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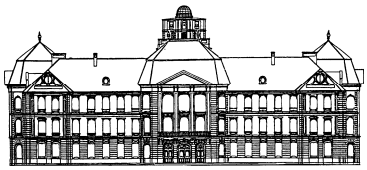

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CANADIAN STUDIES

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of American Studies at Eszterházy Károly College is pleased to present Volume X of the Eger Journal of American Studies.

The Eger Journal of American Studies is the first scholarly journal published in Hungary devoted solely to the publication of articles investigating and exploring various aspects of American Culture. We intend to cover all major and minor areas of interest ranging from American literature, history, and society to language, popular culture, bibliography etc.

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STEPHANIE BANGARTH

MIGRATING MAGYARS AND CANADIAN INCLUSIVENESS: RESPONSES OF THE STATE AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS TO THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEES, 1956–1958

On Maple Island near Sussex Drive in Ottawa, Ontario stands an impressive monument dedicated to Canada's response to the thousands of Hungarians who fled Soviet oppression in the weeks and months following the Hungarian Revolution in October of 1956. The monument, with its blending of Canadian Shield red granite and a Hungarian art form known as a 'kopjafa' is inscribed with a message describing the links made between the two countries in the aftermath of a truly unprecedented national response to a humanitarian emergency. [1]

(photo: Sarah Baxter)

[1] The inscription reads: "May this monument be a lasting symbol of the gratitude of Hungarian refugees who, having escaped after the revolution in Hungary, were welcomed and provided a safe haven to rebuild their lives in Canada." French and Hungarian inscriptions are also on the monument.

My interest in researching the role of voluntary organizations with international links in the Hungarian refugee crisis came out of an interview I conducted with my great aunt and great uncle, Maria and Imre Toth, for the 1956 Memorial Project, an oral history archive, co-sponsored by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario and the Rakoczi Foundation.[2] The focus of the program was for descendants and relatives to interview those members of their families about the events that unfolded in 1956 and the aftermath. Over the course of the interview, and in listening to it some time later, I was struck by how much their experience was marked by assistance from voluntary organizations, both in the refugee camps and then in Canada.

Most scholars of immigration, such as Gerald Dirks and Robert Keyserlingk, underline the importance of the reception of Hungarian refugees as having a liberalizing impact in the immigration policy arena in Canada, serving as a useful precedent for other refugee migrations during times of crisis.[3] The crisis also had an immediate impact on the operation of Canada's refugee program, as Freda Hawkins notes: "Briefly, during the Hungarian crisis and refugee movement, there was a glimpse of what better leadership and a much more co-operative approach to immigration in Canada might achieve."[4] It is also interesting to note that while some of the above-mentioned scholars claim that the decision to accept a significant number of refugees was reached only after pressure was exerted on policy-makers from within and beyond the federal government, they do not indicate either the methods by which such pressure was applied, or the international characteristics of the pressure itself.

The transnational links, however, are important. An earlier work, co-authored with Andrew S. Thompson, describes how the Canadian Council

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[2] Due to extensive renovations and the current project of digitization at the MHSO, excerpts from my interview can be obtained here: Collection X, Maria and Imre Toth interview excerpt, http://www.collectionx.museum/en/media/5146.html. This and other interviews in both English and Hungarian can be found in the oral history collection of the MHSO.

[3] Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977): 190–191; Robert Keyserlingk, ed., *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1993): VIII–IX

[4] Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, 2nd ed., (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988): 118.

of Churches (CCC) played a facilitative role in immigration and intergovernmental affairs throughout the Hungarian refugee crisis, while taking some direction from their overseas contacts, the World Council of Churches. Using a transnational advocacy networks framework, we noted how state and voluntary actors conceived of the place of the Hungarian refugees within Canadian society, how voluntary agencies served as highly valued players on both the domestic and international scenes, and ultimately how the combination of international and national pressure could lead to more humane Canadian immigration and refugee policies, even if only temporarily.[5]

This study will examine the responses of both state and religious and ethnic voluntary organizations to the massive influx of refugees from Hungary during the period between 1956 and 1958. In particular, this paper will highlight the efforts of the Canadian Red Cross, Hungarian Canadian groups, and religious organizations, all of which played a facilitative role in immigration and intergovernmental affairs throughout the Hungarian refugee crisis. Taking some direction from overseas contacts the advocacy movement for the Hungarian refugees can also be understood within a larger, transnational context. Using government documents, newspapers, organizational fonds, oral histories, and published memoirs, this paper will demonstrate how state and voluntary actors conceived of the place of the Hungarian refugees within Canadian society. It will also analyze how transnational contacts played an important function in the reception of Hungarian refugees in Canada and in the short-lived, but foundational, formation of public policy to address the refugee crisis situation.

This paper uses the framework of the transnational advocacy network as proffered by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink to analyze the direction of the Hungarian refugee crisis. Transnational advocacy networks are those networks of activists that coalesce and operate across national boundaries and whose members are motivated by values rather than by material concerns or professional norms and who engage in the "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal exchange of information and ser-

[5] Andrew S. Thompson and Stephanie Bangarth, "Transnational Christian Charity: the Canadian Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, 1956–1957," *American Review of Canadian Studies* Vol. 38, No. 3 (Autumn 2008).

vices."[6] Keck and Sikkink note that "when a state recognizes the legitimacy of international interventions and changes its domestic behavior in response to international pressure, it reconstitutes the relationship between the state, its citizens, and international actors."[7]

* * *

In late October of 1956, pro-democracy, anti-Soviet demonstrations directed at the Soviet-backed government of Matyas Rakosi broke out in Budapest. Fearing that its control of the Warsaw Pact was unravelling, the Kremlin ordered the Red Army to put down the revolution on 4 November 1956. Events quickly turned violent. Soviet forces clashed with protestors, killing roughly 20,000 and imprisoning many, many more.[8] To escape a similar fate, tens of thousands of Hungarians crossed the border into neighbouring Austria. For its part, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was powerless to intervene militarily, its members divided by the conflict over control of the Suez Canal. But they were able to relieve the pressure placed on Austria. Days after the invasion, Canadian immigration officials reinforced the number of immigration officers at the Canadian Embassy in Vienna, loosened the normal requirements concerning proper travel documentation, medical exams and security clearances, and enlisted commercial airplanes to transport the refugees out of Austria. The effort produced impressive results: by the end of 1957, more than 37,000 Hungarians had been accepted into Canada. But government actors were not solely responsible for this shift in policy; indeed, the response was truly a national one, and would not have been possible without the support and assistance of a whole host of voluntary organizations from a wide range of sectors of Canadian society who lobbied the federal government for a more humane response to the mass movement of refugees from Hungary and contributed greatly to the resettlement process.[9]

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[6] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998): 16, 200.

[7] Ibid., 37.

[8] Anna Porter, "It still haunts us all," *Globe and Mail*, 14 October 2006, pp. F1 and F6.

[9] See Gerald E. Dirks, "Canada and Immigration: International and Domestic Considerations in the Decade Preceding the 1956 Hungarian Exodus," in Robert H. Keyserlingk

With the first news of the Hungarian revolution and the subsequent social and political upheaval in the beleaguered country, representatives of voluntary organizations in Europe travelled to Austria to consult with official government bodies to determine an appropriate level of response to the refugee crisis. These included representatives from the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Brethren Service Committee, and the International Red Cross. They coordinated their activities with the Evangelisches Hilfswerk, an auxiliary organization of the Evangelical Church in Austria established after the Second World War to provide relief for the Austrian people. Conferences were held with officials of the Austrian churches, the U.S. Escapee Programme, the U. N. High Commissioner for Refugees' representative in Austria and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM).[10]

In Canada in early November, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and his cabinet met to determine the nature of Canadian relief efforts. It was clear that, according to of one of many memoranda on the subject, those in attendance were aware that "unless the West gives some expression of its solidarity with and sympathy for the Hungarians, we will have lost the last remnants of our prestige in all of Eastern Europe."[11] To that end, the

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(ed.), *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, Inc., 1993), pp. 5–11.

Throughout the crisis, the Federal Government relied heavily on groups such as the Canadian Catholic Conference, the Canadian Rural Settlement Society, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canadian Red Cross, the Canadian Hungarian Relief Committee, the Canadian Hungarian Protestant Ministerial Association, the Canadian Christian Council for the Rehabilitation of Refugees, the Canadian Welfare Council, and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society to assist with the resettlement and integration of the Hungarian refugees that arrived in Canada. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG26-A-1-c, Vol. 117, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, "Minutes of the Meeting Respecting Hungarian Refugees", Toronto, 27 November 1956; Thompson and Bangarth, 'Transnational Christian Charity,' pp. 295–6.

For an account of the experiences of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, see Joseph Kage, "The Settlement of Hungarian Refugees in Canada," in Robert H. Keyserlingk (ed.), *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, Inc., 1993), pp. 99–107.

[10] LAC, MG28-I327, CCC Papers, 'WCC Activities in Connection with the Hungarian Emergency, 29th October—20th November, 1956,' pp. 1–4.

[11] Draft Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 3 November 1956, in Michael D. Stevenson, ed.,

prime minister and his cabinet considered their options, chief among which was the idea of giving monetary aid that would be administered by the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) for aid to refugees outside of Hungary. A grant of $100,000 to the CRC was subsequently approved at the meeting, representing one of the first transnational links in the early stages of the Hungarian refugee crisis.[12] Later, Lester B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, recommended an additional offer of $800,000 to be made available to the CRC to provide relief including, "to the extent practical and economical, of appropriate supplies of Canadian origin." In his lengthy memo to Cabinet, Pearson justified the increase in monetary aid to the CRC by noting the importance of aid from Western countries "on humanitarian as well as political grounds," and noted that providing substantial emergency relief would serve as a replacement for military intervention.[13]

On 13 November the Minister of Immigration, J. W. Pickersgill, met with ethnic organizations representing not only Hungarian groups, but other representatives from other Eastern European countries. At that time Pickersgill resolved to ensure that the Canadian government would take steps to alleviate the suffering of those in Europe and to allow for the entry of such refugees to Canada. Days later at a meeting hosted by the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, Department of Citizenship and Immigration officials met again with the Canadian-Hungarian Federation, and also with church, voluntary, and social groups, including the CCC and the CRC. This meeting was followed up with another on 22 November with representatives from many of the same organizations. What emerged from this meeting is a clear indication of the shared goals between the federal government and voluntary organizations, initially that all parties were interested in securing adequate reception for Hungarian refugees. It is also clear that both government and voluntary agencies did not yet appreciate issues that the Hungarian representatives expressed concern over at this early stage, their knowledge stemming from their

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Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 23 1955–1956 Part II (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2004), p. 461.

[12] Extract from Cabinet Conclusions in *Ibid*, p. 464.

[13] Confidential Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Cabinet, 15 November 1956 in *Ibid*, p. 474. Cabinet subsequently approved Pearson's recommendation in a meeting on 22 November 1956. Extract from Cabinet Conclusions in *Ibid*, p. 477.

contacts in the refugee camps in Austria: money for refugee arrivals; refugee sponsorship, including children, older, and sick refugees; and the clarification and increased leniency in the granting of visas under current regulations.[14] The measured responses on the part of both government and voluntary officials can be explained by the relatively small numbers of Hungarian refugees making their way to Canada by this point.

Nonetheless, offers of employment, sponsorship and other assistance for Hungarian refugees were flooding the Department of Citizenship and Immigration headquarters and its offices throughout Canada as its Director, C. E. Smith, noted in a memo to Col. Laval Fortier (deputy minister of Immigration) dated 22 November. At the same time, applications from refugees without direct sponsors were being refused, with the rate of refusal at one out of every three applications. The disconnect between the large pool of assistance from voluntary agencies and the tangible desire of refugees to come to Canada, as well as the possibility of adverse publicity if applications continued to be refused at the present rate, resulted in government officials turning to voluntary agencies for help. Historically, such cooperation between voluntary agencies and the state on matters relating to refugee and immigration reception was not uncommon. In the immediate post-war period, the CCC and the JIAS, among other groups, established an amicable relationship with the Federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Department of Labour. It was, for all intents and purposes, a mutually beneficial relationship: the federal government obtained two reliable partners that were able to relieve it of much of the burden of refugee resettlement; the CCC and the JIAS were provided with opportunities both to fulfil their obligations to their international contacts while at the same time satisfying their humanitarian and spiritual impulses. The Rural Settlement Society of Canada, the Canadian Jewish Congress (with the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society), the Canadian Christian Council for Re-settlement of Refugees, and the Canadian Council of Churches were singled out in a memo as "national voluntary agencies with which we [the Immigration Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration]

[14] RG 26 Vol. 117, file # 3-24-34-1 v. 1, Report of Meeting Convened with the Hon. J. W. Pickersgill and Ethnic Representatives from Countries Behind the Iron Curtain, 13 November 1956; International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto Minutes of Meeting, 19 November 1956; Minutes of an Informal Meeting held at the Office of the Citizenship Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 22 November 1956.

have dealt with for some time." Moreover, the memo indicated that government officials were well aware of the international contacts of these agencies, suggesting that voluntary agencies could contact "their affiliates or representatives in Europe" to find refugees suitable for sponsorship, essentially serving as another arm of refugee recruitment for the government.[15]

The Canadian Red Cross, via its affiliation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and in cooperation in Europe with the ICEM, played a valuable transnational role in the refugee crisis, and could be counted among the major organizations regularly present at official meetings held between federal government departments, the Ontario government, the Unemployment Insurance Commission and other voluntary agencies. Additionally, the CRC worked closely with the Canadian Hungarian Relief Committee in dispersing the funds collected by way of the Hungarian Relief Fund. In many ways, the activities of the CRC in the Hungarian refugee crisis represented an extension of its work among refugees and orphans in the post-WWII period and earlier during the Second World War when the society contributed volunteer services and $80 million in goods and money.

In the early days of the refugee crisis, the CRC engaged in its customary fundraising initiatives when faced with a humanitarian emergency. The 6 November edition of the *Globe and Mail* indicated that the CRC initiated the Canadian Red Cross Hungarian Relief Fund, launched in cooperation with the Canadian Hungarian Federation. The fund would be used to purchase medical and hospital supplies, bulk food and clothing for distribution by the International Red Cross in Hungary. It was only when the Soviet Army had quelled the Hungarian revolution two weeks following its outbreak were envoys from the Red Cross allowed to enter Hungary. As an aside, by mid-February 1957, the Canadian Hungarian Relief Fund exceeded the national objective of $500,000.[16]

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[15] RG 26, Vol. 117, file #3-24-34-1 Vol. 1, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Immigration Branch memo, from the director to the deputy minister, 22 November 1956; Thompson and Bangarth, 'Transnational Christian Charity,' pp. 297–302.

[16] 'Red Cross Directs Drive To Provide Aid to Hungary,' *Globe and Mail*, 6 November 1956; 'All Her Savings,' *Ibid*, 9 November 1956; 'Russians Let Red Cross Aid Enter Hungary,' *Ibid*, 12 November 1956; 'Hungarian Fund Goes Over Top; Total at $512,071,' *Ibid*, 11 February 1957. It should be noted that at about the same time Pearson was expressing his disappointment in subscriptions from the public to the

The CRC frequently made use of information politics as a strategy to obtain a desired outcome by way of presenting information to the public and in encouraging government action. In particular, Richard Gluns, publicity director of the CRC, traveled to the Red Cross refugee camps in Austria to observe the relief efforts there and most importantly, to report on those actions upon his return to Canada. Later, in January of 1957, Marguerite Wilson, director of public relations for the CRC Society in Quebec (on loan to the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Red Cross Committee as press secretary), toured the refugee camps in Austria, noting in her report to Red Cross headquarters in Toronto the courage of the refugees and of the high regard for the CRC in Europe. According to Wilson, "the camps maintained by the Canadian Red Cross in Austria were cleaner, with better facilities than the other camps." Such information about the nature of the relief process, and about the burgeoning needs of refugees, in the early stages of the crisis was important in highlighting the value of the Canadian Hungarian Relief Fund.[17]

Furthermore, the available primary evidence reveals that the CRC was influential in the early days of the crisis in persuading the federal government to offer a more generous and liberal response with regard to the admittance of Hungarian refugees. Dr. W. S. Stanbury, National Director of the CRC, relayed information pertaining to the confusion and dissatisfaction on the part of the Hungarian-Canadian Federation as regards the specifics of Canada's immigration policy in relations to the Hungarian refugees. Ominously, Stanbury expressed to R. A. D. Ford, Head of the European Division of the Department of External Affairs, his worry of the "reaction of the Hungarian-Canadians when it became entirely clear to them that in fact Canada was not proposing to give any

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Red Cross fund in a confidential memo to the Minister of Finance. While he called for more money to be released from the government purse, he also commented that the government should have taken a stronger lead to the public to ensure more private contributions. Confidential memorandum from the Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Minister of Finance, 11 January 1957 in Michael D. Stevenson, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, Vol. 23 1955–1956 Part II (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2004), p. 492.

[17] *Globe and Mail*, 19 November 1956; 11 January 1957.

assistance to refugees in the way of admitting them to this country except in cases which would be obviously profitable to Canada."[18]

In response to pressure from within and without government circles on 26 November in the House of Commons Pickersgill went much further in committing his government to the reception of Hungarian refugees. In a speech that Col. Laval Fortier referred to as the "Magna Carta for the movement of Hungarian refugees," Pickersgill reiterated his government's commitment in giving priority to applications from Hungarian refugees, that any responsible individual or organization in Canada was free to sponsor immigrants, that arrangements would be made for those refugees requiring medical treatment, and that refugees would be given assisted passage to Canada.[19]

In addition to the cooperative efforts with organizations such as the CRC, the CCC and other voluntary immigrant settlement groups, the federal government, by way of the Citizenship and Immigration Department, mined assistance from a variety of directions. Toronto's Board of Education approved sending up to ten teachers to Holland to teach English to Hungarians in refugee camps in that country.[20] Other indications of the link between international organizations and localized Canadian labours include the efforts of the Canadian YMCA groups to provide recreational activities in Hungarian refugee camps in Austria. The Canadian response was prompted by an urgent appeal for recreational, social and educational facilities from J. Bednarek, director of the World YMCA-YWCA Refugee Services based on ongoing reports from Hilda Pole, YWCA field representative. Additionally, Canadian students and professors were asked by the World University Service (WUS), an international student relief and exchange organization, to contribute to an international fund for the rehabilitation of their counterparts who fled from Hungary. At a meeting of the Canadian branch of the WUS in late

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[18] Confidential memorandum from Head, European Division, to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 14 November 1956, in Michael D. Stevenson, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, Vol. 23 1955–1956 Part II (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2004), 473. Concern over the stinginess of Canadian policy was not restricted to the above-mentioned groups however. See RG 26, Vol. 117 file 3-24-34-1 Vol. 1, 'Minutes of an Informal Meeting held at the Office of the Citizenship Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Toronto, Ont.,' 22 November 1956.

[19] Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 26 November 1956, pp. 36–40.

[20] *Globe and Mail*, 18 January 1957,

November, WUS executive secretary told of more than 1,300 Hungarian students and professor in refugee camps in Austria and Yugoslavia. Funds raised in Canada would be used to provide temporary housing for them and to effect their transfer to other countries. The response was impressive. While operating under their own financial strain, Canadian universities pledged $100,000 to the fund and fourteen universities pledged to accept students, waive tuition fees and offer free housing. They were aided by the CRC which assisted in identifying appropriate recipients.[21]

Further nods to the centrality of volunteer organizations in the Hungarian refugee crisis were evidenced by requests made by government officials for such groups to orchestrate local aid, housing and employment for refugees, and to enforce the government's wishes to settle refugees in specific regional areas. To assist voluntary agencies in their work, the federal government produced educational and guidance materials on refugee reception. These materials, along with other related primary sources, reveal the myriad ways in which the reception of Hungarian refugees was framed. These include, but are not limited to, humanitarian concern, anti-Communist rhetoric, assimilationist language, and "otherization."

A 'Special Hungarian Issue' of the *Citizen*, a publication of the Canadian Citizenship Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, was one such tool made available to agencies assisting in the reception of Hungarian refugees.[22] Drawing on available current scholarly literature in the section on 'Understanding the Refugee Immigrant,' the author likened the refugee to a transplanted flower that, in order to survive needs to set down roots and be cared for in order to flourish and to remain in its new environs. Another section related a story of 'English Through Gestures,' an account from a young couple in Ottawa who opened their home to "Joseph—, Age 25, General Labourer, R.C." as he was described on the file card given to them by an immigration officer. Without a knowledge of Hungarian, the young couple "tried to insist that Joseph use English words." In the interim however, they described their journey in becoming "masters of the sweeping gesture, the dramatic shrug, and the expressive face." The story continues to relate the trials

[21] *Globe and Mail*, 21 and 22 November 1956, 21 December 1956.

[22] LAC, RG 26 Vol. 117, file 3-24-34-3 Vol. 1, 'Special Hungarian Issue,' *Citizen*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (February, 1957).

and tribulations of refugee reception and of refugee adjustment, such as language barriers, food differences, and frustrations arising out of joblessness, concludes that "Joseph still has a long way to go and many things to learn before he will become the good Canadian citizen he is capable of being."[23]

In some ways, the *Citizen* special edition reflected the Cold War anti-Communist international environment and, thus, the federal government's motivation for becoming involved in the refugee crisis, alluded to earlier in this article. In its analysis of Hungarian Canadian organizations, the writer noted that most Hungarians tended to participate in mutual benefit societies. Of the more recent associations concerned with Hungarian political matters, "they differ widely in their ideals but they are united in their anti-communism and nationalism. Their orientation is towards Hungary rather than towards Canada but observers believe that this type of organization will gradually lose its strength."[24]

The *Citizen* special edition is interesting for the nature of the information supplied to prospective and current volunteer agencies assisting in refugee reception. A brief section on contribution to Canadian life by earlier Hungarian immigrants indicated that Hungarians were noted in Canada for their pioneering farm activities in Saskatchewan and later in Ontario in developing the tobacco industry. In urban centres Hungarians were renowned for their restaurants, "justly famous for their splendid cooking and special Hungarian dishes." Factory workers, arts and medicine were other areas of employment singled out by the writer, who also noted that "Hungarians … appear to excel at figure skating and are now devoting their talents to teaching this sport in Canada."[25] The pamphlet also included information on available dictionaries, word lists and other aids, such as the Hungarian versions of the *Handbook for Newcomers* and *How to Become a Canadian Citizen*, both published by the Canadian Citizenship Branch. Two National Film Board documenta-

[23] Ibid, pp. 8–11. When Joseph left for work in the Gatineau Hills, the author of the piece noted that he took with him books on "Learning the English Language" and was also supplied with a half a dozen bottles of Tobasco sauce to make "anaemic Canadian meals more palatable to his Hungarian taste. Included also in his luggage were several cans of paprika, which is a seasoning more familiar to him than our salt and pepper."

[24] Ibid, p. 17.

[25] Ibid, pp. 17–18.

ries, *Canadian Notebook* (1953), highlighting the experiences of newly arrived immigrants in various regions of Canada to give an impression of working and living conditions in Canada, community life and educational facilities and *Physical Regions of Canada* (1953), a film that described the physical and economic geography of Canada on the basis of the six natural division, both featuring a Hungarian soundtrack, were also included in the list of resources. A brief (and colourless) one-page synopsis of Hungarian history was provided on page twenty-three, with a reading list of publications about Hungary so, presumably, volunteers and Canadians could choose to inform themselves about the newcomers in their midst. Lastly, an action plan titled 'Suggestions for Local Committees' offered potential and existing volunteers ideas on how to organize, the types of representatives to include, and how to make arrangements for such necessities as accommodation, refugee reception, provision of interpreters, language classes, counselling, finance, social activities and the importance of liaising with the Canadian Citizenship Branch.[26] The latter would be especially important in maintaining an effective advocacy network, both domestically and internationally, with the relevant federal departments relying on coordination to determine the nature of Canadian response to the crisis, while interacting with international organizations to obtain information.

While it is not possible in the confines of this article to discuss the myriad ways that volunteer organizations and local groups provided refugee reception across Canada, a representative sampling may be obtained via the *Citizen* special edition and in the pages of the *Globe and Mail*, for example. When the first group of refugees by sea arrived at the port of Quebec on 9 December 1956, they were met by over 3,000 people at the docks there to bid them welcome. The crowd threw bags of candy and packages of cigarettes to the newcomers while a military band played the national anthems of Canada and Hungary. Government and religious officials then bade the refugees welcome. The reception committee of the Bien-Etre des Immigrants, the co-ordinating body for refugees in Quebec City, was responsible for the event. When my great aunt and uncle arrived on 7 January 1957 at Pier 21 in Halifax by way of the Spanish steamship Venezuela, they were greeted by many Haligonians who gave them

[26] Ibid, pp. 21–24.

tickets to see a concert put on by the Halifax Philharmonic. Such generosity is still fondly recalled to this day.[27]

Generally speaking, hospitality for refugees was offered in nearly every centre of Canada where refugees arrived, usually as a result of church coordination. These were normally in the form of hostels, private homes and church accommodations, although larger centres, such as Ottawa, established larger temporary residences in government buildings and barracks. A counselling service provided by the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto was made available for refugees in Toronto who moved out of the hostels. Across the country Canadians organized entertainment for the refugees which often doubled as fundraising opportunities. A concert, for example, was presented by the staff of the Conservatory of Music in Regina, Saskatchewan with recent Hungarian refugees as the guests of honour. Proceeds from the public concert went to the Hungarian Relief Fund. Nathan Phillips, mayor of Toronto, declared Saturday, December 15th, 1956, to be "Toronto Hungarian Relief Day', with the funds to be directed toward the relief of Hungarian refugees in Europe.[28] In Brantford, Ontario, in mid-November women lined up for almost two hours for a tea service at the local YM-YWCA, which raised $1,079 for Hungarian relief. At an interdenominational rally on 18 November in Mt. Brydges, Ontario, more than 100 families offered to open their homes to refugees. On 9 January 1957 at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, a Hungarian festival was held, with the proceeds going to a fund to assist Hungarian students to continue their studies in Canada. A programme of Hungarian folk music and folk dancing, exhibitions of old and new Hungarian arts and crafts, and a lecture on Hungarian rug design were among the attractions of the festival. Even the Hungarian ethnic media contributed to refugee reception. Free short-term subscriptions to two Hungarian Canadian newspapers, *Kanadai Magyarsag* (published out of Toronto) and *Kanadai Magyar Ujsag* (published out of Winnipeg, Manitoba), were offered to refugees with mailing addresses.[29] Additionally, Hungarian and other ethnic organizations donated money to the Hungarian Relief Fund and expressed their support

[27] Interview by Stephanie Bangarth with Maria and Imre Toth, 31 August 2006.

[28] *Globe & Mail*, 15 December 1956

[29] LAC, RG 26 Vol. 117, file 3-24-34-3 Vol. 1, 'Special Hungarian Issue,' *Citizen*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (February, 1957), pp. 19–20; *Globe & Mail*, 11 January 1957, 13 November 1956, 19 November 1956,

for the Hungarian struggle. It was estimated that ten thousand Canadians from sixteen ethnic groups participated in a march in downtown Toronto on 3 November 1956 to focus attention on the situation in Hungary. From the early days of the revolution when Hungarians were raising money for the CRC to send food, clothes, and medical supplies to Hungary, to some months later when a series of cheques from various Italian groups in Toronto were donated to the fund, it is clear that already established immigrant communities were as eager as any in Canada to offer assistance.[30]

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The Hungarian refugee crisis is illustrative of the relative potency of transnational movements, and the positive influence that they can have on state policies. Indeed, earlier research has indicated that the crisis marked a watershed moment in the relationship between international and local voluntary organizations and the Canadian government. Statistically, the results were quite impressive when considering the case of the WCC-CCC: in 1957 alone, the WCC was able to resettle more than 26, 000 Hungarians; over 5100 of these individuals found new homes in Canada, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the CCC and Canadian immigration officials. This represented roughly twenty percent of the 26, 205 refugees that the World Council of Churches helped to resettle during the crisis.31 Politically, the crisis also had the effect of solidifying the reputations of a number of voluntary organizations, including the CCC and the CRC for example, as reliable allies in the resettlement of refugee populations, and among the leading voices for the advancement of refugee rights in Canada, a role these groups continue to play to this day.

Still, the Hungarian refugee crisis is telling of the limits of transnational networks in an international system founded on the primacy of the nation-state. The transnational volunteerism that linked national voluntary

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[30] *Globe & Mail*, 3 November 1956, 30 January 1957.

[31] By December 1957, the CCC had found sponsors for 5172 of the Hungarian refugees. Canadian Council of Churches, "Minutes of the Committee on Immigration of Refugees", 12 December 1957, p. 2. See also, Canadian Council of Churches, "Memorandum of interview with the Deputy Minister of Immigration", Ottawa, 13 December 1956. MG29-I327, Vol. 37, file 8 "Department of Ecumenical Affairs—Minutes, 1954–1964"; Thompson and Bangarth, "Transnational Christian Charity," pp. 309–10.

organizations with their international 'parent' groups by shared values and information was an important catalyst for mobilizing action around the cause of refugee rights. But the crisis had the unanticipated effect of heightening the expectations of such groups, unrealistically so in fact; for some groups, the Hungarian crisis was not a "one-off", but rather the standard to which future national responses to humanitarian crises should aspire. Indeed, Dirks has aptly noted that "the unqualified success of the Hungarian resettlement program for Canada acted as a useful precedent when in subsequent years, individuals and groups urged the Government to embark upon other humanitarian schemes aimed at relieving the plight of a portion of the world's refugees."[32] Naturally, the federal government did not—indeed could not—share this view.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the relationship between the voluntary agencies and federal government was never quite the same after the Hungarian crisis. In the decades that followed, many of the organizations cited herein remained heavily involved in the resettlement process; however, with the sense of urgency passed the partnership was no longer essential. For this reason alone, the Hungarian refugee crisis, and the response that followed, remains a pinnacle event in terms of transnational cooperation among advocacy coalitions. If nothing else, it proved that the combination of international and national pressure, and the hard work of localized organizations, could lead, at least under certain circumstances, to more humane Canadian immigration and refugee policies, even if only momentarily.[33]

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[32] Dirks, "Canada and Immigration," p. 11.

[33] As an interesting footnote to this paper, I was alerted to the story of Stephen Tomosvary, a former refugee from Hungary, who, based on his own experiences as a refugee, took a family of Vietnamese Boat People into his home. CBC television featured him in a story that aired on 9 July 1979. CBC Digital Archives, 'Sponsoring Refugees: Canadians Reach Out.' Broadcast date: 9 July 1979. http://archives.cbc.ca/dossier.asp?page=2&IDDossier=524&IDCat=&IDCatPa= [accessed 8 April 2008).

ANNA JAKABFI

A CRIMINAL STORY ENIGMA IN CANADIAN FICTION: RUDY WIEBE'S *THE MAD TRAPPER* (1980)

The true story of an unidentified man by the name of Albert Johnson has become a legend. His stealing of an Indian's trappings, his shooting of a policeman followed by a manhunt in the Canadian North, and his subsequent death at the hands of the RCMP in the winter of

1931–32 were pieces of news in contemporary media, mostly because for the first time in human history it was the airplane that prevented the escape of the culprit. The unlikely story amidst the harsh elements of the Northern winter in Canada inspired the creation of several songs, poems, longer and shorter pieces of fiction, and even a movie. These days you can find several home pages on the internet that all relate in a documentary way what happened in the early days of 1932.

Rudy Wiebe was gradually led into the writing of the novel by first creating a short story in diary form under the title of *The Naming of Albert Johnson.* Wiebe's novel *The Mad Trapper* (1980) is more than a crime story, more than a historical record (*The Fiddlehead* 101–4)—indeed it seems not to be according to many critics: professional geographers and policemen—it is an artistic creation. Certain characters and some turns in the story were curbed to serve the artistic targets aimed at by Rudy Wiebe.

The enigmas deliberately maintained in the novel and still unsolved after 50 years—at the time of the writing of *The Man Trapper*—are: who was the man that repudiated the law by not taking a license to entrap animals, what was his motivation to do so, why did he consent to the identity of another man unknown, supposed and attributed to him, and why did he kill a policeman instead of negotiating as initiated by the police force.

Not one of the artistic creations offered to solve the mystery, instead they all built their story around the secrets surrounding the case. From these artistic works certainly stands out Rudy Wiebe's (1934–) novel *The Mad Trapper* published in 1980. The title term *The Mad Trapper* refers to the man who accepted his given identity by the name of Albert Johnson and as the story unfolds, the reader feels that the policemen become more and more entrapped in the situation and act as if driven by some sort of madness to chase Albert Johnson in the temperature of 40–50 Celsius below zero amidst cruel blizzards. So the term 'the mad trapper' refers more and more also to the posse in chase of the culprit. (Keith, 1981; 115–6) The manhunt eventually succeeds, Albert Johnson is killed after a prolonged chase.

20th century technology, the new element of viewing the earth's surface from above, a new angle, a new dimension changes man's situation on earth forever. The criminal on the escape cannot escape, law will be applied, and the criminal will be allotted his due punishment; he is killed. Conclusion: the individual that invented technology is confronted with it and modern technology ultimately wins and the reader can understand why death will become a decisive element in the 20th century, even if this book may serve as a symbolic beginning to what is coming later in time. (*Canadian Literature* 1984, 354.)

The other new element besides the appearance and active cooperation of the airplane is the presence of the media, the press. Policemen have a complicated task, a hard challenge to face: not only to punish the man, but also to please the media and assist them in communicating the police case to the public. In order to do so politicians in the capital, Ottawa have a say in the matter. With an eye on the increasing costs of the manhunt they decide eventually that a plane should be involved and that the media should be physically present in the final phase of the manhunt to communicate the story authentically to the public. What started as a local infringement of the law, ends as a globally broadcast, sensational series of news that keeps the public alert all over the world in early 1932. 20th century technology enlarges the matter by keeping the public interest focussed on the fate of this mad trapper called Albert Johnson.

Rudy Wiebe's novel reflects faithfully the new world of the 20th century where technology begins to play a decisive role.

The novel entitled *The Mad Trapper* puts man and man's physical endurance into focus by showing how physical endurance is stretched and pushed to never experienced limits. This process is illustrated also by a

handful of artistic devices: in Wiebe's novel the manhunt is prolonged in time by about a fortnight, during which time a fictitious character, another policeman, Paul Thomson is killed by the culprit to increase the tension and to keep up (*The Fiddlehead*, 101–4.) the reader's attention. Another artistic device is to give the man a kind of identity by making him smile all by himself (Wiebe, 1980; 44), by making him sing to himself : 'Never smile at a woman, Call no man your friend. If you trust anybody, you'll be sorry…you'll be sorry…you'll be sorry in the end.' (48)—he sings. The fact that he regularly takes and buys kidney pills in a great quantity belongs to the identity of this strange man. (31). He also has a lot of cash, a large pack of banknotes carefully kept hidden on his body (33.) Also the reader learns that this strange, solitary man has been living alone for the past 15 years (36), and he notices Nersyoo's, the Indian's wife and looks strangely at her which does not go unnoticed either to Nersyoo or Constable Millen.(34) Indians when they first see the man reflect on him saying: 'Looks like another poor white bugger.' (21) Later Nersyoo approaches the man in a friendly way and asks him an unusual personal question for an Indian by inquiring where he came from. And the man answers: '"You saw me. Down the river." He said like iron.' Nersyoo even looks at and tries the man's rifle and states that it is good (54), the only human communication that the strange man has with another human being in the novel.

A kind of past is built up for Albert Johnson by making him possess three photos about three persons: one young man and one old man in a fishing boat in a harbour, and a young woman. He muses over the photos twice in the course of the manhunt. The second time the man looks at the photos in remembering his past he burns the photos, this way he prevents to leave any trace after him. So we have a fairly accurate picture of this strange man whose past and motivations are left, however, in the dark. By creating the two scenes with the photos Rudy Wiebe leads the reader into the thoughts of the protagonist. This way the novelist counterbalances the overbearing portrayal of the policemen's thoughts, dialogues and actions, and attempts to give the strange man some special traits that make him an unmistakable individual, a special human being as a result of artistic creation.

Tension is being built up carefully and gradually as the actions of Albert Johnson are growing in proportion to the invading cold winter. First the strange man is strange because he appears out of nowhere and all by himself. As the Northern cold increases and blizzards are growing in

number and forcefulness, so is the tension between the two parties: the solitary Albert Johnson's solitude is becoming overwhelming and the posse in his chase is growing in number. The climax is the appearance of the airplane to track down the culprit. And the *dénouement* is the ultimate downfall of the culprit, the man of false identity, and his simultaneous killing of Millen, the policeman engaged in the manhunt right from the beginning. The message is clear: the individual cannot win against the community. The reader is kept at suspense and some of us may even be tempted to feel for the culprit as his human side is revealed in certain scenes referred to previously. Not to fall into the trap of feeling sorry for him, he in the end, as a last effort kills his policeman adversary.

The reader is kept at suspense right from the start by also witnessing the fury, the rage in the man trapper. 'The rage in Johnson's face was like a hammer blow over his head: impossible to say a word against. My God, Douglas thought, my god. What's the matter with him.' (Wiebe, 1980; 32.) This aggressiveness is growing in proportions as the story unfolds from not registering for a trapping license into intruding on Nersyoo's trap followed by shooting a policeman then later in the manhunt killing two more of his pursuers. The motivation of the rage is left unexplained, another enigma. Why is this man depicted as furious with humans? What motivates that rage? However as the manhunt is growing in proportions, and the cold in the Northern winter intensifies, the man's initial fury is gradually transformed into the physical effort to escape and survive, though the man must be aware of the hopelessness of his situation. Otherwise he would not burn the family photos, the only personal clue to his identity in Rudy Wiebe's novel. Does the man fear right from the beginning that his identity be found out either in his life or after his death? He seems to want to evade that possibility. The enigma is why?

Another artistic device Rudy Wiebe applies is a set of contrasts. A contrast is that as the culprit's initial rage subsides in the tedious process of the escape, Millen's and the other policemen's bitterness is growing along with the cold and their determination to put an end to this tedious job in the trace of the culprit; the policemen's moods vary between being joyful and being absolutely determined to apply the law to the culprit. In the warm human atmosphere of Aklavik the policemen are joyful in the dance scenes yet they are determined to kill humans when duty calls them, a contrast again. They do not spare themselves in the cold winter of the Canadian North. Duty comes first and duty is to be performed by all means. Law and order are to be maintained. Joyfulness is replaced by

determination to carry out duty. The safe inside space is changed for the unsafe space of outside that man's duty should defeat. Contrast is applied to the culprit who first in the safety of his own log cabin kills and thus uses the safety of his space not for joy but for committing death. Another contrast between the policemen and the criminal! Joy is combined with community feeling in the case of the policemen whereas the later culprit appears as a 'silent, solitary stranger on the raft in the river.' (*Revue d'études canadiennes*, 71) The strange man who just appeared in the region and identified as Albert Johnson is molesting another man's trap, which is his strangest and least reasonable action of a man who seeks isolation, freedom from his past in the wilderness of the Arctic, a very strange contrast to start with. This foreshadows that this man not only antagonises community but as an individual he is ultimately to be defeated as he is in for a bad cause.

