dead by Mewa Singh, who tries to exact justice on the part of the victimized and discriminated passengers.

Pollock bases her play mostly on the marginalized and discriminated group of characters, giving them a special place and role in recreating the event. While explaining Pollock's treatment of women in the play, Bessai says that women serve the function of shedding light on the male characters and undermining the dominant system. She further adds that:

> In this play the women figures, although stereotypical and two dimensional as characterizations are the playwright's chief device for providing moral perspective to events as well as for contributing to the emotional dimension centered in the character of Hopkinson. (Bessai, 49)

By being the chief instrument in the play, albeit in the service of revealing the nature of Hopkinson, Pollock stresses the importance of the female characters for the play without focusing her attention on the development of their characters.

The play was written in the 1970s, at a time when racial, gender and ethnic issues were being reconsidered. At that time many important historical events were reinterpreted, including the ones which gave shape to national mythology. Pollock's revision of the *Komagata Maru* incident, by reconsidering racial and gender issues, added another important dimension to the event. Although the starting points were the facts of a real-life story, the result was a product of imagination and fiction, and that is why Pollock's play is a special contribution for the recreation of the event.

By fictionalizing documentary elements in her play, Pollock makes a connection between fact and myth in Canada's past. She "uncreates" the historical event by criticizing racial injustice done to the Sikhs in the 1914 incident and mixes a great deal of information with fiction (she sets the play in a brothel, she fictionalizes the

central figure of Hopkinson, she introduces T.S. and the circus troupe, etc.), conveying a new truth and creating a new version of Canadian identity and history. Thus, *The Komagata Maru Incident* is a historiographic docudrama, where available facts of the historical event merge with fiction. It is a play about real events that have been rewritten, dramatized and manipulated on stage. Indeed, what Pollock does in her play can be compared to Robert Kroetsch's idea of digging under the imposed layers of meanings, of unnaming and uninventing reality. If, as Kroetsch says, "we haven't got an identity until somebody tells our story" (Kroetsch 1970: 63), and if it is so that "the fiction makes us real" (Kroetsch 1970: 63), then Pollock, through the process of recreation, invests Canadian identity and history with a new meaning and truth. She frees the official story of the *Komagata Maru* incident from prejudices of racial injustice and paints it in new colours, thus reimagining and creating Canada.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (95–110)

High and Low Canadian Literary Products in Post-Communist Romania

"High" et "Low" – Produits littéraires canadiens en Roumanie post-communiste

Ana-Magdalena Petraru

Abstract
This paper aims at rendering the image of English Canadian literature after the fall of communism in Romania. It draws on the polysystem theory as developed by Itamar Even-Zohar and others. A distinction is made between the "low" literary products that characterized the first decade after 1989 and high ones that became known to the Romanian public in the second decade – that is, after 2000. Thus, the paper gives an account of the (media) reception of English Canadian literature in Romania, as far as the works and their translators are concerned, not to mention the context that favoured this reception.

Keywords:
Canadian literature in Romania, polysystem theory, translation

Résumé
Cet article se propose de présenter l'image de la littérature canadienne en Roumanie après la chute du communisme, particulièrement dans sa dimension anglophone. Dans notre démarche, nous nous appuyons sur le fondement théorique de l'École du Polysystème, ainsi qu'il a été proposé par l'École de Tel-Aviv et ses partisans, particulièrement Itamar Even-Zohar. Notre but est de faire la distinction entre les produits littéraires inférieurs de la première décennie ayant suivi 1989 et de la deuxième décennie, c'est-à-dire les années 2000, qui est notamment marquée par des produits littéraires supérieurs. Ainsi, nous allons parler de la littérature canadienne anglophone en Roumanie, de ses moyens, de ses traducteurs et du contexte qui a favorisé sa réception.

Mots-clés : littérature canadienne en Roumanie, theorie du *polysystème*, traduction

Polysystem Theory and Literary Reception[1]

Before starting this account of Canadian literature in Romania after 1989, I will provide a few theoretical insights that were helpful in outlining the reception of literature in general and Canadian literature in particular. The article draws on polysystem theory as developed by Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1970s and enriched by Gideon Toury, a translation studies scholar from the same area. In his theories on the functioning of literary systems, Even-Zohar was inspired by Russian Formalist assumptions, i.e. the notion of "system" consisting of interactive and relational elements. Even-Zohar entitled his approach "the polysystem theory" because it envisages literature as a system of systems, a complex network of relations and hierarchies in which translated literature holds its own position and fulfils its own functions.

Even-Zohar's literary polysystem can be reduced to a number of contrasting pairs that illustrate the status of translated literature according to its position in the host literary polysystem. Thus, the first conceptual couple opposes canonized literary forms (literary masterpieces) to non-canonized ones ("low" literary products: popular fiction, detective novels, cheap sensational romances, etc.): "those literary norms and works (i.e., both models and texts) which are accepted as legitimate by the dominant circles within a culture and whose conspicuous products are preserved by the community to become part of its historical heritage" to "those norms and texts which are rejected by these circles as illegitimate and whose products are often forgotten in the long run by the community (unless they change their status)" (Even-Zohar 1990b, 15).

The second contrasting pair in Even-Zohar's theory opposes the centre of the polysystem to its periphery. This pair comes to complete the previous one since canonized literary translated works and the systems they belong to hold a central position within the polysystem, while non-canonized works with the corresponding systems are cast away to the periphery of the polysystem. The latter, however, are unceasingly struggling for a position closer to the centre. The third dichotomy is a continuum of the first two contrasting couples as it opposes the primary (innovatory) literary forms to the secondary (conservatory) ones.

In Even-Zohar's view, translated literature can occupy both a primary position and a secondary one in the literary polysystem. From this viewpoint, he is among the first to adopt "a non-elitist and non-prescriptive approach to literature, realizing that canonicity is not an inherent feature of texts but is ascribed to them by people and institutions" (Dimitriu 2006, 37). When it occupies a primary position, a literary work

1) This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/140863, Project ID 140863 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

brings in new forms and models depending on the status of the target or receiving literary and cultural polysystems.

Even-Zohar distinguishes three cases in which a translated literary text may turn into a canonized literary work in the receiving culture and literature:

> when a polysystem has not yet been crystallized, that is to say, when a literature is "young," in the process of being established; (b) when a literature is either "peripheral" (within a large group of correlated literatures) or "weak," or both; and (c) when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature. (Even-Zohar 2000, 193-194)

As far as the first situation is concerned, it can be argued that Romanian literature was a "young" literature in the 19th century, when literary polysystem sought literary genres to adopt from older well-established literatures, such as the French and German ones. For the second situation, he provides the instance of the Low Countries whose "peripheral" and/or "weak" literatures lack the formal and content resources to create valuable literary works that could compete with "stronger" literatures of larger countries. Consequently, they are forced to import forms and genres from those countries. A literature at a turning point, in the scholar's opinion, would be American literature in the 1960s as its canonized models needed inspiration from foreign literatures so as to satisfy the younger generation's needs for new forms and contents.

Even-Zohar also claims that a literary polysystem is flexible, since translated texts can hold both a primary and a secondary position. Such an instance was Hebrew literature in the inter-war years, when translations from Russian occupied a primary position, while translations from languages such as English, German and Polish occupied a secondary position. He also speaks about a correlation between translations:

> translated works do correlate in at least two ways: (a) in the way their source texts are selected by the target literature, the principles of selection never being uncorrelatable with the home co-systems of the target literature (to put it in the most cautious way); and (b) in the way they adopt specific norms, behaviours, and policies – in short, in their use of the literary repertoire – which results from their relations with the other home co-systems. These are not confined to the linguistic level only, but are manifest on any selection level as well. Thus, translated literature may possess a repertoire of its own, which to a certain extent could even be exclusive to it. (Even-Zohar 2000, 192-193)

Furthermore, Even-Zohar underlines that the position occupied by translation in the receiving literary polysystem affects the translators' freedom of choice. Since

translated texts are innovatory in form and function, translators are keen on preserving the norms peculiar to the source language, creating "adequate" translations. He uses the term adequacy to refer to the "reproduction of the dominant textual relations of the original" (Even-Zohar 2000, 196).

All literatures influence one another, claims Even-Zohar. In "Laws of Literary Interference" (1990a), he approaches the issue of literary interference, defining that concept as "a relation(ship) between literatures, whereby a certain literature A (a source literature) may become a source of direct or indirect loans for another literature B (a target literature)" (1990a, 54). He identifies the following ten laws of literary interference: "Literatures are never in non-interference"; "Interference is mostly unilateral"; "Literary interference is not necessarily linked with other interference on other levels between communities"; "Contacts will sooner or later generate interference if no resisting conditions arise"; "A source literature is selected by prestige"; "A source literature is selected by dominance"; "Interference occurs when a system is in need of items unavailable within itself"; "Contacts may take place with only one part of the target literature; they may then proceed to other parts"; "An appropriated repertoire does not necessarily maintain source literature functions"; "Appropriation tends to be simplified, regularized, schematized" (1990a, 59).

Polysystem theory as understood by Even Zohar is extremely useful for this paper since the aim is to establish the place of Canadian literature in the receiving Romanian literary and cultural polysystem. Moreover, I are interested in establishing whether Romanian literature was "weak" or "strong" during the period under discussion, i.e. the post-communist one. This is because it will help us account for the "peripheral"/"marginal" or "central" place of foreign literatures as opposed to the national one and consequently of the "interferences" of Canadian literature in the Romanian polysystem. As mentioned above, the translation policy in 19th-century Romania largely focused on foreign models so translation had an important role in filling in the gaps of the young Romanian literature of the time. The early communist period was confronting a similar situation according to partisans of the new regime such as Dan Petraşincu (cf. Selejan 2007, 27), who claims that the previous period (i.e. the inter-war and WW II years) ignored creations by Romanian writers in favour of rather cheap foreign translated works. It was, therefore, essential for a new generation of writers to emerge so as to celebrate the virtues of the new regime and also reflect the ideology of the communist party and serve its interests. In other words, translations occupied a central position within the pre-communist Romanian literary polysystem and it was time for them to be driven to the periphery so as to make room for new Romanian works in line with the Marxist grid. This perspective could perhaps also account for the first translations

from (English) Canadian literature that were carried out in the 1950s, namely two novels by the minor Canadian writer Carter Dyson. He was probably chosen for his socialist progressive views reflected in his works.

English Canadian literature in Romania after 1989

Post-communist Romania witnesses the privatization of the state publishing houses that functioned during the communist years and the foundation of new, private, ones. This had an impact on post-communist rewriters who were forced to adapt to the new capitalist market economy that comprises the book market, as well. Translations carried out during the early 1990s were a result of the incoherent translation policies of the newly established publishing houses. This situation recalls pre-communist Romania when commercial criteria guided the selection process for works to be translated. Thus, "low genres" such as dime novels, detective novels, spy novels or cheap sensational novels have, once again, invaded the market. However, since the 1990s the Romanian "cultural capital" was also enriched with translations from genres that were little enjoyed during the totalitarian regime. Thus, science fiction novels by William Gibson have now been translated by leading Romanian translators and specialists in the SF movement: *Neuromantul/Neuromancer* (1994), *Virtual Light/Lumina virtuală* (1995), *Chrome* (1998) and *Count Zero/Contele Zero* (1999).

What is characteristic of the post-communist period of reception is that it introduces new genres to the Romanian public such as, for instance, Canadian romance fiction. The Romanian Translation Studies scholar Magda Jeanrenaud argues that this is something specific to former communist countries and gives cultural and economic reasons for this phenomenon:

> In Romania, like in the other ex-communist countries, the first years after 1990 mark a kind of "reading celebration" as books invaded the streets of small and big towns. Apart from books that had been prohibited or censored in the previous periods, bookstalls are now invaded by "low genres": dime novels, detective novels, spy novels, science-fiction novels or cheap sensational novels. They all aim to make a quick profit by sacrificing the quality of translations and the price to be paid consists in the flaws of a copyright legislation not entirely settled yet; the rising inflation has led to a production of books destined to be sold quickly on a market lacking proper distribution channels and considered as inoperational by most actors in the field. […] "Intellectual" works that address a small number of readers are less popular, whereas other genres (such as poetry) have hit a low and made room for mass literature […]. New fields, either partially or completely neglected during the previous

> period, such as religion, mysticism, esotericism, homeopathy, popular medicine, and cookbooks, attract editors.[2] (Jeanrenaud 2006, 180-181)

Volumes such as *The Baby Arrangement/Necunoscuta din casă* (1999) by the Canadian Moyra Tarling, *Macnamara's Bride/Anunț matrimonial* (1998) by the American Quinn Wilder or *For Now, for Always/Nu poți fugi de dragoste* (1999) by the British writer Josie Metcalfe are just a few instances of such cheap sensational novels. They were released by publishing houses specialized in such editions, some of which no longer exist today, e. g. ZZ publishing house. Wilder's *Matrimony Notice* came out with Alcris publishing house, which "was set up in 1992 to offer readers fond of romantic fiction the easiest and most pleasant writings of this genre. Over the years, the publishing house arranged its romantic novels in five collections [...] In 2006, it launched two new collections: one comprising modern detective novels and the other romantic novels of 320 pages full of events, happiness and a lot of love" [S1]. Thus, the number of pages was also an important feature at the time that influenced the criteria of selection. Ringier Romania is a branch of a Swiss publishing house. It started its activity in Romania in 1992 and owns not only the most popular tabloid in the country (i.e. *Libertatea*) but also "trendy" and "glossy" women's magazines (*Bolero, Unica*), TV guides and the "teenagers" choice magazine Bravo" [S2]. Translators of such works (Adriana Cisman, Adriana Tomescu, Ruxandra Radu and Cristina Vodă) are not among the renowned Romanian translators.

In this publishing context, the first translations from Canadian literature published after 1989 are Trevor Ferguson's *Onyx John* and Peter Such's *Riverrun/Curgerea râului* in 1993 and came out at Porto-Franco Publishing House in Galați which, according to Gheorghe Buluță in his study devoted to Romanian publishing houses, "has edited books which illustrate a coherent cultural programme" since it was founded in 1991 (1996, 77). Of the two novels only *Onyx John* was translated by a well-known translator, namely, the Romanian writer Ileana Cudalb. One of the most translated Canadian authors in the last decades has been the science fiction writer William Gibson. His success could be related to the preference of publishing houses for new genres that blossomed after the fall of the communist regime. Four of Gibson's novels have, so far, been translated, including his masterpiece, *Neuromancer*: *Virtual Light/Lumina virtuală* (1995), *Chrome* (1998), *Count Zero/Contele Zero* (1999), *Neuromancer/Neuromantul* (2005). The translations from Gibson have been published by Nemira Publishing House and Fahrenheit which are specialized in science fiction; only *Neuromancer* came out with Leda Publishing House in the "SF Nautilus" collection which is coordinated by Mihai-Dan Pavelescu and is considered to be one of the best known brands of Romanian science fiction. As far as the translators of his works are concerned, Mihai-Dan Pavelescu, who

2) All translations mine, unless stated otherwise

translated *Chrome, Count Zero* and *Neuromancer*, is also the founder of the Romanian Society of Science Fiction and Fantasy, and a science fiction editor. In addition, he has published articles on SF works and translations since the communist years. Mircea Ștefancu, the translator of *Virtual Light*, is also a specialist in SF literature. Another reputed Canadian SF writer who was introduced to the Romanian public after 1989 is Robert James Sawyer. Winner of over forty awards for his twenty novels, Sawyer's work explores the intersection between science and religion, where rationalism frequently wins out over mysticism. He also has a great fondness for paleontology (*Calculating God*), for an alien world to which dinosaurs from Earth were transplanted (*End of an Era*) and explores the notion of copied or uploaded human consciousness (*Mindscan*, *Flashforward*, *Golden Fleece*, *The Terminal Experiment*) [S3, *passim*]. with his *The Terminal Experiment/Alegerea lui Hobson* (2008) published by Nemira Publishing House in the Science Fiction Collection and *Calculating God/Programatorul divin* (2009) by Leda Publishing House. The translations are by specialized SF translators: Antuza Genescu and Mihai-Dan Pavelescu, respectively.

