Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

Edited by / Édité par
Évaine Le Calvé-Ivičević + Vanja Polić
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Central European Association for Canadian Studies
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Cartier’s observations, which evoke the knowing smile of one who knows history in its totality, show that one “North” can obscure another. This image is among many that populate the imaginative world of the North; it is far from the descriptions of icy, solitary and hostile expanses, colourless and odorless, in which characters are forged in the face of mortal danger. The abundance and mildness of the climate described here make one wonder whether the explorer knew that he was traversing what we today consider the circumnordic world.

For while the “North” is, in Western culture, the fundamental cardinal point, its definition, perception and demarcation continue to raise questions. Although it is a definite concept—we still speak of “True North”—it is changeable. We can consider it diachronically or synchronically, from the inside or the outside, as a space of culture(s) or as a geographical space. Daniel Chartier (2015: 1) notes this, as he proposes to “recomplexify” the concept.

Even today, when we embark on a quest we must not “lose sight of the North”. Nancy Huston (2002) encouraged us to draw on this phrase — although it was coined in the mid-16th century (Rey 1989: 809) — and we do so with complicit pleasure. We relish the thought that its usage spread with migratory crossings to Canada.

We therefore propose a quest for the North from the Canadian perspective, since Canada as a whole can be considered the “North”. But in Canada one can find a whole range of “Norths” in the past and present, and in a variety of areas, from founding narratives to land management policies, to literature, poetic expression and other
Introduction

Évaine Le Calvé Ivičević et Vanja Polić

« Leur terre est en chaleur plus tempérée que la terre d’Espaigne et la plus belle qui soi soit possible de voir et aussi eunye que ung estanc. Et n’y a cy petit lieu vide de bouays et fust sur sable qui ne soi soit plain de blé sauvage qui a l’espy comme seigle et le grain comme avoyne et de poyes aussi espez comme si on les y abvoir semés et labourez grouaiseliers blans et rouges frassez franbouaysses et roses rouges et blanches et aultres herbes de bonne et grande odeur. (...) Nous nonnmes ladite baye la baye de Chaleur. » (Cartier 2000 : 44)

Ainsi qu’en témoigne les observations de Cartier, à la lecture desquelles nous ne pouvons réprimer le sourire entendu de celui qui connaît la suite de l’histoire, un « Nord » peut en cacher un autre. Comme celui-ci est loin des descriptions d’étendues glaciales, solitaires et hostiles, sans couleurs ni odeurs, où se forgent les caractères face aux dangers mortels, autant d’images qui peuplent l’imaginaire du Nord. L’abondance et la douceur du climat ici décrites font même douter que l’explorateur se savait être à l’intérieur de ce que nous considérons aujourd’hui comme le monde circumnordique.

Car si le « Nord » est, dans la culture occidentale, le point cardinal fondamental, il n’en reste pas moins que sa définition, sa perception et sa démarcation continuent de nous interroger. En effet, pour certain qu’il soit – d’ailleurs ne parle-t-on pas du « nord vrai » – il n’en demeure pas moins changeant, selon que nous le considérons en diachronie ou en synchronie, de l’intérieur ou de l’extérieur, ou encore comme un espace de culture(s) ou un espace géographique, comme le note Daniel Chartier (2015 : 1), qui nous propose ici de « recomplexifier » ce concept.

Ce n’est donc pas perdre le nord que partir à sa quête, aujourd’hui encore. Et c’est avec un plaisir complice que nous puissions, comme avant nous le fit Nancy Huston, à cette locution qui s’installa au milieu du XVIᵉ siècle (Rey 1989 : 809), et dont nous nous plaisons à penser que son usage se développa à la faveur des traversées vers le Canada.

Nous proposons donc une (en)quête du Nord et ce depuis la perspective canadienne, puisque le Canada tout entier peut être considéré comme « le Nord ». Mais on trouve à l’intérieur du Canada toute une gamme de « Nords », conjugués à la fois au passé et
artistic genres. Each of these areas highlights a different kind of “nordicity”, a widely accepted term coined in the 1970s by Canadian geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin (2002).

Beyond geography “the North” embraces a wide scope of meanings and symbolic values. It is an imaginary space, as well as a space for the imaginative. It is constantly remodelled, a space of myths and one shaped by myths. It can be cruel and ennobling, enigmatic and inspiring, powerful and fragile, a space of extreme deprivation and potential enrichment. How can one embrace in all its vastness the “nordicity” of Canada, so often understood as one of its distinctive features, and an essential element of its identity?

We will approach this question from diverse and convergent perspectives to contribute — in an admittedly incomplete but nevertheless relevant way — to the study of the North and nordicity. Divided into five parts, the contributions in this volume provide a kaleidoscopic presentation of topics in this vast explorative project of the equally vast physical and spiritual space that is the North.

I. Conceptualizing the North

The first part of this volume sets the conceptual premises of the discourse on the North—a multifold space, but also much more —which was for a long time hindered by our inadequate vocabulary, eclipsed by a simplistic imagination, and overshadowed by a lack of interest that reflected its lack of weight and its demographic composition.

Daniel Chartier wonders about the imaginary realm of the North, a space conceived and represented for centuries by artists and writers of the Western world, who created, over time and through the accumulation of discoursive layers, a “Northern Imaginary”. However, Westerners reached the North Pole only a century ago, making the “North” a twofold view, seen from the outside in (particularly Western) representations, and from the inside, as seen in northern cultures such as Inuit, Scandinavian, and Cree. Since the former is often simplified and the latter unknown, to study the North from a common perspective we must ask two questions. First, how can we define the North through the imaginary? And second, according to what ethical principles must we consider Nordic cultures (particularly those that have been disregarded by the South) in order to gain a complete view? Daniel Chartier answers these questions by defining what the Northern imaginary is, and then by proposing an integrative program to “recomplexify” the cultural Arctic.

The question of the Northern imaginary is also central for Aritha van Herk, who emphasizes that this imagined space, permeated with ideas and inspiration,

Car, au-delà de la géographie, « le Nord » embrasse un large éventail de significations et de valeurs symboliques. C’est un espace imaginaire aussi bien qu’un espace pour l’imaginaire, constamment remodelé, un espace de mythes aussi bien qu’un espace façonné par les mythes, tour à tour cruel et ennoblissant, énigmatique et inspiratif, puissant et fragile, d’extrême dénuement et de potentiel enrichissement. Comment dès lors embrasser dans toute sa vastitude la « nordicité » du Canada, souvent appréhendée comme l’un de ses traits distinctifs, un élément essentiel de son identité?

Nous l’aborderons sous des perspectives diverses et convergentes, en vue d’apporter ainsi une contribution, certes lacunaire mais néanmoins pertinente, à l’étude du Nord et de la nordicité. Articulés en cinq parties, les articles réunis dans le présent volume apportent une présentation kaléidoscopique de sujets particuliers mais qui tous s’inscrivent dans ce gigantesque projet d’exploration du tout aussi gigantesque espace physique et spirituel qu’est le Nord.