Another artistic device and a folktale element as well is the usage of sets of the number three: the culprit has 3 pictures of 3 people, he is sought out in his log cabin 3 times by the police, and it is 3 times that Millen's life is spared before he is killed in the end; there are 3 policemen in Albert Johnson's trace: Johnson, Millen and Thomson before the posse of numerous policemen set out in the final hunt. In the end, an old Indian woman, again as in folktales and Greek tragedies, foretells Albert Johnson that he will live one more night. These elements of the artistic creation in *The Mad Trapper* indicate that Rudy Wiebe, the writer, the artist is in full control to produce a work of art all through the book.

Another aspect that does not go unnoticed to the European reader is that Albert Johnson is one of the very few anti-heroes in the context of Canadian literature where survival of the protagonist is a central issue. He is the very embodiment of anti-survival. The man called Albert Johnson must have been aware of putting his life into danger by not only not obeying the law but actually challenging it. He is escaping death when at the same time he is seeking it with every action he takes. Another contrast! And another enigma!

Rudy Wiebe's novel is witness to the distinctiveness of thinking between Indians and white men. Because the man called Albert Johnson does not die in the first gunfire, when normally he should have been killed, the Indians call him *wendigo*, an undestroyable, untouchable spirit and would want to leave him to his own devices in the deadly cold of the North in winter. The policemen of white background think differently. They pursue the culprit up to the last moment no matter what the costs in

manpower and finances. By putting the choices of Indians and white man to the reader Rudy Wiebe contemplates and makes also his readers contemplate whether it is worth the effort to hunt to death one man—even if guilty in growing degree—at the price of getting several men killed and many more to suffer for several weeks let alone the enormous financial costs, when winter cold in the Canadian North would have done its job anyway. This enigma could be termed as the enigma of the so-called civilized western man versus North America's indigenous people, the Indians. The reader muses over this incident: who is right?! The Indians' or Canada's law? Nature or modern man's society armed with modern technology? Would not the Indians' notion of the *wendigo* eventually have brought more reason into the manhunt? The result would have been the same except the costs would have been smaller. Why bother beyond a certain point? Why not sit back and let nature take its course both in manpower and in finances?

Conclusion: Rudy Wiebe created a true ballad in prose of the Arctic in Canada with a classic figure in the centre of action who is doomed. This bleak story is so singularly Canadian because it reflects Canadian reality of the 1930's when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police RCMP is in full swing in keeping law and order even in the sparsely populated regions like the North-West, when technology plays its role, when keeping track of every individual—good and bad—is part of Canada's modern history, when the individual cannot oppose the community, on the contrary should be part of it, and Canadian is the deadly cold of winter where survival is possible only if one lives in the spirit of law and order.

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JUDIT ÁGNES KÁDÁR

ARCHIE, WHO ARE YOU FOOLING, ANYWAY?—FLUID NARRATIVE AND IDENTITY IN ARMAND GARNET RUFFO'S *GREY OWL: THE MYSTERY OF ARCHIBALD BELANEY* (1996)

Archibald Belaney alias Grey Owl: hero of early 20th Century Canadian environmentalism, and anti-hero of the partly Ojibway Canadian writer Armand Ruffo's *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archibald Belaney* (1996—further referred to as *GO*). Why is his cross-cultural transformation such an excitement still today? What is the main motivation of a young middle-class Englishman going Indian? Does he really develop an alter ego, an indigenized identity, or does he remain a fake celebrity Indian, just a bit more powerful character than a cigar store wooden Indian? Or did he mostly dwell in the vacuum of a culturally in-between world where he was always a misfit? How did he utilize his understanding of the epistemological uncertainties of his age regarding the ethnic divide between whites and the culture of the Other, and how can a contemporary author challenge this attempted myth making? What can we learn about American and European relations in the view of this shape shifting figure? And finally, who needs the myths of Indianness based on ideologically attuned stereotypes and why? Who is he fooling, anyway?

The present paper would like to convince the reader that the story of Grey Owl alias Archibald Belaney, the Indian wannabe impostor and popular cultural figure, has received a distinctly sophisticated, new narrative presentation by Armand Ruffo, a poetic experimentation with masking and unmasking. Firstly Belaney's cross-cultural (trans-ethnic) transformation is analyzed (1), then the power and implication of his character are detailed (2), followed by an overview of Ruffo's narrative

unmasking (3) and some closing remarks on the epistemological trickster and racialization in Ruffo's Grey Owl text (4).

1. Cross-cultural (Trans-Ethnic) Transformation

Belaney's transformation is voluntary and deliberate, like that of William Johnson/Warraghiagey and Silvester Long/Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance. His ethnic change is partial, but, when discussing the Grey Owl Syndrom Caucasian Canadian writers, Margaret Atwood argues that, as opposed to Earnest Thompson Seton/Black Wolf, founder of the *Woodcraft Indian* movement, who did not wish to fully identify with the natives and develop a native identity, Belaney truly longed for obtaining such an identity, to become Indian (48), partly because of his escapist motivations, and partly because he did not really wish to return to Europe. In that sense he is quite similar to Sylvester Long Lance, who interestingly attempts to leave his biracial (Afro-American and white) identity and develop a surrogate Indian identity (see: Donald Smith: "From Sylvester Long to Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance" in James Clifton: *Being and Becoming Indian: Bibliographical Studies of North American Frontiers* and in Smith's *Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, the Glorious Impostor*.) Their motivations and skills to learn and acculturate were truly remarkable, while both suffered from the consequences of their racial passing. Finally Belaney/Grey Owl finds himself in an identity vacuum on the borderland of two cultures, like May Dodd in Jim Ferguson's *One Thousand White Women: The Journal of May Dodd* (1998) or Mary Jemison/Tow-Falling-Voices in Deborah Larsen's *The White* (2002), who both refuse to exclusively belong to either Anglo or Native Indian culture and decide to create their own microcosmic world of in-between ethno-cultural identity. Nevertheless, both May Dodd and Mary Jemison go through a natural process of indigenization, while Archibald Belaney had made a deliberate choice to mask himself as the Other, as the one who fulfills the dominant expectations about what the Native Other should be like.

For a short note, I would like to apply Michelle Stem Coock's theory of "The Impossible Me" (55–56) on the central figure of Ruffo's book, in order to illuminate the complex fundamental motivations of such a permanent shape shifting.

> The *impossible me*, as I define it, can emerge as a copy mechanism when newly acquired, unexplored options tempt or pressure an

> individual to compromise existential identities formed in a context devoid of those options. Conversely, when an individual suffers a loss of options because the new structural context imposes restrictions, the *impossible me* can become a mechanism of resistance to social control. In both instances, an individual rejects potential modes of adaptation by constructing impossibility. (Stem Cook 56)

I believe that Belaney's early childhood experiences, as will be explained later on, stimulated such a resistance to the social control of his Victorian upbringing as well as a resistance deriving from a child's impossibility of understanding why his parents had left him. Under the restrictions, loss of options that his aunts' world had offered him, he has created an unreal Indian personality for himself, an "*impossible me*" that seemed more comfortable and successful than anything England of the day could have offered for him, though he was constantly threatened by being recognized as a fake Indian. Being a nice Englishman was equally impossible for him as becoming a 100% Indian, therefore, he tended to diminish the chance of an unsuccessful conformist identity with developing a risky but more promising, unique prospective identity, a romantic, mythic and fictional one which has proved to be extremely attractive, fascinating and successful on both continents. Stem Cook explains it as follows: "Invoking impossibility eliminates the threat of an identity that seems to be incompatible with the self by inventing a structure that denies the self the option of incorporating that identity" (55).

As for the process of Belaney's transformation and misconstruction of identity, the author provides us with four phases called the "Beginning," "Transformation," "Journey," and "No Retreat". Just like any other indigenization story in the North American context of ethno-cultural encounters, the first period ("Beginning") includes on the one hand a distancing and break from his original English middle class family and home, and also a brainstorming about New World opportunities, fancying with idealized Indian images based on stereotypes and creating his own "imitationist performances" (Green 43). On the other hand, this phase also includes the actual travelling and home making in Ontario, the initial shape shifting, going Indian as for external markers of ethnicity and for creating his own Indian ways, as well as creating new relationships, establishing personal ties with native Canadians.

Interestingly, here the North (=Canada? North America?) means possibility (*GO* 12) and future, while the past (=England? Hastings? His aunts and the lack of his parents?) is to be closed down as only

imagination, not reality any longer. We can see how deliberate he is in shaping his own imagination, setting up new goals and escapes and also starting his new life in Canada with some ethnic studies at Tema-Augama Anishnabai. He is a good listener and learner of native lifestyle, behaviour and physical features, perhaps less of native spirituality, as Dagmar Wernitznig remarks (106). She adds that Belaney "aimed to create a parallel Indian universe for himself from the start, freely copying what he liked, while ignoring what he did not" (Wernitznig 99). He wants "to remake himself" (*GO* 18) and the band he meets is ready to accept him as a mediator and call him Little Owl, denoting his skill to learn Indian ways. He quickly realizes that the best way to acculturate is to have a native female companion, so his Caribou Clan girlfriend is the first to teach him the language and manners, while "She watches/ him struggling with himself" (*GO* 19), too. All his wives seem to function as supporters of Belaney's myth creation, however, his attitude towards relationships proves irresponsible and present him as a rather week character. He tends to leave them no matter what, even a pregnant girlfriend, while marrying another woman, denoting his constant uncertainties and tendency to escape any static setup in his life. He keeps escaping "The law,/ the women, the past, get rid of it all" (*GO* 22). Besides, he is a heavy drinker and occasional trouble maker, who tries to escape not only family ties but the police and even ends up in the army that did not prove a real escape for him either.

We can see two problems here. One is that he deliberately selects some aspects of Native Indian lifestyle that he wants to acculturate to, like outlooks and a close-to-nature attitude, while he ignores some other important aspects of native culture, like spiritualism. Right from the beginning, he follows and recreates stereotypical images and not his real experiences with the Natives, so no substantial identification, acceptance and satisfaction about his transformation can be achieved. Moreover, he seems constantly confused about his identity, roles, goals and personal helpers, therefore no fulfilled life and happiness is possible for him either. The other main problem is that his transformation has always aimed at the public: English and Canadian audiences of his shows, readers of his nature books and policy makers on both continents. However, having an enormous public attention does not necessarily force him to be honest and authentic but more to provide them with what they want to get: the Hollywood Indian turned environmentalist, while very few really care how authentic he is: the most ironic example is his Indian war dance,

which apparently used to be unknown among the Natives and his dancing skills are rather unique to say the least… We will see the consequences later on in his life and afterlife.

The second phase called "Transformation" takes place at Lake Temagami. Since 1925, a somewhat more prevalent change is visible in Belaney's character. His second wife, Gertrude Bernard, the urbanized Mohawk woman joins him in his myth making efforts: Gertie becomes Anahareo of her "Jesse James," the woman whom probably he loves the deepest and shares charismatic features with, too. However, their relationship is uncertain, for by 1928 she is bored in the wilderness and leaves him (*GO* 48–49). Belaney is the president, treasurer and sole member of the Beaver People Society… He speaks and writes for some environmental concerns, like the protection of the beaver. As for his worldly interests, he is a passionate conservationalist, his speech at Metis-Sur-La-Mer fort marks the beginning of his career as a public speaker. He realizes that in order to make money he needs to give speeches and write, which initially is not his cup of tea at all. He often lacks inspiration, but under material pressures he does his best to provide that "public service." Since 1929, he is taken more and more as an Indian, and he identifies with another aspect of Indian lifestyle: Anahareo, the "prototypical agent of feminine emotionality and Indian Mother Earth philosophy" (Wernitznig 100) opens his eyes to the fact that the diminishing hunting opportunities decrease his business opportunities, too, so making ends meet becomes a challenge (*GO* 60) for him. Besides the predominantly materialistic urges, Belaney's "beaver/Bambi syndrome *a la* Indianness" (Wernitznig 102) formulates an ironic opposition of reality versus fantasy in his character.

In this phase we can observe Belaney's mythic transformation: when on stage, he is such a devoted actor that he fully identifies with his role—not any realistic Native Indian image: "He Who Walks By Night" is now a person more and more lost to the world of illusions he created about himself, lost for his wife as well, who starts to call him Grey Owl, too. In that sense he is as successful as William Johnson presented in Fintan O'Toole's *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (2005): both of them had perfectly learned the cross-cultural communication skills that has made them powerful mediators, culture brokers and businessmen, though Johnson can shift back-and-forth in his two roles (American patriarch Frontier man and Iroquois sachem), while Belaney sticks to his fake Indian identity and poses in that no matter

where he is. In 1935, Gertie returns and finds him even more lost to his thoughts and writing. Belaney is bewildered by publishers' demands, realizes what Wernitznig calls his "Indian marketability" (*GO* 101), and truly becomes a celebrity writer of supposed Indian origins. He is getting more distanced from his public as well as his personal companions, a larger-than-life figure ("I am the Voice of Nature" [*GO* 107]) whose real personality is gradually shrinking to an exhausted and lonely, escapist showman. Grey Owl, the environmentalist Indian now is a commodity with an easy to sell myth and some political influence.

Johnson in O'Toole's *White Savage* is a self-made Indian, too, although he does not lie about his origins and his goal is to obtain as much political influence and economic power as possible. His "swinger shifting" between his Mohawk and white positions depends on the given situation and historic moment, ensuring his growing power and advantageous political position. Consequently, he seems to be happier with his achievements and more content with the identity variables he has developed, since he enjoys the advantages of both cultures and deliberately ignores what he considers as disadvantages in either. He can always escape a community/situation and shift into the other one temporarily, without having any serious moral, ethical or emotional concerns. Belaney, however, goes fake Indian and does not wish to return to whiteness at all. He truly hopes to develop an ideal Native identity and image, but while the latter is easier to achieve, the former makes him rather a split personality with an almost schizophrenic mental state, driving him to spiritual a physical weakness. Nevertheless, both of them create their own myths, enjoy the prestige and advantages of being mediators and are remarkably familiar with both cultures. The most interesting question regarding this transformation is: how is this myth actually made, what are its components, public feedbacks, impacts and what are its implications to the ways we perceive reality and race relations in particular.

The third phase of Belaney's indigenization is referred to as the "Journey." One can see that these phases are not clear cut but overlapping, therefore the same alienation and mystification processes continue. What changes is the growing sense of ambiguity inside and outside: Belaney becomes a Native Canadian Ambassador and a well-known public speaker, due to his companion, Lovat Dickson's work. However, the more others believe and celebrate his Indianness, the more entrapped he is, the more confused and lonely, surrounded only by his lies. He is

afraid of being called a liar (*GO* 104), paranoid about this risk factor of his shows, he is haunted and hunted (*GO* 106) at the same time. Geoffrey Turner, the Oxford ethnographer, is the first white man to doubt him. He calls him a "cigar store wooden Indian" (*GO* 111). Belaney admits the shaky authenticity of his new Indian self and knows that all is about how we see and what we want to see (*GO* 112). He cannot give up now, in order to achieve his goals he must carry on playing Indian. He is challenged from outside as well as from within himself: he is mentally exhausted and develops visions of old acquaintances, wives coming to question him (*GO* 120), while he also worries that Indians do not need him (*GO* 122). Then in London he meets a young Indian from Western Canada, John Tootoosis, and gladly sees some change of tone in the Indian's self-representation, which makes him want to help them in Canada at the Ministry of Indian Affairs, too. He acknowledges: "These are not the Indians the British public wants to see./ Not the Indian I represent. No tomahawks and fancy riding" (*GO* 127). He dines with Prime Minister MacKenzie King and the Minister of the Interior, where he promotes conservation. However, even when talking for THEM, the Natives, he is not ONE OF THEM, but much more someone out of both the white and native society, a mediator lost in the vacuum of the in-between world he has created.

The forth phase of his transformation is entitled "No Retreat." Around 1936, he becomes quite sick and extremely exhausted, and also too political in some decision makers' eyes. His fifth wife, Yvonne Perrier/Silver Moon is eventually another companion in myth-making, who experiences the aging celebrity's last period of life. Belaney cannot afford to pass up the publicity (*GO* 148) and prepares for a second trip in England. He participates in a glorious party at the Buckingham Palace, represents Canadian wildlife, and feels young again! But the next pages show his exhaustion and his mentally disturbed state of mind. He developed parallel fantasies: talks and thinks in his own Indian way and keeps track of his commitments in the calendar (*GO* 175-176). His psychic transformation is presented in a wonderful lyrical episode entitled "Night," where the schizophrenic aspect of his character is revealed: "He is me" (*GO* 188), like any showman or businessman. The once imaginary Indian is now internalized, merged in his personality, however, the HE and ME parts are still separate.

More and more people question his character. The journalist Mort Fellman reveals his secret, but Belaney by then identifies with his own

vision of the Natives and finds his surroundings unable to understand him. He is attracted to a fatal trap: presenting himself with his new identity in Hastings, the place where he was brought up. His vanity to prove himself and to others that he made it as someone remarkable, ignoring the fact that he deceives his relatives, ex wife and himself, clashes with the threat that the same folks can recognize and unveil him (*GO* 181). He returns to Mississauga, the home of beginning and ending, a poetic place (*GO* 165) that may keep his immortal and posthumous glory (*GO* 166). He entraps himself and must experience a tragic fall, if not in Hastings, then some time later on. That actually happens in his afterlife, when some papers start to inquire the rumours about his origins. Nevertheless, journalists have allowed for his white-lied identity and tended to appreciate his environmental achievements, considering the former a less significant aspect of the Grey Owl lifework.

2. The Power and Implication of His Character

On the front page of Ruffo's text, N. Scott Momaday claims: "an Indian is an idea … a moral idea." Belaney is a tangible example of the constructed nature of race and ethnicity, even if he is a very ambivalent figure of Trans-Atlantic cultural encounters. To understand the broad implications of such shape shifters and ethnic passing processes, contemporary post-colonial cultural theory and literary criticism provides us some major help, for instance Homi Bhabha's theory "Of Mimicy and Man" in *The Location of Culture* (1994) explains not only some masking motivations and strategies, but also the "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 122). Beyond the broader spectrum of all indigenization stories and experiences, others focus on the First Nations' presence and image in white Eurocentric writings and other fields of culture. Robert Berkhofer in *The White Man's Indian* (1979) analyses the ideology behind the white man's image of the Native Americans in arts (Part 3), while in Part 4 entitled "European Primitivism, the Noble Savage, and the American Indian" he further studies the virtues and values clashed in the modernist and post-colonial discourses, and also calls attention to the criticism of European social institutions, authority and social inequality that most of the Gone Indian stories imply. Philip Deloria in his *Playing Indian* (1998) addresses the issue of authenticity as a central problem of

all temporary and permanent passing experiences, including "hobby Indians" of all sorts in Central Europe, Canada and the United States.

However, with the consideration of all the above-mentioned theoretical findings, now our present investigation focuses on the individual and micro-social experience of Belaney's passing: how the color line is produced and reproduced through various social technologies of embodiment, identification, and representation in the context of Ruffo's narrative. On a short note, firstly we take a look at Belaney's companions and their perspective presented in Ruffo's textual interpretation of Grey Owl's story, followed by a more extensive analysis of the actual narrative strategies he applies finally merged in a wonderful fluid structure and a cavalcade of voices.

The more than thirty minor characters surrounding Belaney from his childhood witness his transformation, all adding some relevant hints about the motivations, characteristic features, induced power, impact and relevance of Grey Owl's unique personal history. Ruffo occasionally distances them, like Aunt Ada, whom the narrator addresses in third person singular, or makes the reader share the perspective of the given person by giving him/her a first person singular voice (e.g. Bill Guppy, Marie Girard, Annie Espaniel). The rest of the characters enter the game where the author is an invisible journalist interviewing the memory traces Belaney has left in the hearts and minds of these people. This reconstruction of the fragmented facts are emplotted in a scrap book-like narrative which is ever changing, epistemologically challenging and demands the reader's evaluation of the provided perspectives and opinions.

The circle of childhood and early youth friends and family constantly function as a point of reference Belaney tests himself against, i.e. the success of his transformation, the credibility of his newly obtained identity and the meaning, impact of this passing. Aunt Ada, with her strict Victorian views on Archie's upbringing, made him someone with self-respect, however, Ruffo adds, "Who he denies is Archibald Belaney" (*GO* 14). The McCormicks, Margaret and George and Henry Hopkin are the first of his friends to recognize his uniqueness as well as his going Indian and becoming estranged.

As for his acquaintances in Canada, they all find him strange but still support his myth-making for one reason or another. The ambivalence in their opinions is a permanent feature of these narratives. For example Bill Draper, the ranger calls him a "pseudo bushman" (*GO* 32) and considers

him a good listener, Jack Leve, his Bisco friend is amazed by Belaney's environmentalist and oratory skills (*GO* 39), Bill Cartier calles Belaney a "half-breed Apache" (*GO* 47) and also "Mr Confident" (*GO* 47), especially when Anahareo's love helped him. The post-master Jean Noel is astonished on seeing the letter about Belaney's first publication in the British *Country Life,* implying that Grey Owl can apparently write—what an Indian! The Espaniels contribute a lot to his actual transformation: give him his new name, dye his hair, even prepare war dance clothes that no Indian ever worn before… Annie Espaniel adds: "So I say, Archie, What's an Indian War Dance? None/ Of us Indian people have had one of those recently./ For Archie that's OK" (*GO* 37). They know him: his sufferings, drunken states and occasional happiness. They also give some feedback to him, for instance Belaney honestly asks Jane's opinion on his tales, and she replies: "Honestly? Sounds like a lot of north wind blowing" (*GO* 156).

The circle of wives and other female companions emphasize the Janus face of the Belaney/Grey Owl character: they know the man in person with all his weaknesses, desires and shortcomings, while at the same time they all add their own contribution to the mythic greatness and celebrated Otherness of the same person. Ivy Holmes is the first to uncover his strange, secretive and reclusive nature, cannot understand him, cannot get through the wall he surrounds himself with. Gertrude Bernard/Anahareo develops her native identity for Belaney's sake, and like many of the powerful liberal and energetic women on the side of a charismatic man, she also supports his myth making and PR. She admires him for his rhetoric, power and environmentalism. She joins him in the mystery making adventure, and even the Natives need the mediator couple (*GO* 53). However, as a young woman in the woods, she gets extremely bored, cannot tolerate Belaney's writing obsession, so all in all she encourages and supports him, but she is not with him in the spiritual sense of the word. In that respect Yvonne Perrier-O'Neil (Belaney)/Silver Moon, his last wife is similar: she loves him, respects the celebrity person in him, but she is tired of taking care of the aging, boozing, worn out celebrity, besides, she feels bad about the loneliness, pain and regret destroying her husband.

A professional protector and co-creator of the Grey Owl myth is Lovat Dickson, the organizer of Belaney's stay in Europe and the publisher of his works. Dickson knows him probably more than anyone else and has to tolerate at least as much as his wives when witnessing the ups and downs

of Grey Owl's life. He believes that Belaney is a visionary and fanatic person and passionately defends Grey Owl's integrity against the charges of fraud and impostor in *Half-Breed* (1939). As for Ruffo's narrative, Dickson is concerned about Belaney: "If Archie had been a week, vain character he would soon have become an out-and-out drunk—there were plenty of them in the North—and descended step-by-step into apathy and sloth. But he had this vision of a perfect world which was being fatally blemished by people in authority" (Dickson 118).

Another set of characters function as challengers for the central character: they expose him to public attention, test his authenticity, criticize his counterfeit, express the general uncertainty surrounding his passing and identity. Dave White Stone for instance thinks: "Indian, can't say he is,/ can't say he isn't. Speaks the language though" (*GO* 66). Some white officers, rangers and contacts present him as a gone wild ("bushed") rugged individualist. They occasionally fraternize with him, escort him, manage his publications and shows, or simply give him some drink when he wants to escape: Joe Hassak, bartender sees a lot … and believes that "he's obviously got a lot of whiteman in him./ …./ (Maybe there's more Indian in him than I think.)" (*GO* 131). Finally, there are the ones who seriously doubt his authenticity and myth, like the earlier mentioned Oxford ethnographer Geoffrey Turner, or Mort Fellman, who interviewed Grey Owl and found him suspicious, while he hopes to have the story of the decade (*GO* 157) in the bag.

As for Belaney's native acquaintances, they accept him as not really one of them but still someone doing something valuable for them: for Donalda Legace, Belaney is the best thing in her life is to meet him in person. Other Natives respect the mediator and try to ignore his clumsy ways of acting like an Indian: "Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin, we say, dance with us, <u>as you can</u> [emphasis added]" (*GO* 146). Finally, a young Indian in London, John Tootoosis, summarizes the general native attitude towards the Grey Owl phenomenon:

> An Indian can tell who's Indian.
> Grey Owl can't sing or dance.
> But he is doing good
> and when we meet
> I call him Brother. (*GO* 128)

Not quite Native, yet accepted as a pseudo-relative, one with strange habits, and predominantly positive attitudes, who cares about the rest? Indians do not mind being somewhat fooled—at least Belaney thinks so.

3. Ruffo's Narrative Unmasking

Long verse as a poetic and narrative form is extremely popular in recent Canadian writing. Perhaps its popularity is partly due to the freedom of opening towards the short story form combined with poetic expressivity and lyrical power, as well as it potential to host open-ended ideas and fluidity. Ruffo as a native writer deconstructs the Grey Owl myth, but at the same time does not only challenge the white Englishman Indian wannabe's heroic reputation, but also adds a psychoanalytical understanding of his possible motivations and emotions attached to the transformations and experiences he goes through. It is what a post-colonial interdisciplinary analysis may reveal.

The structure is traditional, consisting of four parts, four phases of the central character's transformation and life, implying four seasons that symbolically reflect those changes. The typography, for instance the in-line beginning set versus run-on lines signifies MOVE, CHANGE, RUN AWAY and MOVE TO (DAY-)DREAM WORLD. For example pages 8-9 and pages 86–87 contain sections referring to Gertie's running away and Belaney's constant move, or the ribbon of place names followed by the last line: "No pool of calm. No rest. No power but will. I go on." on page 190 depicts Belaney's attitude to move away, instability, spiritual homelessness, and an ever changing concept of identity.

Another interesting narrative method Ruffo applies is ellipsis: untold details and occasional breaks in the fluidity of narration imply the construction efforts and obstacles in one's story making, the fragmented nature of memory collection partly due to some wounds one tends to conceal by un-telling, and partly due to the less relevant nature of some details, again signifying the emplotting strategies (selection, arrangement) we all make when retelling some stories. For example, Archie dating the Caribou Clan girl is given first person singular voice and then let loose with his own ways of shaping his memory traces:

> And so one morning I tell my wife Angele I'll be gone
> […]
> and send a few dollars back to my wife.
> It is the least I can do. I mean I want to go back but…

[…]
and then … things happen which I've no control over.
War breaks out in Europe.
I get piss drunk and in trouble with the law.
My girl friend gets pregnant. (*GO* 21)

Yet another example is when Marie Girard leaves for the bush and Archie. There are some untold years and then in the same sentence she tells the reader she does not believe what they say about Belaney's assumed crime (*GO* 25), this is how we learn about his issue with the police. Their baby is born, Belaney is long gone, Marie is still in love, has TB, and that's all we are told. This simple but tragic and beautiful diction is a lot more telling than hundreds of descriptive pages in any book. In the section entitled "Archie and Ivy" one can read: "Married February 10, 1917—/ Separated September 19, 1917" (*GO* 29). It sounds like an epitaph: factual and economical, yet it triggers in our imagination all the stories we have possibly heard about such short-lived marriages. Another instance of ellipsis and un-telling breaking the narrative flow is the mention of Belaney's relationship with Anahareo: silences seem to connect them (*GO* 53). Whenever they speak, it is a Chekovian parallel talk, not a real dialogue: separately they both love the other but cannot live together. For a final example of ellipsis, let us remember the scene when Annie Espaniel tells Belaney about the loss of Alex, the one he proudly called his dad (*GO* 163). As one can see, the previously hardly mentioned Alex had become a pseudo father figure for Belaney, which apparently also implies the bad relationship and the lack of contact with his biological father. Then without too much explanation, a certain Jonny Jero appears and without any mention of his relations with Belaney, he introduces himself as: "My mother was Marie Girard,/ my father, I never met,/ Archie Baloney [emphasis added]" (*GO* 82). So we can see how Belaney's missing father turned him to a similar missing father figure himself, and although no details are provided, no lamentation on the whys and hows, still in the vacuum of information-deprived comprehension something deeper is understood.

I would like to call attention to a central structural element that formulates the main axis of this long verse narrative: the *invisible scrap book*. Ruffo provides the reader with a wide range of perspectives in the form of photos, notes, letters, interview-like sections where Belaney's contemporaries, more or less close relations share their impressions, abstracts from books, articles on and by Archibald Belaney/Grey Owl and

even rumours, oral myths surrounding his character. The self-reflexive references in the text draw a parallel between the writing process, un-earthing the memory traces and revealing layers of Belaney's identity. This un-layering of the Grey Owl myth presents the author as somebody one step ahead of the reader in his explorations, who is ready to share his findings and offer them for interpretation and appreciation. The reader can imagine the author collecting, selecting, arranging and "mentally digesting" the material with the curiosity and excitement we may have when trying to remember, select and impose some order on the fragments of our own personal past and retell it to someone dear.

> Archival memory.
> Paper brittle as autumn, unearthed
> across the desk, files scattered.
> Words floating like smoke
> smell of moccasins you are wearing
> carrying you on
> to the beginning. (introductory pages)

The various articles (e.g. "Biographical Article Appearing in *Canadian Forests and Outdoors*, March, 1931"), abstracts (e.g. "The Adventurous Career of Grey Owl [Wa-Shee-Quon-Asier]") document and celebrate the fake Indian Grey Owl's life and magnify his myth. Among the scrap book pieces, though, one can find a really exciting intertextual game: a series of sent and unsent letters written by Gertie and Archie which formulate a kind of lyrical dialogue: Gertie's questions to Archie function as a mirror to face, then Belaney's notes, undated reply and finally his letter to Lovat Dickson present the closing of the Gertie relationship (*GO* 136-38). The most emotional part of the text is his letter to Gertie: he is struggling with letting her go and still needing her (*GO* 89).

Among the remarkable narrative techniques applied here, the unique dramatized dialogues are worth mentioning, for instance Aunt Ada's words: "Not like that, Archibald! How many times must/ I tell you? Now do it again, this time properly./ […]/ If there is only one this I will not tolerate, it is disobedience./ Are you listening Archibald? One, two, three…. Now begin again" (*GO* 8). Here the small boy's aunt acts the role of power bearer ruling his life, which makes Archie rebel against her, but we can learn the facet of this rebel only later on from other intertextual sections. Since this early childhood experience our anti-hero is constantly facing the problem of ambivalent image, communication and the correlated doubt: "Archie, who are you fooling, anyway?" The text

reflects this fluctuation of inner thoughts v. others' views, honesty v. disguise, love and care v. neglect, idealism v. materialism, real Native v. fake Indian disparities. The prosaic sections (e.g. pages 126–27) are more descriptive, sound more objective and rational, while the lyrical parts (e.g. pages 90, 101, 125, 139, 171) are related to the world of emotions, dreams and very subjective positions. However, beyond the modernist binary oppositions, Ruffo's text shows us all the shades, the hyphens and complexities of Belaney's world. Here we should remark the power of irony and Ruffo's skill to play with blurring generic boundaries, the merge of drama and long verse mentioned above *(GO* 8), the merge of poetry and fiction in "Mirror," the scene where Belaney is paddling on a lake and his fragmented image in the water reflects the glassy broken vision of his figure and identity (*GO* 139), or the sarcastic riddle "Grey Owl, Grey Owl" (*GO* 171) which sounds like a combination of Poe's "The Raven" and the saying "mirror, mirror on the wall" in the tale and a nursery rhyme, with all the irony these intertextual references and image combinations contain.

Finally two vocal sources of information must receive more attention: Belaney's own notes the author found in some documents or created based on his understanding of the Grey Owl figure, and the author's own comments addressing Belaney either in second or third person singular.

As for Belaney's voice in the text presented by his notes, they provide us clues to understand his motivations, doubts, confusion, escape mechanisms, traps and tricks and often answer a hiatus of the story line with short remarks. A special function of these notes is to bring us closer to the real Belaney driven by his vanity, materialism, escapist urges, great ideas/ideals, shaky ethical considerations, ethnic identity and honest emotions, for example as presented in the below quote:

> They have rated me the best outdoor writer there is and
> the greatest authority on Canadian wildlife and forest lore
> living today. Yet there are better bushmen everywhere;
> the people I learned from for instance. And I tell them
> that too, giving the Indian about 90% of the credit. (*GO* 87)

His frustrations revealed by this quote are manifold: his underlying accusation of his parents, his guilt-complex for leaving his children and wives, the solitary nature of celebrity life, the seclusion of hotel rooms, the risk of being recognized, the publishers' demands bewildering him, exhaustion, the growing sense of contradictions and the constant exposure

to ethnic identification and justification. “I feel as an Indian, think/ as an Indian, all my ways/ are Indian, my heart is Indian” (*GO* 83). This certainty of positive identification is rather rare in the text, and even the occasional positive feedbacks cannot make him feel better. “*The Times* calls me a new Canadian Ambassador” (*GO* 102). Success still suffocates him further without the solace of his wilderness home. His isolation creates an “Insurmountable wall I never overcome,/ which exists only in imagination/ until at last discover no wall, too late” (*GO* 114). The shortening notes become more poetic, more abstract with age and experience (e.g. *GO* 187). He is increasingly lost in his thoughts, broken body and fantasies.

The author’s notes provide a psychoanalytical insight without the pretence of knowing all about Belaney. Exploring the story through Grey Owl’s journeys is a journey for both the writer and the reader. There is an interesting relationship established between the narrator and the central figure, an almost friendly proximity reflected in the statement: “for you/ there is no peace” (*GO* 28) or in the question: “who is he fooling” (*GO* 29)? The author unveils all of Belaney’s motivations, escapes, his manipulation strategies, stages of shape shifting and overall impact in his own time and afterlife. The section entitled “Romantic” explains the simple wisdom behind selling the demanded Indian image, with references to Cooper’s novels and the whole knowhow to “Butter the facts./ […]/ to get the message/ across” (*GO* 110). Furthermore, in the section entitled “Why I Write” Ruffo’s understanding of Belaney’s motivations are summarized as follows:

> So I can live in the past,
> earn a living,
> protect the beaver,
> publicize conservation,
> attract attention,
> sell 35,000 copies in 3 months,
> give 138 lectures in 88 days,
> travel over 4,350 miles,
> wear feather,
> wear make-up,
> play Indian—no
> be Indian,
> get to go to pow wows, get to tour Britain,
> meet the King & Queen,
> become famous,
> become alcoholic,

leave a legacy,
lose a wife,
be lonely. (*GO* 135)

All in all, taking all the scrap book items, perspectives and wisdom into consideration, the question who Grey Owl was fooling is pretty much answered for us: both his audiences and himself, but how? What does he share with other mediators and culture brokers out of the motivations and outcomes mentioned in the above quote? What is the epistemological trickster, the one who has played on people's uncertainty regarding his ethnic origins, doing to our conscious? And finally, what is the broader implication of his shape shifting to ethno-cultural change and racialization in particular?

4. Epistemological Trickster and Racialization

In my view, through challenging and de/constructing the Grey Owl myth in a fragmented, fluid long verse format, Ruffo's narrative provides a wonderful artistic presentation of a broader socio-cultural phenomenon of the colonial discourses: the seemingly anti-racial implication of the indigenzation stories does not actually blur the color divides but in their overall impact they underline their validity. In their essay entitled "The (In)Visible Whiteness of Being" Leda Cooks and Elizabeth Fullon argue that "the challenge of whiteness studies lies not in any individual trying to change his or her communication patterns; rather we need to understand the ways that communication about whiteness is embedded in our social fabric" (139). It is the very outcome of the post-colonial retellings of shape shifting, more particularly gone Indian stories of both fictional and historic characters.

Samira Kawash in "The Epistemology of Race: Knowledge, Visibility, and Passing" explores the "contextual anxiety surrounding the possibility of passing the color line" (126), hybridity, blurred color lines versus segregation, race passing, the perception of whiteness and the knowledge of Otherness, gives her view on racial impostors and ambivalent bodies, geographies of the Color Line. To pass means to disguise one's self. In addition, "while the individual decision to pass has profound effects on that individual and on those around her or him, at the same time this actual occurrence of passing, the lives and experiences of individuals who pass, is culturally invisible" (Kawash 128). Ruffo makes this passing

visible for us with all the correlated notions of hyphenatedness, self-reflexively projected Otherness and epistemological doubts.

> Grey Owl?
> Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin?
> Archibald Stansfeld Belaney?
> Whiteman? Redman?
> Who's speaking? You tell
> as you now break your pledge and stand and rush
> to the mirror and make your Indian face.
> Who are you speaking as? Who are you
> speaking for? You rip the noose
> from yours neck and fling it into the corner. (*GO* 68-69)

Larsen's *The White* poses a similar uncertainty of identity, image and social position regarding Mary/Two-Falling-Voices' figure:

> "Whose ways? Yours? Your mother's? The old chief's? I am white—"
>
> "That is clear."
>
> "And I am Seneca. And I am a woman. What happened to the idea for which we are known here—that our men and women are good partners. Why does a woman rejoice when she finds it is the Seneca who have taken her a prisoner?
>
> […]
>
> My brother, let me make the few decisions in my power about my own life and death, about on what lands I will roam." (Larsen 116-17)

However, as one can see here, the heroine takes some control over her life, and later her afterlife as well, when asking for a 21st century retelling of her story by the first woman writer, after some twenty-seven other, less satisfactory and more partial interpretations. Mary takes control of how others see her and also the interpretive versions' validity and focus her story may receive. In that sense, by the last part of her life, she becomes a wise and experienced shaper of her own story and concept of identity.

As for Belaney, he similarly acknowledges the power of telling, shaping others' understanding of a projected image. He is an epistemological trickster, a self-made man who is also helped by the climate of his age and the popular need for celebrity Indians. The French Canadians call him *Sauvage* and he dislikes it (*GO* 70), though it is part of the image he recreated.

Strangers want to visit me.
They announce that I'm the first
to promote conservation:
the beaver,
the forests, the
Indian
way of life.