The Romanian public has also been introduced to Canadian war novels (Rohmer's *Rommel and Patton* and *Massacre 747*), famous popular classics (Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*), Japanese-born writers (Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*), authors of bestsellers (Andrew Davidson, Jack Whyte, Linwood Barclay) fantasy writers (Richard Scott Bakker, Tanya Huff, and Kelley Armstrong) and children's books (Vicki Blum, Matthew Skelton, J. Fitzgerald McCurdy, and Kenneth Oppel) That said, important literary figures such as Margaret Laurence, Timothy Findley or Joe Kogawa, to name only a few, have remained untranslated to this day.

Interestingly enough, a series of translations that came out during the inter-war and WWII years were republished in the early 1990's. This is the case of Jul Giurgea's translations of Mazo de la Roche's first novels of the *Jalna* series republished by Venus Publishing House. Despite their low quality, these old translations were probably preferred to new ones because they did not present the publisher any additional costs. Some of the novels in the same series that came out during the communist period have been also republished, i.e. *Mary Wakefield* (vol. 12), translated by Simona Copceag and *The Whiteoaks/Clanul Whiteoak* (vol. 16) by Liana Dobrescu. The rest of the series has now been published and translated by: Radu Anagnoste – *Reîntoarcerea la Jalna/Return to Jalna* (vol. 7), *Vrăjile Jalnei/Variable Winds at Jalna* (vol. 9) and *Moștenirea familiei Whiteoak/Whiteoak Heritage* (vol. 15); Maria Ivănescu (*Fiica lui Renny/Renny's Daughter* (vol. 8) and *Centenarul Jalnei/Centenary at Jalna* (vol. 10); Elvira Chirilă –*Naşterea Jalnei/Building of Jalna* (vol. 11); and Sofia Oprescu – *Dimineți la Jalna/Morning at Jalna* (vol. 12).

Furthermore, most of other authors' novels published after 1989 have come out without a preface, as opposed to the major postmodern authors published after

2000, whose works are usually accompanied by afterwords or forewords by Romanian scholars. The only exceptions are Richard Rohmer's *Rommel and Patton/Rommel și Patton* (1995) prefaced by His Majesty King Mihai I of Romania and William Stephenson and Farley Mowat's *Să nu ne temem de lupi/Never Cry Wolf* (2006) accompanied by the original preface by the author. So far, neither of the two books has stirred the interest of our literary critics and reviewers, as no articles on their authors have been published in Romanian periodicals.

Major-General Richard Heath Rohmer, "one of Canada's most colourful figures of the past half-century, was a World War II fighter pilot, later a major-general in the armed forces reserve, a high-profile lawyer and a successful novelist and biographer" (S4). *Rommel și Patton/Rommel and Patton* is accompanied both by a foreword by King Mihai I of Romania, who was asked by the author himself to introduce the book to the Romanian readers, and by William Stephenson's original preface to the novel. Mihai I starts with a recollection of his first encounter with Major-General Richard Rohmer in 1992 when they had lunch in Toronto. They shared a passion for flying airplanes. King Mihai I of Romania (1995, 5) argues that Rohmer was a distinguished soldier, lawyer and public figure, confessing that he did not know much about the Canadian's literary career and was surprised when he was asked to write a foreword for the Romanian version of *Rommel and Patton*. Mihai I further argues that this book is a fictional one, yet the scholarship of the research and its depth, which is deepened further still by the author's experience during WW II, contribute to a better understanding, from a historical viewpoint, of the events that followed the Invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. Further on, Mihai I makes remarks on Rommel and Patton, two opposite characters. Patton was extroverted, unpredictable, passionate, ready to fight, the king arguing that his vocabulary might pose serious problems to the Romanian translator. According to Mihai I, Patton's vocabulary was a consequence of his frustration of being held in England as key actor in one of the most renowned treacheries of the Allied Powers during WWII. The result was Germany's effort to send troops to Pas de Calais and wait in vain for an invasion led by Patton. Marshal Rommel, on the other hand, never used foul language and his subordinates tried to do so too, when addressing him. He was equally respected by Germans and the Allied Powers. Mihai I concludes that Richard Rohmer's book discusses the period between June 17 – when Romania was trying to put an end to its relations with Germany – and August 15, eight days before the coup d"état. The book includes many events that might remind Romanians of the summer of 1944, and Romanians are compared to Rommel in their aversion for Hitler.

English Canadian literature in Romania after 2000

After the fall of the communist regime, and especially since 2000, Romanian scholars have got involved in international projects related to Canada or took part in national and international conferences disseminating the results of their research in the field. Various conference proceedings and other publications bring together contributions by specialists from all over the world. Moreover, programmes of English and French Canadian Studies have been developed in most Romanian universities, not to mention that centres of Canadian Studies have been founded in most universities of the country, which testifies to a movement of Canadian literature from the periphery to the centre of the Romanian polysystem.

The post-communist period is also characterized by massive translations from Canadian postmodernism and other fairly recent fiction (Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Michael Ondaatje). Several publishing houses published part of Margaret Atwood's work in prose and no less than seven of her novels came out in the series "Leda Masters" at "Corint" Publishing House which owns the copyright in Atwood's works. Michael Ondaatje is the second most translated Canadian "postmodernist" author (four novels), followed by Leonard Cohen (his two novels and *The Book of Longing*).

Margaret Atwood, probably the most renowned Canadian author worldwide, has her novels published in Romania by several publishing houses. Apart from "Corint" Publishing House, where seven of her novels came out in the "Leda Masters" collection, "Tritonic" published *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing/Negocierea cu moartea: un scriitor despre scriitură* (rather poorly translated by Gianina Chirazi). In a review on the book published in *România literară/Literary Romania*, the writer and critic Radu Ciobanu complains about the poor quality of this translation, which is obvious even to a Romanian reader who does not speak English. The Romanian rewriter (2007: S1) argues that anyone could seize Romanian *inappropriacies*, confusions, obscurities and pleonastic or simply clumsy structures that are against the spirit of the Romanian language. In certain passages, the translator is obscure, though not in order to preserve Atwood's style (in addition to some stylistic weaknesses, the translator took Iris Murdoch to be a male writer).

Moreover, two of Margaret Atwood's novels have been republished during this period. The first is *The Handmaid's Tale* which came out as *Galaad 2195 (Gilead 2195)* at "Univers" Publishing House in 1995, probably because the editor believed that such a title would be found more attractive by science fiction readers than its literal translation. However, the novel was republished in the "Leda Masters" series with a literally-translated title (*Povestirea cameristei*) in 2006. The second novel is *The Edible Woman*, which was first published as *O femeie obișnuită* (*An Ordinary Woman*) in 1989,

just before the fall of the communist regime. This title was perhaps changed because a literal translation might have appeared as too shocking to the censors of the time. As in the previous case, the 2008 Romanian edition of the novel published by "Corint" Publishing House preserves the original title in translation, i.e. *Femeia comestibilă*. Both translations were done by scholars.

Apart from the novels mentioned in the table above, Margaret Atwood's short story "Lesus naturae" was translated as part of "McSweeney's Enchanted Chamber of Astonishing Stories" (New York: Vintage Books, 2004, edited by Michael Chabon). The volume – the Romanian title of which is "Colecția McSweeney's. Povestiri incredibile" – was translated by a team of translators (Cristina Barbu, Cristina Iordache, Alexandra Popescu and Gabriel Stoian) and published in 2006 by "Nemira" Publishing House with the editor's preface. As for the translators of Atwood's novels, except for Gianina Chirazi, they are all professional translators. Thus, Canadian Studies scholars (Monica Bottez, Margareta Petruț and Florin Irimia) carried out four of the eight translations, the other four being done by Gabriela Nedelea (a poet and translator of English literature, member of the *Writers' Union* of *Romania*), Lidia Grădinaru (translator of English literature) and Virgil Stanciu (professor of English Literature at "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj).

As mentioned, Michael Ondaatje is the second most translated postmodern Canadian author in post-communist Romania. In terms of literary celebrity, he is included in the same category with Margaret Atwood and Carol Shields, the contemporary writers that oppose Lucy Maud Montgomery, Pauline Johnson, Stephen Leacock, and Mazo de la Roche for the early 20th century Canada (York 2007, 6). It could be argued that this writer holds a central position in the Romanian literary polysystem as far as the translations from postmodern Canadian literature during the post-communist period are concerned. Major Romanian works in Canadian Studies (studies, courses, doctoral theses, etc.) devote sections or entire chapters to his works (cf. "Postmodernism with a Lyrical Touch: Michael Ondaatje" in Florin Irimia's *The Postmodern Canadian Novel. Perspectives on Four Major Writers* or "Cuvintele, Caravaggio, au putere"/"*Words, Caravaggio*. They *Have* a *Power" in Margareta Petruț's Romanul canadian postbelic între tradiție și postmodernism/The Post-War Canadian Novel between Tradition and Postmodernism*).

Two of Ondaatje's novels, namely his masterpiece *The English Patient/Pacientul englez* and *Divisadero*, came out at "Univers" Publishing House. *The English Patient/ Pacientul englez* was published in the collection "The Novel of the 20th Century" (1997) and, interestingly enough, the translation was by Monica Wolfe-Murray, a specialist in conflict and conflict resolution trained at Oxford. *Divisadero* was included in the "Literature" collection that was distributed with the national paper *Cotidianul/The Daily Newspaper* and sold at a lower price than a regular volume. Ondaatje's *English*

Patient, translated by Monica Wolfe-Murray and initially published in 1997, was also reedited and sold with this paper. Since 2007, *Cotidianul* has distributed over 130 titles of contemporary fiction and four of the published authors are Canadian. All in all, the paper had sold two million books by November 2007, including a variety of authors from Nobel Prize winners (Faulkner), to Pulitzer (Jhumpa Lahiri) and Booker Prize winners (Canadian Yann Martel) (Dima 2007). Apart from Ondaatje's two novels, *Cotidianul* also distributed Yann Martel's *Life of Pi/Viața lui Pi*, which was translated by Cătălina Chiriac and published in 2007. The novel had also been published in 2004 by Humanitas Publishing House in the translation of Andreea Maria Popescu. The fourth Canadian novel that was sold with *Cotidianul* in 2008 was William Gibson's afore-mentioned *Neuromancer/Neuromantul*. (Some of these translations, it appears, were carried out very hastily and apparently also entrusted to young translators at the beginning of their career.)

To return to Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost/Obsesia lui Anil* and *In the Skin of a Lion/În pielea unui leu* were both published by Polirom. The former came out accompanied by a comprehensive afterword by Maria-Sabina Draga who claims that *Anil's Ghost*, "unlike *The English Patient*, does not benefit from a famous film adaptation or a tragic-melodramatic plot" (2002, 321). The latter novel was published in an unprefaced edition. The translations were done by experienced professionals such as Liviu Bleoaca (Romanian writer, translator and secretary general of the Romanian Cultural Institute) and Ana-Maria Baciu (teacher of English at a high school in Bucharest and translator of English fiction).

Last but not least, Leonard Cohen is the third most translated major postmodern Canadian author in post-communist Romania. Both translations of Cohen's novels came out in 2003 at "Polirom" Publishing House. The two afterwords, i.e. "Maso-mecanicul placat pe viu/The Maso-Mechanical Encrusted upon the Living" to *Beautiful Losers* and "Rănile copilăriei/Childhood Wounds" to *The Favourite Game* belong to the Romanian writer and critic Mircea Mihăieș. The afterwords were extracted from the biography he devoted to Leonard Cohen, *Viața, patimile și cântecele lui Leonard Cohen/ Life, Passions and Songs of Leonard Cohen* – a volume intended for a wide audience and published in 2005 by "Polirom" Publishing House. The book became a national bestseller, being listed as one of the most popular non-fiction books of 2006 according to the local publication *Ziarul de Iași/Iași Paper* [S6]. Although it mainly focuses on Cohen's music and poetry, the volume also devotes two chapters to Cohen's prose, which were used as afterwords to the published Romanian translations of his novels. Thus, "Rănile, copilăria/The Wounds, the Childhood" is centered on Cohen's *Favourite Game*, an autobiographical novel that, according to Mircea Mihăieș, starts "with the image of a *wound* and ends with the metaphor of a soft trace in the snow [...]. The favourite game of the childhood friend is also the favourite game of the character-

narrator: a faithful remembrance of the ineffable existence. *The Favourite Game* is a celebration of memory and pain" (2005, 207). "Viul, ratarea/The Living, the Failure" analyzes Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* which is seen by the Romanian critic as:

> a discourse on the decay of traditional values, on a hysteric Saturnalia in which "religious freedom" is achieved through sex [...]. The brutality of the approach, breaking the language or behavior bareers make up a fascinating mosaic, a virulent satire of *Canadianness* – the confusing result of a brutal interaction between English, French, Indian and, to a certain extent, Hebrew identities. This confusion of identities can only be escaped through the "mechanic extasis" of drugs or faith. (Mihăieș 2005, 228)

Apart from his novels, Cohen's poems collected in *The Book of Longing* were translated as *Cartea aleanului* and also came out at "Polirom" Publishing House. The afterword is also by Mircea Mihăieș. In his opinion, "*The Book of Longing* looks like the end of a career. It is both recapitulative and prospective, leaving the impression that it opens a stage in the poet's creation by its over 160 poems and 43 drawings (mostly self-portraits). [...] In one of his recent confessions, Leonard Cohen found the right words for it: "If we're lucky, we grow old" (2006, 230). As far as the translations of Cohen's works are concerned, they are all outstanding and they were carried out by professional Romanian translators and writers: Liviu Bleoaca, Vlad Arghir (translator of English fiction), Cristina Chevereșan (professor of English at the West University of Timișoara, writer and critic) and Șerban Foarță (Romanian poet and translator). Arghir is also the first Romanian to devote a book to Cohen, although it was conceived and printed in Germany and it came out at Pont Publishing House in Budapest (1999) with a short introduction by Mircea Florian. Arghir, the visual creator of the Romanian cultural review *Altitudini/Altitudes*, discusses the Canadian author from an admirer's perspective in a documented, yet subjective manner (Irimia 2008).

Equally translated in terms of numbers is Douglas Coupland. During this period, four of his novels, i.e. *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture/Generatia X: povești pentru cultura de accelerație* (2008), *All Families Are Psychotic/Toate familiile sunt psihotice* (2008), *Miss Wyoming* (2009) and *Girlfriend in a Coma/Tânără în comă (2011)* have come out at Humanitas Publishing House ("Humanitas Fiction" collection) in un-prefaced editions; each translation was done by a professional translator.