I. Concevoir le Nord

La première partie de ce volume se propose de poser les prémisses conceptuelles du discours sur le Nord, espace multiple mais aussi beaucoup plus qu’un espace, qui est très longtemps demeuré entravé par l’inadéquation du vocabulaire dont nous disposons pour l’embrasser, éclipsé derrière un imaginaire passablement simplificateur, occulté par un manque d’intérêt à la mesure de la faiblesse de son poids et de sa composition démographiques.

Daniel Chartier s’interroge sur l’imaginaire du Nord, espace imaginé et représenté depuis des siècles par les artistes et les écrivains du monde occidental, ce qui a mené, au fil du temps et de l’accumulation successive de couches de discours, à la création d’un « imaginaire du Nord ». Or les Occidentaux n’ont atteint le pôle Nord il n’y a qu’un siècle, ce qui fait du « Nord » le produit d’un double regard, de l’extérieur — les représentations, surtout occidentales — et de l’intérieur — les cultures nordiques (inuites, scandinaves, cries, etc.). Les premières étant souvent simplifiées et les secondes méconnues, si l’on souhaite étudier le « Nord » dans une perspective d’ensemble, nous devons donc poser deux questions : comment définir le Nord par l’imaginaire? Selon quels principes éthiques devons-nous considérer les cultures nordiques pour en avoir une vue complète, incluant notamment celles qui ont été minorées par le Sud? Daniel Chartier répond à ces deux questions, d’abord en définissant ce qu’est l’imaginaire du
transcends its own materiality. Thus the North occupies Canada as a place without places, much more than as a geographical area or a landscape; it is an uninhabited space that inhabits beings, to the point of becoming a sensibility. As such, this North “within” eclipses Canadians, who, according to Aritha van Herk, belong more to the idea of “North” than the North itself belongs to them. Van Herk highlights the cultural influence of this all-encompassing conception, exposing the ways in which the North exceeds its dimensions so as to measure itself against noricity, and the intimacy and directional value that is ordinarily attributed to it. Contrary to the idea of the “North” as a direction or object of expeditions and explorations, it reveals itself here more as a world of stories than of images. Adopting the language of the North in her descriptions and documentation, Aritha van Herk helps us understand why the documents with which we measure or seek to comprehend it must be viewed as cultural practices of inscription and exclusion.

II. Narrating the North

The second part of the volume is devoted to literary representations of the North, analyzed through a selection of contemporary works. Following the conceptualization in the first part, we evoke a comparison that has a double virtue: it reminds us that the North is not exclusively reserved for and addressed by authors from its own geographic space; and it inaugurates a perspective of study open largely to Francophones. This brings together key Québécois writer Jacques Ferron, and, perhaps unexpectedly, Mohammed Dib. We then approach Canadian literary production with a scenario from the Far North theme, highlighting noricity as an integral part of the identity of the characters. It is worth emphasizing that noricity is not expressed in this identity in a uniform way, but calls upon personal narrative and/or symbolic elements. This is particularly true of two novels by Jocelyne Saucier, who raises an element all the more surprising for its rarity in the evocation of this space: fire.

Adopting an intercultural point of view and adopting the perspective of Francophone postcolonial literatures in Quebec and Algeria, Jasmina Bolfek-Radovani analyzes the narrative functions and values attributed to northern spaces in L’Amélanchier by Jacques Ferron and Les Terrasses d’Orsol by Mohammed Dib. Explored as part of the history and memory of Quebec, the northern space works in Ferron as a concept built from the myth. Conversely, Dib develops the concept of the North by adopting a migratory position based on the notion of deterritorialization. This double function produces an ambivalence: while Ferron’s strategy of reorienting the North as a mythical concept reinforces the
Nord, puis en proposant un programme intégrateur pour « recomplexifier » l’Arctique culturel.

La question de l’imaginaire du Nord est également au centre de la réflexion d’Ari-tha van Herk, qui souligne que cet espace imaginé, pénétré d’idées et d’inspiration, transcende sa propre matérialité. Ainsi le Nord occupe-t-il le Canada à la manière d’un lieu sans lieux, bien plus que comme une étendue géographique ou qu’un paysage: espace inhabité qui habite les êtres, au point de devenir une sensibilité. A ce titre, ce Nord « au-dedans » éclipse les Canadiens, dont Aritha van Herk affirme qu’ils appartiennent plus à l’idée de « Nord » que ce dernier ne leur appartient. L’influence culturelle de cette conception englobante est mise en lumière par l’auteure, qui expose comment le Nord dépasse largement ses dimensions pour se mesurer à la nordicité, à l’intimité et à la valeur de directionalité qui lui est ordinairement attribuée. Contrairement à l’idée de « Nord » en tant que direction ou qu’objet d’expéditions et d’explorations, le Nord se révèle être un monde de récits bien plus que de graphiques. Abordant le langage, la description et la documentation du Nord, Aritha van Herk nous fait entrevoir pourquoi les documents avec lesquels nous mesurons ou cherchons à comprendre le Nord doivent être saisis comme des pratiques culturelles d’inscription et d’exclusion.

II. Faire le(s) récit(s) du Nord

La deuxième partie est consacrée aux représentations du Nord dans la littérature, qui sont ici appréhendées à travers un choix d’œuvres contemporaines. Se situant dans la suite de l’effort de conceptualisation affirmé dans la première partie, la réflexion débute par une mise en parallèle qui a la double vertu de rappeler que le Nord n’est pas un thème exclusivement réservé et traité par les auteurs issus de son espace géographique, et d’inaugurer une perspective d’étude largement ouverte sur la francophonie. Ainsi se trouveront réunis Jacques Ferron, écrivain québécois central s’il en fut, avec un nom qui pourra paraître inattendu ici, à savoir celui de Mohammed Dib. Puis nous nous rapprocherons de la production littéraire canadienne avec une mise en situation de la thématique du Grand Nord, et la mise en lumière de la nordicité en tant que partie intégrante de l’identité des personnages. Mais il est bon de souligner qu’elle ne s’y exprime pas de façon uniforme, faisant appel à des éléments narratifs et/ou symboliques très personnels. Ceci est particulièrement vrai à la vue de deux romans de Jocelyne Saucier, qui fait surgir un élément lui aussi surprenant car rarement invité dans l’évocation de cet espace, à savoir le feu.

Adoptant un point de vue interculturel et se situant dans la perspective des littératures postcoloniales francophones du Québec et de l’Algérie, Jasmina Bolfek-Rado-vani analyse les fonctions narratives et les valeurs attribuées aux espaces du Nord dans L’Amélanchier de Jacques Ferron et Les Terrasses d’Orsol de Mohammed Dib. Ex-
space’s mystifying function, Dib builds the concept of northern space through the function of absence and “non-place”.