I begin by singing my Indian name Grey Owl,
and saying I was adopted by the Ojibway,
and that for 15 years I spoke nothing but Indian;
then, before I know it, I have Apache blood.
Finally I'm calling myself an Indian writer. (*GO* 71)

The white lies are justified by his audience's craving for romantic primitivism that they could not have found any more in real Native Americans. The author makes Grey Owl acknowledge that he is fake and fools others, this happens to be taken for granted. Ruffo also underlines that what really matters is not how others see Belaney but the OTHER THEY PROJECT ON HIM. It seems his environment had an appetite for some living legend, was ready to take him as a native for granted and even attached further features to his myth, which have obviously more to do with the "illustration" (Hollywood) Indian than with any actual Native community. But who cares anyway? He provided the public myth that white folks needed, without taking the trouble of checking his identity and/or the authenticity of his character and story.

Another identity-related problem with the Belaney-like characters is that they cannot avoid being in conflict constantly with their environment and themselves, too. Since he did not fully indigenize himself, he cannot avoid being lost in the vacuum of the culturally in-between position he placed himself into, which is never a real escape but simple and never ending entrapment and estrangement from any human environment. Finally, he also loses the ability to control his own story and myth, therefore the misconstruction of his Indian identity results in confusion at all levels and aspects of his personality.

As for the authenticity of his ethnic identity, at this point we may wish to consider two arguments when judging Belaney's passing, and actually Ruffo provides us a lot of hints to understand both. On the one hand, Belaney's own definition of his ethnicity is based on his assumption that what really matters is perhaps less visible for others: "I feel as an Indian, think/ as an Indian, all my ways/ are Indian, my heart is Indian" (*GO* 83).

On the other hand, only recent sociology and cross-cultural psychology have explored the phenomenon of symbolic ethnicity, the conscious choice of one's ethnic affiliations, their changing motivations and types, for instance Herbert Gans' "Symbolic Ethnicity" and Étienne Balibar's "Fictive Ethnicity and Ideal Nation," or Michael Hecter's "Ethnicity and Rational Choice Theory" all appearing in the seminal essay collection entitled *Ethnicity* (1996). Applying these findings on the study of passing narrative characters and ethnic shape shifters will be an exciting new approach in literary criticism, too. Still keeping Belaney in mind, one must also see the moral and ideological complexity of this shifting: although he represents Native America and Mother Nature for his public, he cannot get rid of his fundamentally racist approach that formulates the indispensable wall between him and the world of the natives. In *The Man of the Last Frontier* Belaney argues*:* "Left to his own devices in civilization the Indian is a child let loose in a house of terrors…. The few words of English he learns consist mainly of profanity, so we have the illuminating object-lesson of a race just emerging from a state of savagery turning to the languages of the white man for oaths that their own does not contain" (*GO* 19). This predominantly racist approach to the Natives is just another proof of his ambivalent life and transformation.

The well-known superiority complex of the white man in the colonial discourse is not only not challenged, but even underlined by Belaney. In addition, Wernitznig has remarkably noticed: Belaney "successfully managed to out-Indian his native contemporaries [emphasis added], perpetuating a post-colonially problematic symbiosis of natives and nature in white, foremost European, perception" (*GO* 105). As we can see here, in its impact, Grey Owl's figure and stories have had similar impact to that of J. F. Cooper and other writers obsessed about the Noble Savage imagery. In "Writing Off the Indian," Chapter 3 of *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1993), Daniel Francis argues that Cooper, the Canadian missionary image-makers and Noble Savage literature as such virtually emptied the need for and interest in ethnographical and sociological knowledge about real Natives. Such literature has served the colonial ideological agenda of the Vanishing Indian, which implies in short: "the only good Indians were traditional Indians, who existed only in the past, and assimilated Indians, who were not Indians at all. Any other Indian had vanished" (Francis 60). Francis also analysed the correlated phenomenon of marketing Indianism in his book. Why does this idealized Indianism sell so well even today? Why

are these gone Indian stories still so attractive for us? Wernitznig gives us a clue: "For late-twentieth-century Western societies Indians are neo-noble loincloth bearers with additional spiritual qualities, which, naturally, they only retain to enlighten non-native wisdom seekers" (Werniztnig 115). The basic problem such stories and popular illustration Indians reveal is that they re-establish the existing racial divides. Serving the needs of those longing for the intellectual excitement and ideological opportunism of romantic primitivism is the basis of Belaney's career as a fake Indian orator and environmentalist writer. Providing some historical justification and challenging ethnic preconceptions are possible outcomes of Ruffo's book embedded in a rich and exciting piece of literature.

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KRISZTINA KODÓ

CONNECTING CULTURES ON THE IRISH AND CANADIAN STAGE

Canada is a multi-national country that has attracted immigrants since the early seventeenth century. Since then, immigration has been a continuous process. Amongst the numerous ethnicities found in Canada, the Irish form through their large numbers a substantial group of their own to such an extent that they are considered one of the founding nations of Canada besides the English, French and the Scots. This is given further emphasis through the use of traditional Irish symbols, the harp and the shamrock, featuring on the official Canadian Coat of Arms.

Therefore, there has always been an interest in Irish-related cultural, artistic and political issues. With the gradual development of Canadian professional theatre and acting from the early 1940s, Ireland has certainly been an example worth considering and following, especially the international success of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. To promote the success of the Abbey, it was perhaps appropriate that an Irishman, who himself was indirectly involved in the developments and occurrences taking place in the theatrical sphere in Ireland, should eventually help, among others, to disseminate the ideas necessary to lay the foundations of something permanent in the creation of a Canadian national theatre.

John Coulter, an Irishman born in Belfast of Protestant parents, was "somewhat sadly deprived of the total recognition he deserved for penning at least twenty-five plays, the libretti for two operas, a biography of Winston Churchill, a book of poetry, one short novel, two major autobiographical works, nine short stories and innumerable articles, essays and broadcasts for both the BBC in Belfast and London, and the CBC in Canada" (Gardner 1). His first play to be published was a two-act verse drama titled *Conochar* from 1917 (this was broadcast by BBC

Radio Belfast in 1934 as *Conochar's Queen)* (Gardner 1). During the years between the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin and the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, Coulter worked as a teacher of art in Dublin. But the happenings at the Abbey helped to shift his focus of interest towards drama. As a result, he gave up teaching in Dublin and immersed himself in drama and theatrical work, and returned to Belfast "to found a small repertory theatre company, an 'Abbey of the north'" (Gardner 1). This endeavour was most probably without due success, mainly as a result of the tense political situation caused by the religious division, the upheavals of the Civil War and the fact that Belfast did not have the same firm foundation for theatrical development that Dublin already had. The majority of the population in Belfast was Protestant with a minor Catholic percentage, therefore establishing a theatre with the intention of promoting Irish plays by Irish playwrights, since that was the Abbey's original aim, would have been simply adding tension to the already extremely tense situation. But as there is very little information available concerning Coulter's theatrical experiments in Belfast, some biographical sources do not even mention it at all, it is difficult to assess the relevance of his involvement, but his departure from Ireland certainly suggests that he was unable to realize his endeavours in Belfast.

The fact that Coulter eventually left Ireland to seek new possibilities elsewhere is perhaps not surprising, since "emigration became a tradition in Ireland, not just a phenomenon, but actually a way of life" (O'Connor 130). From the early 1920s, he is already working in London, and somewhat later settles in Toronto marrying the Canadian poet, Olive Clare Primrose in 1936 (Benson and Toye 235). His play, entitled *The Drums are Out* (1948) was already written in Canada, therefore from a distance in time and space, based on his memories of a certain historical and political incident in 1935. From 1938 onwards, he becomes involved in the development of Canadian theatre and drama writing numerous articles and essays on the possibilities of creating a modern Canadian theatre. As an Irishman, he compares this progress with that of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the importance of the Irish Renaissance that helped to create an identity and a place to perform exclusively Irish plays by contemporary Irish authors. He considers this example worth following for the Canadians.

Canadian theatre as such was virtually nonexistent during the 1930s and 40s. Music hall's and buildings where theatrical performances could be staged did exist, but they mostly catered for the performances of

international professional acting companies, who were always welcome and lent these towns and cities prestige. Canada did not have any professional acting companies, but rather amateur acting groups spread out over the country. These groups also toured the country, but the majority of their performances were also based on the works of well known international authors. Staging an unknown Canadian dramatist's work would have been highly improbable, because it was mainly the title of the play that helped advertise them rather then the more or less unknown amateur group itself.

Coulter was active in the cultural life of Canada from the time of his arrival, and was among those artists, who were responsible for the formation of the Massey Commission, and ultimately the establishment of the Canada Council. As a friend of Tyrone Guthrie, he managed to persuade him to come to Canada and direct the first production of the well known Stratford Festival (Benson and Toye 237). Although his name is well established within these circles, his works cannot be called altogether popular or successful on a permanent basis. In this sense, his name has clearly been forgotten by the Irish, and his name in Canada has perhaps greater recognition. The areas where he had achieved success were in themes using "non-Canadian subjects" and "Canadian historical subjects with formal dialogue" (Benson and Toye 236), for example his *Riel Trilogy.*[1]

The *Riel Trilogy,* according to the dramatist's note, was "designed for presentation in the Elizabethan manner" (Benson and Toye 235). This suggests a standard educated variation of British English. But one of the problematic points in his plays is the use of language and vernacular. In the *Riel Trilogy,* instead of using the 19th century Métis vernacular variety (which would certainly be rich in its mixture of English, French and Native words and expressions), he uses the "Elizabethan manner," which manages to bring across the historical relevance projected by the author, but fails to convey an overall Métis identity. And in his play *The Drums are Out* the language used is certainly not the Northern Irish dialectal variation, but rather an educated form of the English language. This ultimately has the effect of distancing the characters from an overall Irish audience in Ireland, but placed in a different milieu, like Canada, the audience's concern would be less on the language, but on the political and

[1] *Riel Trilogy.* 1. *Riel* (1952; rev. 1975); 2. *The Trial of Louis Riel* (1968); 3. *The Crime of Louis Riel* (1976).

religious aspects that the play manages to raise quite well. The *Riel Trilogy* works on a similar basis since the historical momentum and occurrences presenting Riel's tragic fate are what the audience ultimately focuses on rather than the language itself. The language itself, however, is precise and comprehensible for everyone. And the message conveyed by the author is carried through. But I must admit that if Coulter had given greater attention to the use of language his characters could have had greater depth and colouring in providing the audience not only a historical event, but also a part of their culture and identity, as well.

As the aim of this paper is to present a comparative view and analysis of how cultural exchanges bear influence on individuals from various cultural backgrounds a comparison of Coulter's *The Drums are Out* with contemporary playwright, Malachy McKenna and his play *Tillsonburg* (2000) seems adequate in displaying numerous striking differences. McKenna makes use of many very typical and contemporary Irish English exclamations and expressions to sharply distinguish the Irish cultural background from that of the Canadian rural farmer and that of the Canadian Native Indian. Through their manner of speech the characters come to life, each individual culture being clearly distinguishable from the other cultural variant.

The presentation of the Irishman in a Canadian foreign environment emphasizes the notion of cultural exchange. There is a very acute focus on the various layers of cultures meeting and connecting, hence establishing a "global theatre" (Lonergan 216). The ability of theatre to cross cultural and geographical boundaries has become an important marker of success. But the manner in which an identity is established may be seen differently. Globalization has brought multiculturalism to Ireland, but the representation of an Irish identity has had to be narrowed since only those Irish plays can achieve success on a foreign stage, that are sufficiently adaptable to the international expectation and understanding of what the Irish stands for and represents. Coulter's play in this sense may be viewed as an international play, since it focuses on one particular political incident that the audience has perhaps heard or read about in newspapers. One assumes, however, that it is the Irish immigrant population in Canada, who would be mostly targeted with this particular topic, since they are the group who can identify themselves to certain depths with the Northern Irish religious conflicts.

The story of Coulter's play, *The Drums are Out,* is set in the city of Belfast during "one of the worst of its recurring outbreaks of sectarian

rioting" (Coulter 1). As a Protestant Ulsterman, Coulter witnessed the happenings himself, and by adding further information that he heard created the partly fictional and partly factual storyline. In the centre of the political occurrences there is the traditional family unit, which is eventually disrupted by a secret romance. The two main characters of the play are Sergeant Thomas Sheridan and his daughter, Jean. The Sergeant is a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who through his profession and person represents law and order and the Ulster Protestant side. Jean is an established young school teacher, who was educated in Dublin. Although she is Protestant by birth she has 'gone Irish' during her time spent in Dublin and has also fallen in love with a wanted IRA gunman (Denis Patterson), who is presently on the run. To further complicate matters, she has secretly married him and is pregnant with their first child. We also get to meet Denis Patterson, who first turns up in disguise and is presented as a very decent and likeable person, even though he is an IRA man. The sympathetic and agreeable figure of Denis Patterson is actually the reason why the play was never allowed to be performed in Belfast or Northern Ireland. Coulter was told that if he changed the character of the IRA man to that of the typical bad man figure, the play would be produced. But it did have a successful short production (filling the theatre for over five weeks) in the Abbey Theatre in 1948, but was never revived. There have been however numerous amateur productions of the play in both Ireland and Canada in the past decades.

Coulter's own political views changed, which means that he had 'gone Irish', like Jean, during his time spent in Dublin, where he was very much influenced by the occurances taking place and performances of the Abbey. Within the play both sides are represented: the Protestant side by Thomas Sheridan, his wife, Constable Nixon (an RUC officer) and Matt McCann (a rather foolish gossip and neighbour of the Sheridan's) and the Catholic, nationalistic side by Dennis Patterson and Jean. But it is Jean, who conveys Coulter's political views and ideas:

> Jean: What's happening with us in Ireland is what's happening everywhere else. But Ireland's small enough to let what's happening here and everywhere show itself, clear, in focus. And it's a sorry sight. People on different sides ready to fight and kill each other rather than make an effort to understand or yield an inch. "Not an inch." They shout it as if it were something to be proud of, instead of what it is—a shameful confession of gross political incompetence and failure. (Coulter 44–45)

During the night of the riot, Jean is forced to tell her father about Dennis, when he is injured and seeks refuge within Jean's and her parents' house. From this moment it is not the family unit that is of importance anymore, but Tom Sheridan's decision and ultimately his ensuing dilemma.

The major theme of the play centres on this perplexity of love and family versus loyalty and duty. As a policeman and Ulsterman (Protestant) Sheridan's loyalty and duty to the force come first and only then his family. This is a dilemma of the mind (reason) and the heart and due to this he becomes indecisive and breaks down. Which should come first? What are its limits? And what are the consequences of one's acts? As a consequence of her act (marriage to Dennis) Jean has shattered her father's world, and all his neatly laid plans of their future after he is pensioned in a year's time.

> Sergeant: …But because this day twelvemonth—I'll be out of the force.
>
> Jean: One more year to go, father.
>
> Mrs. Sheridan: It'll soon wear round.
>
> Sergeant: It will. And I'll be a free man. And not so old. And with my bit of pension coming in, for the rest of my life, ah-ha! You know, I'm beginning to look round already for a nice snug little house in the country. We'll have great times of it there. We'll have a tidy wee bit of a fruit and flower garden, with bees in it, and we'll have lots of white hens, Leghorns, and some laying ducks, and maybe a sprinkling of geese and turkeys. (Coulter 17)

Sheridan's dream of retirement is "his own favourite fairystory" (Coulter 17) as his wife says. The Sergeant longs for the piece and tranquility that he has never had since he put on his uniform. Through the Sergeant's character Coulter displays the individual Irishman torn between love and responsibility for his family and his duty to his profession and religious beliefs. During the night of the riot, Sheridan is forced to choose between the most important things in his life: love and duty. He finally allows Patterson to stay the night (because of his love for his daughter), since his injury does not allow him to move, but the Sergeant is quite adamant when he insists that Denis Patterson must be gone by morning. At this particular moment in time all his carefully harboured dreams crumble and fall to pieces. Future as such ceases to exist. The Sergeant allows his heart to overrule his mind in a moment of

crisis, but he already knows that the consequences for his conduct will be paid for by severe punishment.

Coulter's presentation of Sheridan portrays the Irishman, whose beliefs and devotion to his profession, and ultimately the loyalty to the English Crown, is so deeply coded within him that it must lead to his total breakdown. Similarly, Sebastian Barry, contemporary Irish dramatist, depicts a character, Thomas Dunne, in *The Steward of Christendom,* who is a staunch Catholic chief superintendant in the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Being faithful to the English Crown and his duty to his force come before his family, and this eventually leads to his total mental collapse when he is forced to retire at the time the Republic of Ireland is established. The image of the trustworthy and obedient Irishman is a recurring figure that portrays well the dilemma of the Irish male and "provides a historical basis of the Troubles in a way that international audiences might 'overhear'," and "audiences internationally can apply to their own lives and localities" (Lonergan 221).

In the Canadian publication of *The Drums are Out* from 1971, Coulter provides two versions of act three in which he shows two possibilities of ending the play. In version A it is already morning and Tom Sheridan's decision has been made: he must make a report at the Barracks about Patterson. No one can dissuade him, because it is his loyalty and duty to the force that must come first. Then IRA men dressed as policemen arrive (they take Sheridan's gun) and help Patterson leave the house. The play ends with Sheridan leaving the house and knowing full well that he will be arrested. No one can stop him. Everyone realizes the consequences of Sheridan's decision.

In version B, the IRA men come dressed as policemen at daybreak (and not in the morning), while Jean is still alone with Dennis, and take him away. Tom Sheridan's decision is the same: decides to report that Patterson had been in his house. Here Mrs. Sheridan also realizes that if her husband is not willing to take responsibility then many innocent people will be arrested and put in jail. She wants to stop him and make him see common sense, but her argument is weaker than in version A.

Within the sphere of his play, Coulter is intent on remembering the past and "found expression and relief in the writing of the play" (Coulter

1). He acutely perceives this distance in time[2], though in heart he had never really left:

> I had long been away from that no-man's-land between the warring Protestant and Catholic sectaries of the Falls and Shankill Roads. Yet I had never completely left it. Thought and imagination had still been coloured by it. Nor do I wish it had been otherwise, since I believe that writing of any merit is a flowering from roots sunk as deeply in the life of a locality as mine were sunk in the life of Ulster, and particularly in the life of that part of Ulster. (Coulter 2)

Tom Sheridan is also forced out of his psychological sphere, which ends with his dislocation. He sacrifices himself for his daughter's deeds, and becomes a martyr. But for whom does Sheridan really sacrifice himself? Certainly not his family, for whom total ruin is now evident. The Sergeant must satisfy his own honour and virtue, which he has broken by bending to his daughter's will. He feels that he has broken his own righteousness and the only way to amend his own consciousness is to give himself up. Due to this no balance is achieved, because there is a feeling of utter hopelessness and despair: a shattered future and dream, a broken home. Only possibility of survival is to leave and seek a new home in another world. This is a suggestion that is hinted at with reference to Jean, who has disrupted her family and a common future with her husband is also rather bleak. Her only comment at the end of version B is: "Oh, we should pray our babies never would be born into a mess like this, except to change it." (Coulter 77)

The distance portrayed through time and space emphasizes that "the country's history and the players provide the romance and stories of heroism". (Fairleigh xii) The past and the political occurrences influenced and helped shape Irish drama in the previous decades. The geographical distance in Coulter's case merely helped to sharpen his focus, but the individual predicament of Sheridan shows that personal involvement colours the dramatist's approach and evaluation.

In contemporary Irish drama this particular political involvement is not as heavily present, but it is interesting to see how an Irishman, Malachy McKenna, depicts his two male protagonists when placed in a foreign cultural environment. The play is set in the present time and all the characters are male. Two young Irishmen, Mac and Digger, in their

[2] Coulter has been living in Canada for over ten years when the play was actually written in 1948.

twenties go to work on a tobacco farm, in south-western Ontario, Canada, for the summer to earn money. The surroundings which they encounter are not what they had expected:

> The walls of the bunkhouse are dressed with the remnants of years of farming activity; old fertilizer posters, rusty implements, torn old oilskin raincoats, rusty horseshoes, old chains, faded pictures of pin-up girls, outdated calendars, cobwebs, nails, hooks, old rope, etc. …The overall 'feel' of the bunkhouse is hot, dirty and claustrophobic. (McKenna 4)

These bleak and extremely unpleasant surroundings are further enhanced by the title song *Tillsonburg*, which is based on a popular song performed by Stompin Tom Connors, a well known Canadian country rock singer. The song comes up several times during the course of the play when either one or the other characters begin singing its popular refrain, "Tillsonburg? My back still aches when I hear that word", (McKenna 5) this helps to enhance the background atmosphere of the place and the people living there. The characters portrayed all have a 'past' and their individual predicaments shape their perceptions and views. Beside the two Irishmen there is Jon, the Canadian farmer and owner of the tobacco farm, Billy the outcast and drug addict, and Pete the Canadian Native Indian.

McKenna, thereby, collects these very diverse characters from different cultural backgrounds and presents them as the "living wounded" (Fairleigh XIV). Mac and Digger depict the figures of the average Irish college youth, who travel abroad to work and gain experience. But the adventures and experience they had acquired had gone sour the previous year. For some reason, however, they are together again and ready to encounter a new adventure in a different cultural environment.

The basic theme the play relies on is friendship. Mac and Digger are good friends, who trust on each other, they come from a similar Irish background and have already spent time together in a foreign country the previous year. Through their manner of speech, which is loaded with contemporary Irish slang McKenna is able to capture the differences in customs and world views.

> Digger:…Fucken Harlem, and us the only Paddies in the place.
> Mac: Give me five, man!
> Digger: …I tell you, I'm giving no one else five as long as I live, my hands were bollixed from it; every time you met someone, Hey, man, what's happenin', and give me five and give me ten, up high and low down and coming back at ya, man,' fucking muck! And if they weren't

> giving you five they were threatening to cut your throat or beat the shite out of you. I tell you there were times I honestly wished I was black so I wouldn't be so terrified. Now, I've nothing against blacks, no more than yourself with the Indians, but Jasus, there's a limit. (McKenna 27)

Their experiences in the U.S. are retold within the framework of the play, but the tension is heightened through Digger's nightmares, which is the result of the mystery that encompasses last year's incident. This episode is, however, something that neither can bring themselves to talk about. As the play progresses the mystery is gradually brought into complete focus, but it is only at the very end that the audience learns the truth.

> Mac: Next FUCKING thing I know, I wake up to find a crowd of crackheads standing over me. One of them was cutting the pockets from my trousers with a razor blade. One pocket was already gone! ...You never came when they beat me so hard I thought I was going to die, when I tried to scream through my own blood, … I saw your reflection in the carriage window, when they said they'd kill me if I made a sound. … I saw you, Digger … staring through the door from the other carriage, staring at me, you STARING AT ME while …while they DID THAT to me. … Digger, … after all we'd been through together … you left me in that hell. (McKenna 62–63)

But by the end the puzzle is cleared when Digger is finally able to confess that the gang, who robbed, mugged and raped Mac, also did the same thing to Digger. The hurt that Mac had felt about Digger having left him is resolved:

> Digger: I mean, Mac: they came to me first. They … did me first.
>
> Digger: The nightmares. I call out for you the same way you called out for me. You don't hear. And …and … fuckers! I should have put up more of a fight. I should have done something, I should have stopped them …
>
> Mac: It's OK, Digger, it's OK.
>
> Digger: IT'S NOT OK!!! It's not OK. It's not. Thing is, Mac, you remind me of the whole thing; and … and … I can't get beyond it, I can't … Nothing's the same any more. (McKenna 71)

The psychological impact of their stay in New York had a shocking effect on the two Irish youths from which it is difficult to heal. After having finally spoken about it openly, the burden and strain of responsibility and guilt is lifted. All the characters suffer and wallow in their own personal problems. Jon and Pete had formerly been friends until Jon's

wife left him for Pete. Since then, Jon has had many difficulties with his crops and he is on the verge of ruin. Pete, the Native Indian, is very conscious of his own cultural heritage and considers Jon's land and property his, since the land had for centuries been the ancestral land of his forbears. All the characters exhibit through their manner of speech and behaviour an identity, though somewhat simplified, that is easier to understand and relate to for the audience.

Confronting the different cultures within the given Canadian rural environment enforces the ensuing tension in which all the characters reveal their true and deepest feelings about their friends, the milieu and their utmost desires. McKenna's play is successful in presenting how the various cultures relate and react to each other. He manages to raise numerous questions: How does one behave in a foreign environment? How does one adapt? To what extent can one remain true to one's own identity or should one adapt completely in a foreign setting? What can happen to an Irishman abroad? The play succeeds in handling these questions well without overdramatizing the message projected by the author. But the characters are to a large extent stereotypes, because "globalization is changing the way that audiences see plays and it alters the way that writers compose their works" (Lonergan 185).

To conclude, it is perhaps appropriate to quote John Fairleigh that "the past is not yet another country" (Fairleigh XIV). The plays show in both cases the predicaments of the individual in a moment of crisis, though with a variation in its setting and historical time. Time and distance may help to ease the pain of these "living wounded", but it will not disperse their memories. McKenna's play succeeds since through the effectiveness of global theatre different cultural identities are brought in and given greater focus for an easier accessibility for the audience. Coulter's play, however, is somewhat overdramatized and given colouring through the author's personal and emotional involvement. Where McKenna's play is successful in bringing across its message, this play fails, because it is unable to address a wider public directly only those who are themselves ex-Irish patriots.

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Stompin' Tom Connors—*Tillsonburg* (online) (www.youtube.com)

ANNA R. KROUTL-HELAL

STRAIGHT AND GAY ENCOUNTERS IN CANADA: SEXUAL ORIENTATION SEEN AS LOSING SIGNIFICANCE AS NEW LEGAL REALITY TAKES ROOT

Introduction

Slowly but steadily, Canadian society has gone through developments that have spurred changing attitudes to sexual-orientation issues. By 2008, Canada stood along with Spain as the only country in the world to put the same-sex marriage legally on par with the opposite-sex marriage, as measured by the acquisition of spousal benefits, the right to adopt children, ability to sponsor partners for immigration purposes, etc. This new reality, sparked by a 2005 parliamentary vote, is paralleled by both stronger gay political clout and changing media portrayals of gay and lesbian characters. It hints at a growing general acceptance of the notion that there is nothing special to being gay, in particular in the mammoth urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Furthermore, these developments, it has been asserted, might even signal the beginning of the end to the gay rights discourses.

Legal Landmarks

Historically, Canadian laws used to discriminate against gays and lesbians. Until 1977, homosexuals were listed in the categories of persons to be excluded from Canada "along with prostitutes, pimps, or persons coming for these or any other immoral purposes" (LaViolette 2004). The immigration policy had traditionally favored family reunification by which only married heterosexual Canadians were able to bring in their spouses from other countries. In 2002, the same privileges were extended

to lesbian and gay Canadians with the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The same law permits gay individuals to seek political asylum in Canada. Immigration courts are basing their decisions on studies examining negative or outright repressive attitudes to gay lifestyles in other parts of the world, frequently referring to Amnesty International documents.

Matters have been moving swiftly. In 1999, the Parliament of Canada had still reaffirmed the hetero-sexual definition of marriage, voting 216 against 55. Within three years, challenges to this definition were passed by three provincial Superior Courts (Ontario, Quebec and B.C.) and in 2003 the Ontario Superior Court struck down the existing law of marriage as discriminatory, redefining marriage as a '*union of two persons*.' The Liberal party cabinet decided against appealing that decision. Finally, in the fall of 2005, in a free vote buttressed by the Supreme Court of Canada, the parliament gave the same-sex marriage its green light, voting 158 against 133. Every single province of Canada in addition to its three northern territories has come aboard and legalized it. According to Hurley (2005), little organized opposition developed thereafter despite often acrimonious parliamentary debates, public hearings and committee inquiries. Post-2005, most of the controversies quietly faded away.

Moving Away from the US

Going through a sea of rapid social changes, Canadian society has surged ahead to such an extent it has been moving out of step with the United States, according to New York Times whose Kraus (2003) wrote that: "As far as the ease with which society changes, Canada is virtually in a category by itself", adding that incomers taking advantage of Canada's more liberal immigration laws have been mainly US citizens attempting to enter into same-sex marriage contracts with citizens of countries where openly gay behavior can lead to discrimination at work and, in extreme cases, physical threats, beatings or imprisonment.[1]

[1] In general, the number of incoming Americans was difficult to estimate, however, just as it was hard to estimate the proportion of gays among them. Many found jobs in Canada or invest money, and could become resident in Canada without applying for citizenship. Toronto and Vancouver appeared to be the most popular destinations. The booming Canadian economy and aversion to the politics of George W. Bush were factors in luring the Americans north as well. Most of these people were well educated

Canadian documentary film maker Albert Nerenberg has even produced a film about this phenomenon. Called *Escape to Canada*, he looked at Canada's recent *freedom boom*, focusing on the country's legalization of the same-sex marriage, movement toward decriminalizetion of pot smoking, and opposition to the war in Iraq. AWOL U.S. soldiers were profiled, as were American gay and lesbian couples moving to Canada to get married (Hays 2005). Catering to the nascent demand in Canada are companies and hotels offering gay wedding packages (Shenker 2005).

While Canada has progressed, moving away from its long-standing southern ally, in the US the situation has been the reverse. In 2009, same sex couples could legally marry only in Massachusetts whereas about 40 states carried laws or amendments barring the recognition of gay marriage. According to Gatehouse (2004), around two thirds of Americans were against homosexuals to tie the knot in 2004, but this number was even higher in the conservative South and Midwest. Clergy and mayors prepared to defy laws and marry same-sex couples could face criminal charges, he adds. The legal and social status of homosexuals in the US has even been analyzed by Amnesty International, most notably in an extensive 2006 report on police abuse and "pervasive discrimination" faced by gay members of racial or ethnic minorities (Amnesty International).

Paradoxically, the situation used to be very different back in the mid-sixties of the last century: Canada had not yet decriminalized homosexual activity while San Francisco's gay lifestyle was written about all over the world. In Canada, subsequently, attitudes started changing and even statistics tend to support this assertion. Asked in the late nineties which specific social groups people would not want as their neighbors, Canadians were far less concerned about having homosexuals as neighbors than Americans (Grabb & Curtis 2005).

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and tended to come with financial resources; hence they did not make it into any government statistics.

FIGURES SHOWING INTOLERANCE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS (2005)

The survey question	English Canada	Quebec	The US North	The US South
Which social groups wouldn't you want as neighbors? (as related to gays)	33%	19%	35%	44%
	Total for Canada:		Total for the United States	
	30%		38%	

Regions Apart: The Four Societies of Canada and the United States (Grabb & Curtis, 2005 212).

In terms of numbers, the 2006 census recorded 45,345 same-sex couples in Canada, of whom 7, 465 (16.5 per cent) were married. Half of all the same-sex couples lived in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver. Same-sex couples made up 0.6 per cent of all couples in Canada (CBC News 1).

First Nations versus Nation-building

Aboriginal people of North America had very different perceptions of sexuality and it was only with the arrival of the European settlers that new morality was imported, and words such as *miscreant, sinful, predatory* or *deviant* describing homosexuals started to be applied. Among First Nations, homosexuality even had a place of honor but there are, unfortunately, few or no reliable written records to support such assertions. According to Warner (2002 34), First Nations regarded homosexuals and transgender people as having the gift of being able to perceive the world from two opposing perspectives. They were therefore referred to as "two-spirited people", and recognized as special because they maintained "balance and harmony by containing both male and female spirits".

When the first French and British explorers, fur traders, and missionaries had encountered the Aboriginal cultures, they were apparently shocked by the power of women and by the openness and respect accorded to sex between males and between females. Kinsman (2000 216) wrote that in some cultures there were more than two gender classifications. Alongside 'men' and 'women' there would be third- and sometimes fourth-gender groupings, made up of individuals born either male or female who took up some of the work and clothing of the other

gender. These mixed or cross-gender groupings were seen as having special spiritual and healing qualities, helping to bridge the divide between men and women. It may even be argued that that a crucial part of the attempted marginalization of the First Nations was the destruction of their indigenous sexual and gender practices.

Nation-building after the creation of Canadian Dominion in 1867 had dramatically changed the social paradigms. In the first century of Canada's existence, the nuclear-family unit was to become central to Canadian society, standing as a metaphor for nationalism, according to Rankin (2000): "The nation-building project produced a legacy of homophobic, racist and sexist public policy including criminal sanctions against homosexual activity". Sexuality, it was understood, belonged only to the confines of marriage—a man-and-woman union—whose sole goal was procreation. Homosexuality, on the other hand, was denounced as perversion and declared a criminal act (Bibby 1990 17).

Correspondingly, the average citizens' attitudes had evolved to be far from tolerant. In 1950's video clips from the CBC archives, random people addressed on the street talk about "homosexuals being a menace to the society" who should be "locked up", "put away in special institutions such as exist for the insane" or "accept medical treatment". Homosexuality was referred to as a '*social disease'*. Two homosexuals interviewed in silhouette to protect their identity are maintaining that their lives are as regular as anybody else's, but mention also the reality of gay men not being able to live their personal lives, frequently suffering from alcoholism or mental problems as a result. In the same clip, however, a lawyer describes the Canadian laws as being "out of touch with reality," and speaks of the impact of Dr Alfred Kinsey's surveys, according to which about 4–10% of the population described themselves as homosexual while about 36% admitted to having had a homosexual experience at least once in their lives (CBC Archives).

Midway through the 20th century, the number of people who would dare to openly display homosexual tendencies continued to be negligible. One lone voice belonged to Jim Egan, who had spent his entire life demanding greater public education about homosexuality.[2] Overt homosexual behavior was being neutralized "through humor and caustic labels, such as 'fairies' and 'fruits'. The Canadian government had meanwhile even funded an experiment nicknamed the **'**Fruit machine'**,** aimed at

[2] His name would re-emerge in 1995 in the landmark Egan v Canada legal case.

developing a reliable system which would detect homosexuality. The targeted groups were especially civil-service employees and army personnel (Bibby 1990 58).

Same-sex activity came to be associated with '*distinct types of people'* and the emergence of homosexual identities was being matched by more extensive regulation. Since 1890, Canada's Criminal Law, stemming in turn from the English Criminal Code, had contained the offence of '*gross indecency'*: it made any sexual contact between men a crime, paving the way for intensive police surveillance and legal persecution (Maynard 2004 255). Open homosexuality could be punishable by up to 14 years in prison. A 1948 amendment renamed the wording of the offence as '*criminal sexual psychopath*". Interestingly, according to Kinsman (1996 8), all these seemingly bizarre regulations ignored any references to lesbians, this omission seemingly reflecting the prevailing belief that "lesbian sexuality was either non-existent or should not be encouraged by being mentioned".

Only in 1967 was the law amended to exclude consenting adults. It was in the same year, ironically, that the Supreme Court of Canada had denied the appeal of Everett George Klippert, a mechanic's helper serving a life sentence whose admission of his homosexuality led him to be classified as a "*dangerous sexual offender*" (Rankin 2000). A public outcry followed as the media started leaning more sympathetically toward homosexuality causes and, subsequently, Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau would be instrumental in pushing forward a law decriminalizing homo-sexual activity, heralding this change with his now famous statement that "the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation." Rapid changes did not follow, however. Rankin asserted that the construction and maintenance of pan-Canadian nationalism had demanded that the project of defining national identities in Canada had always involved significant attention to the regulation of sexual preferences and practices of Canadians, adding that there was "continued exclusion of queer populations from full citizenship rights and membership in the Canadian nation."

The Role of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms

By 2007, on the 25th anniversary of the adoption of Charter of Rights and Freedoms, most Canadians had lived under this document's umbrella long enough to be influenced by it. In terms of content, the Charter did

little more than codify freedoms Canadians had already been taking for granted; procedurally, however, according to Dickin (2001 107–109) it gave those freedoms a legal status only partially explored at the time of its passage. It is the Charter's location within the constitution itself, she wrote, its so-called *entrenchment,* that makes it so powerful. The last two decades of the 20th century saw exploration of that status displace almost all other types of legal questions considered by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court has become a Charter court.

The Charter's *Subsection 15*, for example, states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. This subsection has been heavily litigated, and its cases make up interesting reading among the Supreme Court of Canada judgments. One of the tests was the 1995 case termed Egan v Canada involving a gay couple seeking to redefine the term spouse (Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada 1). Another Charter-linked precedent concerned Delwin Vriend, an openly-gay teacher in Alberta who was fired purely on the grounds of his sexual-orientation. With his complaint to a Human Rights Commission rejected, he went to court and received a favorable ruling in 1992. Anna Russell, later a judge with the Alberta Court of Appeals, had then commented in her ruling that: "The discrimination homosexuals suffer is so notorious that (she could) take judicial notice of it without evidence." Although Vriend lost his case after an appeal, he was vindicated by a subsequent Supreme Court of Canada's ruling (Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada 2).

The impact of the Charter has been analyzed by Carlton University Professor Miriam Smith. She reviewed the growth and transformation of gay and lesbian social movements, giving an overview of litigation tied to sexual-orientation issues. The Charter, she wrote, did not create equality-seeking as a meaning frame for social movement politics, but it generated instead a "particular meaning frame of equality seeking: rights talk". While the gay liberation movement was centered on developing gay and lesbian consciousness, political identity, organizations and networks, the rights talk pulled gay organizations toward an assumed lesbian and gay identity and focused on the achievement of legal changes as the primary goal. As if presciently, Smith also wondered if the legal inclusion of lesbians and gay men within the ambit of family would "fundamentally alter the heterosexual and patriarchal nature of the family as a social

institution, or the ways in which future generations will interpret and frame sexual identity" (Smith 1999 151–2).

Voices of Opposition

Following the landmark 2005 parliamentary vote, the Government of Canada did not bring the issue back for another review. Some of the earlier decisions of the provincial Supreme Courts did not come under new scrutiny either. Nevertheless, the wisdom of redefining the term marriage, and thus also the reality of setting out new terms for sexual identity, has been examined. John Fisher, an equal-rights activist, claimed in 2003 that two thirds of Canadians would support gay marriage. This may or may not have been an over-statement. Many critics of the same-sex marriage legislation, even those sympathetic to the gay and lesbian causes, had commented that the Government should have permitted *legal unions,* like those that function in many European countries, but not marriage (Macleans, 2003).

Cere and Farrow have challenged the notion that the majority of Canadians support the concept of same-sex marriage. Cere (2004 15) asserted that a parliamentary committee was set up in 2003 and public hearings were held moving across the land to even remote Inuit communities, while 500 submissions were made on the topic, yet the Ontario Court of Appeals had unilaterally declared it would not wait for the government to consider the legislative responses, deciding instead to strike down the existing law of marriage, deeming it discriminatory, and redefining it instead as a *union of two persons*. Farrow (2004 93) writes that in sanctioning same-sex marriages, Canada has made a romantic mistake without thinking clearly about consequences, adding that "no other country in the world has made the claim that Canada appears set to make: that marriage as we have known it constitutes a rights violation" (97). Marriage has therefore ceased to answer to the procreative forms, becoming instead an "evolving social construct" (159).