New media of reception. Novels and their film adaptations

After the fall of the communist regime, new media diversified and refined the reception process. As mentioned above, novels started to be distributed with daily newspapers

at lower prices (e.g. *Cotidianul/The Daily Newspaper*). In addition, the general public became acquainted with some renowned international writers by means of the film adaptations of their works. This is the case of Michael Ondaatje's *English Patient* and of other contemporary English novelists who were introduced to the Romanian public via the film adaptation of their works, and have been appreciated irrespective of their literary value as writers. As Florin Irimia argues in one of his articles published in *Observator cultural/The Cultural Observer*, this applies to Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient,* Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*:

> If it had not been for Anthony Minghella and his film, Romania would have never heard of Charles Frazier and *Cold Mountain* as it would not have heard of *The English Patient* and Michael Ondaatje […]. In our country, both novels were translated shortly after the premiere of their film adaptations even though the original novels had been published years before and had been extremely successful: *The English Patient* was awarded the Booker Prize and *Cold Mountain* the National Book Award. (Irimia 2004)

The Romanian Canadianist also claims that few works of (Canadian) English fiction have been translated so far and this situation may not change unless more film adaptations are produced. In his doctoral thesis on the postmodern Canadian novel discussed above, Irimia even criticizes the faithfulness of the film adaptation to the original novel. In his opinion, the film is weaker than the novel:

> Like any adaptation, the film does not faithfully follow the plot of the novel; moreover, some critics said that Hollywood managed again to ruin another good book by switching the viewer's attention from the ideological, colonial dialectics of the novel to a soap-opera romantic love story […] (Nevertheless, if we consider the fact that the novel was translated into several languages – including Romanian – immediately after the film had been released, we can appreciate that at least sometimes cinematic adaptations can boost the readership of printed versions). (2006, 66)

This viewpoint is also shared by Draga in her preface to the Romanian edition of *Anil's Ghost*:

> Michael Ondaatje – Canadian writer from Sri Lanka is known to the readers all over the world (including the Romanian readers thanks to a recent translatioRn) by his novel, *The English Patient*, Booker Prize, 1992 or rather by its film adaptation by Anthony Minghella. The celebrity of the film truly surpasses that of the book […] the characters created by Ondaatje in his book may forever be associated with Kirstin Scott Thomas, Juliette Binoche and Ralph Fiennes. (Draga 2002, 321)

However, apart from Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, it is difficult to account for the other less famous film adaptations that are perhaps less known to the Romanian public if we were to take into consideration the fact that, in some cases, the original novel was not even translated into Romanian (as is the case with Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Avonlea*, adapted for television in 1975 and 1989, Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, which was adapted in 2007, Timothy Findley's *The Last of the Crazy People*, turned into the film *Le dernier des fous* in 2006 or *The Piano Man's Daughter* in 2003). Ana Olos claims that the Romanian public became familiar with at least one of the writings of Timothy Findley via the film adaptation on HBO, after the author's death:

> The English language often makes us forget the identity of a series of cinema or TV productions although TV series like "The Road to Avonlea" made us recently become familiar with Canadian actors less known than Christopher Plummer. Yet, probably only few of the people who have watched *The Piano Man's Daughter* on HBO know anything about Timothy Findley, the author of the novel on which the script is based and even fewer know why it has been scheduled now. Kevin Sullivan's film (starring Christian Campbelle and Isabelle Fink) that barely succeeds in adapting a large and complicated psychological novel, although the characters' lines preserve the poetry in Findley's writing, is meant to be homage to its recently passed away author. (2002, 13)

Other film adaptations (of translated novels) that could be familiar to the Romanian public are: *Anne of Green Gables* (1985, based on a novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990, based on Atwood's), *Grey Owl* (1999, a biographical film of the writer), *The Robber Bride* (2007, another Atwood novel), *Fugitive pieces* (2007, based on a novel by Anne Michaels) or *Barney's Version* (2010, after Mordecai Richler's novel).

Conclusions

To conclude, the post-communist period has brought novelty to the reception of Canadian fiction in Romania. First, apart from the classics that were also translated during the former periods, new genres have been introduced to the Romanian public. As shown above, this has been the case with romantic fiction that was largely spread in the 1990s and mainly read by a less educated public; most of these novels are no longer available today. Second, apart from Margaret Atwood's SF novels, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*, this period has introduced William Gibson, a classic of Canadian science fiction. Third, it can be said that in post-communist years

the reception process has been facilitated by the easy access to the film adaptations of Canadian works. As a result, one could argue that during the post-communist years, and especially after 2000, Canadian literature comes to occupy a central position in the Romanian polysystem. This highly dynamic period of popularising Canadian literary and cultural values has not come to an end and, in the near future, further translations from Canadian literature and other forms of rewriting are expected.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (111–122)

Literary Criticism as Cultural Ideology: The Slovenian and the Canadian Perspective

La critique littéraire comme idéologie culturelle : les perspectives canadienne et slovène

Marcello Potocco

Abstract
The article compares instances of nationalist-oriented literary criticism in the Slovenian and in the Canadian literary systems. It does so by contrasting work by, especially, Josip Vidmar, Dušan Pirjevec, Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood. Their work is interpreted as a late example of the transnational phenomenon of cultural nationalisms. Canadian and Slovenian cultural nationalisms of the 19th century, as well as their late offsprings in the 20th century, are partly interpreted as a consequence of a specific colonial position of the two countries during the 19th century, resulting in a politically non-radical, loyalist nationalism.

Keywords: Margaret Atwood, Canadian literary systems, colonialism, Northrop Frye, Dušan Pirjevec, Josip Vidmar

Résumé
L'article compare les instances de la critique littéraire de langue slovène d'orientation nationaliste et des systèmes littéraires canadiens. L'analyse porte, entre autres, sur les śuvres de Josip Vidmar, Dušan Pirjevec, Northrop Frye et Margaret Atwood. Leur travail est interprété comme un exemple transnational des nationalismes culturels. Les nationalismes culturels canadien et slovène du XIXe siècle, ainsi que leurs successeurs du XXe siècle, sont en partie interprétés comme une conséquence d'une position coloniale spécifique dans les deux pays au cours du XIXe siècle, entraînant un nationalisme politique loyaliste non-radical.

Mots-clés : Margaret Atwood, systèmes littéraires canadiens, colonialisme, Northrop Frye, Dušan Pirjevec, Josip Vidmar

In his article "Northrop Frye in Margaret Atwood: Njun Odnos Do Kanadske Samobitnosti in Kulture" (Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood: their view of Canadian identity and culture), Mirko Jurak argues that Frye and Atwood played a crucial role in defining and even more so in popularizing the question of Canadian identity (Jurak 1997). The impact of their thought is indisputable, in spite of the very different interpretations this thought has achieved. The placement of Jurak's work among articles in a collection focusing on the Slovenian literary historian France Bernik is not out of place. Indeed, the article itself and Jurak's short introduction to the text indicates parallels between the roles of Frye and Atwood and the collective striving of Slovenian literary criticism. Jurak, however, does not attempt to present a more detailed comparison of the two literary criticisms and their endeavours to define the two national identities. His claims are worth further investigating, since the Canadian and the Slovenian literary system share at least some common points regarding cultural self-perception and its role in the national literature, as well as in the national and comparative literary criticism. In these pages, I will try to sketch some of the convergences, pointing out the most conspicuous authors and their cases.

In 1978, one of Slovenia's most prominent literary theorists, Dušan Pirjevec, published the book-length essay *Vprašanje o poeziji. Vprašanje naroda* (The question of poetry. The question of nation). It soon became one of the most influential theories on the question of Slovenian national literature. With his definition of nation as a collective subject, Pirjevec envisaged some of the discussions that later became particularly forceful shortly before the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Definitions of nation by Janko Kos and by the philosophers Tine Hribar and Ivan Urbančič, each of whom strived to establish a philosophical foundation for Slovenian independence (see Kos 1996; Hribar 1987; Urbančič 1987),[1] were mainly based on the Hegelian view of nation (ein Volk) as an entity whose substantial aim is to be(come) a state and preserve itself as such in the history (of Spirit) (Hegel 1971, para. 549; cf. Moland 2011, 78; Potocco 2011, 127). Pirjevec defined the Slovenian nation as a "blocked movement" because of the lack of its own state, as well as because of its defensiveness and non-expansiveness, suggesting that in the absence of the usual state apparatuses – such as an army, police, school system and cultural institutions in general – literature, i.e. poetry, provided the only possible media and thus became the agent of national self-fulfilment and identity creation (Pirjevec 1978, 64–68). This is due to the fact that the national idea could be expressed only through the media which sought as little institutional support as possible, but according to Pirjevec this also entailed changing literature into the means of what could be defined as national ideology.

At about the same time, in the essay "Slovenski kulturni sindrom" (The Slovenian cultural syndrome), Dimitrij Rupel suggested that almost until the Second World War

1) All translations from Slovenian are my own.

the Slovenian national idea had been expressed almost exclusively by way of cultural media (Rupel 1976). Compared to Pirjevec, Rupel was even more heavily indebted to the early work *Kulturni problem Slovenstva* (The cultural problem of Slovenianism), published in 1932 by one of the most renowned Slovenian literary critics, Josip Vidmar. In his book, Vidmar defined culture as the core value of what he called Slovenianism and as an existential basis of the Slovenian nation. Vidmar was one of the first critics to note that Slovenian history lacked influential military or political figures and events that could serve as the basis of what Friedrich Meinecke defined as a political nation, i.e., "Staatsnation" (Meinecke 1969). Instead, Vidmar argued, "Slovenia [would become] a temple of beauty and spirit. [Slovenians would] synthesize the achievements of their neighbours and instil them with their own spirit, as France Prešeren had done in his lyric poetry. [They would] create a new Athens or a new Florence on our own soil" (Vidmar 1932, 37).

Vidmar's mentioning of the main figure of Slovenian Romanticism – France Prešeren (1800–1848) – is no coincidence. Although Prešeren's opus is regarded as the first mature work of Slovenian poetry, on publishing his selected poems (*Poezije*) shortly before his death, Prešeren was a victim of a specific cultural situation. Particularly the conservative circle led by Janez Bleiweis (1808–1881), a politician and the editor of the first Slovenian journal *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Peasant's and Craftsman's Journal), rejected his mixture of love poetry and a rather openly expressed patriotic sentiment. Bleiweis's stance generally led to ignorance of Prešeren's work (Paternu 1960). It was only on issuing a posthumous edition of his poems in 1866 that the young critic Josip Stritar (1836–1923) elevated Prešeren into a national poet – with the rather romantic idea of Prešeren as a misunderstood genius – and at the same time explicated the idea of Slovenian poetry as a medium of national self-fulfilment. Stritar explicitly expressed the belief that Prešeren's poetry suffices as a justification for the existence of the Slovenian nation (Stritar 1955, 45–46). Pirjevec thus concludes that Prešeren's fate is typical of the reception of poets in a "blocked movement," which ignored the value of poets during their lifetime only to canonise them posthumously as misunderstood victims, and he even designates such a pattern as "Prešernian structure" (Pirjevec 1978, 77–80).

The ideas proposed by Vidmar, Rupel and Pirjevec and by several other historians, such as Boris Paternu, France Kidrič and Ivan Prijatelj (see e.g. Prijatelj 1958; Paternu 1989), who each at least partly defended the notion of nationally oriented literature, were not put under scrutiny until the beginning of the new millennium. The perception that the Slovenian nation is unique in expressing national interpellation through the medium of literature was systematically questioned at the latest in Marko Juvan's "Slovenski kulturni sindrom v nacionalni in primerjalni literarni vedi" (The Slovenian Cultural Syndrome in the National and Comparative Literary History) (2008).

According to Juvan, the ideologically oriented model of national literary criticism is an integral part of the 19th century cultural nationalisms that spread across the majority of Europe. And since this was not merely a European model (see e.g. Anderson 1991), it is not surprising that it is also easily discernable in Canadian literature and literary criticism.

In both cases we may speak of late cultural nationalisms, although with their source in the previous centuries, there are several specific features binding the Slovenian and the Canadian literary systems. The most obvious similarity lies in the fact that in both systems literature was believed to be the main if not the exclusive medium of national ideas. I have just argued that such was the case in the literary criticism of the Slovenians Josip Vidmar, Dimitrij Rupel, and especially Dušan Pirjevec. In Canada it is also not difficult to show the prevalence of such notions, especially in the years between 1867 and 1980s. One only has to consult the collection of essays and manifestos *Towards a Canadian Literature*, edited by Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman, to see that one of the main preoccupations of, for example, Julie Catherine Hart, Thomas D'Arcy McGee and Edward Hartley Dewart was the need to reinforce national self-confidence by way of literary endeavours, along with the doubt that the actual Canadian literature would be able to create non-derivative writing (Daymond and Monkman 1984, 37–45, 74–89; Dewart 1864, ix–xi). The latter, especially, was also one of the concerns of Archibald Lampman's essay *On Two Canadian Poets* (Lampman 2005), written amidst an intense debate on the future of Canada and its literature and partially as a response to Charles G.D. Roberts' statements in his 1897 *History of Canada* (see D. R. M. Bentley 2005).

Echoes of the same discourse are to be found in the Canadian criticism of Northrop Frye and even more so in the metaliterary works of Margaret Atwood – not only in the famous *Survival*, but even more intensely in her other essays and public appearances, such as and *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (1995) and "On Writing Poetry" (1996). Atwood's essays sustain Barry Cameron's and Michael Dixon's claim that some of Frye's followers ignored "the liberal spirit" of his general theory and that it is debatable whether Frye's remarks are responsible for the "critical anachronism of thematic criticism" (Cameron and Dixon 1977). But even in his so-called general theory, Frye defines criticism as one of the unifying structures of a society (Frye 1957). Moreover, it cannot be neglected that in his "Canadian essays," especially in the famous "Conclusion" to the 1965 *Literary History of Canada*, Frye understands both literature and literary criticism as a means of national cohesion, at least in a not yet autonomous literature in which authors do not "naturally think metaphorically but descriptively" (Frye 1965, 836; Sanfilippo 1994). In spite of his general theory, Frye thus presupposes that literature is a favourite medium of the ideology of Canadianness – and as such a medium of cultural ideology. This leads us to a distinctive

feature of the literary history that tends to function as a national interpellation. The so-called thematic critics, Atwood in particular, took up Frye's notions of the "garrison mentality," "unconscious horror of nature," and especially the idea of the social myth as a unifying structure of a culture, although they reduced them to defining typical subjects and themes in Canadian literature. Contrary to Frye, they also thought that elements of cultural unification tend to be present in every piece of literature, while Frye warned that such elements can be present only in a literature which is ideologically overloaded. Despite the differences between Frye and the thematic critics (Potocco 2006, 87–88; cf. R. M. Brown 1978) (and despite my reservations in regard to the mainly poststructuralist and deconstructionist charges against Frye – such as the charge of Frye's "environmental determinism" (cf. e.g. Surette 1982; Pontuale 1994; Sanfilippo 1994)), Barry Cameron correctly suggested that in focusing on the "social and historical setting" rather than on literature, the essays of both Frye and the thematic critics have implicitly become cultural studies (Cameron 1990, 111–12).

This should be emphasised because a similar tendency can be observed in Josip Vidmar's *Kulturni problem Slovenstva*. Vidmar was one of the most renowned Slovenian literary critics. Yet, with the analysis of the politically repressed nation and its cultural nationalism, Vidmar expanded his working area, taking his prevailing literary criticism well into the area of cultural criticism. It is not difficult to understand the reasons for such a similarity between Frye and Vidmar. In both cases, literary criticism – along with literature itself – became one of the most important media for taking over the role of ideological interpellation in the absence of the more common apparatuses. There is a Slovenian example that shows very well the nature of such interpellation. In 1854, the literary critic and historian Anton Janežič issued his first version of the Slovenian Grammar, supplemented by a short sketch of Slovenian literary history. The Austrian authorities forbade the use of Janežič's book in the classroom and it was only after the withdrawal of the historical appendix three years later that the book – in its second edition – was not prohibited (Schmidt 1988, 64–91, 316–400). This shows that the authorities of the Austrian empire understood very well the ideological role of national literary history.

The underlying assumption of Vidmar's and Frye's ideas is, in fact, the division of two types of nations and nationalism, regardless of whether we speak – following the tradition of Meinecke – of political and cultural nations, or whether we approach the problem in modern terms of centralist (political) and separatist (i.e. ethnic) nationalism (Juvan 2008, 10). This second type of nationalism develops its own media and institutions, such as literature, literary history, ethnology, historiography etc., in the absence of political, bureaucratic and other more common institutions. But cultural nationalism itself may also understood as a product of a colonial position. It is not surprising that Frye, in his "Conclusion," also coined the term "colonial mentality"

designating the presumably non-radical mindset of Canadian literature and society. In fact, the assumption of a Canadian colonial position was at the latest evident in E. K. Brown's *On Canadian Poetry* (E. K. Brown 1943, 12–19) – and was later reiterated, for example, by Frye, Dennis Lee and William H. New (Frye 1965, 827; Lee 1973, 39–49; New 1991, 17). Such a mindset, particularly in the early Canadian poetry of Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Cary or William Kirby, may be seen at two levels at least. Firstly, in the non-radical acceptance of literary forms and ideas, and especially as a tendency towards classical forms and a didactic or utilitarian literature (E. K. Brown 1943; Frye 1965; New 1991; Mazoff 1995; Djwa 1975, 44–46). And secondly, at the level of political ideas – that is, as a non-radical cultural nationalism that avoids the claim for a political autonomy, which was evident in the post-Confederation period and especially in the poetry of Charles G. D. Roberts. William D. Lighthall's "Introduction" to the *Songs of the Great Dominion* is but a typical example of the mentality that stresses the positioning of a culturally autonomous Canada as part of the British Empire (Lighthall 1889, xxi–xxii). The idea that Canada would galvanize the strength of the empire (Ross 1986, 168) that was present in the post-Confederation period was supported by the British models used in the school system (see, e.g., Gaffield 2011; Troper 1978; Harper 1997), by the horizon of expectation of the British readers in the publishing system (see, e.g., Parker 1976; MacDonald 1979; Doyle 1979), as well as by the linking of the poetic "classes" with the British oriented conservative "elite" (Newton 1972, 46–48).