Květa Kunešová’s contribution addresses the concept of nordicity as a literary element. After a panorama that starts with Nancy Huston facing the lost North and ends with the presentation of a theme related to the Far North in Quebecois literature, the author analyzes the North in Nicolas Dickner’s novel *Nikolski* (2005), which contains several traditional topoi from contemporary Quebecois novels, most prominently the North as a geographical landmark. Although this chiefly indicates an orientation, it is also a component of the characters’ identity. Huston reveals that the North is represented both as a symbol, and as a territory of geo-political challenges, and explores the extent to which the individual stories that comprise it are linked to Canada’s history.

History is also at the heart of the two Jocelyne Saucier novels through which Petr Kyloušek tackles the theme of the North: *Les héritiers de la mine* (1999) and *Il pleuvait des oiseaux* (2011). Kyloušek’s analysis begins with the observation that the Nordic imaginary is not limited to icy expanses in these two stories, which are set in Abitibi and northern Ontario respectively. The locations are placed under the sign of fire, partly because of the scorching heat of the North, but also due to their murderous and apocalyptic natures. In both cases fire takes on a symbolic value, underpinned by religious imagery. As the author shows, the elements of the Bachelardian imagination—earth, fire, air, water—determine the narrative, whose structuring element is, at various levels, the theme of the devastating fire.

**III. The North mise-en-genre**

The third part of this volume is devoted to genres, and brings together texts on fantastic literature, drama, graphic narratives and film. With its vast expanses, dispersed habitats, extreme living conditions and the fears with which it surrounds itself, the North offers a perfect backdrop for the display of strong, dramatic narratives. It should not be surprising then, that nordicity occupies a privileged place in Canadian science fiction production. But the role that the North assumes here may not be the one commonly attributed to it. The North is a polymorphic theme that knows no barriers and jumps freely from one genre to another, evidenced in the unclassifiable *The G.N.B. Double C*, and its use of graphic design and the fantasy genres. However, since it has a long tradition of wisdom and shows us what is essential, the North reveals itself as a powerful dramaturgic force, on both stage and screen; the inner view and the intimate quest find within it a privileged space of expression.
ploré dans le cadre de l’histoire et de la mémoire du Québec, l’espace du Nord fonctionne chez Ferron comme un concept construit à partir du mythe. En revanche, Dib développe le concept du Nord en adoptant une position migratoire reposant sur la notion de déterritorialisation. Cette double fonction produit une ambivalence : tandis que la stratégie de réorientation à laquelle recourt Ferron dans sa construction en tant que concept mythique renforce la fonction mystificatrice de cet espace, Dib bâtit le concept de l’espace du Nord à travers la fonction de l’absence et du « non-lieu ».

Dans son article, Květa Kunešová s’intéresse au concept de la nordicité en tant qu’élément littéraire. Après un panorama qui, prenant pour point de départ l’expérience de Nancy Huston confrontée au Nord perdu, et se clôt par une présentation de la thématique liée au Grand Nord dans la littérature québécoise, l’auteure passe à une analyse du Nord dans le roman de Nicolas Dickner Nikolski (2005). Nous y retrouvons plusieurs topoï traditionnels des romans québécois contemporains, à savoir le Nord en tant que repère géographique, qui indique premièrement une orientation, mais aussi une composante de l’identité des personnages. Poursuivant l’analyse qu’elle consacre à ce roman, l’auteure révèle comment le Nord y figure comme symbole, mais également comme territoire de défis géopolitiques, à quel point les histoires individuelles qui leissent sont liées à l’Histoire du Canada.


III. Le Nord, mise-en-genres

C’est aux genres qu’est consacrée la troisième partie, qui réunit la littérature fantastique, la littérature dramatique, la littérature graphique et l’écriture filmique. Par ses vastes étendues, la dispersion de ses habitats, ses conditions de vie extrêmes et les peurs dont il s’entoure, le Nord offre une parfaite toile de fond au déploiement de récits forts, dramatiques. Aussi ne faut-il pas s’étonner si la nordicité occupe une place privilégiée dans la production canadienne relevant de la science-fiction. Mais peut-être le rôle qu’il y assume n’est pas celui qu’on lui attribue communément ? Ne
But what place does the (Far) North occupy in Canadian science fiction? Is it portrayed as frequently as we claim? Alan Weiss’ study contradicts the prevalent opinion: Nordic settings are not part of the Canadian obsession with the North, but serve various thematic and symbolic purposes. Weiss supports his analysis with texts such as Robert Watson’s *High Hazard* (1929), Stephen Franklin’s *Knowledge Park* (1972) and Tony Burgess’ *Pontypool Changes Everything* (1998), in which the North incarnates the hopes and fears of characters, and opens a door into a different, transcendent domain. He shows that in Canadian fantasy literature the North embodies and perpetuates a long-standing myth: Canada as a place of threat, or potential renewal.

Extending this reflection, Christl Verduyn quotes Sherrill Grace’s *Canada and the Idea of North* to reaffirm that familiar themes have been built around the myths and realities surrounding the North in Canadian culture. It is a space that is “mortal, cold, empty, sterile, isolated, mysterious … a dangerous and hostile *terra incognita* “ (Grace 16). Conversely, it can be the future: “friendly”, spiritual, sublime, and full of promise and resources. The *G.N.B. Double C* adds the graphic novel to the catalog of representations of the North. Decoding this work, Christl Verduyn concludes that it is a valuable resource to Canadian studies, and an effective teacher because of its entertaining and insightful presentation of Canadian stereotypes and realities.

Marija Paprašarovski portrays the Canadian North as a spiritual source in her reading of two contemporary plays: *Terre Océane* (2006) by Daniel Danis and *Yukonstyle* (2013) by Sarah Berthiaume. She invites us to explore how these playwrights unveil the evocative power of the land of their ancestors. According to Indigenous spiritual traditions, each of the four cardinal points represents a mode of perception. Since the North is associated with wisdom, this return to the source reveals the search for another possible truth: an intimate relationship with the earth and the universe.