Somerville (2004 64), together with Young & Nathanson (2004 51) rejects the notion of single-sex marriage because of concerns over children's rights. Somerville, professor of law and medicine at McGill University in Montreal writes: "Same-sex marriage presents a difficult choice between conflicting claims, each of which can be characterized as a right," adding that children need both mother and father and same-sex marriage makes children rights secondary to adults'. As an ethicist,

Somerville is also interested in the issue of reproductive technologies, positing the thesis that an argument can no longer be made that only opposite-sex people can beget children. But how to reconcile the fact that human reproduction (through surrogate mothers or gamete donors) should not be for sale on one hand, and the fact that two men in a marriage contract can have children only through such an arrangement?[3] Young and Nathanson (2004) argue that since women but not men have reproductive autonomy, then both gay and straight men will increasingly be marginalized from reproduction. They dismiss the (gay marriage advocates') notion that children would be better off with good gay parents than with bad straight ones asserting that the primary focus of gay marriage would still be adults, not children (49).

More recently, in 2009, the Province of Alberta passed a law allowing parents to pull kids out of class when lessons on sex, religion or sexual orientation are taught. The parental rights clause is included in a bill intended to enshrine gay rights in the province's human rights code. Commenting on this step, passed under the ruling Conservative Government, parliament member Rob Anderson stated the legislation had been welcomed by "thousands and thousands of parents, the silent majority." Critics had charged, however, that the new legislation will open doors to human rights complaints by parents, crimping classroom discussions. Teachers, school boards and human rights groups had objected to it (CBC News 2).

Growing Political Clout

It was in Quebec, the province that has frequently led many of the country's social and political reforms, that the first openly gay leader of a major political party in North America was elected—Andre Boisclair of the separatist Parti Quebecois (PQ). During his two years in power (2005–07), Boisclair failed to produce electoral gains for his party, however, and he was eventually forced to resign. Yet significantly, writes Authier (2007), his gayness was not an issue in his resignation or during his tenure; rather, the poor showing of the party was. Conversely, Boisclair's critics who had voiced homophobic remarks did not fare well.

[3] According to Somerville (2004 71), "the use of law can never be neutral, whether we are enacting, changing or repealing it. We use it…to challenge or uphold our most important societal values".

After attacking Boisclair verbally, radio jockey Louis Champagne was promptly sacked from his job.

Can Boisclair's brief and dismal stint at the helm of Parti Quebecois be described as a political achievement for the gay community? Before Boisclair, only two other openly gay politicians managed to hold political posts in Canada. One was Scott Brison who has been Member of Parliament in Ottawa since 1967, served as Minister of Public Works under Prime Minister Paul Martin, and in 2006 ran unsuccessfully in a campaign to succeed Martin as the Liberal Party leader. The other one was Chris Lea, leader of the Green Party, 1990–96. Winnipeg, meanwhile, was the first major North American city to elect an openly gay mayor, Glen Murray (in 1998).

Yet the most encouraging sign heralding this new era may be a ten-year-old study by the University of Toronto, authored by Professor David Rayside, which determined that being openly gay is not necessarily detrimental to one's political ambitions—quite the opposite. Voters cynical about Canadian politicians' honesty are thinking that if someone is courageous to openly admit homosexuality, they must be honest and open as politicians too.[4]

Media portrayals evolving

Media portrayals of gay characters have also been evolving, changing from subtle insinuations through sanitized versions to perfectly natural. Throughout the sixties of the 20th century, gay and lesbian characters were portrayed as either villains to be feared, or tortured, suicidal individuals to be pitied. Few of these characters of 'questionable sexuality' survived the final reel. Tony Richardson's film Taste of Honey which has a marginal gay character was supplemented on its initial release by a study guide, reprinted in Life magazine, on the '*causes and cures of homosexuality'* (Davies 2008 45).

By the early nineties, post-the Aids scare and the Rock Hudson affair, British actors such as Rupert Everett and Simon Callow could afford to be openly gay and the world cinema moved on to deal with gay themes in a comic way. First there was *Philadelphia* though, a serious AIDS-based drama, then there was a brief obsession with drag, but finally there came a

[4] In its book form, the research was published in 1998 under the title On the Fringe: Gays and Lesbians In Politics (University of Toronto News).

veritable international explosion of gay themes this time keenly embraced by mainstream culture. Aspects of gay culture previously seen in movies such as *Some Like it Hot* and *Tootsie*, appeared in the 1994 release of Stephen's Elliott's *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Dessert* and the most memorable Mike Nichols' *The Birdcage*. From Taiwan came Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* which succeeded in bringing gay relationship issues to mainstream audiences. Another film with a similar bridging message was Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*, a British thriller containing also the acceptance of gay love and openly gay identity (Davies 2008 124–132).

From Canada came Brad Fraser's Leaving Metropolis, a drama about a gay man and a married heterosexual man who fall in love, and Breakfast with Scot, a Canadian family comedy featuring a gay couple, one of whom an ex-NHL star, bringing up a precocious openly-gay teenager. The NHL and Toronto's Maple Leafs let the filmmakers use their logos, first time ever the NHL has endorsed a film with an overt homosexual theme. Johnson (2007) cited the NHL spokesperson Bernadette Mansur explaining the organization did not see the film as groundbreaking, commenting instead: "This is not a movie that's making any statement about homosexuality. This is a story of a modern family raising a precocious child."

This trend of normality has been assertive: in the 2006 season of *Sopranos*, there was Vito, "a fat, foul, underhanded, murdering, leather-chaps-wearing breath of fresh air" (Deziel 2006), adding that "gone are the days when gay characters had to overcompensate with niceness to come across as sympathetic." Similarly, the scheming gay character on *Desperate Housewives* provides a break from the two sanitized gay guys on *Will and Grace*. Callow who played the gay character of Gareth in Four Weddings and a Funeral put it this way: "Gay men and women have now entered the mainstream of cinema, losing their exoticness on the way. They are, increasingly, just part of life, though still generally a somewhat marginal part" (Davies 9). In the mainstream media in North America, however, there have been no attempts to create shows with lesbian characters.

To what extent do media portrayals truthfully, if at all, reflect shifts in Canadian popular perceptions of gay people? After all, most of the trail-blazing movies (Philadelphia, Brokeback Mountain, Angels in America or Transamerica, among others) were created in the US, a country which has evidently regressed in its handling of gay and lesbian issues, or in

Britain, Germany, Spain, Taiwan and even the Czech Republic, and not in Canada, a country that is ostensibly ahead legislation-wise. One conclusion could be the general state of the Canadian cinematic scene: it is not lively or influential enough. The Canadians, therefore, rely strongly on the inputs imported from the US, Europe and the rest of the world.

Conclusion

One crucial variable is the country's propensity for change. Change can even be described as one of Canada's chief values. Canada seems to be constantly evolving and people tend to embrace changes rather than being frightened by them. The swift and smooth adoption of the same-sex marriage legality appears to be one such example.

Have the struggles for formal equality and acceptance therefore ended, or are we just witnessing an interlude before the beginning of another stage and a higher-level struggle? What are the challenges remaining? Archer (1999 68) is upbeat in his assessment of the prospects ahead stating that gay communities were now "progressing from a life-and-death-struggle to one that is little calmer, and one we are frankly winning…there will no doubt be many defeats before some sort of final, quiet victory can be realized." He discusses the terms *real woman* and *real men*, as well as the expectations and norms defined for both genders, and voices regrets that society still has a need to live by the dichotomy.

In a certain sense, the gay liberation movement has come full circle and for gay-rights activists it may now be time to re-evaluate the ideas which guided the struggles in the seventies and the eighties, when legal equality appeared a distant prospect and the concept of same-sex marriage was of little interest. Smith writes that organizational restructuring and repositioning is to be expected, and the workings of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act should be monitored, predicting that the policy agenda of the gay and lesbian movement will increasingly focus on advancing queer identities and interests within social institutions, such as the educational system, health care system and broader fields of social policy. Most researchers and writers do agree that there are still many problems and issues to be resolved, even in Canada, one of the few countries that systematically ban discrimination against lesbian and gay men.

One of such issues to consider is the safety of gay spaces outside large metropolitan areas, (especially Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, Winnipeg

and Montreal) where almost 80 per cent of all Canadians live. Homophobia and heterosexism remain persistent and rampant in smaller towns and rural areas, however, anecdotal evidence suggests. According to Warner (2002, 307), "gay pride marches are being held successfully and are welcome only in large urban areas…at the beginning of the 21st century, many still live in isolation and fear." More attention also has to be paid to tightly-knit communities of recent immigrants where the risks arising from coming out as a gay or lesbian can be more serious. Warner (2002 322) writes that the consequences of social disapproval and ostracism among immigrant communities can be much more isolating and traumatic. These may even include severing ties to one's family. It is therefore safe to assert that Canada appears to be on the brink of creating more safe spaces for gay and lesbian communities, but there are still many challenges ahead.

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KATALIN KÜRTÖSI

SMALL COMMUNITIES OF ARTISTS PAVING THE ROAD TO MODERNISM: CANADIAN AND HUNGARIAN CASE STUDIES

"…most menetelünk először egy időben, egy rangsorban azokkal, akik a jövő felé haladnak."
Dienes László[1]

Comparing the early manifestations of Modernism in the case of what later will be called the 'Montreal group of poets' and poets starting their career in Szeged may first look a futile and unrealistic ambition—still these widely differing two cultures on 'the margins of Modernism' show remarkable common features besides the significant differences which result from the diverse social backgrounds. Using some theoretical statements concerning this complex and pulsing phenomenon on the literary scene of the interwar period I wish to elaborate on the basic features manifesting themselves in a rapidly developing North-American metropolis (i.e. Montreal) and a medium-sized provincial town of war-torn Central Europe. What pushed me in this direction is Raymond Williams's hinting at 'an alternative tradition taken from the neglected

[1] "It is my greatest pleasure that the experimental artists in our arts, music and literature are present simultaneously with the international new movements and are not their mere imitators … At last we are not provincial in the back of beyond, and we are not following others with a 50 or 100-year delay. If I am not mistaken, *this is the very first time when we are marching at the same time, in the same row with those heading for the future*." Letter by Dienes László, editor of *Korunk* (published in Kolozsvár, then Romania) in early 1926 to Kassák Lajos, cited by Kassák—Pán, 7. (translation mine, the motto in italics)

works left in the wide margin of the century'[2] (Williams 35) that can modify our image about the artistic movement of the 1920s and 1930s which incorporates widely differing—sometimes contradictory—credos and methods, which still is commonly put under the umbrella terms Modernism (concerning the Canadian examples) or avant-garde (with regard to the Hungarian artists).

In the most frequently cited theoretical elaboration of Modernism, Bradbury and McFarlane define it as a metropolitan movement the result of which is that "[m]any minor modernisms remain […] excluded from standard accounts of this international movement" (Kronfeld 3)—in the past few years, however, a lot of research has been done to 'de-center modernism' (Schedler XI) and to map 'border Modernism'. When outlining the same conceptual drawbacks of general surveys about modernism, Glen Norcliffe points out that there is "a competing conception of modernity that, by being situated and contextualised in particular settings of time and place, amount not to one totalizing explanation, but to a cacophony of variations on the theme of modernity", and re-uses Philip Cooke's term of a "geographically nuanced understanding of modernity" (10). Kronfeld reveals the dichotomy between a general feature of Modernism and its most widely accepted definitions.

> Modernism is famous for its affinity for the marginal, the exile, the "other". Yet the representative examples of this marginality typically are those writers who have become the most canonical high modernists […] While they sometimes acknowledge the multicultural, international nature of the movement, handbooks as well as theoretical debates […] focus on—isms and writers that are well within (the) major linguistic and geopolitical key. (Kronfeld 3)

The most visible difference between these two varieties of Modernism is that the main tendency of "metropolitan modernism was to turn inward, to dissociate the self from others and the external world", while "[i]n border modernism, the external world is seen as constitutive of the self, and identity is explored through association with those defined as culturally, racially, or linguistically 'other'." (Schedler, XII, XIII) At the same time, it needs to be underlined that 'border modernism' also "bears the imprint of metropolitan modernism, even if in opposition to it"

[2] "'Modernism' is confined to this highly selective field and denied to everything else […] [w]e must search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margins of the century." (Williams 34–5)

(Schedler XII). Border modernism—apart from the general search for new representational devices to depict a rapidly changing world—lays emphasis "on historical context, oral forms of expression, and simplification" (Schedler XIII).

Frederic Jameson introduced the term of 'Third World Modernism' (with reference to the Ireland of Joyce's *Ulysses*) that can be linked with a post-colonial situation. The American continent, on the other hand, offers "another marginal, ec-centric space where First and Third worlds meet" (Schedler XIV). As early as 1925, William Carlos Williams suggested that "the modern artist must descend to the 'ground' to truly interact with the 'other'" (cited by Schedler XVI) (although for him, the 'other' was the aboriginal Indian—we will see this idea manifested in the regular sociological and ethnographic/folkloric field work of the Szeged group).

Speaking of Modernism, one is faced with a wide selection of definitions and descriptions.

- Modernism is a complex response across continents and disciplines to a changing world (Gillies 2).
- N. Frye said in 1967 that "'Modern' […] describes certain aspects of an international style in the arts which began, mainly in Paris, about a hundred years ago" (27), stressing that "Modern art […] is concerned to give the impression of process rather than product" (38).
- Modernism can also be defined as a cluster of international movements and trends in literature and the arts. […] There is little agreement about the term's meaning and scope. Chronologically, it may start as early as the 1880s and last as late as the 1950s (Kronfeld 21).
- Willmott considers it a "self-reflexively experimental aesthetic practice that produces its meaning in dialogue with a social field characterized by historical modernization" (101).
- Bradbury and McFarlane in 'The Name and Nature of Modernism' enumerate five key modernist tendencies:
    1. Away from representational realism towards abstract an autotelic art forms
    2. High degree of aesthetic self-consciousness
    3. Aesthetic of radical innovation, fragmentation and shock
    4. Breaking of familiar formal and linguistic conventions
    5. Use of paradox (19–55).

- It involves a "breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions" (Cuddon cited by Gillies, 2).

It can be of use to recall an overview of the term 'avant-garde'—and to highlight that in many respects it overlaps with Modernism:

> the term *avant-garde* was first used in a military context at the end of the 18th century and then about 1820 became a political concept current among utopian socialists. […] in the second half of the 19th century it became an aesthetic metaphor […] used to identify writers and artists intent on establishing their own formal conventions *in opposition to the dominant academic and popular taste*. […] The high point of the avant-garde […] [was] particularly the 1910–30 period when expressionism, futurism, dadaism, surrealism, and constructivism were to generate antagonistic and visionary impulses which signalled a vital tradition of social radicalism and social innovation. (Bayard, 3, highlights mine)

All the above descriptions imply that these artists form a 'minority' in contrast with the dominant way of expression, practised by the majority of artists in a given period. It is not only the artists themselves who are in minority but their audience, as well—therefore their literary production could first appear in periodicals of limited editions, very often implying that the artists themselves would be actively participating in the preparation work (editing), as well as in the printing and distributing process without any honorarium. These journals are called the 'little magazines'. "All the important events in poetry and most of the initiating manifestoes and examples of change are to be found in the little magazines." (Dudek and Gnarowski 203).

This brief survey of terminology can provide us with ample background to our case studies, i.e. the Modernist/avant-garde communities of the interwar period in Montreal and in Szeged. As Dean Irvine puts it, "Modernism in Canada is […] among the marginal modernisms outside the Anglo-American canon […] the study of marginal modernisms not only performs a critique of canonical modernism's exclusionary practices but also provides insight into the historical marginality of its avant-garde aesthetics." (Irvine, 2005. 4)—actually, he goes as far as making a statement about "canonical modernisms' indebtedness to marginal modernisms" (Irvine 8). He continues by citing Tim Conley: "Canada's modernism is not tertiary or 'after' European and then American modernisms, but 'between' them." (Irvine, 2005. 6).

"l'ange avantgardien" (F. R. Scott)

Although "[m]odernism arrived quickly in countries that had well-established literary traditions" (Norris 8)—and Canada in the early twentieth century would not count as such—forerunners of artistic innovation appeared already during and right after WWI, e.g. as early as 1914, Arthur Stringer published *Open Water*, a book of poems. In its preface he pleaded the cause of free verse. In the 1920s Dorothy Livesay wrote in the Imagist mode, experimenting with free verse: her poems appeared in American and English literary publications (Norris 10–11). The watershed date, however, was November 21, 1925 when the first issue of *The McGill Fortnightly Review* (1925–27), a new independent student journal edited by A. J. M. Smith and F. R. Scott, graduate students of the prestigeous Montreal university appeared (Norris 11). (Although Montreal in the 1920s was not as francophone as today, these poets were active in a plurilingual milieau that points at not only a special attitude towards language but also at their 'border-situation'.)

Canadian critics agree that it was the McGill group which cleared the ground for Canadian Modernism. Apart from Scott and Smith, the two leading figures of the group, Leo Kennedy, and later A. M. Klein also were part of its core. The *Fortnightly* not only condemned the backward literary condition of the country, but also "attempted to define Modernism in articles and in poems" (Norris 11). A. J. M. Smith is considered to be the theoretician of the new poetry: he visioned the relationship of a changing society and environment to poetry the following way:

> Our age is an age of change, and of a change that is taking place with a rapidity unknown in any other epoch […] Our universe is a different one from that of our grandfathers […] The whole movement, indeed, is a movement away from an erroneous but comfortable stability, towards a more truthful and sincere but certainly less comfortable state of flux. Ideas are changing, and therefore manners and morals are changing. It is not surprising, then, to find that the arts, which are an intensification of life and thought, are likewise in a state of flux. […] The new poetry […] is less vague, less verbose, less eloquent […] It has set before itself an ideal of absolute simplicity and sincerity—an ideal which implies an individual, unstereotyped rhythm. (27–28)

The two leading figures of the *Fortnightly* launched repeated attacks at the poets of the previous generation, i.e. the Confederation group: Scott and Smith "felt the absolute necessity to get beyond this maple-leaf

school of poetry." (Norris 5). They sharply criticized the general policy of the Canadian Authors' Association as chief representative of the "quasi-Victorian verse of the twenties" (Norris 4).

F. R. Scott, "the chief satirist in the Eliotic vein" (Dudek-Gnarowski 24) mocked their meeting, calling them "expansive puppets", making fun of their loyality and Victorian taste.

> The air is heavy with Canadian topics,
> And Carman, Lampman, Roberts, Campbell, Scott,
> Are measured for their faith and philantropics,
> Their zeal for God and King, their earnest thought.

It is in the April 1927 *Fortnightly* publication of Scott's "The Canadian Authors Meet" that the last stanza offers a contrast to the rejected school of Canadian poetry. Scott in these four lines draws a portrait of the Modernist poet:

> Far in a corner sits (though none would know it)
> The very picture of disconsolation,
> A rather lewd and most ungodly poet
> Writing these verses, for his soul's salvation.

Scott lists the typical features of the 'rebellious' poet: isolated, neglected, discontent—with abundant self-reflection, and pointing out the process of writing.

As is the nature of student journals, at the end of the spring semester in 1927 *The McGill Fortnightly Review* ceased to exist, but a year and a half later, in December 1928 *The Canadian Mercury* was founded by Smith and Scott: it could last but a year (seven issues). Members of the editorial board were Jean Burton, F. R. Scott, Leo Kennedy and Felix Walter. A. J. M. Smith sent in his contributions from the University of Edinburgh, where he was attending graduate school; Leon Edel was in Paris, whence he filed reports on literary activity (Norris 15). The opening editorial of the new journal demanded a higher and more adequate standard of literary criticism in Canada and called for a general renewal in literature following the model of the Group of Seven Painters active in the 1920s (Norris 16). Stephen Leacock, the most widely known Canadian writer in Hungary (thanks to the first excellent translations by Karinthy Frigyes and his followers) wrote an article in the first issue about "The National Literature Problem in Canada" stressing his preference of Canadian qualities in Canadian literature to clinging to English and American

models and pointing out that Canada cannot close its eyes to the literature of the rest of the world (Norris 17). In the second issue readers could be updated about the current literary atmosphere of Paris thanks to Leon Edel's "Montparnasse Letter". The list of their literary models included Joyce, Pound, T. S. Eliot and Huxley as well as Hemingway and G. B. Shaw (Norris 16–17). The new decade—the Depression era—marked the end of the first period of Modernism in Canada. The culture of little magazines resumed after about half a decade—with a significant shift: women came to play a crucial role as editors and contributors alike (vid. Irvine, 2008).

> [T]he international contexts of modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures permeate the literary and editorial work of women in Canada. […] Many editors (both male and female) in Canada designed their magazines on the models of their predecessors and contemporaries in the United States and England. […] the character of their little-magazine cultures is not just imitative but innovative […] generative of alternative local and national communities of writers, editors, and readers. (Irvine, 2008, 6)

"the age's guide and grammar" (József Attila)

After the end of the First World War, the position of Szeged changed radically: it became a border town and part of the university of Kolozsvár was moved over to the banks of the river Tisza. Within Hungarian culture, which has always occupied a marginal position in the European perspective, culture in Szeged in many respects would qualify as 'border culture'. The political background in the 1920s was tellingly referred to as 'white terror', implying not only a severe censorship of newspapers, journals and theatrical performances, but also imprisonment and forced exile for artists and thinkers who did not surrender to the regime (e.g. Kassák Lajos, the most distinguished figure of Hungarian avant-garde, founder of the journal *A Tett* in late 1915, was first imprisoned, then fled to Vienna to found *Ma*, another avant-garde journal in May 1920).

In the early 1920s Szeged could boast of three generations of outstanding poets and writers—many of the aspiring new poets and artists had not yet graduated from high school, some of them were expelled from school or university because of their rebellious artistic convictions but they could contribute to (mainly short-lived) experimental journals. In the interwar period in Szeged 26 journals or weeklies appeared with a section

devoted to literature (poetry, stories and essays alike): half of them had only one issue, and only six could survive for 5 years.

On November 1st, 1922, *Szegedi költők versei*, an anthology of 56 poems by 13 poets (edited by Keck J. G.) came out, containing 4 works by József Attila (he was included thanks to Juhász Gyula, best-known figure of the 'old generation'). The young contributors of the volume, together with Juhász Gyula a few days later formed the 'Tömörkény Society'—just to be banned within no time as a result of protesting letters and newspaper articles of extreme right groups. The publisher of the anthology did not give in: the next journal, *Csönd*, first published in January 1923, with three issues altogether, claimed that "we do believe that Szeged does have a reading public with a thirst for literature […] and is strong enough to raise young talents to the national scene" (cited by Pásztor 161). József Attila, still at the very beginning of his career, was most enthusiastic—the first issue published two of his poems and in a personal letter he expressed his hope that "after graduating from high school, most probably I will become editor-in-chief of the journal" (quoted by Pásztor, 162). That did not happen, but the very first review of his first individual volume of poetry was published in the last issue of *Csönd* by Kormányos István who claimed that "world literature of our days is oscillating towards a new classical poetry that would incorporate from widely diverse directions all that is useful and good and lasting for ages. We do believe that József Attila is the forerunner" (*Csönd*, no. 3, 49). Within a short time it became obvious that the artists gathering around this journal would form two groups—one believing in 'l'art pour l'art', the other in 'l'art pour homme' as a member and later highly acclaimed theatre theoretician and metteur-en-scène, Hont Ferenc put it (Pásztor 163). This latter grouping formed a creative community called 'Igen' (Yes) and organized a matinee performance of introduction in the local theatre, using *Színház és Társaság*, a programme weekly since 1919 (after 1923 edited and published by Koroknay József) that included some short works of literature (among others, published the very first poem in print by József Attila) as their 'loudspeaker'. This same weekly brought out the first review of József Attila's rebellious volume, tellingly entitled *Nem én kiáltok* ('It's not me shouting'). The programme weekly thus informed a relatively wide readership not only about upcoming events, but exposed them to the latest tendencies in poetry and prose, as well as reports from other countries: at Christmas 1924 a young poet and later playwright, Berczeli Anzelm Károly wrote about his experiences in Italy.

In the second part of the 1920s two important journals dedicated mainly to the avant-garde were published in Szeged. They respected the legal conditions of the time: periodicals appearing every month or more frequently had to be reported to authorities 15 days prior to publication—those coming out in longer intervals had to be shown to the legal court only before being distributed. Even so, court cases frequently followed—in 1938 a stricter act of censorship made political decisions easier, which is why in the following years the number of anthologies, almanachs, yearbooks and calendars increased (Pásztor 10).

The new university hired 35-year old Zolnai Béla as chairman of the French Department in 1925 who immediately started to play an active role in the cultural life of Szeged. The following year professors and talented students of the university together with writers residing in town formed 'Széphalom-Kör' (the name refers to a decisive place of the Hungarian Reform Age in the early 19th century), and in January 1927 they launched their journal, *Széphalom*, which aimed at spreading information about contemporary world literature, offering a forum for young talents (including 6 poems by Radnóti Miklós) and inviting the most highly acclaimed Hungarian poets and critics of the day, like Babits Mihály, Kosztolányi Dezső, Szabó Lőrinc and Szerb Antal.

In the second part of the 1920s the economical prospects of the country, and especially of provincial towns and villages were rapidly decreasing, the number of unemployed educated people grew day by day. A group of students with a strong interest in sociology and folklore founded the Szegedi Alföldkutató Bizottság ('Szeged Research Committee of the Plain') in 1927 and launched the journal *Népünk és Nyelvünk* ('Our People and Language') in 1929, edited by Bibó István who later became a decisive figure of political science in Hungary. They carried out field work in the neighbouring small villages and farmsteads (e.g. Tápé where Kodály Zoltán started his folksong recording activities in 1905). In the meantime (March 20th, 1928), another group of radical youth formed Bethlen Gábor Kör under the leadership of graphic artist Buday György who believed that the most important objective was to bridge the great physical and intellectual gap between people living in towns and in villages—he found that the job could be done only by the new generation who should get involved in a scientific research programme about life in the rural areas situated around the town (based on the model of the settlement movement in England the leaders of which Buday met in London in 1928) (Csaplár 22–24). The results of the first

sociological field work were published in the spring of 1930—a few months later, the Szegedi Fiatalok Művészeti Kollégiuma ('Art College of Szeged Youth') was founded by Buday and 14 other enthusiastic young people, who immediately started to organize series of lectures and discussions about art, exhibitions and publications (Csaplár 31).

In September 1930 Radnóti Miklós and Baróti Dezső started their studies at the University of Szeged and joined the literary circle around Professor Sík Sándor, an exceptional man with European perspective. In the following years, members of the group organized cultural events in small villages and rural areas including lectures about the folklore of the region (Ortutay Gyula), the social situation of American women (by Tomori Viola, 1934), accompanied by sociological photos by Kárász Judit, wood-cuts by Buday György, and even a lecture about Canadian agriculture. The events were interdisciplinary, crossing the borderline between scientific research, theatre art and photography, or graphic art. The College published a calendar each year between 1929 and 1938, launched a series of books of plays, and several members started an active period of publishing individual volumes. In 1931 Buday's pictures inspired by the annual religious festival in Szeged (*Boldogasszony búcsúja*), published by Kner Imre's prestigeous company in a nearby small town was selected among the three most beautiful books of the year by Magyar Bibliofil Társaság. The same year (April 11th, 1931), however, Radnóti Miklós was charged with blasphemy and obscenity in his volume of poetry *Újmódi pásztorok éneke* (Csaplár 40–46, 68). He was found guilty and condemned to 8 days of prison (suspended for three years)—Horger Antal, professor of linguistics, responsible for József Attila's expulsion from the university, wanted to do the same with Radnóti, but Sík Sándor prevented him from carrying out this scheme.

It was in the field of theatre that the College was able to reach out to a big audience: Hont Ferenc—greatly influenced by French 'mass theatre' (Gémier), by Reinhardt's Salzburg Festival and the stage innovations of Jessner, Piscator and Brecht, as well as Meyerhold and Tayrov—directed *Az ember tragédiája* ('The Tragedy of Man') by Madách Imre with Buday's scenery on the enormous square in front of the newly built 'Votive Church' in Szeged for an audience of about 6 thousand on August 26th, 1933. Hont first put forward the idea of an open-air theatre festival in Szeged in the already quoted journal, *Széphalom* arguing that "not far from Szeged we have a border with two different countries where big numbers of Hungarians live. The open-air festival of Szeged should bring

these masses regularly to be exposed to Hungarian culture." (263). His intention was to use the above mentioned European models, but not to copy them, and stressed that the future festival should offer "an exceptional artistic experience" (263) to its audience. Although there were some ups and downs and disruptions of the festival, it has been a summer attraction ever since. Its fortune can serve as a telling demonstration of the impact of a tiny group of young avant-garde intellectuals on the cultural life of a medium-sized provincial town in Southern Hungary.

With this positive note it may be of use to recall the initial idea of 'marginal' or 'border modernism' and conclude that both examples support the importance of closely-knit communities of writers, poets and other artists in the formation of not only regional, but also national culture during the interwar period. The Montreal group of poets had everyday contacts with French culture in the city, as well as with new ways of artistic self-expression in the United States and in Europe. Members of the Szeged College experienced the new border-position of the town, and travelled to big European cities (London, Paris, Rome) to see in what direction modern art (and society) were developing. Both small communities claimed it their mission to spread ideas about a new way of representation in arts and their activities resulted in including their bigger communities, the city and the town on the map of Modern art.

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GEORGE MELNYK

URBANITY IN POSTMODERN CANADIAN CINEMA: DENYS ARCAND'S *JÉSUS DE MONTRÉAL*

You never get away from where you come from[1]
Denys Arcand

For Denys Arcand Montreal is an adopted city. He was raised in the village of Deschambault on the St. Lawrence River, not far from Quebec City. According to his biographer, Réal La Rochelle, he also made the village his home when he was forging his career as a filmmaker from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s. Yet he had spent his high school and college years (1950s) in Montreal and he had worked there, first for the National Film Board, and later as an independent filmmaker. He came to Montreal as a student migrant from rural Quebec, a psychological and cultural space that prided itself on its devout Catholicism, the preservation of the French language, the sanctity of the traditional family and a veneration of the land as the fundamental elements of French-Canadian identity. In Arcand's case this conservative, rural foundation clashed in a creative way with the sophisticated and self-important urbanity of Montreal and its Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Arcand brought the two opposing forces together in the form of a new, critical, personal consciousness—an awareness of the problems inherent in both. That is why Arcand's films display a contrarian's dual allegiance—to the weight of the past and its values and to the present with its conflicted and profoundly diverse sensibilities. He is comfortable in neither.

[1] Quoted in *Denys Arcand: A Life in Film*, Réal La Rochelle, tr. Alsion Strayer (Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2004) 42.

His signature film, *Jésus de Montréal* (1989), which followed on his Oscar-nominated film *Le decline de l'empire américain* (1986) explored the seemingly vain and hedonistic pursuits of urbane academics.[2] In 1989, after completing *Jésus de Montréal* he described the meaning of the film held for him:

> *Jesus of Montreal* was born from juxtaposing with the themes of the Passion according to Saint Mark, my memories of life as an altar boy in a remote village that had been Catholic for centuries, and my daily experience as a filmmaker in a big cosmopolitan city. I will always be nostalgic about that time of my life, when religion provided a soothing answer to the most insolvable problems, while remaining quite aware of how much obscurantism and demagogy these false solutions contained… Through the thick fog of the past, I hear the echo of a profoundly disturbing voice…All my films exude this loss of faith. It's always with me.[3]

Arcand uses the idea of juxtaposition to express his own experiences of intellectual and cultural migration from one context to another, both contexts residing in the same national identity. When these elements are juxtaposed as they are in Arcand, a current is produced—a flow between two antithetical polarities. This current may be equated with Arcand's personal trajectory, an evolution that parallels that of Quebec as it rose after 1960 from a long period of "obscurantism and demagogy" toward a newly found cosmopolitanism and by the 1990s, a self-made place in the world's globalized economy.[4] This is the flow of modernism into postmodernism.

From Arcand's statement Montreal appears as the city where he lost his original, born-into faith. But the faith that he lost was a traditional one, associated with a repressed past, village life and childhood, that in adulthood he considers dysfunctional and empty. In *Jésus de Montréal* he posits another faith—fresh, alive and engaged. It is Christian to a profound degree but it is not dogmatic or catechismic. It is a "heretical"

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[2] For the sake of easy identification, all French-language Quebec films that were released with an English title, whether simply subtitled or dubbed, will be referred to by their English titles.

[3] La Rochelle, *Denys Arcand*, 44.

[4] Scott MacKenzie argues that both *Decline* and *Jesus* are examples of the internationalization of Quebec cinema and identity. See Scott MacKenzie, *Screening Quebec: Québécois moving images, national identity, and the public sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 173.

interpretation stripped of clerical encrustation and naked in its purity. Arcand achieves this revitalized sense of Christian values and devotion by blending the past (the New Testament story of two thousand years ago) with the present (Montreal today), the religious (the Passion of Christ) with the secular (the theatre), the rural (Mont Royal) with the urban (from the soup kitchen to the revolving restaurant). The concept of losing one's faith becomes for Arcand a rediscovery, a return to his lost faith's fundamentals, that makes him re-Christianized or reborn. Montreal is turned into a city of faith and the film that Arcand conceived and wrote a kind of Sermon on the Mount, in this case Mont Royal Park.

The great Quebec filmmaker, Jacques Brault, has described Arcand's films as "a kind of history project on modern Quebec" but that history has been volatile, revolutionary, and modernizing. Arcand has experienced it directly in his own life and viewed that experience from his religious background rather than from the perspective of any adopted ideology.[5] In *Jésus de Montréal* he confronts both the dried-up Catholicism of the past and the empty secularism of his adulthood with equal condemnation. He connects his two worlds by universalizing or eternalizing the Christian message. By situating the Passion story in the present context and stripping away the past (Roman Jerusalem) Arcand has removed the distancing of history and turned the narrative into a mythological metaphor of the human condition applicable at all times and everywhere. Rather than create a period piece on Christ as other filmmakers have done Arcand has created a contemporary drama, which is what the original biblical narrative was for its writers. By situating the Passion story in Montreal the historical and cultural differences between Jerusalem and Montreal are erased. The moral choices in the biblical narrative remain applicable today. Arcand's view that the religio-centric world of his Dupleissis-era childhood and the secularized world of Levesque-era adulthood are not far apart is rooted in a Catholic belief that historical change or progress is transitory and unimportant from a spiritual perspective and that history is the home of unchanging, flawed and sinful human nature. We are not watching history, Arcand might say; we are watching reality.

Arcand's sensitivity to the biblical story infuses the film with the Christian gospel of love. Situating Christ's Passion in the contemporary world as a problematic play within a daily drama that reflects the play and

[5] Ibid, 64.

its actors is an innovation that elevates the metaphoric power of creativity to new heights. When Norman Jewison tried to deal with the same subject in his film adaptation of the musical *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, some twenty years earlier, the result was not half as powerful. Maybe it was simply the lack of gravitas associated with the musical form (the Passion was never contemporized but left in its historical period) or even Jewison's own Protestant English background that somehow could not raise the material to its tragic heights. It would seem that a devout Catholic upbringing like Arcand's, albeit rejected, and his subsequent immersion in a dynamic, secular Montreal lifestyle were the two forces that could generate such a sense of angst and profound insight. When the intensity of urbanity meets the burning coals of its rural nemesis, the sparks lead to fire.

The inaugural spark in Arcand's urbanity was his traditional Jesuit education.

"I owe what I am to them." he has remarked.[6] The Jesuits, as he relates, introduced him to the power of Italian neo-realism in its heyday. For this rural migrant the relatively educated and cosmopolitan interests of his Jesuit teachers were a breakthrough, while the artistry of post-war Italian cinema with its intense Catholic context provided a bridge to a new world. He walked across it quickly attracted by the possibilities of individual creativity. It was urbanity that opened Arcand's eyes to cinema (Quebec had a law against children attending movie theatres). It wasn't Hollywood but European cinema at an advanced level (cleric-initiated film clubs were popular venues for students to mingle) that appealed to the young intelligentsia. When Arcand joined the ONF at the age of 21 he went to the only place in the country where he could become a filmmaker, a documentarist, because Canada did not have a feature film industry at that time. What he had been viewing in the film clubs of his university years did not exist in Quebec, but the birth of the Quiet Revolution and its slogan of "Maitres chez nous" was a rallying cry that pointed in the direction of self-expression and the possibility of creating something that did not exist.

The National Film Board (ONF), which was making Montreal its new organizational home with a distinct French-language production unit, was the second urbanizing factor. The sixties were a time of cinematic renewal with new developments in the documentary mode, especially the approach termed *cinéma directe*, which emphasized populist subjects and

[6] Ibid. 66.

narrative spontaneity. The renewal was fueled by this cinematographic innovation and the new cadre of daring, young filmmakers, who knew each other and worked together. The nationalist impulse was exploding in Quebec in the radical sixties and it culminated in the October Crisis of 1970. This impulse to turn the province from its old identity as French-Canadians to a new national identity as an independent Quebec was widespread and profound, especially among the cultural and intellectual elite to which Arcand belonged. Added to this heady mix was the rebirth of Quebec feature films, incubated by the ONF, of which Claude Jutra's masterful *Mon oncle Antoine* (1970) is the most famous. Cultural self-assertion was no longer limited to television, literature, the stage and music but came to include narrative cinema. Arcand's association with the ONF taught him his craft, but also generated the desire to go beyond the documentary mode. The sixties were about removing the old restrictions in whatever form and Arcand was swept up in that energizing process of cultural liberation.

The third element in Arcand's urbanity was the political revolution centred in Montreal—the movement for Quebec independence, which in the radical 60s, was decidedly leftist and national liberation-oriented. When Arcand did his working-class ONF documentary *On est au coton* in 1970 he acknowledged the importance of the factory worker, something that was *au courant* in the ideological milieu of the time. His hard-hitting portrayal of women workers in a cotton mill was so controversial that the ONF refused to release it. The original was finally shown in 1994 and only released in 2004. While still living in his native village of Deschambault he also wrote and directed *Réjeanne Padovani*, a film about a Montreal mobster and then a year later (1974) he came out with *Gina*, a docu-drama about the censorship of *Coton*. Every one of these films is Montreal-centric. Arcand even did a short film on a hospital workers labour dispute in the eastern townships. But it was not until the electoral radicalism of the 1970s (the triumph of Renée Levesque's PQ) ended with the loss of the 1980 independence referendum that the Arcand was able to express the contradictions of the new Quebec with his own vision. The palpable disappointment over the public's hesitancy over independence was a catalyst for self-reflection and self-criticism. The promise had been overturned by reality and this provoked a sense of satirical relief from the seriousness of the political project with which Arcand had sympathesized.