Although it might seem strange at first glance to use the terminology of postcolonial studies in the context of the Austrian empire, Marko Juvan and Katherine Arens have shown that even in the Habsburg empire the relation of the centre to the cultures "of lesser diffusion," including the Slovenian relation, was in some respects colonial (Arens 1996; Juvan 2000, 138). The Slovenian cultural system shares characteristics of Frye's "colonial mentality," namely, non-radical inclusion of foreign ideas and cultural forms, as well as a politically non-radical cultural nationalism. Janko Kos, in particular, shows that Slovenian literature was rejecting the radical extremes at least during the whole 19th century (Kos 2001); the two most prominent examples are Prešeren and Janko Kersnik. Prešeren neutralised the radical ideas of German Romanticism by combining them mainly with the traditional form of the Petrarchist sonnet, as well as with several other formal influences, e.g., that of Ludwig Gleim's Anacreontic poetry (Kos 2001, 75–110). A few decades later, in 1890, Kersnik's criticism advocated the use of realistic "sheer truth under the golden, transparent veil of idealism" (Kersnik and Ocvirk 1952, 315). At the same time, Kersnik's novels, while sporadically influenced by Turgenev's realism, mainly preserve the characteristics of the traditional *Dorfgeschichte* (Kos 2001, 152–53), thus neutralising the more radical versions of realism. These are but two cases that demonstrate the defensive non-radicalness of

Slovenian literature that – according to Boris Paternu – requires "comebacks into the 'safety system' of solid moral, social and religious values, and along with it, the norms of rationalist poetics" (Paternu 1974, 74). It is probably not necessary to point out the similarity of Paternu's description of Slovenian literature with the "unquestionable moral and social values," characteristic of Frye's garrison mentality (Frye 1965, 830). Paternu also rightly notices that Slovenian poetry is non-radical in that it rarely shows traces of political revolt (Paternu 1974, 74). According to Pirjevec, what distinguished Slovenian identification in relation to European cultural systems was its defensiveness and its pessimism (Pirjevec 1978, 65), which could be interpreted as an impossibility of wishing to act as a political nation. In much the same way as some Canadian post-Confederation writers, the Bleiweis circle – the most influential current in the cultural and journalist waters of the post-1848 Slovenianism – was strongly in favour of a merely cultural autonomy. Despite the growing nationalism elsewhere in the Austrian empire, France Prešeren was thus undervalued not only because of his love poetry, but even more so because of his overly radical national idea, i.e. his moderate Pan-Slavism that openly opposed the idea of a Slovenian cultural autonomy limited in the political frame of the Austrian empire – an idea favoured by the Bleiweis circle. It is precisely because of such cultural autonomism that, even in the decades following Bleweis' death, literature and literary history became the main medium for expressing the national idea.

Finally, there is another common point in the criticism of Vidmar, Pirjevec and Rupel on the one hand, and Frye and Atwood on the other. I have already pointed out that both Vidmar and Pirjevec grounded their criticism mainly in the poetry of France Prešeren. It is true that Pirjevec never claimed that all Slovenian literature was affected by cultural ideology – he indicated that the role of national self-fulfilment in poetry was mostly emphasised by processes of its reception, and believed that national ideologisation was receding from the Slovenian literary system in the process of its differentiation (Pirjevec 1978, 70–71). Nevertheless, he stressed almost exclusively the role of major authors, such as the poet France Prešeren, the prose author Fran Levstik, and Ivan Cankar, Slovenia's seminal author of novels and short stories. Similarly, Frye bases his imaginary of Canadian literature mainly in the analysis of selected poets in A.J.M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (cf. D. M. R. Bentley 2006, 4). It would not be correct to attribute Frye's thesis merely to this selection or even to Frye's paranoia, as D. M. R. Bentley does. After all, analogous ideas had been expressed earlier, at least in Lightall's *Songs of the Great Dominion*, with its editor introducing the notion of "northerness" as a characteristic feature of Canadian poetry (Lighthall 1889, xxiii). However, another, more important influence can be traced in Frye's "Conclusion." It is not only that Frye often returned to analysing the poetry of E. J. Pratt, the convergences of his mythopoetic theory and Pratt's mythopoetic poetry, especially in

Brébeuf and his Brethren and *Towards the Last Spike*, are more than obvious. The surrounding "huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting" described by Frye in the "Conclusion" is not merely the setting of these two Pratt poems, but of virtually all of Pratt's poetry, with its mainly Darwinian imagery of uncontrollable, menacing, chaotic nature (Djwa 1975). Even when writing *The Titanic*, as Sandra Djwa observes, Pratt "uses nature as a frame in which to explore the psychology of human response" (Djwa 1977, 65) – which is fairly close to Frye's claim that "the unconscious horror of nature and the subconscious horrors of the mind coincide" (Frye 1971, 141). "It is this nature," Djwa adds, "which Northrop Frye was to elevate to the status of a national myth [...] as he viewed the Canadian tradition [...] through the perspective of Pratt's poetry" (Djwa 1977, 65–66).

Frye, Atwood and their Slovenian counterparts therefore all ground their descriptions of the respective national imaginary in a rather narrowly selected group of literary works. This is not to say that these works weren't crucial in forming the two literary canons and national imaginaries, but it is clear that accounts of the national imaginary by Frye, Pirjevec and Vidmar cannot be understood as an analysis of the two literary systems as a whole. There also exists a circular referencing in the relation of literary texts to national ideology. While national interpellation may be mainly constructed by literary criticism, it must be at least partly grounded in the textual basis, as acknowledged by Juvan. Pirjevec's claims may overemphasize Prešeren's national idea, but they are based in Prešeren's patriotic sentiment, as observed in several of his poems (Juvan 2008, 5–6). In Pratt's case, it is hardly debatable that at least *Towards the Last Spike* contains more than a trace of national ideology, but the same is true of his *Brébeuf and his Brethren* (Buitenhuis 1987, 143; see also Redekop 1985; Tschachler 1989). Moreover, it is evident that the mythopoetic quest was – via Frye and Atwood – transmitted to the poets of the 1960s, such as Atwood, John Newlove and Al Purdy (Djwa 1977, 65).

All this demonstrates that Frye's and Atwood's – or Stritar's and Vidmar's – mythopoetic quest was by no means a Canadian or even a Slovenian speciality or curiosity. Juvan claims that the Slovenian cultural syndrome is part of the 19th century trans-European ideology of cultural nationalism. The fact that in the Canadian literary system we can observe the same ideology well into the second half of the 20th century merely proves that such cultural nationalism was neither limited to the 19th century nor to European literature and literary criticism alone.

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Central European Journal of Canadian Studies
Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale
volume 09 (2014) | (123–136)

Serbian Memes in the Canadian Diaspora: A Case of Cultural Compromise[1]

Les mèmes serbes dans la diaspora canadienne: Un compromis culturel

Vesna Lopičić

Abstract
As one of the most constant propagators of Darwin's theory of evolution in our times, Richard Dawkins claims that we are the only species capable of cultural transmission of information in such a way that it can give rise to a form of evolution. This is how Dawkins introduces the meme as a unit of cultural transmission and as the agent of cultural evolution. The survival of the meme depends on its psychological appeal, and a new meme will replicate itself whenever favourable conditions arise. Any given diaspora makes for such a replication-inducing environment for the memes originating in the homeland. Commonly known as cultural traits, such memes can be found in diaspora literature. The aim of this article is to identify the memes that are described in the literature of Canadian authors of Serbian origin and compare that meme pool with typical Canadian values. Synchronic digraphia, 'inat,' and 'slava' are three uniquely Serbian units of culture that are explored in the cultural environment of Canada.

Keywords: Canadian culture, Richard Dawkins, memes, Serbian diaspora

Résumé
Un des propagateurs les plus constants de la théorie darwinienne de l'évolution, Richard Dawkins, affirme que nous sommes les seules espèces capables d'effectuer la transmission culturelle de l'information de façon à provoquer une forme d'évolution. Dawkins invente le concept de mème comme étant l'unité de la transmission culturelle et l'agent de l'évolution culturelle. La survie du mème dépend de son importance psychologique; le nouveau mème se reproduit à l'identique toutes les fois que les conditions sont favorables. Toute diaspora constitue un bon environnement pour la réplication des mèmes provenant du pays d'origine. On peut trouver ces mèmes, reconnus comme traits culturels, dans la littérature de la diaspora. Cet article se propose d'examiner les mèmes qui sont décrits dans les śuvres d'auteurs canadiens d'origine serbe tels que, par exemple, « digraphia synchronique », « inat » ou

1) This research was supported by the project 178014 granted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

« slava », des éléments culturels typiquement serbes, en les envisageant dans le contexte des valeurs canadiennes.

Mots-clés : culture canadienne, Richard Dawkins, mèmes, diaspora serbe

Introduction: Genes and memes

The aim of this article is to identify some memes found in the meme pool of the Serbian diaspora in Canada and to show how they are compromised in a changed cultural environment. The examples are taken from the works of Canadian authors of Serbian origin, and compared with similar cultural traits comprising the meme pool of Canadian culture. For this purpose it is necessary to refer to the findings of the dual inheritance theory.

Dual inheritance theory, or gene-culture coevolution theory, holds that "parallel mechanisms for inheritance, mutation, selection, and drift act on culture as they do on genes" (Shennan 3175). It is now a fact confirmed by science that what is universal to all life forms are DNA codes of genetic information that are capable of self-replication. Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish Gene* 1976) is among the first scientists to explain that the genes making up chromosomes have the same general characteristics in all living creatures, whether animal or plant. They propagate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures, thus becoming the driving force of biological evolution. Man as a species is exceptional in only one regard: culture. We are the only species capable of cultural transmission of information in such a way that it can give rise to a form of evolution. Though aware of the examples of birds and monkeys demonstrating some ability to learn by imitating the activity of some other member of the same species, Dawkins claims they are just "interesting oddities." Only human culture can truly evolve:

> Language is one example out of many. Fashions in dress and diet, ceremonies and customs, art and architecture, engineering and technology, all evolve in historical time in a way that looks like highly speeded up genetic evolution, but has really nothing to do with genetic evolution. (Dawkins 1989, 190)

This is how Dawkins throws out the gene as the sole basis of evolution and introduces the meme as a unit of cultural transmission and the agent of cultural evolution. Cultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission because "just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to

brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation" (Dawkins 1989, 192). Using the type of metaphor which earned him the label of philosopher rather than scientist, Dawkins continues that the old gene-selected evolution, by making brains, provided the 'soup' in which the first memes arose. This is how genes and memes are related. Just as genes live in chromosomes, memes live in human brains. Similar to genes, they are characterised by (relative) longevity, fecundity, and copying-fidelity, and they are subject to mutation, and blending.

Further, memes are as selfish as genes (as Dawkins explains in the 30th anniversary edition of his famous book, "selfishness" means survival efficiency of an entity). The unit that survives as a consequence of natural selection is by definition selfish because it has to compete for survival with rival units. If we talk about genes, they are alleles, rivals for the same chromosomal slot. If we talk about memes, they compete against other memes for our time, library shelf-space, newspaper column-inches, billboard space, radio and television time (Dawkins 1989, 197), internet, or SMS space. Just like with genes, selection favours memes that are most adaptable, that can best manage change, in the Darwinian sense. With other selected memes they create the meme pool that characterises a certain society. The meme pool is in fact the culture where new memes have to struggle for selection. If they prevail due to their psychological appeal, they can affect the course of evolution of that or some other culture. The survival of the meme depends on its psychological appeal, and a new meme will replicate itself whenever favourable conditions arise.

Here is an example of a meme in the form of a Spanish phrase that became a catch phrase in popular culture: "Hasta la vista, baby." Besides being in everyday use in Spanish-speaking countries, it reached a wider public through Jody Watley's single "Looking for a New Love"[2] in 1987 and the Tone Loc single "Wild Thing" in 1988, only to reach world-wide fame with the blockbuster "Terminator 2" in 1991. After the film, the phrase further penetrated pop culture and the jargon of the young, the world of politics, music, film, literature, either in the original, in translation, or even variation. Typically for pop-culture memes, "Hasta la vista, baby" became immensely popular but proved short-lived in line with what Dawkins says: "Some memes, like some genes, achieve brilliant short-term success in spreading rapidly, but do not last long in the meme pool" (Dawkins 1989, 194). It is exactly the same with some cultural traits which evolve in historical time only to quickly disappear with changed social circumstances.

2) *"Looking for a New Love"*
My love was true
Still you threw it all away
But now you're like the rest
Unworthy of my best
Hasta la vista, baby

"Wild Thing"
Say what
Yo love you must be kidding
You're walkin' babe
Just break out of here
Hasta la vista baby

Memes are similar to genes because they can appear to be altruistic, just as genes may assist their own replicas, seemingly altruistically, in other kindred bodies. Genes do that for their own preservation and continuation, and memes have exactly the same selfish mechanism. For example, certain religious sects may offer help to the followers for the sole purpose of attracting them to the sect so that the number of meme propagators increases through imitation, and with it the replication success of the religious meme.

Dawkins also notices that although memes and genes may reinforce each other, they can sometimes come into opposition. He gives a very illustrative example of celibacy. In a gene pool it would quickly disappear, while in the meme pool it has been self-replicating for centuries.

Memes in the Context of Diaspora

At the same time as Dawkins, evolutionary archaeologists interested in cultural transmission proposed different units equivalent to memes (e.g. Dunnell 1971, 1986; Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman 1981; Boyd & Richerson 1985; Lipo et al. 1997; O'Brien & Lyman 2000, 2002; Lipo & Madsen 2001; Rogers & Ehrlich 2008).[3] Time will show which of the terms for these units will prevail by becoming widely accepted, and whether 'memes' will substitute the commonly used term 'cultural traits.' Also, O'Brian (et al) in their article *Cultural Traits as Units of Analysis* (2010), confirm the significance of innovations for the evolution of memes constituting a culture, noticed in a much older study by Schumpeter (1934):

> Cultural traits are units of transmission that permit diffusion and create traditions – patterned ways of doing things that exist in identifiable form over extended periods of time. As with genes, cultural traits are subject to recombination, copying error, and the like and thus can be the foundation for the production of new traits. In other words, cultural traits can be both inventions – new creations – and innovations – inventions that successfully spread. (O'Brian, 3797)

The suggested relationship between cultural traits and the creation of tradition is especially interesting in the context of the diaspora. The diaspora makes for a good replication-inducing environment for the memes originating in the homeland. Tradition is always related to the home country, and it can be defined according to O'Brian

3) "A number of different names attempted for the parts of culture testify to the seriousness of the problem. Chick makes a whole list of them: ideas, beliefs, values, rules, principles, symbols, concepts, elements, culturgens, traits, etc., operational at lower levels, while themes, configurations, schemes, complexes and patterns are applicable to high levels of culture" (Lopičić 2008).

as patterned ways of doing things. However fixed, tradition is yet inevitably subject to change, in the environment of the home country and particularly so when uprooted and re-planted in the environment of a foreign society. The complete meme pool of one culture can never be transplanted to another place, and even individual memes undergo the process of recombination and suffer from copying error. Thus the customs and traditions of the mother country metamorphose into different forms despite the conscious effort on the part of immigrants to have them preserved and inviolate. This accounts for the differences between the memes of the original and diaspora communities resulting from imperfect cultural transmission and constituting the evolution of a culture.