To close this section, Vesna Lopičić and Milena Kaličanin introduce us to the medium of cinema, taking us to the heart of the Inuit tradition with their analysis of Zacharias Kunuk’s 2001 Canadian film *Atanarjuat* (*La Légende de l’homme rapide*). This film is the first feature written, directed and interpreted in Inuktitut, a Canadian Inuit language. Set in the vast Arctic in the distant past, the legend of Atanarjuat and his elder brother Amaqjuaq depicts Indigenous motifs deeply rooted in the Inuit oral tradition. Defying powerful resistance to appropriation, the film version of this authentic Inuit legend achieves brilliantly its original goals: to show how Inuit communities have survived and prospered in the Arctic; and to provide new narrative support to assist Inuit communities in (re)building their pride and sense of belonging to Canada’s North.
connaissant pas de barrières, le Nord fait figure de thème polymorphe et saute à loisir d’un genre à l’autre, ainsi qu’en témoigne, faisant appel à la fois au graphisme et au genre fantastique, l’inclassable *The G.N.B. Double C*. Mais parce qu’il possède aussi une longue tradition de sagesse et nous ouvre les yeux sur l’essentiel, le Nord se révèle également comme une puissante force dramaturgique, qu’elle s’exprime sur scène ou à l’écran. Le regard intérieur et la quête intimes sont autant de thèmes qui trouvent dans le Nord un espace d’expression privilégié.


Pour clore cette section, Vesna Lopičić et Milena Kaličanin nous font aborder un autre genre – le cinéma – et nous conduisent au cœur de la tradition inuite avec une
IV. Reflections and sounds of the North

The fourth part of the volume invites us to explore another poetics of the North, which, although generally associated with silence and whiteness, is a source of inspiration that appears in all timbres and colors. Nordinity thus finds its place in pictorial art, and is expressed with as much ease in the musicality of the poetic verb as in that of instrumental works. These representations of the North uncover its multiple manifestations in the Canadian identity, whether seen from a historical perspective (prioritizing a specific period of creation) or an intersectional one (highlighting the meeting of graphic arts and poetry), and whether it focuses on a work of art, or of (in this case feminine) writing.

Focusing on the interwar period, Katalin Kürtösi bases her analysis on examples drawn from literature, to address the ways in which artists have contributed to the perception of the Canadian North as a determining element of national identity through theater and painting. The Group of Seven, formed in 1920, brought together resolutely innovative painters who played a key role in Canadian artistic life until it broke up in 1933. In addition to their impact in the domain of visual arts, the Group’s famous works have inspired many poems, novels and plays. Katalin Kürtösi retraces the special atmosphere of Canada during the interwar period, reminding us that a recent exhibition bears witness to the interest still shown in these paintings today.

Krisztina Kodó also addresses the meeting of arts in interpretations of the North, with a text dedicated to the visual and sonic expressions of Canadian artists and poets, including C. D. Shanly and Henry Beissel. Although there is an abundance of works on this subject, Kodó focuses on visual (especially pictorial) works, such as those of W. B. Bruce (*Le Chasseur fantôme*), and on the arctic scenes of Lawren Harris (*Lac et montagnes, Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone, Le mont Robson and Le mont Lefroy*). Her study, which compares the poems to the selected canvases, illustrates through an analysis of word choice and metaphorical images and colors, how and to what extent the visual (paintings) and the audible (poems) complement each other.

Since the North is inevitably associated with the cold, winter is an unavoidable and vast theme of Quebecois literature. Veronika Černíková, starting from Daniel Chartier’s study *Aspects des fonctions de la nordicité et de l’hivernité dans la poésie québécoise*, analyzes the functions and dimensions of snow in women’s poetry in Quebec after the Second World War. The authors, including Brossard, Gagnon, Lasnier, Turcotte, Audet and Desautels, develop an existential and aesthetic potential of snow that corresponds to the existential and aesthetic functions of the entire vocabulary Chartier analyzes. However, contrary to Chartier’s findings, the distinctive
Évaine Le Calvé-Ivičević / Vanja Polić

Introduction

Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

IV. Reflets et sonorités du Nord

La quatrième partie nous invite à explorer une autre poétique du Nord qui, bien que généralement associé au silence et au blanc, n’en est pas moins une source d’inspiration susceptible de se incliner dans toutes les sonorités et toutes les tonalités de couleurs. Ainsi la nordicité trouve-t-elle sa place dans l’art pictural et se traduit-elle avec autant d’aisance dans la musicalité du verbe poétique que dans celle d’œuvres instrumentales. Qu’elle soit abordée dans une perspective historique, privilégiée une période de création, ou transversale, mettant en lumière la rencontre des arts graphiques et de la poésie, qu’elle se focalise sur un art, une œuvre, ou qu’elle aborde la réalisation artistique dans la perspective d’une écriture, en l’occurrence féminine, l’exploration des représentations du Nord nous fait découvrir ses multiples manifestations dans l’identité canadienne.


C’est également à la rencontre des arts dans l’interprétation du Nord que s’intéresse Krisztina Kodó avec une étude consacrée aux expressions visuelles et sonores d’artistes et de poètes canadiens (C.D. Shanly et Henry Beissel). Compte tenu de l’abondance de travaux traitant ce sujet, l’auteure se focalise sur les œuvres plastiques (plus particulièrement picturales) notamment celles de WB Bruce (Le Chasseur fantôme) et sur les scènes arctiques de Lawren Harris (Lac et montagnes, Winter Comes from the
identifying and political function of snow is absent in Quebecois women’s poetry, although Černíková highlights three dimensions of snow that are external to the winter vocabulary: spiritual, carnal and scriptural.

Following the celebration of painting and poetry’s union, Leonor María Martínez Serrano analyses that of poetry and music in the work of Canadian poet Robert Bringhurst. *New World Suite No. 3* (2005), Bringhurst’s complex polyphonic poem for three voices in four movements, is inspired by the natural polyphony of the Earth. The poet acquires the necessary knowledge for writing for two or three polyphonic voices from Canadian pianist Glenn Gould’s unusual documentary *The Idea of North*. Highlighting the architectural complexity of this work, as well as its semantic density and the depth of its thought, Martínez Serrano concludes that it is not only a tribute to the human voice, but also a reminder of our responsibility to protect the Earth.

**V. Encountering the other**

The last part of this volume examines the Canadian North’s encounters with the rest of the world. Whether it occurs through reading or teaching, this discovery/encounter raises the question of how to initiate an uninformed public into nordicity. This concerns both translators and teachers, as mediators and valuable intermediaries, but encounters can also take place in the sporting arena, where players display their identities and their sense of belonging to a geographical and cultural sphere. Hockey, for example, is seen as a synonym for the North, and its place in Canadian nordicity is significant. The encounter can also occur in a political or economic setting, either internal or external. The place of the North on national and international political scenes constantly grows and therefore requires lucid analyses. Issues surrounding the North regarding land management and commercial relations are the focus of one of the articles in this final part of the volume. Finally, the North, and notably Canada, are also synonyms for consensual societies, concerned with guaranteeing their populations all the legal rights which they can enjoy. As such, the legislation regarding the rights of woman constitutes an emblematic subject which is studied in comparison with one of the more “Mediterranean” countries or cultures, Croatia. It is with these considerations of encountering the other that the volume closes.