Le déclin de l'empire américain was his breakthrough 1986 film. It represented the second, and to date the most creative, stage of his career. *Jésus* followed quickly on its heels. His friend and biographer, La Rochelle believes that both films and *Jésus* in particular is "intimately linked to Montreal…"[7] That intimacy is worth exploring because of what the term intimacy implies—closeness, understanding, compatibility, and even revelation. Eventually both films were linked to his most successful and much later film—*Les invasions barbares* (2003), which won an Oscar for best foreign film.[8] In a chapter of his biography titled "Denys of Montreal" La Rochelle points out that "most of Arcand's films take place in Montreal, which is certainly the case in his feature films."[9]

The characters in *Le déclin* are intellectually trendy academics who live in the city but retreat to the countryside for a good time that ends in serious self-reflection. The retreat to the countryside (to the same abode used in *Le déclin*) also plays a key role in *Les invasions barbares* and if we consider Mont Royal Park a symbolism of rurality in *Jésus* we have representations of the rural in each film of the trilogy. This suggests that the duality in his worldview described earlier in this chapter is presented in each film. In all three films, the city is presented as a place of ideological fashionableness and spiritual emptiness, a place crying out for redemption in some fundamental way, while the rural countryside is presented as a place for introspection and conviviality, a place of human community, which the city lacks. We work and struggle to achieve in the city, Arcand seems to be saying, while in nature we find ourselves with ours in moments of peace. It is as if humanity needs this rural connection as a place to reflect on the drama of life. This approach parallels his own life up to the mid-eighties, where the village allowed for creativity, while the city was the locus of cinematic production.

In *Jesus of Montreal* it is Mont Royal (origin of the name 'Montreal'), a park which overlooks the city and on which is planted a huge cross

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[7] Ibid. 190.

[8] The argument for considering the three films a trilogy is made by George Melnyk, *One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 142 and confirmed by La Rochelle, *Denys Arcand* who also believes that *Jesus of Montreal* forms a diptrych with *The Decline* [and *Barbarian Invasions*] 190. The initial script for *Barbarian Invasions* was written in 1991, a year after the release of *Jesus of Montreal*, 200.

[9] La Rochelle, *Denys Arcand*, 192.

symbolizing the city's connection to Christianity that may be considered the equivalent of the countryside or the rural. While the city is the opposite of the country, the city retains natural spaces. Likewise in the dichotomy of past and present, the past of a city is retained in old architecture and design, even as new buildings go up. The enactment of the drama of the Cross on Mont Royal authenticates Montreal as a version of Jerusalem because the original crucifixion occured "outside" the city at the hill of Golgotha so as not to stain the sacredness of the city. The parallels in time and place arise out of Arcand's own contradictory duality—the rural past and the urban present.

The centrality of Montreal to Arcand's cinema of contradictions is described metaphorically by La Rochelle as "… the cocoon of his intellectual and artistic training…the flip side of Deschambault-de-Portneuf…"[10] One may view Arcand's urban experience as a kind of permeation or penetration, a barbarian invasion of his originating psyche. Urbanity began as an assault on his traditional upbringing but it was not completely victorious. It ended up being transformed by the persistence of that earlier upbringing into a vital mythology or metaphor—the city of faith. The energizing and optimistic urban secularity Arcand experienced in the 1960s destroyed the identity he had brought with him to the city but then it left him dissatisfied, questioning the substitutes for religion that modernization offered him. Arcand highlighted the conflict when he said that "secularity is doubtless the most obvious acquisition of the Quiet Revolution."[11] Beginning with *Le décline*, culminating in *Jésus*, and then reiterated in *Les invasions*, Arcand presented secularity as a spiritual poison equivalent to the poison of traditional Catholicism, a hypocrisy that demanded confrontation and exposure. The Quiet Revolution's triumph of secularity over religion is presented in *Jésus de Montréal* as a fundamentally empty triumph. For Arcand replacing the cassock with a business suit is not a sign of authentic progress. The artist despises both, though both are entrenched in him as his fundamental identity.

The plot of the film centers on an actor named Daniel (Lothaire Bluteau), who is recruited by a cleric to rejuvenate an annual Passion Play. Like Christ, Daniel collects a disparate group of actors engaged in various unappealing jobs and turns them into vehicles and examples of his message. The production proves popular but its interpretation of the

[10] Ibid, 192.
[11] Ibid. 274.

Gospels is heretical and is closed down by the priest. During the closure Daniel is injured and eventually dies. The film contains a number of scenes that appear in the New Testament, including Christ's driving the moneychangers out of the Temple, while a scene in the Montreal Metro serves as a symbolic tomb from which Daniel 'arises' much like Christ did. Bill Marshall, in his magisterial *Quebec National Cinema* claims that the film seems to be "a reworking of an old myth" rather than exploring something new.[12] "Reworking" is an understatement for what Arcand has done in the film. While the life of Christ has been told cinematically before, the success of Arcand's retelling comes from its profound connection to French-Canadian culture. Without his deep Catholic roots, the reverence with which Arcand imbues the film would be totally lacking. While attacking clerical hypocrisy the film (he equates the Catholic priest with the Temple priests of Christ's day) Arcand is able to build an overpowering Christian imagery, using a contemporary venue and the conceit of a play within a play/movie. Marshall feels the film does not contain any "new cultural hybridities", which makes it un-postmodern for its time.[13] The film may not be postmodern ideologically, but it is obviously postmodern in structure, plot and characterization. Its approach is multi-layered and complex. Considering Arcand's background in both the old world of French-Canada and the new world of the Québécois, plus his personal trajectory within this profound historical change, one can see that the film is an expression of a deeply-rooted culture meeting the contemporary world, rather than that of a minority voice filled with postcolonialist critique. Aswell, a postmodern retelling of Christ's last days filled with sociologically valid cultural hybridities may have muted the dialogue that Arcand was engaged in with his own people, the creators of the new, secular, post-Quiet Revolution Quebec.

Marshall confirms this when he states that the film cast Montreal itself "as a generalized *Cité*, a place of sin, corruption, modest heroics…" and that its representation in the film is "crucial to an understanding of the relationship between modernity and postmodernity."[14] Montreal is the place where modernization and secularization are born and triumph. Marshall points out that Montreal, prior to the Quiet Revolution, was a

[12] Bill Marshall, *Quebec National Cinema* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001) 294.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid, 297.

strange place for rural French-Canadians because of its Anglo economic domination. This domination by the Other was an excuse for its being viewed as different from the rest of Quebec—the authentic, real Quebec. What Arcand did in *Jésus* was bring that sense of urban strangeness, that aura of temptation and distraction, into the broader Quebec identity from which he had been alienated. Montreal was not longer some outside dark force that had to be resisted. It was a dark force that resided within the body politic itself and included every Quebecker. The historic changes may have been initiated by the city and its elite, but in the end it embraced everyone, often with majority approval. So secularity was no longer the "fault" of the Other. Montreal was now a world created by the new Québécois, in which the Other had been reduced to a distinct minority. A Francophone state and an indigenous Francophone capitalism were at the heart of the new Montreal and the mastery that the Quiet Revolution demanded. Arcand the moralist was confronting a new self that all Francophone Quebeckers shared.

The claustrophobic world of Claude Jutra's *Mon oncle Antoine*, set in the old rural Quebec that Arcand knew as a boy, stands in sharp contrast to the commercially vibrant Montreal of *Jésus* some 40 years later. In the former the *maudits anglais* cast a shadow that suggested an outward cause of dysfunction, death and hopeless imprisonment, while in the latter the source of evil is within francophones themselves but for whom there is a way to salvation and change. If the postmodernist vision reflects positively on the diversity brought on by modernization and secularism, Arcand responds in this film with an innate pessimism about the human condition. He carries within himself the moralist's ahistorical critique of progress. He tends to see an unchanging human condition in which the results of being *maitres chez nous* become pathetic, if not empty. In contrast he posits simple human love and caring, a moral order that makes sense.

Arcand begins his film with a moral order in which Montreal parallels the moral order of Jerusalem in Jesus's day. The spiritual emptiness of theatre goers, who only see the superficiality of fame, and the commercial ritual of Montreal are equated with moral climate created by secular progress. Values are commercial rather than emotional. This city as vice implies the city as faith, where humans test themselves against the temptations and desires of modernity. In *Jésus* eternity wins.

Pierre Nepveu and Gilles Marcotte, editors of *Montréal Imaginaire*, believe that Montreal is the ur-city of Quebecois identity, which may be

why it serves as such as strong metaphor for the collective unconscious. "Montréal n'est pas tout; elle est peut-être l'image du tout," they write.[15] They call the city "la ville-mère, la ville-marie" emphasizing the city's sacredness by using its original European name associated with the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.[16] Montreal as the city of the Mother of God becomes a city of sin that requires salvation. The city is made to carry this quality to the exclusion of other qualities in order to manufacture a stage or platform on which drama can occur. The loss of faith (we are all sinners) and the finding of faith (we are all redeemable) are the polarities that Arcand juxtaposes and unites in his highly sympathetic treatment of human beings as failed creatures. The emptiness of secular Montreal and its fullness as a spiritual place requires the other just like belief and non-belief need each other in order to stand out. The conflict between the two forces turns the film into a catalyst for what one academic calls "…greater debate about the cultures in which they [the films] are produced, screened and seen."[17] Arcand's film is meant to raise discussion, to challenge conventional truisms and hype, to create an arena of debate. His audience is one whose culture is firmly rooted in Christian mythology. The inheritors of that culture can respond to his imagery. In 1989, when he made this film, the multi-racial world that is now Montreal was only emerging. The film looks back onto the previous twenty years rather than looking at the future.

Arcand's imagining of Montreal is both historically specific and universal in a mythological sense. He creates a universal entity that is an all-encompassing venue for human life (the city), but then he overlays this identity with a historically accurate reality, which is Montreal in 1990. But this imagining is rooted in his rural past because the city that is not his birth place. Simon Harel of the *Université du Québec à Montréal* writes about the Anglophone and Allophone realities of Montral in his essay "La parole orpheline de l'ecrivain migrant."[18] What he has to say about immigrant writers, who have made Montreal their home, has

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[15] Pierre Nepvew et Gilles Marcotte, *Montréal imaginaire: Ville et literature* (Montreal: Fides, 1992) 7. "Montreal isn't everything; but it is probably the image of everything." (My translation).

[16] Ibid.

[17] MacKenzie, *Screening Québec*, 5.

[18] Simon Harel, "La parole orpheline de l'ecrivain migrant" in Nepveu et Marcotte, *Montréal imaginaire* .

relevance and application to Arcand's migrant situation. Sociologically, linguistically, ethnically and geographically Montreal was distinct from the rest of Quebec society, including Quebec City, because of its post-conquest diversity, which does not exist in the rest of the province, the Eastern Townships notwithstanding. Its heterogeneity has made it a kind of Other.[19] Arcand is part of one part of Montreal—the Francophone part. And when he describes the Allophone part (the Jewish hospital) in the film, he presents it as a successful opposite. The Other of the Other City seems much less chaotic and conflicted than his own reality in Francophone Montreal.

If one considers Arcand as an internal exile from the old Quebec, that non-Montreal Quebec, he must somehow make Montreal his own. His understanding is based on being an outsider and that kind of consciousness is often critical, aware of the failings and the problems glossed over by official interpretations. A postcolonial writer would write of the racism and hardships facing his or her group. Arcand can't do that but he can find something problematic with his own group, just as Mordecai Richler did in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. It is fair to say that Arcand's initial *not being at home* in Montreal and later making Montreal a home suggests a process of *liberation* from the past that allows him to embrace the present as the past's equal. He does not pine for the past. He critiques it. He does not laud the present. He critiques it. The self that the artist creates that says something positive is one that is neither the self of the past nor the self of the present. It is always, Harel argues, the self of the future—the potential, possible or idealized self.[20] That is why there is a hopeful message at the end of the film, a hopefulness that bespeaks a biblical redemption. The artist in a new land wants to find a place where the new world makes sense. For Arcand *Jésus* and *Le déclin* before it are the two films that allow him to do that self-consciously and with artistic integrity.

In *Jésus* the hybridity and multilingual reality of the city has only one expression—when Daniel is taken to the non-French hospital because the French one is overcrowded and hopeless. In the hospital of the non-

[19] Ibid. 389.

[20] Harel claims that the immigrant writer creates a space of potentiality in order to deal with being a stranger. It is the place where conflicting identities are resolved. (398). The ironic reality is that this idealized resolution for place—a dreamed place of happiness is only a dream, a fantasy.

French Other he gets good treatment. The rest of the film takes place within a total Francophone context. Again we have Arcand's primarily binary universe, in which there must be some small presence of otherness to make the narrative work. Mont Royal as the symbol of the rural is not a significant presence but a vital one, all the same. Likewise the Jewish hospital is not a dominant reality, but a vital one for the meaning of the film. It is as if Arcand's roots in another Quebec must appear in his films like a cameo appearance that he cannot do without.

Montreal as the place of familiarity and difference has its ethnic divisions, but these divisions are not presented as spiritually fundamental, whatever their sociological import. What is fundamental is the over-arching moral crisis that requires salvation and it is this crisis that imparts a unity to Montreal, a singularity that floats above ethnic divisions. In commenting about his 2003 film *Les invasions barbares*, also set in Montreal, Arcand said that "After Duplessis and the Church, Quebec woke up to a world without structure…"[21] He has returned a "structure" to the new Quebec, which is a distilled or purified version of its religious past. Arcand entered Montreal from a francophone reality and remained within that reality. He took his sense of the sacred, that Catholic upbringing, and transferred it to a diverse environment, whose diversity he saw from one side only. His Montreal is both sacred and secular, both a spirit and a living society. The sacredness of the film is diegetic—an envelope that surrounds the audience with spiritually. The secular is dialogical, because it involves the elements that specify time, place and people or actors. But the dialogical, because it is symbolic, is clothed in the diegetic myth of the Passion. In this way the city's Métro is both Christ's and Daniel's tomb (sacred) and a subway (secular). The actor Daniel is both an actor (secular) and a saintly embodiment of Christ (sacred). Mont Royal is both a park and Golgotha. Montreal is both the city of the temple (Jerusalem) and Sodom and Gomorrah, the city of sin. In this way the Montreal of Arcand cannot be the Montreal of others—of Anglophone writers like Hugh MacLennan or Allophone writers like Mordecai Richler. But what Arcand, who speaks out of the majority, shares with these minority writers is what Harel sees as melancholy and what the English Canadian film scholar, Jim Leach, calls "ingrained pessimism."[22] The tragic is appealing to a writer, who feels estranged.

[21] La Rochelle, *Denys Arcand*, 273.

[22] Jim Leach, *Film in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006) 114.

Jésus de Montréal is not about happiness. It is about suffering leading to a spiritual awakening and human transformation. With its message of hope and resurrection (Daniel's organs are transplanted into those who require them) the film parallels the mood of the Biblical story very closely. Personal sacrifice is the main idea. The interaction of the divine and the human (the basic binary that underlays Arcand's other binaries) results in a world of "double vision" with two opposing, but united aspects constantly at play, thus allowing the audience to view any event in the film from either the secular or the sacred side.[23] In fact, one can say that the whole thrust of the film is a display of how the secular is redeemable through divine intervention. Daniel, the actor, is mysteriously transformed from his secular occupation as an actor into a divine mission as a saviour of compatriots. In this way Arcand's retelling of the Passion becomes a sermon and he a priest or better still, an evangelist like the official authors of the New Testament.

What may be valuable to an understanding of the way *Jésus of Montréal* operates as the transition between Arcand's rural childhood and his urban adulthood is how both his earlier film *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* and his later film *Les Invasions barbares* while being Montreal-centric offer a certain spiritual primacy to the rural—in both cases the same country retreat where the same characters from both films gather to reflect and celebrate conviviality and community. At the country retreat the unilingual universe of

Quebec's secularized intellectual elite seems to be a reflection of the old modernist Catholicism because of its homogeneity. Here the old world retains some currency.

But this country retreat does not exist in *Jésus*. Here the rural is a hilltop park, nature within the metropolis. But it plays the same role as the country house—it is a space of spiritual understanding far from the economic and political interests of the day. For Arcand Mont Royal is a sacred place and by sacred he means the urban-surrounded space left for nature.

[23] Leach considers Arcand's trademark approach as being one of a "double vision" or presenting things in a dual way. Ibid. 118.

Death and Redemption in the City of Faith

A closer examination of one or two key scenes and characterizations brings out the sense of what a city of faith means for Arcand, of how Christian narrative and symbolism embues the film's *mis en scene* and how death is the overarching partner of redemption. *Jésus de Montréal* begins with a theatrical production in which the protagnist commits suicide because of despair. The film ends with a character, also an actor in a play (and a film) who dies for the sake of others. The two deaths that anchor either ends of the narrative are contrasted in a theological way—the former condemned for its hopelessness and the latter held up as a model for how to redeem oneself and others. In both cases the paradigm of a play creates a church-like sanctuary for a ritual performance. In the beginning play there is nothing but sin, while in the concluding play there is complete hope and a sense of salvation. Goodness replaces bleakness. Arcand creates a moral dichotomy by having the audience for the first play praise the actor for his portrayal of a suicide, while not being touched by its moral implications. In contrast the audience for the second, Christ-like death is non-existent, except for a few loyal fellow actors, who have been converted to Daniel's Christian view of the world. This is Arcand's reflection of both the original Christian text and his own critique of secular society. The public speaks socially approved platitudes in the first play, while it stands silent and distant at the end of the second. The audience for Daniel's Passion performance is moved genuinely before the play is closed down, but it does not act in a transformative way. It absorbs but does not return. Only his fellow actors, who become disciples of his values, are there for him. When death takes on divine overtones, its meaning is conveyed to others, who have been inspired to spread the message. The theology of the film suggests that one can make one's death an imitation of a divine death by dying for others rather than just for oneself.

The Catholicism that underpins the whole film is one that contains traditional elements and also contra-traditional elements. The following scene expresses that curious blend of past and present Quebec that inhabits the film. When Daniel meets the priest, who wants to reinvigorate the Passion Play and so increase audiences, the two meet in a cathedral-like church. The vast space itself is empty except for the two of them. On the one hand, the scene is a reflection of the old piety of

Quebec, expressed in grand churches. On the other hand, the church is profoundly empty. It is a contemporary shell that bespeaks the moral bankruptcy of the priest and the church he represents. The human and the divine spirit is missing and that is what Daniel brings to it. Asking an actor to revitalize the church is surely a strange request that suggests a certain illusionary quality to the project. We don't want real piety, the priest is saying, only the emotional equivalent of relevance that an actor can put on. The priest, of course, is a hypocrite, engaged in an illicit sexual relationship. He does not become a follower, a person who is saved.

The dramatic decline of traditional Catholicism in Quebec is a sociological fact, whose cultural significance Arcand, like others, is struggling to comprehend. The "empty sepulcher" of the Passion is contrasted to the "empty sepulcher" of the church and its priests. In the former the emptying of the tomb brings hope and new life. In the latter the emptiness is a kind of death. The priest has no real hope for genuine renewal. He only wants to look good. Arcand indicates that salvation cannot come from the empty vessel of traditional Catholicism, but from the outside, from those who are morally pure or purified.

Guy Hennebelle, a French film critic, wrote an article in 1975 titled "Le Cinéma Québécois" in which he quoted Jean Chabot, the auteur director of a film titled

Mon Enfance à Montréal as saying that "le cinema canadien-français est mort. Voici maintenant l'ère cinema québécois."[24] Arcand's cinema is clearly of that Quebecois variety, however, the French-Canadian roots of that cinema cannot be hidden or erased from the new identity. It persists and Arcand represents a powerful continuity between the two identities—the traditional one and the modernized one. Without that continuity he could not have "wedded" the story of first century Jerusalem and twentieth century Montreal so effectively, and without that continuity in his own consciousness and that of his primary audience he could not have turned a contemporary Quebec society into a reflection of Judaic society in the Roman era. The line from his past to his present is what gives the narrative its strength and meaning. For some, like Bill Marshall, this may be a drawback and an ethnic limitation, but one can also argue that this singularity creates a dramatic potential filled with universality. The

[24] Guy Hennebelle, *Les cinemas nationaux contre Hollywood* (Paris, Éditions du cerf, 2004) 183.

audience, which is aware of the biblical story, sees itself in that story as much as it sees itself in Montreal. The actors become personifications of ourselves, just as they are personifications of the biblical figures. For an international audience, the Quebec milieu is subsumed by this greater identification with the human condition, while for the Quebec audience this identification is augmented by its sense of being insiders.

Arcand's personal and historic journey from being a French-Canadian to being a Québécois filmmaker is one of transformation, which is the message of the film and the message of the Passion Play itself. Christ was Jewish but his followers founded a new religion based on Judaism that was not Judaic. This is the contradiction of continuity between old and new, whether it be young Arcand and mature Arcand, old Quebec or new Quebec. That continuity is a journey that needs to be read as being within one people. Even though Arcand is trapped by history and his own specificity, the morality he espouses is for all peoples and if he had not experienced the historic, religious transformation of Quebec, he could not have engaged with the theme of transformation in this film in such a profound, multi-layered way. If he had not been a migrant from the past, he could not have viewed the present with such critical force. If he had not been inbued with earlier spiritual values, he could not have challenged contemporary religious reality and made that challenge something eternal.

When a collection of essays titled "The Cinema of Canada" appeared in 2006, a scene from *Jésus* graced the cover.[25] Why the publisher chose this image is unknown, but its selection suggests that the film is somehow identified with Canada today. There is no essay in the book on the film, but there it is on the cover. The image is of the two actors playing Christ and Mary Magdalene in the re-enacted Passion Play touching heads but without any backdrop. The male actor's head is bleeding from a crown of thorns. The Christian reference is clear. The subjects of the image are pain, suffering, death and love. The image is a reminder of the role of death in redemption. In order for redemption to happen something must die. Taken from its religious context and politicized, the image presents Arcand's sense of a deceased traditional nationality and its rebirth of a new Quebec, which in turn must also be redeemed by morality. In this way he ties together biblical themes, historic themes in Quebec, and a statement of personal morality that turns urbanity into *the* site of transformation. It makes Montreal a sacred site, as was its original

[25] Jerry White ed. *The Cinema of Canada* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006)

imagining. No wonder one Russian critic termed him "the last humanist" of current cinema.[26]

When a city is made into a city of a certain faith, in this case Christianity, then there is a concern that this expresses homogeneity or a monolithic reality, which goes against the grain of our current privileging of diversity. Arcand's world may be dual but it is not hybrid. His Montreal is heavily Francophone. But, it may be argued, so was Jerusalem a heavily Jewish city in the Roman occupation period and the biblical story is told within that community's life and within that historical moment. Montreal was originally a French creation like Jerusalem was a Jewish creation but like all cities it underwent historical transformation. When Montreal was captured by the English, as Jerusalem was captured by the Romans, the stories of each city became varied and multiple. But no one need feel that the telling of one aspect of the city's reality is necessarily a diminishment of other aspects. That single aspect is a doorway into a certain reality. Arcand has sought to raise Montreal from a sociological statement to a moral one that encompasses every one, even if it comes from one community. When the priest asks Daniel, the actor, to "update" the Passion Play he gets exactly what he asked for and the film becomes its own "update" because Daniel becomes a Christ-like embodiment. But the curious aspect of this is that the film involves a return to purer forms, whether real or imagined. The film is sent back into the past in a moral way in order to make itself relevant. It is this reverse movement that makes the film so successful. By going into several different pasts (biblical, Quebec, Arcand's) the film becomes filled with meaning. It achieves in its story what the priest wanted only for the play, which became against his desire threatening to the established order. All of this is worked out in the binaries that Arcand inhabits as a Francophone migrant to a Francophone Quebec and which he has ingested.

Arcand and Urbanity

Arcand's urbanity and the urban space of Montreal that he inhabits in his film is only one of numerous inhabitations. The power of his presentation of the city as a site of human conflict comes from his being a migrant from a world that has mostly disappeared. His inherited piety met

[26] La Rochelle, *Denys Arcand*, 281.

its first major secular test in that urban space and resulted in the birth of a different morality that judged the old inadequate and barren. The religious baggage he carried with him to the city, which he never totally jettisoned, was the way to the sacral. Like luggage it sat stored away until it was time to fill it. Arcand recreated a mythological Quebec that expressed the evolution of his own people in a way that could be understood by them, and also appreciated by those who had not undergone that evolution.

In terms of spatiality, visuality and orality, Arcand's urbanity is one that raises spatial practice and representational spaces (e.g. the basilica) to a moral equivalency, where they signify different moral attributes such as hypocrisy. The visuality of the film represents ironic situations and a judgmental tension as the camera sets up scenes of conflict between place and space, public roles and private actions, religious signifiers and urban signs. The orality of the film contrasts the disembodied economy of language used by the Jesus character with the natural excitement and involvement in the moment of the rest of the cast. Among the cultural grammars that play a prominent role in defining the film are gender, national identity, religion, generation, and, of course, genre. The film is a male film based on a male-authored text, written and directed by a male auteur with a male lead that holds the camera on himself. The Christian narrative of the film is overly evident and its Francophone universe is almost all-encompassing. Arcand made this film when he was middle-aged (late forties) and it represents a certain maturity and gravitas that suits the dramatic genre that he uses. The highly symbolic nature of this religious film also works in the dramatic mode, where each scene has the potential to be constructed as carrying portent and meaning. As for the multidisciplinary characteristics of the film the most significant is likely history. The scholar Jim Leach views Arcand's work as infused with historical sensibility.[27] But this infusion is highly philosophical in its end result. One might also say that architecture and fine arts are supporting elements, especially in regard to Shakespeare's comment on life as a stage and all of us actors upon it. Arcand's reflections on theatrical performance in the film are a commentary on both film and the human condition.

The richness of Arcand's urbanity, framed as it is by contemporary urban life as a site of the sacred, is steeped in the religiosity of Quebec's past, as well as his own. No other Canadian filmmaker has come even close to achieving such a mythological statement in an urban film as

[27] Leach, *Film in Canada*, 114.

Arcand has in *Jésus*. It is likely that the polarities of past (Jerusalem and Catholic Quebec) and present (a secularized Montreal) are what give the film its electric energy and spiritual depth. Arcand's migrant urbanity has raised the city in this film to new heights of meaning, far beyond the Quebec nationalist cultural center that it is. He has given it biblical proportions and in so doing he has in a metaphoric way resurrected it from a secular death and associated it with a sense of universal significance.

JUDIT MOLNÁR

MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S RUNNING TO AND AWAY FROM SRI LANKA

Michael Ondaatje in his fictional travel memoir, *Running in the Family* (*RF*) (1982), relates his experiences accumulated during his two visits (1978, 1980) to his place of birth, Ceylon, that has been called Sri Lanka since 1978, "the resplendent land" in Sanskrit. Milica Zivkovic emphasizes that particularly in multicultural writing "[t]here is a need for affirmation of self and *origin*" (97; emphasis added). Later on she quotes (102) from Ondaatje's third novel *The English Patient* (1992) where Hanna, a Canadian nurse, tells the English patient: "Kip [a Sikh sapper] and I are both international bastards—born in one place and choosing to live elsewhere. Fighting to get back to or to get away from our homelands all our lives" (176). Apparently, in Ondaatje's works circular migration i.e. migration in and out of places, is a recurring theme in his attempt to construct a meaningful world in the course of which he dramatizes the problem of multiple cultural identity/ies that are closely connected to places. One is reminded of Homi Bhabha's notion of "the third space" as a space of in-betweenness. ("Location" 36–39)

After his parents' divorce, Ondaatje left Sri Lanka for England at the age of eleven in 1954 together with his mother; he spent most of his adult life far away from his homeland. Not only did he want to get to know more about his family background, particularly about his father, but he also decided to discover his father's *land*. This is a small country in comparison with Canada and India: "Ceylon *falls* on the map and its outline is the shape of a *tear*. After the *spaces* of India and Canada it is so small" (147; emphasis added). This place is invisible; it "falls on a map", exists almost by chance, it is tiny; and its shape is symbolic of its status for Ondaatje as a place of loss. His father used to travel around on his

"infamous" train rides being always drunk with no difficulty from place to place because of the size of the island. In *RF* the author guides the reader by tours to different places in the island whose passages or trajectory is always interrupted; these "stops" become closely associated with meditations of various sorts. This explains why we have the feeling that the narrative "falters" quite often; the narrator's voice has a meandering tendency.

Ondaatje's motivation for his return journey was complex; it was to explore lost places and times: the decades of the 1920s and 1930s. Huggan Graham notes, "The celebratory nature of modern ethnic autobiography must [...] be balanced against its pathos: its sometimes agonized *sense of loss* ("Exoticism" 119; emphasis added). Similarly, what Relph finds important in this regard, certainly holds true for Ondaatje's case. The changing character of places through time is of course related to modifications of buildings and landscapes as well as to changes in our attitudes, and is likely to seem quite *dramatic after a prolonged absence*. On the other hand, the persistence of character of places is apparently related to a continuity to both in our experience ofchange and in the very nature of change that serves to reinforce a *sense of association and attachment to these places.* (31; emphasis added) Ondaatje says that his aim was "to trace the maze of relationships in [his] ancestry" (25). He manages to do so with re/familiarizing himself with a *maze* of *places* that are central to his narrative. To date, most critics with a few exceptional cases have given priority to the colonial and postcolonial social issues embedded in the novel over the spacial dimensions that relate directly to those. By contrast, particular places and spaces will serve as springboards for my analysis, which reads their significance in term of Ondaatje's personal inner journey. The importance of places is reflected also in Ondaatje's choice of subchapter titles among which are many place names like: "*Asia*", "*Jaffna* Afternoons", "*Kegalle*" (i), "*Kegalle*" (ii), "To *Colombo*"," "*Wilpattu*", "*Kuttapitiya*", "Travels in *Ceylon*". Hutcheon notes that Ondaatje "[offers] much about the *geographical* and historical background of Sri Lanka itself [...]". ("Interview" 201; emphasis added) Ondaatje, himself tells us:

> [..] I wanted to establish a kind of *map*, I wanted to make clear that this was just a part of a long tradition of invasions and so forth. So the *map* and the history and the poetry made a more social voice, became the balance to the family story, the other end of the see-saw. (201; emphasis added)

Nancy Pedri suggests: "The coincidence of land and identity across time is nowhere more apparent than in the mapping of the colonized lands [...]" (42). She confirms that *RF* is a text that "[p]rovokes an awareness of the close connection between representation of space and the process of mapping space on the one hand, and the intimate quest for personal and cultural identity on the other" (41). Maps are current in postcolonial literatures both as "symbols of imposed political authority or as metaphors for territorial dispossession" (Huggan "Territorial" 32).

It is not by accident that the frontispiece in this "memory novel" defying classification ("memoir, fiction, history, autobiography, biography") ("Interview" 201) is a spacial design that happens to be an idiosyncratic map of Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Ashcroft claims: "Geography, maps and mapping have arguably had a greater effect on our ways of imagining the world than any other discourse" ("Transformation" 128) What is recognizable on this special map placed right on the very first page? On close scrutiny the reader will acknowledge the fact that this is a good example of cultural cartography. Why is it so? To find the answer I shall rely on Perdy's observations she made in her most important article about "cartographic explorations" (41). She claims:

> The inclusion of an introductory map coupled with extensive commentary on the manipulative processes of cartographic inscription and the indeterminacy of cartographic interpretation provokes an exploration into how the map reader's identity is negotiated within and across the map's lines. (45)

In the following, I would like to concentrate on the visual map on the very first page of the novel. It certainly directs the reading strategy in order to be able to understand the author's goal which is to reclaim his past.

Ondaatje's endeavour was to "augment maps with stories" (Kort 165). The reader should "parse" the map carefully and then one can realize that it is actually a speculative interpretation of the visual image. The mapping "operation" is all the more important because in the process of the narrator's retrieving and reinventing his past the alternative spatial configurations gain more and more importance. Pedri calls our attention to the fact that Ondaatje on "his" map excludes the names of villages "[r]eferred to in the narrative as being inhabited by indigenous peoples (such as *Wattala, Kalutara, Usetakeiyawa* and *Pelmadulla*) [which] indicates that these places and their peoples are not part of his 'official'

map" (52). His unique quest for belonging manifests also in the places he has or has not chosen as important geographical markers on his map; they reflect his own cultural ambivalence. Strangely enough, his map "[d]oes not mark out a space for the indigenous people of Ceylon" (Pedri 53). Jose Rabasa's view is concurrent with that of Pedri's when she says: "Since the totality of the world can never be apprehended as such in a cartographical objectification, maps have significance only within a *subjective* reconstitution of the fragments" (360; emphasis added).

Ondaatje's naming strategy on his map should not be left unnoticed either. Pedri points out that the narrator's linguistic choices do not reflect the cultural mix of the country: Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch, British, and Burgher. (52) Pedri gives two examples for "linguistic digressions": *Ganga* is not accompanied by the English word *river* and *Sigiriya* is used and not the anglicized spelling *Sigiri*. (52; emphasis original) Further on Pedri adds: The introductory map of Ceylon mirrors [...] domination; only the places that are not inhabited by people, namely rivers and the fortified ancient city and palace Sigiriya (c. 459 A.D.) escape English labelling. (54) It makes one wonder whether the narrator's idiosyncratic way of charting his land is intentional or it only accentuates the fictionality of the narrative since "[i]n Sri Lanka a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts" (206) as Ondaatje says in the *Acknowledgements* in his novel. But it may well be that the "untold", "the silenced", and the "selected" bear significance. If so, the narrator takes up a position of power by giving examples of colonial/postcolonial enigmatic mislocations and misnomers. Huggan tends to think that Ondaatje's map "[i]s a questionable concept more closely associated with *rumour* than with truth" ("Territorial" 79; emphasis added). This could be supported by the fact that the first chapter is called: "Asian Rumours". At the same time, one also has to bear in mind that: "[M]aps [...] are unstable products of social, historical and political circumstance" (Huggan, "Territorial" 4).

Huggan differentiates among three possible literary functions that [visual] maps can have: they can be icons, motifs, and metaphors. ("Territorial" 21) I would argue that in Ondaatje's case all the three operate simultaneously. The map as an icon calls our attention to the importance of the geographical location of the narrative and thus "[t]he act of reading the text involves an alternation between verbal and visual codes" (Huggan "Territorial" 21). It is also a motif because it supports "the novel's central theme of hidden truth" (Huggan "Territorial" 24); here it is the narrator's attempt to identify himself spatially and culturally

with his homeland. Map as metaphor for Huggan "could be of control, appropriation of territory" (24). I think this function is more prominent in the non-visual maps in the narrative that delineate the colonial history of Sri Lanka.

Mention should be made of the two epigraphs facing the map as companion pieces generating cartographic imagination. One is by Oderic, a Franciscan Friar, from the 14th century, who is fascinated by the "miraculous things" in the island. He "[t]ransforms the reality of a country into one that suggests myth and fable [...]" (Chelva Kanaganayakam 38) This is followed by and contrasted with a newspaper clipping from *Ceylon Sunday Times* (29.1.78.) in which the Americans are glorified for their knowledge of English and the local people of Sri Lanka are downgraded because their lack of it. In Huggan's view: "The power of language to reconstruct the world, suggests Ondaatje, depends on the power and influence of the society or culture that uses it; the world that is reconstructed by a dominant language is no more 'real'; but the version it produces will almost certainly achieve wider credibility" ("Territorial" 80–1). Similarly Kanaganayakam thinks that the second quotation "[e]xpresses a world view conditioned by centuries of colonial domination" (38). The realities expressed in the two quotations are both true despite the essential differences in their emphases.

It is not only these two epigraphs' sharp contrast with each other that suggests that situating different territories and empowering them with virtues and excellence on the one hand, and impoverishing them on the other hand, are consequences of evasive ideological constructs. As the two quotations differ, Ondaatje's brother's maps of Ceylon in his home in Toronto are not like the author's visual map at the beginning of the text. However, in this case the dubious truth value of the representations are closer to each other. His brother's maps are central to the narrative demonstrating the alternative realities that emerge from maps. As Huggan reminds us, "[w]hile in one sense maps are the products of precise research, in another they are the projects of dreams or visions which, once signed in the name of a dominant culture, acquire the spurious badge of 'truth'" ("Territorial" 80). In the chapter called "Tabula Asiae" Ondaatje describes his brother's "*false maps*". Old portraits of Ceylon" (63; emphasis added). Paul Jay notes, "Ondaatje rarely takes the time to explore Sri Lanka's location as a colonial island and its connection to other locations of British colonialism. One exception is the short chapter entitled 'Tabula Asiae'" (3). Looking at these maps he sees "mythic

shapes [growing] into eventual accuracy" (63). Hutcheon connects this to the fact that Ondaatje is a writer "[w]ho is fascinated with borders, including those between literature and reality" ("Running in the Family" 301). Ondaatje can see the history of many centuries on these maps:

> The maps reveal *rumours of topography*, the routes for invasion and trade, and the dark mad mind of travellers' tales appears throughout Arab and Chinesedand medieval records. The island seduced all of Europe. The Portuguese. The Dutch. The English. And so its name changed, as well as its shape [...]. (64; emphasis added)

The Greek, the Arabs, the Portuguese, the English named the island differently. So it was not only through military invasion that the island was exploited but through "the redefinitional strategies of a dominant language" (Huggan "Territorial" 80). While contemplating in the course of viewing these maps, Ondaatje is reminded of his own past. His ancestors also arrived centuries ago.

> [...] my *own* ancestor arriving in 1600, a doctor who cured the residing governor's daughter with a strange herb and was *rewarded with land*, a foreign wife, a new name which was the Dutch spelling of his own. Ondaatje. (64; emphasis added)

As Huggan interprets it, "The 'exotic' maps of old Ceylon on his brother's wall in Toronto hold out promise of untold wealth, a country rich for the picking. [...] Ondaatje [could] also be a claimant ("Exoticism" 123). He is fully and nostalgically aware of his and his family's once recognized but by now lost social status. This sense of loss never leaves him and this time guides him to understand the maps from a new perspective. He is puzzled by his brother's maps. He trusts only Robert Knox, who wrote *Historical Relations of Ceylon* (1681) one of the sources for Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. He believes that "[a]part from Knox, and later Leonard Woolf in his novel *A* (sic) *Village in the Jungle*, very few foreigners truly knew where they were" (83). Interestingly enough, years later, his brother, Christopher Ondaatje became a Leonard Woolf scholar providing the Afterward for the 2005 edition of *The Village in the Jungle*, furthermore writing the Introduction to Woolf's *Stories in the Eas*t that was republished in 2007. He also wrote a monograph entitled *Woolf in Ceylon: An Imperial Journey in the Shadow of Leonard Woolf* (1904–1911). All these were preceded by *The Man-eater of Punanai—a Journey of Discovery to the Jungles of Old Ceylon* (1992). One wonders how Christopher Ondaatje's "false" and bewildering

maps triggered the author for further investigations into the shared homeland with his brother. It is also interesting to note their common appreciation of Leonard Woolf.