Therefore, the entire cultural heritage of a nation consists of changing memes transmitted horizontally through cultures and vertically through families in ever new ways which either die out after some time or become part of tradition and the agents of its evolution. O'Brien (et al) confirms what Dawkins has been claiming:

> Cultural traits have long been used in anthropology as units of transmission that ostensibly reflect behavioural characteristics of the individuals or groups exhibiting the traits. After they are transmitted, cultural traits serve as units of replication in that they can be modified as part of an individual's cultural repertoire through processes such as recombination, loss or partial alteration within an individual's mind. Cultural traits are analogous to genes in that organisms replicate them, but they are also replicators in their own right. No one has ever seen a unit of transmission, either behavioural or genetic, although we can observe the effects of transmission.[4] (O'Brien, 3797)

In line with this, Stuart Hall in his article "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" also emphasises the issue of transformation: "The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 401-402).

It is interesting to observe some memes in this process of synchronic and diachronic transmission, replication and modification, and the effects of transmission and transformation in diasporic circumstances as described in literary works.

4) O'Brian rounds up this idea in a purely anthropological fashion: "Fortunately, such units are manifest in artefacts, features and other components of the archaeological record, and they serve as proxies for studying the transmission (and modification) of cultural traits, provided there is analytical clarity over how to define and measure the units that underlie this inheritance process" (O'Brien, 3797).

Serbian memes

It is impossible to pull out a few memes out of the meme pool of one culture as most representative, and equally difficult to find those that make that culture unique. Regarding Serbian culture, there are nevertheless a few memes that stand out as probably unique. For example, synchronic digraphia, meaning that in Serbia people use both the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet (1814) and Gaj's Latin alphabet (1835). Both scripts are studied in elementary school as obligatory within the Serbian language courses so that most speakers of Serbian can read and write both scripts. In this sense, Serbian is the only European language with active digraphia. However, after the civil wars (1991-1999) and the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, there has been a noticeable tendency to promote and favour the Cyrillic script as a repository of national identity threatened by foreign influences, meaning that this meme of Serbian culture is undergoing a transformation. Its transmission to Canada is also marked by insistence on the Cyrillic script for the sake of its preservation in an environment where only the Latin script is used. Most Serbian authors at home and abroad prefer writing in the Cyrillic, and David Albahari, probably the best Canadian author of Serbian origin writing exclusively in Serbian, has just published a collection of short fiction *Learning Cyrillic* (translated into English) as if to prove its significance for the Serbian diaspora. The digraphia meme is evidently challenged in Canadian diaspora since the Serbian newspapers in Canada are published mainly in the Cyrillic script (*Kišobran/Кишобран* Vancouver, *Novine/Новине* Toronto). The reductive transformation of this meme is closely related to the phenomenon of rising patriotism and the feeling of threatened national identity, so that a new meme "Use Cyrillic!" now becomes dominant. In accordance with Cawley (2006), such a phenomenon qualifies as a meme because a) it includes instructions for carrying out a specific action; b) it is stored in our brain as an impulse; and c) it is passed to other (Serbian) brains through the process of demonstration, observation and imitation.

Another meme which belongs in the meme pool of Serbian culture, and one which is found on the site of "WWWord Untranslatable," is 'inat.' As an abstract concept, it also seems to be uniquely Serbian, though it should not be to the pride of the Serbian people to practice it. There is even a saying that 'Inat is a bad advisor' ('Inat je loš zanat'), well-known by all Serbs but seldom heeded. The word 'inat' is approximated by the words obstinacy, persistence, tenacity, though these are not adequate translation equivalents. Despite being an expert on Serbian mentality, Misha Glenny is still puzzled by this word. He writes the following on "WWWord Untranslatable":

> To my knowledge, there is only one language that succeeds in reducing a complex chain of concepts to one four-letter word. The word is *inat*; the language is Serbian.

> Serbs themselves will sometimes engage in extended discussions when trying to define the idea of *inat*. Probably the least wordy English version of the word is "deliberately cutting off your nose to spite your face," although a more elegant definition I have seen is "defiance for the sake of defiance rather than to achieve a long-term goal." (Untranslatable)

In his article on "inat," Misha Glenny traces the origin of this word and concludes that it is part of considerable Ottoman heritage still very much alive in the Serbian vocabulary and general culture. From the original Turkish meaning 'persistence' this word developed in the 19th century into a meme for the unreasonable defiance and persistency which probably helped the Serbs to be the first Balkan nation to win their independence from the Turkish occupiers.

Glenny specialised in reporting on the Yugoslav wars and wrote *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (1992), which makes him a rather reliable source of information concerning Serbian national characteristics. He claims that "*Inat* is specifically associated with Serbs, and is often qualified as *srpski* or Serbian *inat*, meaning that it is largely (although not wholly) absent from the Croatian or Bosnian variants of the language that used to be called Serbo-Croat." Glenny further proposes that internalised 'inat' can explain the attitude of the Serbs during the Yugoslav wars, their irrational defiance manifested as sitting on bridges under shell fire, or running a five kilometer race during an air raid. He also suggests that the Serbian people may have been manipulated by their political elite, who reinforced the idea of 'inat' as a valuable part of their intrinsic character and led the nation to self-destructive behaviour.

When transmitted to Canada, the 'inat' meme should by the nature of memetics self-replicate, and continue to spread. However, though the diaspora is generally a good self-replicating environment for the memes reaching it from the home country, this does not happen, due to significant cultural differences. Defining Canadian culture is as difficult as defining any culture, but Kyle Carsten Wyatt, as a Canadian, takes a hint from Northrop Frye's famous concept of garrison mentality. It is probably not well-known that Frye in an 1989 speech explained that the garrison mentality, "which was social but not creative," had been replaced by "the condominium mentality, which is neither social nor creative, and which forces the cultural energies of the country into forming a kind of counter-environment" (Wyatt 2012). When an immigrant moves to one of Canadian metropolises, as they are prone to do, they are supposed to meet "one of the most highly urbanized people in the world," but they often do not, because of the condominium mentality. In order to clarify this phenomenon, Wyatte describes the life in his condominium:

> Unlike a garrison, which Frye saw as a social unit, my building offers the *illusion* of community while cultivating insularity. We take the elevator to the lobby or the underground parking garage, fiddling with our iPhones instead of visiting with the person standing next

> to us. We post complaints about our neighbours' barking dog on "community-building" Facebook pages, rather than knocking on their door and having an actual conversation. We threaten to call the cops when our neighbours enjoy their balconies, instead of joining them for a beer. We flip our units as soon as we can afford a better one in a better building, or as soon as our view is destroyed by a rival development down the street. We're all alone with our high-speed Internet and embarrassment of social networks, as concrete walls mute the existence of our real neighbours. (Wyatt 2012)

In such an alienating social environment, the Serbian 'inat' cannot thrive because for its full effect it needs the Other as the point of reference. What is the use of spiting oneself stubbornly if there is no witness? For its replication the meme naturally needs an audience of imitators who will catch up this mental virus and spread it further. Canadians, however, are people who mind their own business, nice and polite but mainly indifferent to their neighbours and their quirks, such as parking in front of a fire hydrant out of spite ('za inat'), or back-biting within their boss's hearing though aware of the consequences ('za inat'). For law-abiding and reasonable Canadians, such irrational behaviour is psychologically not appealing, and the 'inat' meme cannot survive even within small Serbian immigrant communities. It cannot meet the three laws of memetics, as defined by Cawley (2006):

1. The Law of Intention: Memes replicate for their reasons, not ours.
2. The Law of Propagation: A meme thrives only through a frequent cycle of demonstration, observation and imitation.
3. The Law of Gravitation: A meme tends to move from the cultural fringe toward the cultural center.

The process of acculturation is merciless, and the social/behavioural patterns of Canadian culture prove to have better survival value, and are consequently adopted by immigrants sooner or later.

Authors of Serbian origin in Canada very often write about the problems that immigrants encounter when faced with cultural differences that confuse and eventually deculturate. Obstinate insistence on old patterns brings only ridicule or indifference as Nebojsa Milosavljevic (2005) shows in his stories. In one of them, "The Silence of the Piglets," his narrator sticks to the Serbian tradition of serving a roasted piglet for Christmas dinner against the North American tradition of using turkey for that occasion. He offers the example of a Serb who has been for thirty years smuggling a small piglet from an Amish farm to Richmond Hill in Toronto where in his back yard he would, according to the Serbian custom, slaughter[5] and roast the piglet. He has been so persistent

5) It should be noted that slaughtering and serving piglets for Christmas dinner does not have the elements of religious ritual nor is it part of Orthodox religion in any way. It is probably the most delicious way of breaking a 40 day fast preceding Christmas.

that the neighbours finally stopped calling the police and the animal protection society. However, this is a solitary example and just like the 'inat' meme, the home-slaughtered roast piglet meme in Canada is compromised by the use of turkey. At the beginning of his story, Milosavljevic openly declares his resistance to the Canadian custom of serving turkey by saying "No passaran," and thereby giving tremendous weight to his patriotic attitude. The humour of this scene arises from the incongruity of the historical reference and the trivial situation to which it is applied. The famous cry of La Passionaria against Fascism is used as a battle cry against turkey. The narrator claims that he has made many compromises of Serbian cultural memes in a Canadian environment, such as accepting to live in a country without the fragrance of linden trees, where soccer is not a national sport, where for half the year the temperature is below zero. Still, the line has to be drawn somewhere, and in his case it is the issue of Christmas dinner. Turkey will not pass, he says, and in this parody of national pride, the enemy he has to defend his position against is a simple bird which he sees as an attack on his integrity and national identity. Yet, underlying the humour, there is a serious overtone worth considering. Milosavljevic implies that the turkey has become the Trojan horse of the New World Order, of transnational capitalism and globalisation's tendency to standardise even the menus. The vast variety and richness of national cuisines are challenged by the memes of the dominant Anglo-American culture, or rather by the economic interests of mega-corporations like McDonald's. The author fears that reducing this culinary variety by imposing a uniform global menu becomes a symptom of thought control and restriction on freedom. Regardless of this view, immigrant communities and individuals are evidently and inevitably exposed to the influence of all the memes of the host culture, which must be competing with some memes brought from the old homeland. In this everlasting battle of memes which constitutes cultural evolution, the host memes usually win.

The third illustration of meme transmission and their replication in the diaspora is another uniquely Serbian cultural unit, known as 'slava' (Thanksgiving or Glory-giving), a spiritual birthday of the Serbian family. It has been part of Serbian tradition since the conversion to Christianity of the Serbian tribes in the 9th century. "Because Krsna Slava is regarded as the anniversary of the baptism of the family into Christianity, it is an annual reaffirmation of the family to its baptismal vows and the renewal of its ties to the Orthodox faith and church" (Bizic). It is interesting that 'slava' is a custom exclusively of the Serbian people among all Slavs and Orthodox Christians. While the whole nation, especially children, celebrate the day of St. Sava, similar to the Irish celebrating St. Patrick, each family has their own patron saint who is venerated by throwing a feast on a particular day.[6] The head of the household passes the 'slava' to

6) Popular 'slava' dates include St. Nicholas (December 19th), St. George (May 6th), St. John the Baptist (January 20th), St. Stephen (January 9th), St. Archangel Michael (November 21st) and St. Demetrius (November 18th), St. Trifun (February 14th), etc.

his son or daughter (if she remains in his home) who is in that manner connected to the first baptised ancestor thus linking generations and preserving the values of the faith in Christ:

> The Mother church blessed this practice and proclaimed Krsna Slava a Christian institution. According to the words of St. Paul (Phil. 1:2), every Christian family is a small church, and, just as churches are dedicated to one saint who is celebrated as the protector of the church, so Serbian families place themselves under the protection of the saint on whose holiday they became Christians and to whom they refer as their intercessor to God Almighty. (Bizic)

The whole family gathers and entertains many visitors who come to venerate the saint and feast with the family.

The memetic 'slava' is a memeplex, "a combination of memes that work better in unison than they do separately" (Cawley). All the elements of 'slava' mentioned above are separate memes that constitute the 'slava' memeplex. There are many more that can be listed here, but only the religious aspects of 'slava' will be briefly described. Barbara Rolek refers to a special 'slava' bread, boiled wheat with honey and walnuts, red wine, and a special beeswax candle (Rolek 2008). The bread is blessed by a priest and it symbolically represents Jesus as the Bread of Life, while the cross cut in the bread by the priest reminds us of his crucifixion. The wheat represents the death and resurrection of Christ, so the red wine stands for his blood. The candle, which the head of the family lights in the morning, proclaims Christ as the light of the world, and it should be left burning throughout the day. It also means that one should not permit the flame of their Krsna Slava ever to be extinguished. As a meme-complex, Serbian 'slava' evidently contains a whole set of ideas that have evolved together and that reinforce each other, as all other religious memes do. How important it is to the Serbs, both in the homeland and in diaspora, is proven, for example, by the words at the beginning and at the end of the web-site *American Serb History 101 with Baba Mim*....: " This site is dedicated to those who voluntarily desire to learn more about the wonderful American Serbian Orthodox heritage, responsibly empowering them to go on and pass their knowledge on to others ... Do not fail to keep this ancient and honorable Serbian Orthodox tradition and to pass it on to your children." This imperative to spread is the basic characteristic of memes, and 'slava' has a high survival value as a memeplex because it uses all the seven modes of spreading: fertility, tradition, advocacy, resistance, sabotage, reason, and motivation (Cawley). It is amusing to see how some Serbian authors describe its evolution in contact with Canadian culture, what transformation it suffers in the process of transition, and how it replicates.

In most households of Canadian Serbs, 'slava' or the patron saint's day becomes an important event even if it has not been that ardently observed at home in the old country. Severed from their homeland, many immigrants crave to mentally reunite with it by going back to their roots and resuming this sometimes neglected custom. As a meme, it becomes psychologically very appealing, which explains the proliferation of 'slava' celebrations in diasporic environments. However, from a private gathering of relatives honoured by the visit of the 'kum' (godfather), the patron saint's day celebration often becomes a public party. Nebojsa Milosavljevic, in his short story "Slava," identifies two types of celebration: formal and informal.

Formal celebrations are very solemn, attended by successful immigrants, and organised by likewise successful Serbian families mainly to show off their wealth. All the necessary paraphernalia are there: the icon of the saint, bread, ground wheat, and a candle, but the candle has to be of the most expensive and massive kind, and the priest is always abundantly rewarded for his services. The gathering is polite, the table set perfectly, and the food served is international in character, rather than traditionally Serbian. The guests talk business and politics, praise everything and leave early. On the other hand, Milosavljevic continues his parody, informal celebrations are simply parties, where the guests show up leisurely dressed, where not even the candle is indispensable, and where everybody has fun, the hosts included. The saint may even be forgotten, but the guests will eat well and stay until the small hours of the morning. Yet, what these celebrations have in common is the basic purpose of this religious custom, i.e. the preservation of family values and continuation of Serbian tradition.

In terms of memetics, all the modes of spreading are active:

1. Fertility, in the sense that all the children of the family are raised in contact with the meme. They are always present at the patron saint's celebration, feeling their own importance as the hosts to all the guests.
2. Tradition, in the sense of its maintaining by guiding and training the young at their formative stage through exposure and participation in the ritual.
3. Advocacy, in the sense that the meme is actively spread through ritual, iconography and communication.
4. Resistance, in the sense of avoiding contact with competing memes, such as ethnic customs of other immigrants.
5. Sabotage, in the sense that other memes, like Canadian national holidays, are never given precedence over the 'slava' meme.
6. Reason, in the sense that the celebration of the family saint appeals to the prospect's emotions, desires, and experiences promising a rewarding evening in the company of his kindred, good food, and entertainment.

7. Motivation, in the sense that practicing and spreading the meme will improve the quality of the prospect's life by fostering the sense of belonging and the possibility for social networking.