Encounters with the North do not necessarily take place exclusively among adults: the young public should also be considered. Mátyás Bánhegyi and Judit Nagy suggest this, sharing their valuable teaching experience. Their contribution addresses a number of theoretical issues raised by language teaching, and outlines theoretical considerations for teaching about distant cultures, in this case the...
Arctic to the Temperate Zone, Le mont Robson et Le mont Lefroy). L’étude comparative des poèmes avec les toiles sélectionnées illustre (à travers une analyse du choix des mots, images métaphoriques, couleurs, images, etc.) comment et dans quelle mesure le visuel (les tableaux) et l’audible (le poème) se complètent.


Après avoir célébré les épousailles de la peinture et de la poésie, par lesquelles débute cette partie, nous sommes conviés par Leonor Maria Martínez Serrano, à celles de la poésie et de la musique dans l’œuvre du poète canadien Robert Bringhurst. Son complexe poème polyphonique pour trois voix en quatre mouvements, New World Suite N° 3 (2005), puise son inspiration dans la polyphonie naturelle de la Terre et dans la musique polyphonique – avec en toile de fond le singulier documentaire composé par le pianiste canadien Glenn Gould, The Idea of North – le savoir-faire nécessaire pour écrire ses poèmes pour deux ou trois voix. Mettant en lumière la complexité architectonique de cette œuvre, sa densité sémantique et la profondeur de sa pensée, l’auteure conclut que ce poème est un hommage à la voix humaine mais aussi un rappel de la responsabilité des humains envers la protection de la Terre.

V. À la rencontre de l’autre

La dernière partie de ce volume s’interroge sur les rencontres du Nord canadien avec le reste du monde. Qu’elle se déroule par le truchement d’une lecture ou d’un professeur, la rencontre-découverte soulève la question de l’initiation d’un public non averti à la nordicité. Cette question concerne aussi bien le traducteur que le professeur, tous deux médiateurs et précieux intermédiaires. Mais la rencontre peut aussi se réaliser dans le domaine du sport, où chacun affiche une identité et une appartenance à une sphère géographique et culturelle. Le hockey s’impose comme un synonyme du Nord et sa
Canadian Far North. These reflections are complemented by practical remarks on teaching the subject at secondary and tertiary levels, and illustrate how to prepare teaching material.

The affirmation of identity found in hockey, Canada’s national sport, is another site of encounter. Hockey offers Petra Bručić an innovative perspective from which to contrast Canada with its most competitive opponents on the ice: the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Sport is a known showcase for the consolidation of national identities, hence this contribution presents the most salient features of this process through an analysis of stories about selected hockey games between Canada and its two main rivals.

Canada’s rivalry with its surrounding countries is also found at high political and economic levels, as well as in industrial, territorial, and commercial development. Three works anchored in these topics conclude this volume, and provide a firm multidisciplinary dimension. Iwona Wrońska looks at the Stephen Harper years, and the then Prime Minister’s ambitious plan to protect “sovereignty in the Arctic”. This phrase became crucial in the political discourse of the Harper administration, which ruled from 2006 to 2015. Wrońska evaluates Harper’s “Northern policy”, showing how the North was used as a political strategy to unite Canadians around the issue of sovereignty protection, although with the exception of a few infrastructural development projects the proposed policies were never put in place.

Ozren Pilipović analyzes the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the Canadian economy. Written before the 2017 renegotiations, this contribution clarifies—in accordance with the postulates of economic theory—why regional economic integration has a positive impact on trade between member countries. Pilipović reflects on current issues, using the econometric gravity model to analyze empirical data and outline the positive effect NAFTA membership had on trade between Canada and the US, and between Canada and Mexico.

Finally, Zrinka Erent-Sunko engages with women’s rights, more precisely with the woman’s right to choose to give birth. Lately this right has been the object of numerous discussions. By not taking ‘pro’ or ‘contra’ attitude, this paper provides a historical overview and examines possible similarities and differences of the legal regulations on the issue of abortion in Canada and Croatia. In the article, Erent-Sunko clarifies the judicial systems concerning abortion in both countries and invites the reader to ponder whether the “North” is a straightforward place and whether it can be taken as a model.
place dans la nordicité canadienne demande à être présentée. Enfin, la rencontre peut avoir pour toile de fond les rapports politiques et économiques, qu’ils soient internes ou externes. La place du Nord sur la scène politique nationale et internationale ne cesse de croître et réclame des analyses lucides. Les enjeux entourant le Nord dans les domaines de la gestion du territoire et des rapports commerciaux sont donc abordés ici. Par ailleurs, le Nord, et notamment le Canada, sont aussi synonymes de sociétés consensuelles, soucieuses de garantir à leurs populations tous les droits légitimes dont peuvent jouir ces dernières. A ce titre, la législation des droits de la femme constitue un sujet emblématique propice à une étude comparative avec celle de pays aux cultures plus « méridionales ». C’est à ce domaine que se consacrent les réflexions qui viennent clore ce volume.

La rencontre avec le Nord ne concerne pas nécessairement un public exclusivement composé d’adultes : le public jeune mérite lui aussi d’être pris en compte. C’est ce que nous rappellent Mátyás Bánhegyi et Judit Nagy, qui partagent avec nous leur précieuse expérience d’enseignants. Leur article aborde plusieurs questions théoriques posées par l’enseignement de la langue et expose certaines considérations théoriques concernant l’enseignement des cultures lointaines, en l’occurrence le Grand Nord canadien. Ces réflexions sont utilement complétées par des remarques pratiques sur l’enseignement de ce sujet aux niveaux secondaire et supérieur, accompagnées d’une illustration de la préparation de matériel pédagogique lié au sujet.

Autre terrain de rencontre, mais aussi d’affirmation identitaire, le sport canadien par excellence est sans aucun doute le hockey. Cette discipline sportive offre à Petra Bručić une perspective innovante pour une mise en contraste entre le Canada et les nations avec lesquelles ce pays rivalise au plus haut niveau sur la glace : les États-Unis d’Amérique et la Fédération de Russie. Le sport est une vitrine bien connue de la façon dont les pays consolident leur identité, et c’est pourquoi cet article présente les caractéristiques les plus importantes de ce processus identitaire par le biais d’une analyse de récits traitant de matchs de hockey sélectionnés entre le Canada et ses deux plus grands rivaux.