In similar ways, as it is impossible to reduce the interpretation of the maps elaborated upon above to one and only unambiguous and credible solution, we can assert that the "actual" places Ondaatje visited lend themselves to speculative ruminations as well. His two trips blur into one another combined with his haunting memories from his early childhood; this would give free reign to both his and the reader's imagination. The narrative operates on different planes in the process of articulating space as self-affirmation. Huggan stresses this point, too: But the truth claims of travel memoir are always open to suspicion. It insists that it has witnessed places and events it may have just invented; instead of recording facts, it may be spreading, or 'substantiating' *rumours*. ("Exoticism" 121; emphasis added) Ondaatje's displacedness, and his "divided cultural allegiances" (Huggan, "Exoticism" 123) may aggravate the problem of following him in his attempt to find his rootedness in his native island.

Over the course of the story the narrator chooses physical locations where he would stop; it is difficult to decide if there is a planning space in his head with specific purposes, or the visits happen at random. Hutcheon sees the narrator in *RF* as somebody who collects historical facts, and "As readers we see both the collecting and the attempts to make a narrative order" ("Poetics" 114). In order to be able to collect historical facts he has to make field trips in the island, however, what his empirical experiences united with his imagination will result in is unpredictable.

Jay points out that "Ondaatje's references to place and location tend to be personal [...]. Specific houses, buildings, and other structures important to his family history figure prominently in the book [...] (3). Upon return, first we find him in Jaffna: "I sit in the huge living room of the governor's home in Jaffna." (24) Jaffna is basically a Tamil city that was controlled by the Dutch between 1685–1798. Kanaganayakam remarks: "Ondaatje's choice of beginning his work in Jaffna and not in Colombo suggests a partial recognition of his father's claim to be a Jaffna Tamil" (36). The narrator gives a detailed description of the *house*:

> The walls, painted in recent years a warm-rose, stretch awesome distancte away to my left to my right and up towards the a white ceiling. When the Dutch first built this house egg white was used to paint the walls. The doors are twenty feet high, as if awaiting the day when a family of acrobats will walk from room to room sideways, without

> dismantling themselves from each other's arms. [...] The house was built in 1700 and is the prize building in this northern region of Ceylon. In spite of its internal vastness, it appears modest from the outside, tucked in one corner of the fort. (24–5)

The narrator is together with his family members who tell him stories in this "haunted" (25) place where time stops. This is a place of memories and the building takes over the story telling that happens to take place in the "[s]pacious centre of the labyrinth of [an] 18th century Dutch defense" (25). What is emphasized here is not the subject matter of the parole among the people but the locale of it. The *genius loci* of this old colonial building is in the focus, despite the fact that it is "an injuring symbol of subjugation and defeat" (Kanaganayakam 36) After all, he says: In the heart of this 250-year old fort we will trade *anecdotes* and *faint* memories, *trying* to swell them with order of dates and *asides*, interlocking them all as if assembling the hull of a ship. *No story is ever told just once*. (26; emphasis added) Kanaganayakam criticizes the narrator for "[i]solating himself in the Fort [and] taking an elitist seclusion in the governor's home" (36) without paying attention to the bloody ethnic clashes that the Tamils and the Sinhalese are engaged in. Indeed, he is more preoccupied with his grandiose and spacious environment than the political confrontations the island has to face and live with. The interior space evokes earlier colonial times in his imagination.

Finally, I shall concentrate on the most important places that are mentioned in the text keeping in sight: "To recreate fictionally the land and the family one had left decades ago is inevitably coupled with the failure to arrive at any objective truth because the distances of time and space distort facts and memories contain only incomplete truths, the only material the between-world writer can record" (Zivkovic 103). The stories he tells are "both of the past and the present" (Douglas Barbour 139).

Kegalle which is at the bottom of a steep rock face is the place where Ondaatje's ancestral home was established. This was "the home the ancient patriarch built to find a dynasty" (Barbour 142). Two subchapters are devoted to this place and they differ to some extent. *Kegalle* (i) is more a place of memory while *Kegalle* (ii) is also a political place which was important in 1971, the year of the Insurgence. In *Kegalle* Ondaatje's grandfather marked out a land for himself at *Rock Hill* "[l]iving in his empire—acres of choice land in the heart of Kegalle" (56). Later his dipsomaniac father moved there with his second wife. Traces of his heavy

drinking are revealed in: “The cement niches on the side of the house [which] held so many bottles that from the side the house resembled a wine cellar” (58). He would hide his bottles at all sorts of unimaginable places in the by now overrun garden. His half-sister shows him: “*Here*, she said *and here*” (60; emphasis original). His illusion is even more shattered by having to get know about these secret and scandalous spots in the “depressed garden of gauva trees, plantains, old forgotten flowerbeds” (60). They tell him a lot about his father’s ill-fated character. In his memory there was a “lovely spacious *house* [which] was now small and dark, fading into the landscape. But the mangosteen tree in which he “practically lived in as a child during its season of fruit, was full and strong” (59). It fills him with some comfort that his most private place in his childhood is left untouched. All in all, however, he concludes: “Whatever ‘empire’ my grandfather had fought for had to all purposes disappeared” (60). Kanagayakam notes, “Ondaatje’s return to the country of his birth needs to be seen as a complex version of the familiar ‘been-to’ situation” (34).

Kegalle (ii) falls into two parts. In the first part the familiar space we read about in *Kegalle* (i) becomes a strange and undesirable place, an altered reality, described in magic realist terms. Among the fabulous elements are the cobras and the snakes that often visit the family home at *Rock Hill* in search for eggs. His father distributed ping-pong balls among the chickens and the snakes died because they could not digest them. After his father’s death he kept returning to the house in the form of a cobra. Here fictionality takes over realism. The home in the second part should have been part of the political and social reality closely surrounding it; the insurgents went from house to house to collect weapons in *Kegalle,* but at their house they played cricket on the front lawn instead. Kanaganayakam notes that despite the fact that Ondaatje mentions the bloody bottles in *Kegalle*, he does so “only to shift the emphasis into one of irony” (37). His ancestral home is permeated by a multitude of spirits: compassionate, harassed, and rebellious.

He spent his childhood years on the estate of *Kuttapitiya*. Coleman emphasizes “the unreality and the isolation” (119) of the house. Ondaatje has very fond memories of this place: “We had everything. It was and still is the most beautiful place in the world” (145). On his visit Ondaatje reconciles childhood memories with reality so that what were dreams at some point he could relive it. According to Bachelard:

> Through dreams, the various *dwelling-places* in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days. And after we are in the new house, when memories of other places we have lived in come back to us, we travel to the land of Motionless Childhood, motionless the way all immemorial things are. We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of *protection*. (5–6; emphasis added)

The house on the estate corresponds to his childhood "existential space". According to Relp's definition: "Existential space or lived space is the inner structure of space as it appears to us in our concrete experiences of the world as members of a cultural group. It is *inter-subjective* and hence *amenable* [...]. (12; emphasis added) His daughter tells him: "'If we lived here it would be *perfect*.' 'Yes.' I said.'" (146; emphasis added). It is an Eden-like place an image that often appears in postcolonial literatures.

His maternal grandparents used to live in *Colombo*, a city with a rich colonial heritage. One of his poems in the novel is dedicated to the city: "To Colombo" but he does not speak about the city itself in it. We don't get to know much about the city itself but instead about a specific place that of *St. Thomas' Church* which bears the title of a separate subchapter, too. The church is not treated as a religious, "sacred" place now but rather as a site for Ondaatje to protectively familiarize himself with his genealogical history. But to some extent it is a sacred place even if not in the traditional sense of the word. Relph writes:

> Sacred space is that of archaic religious experience; it is continuously differentiated and replete with symbols, *sacred centres and meaningful objects*. [...] the experience of such space is primordial, equivalent perhaps to an experience of the founding of the world [...]. (15; emphasis added)

For Ondaatje the building becomes sacred because of the unexpected and "meaningful objects". In a way, he is trying to guard himself: "To kneel on the floors of a church built in 1650 and see your name chiselled in large letters so that it stretches from your fingertips to your elbow in some strange way removes vanity, eliminates the personal" (65–66). In the church "[h]e confronts a past that part of him apparently wants to keep uncertain" (Huggan "Exoticism" 120). He confesses: "What saved me was the lack of clarity. The slab was five feet long, three feet wide, a good portion of it had worn away" (66). Huggan asserts that here Ondaatje's balance between "inscription and erasure" is "captured" ("Exoticism" 120). Ondaatje and his half-sister go through many old church ledgers

which abound in the name of Ondaatje: "We had not expected to find more than one Ondaatje here but the stones and pages are full of them." (66) It was here in 1915 that the first service was given according to the Anglican tradition and prayers were said in Tamil by G.J. Ondaatje. ("lankalibrary" 2) But for Ondaatje the experience is both "uplifting and painful" (Kanaganayakam 37). He feels: "When I finish there will be that eerie moment when I wash my hands and see very clearly the deep grey colour of old paper dust going down the drain" (68).

Colombo's large *harbour* is a privileged location for Ondaatje; it has a substantial influence on him. His liminal state is displaced in his feelings when he says right in the very beginning of the short subchapter called "Harbour": "I arrived in a plane but love the harbour" (133). He is aware of his threshold existence to be enjoyed in the here and now because he will be on the plane again. The harbour means freedom but it is a constraint, too, for it is a place for saying good-byes. As Barbour sees it: "[t]he harbour is a container of contradictions" (152). The harbour is real: "There is nothing wise about a harbour, but it is real life" (133). But it is also an imaginative space: "*Harbour. Lost ship. Chandler. Estuary.*" (135; emphasis original).

Nuwara Eliya is a place for liberation among the mountains with a blessed climate where Ondaatje's grandparents spent the otherwise almost unbearable hot days in Colombo. "*Nuwara Eliya* is a different *world* [from Colombo]". (39; emphasis added) The pleasant physical environment was ideal for the local culture to flourish in the days of colonial rule. It could provide space for parties, horse races, dancing, and all sorts of entertainments. Lalla, Ondaatje's maternal grandmother, says about the 1920s that they were "so whimsical, so busy—that we were always tired" (41). It "[w]as also fertile ground for a never-ending series of relationships" (Barbour 141): "This was Nuwara Eliya in the twenties and thirties. Everyone was vaguely related and had Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch, British and Burgher blood in them going back many generations" (41). Other places associated with amusement of different sorts was *Gasanawa*, a rubber estate, "[t]he estate a perfect place for parties" (45–46). In winter time they met in *Galle Gymkhana*, and at *Ambalagonda*. *Mount Lavina Hotel*, with its imperial elegance, a legacy of Sri Lanka's colonial heritage, is the place where after long nights they used to go for breakfast and "wild" swimming. This is where Ondaatje's mother found a job after her divorce, too. *Palm Lodge* was Lalla's unique place for all generations where they could have fun and forget themselves. She had a unique

character: “Her schemes for organizing parties and bridge games exaggerated themselves. She was full of the ‘passions’ whether drunk or not.” (122) Lalla later on opened up a boarding house, too. Often times all of these social places are spaces for unselfconscious and outrageous behaviour individual and collective as well. They represent the “lost generation of aristocratic grandeur” (Huggan, “Exoticism”, 123).

Lalla’s death, however, can be connected to a very different space that of a fluid space: water. She was swept away by flood; “It was her last perfect journey” (138). Here again Ondaatje tells us specific names that Lalla was floating by: “Below the main street of *Nuwara Eliya* the land drops suddenly and Lalla fell into deeper waters, past the houses of ‘*Cranleigh*’ and *Ferncliff*. They were homes *she knew well*, where she had played and argued over cards.” (129; emphasis added) Finally, she died “[i]n the blue arms of a jacaranda tree” (113). As Barbour puts it “[s]he rushes towards her final apotheosis in the trees” (152). _ivkovic points out that “[L]alla’s death is a natural outcome of Lalla’s life who had lived in complete harmony with herself and her surrounding” (106). According to Ernest MacIntyre “[t]his is one of finest scenes of imagination” (317) in the novel.

A place for imagination and contemplation is *Sigirya*, an archeological site, which is an ancient rock fortress and palace famous for the “Sigiri Graffiti”. Ondaatje says: “In the 5th Century B.C. graffiti poems were scratched onto the rock fortress of a despot king. [...] These were the first folk poems of the country” (84). In the next paragraph he talks about the “Quatrains and free verse about the struggles, tortures, the unspoken spirit, love of friends who died for the cause” (84). They were written and later whitewashed on the walls of the *Vidyalankara* campus of the university of Ceylon during the 1971 Insurgency. The author implies a kind of connection between the ancient graffiti and the recent poems on the walls. Kanaganayakam notes, “[t]he parallel with the graffiti poems on the rock face of Sigiry, and the implied contrast between love poems written to satisfy the despot king and the angry verses to defy a hostility government provide a saving sensitivity” (37). Barbour calls our attention to the fact that these poems were not only whitewashed but they were also covered by “lye”; suggesting “lie”. (Barbour 146) The poems on the wall of the campus bear some resonances with the paintings on the wall erected in Bombay separating the Parsi community from the rest of Bombay in the turbulent year of 1971 when East Pakistan became Bangladesh. Christian Bök notes, “Ondaatje begins to recognize that the

privacy of silence can be defied via graffiti; such writing can be more than an autotelic act of violent transgression; such writing can also be a revolutionary statement of communal solidarity" (118). The spirit of these two places *Sigirya* and the *Vidyalanka campus* are behind Ondaatje's aesthetical and philosophical meditations. Through identifying himself with them his local pride shows.

Ondaatje's communal identification is also manifest in the two schools he mentions: *St.Thomas College* only briefly regretting that he had never met Lakdasa Wikkramasinha who studied there at the same time when he did and later became "A powerful and angry poet" (85). He expands more on *St. Thomas College Boy School* where he learnt the Sinhalese alphabet: "I still believe the most beautiful alphabet was created by the Sinhalese. The insect of ink curves into a shape that is almost sickle, spoon, eyelid" (83). He illustrates it, too, which gives an effective appeal to the text. Bök claims that "Subjected to a multilingual heritage, the country has, not surprisingly, cultivated a myth of language [...]" (119).

In Sri Lanka it is not only the language that is fabled but the land itself as well. Ondaatje takes his family to *Wilpattu*, one of the largest and oldest national parks in the jungle. They feel out of place there and can only behave as lost tourists; they are surrounded by crocodiles, deer, storks, boars, and leopards. In Barbour's summary:

> "Wilpattu" with its nicely judged comedy of tourists tribulations, demonstrates how far Ondaatje has traveled from his home even as it also reveals his sympathetic perceptions of that now alien-place. His and his family's behaviour at the wildlife sanctuary marks them as foreigners, and this is confirmed when his soap disappears and the cook and tracker both tell him that the "wild pig has taken it." (153)

It is a moment of high comedy (Barbour 153); the subchapter ends: "My eyes [Ondaatje's] are peeled for a last sight of the oora, my soap caught in his tusk and his mouth foaming" (143). To be part of the exotic natural landscape of Sri Lanka plays a significant role in Ondaatje's return trips. This is marked by a compelling desire to belong to this luscious space that is offered by the flora and fauna of the country. Huggan compares him to a tourist: "Ondaatje relishes the role of being a tourist in his own country. Impressionistic descriptions [...] come straight out the traveller's manual" ("Exoticism", 122). The following few lines aptly illustrate what Huggan has in mind.

> Kabaragoyas and thalogayas are common in Ceylon and are seldom found anywhere else in the world. [...] The kabaragoya is in fact a useful scavenger and is now protected by law as it preys on fresh water crabs that undermine and ruin the bunds of paddy fields. [...] The thalagoya, on the other hand, will eat snails, beetles, centipedes, toads, skunks, eggs and young birds, and is not averse to garbage. (73)

Despite some of the "picture-postcard landscape" (Huggan, "Exoticism", 118) he wants to internalize "the sensuous experience[s]" that revisit him from his childhood (Zivkovic 105) as well:

> My body must remember everything, this brief insect bite, smell of wet fruit, the slow snail light, rain, rain, and underneath the hint of colours a sound of furious wet birds whose range of mimicry includes what one imagines to be large beasts, trains, burning electricity. Dark trees, the mildewed garden wall, the slow air pinned by rain. (202)

The natural environment is both menacing and also something to be admired and never to be forgotten: "I can leave this table, walk ten yards out of the house, and be surrounded by versions of green" (167). The subtropical evergreen forests due to ample rainfall are responsible for this unforgettable scenery. Ondaatje's relation towards the complex reality of Sri Lanka's and his own past and presence is manifold in itself, too. His displacement is double: "I am the foreigner. I am the prodigal who hates the foreigner" (79). His attachment to the birth of his place is ambiguous: "[h]e feels both and does not feel Sri Lankan" (Huggan, "Exoticism" 122). Kanaganayakam thinks along the same lines:

> *Running* is as much about running "in" as it is about "to," "from" or "against." The constant shifts in perspective, the foregrounding textuality, the anxiety to belong and the need for distance, the awareness of history and the self-consciousness about historiography—all combine to create the effect of a complex quest in which the notion of identity need to be explored in all its multiplicity. (35)

Spatial proximity to his homeland and all the literary energy Ondaatje devoted to find a stable point or resting place in his native island seems to have failed. It is not by accident that he quotes D. H. Lawrence: "[...] we're rather like Jonahs running away from the place we belong". "[...] Ceylon is an experience—but heavens, not a permanence." (78) Revisiting all the various places great in number be it real, imaginative or imaginary have not helped him create a space that he could claim his own. In the end, places and histories leak into each other in subjective

memory, providing an always tenuous mapping which gives both the writer and the reader and uncertain place to stand.

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JUDIT NAGY

CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON THE CANVAS: EUROPEAN INFLUENCES ON CANADIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTING 1867–1890

Introduction

Whereas the second half of the 19th century is known as *the age of transition* in Victorian England, the post-confederation decades of the same century can be termed the *age of possibilities* in Canadian landscape painting, both *transition* and *possibilities* referring to a stage of development which focuses on potentialities and entails cultural encounters. Fuelled both by Europe's cultural imprint and the refreshing impressions of the new land, contemporary Canadian landscapists of backgrounds often revealing European ties tried their hands at a multiplicity and mixture of styles. No underlying homogenous Canadian movement of art supported their endeavour though certain tendencies are observable in the colourful cavalcade of works conceived during this period.

After providing a general overview of the era in Canadian landscape painting, the current paper will discuss the oeuvre of two landscapists of the time, the English-trained Allan Edson, and the German immigrant painter Otto Reinhold Jacobi[1] to illustrate the scope of the ongoing experimentation with colour and light and to demonstrate the extent of European influence on contemporary Canadian landscape art.

[1] Members of the Canadian Society of Artists, both Edson and Jacobi were exceptional in the sense that, unlike many landscapists at Confederation, they traded in their European settings into genuine Canadian ones. In general, "artists exhibited more scenes of England and the Continent than of Ontario and Quebec." (Harper 179)

An overview of the era in landscape painting

Meaning to capture the spirit of the given period in Canadian history, W. H. New, suggests that "the age was [...] of definition" (81). In addition, he uses the terms *Victorian, progressive, nationalist, imperial,* which prove equally helpful in determining British influence on contemporary Canadian landscape painting. Indeed, landscape painting between Confederation and the turn of the century was largely *Victorian* in its precision, truthfulness and attention to minor detail (Harper 180).[2] Victorian aesthetics considered art the best approximation to life, which brought about the quest for realistic depiction.[3] In the same spirit, George Eliot praised the realistic vision achieved by contemporary landscapists whereas he gave voice to his resentment assessing contemporary portrait painters' work, who "treated their subjects under the influence of traditions and prepossessions rather than direct observation" (Eliot xx).[4]

Technological *progress* affected arts: the camera served as a new tool to present objective reality. Experimentations with photographic vision are discernible in contemporary landscape painting. The completion of the CPR facilitated artists' discovery of the diversity and variety of landscape[5] thus contributing to the popularity of the genre. Immigration was another important factor both hindering and boosting progress. The influx of British immigrants in the 1850s and 60s contained a quota of artists. In fact, "few […] artists were not immigrants"[6] and "few lacked academic training—the newly arrived artists had undergone a long and

[2] In fact, the invention of the camera facilitated this development in Canada: "[These painters's] vision owes much to the camera" (Harper 180).

[3] See John Ruskin.

[4] The essay "The Natural History of German Life" was written in 1856. Seminar handouts, Éva Péteri, 2002⁄1 5.25 American transcendentalist thinkers such as Emerson shared Eliot's views regarding the importance of direct observation. According to the Princeton school, the main ideas of the transcendentalist movement rooted in German philosophy, they originate in/ from Kant (Sarbu xx).

[5] "Lucius Obrien, following the post-confederation interest in the regions of the country, and enabled travel courtesy of a railway pass, painted massive landscapes of the Rockies, sometimes to advertise the railway, exaggerating the grandeur of the mountain scenery" (New 117).

[6] See also: "Several of the most prominent exhibitors were either British-born or sons of British immigrants living in Ontario and Quebec" (Harper 180).

vigorous art training and were expert technicians" (Harper 188). Some of these artists remained fully under the influence of their former accents. Moreover, they made Canadian art life too conscious of foreign developments[7], which put a crimp in the evolvement of a uniquely Canadian style:

> British artists, accustomed to the gentler English countryside, were stimulated by the sheer size and frequently violent nature of Canadian waterfalls and rivers. Most of them, however, were so heavily influenced by European traditions that they tended to draw the land as they thought it should be instead of how it really was. These ties to the past prevented most of the paintings of this period from being [...] a product of a uniquely Canadian experience and perception (net xx)

On the other hand, other immigrant painters recognised the incompatibility of European light and colour with Canadian reality, hence the necessity to break with tradition.[8] This induced considerable experimentation encouraging artists to seek new modes of expression even if, in practice, this, to a great extent, meant attempts at adjusting European techniques to Canadian subject matter.

Technological progress, territorial expansion and the resulting social changes brought about an upsurge of national pride. Landscape painting proved a suitable medium to materialize the new-born Canadian *nationalism*. The varied geography of the country provided rich subject matter for landscapists to exploit. Ruskin's view that "the painter cannot paint anything better than a divine thing" (xx) contributed to making nature a popular subject. [9] In Canada, the interest in landscape painting can partly be attributed to the fact that the colourful and often spectacular landscape, representing the divinity of nature, was associated with the greatness of the nation: a Canadian manifest destiny. The nationalism of the period led to the emergence of the quest that still seems to haunt Canadian artists today: the quest for national identity. In this sense, the period was an *age of definition* in Canadian landscape painting, indeed.

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[7] "[Canadian landscape painters] had a broad awareness of what was happening in the US, England, and Germany" (Harper 197).

[8] The case of the British water colour school can be mentioned as an example (Harper 188—192).

[9] Seminar handouts, Éva Péteri, 2002⁄1 5.26 Similar thoughts emerged in American transcendentalism and German idealism as represented by Goethe. ("Nature is but the living garment of God") (Sarbu xx).

Finally, the period could be considered *imperial* as Canada had close ties with Britain art-wise and the Canadian institutions of art of the period were modeled after their British counterparts[10]. While Prince Albert tried to enliven art life in Britain by promoting cultural matters, the Marquis de Lorne[11] exported the same spirit to Canada. Most contemporary Canadian art teachers gained their knowledge in British art centres, many were also British immigrants, just as some well-known artists such as Allan Edson, took study trips to Britain, and, consciously or subconsciously, imported British traditions of contemporary landscape art onto the New Continent. In elite art circles, the British landscape painting techniques were largely accepted as etalon, they often set the artistic standards.

Cultural influence on the Canadian painting of the period

As the latter statement also suggests, one of the remarks often sounded in critical essays is that Canadian landscapes of the period bore a certain resemblance in techniques to their European counterparts, which is mostly due to the contemporary critical expectations that were, to a great extent, formed by the Royal Academy of Arts: a British institution.

> When the Marquis de Lorne and his wife founded the Royal Canadian Academy in 1880 they hoped to encourage native art, but the institutionalizing of taste reconfirmed for another generation certain idealizing convocations of landscape depiction … The subjects of arts were local, but the techniques and colour sense European. (New 116)

Another element of frequent criticism is that Canadian landscapists did not challenge the European-set artistic standards but tried to fit their work into the European mould instead.

> [Canadian artists] could accept the implicit (and often explicit) hierarchies of culture that derived from Europe—accept the idea that European standards were universal, and […] paint in way that would primary seek European approval. (New 23)

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[10] The Canadian Academy of Arts was founded by the Marquis de Lorne, which a year later was supplied with the prefix Royal, following Queen Victoria's request (Harper 185).

[11] "Lorne wanted […] an academy of meritorious painters, sculptors and architects […] his imagination went no further than a feeling that he should recreate little replicas of British cultural organisations in the new Dominion" (Harper 183).

The case is more complex, though. Firstly, only the first group of artists I referred to in the point *progress* conformed consciously to the European mainstream of art. Secondly, Victorian England itself saw the decline of Romanticism and witnessed a transitory phase awaiting the birth of Modernism. Thirdly, beside the European influence the other great center that shaped the Canadian landscape experience of the time was New England. This fact signified the onset of an era when "[Canadian painters] would mimic other models, borrow from American culture, and seek American approval as an alternative to things European" (New 23). Yet, American landscape painting of the period owes much to German techniques, so one may say that it is equally European in its essence. Consider the works of the Hudson River School or the Rocky Mountain School.[12]

What did all the mimesis and conformism come down to in the long run?

> The most immediate result of this [the critical context of Canadians imitating foreign models] was the enshrinement of a set of conventions about nature […] but nature was a subject […] that concurrently proved Canada's distinctiveness. (New 112)

Despite the fact that artists were trained to see things in conventional ways, Nature in Canada lived its own life and was unwilling to fit into the mould European academic hands had prepared for it. It forced the European eye to adjust to the view rather than the view adjusting to the eye: "It is inevitable that a country with such marked physical characteristics as Canada should impress itself forcefully upon our artists" (New 265). Charles W. Jeffreys's words also reveal the important motive as to why landscapists may have chosen to abandon traditional subjects (xx).

This adjustment did not happen overnight, it took years of experimentation until the anomaly from contemporary European landscape paintings became visible.

Nature supplied Canadian landscapists with a genuinely Canadian material. Distinct and inspiring as the input was, it lacked the power to breed a uniquely Canadian style during the period in question. In Harriet Ford's words:

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[12] Representative painters are Thomas Cole, Thomas Doughty, Asher B. Durand; Alfred Bierstadt (*Oxford Dictionary of Arts* xx).

> Though the painting on Canadian subject is a worthy ambition it does not necessarily make a Canadian school. This is a deeper, more profound thing of the spirit, and such an objective would come only with an artistic ripening which requires time. (Harper 200)

Yet, Canadian subjects did help the development of Canadian features, which in time were conducive to the birth of a Canadian school. As Canadian light conditions, and with it, colours[13] differed from those of Europe, European methods were inappropriate to paint Canadian subjects in the prevailing realistic, truthful mode. Real Canadian features in landscape painting thus started with the realistic reflection of Canadian light conditions.

Analysis

Susanna Moodie wrote in the "Quebec" chapter of *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852):

> The day was warm, and the cloudless heavens of that peculiar azure tint which gives to the Canadian skies and waters a brilliancy unknown in more northern latitudes. The air was pure and elastic, the sun shone out with uncommon splendour, lighting up the changing woods with a rich mellow colouring, composed of a thousand brilliant and vivid dyes. The mighty river rolled flashing and sparkling onward, impelled by a strong breeze, that tipped its short rolling surges with a crest of snowy foam.
>
> Had there been no object of interest in the landscape than this majestic river, its vast magnitude, and the depth and clearness of its waters, and its great importance to the colony, would have been sufficient to have riveted the attention, and claimed the admiration of the thinking mind. (Moodie 39)

As the above ekphrastic excerpt proves, Moodie also found the *peculiar azure tint* conspicuous of Canadian skies and very foreign to English light conditions. Her Ontario abode abounded in clear, sunny days, with far more light than her native England. But it was not all about latitudes as Canadian skies equally differ from light conditions offered by Mediterranean locations.

Another important observation is connected to how the water responds to the altered light conditions: the resulting reflection, which triggers the

[13] Light conditions determine colour.

words *brilliancy* and *sparkling* will become an objective of truthful landscape portrayal.[14]

The unusual skies and their effects on water challenged old European techniques and brought about experimentation in landscape painting which I will now illustrate with the example of Alan Edson and Otto Reinhold Jacobi. I will examine their use of colour and light in a number of paintings representative of their artistic development and showing the extent of experimentation they carried out.

Allan Edson (1846–1888)

Allan Edson took his first painting lessons from Robert Duncanson, an American artist, whose influence shows primarily in his assertion of foreground elements (University of Lethbridge Art Gallery). In the 1860s he became an active member of the Montreal art community, where he met Lucius O'Brien, Otto Jacobi and John Fraser (xx xx). From 1861 on he took several art study trips to England, where he was affected by the Pre-Raphaelites, whose influence is discernible in his attention to detail and his concern for atmosphere and clarity (Collections). Taking delight in painting quiet, secluded moments of nature, he was "a painter of significant individuality and imagination, whose mature work is often likened to an early form of impressionism" (University of Lethbridge Art Gallery).

Edson's early phase testifies to Biedermeier accents[15], which can be illustrated well with his painting entitled *Lumbermen at the River Saint-Maurice* (1868). The sky is bathing in soft, European blue, the vegetation is dressed in mild, warm colours, there is a sublime mountain peak in the background but it is tamed by the sunlight, which gently slides down its slope towards the river. The water of the river is dressed in matt rather than in brilliant colours; the dynamism of the muddy blue water is

[14] Interestingly, water and light became vital subjects of the Impressionist movement in Europe, too (xx xx).

[15] Biedermeier was popular in Austria and Germany between the end of the Napoleonic wars and the year of revolutions (1815–48). The most popular Austrian representative, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller said that "the close study of nature should be the basis of painting". Biedermeier landscapists were known for "their loving attention to detail" Also, they "recognized the importance of the role of light. Their work later developed into dynamic, light-impregnated realism" (Chilvers 561).

juxtaposed to the motionlessness of the river bank. The insertion of the boat into the foreground is reminiscent of Duncanson.

Before the Storm—Lake Memphremagog (1868) displays colours even more faded than those of Edson's Biedermeier period; we have entered his *dull and gloom* phase (Harper xx). Capturing the sublime side of nature, the painting depicts the romantic subject of an impending storm. The majestic, edgy mountain peak buried in mist and cloud fills the spectator with awe. The vertical strokes of rain coming down and the horizontal strokes of land and lake are juxtaposed. Darker and lighter hues form a complex system of tonal contrast. The water appears to reflect the threatening colour of the sky, and the flat waves display no brilliance. The whole picture is coated with a thin cover of soft brown haze.

Mount Orford—Paysage des Cantons de l'Est (1870) represents a slight change from gloom, not very pronounced, though, and certainly not very skilfully executed: brown haze lifts, colours become more pastel-like, lighter but colder. Light effects seem unnatural as if a huge lamp was lit above the hills in the foreground. The more distant part of the same hill is depicted more successfully, apart from the sudden surge of waves at its foot. Judging from the light conditions, this painting was painted in sunshine and the occasional patches of clouds were later turned into tufts of violet smoke signalling an approaching tempest as if the painter had found his initial painting too bright. The flat, horizontal strokes of the water testify of elongated, lazy crests typical of calm breeze rather than storm. There is a slight sparkle but it seems to come from the large, brown rock in the left, lower corner.

The new, bright colours of *Landscape with Cascade* (1872) herald the gaiety and optimism of Edson's new artistic stage. Yet, the sky remains pale blue and pastel-like, even with the light mauve base of paint on which the blue was spread. Colours are warmer and brighter, the rocks, the vegetation and the stream are bathing in a yellowish-green light. The dynamism of the foamy water is opposed to the static posture of rocks and trees, which, both in the left upper corner and on the right hand side are stiff and vertical. The water is matt rather than brilliant even though the afternoon sun encases it.

Luminist in essence[16], the painting entitled *Storm at Lake Memphremagog* (1880) treats light effects with photographic precision. The indispensable *natura terribilita* component is represented by the rolling cumuli in the background, projecting the momentum of the approaching storm onto the canvas. The dark, cool hues towering in the left upper corner form a contrast with the bright, warm colours of the fall foliage positioned centrally. The reflection of this contrast in the water and the clearcut outlines contribute to the play of light that pervades the painting.

Otto Reinhold Jacobi (1812–1901)

The Prussian-born artist Otto Reinhold Jacobi settled in Montreal around 1860 with fellow artist Adolphe Vogt. In Harper's comparison, he worked with "subtler atmospheric effects" than Edson (xx). The reflection of light both on water and on land were important elements of his landscapes, which bear testimony to the influence of both German Romanticism and American Luminism (Canartist).[17]

Autumn Landscape (1868) has even more romantic gloom than Edson's paintings composed in his early period. The majestic peak in the background underlines the sublime side of nature Jacobi wanted to emphasize here. The whole picture is dressed in brown atmospheric haze, which radiates warmth and dejection at the same time. The movement of the water in the foreground creates the feeling of dynamism and forms a contrast with the darker static banks of the stream. Both the water in the foreground and the mountain in the background symbolize the majestic power of nature.

There is slightly more colour used for *Forest Stream* (1869). We can observe how meticulously each object is put on the canvas. However, the light effects are unnatural as light is shed upon the wild, foamy mountain

[16] For example, light is centered on the withering tree leaves, dramatising the cumuli and nimbuses lurking in the background from the left and also shading the foreground to almost tarry black at places (Chilvers xx).

[17] "Although he painted in Romantic style, he was known to have used photography to achieve a greater degree of naturalness in his landscapes. [He was] seeking to harness something of the new world, a practice that would become habit to a generation of Canadian artists. But despite his adventures in the wild, Jacobi was not entirely successful in capturing the spirit of this country in his finished works, where atmosphere, tone and tenor remain anchored in European aesthetics" (Canartist).

stream in the focus of the picture while everything else is coated with gloom, forming the conventional Romantic contrast and proclaiming the domination of the sublime. The redness of the sky along the horizon adds a touch of drama and mystery to the atmosphere. Also, some of the trees on the river bank are painted in a hue of silverish-green that does not exist under any condition of light. One can detect attempts at capturing the brilliancy of water in the foreground of the picture by the artist's altering different tones of grey employing flat, horizontal strokes. However, the rest of the water looks matt. All in all, the picture seems to have been composed in an *imaginary* rather than a *real* key, the only *real* being the inspiring force of the power of water.

Jacobi's experimentation with the reflection of light on the water becomes more pronounced in *Canadian Autumn* (1870) where his employment of Luminist techniques[18] lends a touch of sparkle and brilliance to the stream in the foreground. The sunlit fall colours of the majestic mountain in the background form a contrast with the darker, shadowy foreground. Light effects become realistic and attention is paid to detail. According to Russell Harper, the year 1870 marked a division line in Jacobi's career: "In 1870 Jacobi abandoned his Germanic accents to experiment with realistic truthfulness in painting rivers, rocks and trees" (xx).

La Riviere Montmorency (ca. 1870) is a further step towards bringing the depiction of light reflection on water to perfection. The potential power of the water is illustrated on the rocks shaped by the stream, now calm and quiet. The vivid blue Canadian sky is not exposed, the resulting diffused light induces the scattered, subdued, silvery glitter of the greenish brown water.[19]

From the middle of the 1880s on, Jacobi gradually moved away from the concrete, towards a degree of pictorial abstraction. The painting entitled *Landscape* (1883) indicates how his clear and photographic outlines commenced to blur and wane. *Landscape,* of pastel impressions, has again too much of the European soft blue sky to be realistic. The vivid colours of the red maple bring life into the otherwise static scene. The river is smooth, unruffled, probably to show Jacobi's continued interest in

[18] I.e. an appreciation of the way light could achieve sparkle and luminosity (Chilvers xx).

[19] The painting shows the influence of Luminism, esp. Bingham.

light reflection on water. The gathering cumuli in the background suggest a forming storm, a Romantic remnant.

Conclusion

Very often, books speak of anything in landscape painting before the Group of Seven as something inferior, not distinctively Canadian. Even in more modest estimations, "Only with the early impressionism of Maurice Cullen and J. W. Morrice near the turn of the century did traditions of colour … begin to change" (New 117).[20] Yet, no one can deny the importance of the post-confederation period. As we have seen, tremendous experimentation was going on then, which seems slightly more pronounced by artists who had some European schooling or teachers or were European immigrants themselves.[21]

> Basically, these men set down highly romantic views but their objective and detailed photographic vision makes their work something more than simply romantic art. No broadly based national style emerged in those years but in some landscapes one does find Canadian qualities which are such that no one would readily feel that they were by painters of any other country. (Harper 181)

European influence worked as a catalyst to start Canadian landscape painting on its own way. The experimentation with colour triggered by the light effects foreign to the European-trained artist's eye was an important step in the long process along which Canada developed its own artistic style(s) in the genre. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say that it was a … motivated by a cultural encounter.

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[20] The landscapes of the period between the confederation and 1890 all bear some traces of Romanticism, whether it be theme, colour or composition. (romantic themes: gloomy autumn landscape, dramatic sunsets and sunrises, coming storm, power and freshness of water, dark forests, etc.) Photographic vision, a parallel trend of importance, has its roots in Ruskin's true-to-nature principle and in the artistic influence of the camera.
Painters aiming at depicting the landscape in a realistic way had to adjust European techniques of painting light to the light effects experienced on the new continent (xx).

[21] Compare Lucius O'Brien and Alan Edson or Otto Rheinhold Jacobi. O'Brien's colours are a lot softer.

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MÁRIA PALLA

EAST MEETS WEST: AN INTERCULTURAL READING OF JUDITH KALMAN'S AND SHAUNA SINGH BALDWIN'S SHORT STORIES

Two writers. Two collections of short stories. Three countries of adoption. Two or more ancestral homelands. A number of different cultures from different continents. This is the striking initial multiplicity one faces when approaching Judith Kalman's and Shauna Singh Baldwin's works. Yet these texts can enter into dialogue with each other and may yield results unobtainable through studying them separately.

Through their joint discussion this essay only continues the tendency noticeable in the recent growth in the number of Canadian multicultural anthologies comprising pieces by authors from diverse ethnic or national backgrounds in the same volume. Kalman here stands for the Hungarian, while Baldwin for the East-Indian diaspora in Canada. Before the appearance of such collections, these immigrant groups already published their own, independent anthologies. John Miska, the notable Hungarian-Canadian critic, writer, translator, bibliographer and librarian, has edited a number of such collections, starting his work as an anthologist with *Antológia 1; a kanadai magyar írók könyve* (Anthology 1: A Book of Hungarian–Canadian Authors) as early as 1969, at a time when he also founded the Hungarian–Canadian Authors' Association (1968). Though the first anthologies were published in Hungarian, definitely catering for the intellectual needs of the diaspora, the choice of the readers' mother tongue was also probably the result of the Hungarian refugees' as yet insufficient knowledge of English, the language of their adopted land. Just as plausibly, the choice of language may also be explained by the strong emotional ties linking the refugees to their mother country, its culture and its language.