Momo Kapor, a famous Serbian author, wrote another short story dedicated to this custom. "Happy Patron Saint's Day" addresses a foreigner who may be puzzled with the passion and zeal invested in the preparation of the family 'slava,' and the eagerness of the guests to visit all the celebrating households. Besides, the transformations this memeplex has recently undergone and noticed by Kapor may be also perceived in Canada. First, there is a tendency to extend the celebration over a few days rather than having it on the day of the saint in question. Then, in Canada especially, the celebration is conveniently moved to the nearest weekend regardless of the saint's day. Further, the customs regarding food are not strictly respected and ground wheat is sometimes served decorated with whipped cream. Also, even if the patron saint's day happens to be in autumn during the pre-Christmas fast, not rarely is the festive table loaded with roast pig or lamb and Russian salad.[7] Another form of deviation from the original custom is a common practice to have politics as the main topic during dinner instead of celebrating the saint and God. The intimate atmosphere of the family celebration is also being lost since it often turns into a grand party. Weather permitting, a garden party with a band will be thrown, where some of the guests will not even manage to get to the hosts to wish them good health. Finally, a growing number of families hold the celebration of the patron saint at a restaurant, owing to a small apartment, lack of time for preparations, less stress, etc. This is a far cry from the original Serbian custom of inviting only the godfather, who brings a red apple as a token of health and a lot of good wishes to the family. That said, all these changes will definitely raise the survival value of the slava-memeplex and ensure its replication success in Canada.

Conclusion

The three main examples of cultural traits discussed above and their transformation among the Serbian immigrants in Canada prove the words of Richard Dawkins: "Cultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although basically conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution" (Dawkins 1976: 203). Synchronic

7) For the sake of culinary clarity a definition of Russian salad is in order: the chef boils potatoes, chops them into small cubes, along with carrots, then mixes them with peas, mayonnaise and cubed ham. The smaller the cubes, the more appreciated this salad traditionally served at Christmas will be. Russian salad is a starter or harbinger of treats to come – that is, of the soup and the main meal of sour cabbage rolls, roast meat etc.

digraphia, 'inat,' and 'slava' are three units of culture that make the Serbian meme pool unique. For that reason, it would be preferable to keep them unchanged and conserved for all time, if such were possible. However, synchronic and diachronic cultural transmissions even within the home country inevitably give rise to change, manifested as a form of cultural evolution. In diaspora, this process is more complex. On the one hand, the immigrants tend to preserve the national customs in their original form, often puristically insisting on the 'old ways' in their hopeless endeavour to maintain the bond with the homeland. On the other hand, the changed social environment necessitates many compromises and adjustments leading to the transformation of the original cultural units. If the celebration of the household saint is shifted to the weekend, it is for good reason: as venerable as an ethnic tradition may be, and as culturally tolerant as Canadian society tends to be, few employers will tolerate recalcitrant employees.

Therefore, the replication of Serbian memes in Canadian diaspora meets all the three criteria of gene replication. First, when memes are passed on from Serbia to Canada, even those unique memes that many Serbs are proud of, inevitably the copying is often imperfect. The memeplexes, like patron saint's day celebrations, pose a great challenge because of the host of memes they comprise. For example, lighting the candle: when is it exactly done (at dawn, before or after the priest arrives, when the first guest comes, when the bread is cut, at noon, or…), and who does it (the priest or the head of the family)? Due to these uncertainties, there are as many variations that happen in the process of replication as there are uncertainties. Further, some memes of Serbian culture are accepted and spread, while some are ignored. This process of meme selection is more than natural in an environment that is not always replication-friendly. Slaughtering a piglet in a backyard surpasses the limits of Canadian tolerance so this and many other peculiar memes had to be discarded in diaspora. Finally, and most importantly, even when the original meme is transformed in the process of cultural transmission, meaning that copying fidelity is not absolute, its basic elements are retained. Retention allows for the continuity of tradition so that, regardless of its many variations, the observing of Serbian 'slava' proves the old saying: "Where there is a Slava, there is a Serb." To conclude, following the tenets of the dual inheritance theory, for adaptive evolution (compromise) of cultural memes, the existence of an embodied genome (capable of compromise) seems to be a necessary prerequisite.

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Canada in Eight Tongues. Translating Canada in Central Europe / Le Canada en huit tongues. Traduire le Canada en Europe centrale

Katalin Kürtösi, ed.

Brno: Central European Association for Canadian Studies /

Masaryk University. ISBN 9788021059542

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Canada in Eight Tongues. Translating Canada in Central Europe / Le Canada en huit tongues. Traduire le Canada en Europe centrale (2012) is a volume of twenty-five papers by some prominent – mostly European – scholars and translators about the changes and the current trends of the Central European translations of Canadian literature in the past century. Owing to the editorial work of Katalin Kürtösi, Associate Professor of the University of Szeged, we can hold in our hands a collection of studies penned by eight countries' committed supporters of Canadian literature, criticism, and texts in other areas of humanities and social sciences in their own native languages.

By reading the papers, written in English and French, presenting the works of the most popular Canadian authors translated in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia, we can become acquainted not only with their literary preferences but can also keep track of the linguistic predilections of these countries. Moreover, we can gain insight into some of the translators' difficulties – such as the domestication of certain Canadian animals and how to apply numerous theoretical terms in the European context.

The volume can be divided into four broader sections, informing the reader of (a) the most translated Canadian books in Central Europe, (b) their various receptions, (c) how their genre and gendered distribution varies from country to country, as well as (d) what challenges their translators found in their work. They beautifully depict what has been achieved so far and what gaps should still be filled in in order to further acquaint the European readers with Canada's unique and "exotic" (Anikó Ádám, 61) writing.

"A Panorama of Translations in Countries of the Region" demonstrates how the publishing policies changed throughout the twentieth century, scrutinizing the period's historical cornerstones, which either boosted or kept back the dissipation of

the "dangerous" foreign ideologies of the era. Historical events such as the two World Wars reshaped the publishing policies and, thus, the translating regulations of the region. Czechoslovakia, for example, was incorporated into the Third Reich during World War II and there was only one book by a Canadian author (Ernest Thompson Seton) which went through censorship amid those radical years (Don Sparling, 43). In the post-war period, period, however, Canadian Dyson Carter's anti-West and pro-Communist world picture was translated not only in Czechoslovakia, but in the USSR, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and East Germany, too, without any governmental intervention (Lucia Otrísalová, Marián Gazdík, 119).

The Yugoslav Wars ended with the declaration of independence of the constituent countries step by step, which contributed to the reawakening of their political, cultural, and linguistic efforts. As Jason Blake argues in "Late for the Party: Alice Munro in Slovenian Translation," although Slovene censorship was unpredictable before the fall of Yugoslavia, the translation market in Slovenia has been thriving since then (180). Likewise, after the formation of Croatia in the early 1990s, Canadian translations into Croatian finally began to make their way from works by authors such as Michael Ondaatje, Barry Callaghan, and Robertson Davies (Petra Sapun Kurtin, Mirna Sindičić, 50).

As Communism toppled in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the transition period to new democratic political systems gradually gave way to translations of Western literature. From this moment on, it is the rules of the market economy and sales potential that have dictated what should be translated. Publishers tended to gravitate towards those works that already proved international acclaim (such as Lucy Maude Montgomery of *Anne of Green Gables* fame), for which authors received some prestigious awards (including Booker Prize winner Margaret Atwood), or that discussed some pertinent contemporary issues (Douglas Coupland).

The authors of the next section, "Translations and Reception of Authors and Works", enumerate some of those translated Canadian works that fought their way through the strict censorship of the ruling governments. The translations of the highly renowned Canadian writer Timothy Findley (Galina Avramova, 131) and Michael Ondaatje (Madeleine Danova, 139) are accentuated in Bulgaria. Hungarian Zoltán Kelemen chooses Leonard Cohen, who has mostly been known as a guitarist and singer and not as a writer of poetry and fiction for the Hungarian audiences (145). Robert Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man* is assessed by Tanja Cvetković as a prominent representative of the Serbian translations of English Canadian texts (149). While Marián Gazdík presents the chronological development of the reception of Margaret Atwood's works in Slovakian (155), Lucia Otrísalová focuses on the Slovakian translation of *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery, one of the most translated and most popular Canadian authors in the world (169).

The "Genres and Gender" section includes papers on Canadian short stories and drama which gained significant readership in Croatia and Hungary, respectively, and Mirna Sindičić Sabljo and Petra Sapun Kurtin's study draws attention to some Canadian women authors translated in Croatia. Sabljo and Kurtin (191) point to the fact that Canadian literature was not well-known in Croatia before the 1990s and the first translation of a novel by a female Canadian writer (Edna Mayne) appeared only 60 years after the appearance of Seton's works. As Croatian was neglected for the benefit of Serbian and Serbo-Croatian (or Croato-Serbian) during the Yugoslavian regime, it was not until 1991 that one noticed the beginning of the inflow of Canadian books into Croatia. Since then Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Carol Shields, theorist Linda Hutcheon, and many more have had their works translated into Croatian. Despite the positive changes, according to Sabljo and Kurtin's tally, male-authored works still outnumber works by Canadian female authors.

Antonija Primorac gives an overview of the representation of Anglophone Canadian short stories in Croatia (201), putting a special emphasis on three anthologies: *Antologija kanadske kratke priče na engleskom jeziku* (An Anthology of Canadian Short Stories in English, 1991), *Veliki safari kroz carstvo engleskog jezika* (A Great Safari through the Realm of the English Language, 2001) and *Život na sjeveru* (Northern Exposure, 2009). The first was addressed to the reading audience of former Yugoslavia, and the second aimed at showing the richness of contemporary short stories coming from countries that used to be part of the British Empire, including five Canadian pieces.

In the next paper, Katalin Kürtösi switches from the short story to Canadian drama translated into Hungarian (209). She raises the question of translatability, and what the publishers take into account when they choose works to be translated. She enumerates some of the works translated in the genre, highlighting a drama anthology: *Történet a hetediken* (Seven Stories) that includes Michel Tremblay's successful *Les Belles-Soeurs*.

The last chapter of the volume, "Translators' Insight", reveals the work and hardship of some of the translators who engaged themselves in bringing Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* to the Czech and Hungarian readers. Sylva Ficová emphasizes that she had difficulties in finding suitable Czech literary terms identical in meaning to the ones applied by Frye (224). Recounting the same difficulty, József Szili adds that he needed to translate several "old terms with a fresh reference to comply with the needs of the theoretical integrity of the work" (228).

The volume ends with Ljiljana Matić's French study of the influence of contemporary Quebec writers on Serbian literature, mentioning some of the best known emigrant writers from Serbia, such as Négovan Rajic and Ljubica Milićević (237). *Canada in Eight Tongues, Translating Canada in Central Europe / Le Canada en huit langues, Traduire le Canada en Europe centrale* is a comprehensive work of Central European

scholars and translators who took up a pen to show us the translating trends of Canadian works in their countries since the beginning of the twentieth century. The various authors show how translations came into being and how their efforts were received in various nations. Their labour is invaluable because literary translations function as a means of cultural transfer and it is through their work that the Central European readers formed and continue to form an image of Canada.

Migrating Memories: Central Europe in Canada, Vol. 1 – Literary Anthology

Lopičić, Vesna (ed.)

CEACS, Brno 2010, 460 pp., ISBN 9788677462338

Migrating Memories: Central Europe in Canada, Vol. 2 – Oral Histories

Albu, Rodica (ed.)

CEACS, Brno 2010, 422 pp., ISBN 9788677462250

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Migrating Memories: Central Europe in Canada, an impressive and unique two-volume collective monograph published thanks to efforts of Canadianists from eight European countries, has two parts and aims: Volume 1 deals with literary activities of immigrants to Canada from Central Europe, while Volume 2 summarizes interviews with immigrants to Canada and is thus an instance of oral history. With these different approaches and focuses, encompassing both the theoretical and the practical, the two volumes put forth a complex and structured view of emigration. Replicating the political schemes of Canada, the languages used in the monograph are English and French (with most published literary texts and most oral history interviews being in English). The project was quite ambitious and demanded as close cooperation and coordination between all teams of contributors from CEACS member countries, as well as all the émigrés, literary authors and other individuals who agreed to be interviewed. Indeed, a variety of views are represented, as the subjects came from eight countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia).

Volume 1 "fictionalizes" the immigrant experience, translating it into elevated language while making sharp observations about "the old" and "the new" cultures. Peter Petro, a Slovak essayist poignantly writes, "after all, not all immigrants are the same. Some came here to live here, to assimilate and to become Canadians; others came to

Canada to build their own small and better Slovakia" (380). Other authors, including renowned Czech immigrant Josef Škvorecký, note the visible and invisible differences between their mother country and Canada: "Outside the window, which is high, marrow and gothic, the cold Canadian wind blends two whitenesses: snowflakes sifting down from lowering clouds and snowdust lifted and whirled by the wind from the land stretching southwards to lake Ontario" (127). Škvorecký calls Canada the "country of cities with no past" and that "uprootedness" is what many authors feel the need to comment on.

In terms of national representation, Serbian authors prove to be the most productive; more than thirty-five extracts were carefully selected from a much bigger number of published authors. On the other hand, Slovakia and Slovenia are represented by only half a dozen authors. That, however, is also an interesting detail – for why is it that some nationalities tend to verbalize their experience more promptly, while the others withdraw, so to speak? If "their" authors wrote any literary reflection of their immigrant experience, it remained unpublished or unrecognized. That is also the question that the authors of the Slovak section try to answer in an interview with present-day writer and poet Ilja Čičvák. "The number of writers depends on a number of circumstances that have to be taken into consideration. First, there is one's intellectual ability to express oneself in an appealing artistic way that is not only plausible to the eye of the reader, but also to the publisher [...] That's the degree to which a publisher feels responsible in representing public interests, its culture, the uplifting of the human spirit" (331). Thus the literary anthology not only presents an impressive selection of Canada-related literary extracts, it also opens important literary questions related to the role and raison d'être of immigrant literature.

Volume 2 includes transcriptions of guided interviews, all translated into English and accompanied by a foreword or introductory essay analysing the historical, social and political context of immigration to Canada from the respective country. Such a compilation represents a unique set of interviews, as English functions here as a *Lingua Franca* and enables the reader to share and compare multiple experiences of individual immigrants, coming from eight different countries. The immigrant experience varies: there were many famous Czech immigrants in Canada, for example the world-famous tradesmen and shoe-maker Thomas Bata, textile-producer Steinsky and mechanical engineer Karel Velan, to name a few, but also professors and artists: Milan Kymlicka, Jan Rubes and Dagmar Rydlo, among many others (80-81).

Slovak immigration to Canada, meanwhile, can be divided into as many as five different historical waves (294-296) which are mostly unknown to the rest of the world. In contrast, the year 1956 is well-known to history, and Peter Szaffkó discusses Hungarian immigration especially at that time, which according the author "was the year when some of the most important contributions to modern Canadian culture were

started by creative and enthusiastic Hungarian refugees" (121). Serbian and Slovenian immigrants also have common ground, as they were leaving Yugoslavia. Milena Kostić analyses Serbian immigration in a manner similar to Javorčíková and Glavanekov-Yaneva (who analyses Bulgarian immigration) – namely, from an objective historical point of view. However, she also adds a psychological interpretation of the reasons and circumstances leading to immigration of the follow-up double identity of an individual. The in-depth exploration of Romanian immigration by the editor of Volume 2, Rodica Albu, who approaches the topic from a sociological point of view – she points out that the need to create "or recreate the Romanian space in Canada" (168), to create a place where one can belong and return. This project has enormous potential for the research of cultural and Canadian studies in Europe. The interviews can also serve as databases of corpuses for further discourse analysis and linguistic research.

In conclusion it must be said that the monograph, as a result of a long and very demanding preparation including the study of secondary literature and research of references, has summarized and analyzed many valuable pieces of information. The two volumes can be useful as an introduction to emigration study problems in general as well as helpful toward the understanding of the specific questions connected with each group of immigrants to Canada. The literary texts in particular, since they are based on the experience of exiles as well as the life stories of particular immigrants, will acquaint readers with many human adventures and extraordinary destinies. The books make for absorbing reading and can serve as a remarkable source of inspiration.