Cependant, la rivalité avec les pays qui entourent le Canada se situe également aux niveaux beaucoup plus importants de la politique, de l’économie, du développement industriel, territorial, ou encore commercial. Les deux travaux qui suivent fournissent un ancrage dans ces domaines ainsi qu’une dimension résolument pluridisciplinaire, abordent ces sujets. C’est tout d’abord un coup d’œil en arrière, vers les années Harper, que nous propose Iwona Wrońska, qui revient sur le plan très ambitieux que présenta le premier ministre pour protéger la « souveraineté dans l’Arctique », syntagme qui devint un mot clé dans le discours politique sous l’administration de Stephen Harper, de 2006 à 2015. L’auteure trace une évaluation de cette décennie de « politique du Nord » de Harper et met en lumière comment
Introduction

Under the sign of immensity

Whether approached as a concept in constant movement, a space of narration, a polymorphous theme, a constantly renewed source of spiritual and artistic inspiration, a real and imaginary territory to be known and discovered, a political issue or even an expression of some of the society’s choices, the North is always located under the sign of immensity. In light of this observation, the present volume seems minute, but this does not betray its primary ambition: to explore nordicity, and to arouse the desire to undertake new research.
le Nord a été en fait utilisé comme un outil de stratégie politique, en vue d’unir les Canadiens autour de la question de la protection de la souveraineté, tandis que les politiques initialement annoncées n’ont pas été mises en place, à l’exception de certains projets de développement des infrastructures.

Quant à Ozren Pilipović, il entreprend une analyse de l’impact de l’Accord de Libre-échange Nord-Américain (ALENA) sur l’économie canadienne. Rédigé avant la renégociation de 2017, cet article éclaire pourquoi, conformément aux enseignements de la théorie économique, l’intégration économique régionale, en l’occurrence l’ALENA, a un impact positif sur le commerce entre les pays membres. Les enjeux actuels sont éclairés par la réflexion de l’auteur qui, utilisant le modèle économétrique de gravité, analyse les données empiriques et montre comment l’appartenance à l’ALENA avait un effet positif sur le commerce entre le Canada et les USA, et entre le Canada et le Mexique.

Enfin, Zrinka Erent-Sunko aborde les droits de la femme, parmi lesquels celui de mettre au monde un enfant ou non, occupe une place primordiale. Sans prendre parti, l’auteure se propose de donner un aperçu historique et de rechercher les similitudes ou les différences possibles entre les régimes juridiques sur l’avortement au Canada et en Croatie. A la faveur de sa lecture éclairante de la réglementation juridique, nous sommes invités à nous demander si le « Nord » est une notion univoque et s’il peut être pris comme modèle.

**Sous le signe de l’immensité**

Que nous l’abordions comme un concept en continuelle mouvance, comme un espace de narration, une thématique polymorphe, une source d’inspiration spirituelle et artistique sans cesse renouvelée, un territoire réel et imaginaire à découvrir, comme un enjeu politique ou encore comme l’expression de choix sociétaux éclairants, le Nord est toujours placé sous le signe de l’immensité. À la lumière de cette observation, le présent volume semble bien petit, mais cela ne trahit pas son ambition première — explorer ne serait-ce qu’une petite parcelle de la nordicité et susciter le désir d’entreprendre de nouvelles recherches.
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Bibliographie


What is the Imagined North?

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Abstract
The North has been imagined and represented for centuries by artists and writers of the Western world, which has led, over time and the accumulation of successive layers of discourses, to the creation of “imagined North” – ranging from the “North” of Scandinavia, Greenland, Russia, to the “Far North” or the poles. Westerners have reached the North Pole only a century ago, which makes the “North” the product of a double perspective: an outside one – made especially of Western images – and an inside one – that of Northern cultures (Inuit, Sami, Cree, etc.). The first are often simplified and the second, ignored. If we wish to understand what the “North” is in an overall perspective, we must ask ourselves two questions: how do images define the North, and which ethical principles should govern how we consider Northern cultures in order to have a complete view (including, in particular, those that have been undervalued by the South)? In this article, the author tries to address these two questions, first by defining what are the imagined North and then by proposing an inclusive program to “recomplexify” the cultural Arctic.

Keywords: North, imagined North, Northern cultures, cultural Arctic, nordicity, Research ethics

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Qu’est-ce que l’imaginaire du Nord?

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Résumé
Le Nord est un espace imaginé et représenté depuis des siècles par les artistes et les écrivains du monde occidental, ce qui a mené, au fil du temps et de l’accumulation successive de couches de discours, à la création d’un « imaginaire du Nord » – que ce Nord soit celui de la Scandinavie, du Groenland, de la Russie ou du Grand Nord ou des pôles. Or les Occidentaux n’ont atteint le pôle Nord il n’y a qu’un siècle, ce qui fait du « Nord » le produit d’un double regard, de l’extérieur – les représentations, surtout occidentales – et de l’intérieur – les cultures nordiques (inuites, scandinaves, cries, etc.). Les premières étant souvent simplifiées et les secondes méconnues, si l’on souhaite étudier le « Nord » dans une perspective d’ensemble, nous devons donc poser deux questions : comment définir le Nord par l’imaginaire ? Selon quels principes éthiques devons-nous considérer les cultures nordiques pour en avoir une vue complète, incluant notamment celles qui ont été minorées par le Sud ? Nous répondrons ici à ces deux questions, d’abord en définissant ce qu’est l’imaginaire du Nord, puis en proposant un programme intégrateur pour « recomplexifier » l’Arctique culturel.

Mots-clés : Nord, imaginaire du Nord, cultures nordiques, Arctique culturel, nordicité, Éthique de la recherche.

Over the centuries, artists and writers of the Western world have imagined and represented the cold world. Upon closer inspection, these fall into differentiated imaginaries – the “North,” Scandinavia, Greenland, the Arctic, the poles, even the winter – that are presented often as an amalgam supported by a simplification of forms – horizontality – and colours – white, pale blue, pink hues –, on the presence of ice, snow, and the complete range of cold, on moral and ethical values – solidarity –, but also, on its connection with a “beyond” where the Arctic begins, at the end of the European ecumene and the beginning of a “natural,” unknown, empty, uninhabited, and remote world: the Far North. The entirety of these representations forms a system of signs, what I call here out of convenience “the imagined North.”