The change of the language used in the later volumes, the most recent one being entitled *Blessed Harbours* and published in 2002, indicates the progress of acculturation in the life of the diaspora. Although Hungarian-Canadians never established their own publishing house, their various organizations such as the Rákóczi Foundation or the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada were instrumental in some significant publishing enterprises. At the same time, there are still numerous journals and periodicals published in Hungarian with the only exception as a bilingual magazine being the Toronto-based *Kaleidoscope*.

South-Asian Canadians, a name originating from a geographical designation and used to refer to Indian-Canadians as well, brought out their first joint publication as an ethnic community somewhat later. As Arun Mukherjee notes (24), it was a collection of essays called *A Meeting of Streams* in 1985 that represented the diaspora on its own in a single volume. This was to be followed by *The Geography of Voice,* a literary anthology, in 1992, *Shakti's Words: South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry* a year later (1993), and several other volumes including *The Whistling Thorn: South Asian Canadian Fiction* (1994), *Sons Must Die and Other Plays* (1998), with the most recent being *Her Mother's Ashes*, the third book in a series of writings by South Asian women in Canada and the US (2009). Several of these volumes were published by the Toronto-based TSAR publishing house established in the mid-1980s, growing out of the literary magazine first called *Toronto South-Asian Review*, which, in 1993, changed its name to *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad*. Explaining the reasons for this change, Mukherjee calls attention to the realization that "South Asian Canadian writers do not see themselves as members of a self-identified community" (31). However, as demonstrated above, anthologies based on a regional grouping of their authors still keep appearing and the label South-Asian is still applied, even though it is often regarded as "a reductive, constrictive, and false categorization" inadequate to reflect the diversity it is supposed to cover (Dunlop 117).

At the same time, multicultural anthologies exemplified by *Other Solitudes* edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond in 1991 or *Making a Difference* edited by Smaro Kamboureli in 1996 work against the separation of ethnic writings from the mainstream and from each other. Attention is paid to their differences, but an attempt is made to offer the opportunity of a parallel reading. The editors of the *Toronto South-Asian Review* also recognized the significant variety within the

South-Asian community, that it was too broad a term for such a diverse group, but they still wanted to stay true to their mission of reflecting the multifaceted nature of contemporary literature especially in Canada, the United States, Asia and Africa, so they did not limit their focus but rather made their approach a more inclusive one. However, the increasing acknowledgement of and respect for differences can be attributed to the new policy of the country officially proclaimed in the Multiculturalism Act adopted in 1988, a new philosophy also manifest in the resulting changes on the part of government organizations as to what projects to aid financially.

From the list of titles together with the dates of publication of anthologies presented above it is also apparent that the literary output of the Hungarian diaspora in Canada seems to be somewhat decreasing in recent times while that of the South Asian Canadians is on the increase. As early as 1987, George Bisztray, the author of the seminal study *Hungarian-Canadian Literature* concluded his book with a chapter speculating about the prospects of Hungarian-Canadian literature and predicting a rather uncertain future for it (75–76).

These tendencies can, at least in part, be attributed to the different patterns of immigration these groups follow in Canada. Hungarians came to Canada in 4 major waves. In the period before 1914 about 8,000 Hungarian nationals, mainly farmers, emigrated to western Canada; after World War I, from 1925 to 1930, about 26 000 Hungarians arrived; between 1948 and 1952 some 12 000 postwar displaced persons came; and in 1956–1957 about 37 000 Hungarian refugees entered Canada after the collapse of the 1956 Revolution against the Soviet domination of the country. It was the many young students among the 56ers who really left their mark on the Canadian cultural scene, but since then no migration on such a scale has occurred between the two countries. Transnational migrants travelling back and forth between the two continents represent a more recent phenomenon. As one can only guess, the stories in Kalman's collection *The County of Birches* (1998) must be based on her own experiences as a child leaving Hungary with her parents in 1956, finally to find a new home in Montreal.

The first South Asian immigrants arrived at the turn of the twentieth century, mainly in British Columbia, and most of them were Sikhs from the Punjab in the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent. A second wave did not start arriving until the 1960s due to the discriminatory laws of Canada aiming to restrict the immigration of

people of colour. These regulations were changed significantly in 1967, which allowed a more diverse and better educated segment of South Asians to settle in Canada. It is this group that is responsible for the remarkable literary output of the diaspora, an achievement acknowledged by various prizes awarded to their writers (McGifford x). Shauna Singh Baldwin was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the Canada/Caribbean region for her first novel, *What the Body Remembers*, in 2000, while her next novel, *The Tiger Claw*, was shortlisted for the Giller Prize in 2004. Her collection of short stories to be discussed here appeared under the title *English Lessons and Other Stories* in 1995, almost the same time as Kalman's book. However, Baldwin belongs to a younger generation and her migration has also taken a different direction from Kalman's as she was born in Montreal but grew up in India and finally settled in the United States, never relinquishing her Canadian citizenship.

Kalman's *The County of Birches* is a collection of linked short stories following the central character Sári's family on their way from Hungary to Canada with the clear indication of a no return ever to their Central European homeland. The titles of the sections in the book make sure the reader does not miss the stages of this journey, where the first one is THE OLD WORLD, the next is THE GREY WORLD and the final one is THE NEW WORLD. This passage through geographical space is Sári's own experience but she also listens to her father's narratives throughout the several stories of the volume. These start with two pieces narrated mainly in the third person, unlike the other stories in the collection, and it is thus that she as well as the readers are provided with a chronologically arranged starting point of the genealogies of the two branches of her family.

Both sides of her family were rooted for centuries in the north-eastern part of Hungary evoked by the title of the whole book, a territory, which is the English rendering of the region known as Nyírség in Hungarian. Part of the land of birches called Beregszász, which once belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, was given to the Soviet Union, now the Ukraine, at the time when Hungary was dismembered under the provisions of the Versailles Treaty concluding the Great War. It is not only her journey in space that determines the identity formation of the young girl but also her Jewish heritage, an aspect of her identity given a prominent role throughout the whole process. The most traumatic event in the life of European Jews during the 20th century, the Holocaust is a

haunting background making its presence felt all the time. The historical facts are well known but on a personal level for Sári it is the time when most of her extended family were lost, an estimated eighty people. Her mother and father are survivors and their traumatic memories of the Nazi concentration camp and the labour camp respectively keep surfacing in their tales and nightmares. They already appear in the opening story "Not for Me a Crown of Thorns", a narrative where the motif of victimization occurs on three levels. Sári recalls the Biblical story of the Flood, at the end of which Noah sends two pigeons out to survey the situation and the first one is lost, sacrificed. The next innocent child victim is Sári herself, who is punished instead of her sister Cimi for the latter's misdemeanor. The incomparably larger magnitude of the third disaster, the Holocaust, is foreshadowed by the Biblical event, while the personal involvement is indicated by the second one. It is also a telling feature that the collection ends with "Eichmann's Monogram", in which one narrative line involves the trial of the chief Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann, greatly responsible for the mass deportation of Jews. This ending allows some sort of rest finally to be achieved and it closes the collection on a note of resignation.

The specifically Hungarian heritage of the family is mostly present in the language of the stories. Several words appear in Hungarian referring to family members and locations but the issue of the acquisition of a new language is just as crucial. The mother is much more interested in, and much more talented at, learning new languages, so it is not surprising that she is the one who suggests leaving Hungary in the aftermath of the 1956 Revolution. Suffering from the aggression and brutality of the times reminds her of her previous experiences and provokes her into saying, "'I saw Auschwitz, now this!' She was not going to raise her children in fear. 'I've had enough cringing and hiding and hoping against the worst that always happens" (65). The father suffers more from the departure emotionally, which is signaled by his turning inward and his being less willing to communicate with those surrounding him. Yet it is also mentioned several times that even the mother is discriminated against both in England and in Canada for speaking the English language with an accent: this is given as the reason for her not being employed in more prestigious jobs such as that of a school teacher for a long time.

Yet the central issue concerns the preservation of the family's Jewish identity and their relationship with the Jewish community in Canada. Examples of Jews integrating into the mainstream society to the point of hiding their Jewishness include the mother's brother living in England,

who insists on being called Uncle Larry instead of Laci bácsi, and the mother's sister Cimi and her husband Uncle André, who both converted to Christianity. The latter take things so far as "speaking in a French-accented English to discourage my parents from reverting to Hungarian." This is how they argue their case: "What good had it brought any of them being Jewish? Forget about Hitler; afterwards, Apu [Dad] had had to change his Jewish name to protect himself from Stalin. Show him one time it had ever proved an advantage to be Jewish" (126). Although they cannot accept such an argument, Sári's parents never actually decide to settle in a Jewish neighborhood in Montreal. When the mother can only find employment as a teacher in such an area of the city, she hates it. "It reminded her of Europe. She hadn't come all this way just to arrive into the same old smells, same old faces, same old reminders of disaster." (127) Nevertheless, they do try to be faithful to their religion celebrating the Jewish holidays and observing the traditions in their family circle. However, joining others in a synagogue turns out to be a troublesome experience for the parents and the girls in the family, too. Sári finds it especially hard to deal with the exclusion she is often subject to among the Montreal Jews, who have known each other and have socialized together for years.

Similarly to their creator, the characters in Baldwin's stories travel back and forth between North America and India, unlike the afore-mentioned refugees in Kalman's book. Baldwin's central figures all have the same very distinct ethnic background: they are Sikhs who as such form one of India's minority groups; like these people, Kalman's Jewish characters are also members of a minority in Hungary. The opening stories in Baldwin's collection address the process of acculturation either in the form of a family member leaving home and family for school or for work and returning as a completely altered person, or Sikh immigrants experiencing the demands made on them by both or either of their cultures, the inherited and the acquired ones. The result is always disastrous. In "Montreal 1962", the unnamed male character is expected to cut his hair and get rid of his turban, an essential part of his traditional clothing, if he wants to be hired. The final suggestion is that doing so would be too high a price, which leaves the reader with a sense of utter hopelessness, a lack of possible reconciliation between the two cultures. The impression thus created is counterbalanced by valiant defiance on the part of the female narrator, his wife. She has this to say:

> And so my love, I will not let you cut your strong rope of hair and go without a turban into this land of strangers. […] My hands will tie a turban every day upon your head and work so we can keep it there. One day our children will say, "My father came to this country with very little but his turban and my mother learned to work because no one would hire him."
>
> Then we will have taught Canadians what it takes to wear a turban. (16)

In "Toronto 1984", a more tolerant Canadian society is presented. Here the younger narrator Piya is allowed to stay on at her job in spite of offending her employer by refusing to stand up and drink a toast to Elizabeth II, of whom she thinks as "the British Queen, the symbol of the empire my grandfathers fought against for independence, the one whose line had sent my grandfathers to prison. I would not stand." (63) Although afterwards Piya is referred to as a Paki half-jokingly by her boss, she swallows her anger and fights back in the name of the whole subcontinent by becoming an efficient worker. It is her Indian family that tries to hold her back and insists on a traditional arranged marriage. From this she is saved by another similarly catastrophic event, the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in retaliation for her ordering an attack on the Golden Temple, a sacred location for all Sikhs in Amritsar, resulting in the deaths of eighty soldiers and some five hundred civilians in 1984. The family visit is thus postponed and not without reason: from documents it is known that a wholesale massacre of Sikhs followed in Delhi and some other major cities in the north.

It is not the only traumatic event from India's history which is evoked on the pages of the collection. The Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan at the time of the subcontinent gaining independence on 15 August 1947 is evoked in the story "Family Ties". This is not surprising since the province of Punjab, home to a significant Sikh population, was divided between the two countries at this time. Partition went together with a large-scale movement of population involving more than ten million people. As the new Indian and Pakistani governments were absolutely unprepared to handle the situation, they had no control over the erupting violence that resulted in the slaughter of about 500,000 people. It is implied in the story that the father's sister was taken advantage of and raped by Muslims; she became pregnant and gave birth to an illegitimate child. The unwanted birth subsequently leads to her being rejected by the

family due to a false sense of pride and shame at the same time, ultimately causing her madness.

Cultural differences survive spatial dislocation as well when, in the eponymous short story, Simran travels to the US to study and meets a fellow student of Pakistani Muslim background, who immediately falls in love with her. The two of them never really get intimate in spite of Mirza's attempts, which, however, always stop short of a proposal of marriage, something he still regards as impossible between a Muslim and a Sikh. His insistent phone calls after Simran's return home destroy her chances of ever returning to the place of study abroad as her parents are abhorred by their mistaken speculations about their daughter's affair with a believer in the Koran.

A complicated view of related affairs is offered in "Nothing Must Spoil This Visit" when a Sikh young man called Arvind, now married to a second-generation Hungarian-Canadian woman, re-visits his family at his birthplace in India with her. The contrast between the active, talkative and initiative Janet and her Sikh counterpart Chaya becomes obvious early on in the story, though the reasons for Chaya's shyness, passivity and hostility towards Janet are only revealed later. As it turns out Chaya, now married to Arvind's brother, was once engaged to Arvind as a preliminary to an arranged marriage, which eventually fell through for two reasons. First, Arvind left for Canada; second, she compromised herself with Arvind's brother and had no other choice but to marry him. Yet, at the end we learn that a child, so important in all the families presented in the collection, will be forever denied to Janet and Arvind because of his childhood illness, while Chaya has already fulfilled this role in her life. Values clash subtly and choices are hard to make in this case. A Hungarian reader also begins to wonder why Baldwin has chosen a Hungarian immigrant for the Sikh boy's wife. One explanation might be the plausibility of such a situation: the Hungarian Janet is not quite part of mainstream Canadian society, which makes her available for this kind of inter-racial marriage, but coming from a European background she is attractive enough for the young man due to her generic European background associating her with the exotic Other.

In addition to this obvious link between the two collections of short stories, the haunting memories of equally catastrophic historical events in the past, the difficulties of adapting to a new culture while also preserving the old-country heritage and the importance attached to one's loyalty or lack of loyalty to the family are the most striking features these volumes

share. The two women writers also find it significant to explore these issues from the viewpoint of women, thus interpreting them from a peculiar, gender-determined, angle presenting them in a new light. Through reading these two sets of stories in near-simultaneous succession, one may find new ways of mutual understanding for these distinct ethnic groups, ways that help bridge the cultural divide separating them. The reader thus discovers in practice what the poet-critic Rishma Dunlop claims about diasporic writing when calling it "a push against the existing order of things, speech that makes possible new understandings of human differences, writing against the grain of history" (116) in an attempt to challenge and dismantle borders.

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J. TERRY ROLFE

CULTURAL EXCHANGE: ANOTHER CANADA–US CONTINENTAL DIVIDE OVER LIBERALISM

Introduction

Canadian Studies are often situated in the broader frame of North American Studies. This is appropriate given the New World continental landscape and its economic and political realities. North American Studies in turn often focus on America's perceived hegemonic role with Canadian participation relegated to that of a benign observer. This view is very complementary to Canada, but fails to acknowledge how influential the single-border relationship is between Canada and the United States, especially for trade relations, resource extraction and use. Nor does it consider how nuanced the cultural exchange is between the two nations. Canada and the United States have built upon and re-examined transatlantic foundational concerns about individual rights; despite an early convergence, pivotal outcomes and oscillating concerns on social issues thereafter set the stage for an extreme American neo-Conservative resistance to an "excessively liberal" Canada. Canada's mainstream, subtly nationalist response, channeled by its iconic Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), has tried to portray a more balanced but detached socially democratic edge, difficult due to its overwhelming dependence on the American market. This paper sets out conceptual linkages between cultural exchange, technology and liberalism, before analyzing key aspects of North American political economy that impact continental interpretations of "liberalism". It considers Canada's geo-political and metaphorical coming-of-age—a prolonged adolescence—compared to America's bold beginning, focusing on the critical separation era of World War I and its aftermath, and the peripheral shift of

dependency from empire to a predominantly continental alliance. Mass communications in Canada continue to have a resounding influence on this path, with the critical perspectives of Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis embedded in Canada's orientation, although globalization pressures are adding new challenges.

Cultural Exchange, Technology and Liberalism

Cultural exchange has inherent challenges associated with technological change, shifting geo-politics and morality. The study of culture and prior concentration on anthropological comparison have long required reflection upon cultural relativism (Kluckhohn 1949), especially when biology, circumstance and economic behavior are considered. It also requires the explicit recognition of both researcher subjectivity and the bi-directional impact entailed whenever something social is studied (Dewey and Bentley 1949). These principles of inquiry resonate in the enduring debate of Atlanticism versus differentiated Eurocentricism and Americanocentrism (Kroes 2009). There cannot be, within this conceptual frame, any unilateral sovereign effect nor any detached colonial (or post-colonial) influence.

Technology long ago accelerated travel and personal contact, with established trade of materials and goods ensuring reciprocal learning. Momentous developments such as the Gutenberg Press (1436), with its movable type, first introduced speed and flexibility into widespread information exchange; subsequent technological leaps (such as computer processing, the Internet and visual imaging) have long exceeded the basic human thirst for knowledge and advancing philosophical thought. Unchecked, the drive for suppleness in contact and entertainment may ironically impose both a yoke and a yearning. It could foster an over-stimulated, over-burdened obligation to ferret out piecemeal data and instantaneously process fragments[1]; this in turn could lead to knowledge transiency rather than accumulation, desensitization, blanket censorship or other institutional retrenchment of information exchange. Technological advancement, as such, has the potential to work against meaningful cultural exchange and reflection. At a meta-level, the worrisome trend

[1] The increased use of split-screen imaging in TV and film formats reflects the pressure to multi-task visual processing. It inevitably reduces the appreciation and interpretation of each image.

towards "technopoly" (Postman 1992) with the deification of technology (as a "tool of tools") and the "surrender of culture to technology" could be viewed as a somewhat villainous socio-behavioral inclination intent on securing the domination of worldviews. America, as an imagined hegemony, cannot be held singularly responsible for this almost universal human tendency.

Discussion of villainous intentions and censorship as a barrier to idealized free exchange of ideas reaffirms the need to consider technological change along with geo-political developments and morality. As suggested above, value orientation is implicit in even the most rigorous inquiry. A personal reflection is thus, at some point, justified. One could subjectively argue that without the *liberal* principles of free thought and speech, seeded in Roman times and developed progressively since the 17th century, the movement towards universal rights would falter, autocratic rule would prevail, stilted adversarial dialogue would overwhelm balanced dialectics, and inequities would remain unchallenged. For those advocating science and reason over religion and faith, the paramount quest for rationality can drive a concern for the lost opportunity to ask questions, address assumptions, test authority and apply a structured theoretical approach to consider the pressing issues of the day. But not all modern religions require blind faith: a "religion" can be broadly interpreted as "something which has a powerful hold on a person's way of thinking, interests, etc." or simply a "worldview" with a "system of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in a community" (Webster's Dictionary, 1987).

"Liberal economics" can thus be viewed as a culturally-embedded *religion* on the Western front, adding another worldview dimension impacting cultural exchange and liberal practices generally. When this complex paradigm is synergistically bundled with an overlay of Christian endorsement—as clearly occurs in the U.S. *Declaration of Independence*—the entrenched beliefs in competitive free market capitalism impart *sacredness* to monetary exchange, with dominance over cooperation and less unitized forms of reciprocal exchange. The resulting inequitable accumulation of knowledge and wealth can thereafter be justified in terms of this framework with all persons equally granted the *right to compete*[2]; a wide array of conduct becomes defensible not only for basic survival, but also for happiness and the protection of property.

[2] But not necessarily the *means* to do so.

The collective entity's survival is driven by progress in turn, gauged by expansion and material growth. America's cathartically-legitimized, more rigid constitutional foundation and these justifications reflect the European-coined notion of Social Darwinism with the promotion of highly individualized self-interest[3] and the reliance upon economic instruments to fairly distribute goods and wealth. Individual success results from either the "survival of the fittest" or dishonesty and speculation—an obvious mix of exclusionary and predatory practices—with less obvious collective impacts in terms of stability. The unbalanced pursuit of competition over cooperation adds inherent instability, as Elinor Ostrom[4] demonstrated: "rational" individual self-interests must be tempered by reciprocity, familiarity and trust, backed by a cooperative *behavioral* theory of collective action, to ensure community resilience and support formal economic structures (Rolfe 2004).

Any reader may now be wondering why my focus rests first and foremost upon the American value framework rather than Canada's differentiated orientation. The reasoning is clear: the continental geo-political reality for Canada is that of economic dependence, with 80% of Canadian exports routed to the United States. So, whereas Canada might ideally wish to pursue a consistent, *modern social democratic* approach—distanced from socialism *per se* in its practical, hybridized mix of social welfare policies and relatively efficient capitalist mechanisms and private ownership—it appears hopelessly engaged in a schizophrenic, structured but pragmatic dance for the sake of supporting its own more community- than individually-focused agenda. Arguments supporting more intervention and regulation in banking and social services often rest upon a conservatism[5] driven by this peripheral, lopsided economic reality. Canada, spread out as it is, has a more vulnerable economic position especially during a downturn, along with lesser economies of scale, the need for more quasi-monopolistic structures in transportation and com-

[3] It is important to note that Adam Smith, despite his more popular argument for the efficient redistribution of labour and wealth via money ("the invisible hand", from *The Wealth of Nations*), preferred his own first work, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. He observed that, despite humanity's inclination towards self-interest, there was also the ability and compelled desire to apply moral judgments to collective actions.

[4] Co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics 2009.

[5] This cautionary social welfare approach should not be confused with the Conservative political agenda.

munications, and a general acknowledgement that, for smaller populations on the fringe, you have to take care of all community members even if this means a collective, almost paternalistic, imposition of sacrifice on individual liberties[6] and the bridling of free speech[7].

For the transatlantic cultures, there were 19th century developments and reassessments in the connection of liberalism with economics. The argument, under "social or modern liberalism" was that governments were now able to offer more freedom by providing broader social services; this had many skeptics, unsettled by the corollary notion that unrestrained capitalism automatically hindered freedom. This led to a reassessment and to "*neo*-liberalism" with a negative stigma thereafter associated with *social* liberalism. Neo-liberalism prevailed with economic policies driven by monetarist principles accepting only an affordable level of social services. As Bertrand Russell highlighted, the growing "liberal idealism" as an over-arching mindset was becoming problematic: the continuing underlying assumption that monetary mechanisms alone could efficiently reallocate goods and optimize labour distribution—through an "invisible hand"—was not being reflected in global equity. The global circumstance is such that many groups are more advanced and others lag behind in terms of their technological progress, economic activity, pursuit of individual rights and accumulation of wealth and influence. Using neo-liberal economics, especially when coupled with development[8] economics, did not appear to sufficient generate "catch-up". The need to counter over-confidence in neo-liberal economics is evidenced by the *growing* disparity between rich and poor, and North and South, despite subsequent thrusts of Keynesian and modern welfare economics.

The account offered here reveals a subjective, typically apologetic Canadian perspective, reflecting a national autonomy submerged and world influence rendered largely impotent. It reveals a perennial adolescent bellyache driven by relative affluence, emancipation and leisure, with a particular brand of naivety and idealism disassociated from recurrent centuries-old conflicts and international economic realities.

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[6] A commonly cited example is that of forced use of motorcycle and bicycle helmets.

[7] That is, especially where free speech leads to statements reflecting prejudice and causing undue harm.

[8] Development economics, in the early stage, typically led to unsustainable borrowing and obligations to purchase goods from the funder.

North America's coming of age and Canada's metaphorical past

As argued prior, cultural exchange in North America can be neither dissociated from age-old philosophical traditions nor from continuing networked transatlantic influences. Given our colonial pasts and Western European affinities, it is commonplace to see selective European continental philosophies cited. The Age of Enlightenment is highlighted for the origins of liberalism, with John Locke's (1690) underscoring of the live and let live principle ("no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions"), providing a foundation for Rousseau's (1762) specified "Rights of Man". This combination could be partly responsible for Canada and the United States' earlier shared, isolationist stance, along with the sense that a separate, juxtaposed set of utopian dreams could be pursued. There are, however, far too many notable figures and movements associated with the rich 19th and 20th century European philosophical development to definitively argue this case here. Rather, a more obvious argument is that the linguistic, partnered assumptions of English (as the "objective" language of business) and French (as a counterbalancing emotive expression) have left a lingering flat dialectic that excludes full consideration of alternative languages and views[9].

Obvious connections between the American *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and the writings of European philosophers, especially Locke, must be acknowledged with further credit to the French revolutionary precedent. Atlanticism, as an exchange with imagined *northern* two-directional flow, must acknowledge a further layering of southern and international networking that impacted the United States and Canada's coming of age. Compared to Canada's gradual, hand-holding exploration of identity, the United States had an abrupt, revolutionary right of passage with a pivotal impetus linked to the triangular transatlantic subjugation of Africans and other citizens of regional colonies. Both nations dealt poorly as well with the internal issues of dominance and displacement of aboriginal North Americans, as well as later immigrants. The Dominion of Canada took a lesser rebellious path[10], satisfying its

[9] Many of which have percolated through both England and France's earlier thinking, for example, with aspects of Marxism, German idealism, phenomenology and existentialism incorporated.

[10] Only lesser insofar as the Louis Riel rebellion was also a pivotal event albeit not as widespread as the American Revolution.

English rulers with maintenance of peace, order and good government on the Western front, while constructing east-west communications and transportation networks to protect the Empire's interests and buffer Canadian territory from its neighbour. Canada has respectfully and incrementally pursued a gradual independence, emulating British constitutional structures and practicing common law, constructing legislation and setting precedents which embody many principles of Western European liberalism. One example is Canada's alignment with the United Nation's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which led to a suite of meshed Canadian national and provincial legal mechanisms intended to protect the human rights of Canadians. These include the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Act* (which explicitly advocates equal opportunity without discrimination on the basis of gender, disability or religion), and the 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Commission*.

Despite these international influences, immediate geo-political realities prevail. Canada has had considerable experience living on the periphery of an abyss, off its Eastern, Northern and Western shores, with the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific Oceans offering ample separation outside its continental landscape. Canada also lies in the shadow of a giant, with the Canadian population concentrated very close to its southern border and the United States superpower offering its only significant land-based neighbour[11]. Canadian territory and identity, respectively protected and fostered through east-west conduits, has relied heavily on innovations in electric media and a strong federalist vision to coordinate activities across disparate regions. Mass communications is more than a powerful tool in Canada: it is the socio-political glue that helps the country overcome environmental determinism, a looking glass through which it can observe its awesome neighbour as well as its own response. Here the renowned words of communications theorist, Marshall McLuhan, resound: that the "medium is the message"—that *any* media image or idea is inescapably distilled and contrived as it passes through a lens.

[11] Canada also has close island neighbours: France's St. Pierre-et-Miquelon islands just off southern Newfoundland and Denmark's Greenland which lies largely within the Arctic Circle.

This embedded Canadian awareness of the lens and its refashioned reality—historically but not necessarily universally[12] retained—has long given rise to a detachment rather than a cynicism, reinforced through well-publicized efforts to consider both sides in debates, on a single national public broadcasting service. This sense of detachment also provides a partial permission to enjoy "harmless" entertainment, even if the explicit and subliminal messages are anything but harmless. Canada's less defensive and cynical attitude towards American media, compared to other nations, may simply reveal more practice dealing with America up close and personal, waking up each morning to find there's been no invasion to secure Canada's resource reservoirs[13]. Canada's general tolerance is clearly tied to the view that mass media is essential for collective action, news, weather and entertainment—all critical for *survival* in a more northerly, sparsely populated nation. In many respects, North American experience has been moderate: Canada did not confront, on its own land[14], the point-blank tyranny of the Third Reich or its blatant propaganda. The United States, in contrast, experienced direct hits on Pearl Harbour as well as its marine routes. Both countries, through their WWI and WWII efforts had to deal critically with information trans-missions, with coded messages and manufactured realities, but this does not set them aside from the experiences of many other allies.

The United States with its milder climate, greater population density, rich resources and productivity, and more openly networked communities more quickly established its own independent economic engine. In contrast, Canada's path has long remained that of a colonial-styled "staple

[12] One cannot assume that all Canadians share this heritage of media "detachment". Immigration has had considerable socio-cultural impact in Canada and there are now many alternative language channels, conveying other worldviews, i.e. Bollywood. The Canadian 1st Nation's receptivity to English and French media, and counteraction with their own customized media formulation, is also a case deserving more attention.

[13] Sadly, no invasion is necessary: Canada does not have adequately strict rules on foreign ownership.

[14] Canada was nevertheless impacted by the war on native soil: the Halifax Explosion (1917), set off when two allied cargo ships collided, was one of the country's most devastating incidents—and remains the "world's largest man-made accidental explosion" (Wikipedia)—killing 2,000 people and injuring over 9,000 others.

economy"[15] (Innis 1930) reliant on the export of unprocessed primary resources. The resulting entrenched imagery of dependency meshes awkwardly with Canada's early metaphors of vulnerability and humbleness in the face of nature. The wish for independence coupled with a lack of confidence created national adolescent angst. Much has been made of Canada's thematic pursuit of "survival" (Atwood 1972), perhaps best portrayed in Earle Birney's fatalistic epic poem, *David*[16]. Trepidation of the natural elements waned earlier in American historical discourse and soon either a mastery of the landscape was celebrated or a truce declared: *The Virginian* regards the struggling Wyoming territory with both awe and promise, the natural flow of *A River Runs Through It* and *Legends of the Fall* is echoed in behavioral choices but does not fully constrain them[17]. American Frontier icons continue to be celebrated, as unconstrained Marlborough cowboys securing individual freedom by using the most basic of tools and sheer bravado. In Canada, mastery of things natural has never been assumed: the natural environment and human biological frailties prevail, with resistance falling away to acquiescence in Atom Egoyan's tragic Canadian films, *The Sweet Hereafter* and *Away From Her*.

World War I and its Aftermath: A Rocky Road for Liberalism

The outcomes of World War I spun an oscillating trajectory of operational prerogatives linked to interpretations of "liberalism". WWI (1914–1918) was a colossal tragedy, not only in the millions of lives lost but also in the shattering of Western European optimism. The momentum was broken for contemplating conditions *liberalis* (Greek), as those "suitable for a free man": the idealism of Locke, Smith, Kant, Jefferson, Paine, Mill and others—firmly transatlantic in their appeal—was confronted by bitter realities. This first worldwide conflict fundamentally

[15] The staples theory argues that Canada's socio-political and economic history was largely tied to resource extraction and export, including various staples such as fur, fish, wheat, wood, minerals and fossil fuels.

[16] In this poem, the narrator Bob stumbles through an early adult right of passage, being forced (through observation) to acknowledge Nature's awe and impartiality: his companion, David, echoing the biblical David and Goliath struggle, is drawn to climb a challenging peak but tragically falls to his death.

[17] Authors were respectively: Owen Wister (*The Virginian*, 1928), Norman Maclean (*A River Runs Through It*, 1976), and Jim Harrison (*Legends of the Fall*, 1978).

shifted the European outlook, sobered North American mindsets, prompted a problematic response, and set the stage for another widespread war. Both Canada and the United States were significantly involved in the wars, but their motivations differed sharply as did the paths taken.

Canada automatically entered the war when Britain declared war on Germany, with Canada's Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, passing the 1914 *War Measures Act*. Despite its colonial obligation, WWI also offered Canada a right of passage. The new military policy it specified ensured that Canadian troops were kept together and national recognition was given for their valiant efforts in the battles of Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele and other critical locations. Borden had initially committed 500,000 troops to support the cause, but news of enormous casualties and deplorable trench conditions diminished the enthusiasm of volunteers. The government's introduction of the *Military Service Act* (1917) led to a political and military crisis (the Conscription Crisis): it challenged the right to choose to fight or not, to live and let live (Locke), or choose to avoid conditions which were unfair or prejudicial[18]. Canada's internal political circumstance was also moving the country further away from alignment with the United States—away from the 1911 Liberal-led negotiations of free trade ("reciprocity")[19].

Canada's rights as a dominion within the British Empire were re-cast. Its seat at the Paris Peace Conference was earned by proficiency and bravery, and Canada (along with the other dominions) now also had the right to be an independent signatory on the Treaty of Versailles as well as hold separate membership in the League of Nations. Canada's commitment in WWI and its pursuit of conditions *liberalis* both challenged and transcended individual and economic rights: it recognized through symbolic sacrifice and political commitment—abroad as well as at

[18] The greater reluctance on the part of French Canadians to join the military effort stemmed from the reported preference for English Protestant commanders and associated linguistic challenges and prejudices.

[19] Borden's continuation as Conservative leader and Prime Minister was at risk, but he salvaged his position by skillfully soliciting support from opposition Liberal ranks[19] and establishing a coalition Unionist government. This alliance countered the depleted English Liberal party, removing Unionist interests further from Liberal initiatives such as the 1911 debate over free trade with the United States. Interestingly enough, Borden had himself been a prior Liberal party member.

home—that the ideal of liberalism would require ongoing retrospection and negotiation.

When WWI broke out, the United States was determined to remain neutral, continuing its international trade under a unilateral approach. Two critical circumstances nevertheless led to America's 1917 decision to participate as an "associated power"[20]: its international shipping was being threatened and it was revealed that Germany had appealed[21] to Mexico for a military alliance. President Woodrow Wilson, however, not only argued for the protection of American trade and territory, but also idealistically for the support of liberal ideas, consistent with the United States' declaration of self-evident rights. In his message to Congress on February 26, 1917, Wilson argued for the protection of the "ultimate base of our existence and our liberty", suggesting that this was a crucial moment when civilization itself was at stake through an attack on human rights. As compelling as his words were, and as pivotal as America's role was in the Allies' success, the US Senate later refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which in turn, would have supported the League of Nations, which Wilson personally favoured. The United States returned, during the interwar period, to its prior more neutral position, letting economics rule through its unilateral trade policies.

In the inter-war period, there were parallel developments on liberties within Canada and the United States. Women's suffrage gained gradual momentum, despite the far earlier (pre-18th century) French leadership on this cause. Recognition of American women's rights began in Wyoming in 1869, likely intended to establish more stable structures on the rugged frontier. Nation-wide, American women's voting rights were not established until 1920 when President Woodrow Wilson passed the Nineteenth Amendment. In Canada, early initiatives started first in Ontario in 1884, when unmarried women and widows were allowed to vote in municipal elections, and then in Manitoba when in 1916 women were permitted to vote in provincial elections. It was not until 1919 that all Canadian women were granted the right to vote federally, with the

[20] As such it did not join as a direct "ally" with the members of the Triple Entente (the United Kingdom, France and Russian Empire) which had formally declared war on the Ottoman Empire.

[21] This appeal was evident in the intercepted Zimmerman Telegram.

provinces for the most part following suit[22]. Although this progress seems fragmented, it must be acknowledged that, in England, women did not have equal rights to vote until 1928, and the United Nations only introduced a declaration for universal women's voting rights in 1948. One could argue, as such, that this North American rights outcome was quite influential. The same could be said for the 1960s–1970s feminist movement led by iconic American figures, Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan, with the prominence of female political activists assisted thereafter (with Rachel Carson, for example, writing the bestseller, *The Silent Spring*).

Post-war economic and social conditions were generally bleak in Canada but less congruent in the United States. For soldiers returning from war, there were fewer job opportunities; women had joined the workforce to assist in the war cause and some remained, and the economic and physical costs of the war overall took a major toll. The cost of the war was reported as $1 billion for Canada and substantially more, at $32 billion, for the United States; however, the economic spin-offs of America's involvement in European reconstruction created wealth for trading industrialists and financiers, so the resulting American recession was short-lived. The 1918 flu[23], transmitted home from Europe after the war, substantially disrupted the economic and social fabric of both countries, killing mostly youthful healthy persons. In Canada, this H1N1-variant flu epidemic claimed over 50,000 persons, close to the nation's 67,000 WWI casualties. In the United States, it was even more devastating, affecting roughly 28% of the population and causing over 500,000 deaths, close to one-half of their 116,708 souls lost in WWI. In Canada, the disruption was compounded by the 173,000 Canadians who returned home from World War I with injuries. This rate of injuries was far higher (relative to troop strength) than that in the United States: in fact, it came close to 85% of the 204,002 Americans injured[24].

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[22] The notable exception was Quebec which withheld women's right to vote provincially until 1940.

[23] The 1918 worldwide flu pandemic killed in excess of 50 million and disrupted commerce worldwide.

[24] Sourced from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_Canada_during_WWI, Stewart Wallace (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Canada* (1848), and http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/allwars.htm.

The aftermath of war led to the reassessment of rights across various segments of society. In Canada, the overall labour disruption and economic suffering led to intensified, broad-based unionization[25], culminating in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and giving rise to a reactive armed force focused on strikebreaking. Prime Minister Mackenzie King argued for greater regional concern, countering the industrial-heartland and centralized Canadian influence while pushing for greater independence from the United Kingdom through a redefined role for the Governor General[26]. This push for decentralization saw Canada's sovereign identity within continental North American bolstered through the establishment of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, encouraging Canadian cultural content and counter-acting growing American radio media influence. Despite this drive towards greater autonomy, there is evidence that Canada was coincidentally shifting to a more continental approach, avoiding external conflicts[27] and seeking closer diplomatic ties[28] with the United States. Overall, the two nations were moving more so in concert, grasping their new military stature, reassessing their international involvement, and pursuing unilateral arrangements from an isolationist[29] position with the benefits of trade considered foremost. The result was a shift away from the internationalist momentum established overseas by the League of Nations, where many citizens were seeking

[25] In particular, there was an effort to improve working conditions universally, with Canadian trade unionists establishing One Big Union (the OBU), an entity criticized by some as excessively socialist.

[26] The Governor General is Canada's ceremonial head of state, continuing a degree of formality respectful of Canada's prior dominion role.

[27] The *Foreign Enlistment Act* of 1937 restricted Canadians from participating in foreign wars. Nevertheless, 1,546 volunteers served in the Spanish Civil War, when the legitimate Spanish government was challenged by Francisco Franco's uprising, backed by Nazi Germany and Fascist allies in Italy.

[28] Canada entered into a fisheries treaty with the United States and opened its own embassy in Washington".

[29] One indication of the withdrawal from the global community was the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 which sought to keep demographics status quo, restricting new immigrants to 2% of that ethnic population already resident in the States.

broader collective protection, now more so apprehensive of nationalist zeal and cynical about life outcomes and the exercise of authority[30].

The American "Roaring Twenties" optimism was soon extinguished by the worldwide Great Depression, triggered by excessive speculation and the resulting 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. Regional employment and confidence fell further as North America entered the widespread, prolonged prairie Dustbowl conditions of 1930-1936. Canada was now more fully integrated as a peripheral continental economy; this dependency upon the inflated American market was reflected in Canada's dampened industrial output, not quite as severe as America's, but far worse than the post-1929 performance in Britain. Canada's continued reliance upon primary goods export proved especially problematic. Unemployment in Canada and the U.S. rose to 27% and 25% respectively, resulting in mass migrations across provinces and states, with soup lines and fledgling social safety nets[31] set up. With North American relocation, new improved prospects were not assured but regional diversity offered more hope than it did in Britain where many men were sent to work camps and unemployment soared to 90% in some locations, sparking massive hunger marches[32].