Chapters in Contemporary Canadian Literature

Jiří Flajšar / Pavlína Flajšarová / Vladimíra Fonfárová

Olomouc: Olomouc University Press, 123 pp., ISBN 9788024434063

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Chapters in Contemporary Canadian Literature is a collective work by three Czech scholars of American, British and Canadian Studies. The volume sets out to provide a "brief yet informative survey of Canadian literature in English" (6). (As the authors explain, Francophone Canadian literature falls outside the scope and target readership of their volume.) Each of the authors has written several chapters on the chronological development of individual literary genres and other aspects of Canadian literature. While the title states that the publication focuses on contemporary Canadian literature, the period before 1945 is covered in the opening sections of the individual chapters, as well as in the introductory chapter, written by Jiří Flajšar, which succinctly sums up the development of Canadian literature from the colonial beginnings up to the end of World War II.

Likewise, in the next chapter, Pavlína Flajšarová surveys trends in Canadian literary criticism from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Flajšarová particularly concentrates on critics' shifting views of nationalism, on the rural versus the urban, on regionalism and on cosmopolitanism. Towards the end of the chapter, Flajšarová deals with Northrop Frye and his legacy, as well as the postmodern theorists and writers Robert Kroetsch and Linda Hutcheon. The up-to-date survey also mentions W. H. New's *Borderlands* (1998), which shows the relationship between Canadian literature, history, and culture and which "interprets Canadian identity as being defined by borders and binary dichotomies (such as inclusion and exclusion, in and out)" – that is, it reflects the "growing influence of Canadian multicultural writers who came from neither the English- nor French-speaking traditional communities but rather from smaller ethnic groups" (22). On the whole, this chapter is particularly useful, as it enables the reader to follow analogies between the critical and theoretical concepts and the views reflected in literary works that are discussed later in the book.

In the third chapter, Jiří Flajšar analyses the primary currents of Anglophone Canadian poetry after World War II. To provide sufficient background, Flajšar begins

with a concise characterization of the earlier Confederation poets and their influence, as well as the appearance of the Modernist poets of the 1920s and 1930s and the persisting binary between the modern and the traditional in Canadian poetry. Flajšar then smoothly moves on to the 1950s, when Canadian poetry was "becoming more and more diverse and decentralized" (30), foreshadowing the further expansion of its subject matter in the two following decades. Flajšar characterizes the 1960s in poetry as emphasizing the confessional and the 1970s as the revival of regionalism. My only criticism here is that while Flajšar does mention that Canadian poetry of the 1980s and 1990s diversified to include numerous poets from various ethnic backgrounds, he only lists four names (Daniel David Moses, Dionne Brand, Erin Mouré and George Elliott Clarke) and closes his survey by mentioning the 2005 publication of *The New Canon: An Anthology of Canadian Poetry* (2005), a collection deliberately reflecting this increasing plurality. A brief characterization of (at least some of) the four listed poets' work would be extremely useful in helping the reader understand how the ethnic writers react to previous traditions in Canadian poetry.

In the following two chapters, Vladimíra Fonfárová traces the development of the postwar Canadian novel and short story. Fonfárová begins the chapter on the novel with a brief discussion of several critics' views of which (if any) period represents Canadian Modernist fiction, finally opting for Richard J. Lane's view that the Canadian Modernist novel only appeared during and after World War II, in contrast to Robert Kroetsch's claim that Canadian literature evolved directly from the Victorian into the Postmodern (36). Fonfárová resists any simplification, however. While praising Sheila Watson's 1959 novel *The Double Hook* as a masterpiece of belated Modernism, she admits that Hugh MacLennan's *The Watch That Ends the Night*, published that same year, relies on a Victorian treatment of narrative and structure (37). In the remainder of the chapter (the longest one in the book), Fonfárová surveys the Canadian novel from the 1960s to the present, pointing out the most significant phenomena in each decade. She thus characterizes the 1960s and 1970s as "the golden age" (39), with writers such as Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje, and the 1980s and 1990s as the "boom of historiographic fiction and ethnic writing" (45). Finally, Fonfárová observes new manifestations of Postmodernism at the beginning of the twenty-first century, focusing on Atwood's dystopias and Yann Martel's novels with unreliable narrators.

Fonfárová's analysis of Canadian short fiction is framed with W. H. New's theory of the short story as a subversive genre, as introduced in the Canadian critic's landmark study *Dreams of Speech and Violence* (1987), a concept that works remarkably well with respect to Anglophone Canadian literature, which strived to define itself against the dominant literary tradition of the United States. Further on, Fonfárová identifies the short story cycle as a prominent genre in Canadian short fiction, but

does not fail to mention that the great majority of Canadian short story writers are also novelists.

Fonfarová's survey of Canadian drama is equally effective in that she recognizes indigenous theater, the one-act play, and the radio drama as the foundation stones of the genre in the first half of the twentieth century (77-8). Fonfárová then proceeds to the breakthrough of Canadian drama in the 1960s, with playwrights such as George Ryga, and the major authors of the following two decades, such as Sharon Pollock and Michael Cook. Fonfárová also briefly mentions several winners of the Governor General's Award for Drama (presented since 1937) in the 1990s and early twenty-first century.

In the following chapter, Pavlína Flajšarová analyzes the situation of Canadian literature and English-to-French and French-to-English literary translation. Flajšarová explains that because of the political and cultural differences between the two groups, there has been a long tradition of French-to-English literary translation but not the other way round, as translation into English has often symbolized colonization for French Canada. Flajšarová also emphasizes, however, the recent proliferation of multicultural Canadian literature which has meant that the traditional English-to-French and French-to-English dichotomy no longer covers the entire scale of Canadian literary translation.

The following chapter, written by Jiří Flajšar, outlines a history of book-length translations of Anglophone Canadian literature into Czech. Ernest Thompson Seton, his research has revealed, is the most widely translated Canadian writer of all time, while Margaret Atwood has been the most translated author in the post-communist period. However, Czech translations of Anglophone Canadian poetry and drama remain unrepresented.

In the final chapter, Flajšar surveys the major print and online resources available to Central European researchers in Canadian literature, including reference books, histories, scholarly journals, online Canadian literature library catalogues and online subscription literature as well as criticism databases and archives. The book also includes a bibliography, compiled by Flajšarová, which lists all the publications referred to in the previous chapters.

In conclusion, all of the chapters are well-written and do represent, as mentioned in the opening chapter, a useful introduction "for Central European students of Canadian literature and for researchers at the early stage of their research" (6). Importantly, the volume not only provides a chronological overview of Canadian literature, but also familiarizes the reader with relevant theoretical concepts. Finally, it includes suggestions for further research by means of the research guide chapter and the extensive bibliography.

In Defence of Principles: NGOs and Human Rights in Canada

Andrew S. Thompson

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 224 pp., ISBN: 9780774818629

Scott N. Romaniuk

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"[T]here is nothing inevitable about the adoption and protection of human rights, even in a liberal parliamentary democracy such as Canada" (118). These words, part of Andrew S. Thompson's concluding remarks for *In Defence of Principles: NGOs and Human Rights in Canada*, are as equally unsettling as the evidence presented in this account of the transitory process of human rights in Canada from idea to law. This critical study of what scholars in Canada have recently referred to as the "age of rights" or "rights revolution" is an inadvertent product of the author's work with Amnesty International (AI) Canada. Thompson worked with the organization from 1999 to 2000. He accrued a great deal of insight into how a non-governmental organization (NGO) engages with the practical (particularly legal) aspects of human rights and combined this together with his intention to analyse the influence of several human rights organizations.

Thompson's service with AI Canada and work on his book merges with the profound events of September 11, 2001 (9/11) (the al-Qaeda attacks on the United States [US]). The events of 9/11 ushered in an immense wave of anti-terrorism policy (predominantly from and within the US). It brought with it no short measure of infringement on liberal democratic rights and freedoms known by millions of people in North America and abroad. What has been perceived as undemocratic policy and measures conflicted with a long tradition of the rule of law, its judiciary practice, and rich civil society in North America.

Taking these events as the starting point for his book, Thompson developed three pillars of inquiry that inform his overall framework. First, he considers the roles of principled ideas governing rights. Second, he engages with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (or public interests groups) that help defend and strengthen principle-based ideas. Third, he takes a close look at state institutions that administrate according to the value of the rights and principle-based ideas and applies them to real-life circumstances. Thompson then connects these pillars with three case studies. His

aim is to chart "the emergence, advancement, and defence of a particular standard of behaviour" (8-9). Within these case studies, readers are exposed to an examination of four primary and public interest groups: (1) the Canadian Council of Churches [CCC], (2) the Canadian Jewish Congress [CJC], (3) the Canadian Civil Liberties Association [CCLA], and (4) AI Canada. He refers to all of these as both influential and "principled" with the aim of illustrating struggles intrinsically linked with seeing the promises and ideals of the so-called "age of rights" effected (9).

Thompson's framework, methodological approach, and case selection reflect an interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter. His work includes the use of sociological, historical, legal, and political science analyses. The initial position taken in his work is a sub-set of political science (International Relations (IR) theory). Thompson briefly deconstructs some of the mainstream IR approaches – such as realism and liberalism – within the context of human rights. Doing so allows him to bring attention to the constructivist school of thought. This theoretical (or ontological) approach is concerned with identity and approaches, sets of ideas, values, norms, the way actors interact, the practices that occur as a result of interaction, and how idea formation and their use affects the world. In doing so, Thompson highlights the importance of the "power of principle" and the battleground of ideas, which he describes as the "cumulative process by which norms about appropriate conduct are formed, debated, contested, and, in some cases, accepted" (10). Like some prominent constructivist IR and norms scholars (i.e., Martha Finnemore, Kathryn Sikkink, Ted Hopf, and Thomas Risse), Thompson establishes a suitable analytical environment for the study of "human rights," "social expectations," "principled commitments," and "appropriate responses." Arranged in such a way, Thompson's work is able to take place within important historical, cultural, political, and social conditions and contexts.

The chronological arrangement of the study is done through three concise but very engaging chapters. Each chapter is an exploration of a trial that can be taken as part of a sequence of events or read independently. Accordingly, readers have the opportunity to engage with the subject matter at various points without finding the actual layout of the work imposing. In Chapter 1, Thompson looks at the CCC and how the organization sought to secure norms relating to the rights of refugees. It depicts a history of the group, its actions as regards the law, and its interaction with the Supreme Court of Canada. The *Charter*, the *Immigration Act*, and the Federation of Canadian Sikh Societies (FCSS) are seminal parts of the story and of Thompson's analysis for the relationship with rights-based principles and judicial processes. Chapter 2 is concerned with the emergence of norms with respect to the protection of minorities considered vulnerable within Canadian society. A critical investigation of the 1970 hate propaganda law concerning both the CJC and the CCLA establishes a combative point of connection with the principle of freedom of expression. The *Criminal Code of*

Canada and sections of the Constitution undergirds the case depicting the contentious nature of the law. Chapter 3 places readers at the centre of Thompson's personal experience as a former-media officer with AI. Tracing Canada's history as an abolitionist country since the 1960s, the tumultuous process of implementation and repeal is brought to the fore. Canada's 1976 extradition treaty with the US and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* form the backdrop of a fundamental issue: "how liberal states respond when confronted by those who pose a direct threat to their society and [if they] warrant infringing upon an individual's rights to security and life in order to protect the public" (14).

An important aspect of this book is how it confronts the often inaccurate perception that just because human rights retain a strong ethical character they are consequently spoken of in absolute terms. Thompson argues against this idea. The claim is made that when the principles of human rights are put to the test whereby "moral ambiguity and tremendous material considerations" come into play, "even respect for claims considered to encompass fundamental or 'first order' rights is far from assured" (x). Rather than dismissing Canada's human rights "revolution," Thompson's argument in all three chapters hones readers' attention in on the resilience invested in the ideas that define the very nature of government interaction with and treatment of its citizenry. A wealth of material informs the presentations made throughout. Further, information gained from archival collections has undoubtedly contributed in no small part to this book. In accessing Library and Archives Canada, Bill Domm, B'nai Birth Canada, Canadian Civil Liberties Union, and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, among others, Thompson cites nearly 40 cases. These include *Ahani v. Canada* and *Baker v. Canada*, both of which are watersheds in the realms of constitutional and administrative law. Both also address procedural fairness in practice within the context of national security. Over 20 Canadian government bills and treaties contribute further to the book, in addition to many Canadian government documents and documents in international law (including United Nations [UN] and Organization of American States [AOS] documents). Beyond exploring numerous secondary sources from multiple disciplines, Thompson also conducted numerous interviews and undertook research in over 20 highly-read and recognized newspapers and periodicals.

The book is very well organized and accessible. Thompson reviews previously established points of views of authors in other fields. Although he engages with IR theory, Thompson unfortunately creates the illusion of having refuted certain IR positions relating loosely to the topic. This, however, should not be taken as a crucial mistake as the aim is not to engage extensively with the IR domain; nor does this seeming refutation invalidate any of his observations or arguments. Having only briefly looked at constructivism, Thompson might be cautious to delve into this area without a com-

mitment to a thorough engagement of the ontology and how it might fit throughout the book. By not doing so, Thompson might easily come across as a somewhat disinterested observer of constructivism (which prefigures quite significantly given the subject matter of the book) and of IR theory more generally.

Given the many ongoing challenges facing liberal democracies today, let alone in the aftermath of the 9/11 events and the injurious response by the UN in the "War on Terror" (WoT), it is everywhere evident that Thompson brings an important contribution to the fields of freedom, security, and rights of individuals by razing barriers between scholarly domains. He brings them to bear on the evolution of human rights in order to cast an analytical prism on his cases and does so in a praiseworthy fashion. Readers should therefore be able to see the strengths and weaknesses of ideas, rights, and the idea of rights as they pertain to governance and citizenship in liberal democracies. They may also do so from multiple points of view. This, in and of itself, stands as a nice contribution for highlighting scholarship's oversight of fruitful interdisciplinary practices, especially when operating within the domain of law.

Thompson's book is unquestionably an academic text. The work, however, is much more than this. It stands as a combination of diverse factors and interests that have helped bring about a highly readable and resounding addition to what is currently understood about the evolution of human rights in Canada and beyond its national borders. Despite the minimal weaknesses mentioned above, Thompson has produced an exemplary account of issues that affect the daily lives of Canadian's and peoples living within liberal democracies elsewhere. Stemming from the main cases are perplexing questions about power structures and power struggles within society that irrefutably affect and are affected, but not exclusively, by prevailing arrangements of rights and/or discrimination. This work requires no prior knowledge of a particular field of research. A broad readership is for that reason able to gain valuable insight into very intense and formative qualitative measurement discussions that are often ambivalent and inconsistent.

Desiring Canada: CBC Contests, Hockey Violence, and Other Stately Pleasures

Patricia Cormack / James F. Cosgrave

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 272 pp., ISBN-13: 9781442613911

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Especially for those of us who do not live in Canada, *Desiring Canada: CBC Contests, Hockey Violence, and Other Stately Pleasures* is an ideal book. Patricia Cormack and James F. Cosgrave write clearly, energetically and intelligently of the lowbrow popular culture that usually flies below the Central European radar. In Brno or Budapest or Bucharest, academics know Thomas Haliburton and Tomson Highway, but not necessarily Tim Hortons. Moodie and Munro are household names in the halls of academe, but Mercer? Who's that joker? *Desiring Canada* fills many of these cultural gaps as its authors introduce and cleverly "examine everyday pleasures, Canadian identity, and the state" (17).

Like many texts, *Desiring Canada* begins with an epigraph by Pierre Trudeau – namely, his 1967 line "There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation." Unlike many books, *Desiring Canada* does something interesting with the quip. As long as there's a television in the nation's bedrooms, the state-funded Canadian Broadcasting Corporation does have its place there and plays its part in regulating our wants and concepts of Canada. "Canadian identity," we learn, "is one of desire, and desire is by definition always incomplete" (212). In other words, the publicly-funded CBC helps to flesh out concepts of Canada, entailing that "the state has only *appeared to disappear* from the interest in citizens' pleasure" (212).