Like all represented space, the “North” is the product of a dual gaze, from the outside and from the inside; we can distinguish between the “representations” of the North and the works of “Nordic cultures.” The first, fruits of principally the German, French, English, and then US-American imaginary, seldom distinguish the different cultural spaces of the territory and focus their attention up towards the Arctic and the poles, with little consideration for the cultures (Inuit, Sami, Cree, Innu, Scandinavian, etc.) that originate in these territories. The latter sometimes have an extension beyond themselves – this is notably the case of Scandinavian cultures, whose reception in Europe benefits from a clearly ameliorative prejudice. This does not, however, apply to Indigenous cultures, which have long been marginalized, at times with the rhetorical objective of reinforcing the image of an uninhabited and uninhabitable Arctic, often by persistent political and ethnic prejudices. In any case, the “representations of North” created from the outside and the “Nordic cultures” derived from the territories of the “North” have little in common, often placed as differentiated discursive layers, even though they are both connected to the same territory of reference. This distance can be observed for other represented geographic areas, but the imagined “North,” especially the “Far North,” is distinguished in that it has been forged on discourse more than on experience for centuries, which accentuates the autonomy of the discursive layers “from the inside” and “from the outside.” Let us bear in mind that man went to the North pole only a century ago whereas he has been imagining it for millennia. Lastly, it is important to remember two sociopolitical phenomena that had an effect on the representation and the reception of the North and the Arctic. On the one hand, the general context of indigenous colonialism, which reinforced the silencing of cultural and human aspects of cold territories, and on the other hand, the general tendency of the governance of the “North,” dominated by the capitals or the powers of the South, who administrate according to their knowledge (seldom based on experience) and the circumstances of their own needs, with the gaps that can create.
Depuis des siècles, les artistes et écrivains du monde occidental imaginent et représentent le monde froid. Lorsque l’on s’y penche de plus près, celui-ci se décline en des imaginaires différenciés (le « Nord », la Scandinavie, le Groenland, l’Arctique, les pôles, voire l’hiver) qui se présentent le plus souvent dans un amalgame s’appuyant sur une simplification des formes (horizontalité) et des couleurs (blanc, bleu pâle, teintes rosées), sur la présence de la glace, de la neige et de tout le registre du froid, sur des valeurs morales et éthiques (solidarité), mais aussi, à sa jonction avec un « au-delà » où commence l’Arctique, sur la fin de l’écoumène européen et sur l’ouverture vers un monde « naturel », inconnu, vide, inhabité et éloigné : le Grand Nord. L’ensemble de ces représentations – nous y reviendrons – forme un système de signes, que j’appelle ici par commodité « l’imaginaire du Nord ».

There exist “representations” of the North and the Arctic, often Western, that are easily accessible and of a great (simplified) semiological coherence. There are also “cultures” of the North, some of which are well known (those of Russia, Scandinavia) and others are totally unknown – other circumpolar spaces and the Indigenous. If one wishes to study the “North” in a perspective of the whole and take into account its plurality of unequal visibility, we must thus ask two questions which at first glance seem far removed, but must be articulated in our case: How to define the North by the imagination? According to which ethical principals should we consider Nordic cultures in order to have a complete view, including notably those which have been marginalized by the South?

Defining the North by the imagination

All of the discourses stated about the North, the winter, and the Arctic, which can be retraced both synchronically – for a given period – or diachronically – for a specific culture –, derived from different cultures and forms, accumulated over the centuries according to a dual principal of synthesis and competition, form what could be called “the imagined North.” It is a plural and shifting sign system, which functions in a variable manner according to the contexts of enunciation and reception.

When developing, a decade ago, this notion of “imagined North,” I simultaneously suggested the hypothesis that there exists, beyond the diverse and divergent cultures and perceptions about the North and from the North, a common esthetic foundation that could then be segmented according to the characteristics that, if they are not unique to the “North” in their individuality, compose all the same an ensemble of original and unique signs from a cultural point of view. The ensemble of signs established over the centuries by Western culture to represent the idea of North, a whole constantly reworked by new propositions – today, those of regional and Indigenous cultures are finally considered – that by confirming or modifying certain characteristics, constitute that which is “the imagined North.” It is a living whole, “organic,” that evolves according to historic periods and contexts; like all sign systems, it allows for the opening of an imaginary world by partial evocation of its characteristics, which permits an economy of means for representing the North. The colour pale blue, for example, exercises this function: it suffices to use it to induce the reader or spectator to a universe made of cold, vastness, and ice, which refers to the sign system as a whole.

1) This principal of synthesis and of competition between discourses, inspired by Wolfgang Iser’s reader response theory and inscribed in reception theory, was referred to in my monograph, Daniel Chartier: L’Émergence des classiques, Montréal: Fides, 2000.
Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

Daniel Chartier

Qu’est-ce que l’imaginaire du Nord?

Existent donc des « représentations », souvent occidentales, du Nord et de l’Arctique, facilement accessibles et d’une grande cohérence (simplifiée) sémiologique, et des « cultures » du Nord, certaines bien connues (de Russie, de Scandinavie) et d’autres totalement méconnues (des autres espaces circumpolaires et des Autochtones). Si l’on souhaite étudier le « Nord » dans une perspective d’ensemble et en tenant compte de sa multiplicité d’inégale visibilité, nous devons donc poser deux questions de prime abord éloignées, mais nécessairement articulées dans notre cas : comment définir le Nord par l’imaginaire ? Selon quels principes éthiques devons-nous considérer les cultures nordiques pour en avoir une vue complète, incluant notamment celles qui ont été minorées par le Sud ?

Définir le Nord par l’imaginaire

L’ensemble des discours énoncés sur le Nord, l’hiver et l’Arctique, que l’on peut retracer à la fois synchroniquement (pour une période donnée) ou diachroniquement (pour une culture déterminée), issus de différentes cultures et formes, accumulés au cours des siècles selon un double principe de synthèse et de concurrence, forment ce qu’on peut appeler « l’imaginaire du Nord ». Il s’agit d’un système de signes pluriel et mouvant, qui fonctionne de manière variable selon les contextes d’énonciation et de réception.

En développant, il y a une dizaine d’années, cette notion d’» imaginaire du Nord », je suggérais en parallèle l’hypothèse qu’il existait, au-delà des cultures et des perceptions diverses et divergentes sur le Nord et du Nord, une base esthétique commune que l’on pourrait ensuite décliner selon des caractéristiques qui, si elles ne sont pas propres au « Nord » dans leur individualité, composent tout de même un ensemble de signes original et propre à ce qu’est le « Nord » d’un point de vue culturel. L’ensemble de signes établi au fil des siècles par la culture occidentale pour représenter l’idée du Nord, ensemble constamment retaillé par de nouvelles propositions – dont aujourd’hui celles des cultures autochtones et régionales, enfin considérées – qui en confirment ou en modifient certaines caractéristiques, constitue ce qu’est « l’imaginaire du Nord ». Il s’agit d’un ensemble vivant, « organique », qui évolue selon les périodes historiques et les contextes ; comme tout système de signes, il permet d’ouvrir un monde imaginaire par l’évocation partielle de ses caractéristiques, ce qui permet une économie de moyens pour représenter le Nord. La couleur bleu pâle, par exemple, exerce aujourd’hui cette fonction : il suffit de l’utiliser pour induire chez le lecteur, chez le spectateur, un univers fait de froid, d’immensité et de glace, qui renvoie au système de signes dans son ensemble.