America's New Deal reconstruction effort rekindled hope for a revived economy. Incoming President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt pursued an aggressive counter-cyclical infrastructure investment strategy and instigated a number of labour service programs. The Canadian Conservative Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett, also assumed the helm under these difficult conditions and partly mimicked Roosevelt's approach by supporting the expensive Canadian National Railway[33]; the Conservatives otherwise promoted business, banking and revitalized trade within the British Empire, shifting away from continental alignment with the United States.

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[30] The Nihilist movement in particular reflected a reluctance to accept government or social objectives, asserting that morality was not inherent but contrived and formal power structures were often simply manipulative.

[31] This development was more so evident in Canada where veterans pushed for social welfare programs, arguing their rights on the basis of prior sacrifices made.

[32] Sourced from: http://www.thegreatdepression.co.uk/unemployment-during-the-great-depression/.

[33] The counter-cyclical economic advantages of infrastructure construction in Canada is very different than that in the United States: the predominantly east-west corridor of Canada offers far fewer network opportunities and economies of scale compared to the hub-driven transportation grid of the United States.

The Canadian Conservative government thus established a strong *laissez-faire* reputation by adhering to traditional neo-classical economic principles and remaining largely indifferent[34] to the suffering of citizens and provincial authorities. With Roosevelt openly admired by many Canadians for his bold, compassionate efforts, the indifference on the part of the Canadian Conservatives led to greater dissatisfaction and a more broad-based, socially-driven political Liberal agenda, backed by protest movements. Winning the 1935 election as the Depression wound down, incoming Prime Minister MacKenzie King offered Canadians housing and employment relief programs while also supporting the establishment of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, National Film Board, Bank of Canada, and Air Canada.

Conclusion

Cultural exchange between Canada and the United States has developed a complex melodic character. There are many variations on Western European traditions and prior classical structures that underscore North America's social and economic life, political thought, institutions, and the practice of law. Despite their divergent histories, these two nations maintain a remarkable post-Colonial alliance: the resounding timbre of America's behemoth economic base softens to a compatible hum of largely coordinated continental resource and trade flows. Canada's sovereignty and independent path, along with its distinctly community-oriented and human rights vision, has at times struck a disparate chord with its single land-based neighbour. Canada's self-sufficiency has never been assumed—it remains largely a staple economy—but its national autonomy is nonetheless safeguarded, buttressed by transatlantic relations and recurrent, albeit more subtle nationalist refrains. Canadians remain acutely aware of the consolidating role of communications—its critical role in maintaining a buffer, as an east-west Continental Divide—with the power of the lens and the importance of maintaining responsive communications conduits acknowledging a geo-political subjectivity, with disparate environmental challenges and Canada's preoccupation with survival. The outcomes of World War I and its aftermath were particu-

[34] This approach offered incentives rather than relief to guide economic behaviour, assumed the market would optimally allocate resources, and relied on work camps for regulated control of unemployed men.

larly influential to the evolving relationships between the two countries and how they chose to explore, together and apart, transatlantic initiatives related to liberalism and human rights.

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PÉTER SZAFFKÓ

CENTRAL EUROPEAN THEATRE AND THE *CANADIAN THEATRE REVIEW*: THE FIRST DECADE

1. Introduction

The history of the Canadian theatre goes back to 1606 when the first theatrical performance was presented on the shores of Port Royal to celebrate the return of the Governor from his trip. Nevertheless, professional theatre in Canada has a relatively short history; in fact, less than half a century.

With some exaggeration, I might also say that theatre criticism in Canada has existed ever since the regular publication of local and national newspapers. The story of this fascinating genre is very well illustrated and commented upon in *Establishing Our Boundaries* published in 1999. Theatre journals, however, emerged only in the 1960s when various experts—directors, historians, dramaturgs, critics and scholars—wanted to express their views on the state of affairs as well as the development of the theatre arts in Canada. Although the difference between day-to-day criticism of individual performances and a more academic approach to the art of the theatre in any culture may seem evident, it is worth quoting Herbert Whittaker, one of the doyens of Canadian theatre criticism, who was the first national chairman of the Canadian Theatre Critics Association and worked for the *Globe and Mail* for more than thirty years. Concerning the history of Canadian theatre criticism, he wrote that

> The academic critic is allowed a more historical perspective, watching for the trends taken by [the current theatrical] expression. While the daily working critic feels part of the daily creativity, clinging precariously to his objectivity, the periodical critics must look for overall

> developments, making note of similar trends in time and place. (Wagner, *Contemporary* 340)

Given this fact, it seems natural that academic or half-academic theatre journals would be founded relatively late. In Canada, the first such magazine was *Performing Arts in Canada*, a quarterly founded and published in 1961 in Toronto. From 1964 the journal happened to have strong Hungarian connections because George Hencz became President of the company that published it and he stayed in that position for more than three decades. Editors of the journal included then prominent Hungarian intellectuals such as Rolf Kalman, Stephen Mezei or Billyann Balay. Since 1991 the magazine has become *Performing Arts and Entertainment in Canada* and covered theatre, dance, concert and other cultural events. (As far as I know, the journal ceased to appear after 2002 due to the illness of George Hencz and some other circumstances.)

The first journal devoted solely to the theatre was a short-lived periodical entitled *The Stage in Canada* founded in 1965 and published by the Canadian Theatre Centre. Its editors included Tom Hendry, co-founder of the Manitoba Theatre Centre (with John Hirsch) and Jean Louis Roux, among others. Although I have no concrete information, it seems that the journal was not published after 1968.

2. The Canadian Theatre Review: The Background

The first issue of the still most significant theatre quarterly, the *Canadian Theatre Review*, came out in winter 1974 published by the Faculty of Fine Arts, York University, Toronto. The founding editor was Professor Don Rubin, an American expatriate, who decided to choose Canada as his home during the Vietnam war. For the first few issues he had two associate editors, the already mentioned Stephen Mezei and the noted theatre historian Ross Stuart. Other Canadians of Hungarian descent could also be found on the list of contributors: Peter Hay, the adopted son of Julius Hay a.k.a. Gyula Hay, was on the Advisory Board while articles were written by John Hirsch, one of the most successful and renown Canadian directors, and Joseph Erdelyi, a free-lance theatre critic living in Toronto at the time. Other parts of East-Central Europe was represented among the contributors by one of Canada's first outstanding playwrights, George Ryga of Ukrainian origin and Polish emigré, Marion André, playwright and director.

One of the reasons why I mention these names is that this short list in itself is a proof of the existing multicultural feature of Canadian culture. The other reason is that in the following pages I would like to provide a brief summary of what the readers of CTR may have learnt about contemporary theatre in Central Europe during the first decade of its publication.

Why Central Europe? On the one hand: because this part of Europe has always produced a great variety of theatre trends, experiments and innovations and it would be interesting to see how much of this information was available for theatre workers in Canada. It is enough to think of the achievements of twentieth-century Russian, Polish, Czech and German theatres. On the other hand: since the 1970s and 80s were the period of alternat(iv)e theatre in North America, its Canadian representatives must have been interested in the artistic endeavours and achievements of some Central European theatres and if there was any authentic source for such information, it was the highly ambitious *Canadian Theatre Review*.

Why only the first decade? Partly because I see this period as the pioneering time of the journal both for the editors and the readers but partly because 1985 was the year when Michail Gorbachev became party head in the Soviet Union and it can be regarded as the first step towards the collapse of the communist block, i.e. during the decade between 1974 and 1984 Central Europe was still treated as an exotic place behind the iron curtain …

But before going into concrete details, let me start by quoting the first paragraph of the editorial of the first CTR issue, which can be read as a kind of ars poetica:

> The Canadian Theatre Review is a magazine about Canada today which means, to some extent, that it is also a magazine about Canada as it existed in the past and as it may exist in the years to come. There are, of course, many magazines which, in one way or another, deal with Canada. What makes CTR unique is its perspective: Canada as seen through the eyes of its theatre artists. This is our view, our own way in. But because the perspective is a focussed one, it does not necessarily follow that the potential audience for CTR will be small. There are many thousands of people working today in the Canadian theatre and we hope to reach them all. (Rubin, Mezei, Stuart 4)

No doubt the main purpose of the journal was and has been ever since to provide a forum for the makers of the modern Canadian theatre through

which they can communicate their ideas, desires and problems, descriptively or analytically to each other and anybody else involved or interested in the world of the theatre. Being an academic journal, *CTR* has been open to all aspects of Canadian and world theatre and its editors or contributors could not help reporting major events in Europe and elsewhere.

3. Articles on Central European Theatre

During the period examined there were 21 articles or reviews on various aspects or figures of Central European theatre. The great majority (three-fourth) of them were devoted to Poland (9) and Soviet Russia (7) while the theatre scene in the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Hungary was covered on one occasion each. In addition, the East German Bertolt Brecht was the subject of two articles. Statistically speaking, all this means that in the period examined every second issue of CTR dealt with this part of Europe. While it would be useless to make judgements as to whether it is enough, too much or too little, the distribution of the articles among the various countries seems to be more or less acceptable. What I find even more interesting is the diversity of the articles in terms of genre or approach to the discussed topic.

3.1 The Soviet Theatre

The very first report from Moscow came from the then young Vancouver director John Juliani (aged 34) who travelled through Europe and Asia for a year on a Canada Council grant and kept a diary of his experiences. In the excerpt published in the second issue (Spring 1974) he relates his contradictory views on the famous director Andrei Lyubimov's two works in the Taganka Theatre: while the "highly acclaimed production of *Hamlet* … was a distinct disappointment" for Juliani (Juliani 26), he praised the "poetic documentary-spectacle" (29) entitled *A. C. Pushkin* which he saw the following night. The Canadian director also writes about two other plays he saw in Moscow, one at the Mossoviet Theatre (*St. Petersburg Dreams* based on Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*) and another at the Sovremennik Theatre (*Valentine and Valentine* by Roschin). It is particularly interesting how Juliani reflects upon this latter performance. He argued that Roschin's play was "decidedly different from the average socialist education piece. It

provided me with many insights about urban living in Russia, and especially about a recent disturbing and altogether acknowledged social phenomenon—the feminization of Soviet society" (31–32). Juliani had a chance of meeting some officials of the ITI (International Theatre Institute) which forced him to make the following comment:

> … I noticed the remarkable way the I.T.I. functions in socialist countries. Unlike the now defunct Canadian Theatre Centre which could never seem to fulfill the needs of our theatrical community, the Soviet I.T.I. is impressive because of the scope of its operations and because it actually seems to accomplish something concrete for its members. It is depressing to think how much remains to be done in Canada by our branch of the I.T.I., or some equivalent organization. Surely our problems, those vaunted considerations of "multiculturalism" and distance, are no more formidable than those of the U.S.S.R., which has to deal with a larger geographical area and with a greater variety of native languages. (30)

This kind of comparison between Canada and the country in question is rather typical of such articles, especially if they are related to personal experiences. For example, Oscar Ryan who reported on "Theatre in Soviet Georgia" in issue 13 (Winter 1977), makes the following comment in connection with an early twentieth-century Georgian historical drama called *Treason*: "There were times during this production that I imagined I was at Stratford—the larger-than-life canvas, the bold statement, the sense of history, the heroism; yet here also is Eastern colour, and here also, the severe simplicity of the ancient Greeks (140)." Otherwise Ryan's piece is one of the highly informative and descriptive types of writing basically characteristic of those CTR articles which reported on international events or theatre scenes. After a brief but useful historical introduction, Ryan analyses three Tbilisi productions he saw on one weekend but the most interesting comment he makes is related to the study of theatre in Georgia:

> Theatre Society people I spoke to, especially those pursuing research and theory, take a broad view of their art; they feel that theatres throughout the world have related problems, that theatres in different regions of the same country share these problems, indeed that all theatre workers share them. You can't study theatre history in separate, isolated compartments, they stress. You must regard it as a whole. (140)

Similarly to John Juliani, Joyce Doolittle visited the USSR in 1974 as a researcher-lecturer and reported on nine productions she saw in the

Leningrad Theatre of the Young Spectator (TUZ) in issue 10 (Spring 1976). The reader can learn from the article that in the USSR it was quite common for a city to have at least one theatre devoted to the young and that

> There are over four dozen such theatres in the Soviet Union, all enjoying large government subsidies and a stability and respect unimaginable in most North American centres. What makes the Leningrad theatre remarkable is its special successful mixture of youth and experience, the loyalty and diversity of its audience and its constant experimentation and research. (Doolittle, *Leningrad TUZ* 41)

It is indeed fascinating that 3 out of the 8 articles deal with theatre for the young. In addition to the above-mentioned report, Joyce Doolittle also wrote a review about a book called *Russian Plays for Young Audiences* published in the US in 1978 and translated and edited by Miriam Morton (Spring 1979) who actually contributed the third writing on Moscow's Music Theatre for Children, the only one of its kind in the whole world (Summer 1980). After evaluating the five plays for young poeple, Doolittle closes her review with the following conclusion:

> When we have more examples of serious playwrights writing full-length plays in many genres, when we have permanent playhouses for young audiences, when budgets for plays for young people permit anything other than "poor theatre" staging, we may also be in a position to publish such a rich collection of plays for young people. (Doolittle, *Russian Plays*114)

Another review was written by Don Rubin, founding editor of CTR, on V. O. Toporkov's book on *Stanislavski in Rehearsal: The Final Years* written in 1949–1950 but published in New York in 1979. As we learn from the review, some of the material in the book had already been published but most of it was new. What Professor Rubin finds the most interesting in it is Toporkov's very simple insight when he states that

> Stanislavski ultimately did not *discover* secrets of acting technique as much as he *explained* them. Those secrets … *were* possessed by our great artists and teachers, but *they* could not explain them sufficiently to their pupils, although, as [Toporkov] says, 'they strove to do so with all their hearts.' (Rubin 111)

The last article on Russian theatre deals with the training of theatre critics by giving a detailed description of the degree programme in Soviet schools from which the reader is informed about the fact that "the normal

length of professional studies in a Soviet theatre school for actors and directors is four years. For the would-be drama critic, however, the required length of study is five years, a far cry from the casual training (and that even rarely) given in North America (*The Critic* 61)."

3.2 The Polish Theatre

In 1975 three articles focussed on various aspects of the Polish theatre. Readers of issue 6 of *CTR* (Spring 1975) were informed that 1974 might well be said to have been the year of Wyspianski, the famous 19th-century Polish playwright whose plays were revived on a number of stages in the country. Roman Szydlowski, the major CTR correspondent from Warsaw enlists and analyses a few important productions which "were most effectively presented" ("The Year of Wyspianski" 133). In the next issue (Fall 1975) he continues to report about the theatre scene in Poland stating that while 1974 was "the year of the country's classical dramatists, above all, the year of Wyspianski," 1975 "is in a way even more exciting for it seems to be a celebration of Poland's contemporary dramatists" ("Contemporary Poland" 85). Playwrights mentioned in the article include Mrozek, Gombrowicz and Rozewicz, each one having at least one play produced in some Polish theatre. In summary Szydlowski remarks that

> Perhaps the most important thing to note … is that Poland's artistic directors have always known that a theatre cannot be called "alive" unless it is producing its own contemporary writers. Even when good contemporary plays were few and far between, these directors searched for, produced and promoted such plays with genuine enthusiasm. Because of this support, these writers have developed and today public support for their work is consistent. (87)

It is impossible not to notice an underlying reference to the Canadian situation in which most of the supporters and makers of the alternative theatre were more than convinced that the only way for the modern Canadian theatre is to rely on genuine Canadian drama and performance. If the above remark is an underlying reference to the Canadian theatre, the following introductory paragraph in Robin Endres's short writing on the amateur tradition is an explicit comparison between Poland and Canada:

> Underlying Polish cultural policy in general are some rather basic principles, neglected or under-emphasized in Canada. Perhaps the primary one is that any visible culture must have a broad base, as broad a

> base as state subsidies can possibly afford. The Polish amateur theatre movement, a movement of which few in the west are even aware, in addition to providing outlets for the creative use of leisure time, plays a key role in the development not only of this broad base but the development of Polish theatre as a whole. (136)

After providing a very informative and positively objective picture of the training and fate of the amateur theatre workers, Endres concludes by saying "whether or not such a program would have any applicability for Canada is obviously a point for further discussion. The fact is, though, that in Poland, sophistication and mass appeal do co-exist. Obviously, the amateur theatre movement deserves much of the credit for this phenomenon (137)."

1975 was not only the year of contemporary Poland as Szydlowski stated but also the year when Polish director Swinarski died in an airplane crash just after his last production, a Mayakovski piece, opened at the National Theatre in Warsaw.

Death is the topic of Tadeusz Kantor's manifesto, "The Theatre of Death," published in the Fall 1977 issue. CTR has no comments on the Manifesto which is rather unusual. This way it is difficult to say what the editors might have wanted to achieve with publishing the world-wide-known director's thoughts on a new form of theatre. One of the remaining four articles on Polish theatre includes a very brief review by Don Rubin on a book called Polish Theatre Directors which examines the work of ten significant directors including Grotowski, Kantor, Swinarski, Szajna and Wajda (Winter 1981).

The other three writings deal at least partly with the most famous Polish director in the twentieth century, Jerzy Grotowski. In the Winter 1977 issue Michael Macina reported on the New Directions Conference in Hamilton with such notable speakers as André Gregory, Charles Marowitz and Jerzy Grotowsky. As the author of the article remarks "Grotowski's talk was noteworthy because one detected his moving away from the kind of rhetoric which has, in the past, led some to accuse him of being something of a mystic" (Macina 130). Grotowski had a four-hour lecture in which he tried to explain his new concept concerning theatre direction emphasising a deeper involvement of the audience in his work.

He and his work are mentioned in Don Rubin's two reports on "one of the more important international gatherings of experimental groups, the Wroclaw Festival in 1974 and 1987. Although in 1974 companies arived from Argentina, England, Portugal, Brazil, the Soviet Union, Poland,

Hungary, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Italy, Denmark and Japan, as Rubin remarks "of this large gathering, only a handful of things seemed of genuine interest," primarily "an open meeting with Grotowski in which he talked about new directions his work was taking him" (Rubin "Abroad" 130). Taking briefly about the production of his company entitled *Apocalypsis*, Rubin concludes that "as a viable theatrical direction … one has to wonder" (130). While in 1974 he was mostly concerned about the problem of "trying to decide which of our companies are actually working in the area of genuine theatrical experiment and which are simply providing theatrical 'alternatives' in the various regions" (128), in 1978 he had to report that "given the chaos of the 1978 version, will there be—should there be—another Wroclaw Festival in the future?" (Rubin "Wroclaw Festival" 140).

3.3 Other Central European Countries

As for the other Central European countries, Czechoslavakia is represented by an interview in 1975 with Josef Svoboda who spent some time in Canada on the occasion of a touring exhibition of his work. The article on "Theatre in the GDR" is a description of the theatrical scene in the country based on the statement that "the theatre of East Germany has come of age" (Tracy 92). The third country in the period examined is Hungary which was reported on by Canadian playwright Henry Beissel who was invited by the Hungarian ITI to visit some theatres and assist in the translation of his play *Inook and the Sun* which was supposed to be produced in Hungarian. Although this project has not yet been realised, Beissel provided a reliable and informative picture of Hungarian theatres and playwriting. The most fascinating part of his report is connected to the peculiarities of the Hungarian language, a curious phenomenon for many people on their first visit to Hungary:

> Hungarian is a forbidding but dramatic language. No amount of etymological ingenuity is going to help you identify a building that's marked *szinhaz* as a theatre. And when I was invited to see Shakespeare's "Darab", I racked my brains in vain to guess which of the Bard's plays might bear that title—it turned out all 38 do, bacause darab simply means "play" or "piece". Actually, the play on that occasion was Othello and the production I saw gave me insight into the sonar qualities of Hungarian whose many open vowels, rich and strong consonants and rather explosive rhythms deriving from the heavy stress that falls on the first syllable of every word—all seemed eminently suited to the

> elemental frorces that erupt in that play and to dramatic speech generally. (Beissel 141)

Finally, I have to mention Bertolt Brecht who was the subject of a review on the English translation of Klaus Völker's *Brecht Chronicle* and an excerpt of a German paper on "Brecht as Critic" translated for the CTR by Anton Wagner.

4. Conclusion

What can I say in conclusion? Reading through the articles on Central European theatre, I had the impression that the topics, the texts and the issues raised in these writings were quite closely related to the central issues of contemporary Canadian theatre including the avant-garde, youth theatre, international relations as well as state subsidies. Whether these articles had any direct impact on the development of any aspect os Canadian theatre would be impossible to judge but it would also be wrong to ignore the presence and any indirect influence of some of the ideas presented in the above articles.

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PLACES AND IMAGINED COMMUNITIES IN ONDAATJE'S *RUNNING IN THE FAMILY*

Introduction

The notion of place is closely connected to the concept of memory, as both of them are important signifiers of culture and identity. The present paper aims at examining the issue of memory and place in Canadian author Michael Ondaatje's travelogue-memoir, *Running in the Family*.

The intricate ways of constructing memory and place, the dynamics of remembering and forgetting as well as place as fiction built up of layers of memories will be at the centre of my investigation. I will focus on the search for belonging and the creation of homespace in this narrative which crosses generic boundaries. I will also deal with the motif of rewriting "home" in a text which figures the overlapping of geographic and discursive spaces.

Memory in the retrieval of national and personal history

The attempt to build a narrative about one's homeland on the basis of memory has been shown to be an irresistable challenge and a compelling necessity for immigrant writers. Such narratives may serve as points of reference for identity and meaning. This is the case with Sri Lanka-born Canadian Michael Ondaatje's memoir, *Running in the Family* which is also an attempt to revise the history of his homeland and his family.

In his 1982 essay entitled *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie deals with the discourse of writers in the between-world condition. He claims that those writers who write about their homeland from the outside must necessarily "deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been

irretrievably lost" (Rushdie, 1992:11). However, the fragmentary nature of these memories, their partial truths and incomplete explanations make them highly precious for the immigrant writer. "These shards of memory", Rushdie claims, "acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were *remains*; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities." (Rushdie, 1992:12).

Ondaatje reacts to Sri Lanka, the homeland of his childhood from a background of displacement: he left Ceylon for England and then Canada at the age of 11, after his parents' divorce and chronicles in the novel his return twenty-five years later. The book is the result of two return journeys made by Ondaatje to the island in 1978 and 1980 and reveals the importance of home to the writer. It is made up of novelistic, auto-biographic, poetic and documentary elements, apparently unstructured and randomly placed texts as well as snaphots from the family album. Abounding in colourful, mind-boggling events the novel tries to recapture the world of the parents, "the roaring twenties", Ceylon in the early decades of the 20th century which Ondaatje knew mainly from fragments of stories he had heard as a child. His commitment in writing this work is clearly to come to terms with a past that is both personal and cultural.

Belonging to a family and having a role in history are the very basis of identity: therefore the author, realizing that he had "slipped past a childhood that (he) had ignored and not understood" yearns to reconstruct his family's story. This involves looking back both at a history that began its process of formation three centuries ago, that is, history in the national sense and history in the private sense. Thus the narrator's task is twofold: he has to articulate both the complexities of a colonial inheritance and the intricacies of family connections. (Davis, 1996:267) He attempts to reconstruct the Ondaatje family history from stories and comments by friends, fictions and myths, all of them subject to the workings of memory. National history is equally difficult to disentangle on account of the colonial mythos, the native propensity for invention and not least by the intricacy of social affiliations in Ceylon. The interrelationships between different national and cultural identities, the interactions between the Tamils, Sinhalese, Burghers, Dutch and English formed a complex Ceylonese identity, a society in which intermarriage caused everybody to be vaguely related. As a Ceylonese man asked by a British governor said about his nationality, "God alone knows" (Ondaatje, 1982:32).

The authenticity of Ondaatje's narrative is due to his voice as an expatriate, a voice that is both central and marginal. His perception of Ceylon is profound and complex because it views the past both as a prodigal and a foreigner: "Geographically, he is the foreigner coming for a short visit; generationally, he is the native son connected to the homeland by his family lineage." (Ray, 1993:38) Also, he is aware of this duality, this between-world position: "I am the foreigner. I am the prodigal who hates the foreigner." (Ondaatje, 1982: 67) This paradoxical status allows him to examine the past with what Rushdie calls a "stereoscopic vision... a kind of double perspective: because they, we, are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders in this society." (Rushdie, 1982:19)

As Rocío G. Davis points out, "Ondaatje's principal discursive technique in creating his history is the gathering of data on both Sri Lankan history and that of his family and, when the facts fail to speak, turning to myth to give explanations and to fill in the gaps." (Davis, 1996:269)

Although the presentation of historical and familiar constructions hints at linearity, the parallel recounting of national and personal history is unexpectedly episodic. The novel abounds in recurring images, foreshadowing and flashbacks, themes taken up and discarded only to be addressed later. The stereoscopic vision, the simultaneous perception of present and past, personal and collective history results in a fragmented narrative. To give just one example, the chapter entitled *Honeymoon* promises a logical sequence of events, an account of what followed the parents' wedding. What we are offered instead is a listing of events going on at the time in Ceylon and abroad:

Fred Asteire's sister, Adele, got married and the 13th President of the French Republic was shot to death by a Russian. The lepers of Colombo went on a hunger strike, a bottle of beer cost one rupee, and there were upsetting rumours that ladies were going to play at Wimbledon in shorts. (Ondaatje, 1982: 29)

Instead of progressing directly to a national and universal history, the narrative suggests an interactive relation between personal and public histories. The anecdotes, gossips and memories around which Ondaatje constructs his family history are subject to the exaggerations and omissions of their "original" tellers and also the narrator's fictionalizing. Ondaatje's narrative makes us conscious that the process of history writing does not essentially differ from the construction of family histories and other narratives. It is subject to the same fictionalizing

processes. The pun on *Historical Relations* underlines the chaos of actual 'historical facts' and the ordering processes acting upon them. *Historical Relations*, which is the title of a section in the novel refers to relations or relatives in the Ondaatje family. However, it also means 'connections with history'. As Linda Hutcheon points out, it is later in the novel that we discover it to be the title of a memoir by Robert Knox, a man held captive in Ceylon for twenty years. This memoir constitutes one of Ondaatje's main sources of historical information about the land and its traditions. (Hutcheon, 1985:307) Ondaatje reveals the 'mechanisms' of making history, and the essential subjectivity of any type of narration, underlining that history is a process, not a product:

...we will trade anecdotes and faint memories, trying to swell them with the order of dates and asides, interlocking them all as if assembling the hull of a ship. No story is ever told just once. Whether a memory or funny hideous scandal, we will return to it an hour later and retell the story with additions and this time a few judgements thrown in. In this way history is organized. (Ondaatje 1982: 19)

Thus history is shown to be subject to our fictionalizing memory.

Sonia Snelling considers that the search for an ancestral past and the process of making history are the main subjects of Ondaatje's memoir. (Snelling, 1997:21) She claims that the search for absent or lost parents is a challenge to the authority and universality of Western historicism since the traceable ancestral line in Western culture is a sign of the continuity and purity characterizing European history. Ondaatje unsettles the received history of colonial past as told by the imperial masters as well as the narrative structures and forms through which history validates Europe's appropriation of the rest of the world. The search for an ancestral past develops into an interrogation of the whole process of history-making: the inacessibility of the narrator's father emphasizes the elusiveness of a knowable past, the inadequacy of totalizing narratives and the impossibility of closure. Ondaatje produces a text which tells his history through multiple voices and perspectives: the omissions, incongruities and the awareness of his own limitations prove his rejection of the discursive dominance of the West. (Snelling, 1997: 22) As the absent parent becomes the metaphor of the elusiveness of the past, the researching of the absent father's life demonstrates the flaws inherent in gathering historical material. Mervyn, the father's story is often postponed as other stories intrude upon the text: they obviously interrelate with it but also prove the arbitrariness of inclusion. When relating the

events of the 1971 Insurgency in Ceylon, Ondaatje playfully speculates on the random progress of personal and national histories:

The insurgents were remarkably well organized and the general belief is that they would have taken over the whole country if one group hadn't mixed up the dates and attacked the police station in Wellawaya a day too soon. (Ondaatje, 1982: 83)

Ondaatje is often charged with not considering the political and social realities of Ceylon. Sonia Snelling explains: "Although he does not write a direct response to the social and historical consequences of colonial rule, he subtly undermines the racist and uninformed comments of European visitors that appear as epigraphs of certain chapters. (Snelling, 1997: 28) The text celebrates the landscape and cultural identity of Ceylon, praises the country's folk poems and its beautiful alphabet. The absence of direct engagament with the colonizers is a deliberate ploy to exclude them from history—and this is a mirror image of European history's traditional exclusion of the colonized. We could also say that the narrative disruptions, the inconsistencies are all a refusal of the Western emphasis on large-scale historical events, the coherence and authority of Western historiography. The text undermines notions of historical fact as a fixed and complete statement and reveals the subjective and partial nature of archival evidence. The two epigraphs of the book are also significant in connection with Ondaatje's view on colonialism. They express two different perceptions of Ceylon. The first—a statement by Oderi, a Franciscan friar of the 14th century—is clearly Orientalist, suggesting myth and fable. The second one—a comment by Douglas Amerasekara from 1978—is neocolonial and expresses a world view conditioned by centuries of colonial domination. Ondaatje suggests that it is the myths that remain to shape the present of the country: "From Sellyan to Paradise is forty miles", says a legend, "the sound of the fountains of Paradise is heard there." (Ondaatje, 1982: 64)

As Carol E. Leon argues, *Running in the Family* registers a continuation of colonial culture through a sustained engagement with the discourse of cartography which is a vital feature of the text. (Leon, 2003: 15)

Maps and mapmaking belong to a discourse that often functions to structure and symbolize hegemonic power. Ondaatje's travel account, however, portrayes earlier cartographic representations of the island as incomplete and indeterminate 'translations'. The map topos in the narrative displays a resistance to conventional forms of cartography which function as spatial paradigms of imperialism.

Returning once again to the issue of history, although Ondaatje dispells illusions about historical facts, he longs for the legitimating power of history. His quest encompasses history because it involves the need to establish roots and the desire to create himself a homeland that is not only imaginary. The fear of being severed from his own history through immigration comes across in this statement: "After the cups of tea, coffee and public conversations... I want to sit down with someone and talk with utter directness, want to talk to all the lost history like that deserving lover." (Ondaatje, 1982: 43)

The episode when he comes across his own family name cut across the stone floor of a church has several different interpretations. Sangeeta Ray considers it a way of showing that history and subjectivity can never be carved out in stone; they are present in the form of moments that can only be translated into a fragmented autobiography. Rocío G. Davis, on the other hand, thinks that "To kneel on the floors of a church and see your name chiselled in large letters..." confirms the prodigal his legitimacy. I share this second opinion.

Memory and the act of writing/telling

Integral to the process of collecting history is the act of writing and the concern for language. In the following I propose to deal with the relationship between language and memory, more precisely, the role of language in creating and preserving memories.

Ondaatje's memoir abounds in references to the materiality of language: letters carved on gravestones or church floors, family names in ledgers and the beauty of the Sinhalese alphabet being determined by natural resources.

Sanskrit was governed by verticals, but its sharp grid features were not possible in Ceylon. Here the Ola leaves which people wrote on were too brittle. A straight line would cut apart the leaf and so a curling alphabet was derived from its Indian cousin. Moon coconut. The bones of a lover's spine. (Ondaatje, 1982: 69)

Ondaatje also mentions the graffiti poems scratched on the rock face of a despot king, the first folk poems which were love poems written to mythological women as well as the old frescoes in Sigiriya. Writing is also conceived in terms of punishment for schoolchildren as well as an act of protest against the authorities. Quatrains and free verse about the struggle of students during the 1971 Insurgency had been inscribed on the

walls of a university turned into prison camp. “The students went around for days transcribing them into their notebooks before they were covered with whitewash and lye.” (Ondaatje, 1982: 70)

Ondaatje is present in the text as a physical writer of it. This becomes evident from the opening part when he wakes up from a nightmare and finds himself in Ceylon: “Half a page—and the morning is already ancient.” (Ondaatje, 1982: 16) The self-reflexivity of the text shows the power of the written word.

Throughout the novel Ondaatje makes is clear that writing this history is his only way of seizing the disappearing truths of his past. This is a charge given to him by his family: “‘You must get this book right’, my brother tells me, ‘You can only write it once.’” (Ondaatje, 1982: 28)

Although writing has the power to preserve, even create memories, the homeland and its past, just like facts, escape narration. As Ondaatje confesses at the end of his memoir, “the book is not a history but a portrait or ‘gesture’”. Moreover, “in Sri Lanka a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts.” (Ondaatje, 1982: 176)

The whole narrative springs in fact from the strong wish to understand the past, the urge to recreate the figure of the father: “There is so much to know and we can only guess. Guess around him. To know him from these stray actions I am told by those who loved him. And yet, he is still one of those books we long to read whose pages remain uncut.” (Ondaatje, 1982: 171)

Eloquence and the gift of storytelling are central issues in the memoir. Local legend had it that those who ate thalagoia tongue became brilliant speakers: “There is a myth that if a child is given thalagoia tongue to eat he will become brilliantly articulate, will always speak beatifully, and in his speech be able to “catch” and collect wonderful, humorous information.” (Ondaatje, 1982: 61). The narrator’s Uncle Noel became a successful lawyer and a great storyteller from eating just part of the tongue. We do not have evidence about the narrator having ever eaten of the infamous tongue, nevertheless we may consider that he epitomizes the love of storytelling. He spins an entire web of family myths, the most memorable being perhaps the tall tales about Lalla the grandmother and the drunk father. Being a spinner of yarns is a family trait and heritage: eloquence runs in the family. Recording or rather, reconstructing family history is therefore doubly significant: it helps forging the narrator’s sense of identity by making him part of a family, moreover, it links him to the lineage of eloquent storytellers thus confirming the prodigal his legitimacy.

The act of blowing up insignificant details, that is, recording by exaggeration was a characteristic trait of Ceylonese women. The narrator's mother is shown to have shared this talent:

She belonged to a type of Ceylonese family whose women would take the minutest reaction from one another and blow it up into a tremendously exciting tale, then later use it as an example of someone's strain of character. If anything kept their generation alive it was this recording by exaggeration. The silence of tea estates and no doubt my mother's sense of theatre and romance (...) combined the edited delicacies of fiction with the last era of a colnial Ceylon. (Ondaatje, 1982: 143)

The act of storytelling is shown to resemble in its nature the activation of a clockwork or the act of blowing life into papier-mâché puppets. The narrator mentions relatives from his parents' generation who stood in his memory like frozen opera: "I wanted to touch them into words." (Ondaatje, 1982: 16) The magic act begins in a carnivalesque time: "It began with that moment when I was dancing and laughing wildly within the comfort and order of my life."

One of the narrator's many aunts performs the same act of revival: even though half deaf and blind she has the power of transforming the 'flat characters' of an old photograph into sensuous, life-like people:

> Before I leave she points to a group photograph of a fancy dress party that shows herself and my grandmother Lalla among the crowd. She has looked at it for years and has in this way memorized everyone's place in the picture. She reels off names and laughs at the facial expressions she can no longer see. It has moved tangible, palpable, into her brain, the way memory invades the present in those who are old, the way gardens invade houses here, the way her tiny body steps into mine as intimate as anything I have witnessed and I have to force myself to be gentle with this frailty in the midst of my embrace. (Ondaatje, 1982: 92)

Photographs are therefore important means of structuring memory. The snapshots from the Ondaatje family album thus interact with texts: stories and photographs, text and image together build up the space where the narrator belongs to. It is at the confluence of image and text that the identity of the narrative and of the narrator is formed.

Place and Homespace

As Carol E. Leon claims, *Running in the Family* is a travel narrative which explores alternatives to traditional forms of travel writing. It

creates the homespace as the narrative crosses both generic and disciplinary boundaries.

Conjuring the past and the homeland as well as the longing to return pervades the diasporic narrative. It is along the borders of fact and fiction that Ondaatje creates the homespace that he can understand, articulate and belong to.

Although Ondaatje's homespace is superimposed on an empirical location (Sri Lanka), he experiences spaces in flux, "dwellings in travel". As in all good travel narrative the outer expedition is undertaken simultaneously with the exploration of emotional and social geographies. The memoir is thus a quest for identity of self and place.

From the very beginning Ceylon is enveloped in a dream: "What began it all was the bright bone of a dream I could hardly hold onto." (Ondaatje, 1982: 16) The preliminary part of the memoir written in italics differs from the narrative as here the narrator puts on a third person singular mask, distancing himself from the traveller experiencing the journey. The traveller is therefore Othered.

Travel to the homespace may unsettle the diasporic individual's sense of identity. At the same time, the homeland can never be completely reclaimed: loss of the homeland also means loss of self.

Ondaatje evokes the homespace of Ceylon as "sites of exploration". He describes the maps generated by colonial activity as "old portraits", translations growing from mythic shapes into accuracy:

> The island seduced all of Europe. The Portuguese. The Dutch. The English. And so its name changed, as well as its shape,—Serendip, Ratnapida ("island of gems"), Taprobane, Zeloan, Zeilan, Seyllan, Ceilon and Ceylon—the wife of many marriages, courted by invaders who stepped ashore and claimed everything with the power of their sword or bible or language. (Ondaatje, 1982: 54)

Ondaatje implies that the imperial acts of delimiting and mapping cannot subdue the fluidity of the place of Ceylon. This elusiveness of the island is a metaphor of Ondaatje's writing.

Ceylon is juxtaposed with Canada, and, relevantly enough, the text dissolves the points of arrival and departure. Back in Canada, Ondaatje plays a tape with nocturnal sounds in Ceylon. Two separate places are thus superimposed while Canada loses its initial position as a point of reference. The diasporic individual's experience of home is always ambiguous. As Iain Chambers says,

> While 'going home' recalls the nostalgic associations of a mythologized point of origins (our mothers and fathers), 'being at home' in the world involves finding ourselves in a wider, shifting, but more flexible, framework in which our mothers and fathers, bonds and traditions, the myths we know to be myths yet cling to, cherish and dream, exist alongside other stories, other fragments of memory and traces of time. (Chambers 1990, 104 in Leon, 2003, 16)

Conclusion

My aim in this paper was to highlight connections between place and memory in a diasporic narrative about the homespace. First I dealt with the issue of memory in the retrieval of national and personal history coming to the conclusion that there is no strict division between personal and public history, 'fact' and 'fiction', story and history. Secondly, I focused on the act of writing and storytelling in the context of the materiality of culture as well as the search for identity. Finally I pointed out that reconstructing or rather, creating the homespace is an important means of forging identity and a sense of belonging in Ondaatje's narrative which does not allow for lament, bitterness or regret about the past, but professes an immense joy.

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