The five body chapters are neatly woven together and focus on: 1) two recent CBC contests ("Seven Wonders of Canada" and "49 Songs from North of the 49th Parallel," which set out to choose a playlist for newly-elected President Barack Obama); 2) the Tim Hortons coffee phenomenon; 3) ice hockey and televised spectacles of violence; 4) "Peace, Order and Good Gambling"; and 5) CBC comedy. *Desiring Canada* is a model for academic writing. The arguments and writing are clear, endnotes are delightfully sparse and sometimes funny, the index is well-organized, and Cormack and Cosgrave provide concise information and background on, for example, the oft-ridiculed MAPL rules for what makes music Canadian. This saves us from having to slog through such

documentation and regulations on our own. Most importantly, the authors provide clear rationale for the choice of material in each chapter. Pop culture is, well, *big*. What to look at? They tell us what and why.

Central European Canadianists will probably learn most from chapters 1 and 2, "Contesting Canada at the CBC" and "'Always Fresh, Always There': Tim Hortons and the Consumer-Citizen." First, the second chapter, the one about the strange affinity for coffee and donuts (curiously, *not* the "doughnuts" I spelled and consumed as a child). Named after a professional hockey player, the private company Tim Hortons has gradually and stealthily become a symbol of Canada: "Because coffee consumption is so socially and politically charged," the authors inform us, "it is almost impossible to consume coffee in a public space without making a statement about oneself" (70). If that statement sounds absurd or delusional, just ask a Canadian how true it has become: Cormack and Cosgrave prove that choosing Tim Hortons over Starbucks is like choosing Gordon Lightfoot over Miles Davis. Politicians are always careful to include a photo op at a Tim Hortons, the Department of National Defence has played a role in getting the chain's beans to troops in Afghanistan, and, perhaps most masterfully, using the power of the internet, "Tim Hortons cleverly gets its customers to do its talking, with profound implications for story-telling's place in Canadian identity" (85). The "Every Cup Tells a Story" website invites customers (good Canadians, all) to post how and why Tim Hortons has been a part of their lives. Though it's easy to be cynical about such capitalist ventures, many of the stories at www.everycup.ca are indeed heart-warming and – dare one say it? – *typically Canadian*.

In chapter 1, Cormack and Cosgrave provide close analyses of contests aiming to pick the best Canadian places and the ideal Canadian music to fill "Obama's playlist." Each of these contests could or should have been a popular celebration of Canada, not least because regular folks did much of the voting. (For the record, the winners were: the canoe, the igloo, Niagara Falls, Old Quebec, Halifax's Pier 21,where many immigrants first set foot on Canadian soil, prairie skies, and the Rockies). There was, however, a jury and a set of rules, and online commentators took the opportunity to nit-pick everything from jury selection to eligibility to selection criteria. "This is a travesty. A joke without humour," said one. Commenting and kvetching are often one and the same in online forums, but even so Canadians seem a rather litigious, morose people. This general dourness is musically redeemed by at least one comic song, as the authors provide a nuanced reading of The Arrogant Worms' classic "Canada Is Really Big" – a song which is exceptional "because it pokes fun at the Canadian pursuit of identity through the sheer occupation of empty space" (52). It's as if the comic band was in collusion with the authors, so apt it is in supporting Cormack and Cosgrave's desire-as-lack argument.

The title of the final body chapter, "The Funny State Apparatus," is slightly misleading because the chapter focuses almost exclusively on comedian Rick Mercer (to be

fair, the authors are upfront about this exclusivity). Mercer's shows and routines are firmly entrenched within the CBC's programming, and most Canadians will remember such fine acts as "Talking to Americans," where unsuspecting victims flaunt their Canada-ignorance. In mock-reporter mode Mercer asks innocent Americans to opine on Canada's lack of paved roads or the atrocious Toronto Polar Bear Slaughter. Mercer, though, does not specialize solely in anti-American gags that stoke the Canadian ego. "In his role as CBC comedian, he appears as the court jester who has some licence to criticize the powerful" (210). For example, he once spearheaded a movement to have politician Stockwell Day renamed "Doris Day." The joke behind the joke? "[A]ccording to the rules Day himself had proposed," Mercer's petition "would have compelled him to change his name" (194). In his weekly rant Mercer "generates laughs by exposing the ridiculous reasoning and behaviour of politicians" (190) and other bigwigs. But as the sociologist duo points out, Mercer's comedy is not quite as simple and subversive as that. When not taking down foolish politicians, Rick Mercer shows his loyalty for the Canadian military and other instruments of formal authority. Moreover, politicians often appear with him, making Mercer's critiques seem more like gentle teasing than scathing ridicule. For what politician would agree to appear on a comedy show that was truly dangerous?

The two other chapters – namely, on hockey violence (chapter 3) and gambling (chapter 4) – though insightful, will probably be of less interest to most Central European Canadianists. That said, Cormack and Cosgrave's thorough analysis of gambling practices and state or provincial control of the same is downright spooky. After citing a government ad that gloats over how much money gambling brings in, the authors harpoon this doublespeak, deadpanning, "Apparently one is to conclude that gambling is good for Canadians" (158).

The chapter on hockey and hockey violence provides a concise and rewarding overview of sport as a civilizing process and of how, at the same time, the state is a co-celebrant in hockey violence because it highlights the game on Hockey Night in Canada, the CBC's longest-running show. The authors' examination of the CBC's fight-happy commentator Don Cherry, with his flashy suits and flashier viewpoints, is the best out there. If the CBC is the most politically correct entity around, their most famous character is the least. Cherry is often unfairly ridiculed as a philistine, a blissfully unaware throwback to an earlier "manlier" time. This is not the case, and when Cherry "begins his comments with a phrase like 'I'm gunna get in trouble for this,'" he is in fact occupying a "rhetorical position" from which "he says what is outside 'politically correct' official discourse" (129), broadcasting his personal views on Christmas and the military, among other things, while ostensibly not "really" belonging to the CBC.

These are tough fiscal times, but Canadian Studies libraries should find a few dollars for *Desiring Canada*.

Modernism on the "Margin" – The "Margin" on Modernism: Manifestations in Canadian Culture

Katalin Kürtösi

Augsburg: Wissner-Verlag, 2013. Studies in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Vol 4. 278 pages. ISBN 978-3-89639-911-3.

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One of the curious paradoxes of current critical discourse on post-Modernism is the way the term is bandied about with great confidence despite the lack of any generally accepted consensus of what, exactly, is meant by the term Modernism itself. For that reason, it is always useful to return to an examination of Modernism, an exercise that is doubly valuable when it concerns Modernism in contexts where, traditionally, Modernism was viewed as at best a minor phenomenon. One such context is Canada and Canadian culture.

Katalin Kürtösi's *Modernism on the "Margin" – The "Margin" on Modernism: Manifestations in Canadian Culture* sets out to explore the Modernist influence in the Canadian cultural tradition. She begins by looking at the broader picture: in the first section of the book she examines a whole set of features characterizing Modernism in general, paying particular attention to the question of centre and margin (more of this later). She then moves on to a very compact and richly detailed account of the "state of Canada" in the early twentieth century, showing the many ways in which the country was an integral part of contemporary social, economic and technological developments internationally and very much aware – though perhaps with a certain time lag – of European and American cultural trends. This section is concluded with a close look at the manifestation and impact of some of these trends within Canada.

The second – and longest – section of the book is entitled "The Canadian Picture of Modernity". Over half the section is devoted to Emily Carr, a figure whose stature has increased enormously over the past few decades. Kürtösi's treatment of Carr helps explain why this is so, and why she is such a key figure in Canadian Modernism: her extraordinary accomplishments as both artist and writer reflect her lifelong search to deal creatively with various kinds of marginalization – the result of her colonial

relationship as a Canadian to the United States and the "mother country", Britain; her refusal to write in genres that were perceived to be prestigious; her use of local, colloquial language; her physical location within Canada; her position as a woman; her own eccentric person – and her re-discovery of the "primitive" in Canada. A very interesting sub-section on Carr discusses her as a subject of theatre plays, works that in effect confirm and even canonize her as a key figure of Canadian Modernity. This second section of the book concludes with a discussion of two other key Canadian modernist painters, Lawren Harris and Bertram Brooker (both of whom also made significant contributions in the field of writing), and examples of Modernist contributions in the world of Canadian theatre.

Literature is the focus of the third section of the book, or more precisely the depiction of "the artist" (in the general sense of the term) in the works of a number of writers, both Anglophone and Francophone: F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, A.M. Klein, Sinclair Ross, Leonard Cohen, Hubert Aquin, Mordecai Richler and Michel Marc Bouchard. In examining these writers' works the author stresses their strong self-reflective aspects and the tendency towards mythologizing Modernist art and artists they evince. In so doing, she indicates how these writers both seek points of reference in centres of Modernism and artists outside Canada and, at the same time, redefine Canada itself (or specific places/communities within Canada) as what might be termed "marginal centres".

Stepping back a pace from Modernism itself, Katalin Kürtösi in her fourth section deals with Modernism viewed through the critical lens of five major Canadian thinkers: Harold Innes, Northrop Frye, Marshall McLuhan, Charles Taylor and Hugh Kenner (who was himself a former student of Marshall McLuhan's). In a sense this returns the book to its first section, since all of these individuals tended to deal with the general phenomenon of Modernism (of them only Frye wrote systematically on Canadian-focused issues and individuals). But they do so from the point of intellectuals at the margins all of whom (with the possible exception of Innes) established themselves in the course of their careers at the very heart of contemporary critical discourse internationally. As such, they were able to shine a unique "Canadian" light on Modernism and its many varied manifestations.

Modernism on the "Margin" – The "Margin" on Modernism covers a very broad scope of issues, and does so on the basis of the author's extensive and deep reading in the field. Its basic thesis concerning the importance of the marginal when it comes to the question of Modernism is not something new. We have come a long way from the time when Modernism was considered a product of the great metropolitan "centres", or when it was spoken of only in the singular: the specific forms Modernism took in different places and at different times have given rise to increasing use of the more accurate term "Modernisms". And Canadian Modernism specifically, as one of these,

has been the subject of much excellent work in the past ten to fifteen years. What distinguishes this work is the constant and delicate interplay between centre and margin and the insistence that the margin – in this case Canada – is the site of a specific Modernism with features of its own, features that in fact derive their strength from this very marginality. The effect is that of a continuous set of dialogues – between the world outside Canada and Canada; between regions of Canada; between different forms of creative expression; between different generations of artists; between the arts and critical reflection on the arts. And in all of these dialogues, the fruitful potentiality of the margin is observed and stressed. The overall result is a very complex set of perspectives on the phenomena of Modernism in general, and on Modernism as it has played out in Canada. This makes *Modernism on the "Margin" – The "Margin" on Modernism: Manifestations in Canadian Culture* a valuable contribution not only to Canadian Studies but to the wider discourse on Modernism as such.

"Canada: A Conservative Society?"

34th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries

Grainau, Germany. 22-24 February 2013

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The 34th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS), held in Grainau in February 2013, was organised by the Political Science and Sociology section of the Association. The two-day conference entitled "Canada: A Conservative Society?" included papers from a wide range of subjects divided into three workshops: Conservatism and its "Others" in Contemporary Canada, Language and Literatures in Canada: Reflection of a Conservative Society and Nature Revisited: Economic, Ecological and Cultural Values of Natural Resources in a Conservative Society. The conference was opened by the President of GKS at the time Martin Kuester, the Canadian Ambassador to the Republic of Austria Dr. John Barrett, the Canadian Ambassador to Switzerland, Roberta Santi, the Canadian Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Peter M. Boehm, and the President of ICCS, Patrick James. The opening was followed by the presentation of the Prix d'Excellence du Gouvernement du Québec, the Jürgen Saße Award, the Foundation of Canadian Studies Award and the GKS Scholarship to prominent Canadianists.

The conference started with an introduction by Dr. Steffen Schneider from Bremen University, Germany, and a keynote lecture "Conservatism and the Transformation of the Canadian Party System," presented by David Laycock from Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. The presentation gave an overview of the developments of the federal party system in Canada. Attention was drawn on the changes that took place in 1993, the Liberal Dominance, the post 2006 party system and the Harper Government.

There were over 150 professors and students from fields such as history, political science, American studies, English studies, Native studies and Romance language studies in attendance at the conference. Attendants were predominantly from universities across Austria, Germany and Switzerland. There were participants from Denmark, England, Norway, Sweden and Ukraine as well.

"The Dynamics of Communication(s) in Multi/inter/trans/cultural Canada"

5th Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists

Baia Mare, Romania, 19-20 September 2013

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University of Bucharest, Romania

This year's Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists event took place on 19-20 September, and the organisers (Crina Bud and Adrian Oțoiu) focussed on the dynamics of communication(s) in multi/inter/trans/cultural Canada – a current subject of interest in fields ranging from politics and sociology, to culture of all types. The conference began with two talks about security concerns and the sometimes tense partnership between Canada and the United States in the fight against terror.

In a subsequent paper, Oana-Meda Păloşanu pointed out the possibilities Japanese-Canadian authors exploit in their texts in linguistically manifesting themselves in their English-language works and thereby not entirely giving many white readers access to their. As Păloşanu, a speaker of Japanese, showed, the aim of using Japanese words and expressions in English-language works is to make many readers feel "othered." Meanwhile, Ana Olos presented conference attendees with a humorous prelude to poet George Elliott Clarke – namely, her Wallace-Stevens-inspired consideration of thirteen reasons to read the Canadian poet, who presented his work the next day.

Because there were parallel sessions throughout, conference participants were faced with difficult choices. Indeed, for those researchers who regret having missed sessions, it might have been better if the conference had lasted longer! A few examples of papers given: Mihaela Topan spoke about Ghyslaine Côté's film *Elles étaient cinq* and Professor Dana Puiu emphasized the uncommon features of Louise Dupré's plays. Aliteea Bianca Turtureanu stressed that representations of transculturality in Nancy Huston's works result from the collaboration between the writer and personalities from other domains, such as photography or painting. Jana Marešová exemplified and commented upon contexts from modern society which affect the communication abilities of the characters in Joseph Boyden's novel *Through Black Spruce*, Anamaria Fălăuş concentrated on the obstacles of communication in Stephen Hennigan's *The Places Where Names Vanish*, while Andreea Gianina Bera referred to constructions of masculinity and femininity in Margaret Atwood's and Carol Shields's novels. Other

papers included (besides my own reflections on forms of communication within art symposiums in Canada) Oleh Kozachuk's academic plea for improving the quality of life of the First Nations, as well as several focussing on film: Raluca Ghimbulut's paper on Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*, Georgeta Moarcas's analysis of two documentaries by Pierre Perrault, and Adrian Otoiu's exposé about communication in four Canadian puzzle films, which are characterised by time loops and ambiguities. Silvia Branea centred her presentation on the communication of Romanian emigrants with the Founding Nations as well as with the First Nations, and Sorina Gheorghe from the same university reminded us of the sad legacy of aboriginal residential schools.

This conference was "unconventional" in terms of the rich cultural offerings. A special moment on Thursday was the projection of two films by the affable and open-hearted filmmaker Dan Schlanger: the documentary *Death in the Forest* and the black comedy *The Bar*. *Death in the Forest* deals with perils of working in forestry, as well as the tradition of this occupation within families. Another special moment was Crina Bud's presentation of Kim Thuy's biography, followed by a conference via skype with the Canadian author of Vietnamese origin. Later, Florin Oncescu – "a part time writer and a full time engineer" – read some of his humorous texts based on his experience in both Canada and the USA, Horea Naşcu spoke in a comical way about a novel by Mordecai Richler, and later the audience could also enjoy the projection of the film *Canadian Smile* realized by Diana Manole from Trent University. After the reception sponsored by the Canadian Embassy in Bucharest, an intellectual feast was offered by George Elliott Clarke in the form of a performance.