1) Ce principe de synthèse et de concurrence des discours, inspiré de la théorie de la lecture proposée par Wolfgang Iser et inscrit dans une esthétique de la réception, a été énoncé dans mon ouvrage L’Émergence des classiques, Montréal : Fides, 2000, 307 p.
Also, like all systems constituted by centuries of discourse, in order to detach from it or to contest the foundations, one must deconstruct it or rework it. For example, this is what the creators of the first feature-length film of Inuit fiction, *Atanarjuat*, do intelligently, by taking the Western characteristics of the images of the Arctic one by one to deconstruct them.\(^2\) They know that the spectator possesses the codes of the sign system that is the imagined North, constructed by Western culture, and they use them to suggest a new perception of this territory, which is then added to the previous ones and shifts the issues and the codes. In the same way the process of the act of reading is described by Wolfgang Iser (1985), the culture receives, accumulates and orients the imaginary. The latter keeps its coherence while modifying itself along with new cultural propositions, filtered by the processes of accumulation and competition. The success of *Atanarjuat*, for example, permitted this film to play a role in the contemporary orientation of the imagined North; if the film had not been award-winning, it would certainly have contributed to the accumulation of the discourse on this imaginary, but without displacing the codes to such a significant extent.

To suggest that the notion of the “imagined North” thus transforms the manner of conceiving of the territory, so that it at last includes the cultural and human aspects and opens a field of criticism to be able to grasp the esthetic and political nature of the connections between representations, the imaginary, territory, and culture. Talking about the imagined North assumes the existence of a link between cultural representations and territory – which is not a given – and is to suggest that a real place can have an impact on the forms of representation that derive from it. At first glance, this seems to go against modernity and postmodernism, which defend the self-defining character of artistic forms, except that if we consider the notion of “place” in a perspective of cultural construction, then it is also governed by its own rules. It remains to be seen what could be the links between a real place versus a represented place, which permits the notion of the idea of place when it is defined as an overlap and a competition of discourses. Indeed, that implies that the materialist does not necessarily bring about an idea of place and that inversely, the discourse cannot be entirely detached from the notion of reality. These places form a complex human composition, made of experiences, discourse, materiality, cultural forms, and memory. All of these refer to the real, the human, and to reality, whether the latter is material, discursive, or semiological.

Against the usual discourses, it can be rightly questioned if the North can be considered as a “place” in Western culture. A reading of the history of representations of North convinces, rather, that the “North” was defined as a “space” and not as a “place:” the insistence on its characteristics linked to emptiness, immensity, and

\(^2\) For example, none of the characters suffer from hunger or from the cold (in one scene, a man even runs naked on the ice), no one gets lost, certain Inuit are devious and disloyal, the conflicts are complex.
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Daniel Chartier
Qu’est-ce que l’imaginaire du Nord?

Aussi, comme tout système constitué par des siècles de discours, il faut pour s’en détacher ou pour en contester les fondements le déconstruire ou le retravailler, mais dans tous les cas, en tenir compte : c’est ce que font avec intelligence les créateurs du premier long-métrage inuit de fiction, *Atanarjuat*, en reprenant une à une les caractéristiques occidentales de l’image de l’Arctique pour les déconstruire. Ils savent que le spectateur possède les codes du système de signes qu’est l’imaginaire du Nord, construit par la culture occidentale, et ils l’utilisent pour suggérer une nouvelle perception de ce territoire, qui s’ajoute aux précédentes et en déplace les enjeux et les codes. À la manière du processus de l’acte de lecture décrit par Wolfgang Iser (1985), la culture reçoit, accumule, dispose, pose en concurrence les nouvelles propositions qui alimentent et orientent l’imaginaire. Ce dernier garde sa cohérence tout en se modifiant au fil des nouvelles propositions culturelles, filtrées par des processus d’accumulation et de concurrence. La consécration d’*Atanarjuat*, par exemple, a permis à ce film de jouer un rôle dans l’orientation contemporaine de l’imaginaire du Nord ; s’il n’avait pas été primé, le film aurait certes contribué à l’accumulation des discours sur cet imaginaire, mais sans en déplacer de façon aussi importante les codes.

Poser la notion d’« imaginaire du Nord » transforme ainsi la manière de concevoir le territoire, pour qu’il inclue enfin les aspects culturels et humains, et ouvre un chantier critique pour arriver à appréhender la nature esthétique et politique des liens entre les représentations, l’imaginaire, le territoire et la culture. Parler d’imaginaire du Nord suppose l’existence d’un lien entre les représentations culturelles et le territoire – ce qui n’est pas une évidence –, et revient à suggérer qu’un lieu réel puisse avoir une incidence sur les formes de représentations qui en sont issues. De prime abord, cela semble aller à l’encontre de la modernité et de la postmodernité, qui défendent le caractère autodéfinitoire des formes artistiques, sauf si l’on considère la notion de « lieu » dans une perspective de construction culturelle, donc elle aussi gouvernée par ses propres règles. Il reste à établir ce que pourraient être les liens entre un lieu réel face à un lieu représenté, ce que permet la notion d’idée du lieu lorsqu’elle est définie comme une superposition et une concurrence des discours. En effet, cela implique que la matérialité n’induise pas nécessairement une idée du lieu et qu’inversement, le discours ne puisse pas être entièrement détaché de la notion de réalité. Les lieux forment une complexe composition humaine, faite d’expériences, de discours, de matérialité, de formes culturelles et de mémoire. Tout cela renvoie au réel, à l’humain et à la réalité, que cette dernière soit matérielle, discursive ou sémiologique.

À l’encontre des discours usuels, on peut avec raison se demander si le Nord peut être considéré comme un « lieu » dans la culture occidentale. Une lecture de l’histoire

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3) Par exemple, aucun des personnages ne souffre de la faim ou du froid (dans une scène, un homme nu court même sur la glace), personne ne se perd, certains Inuits sont retors et déloyaux, les conflits sont complexes.
whiteness led to the development of a system of representations that sometimes overlooks the human experience of the territory. Over the centuries, the phenomenological knowledge of the North was not obvious: Westerners preferred to see in the North a territory beyond the ecumene – that they however continued to try to explore, which took time, all the while imagining it in texts – and thus exempt from knowledge.

Moreover, they ignored – by ignorance, later by exclusion – a part of the discourses of those who lived there (Inuit, Sami, Cree, etc.). In many of the Western texts, the “North” thus refers to a neutral matrix on which we can situate a text without taking into account the material or phenomenological reality, as long as they respect a series of criteria and characteristics that are unique to the “North” in the imaginary. From exploration narratives to poetry, from popular culture, filmic and commercial, to visual arts, from the song to the adventure novel, a whole imaginary forged on representations and perceptions refers to a “North” of representations and perceptions which can be considered historically as human and cultural constructions, the whole in a transversal aesthetic coherence that spans eras, genres, techniques, and cultures, all while adapting to the contexts. The cultures that claim it combine a part of the individual and a part of the universal in a synthesis that is their own, that defines them: thus Iceland appropriates in its manner the imagined North by adding it to other identity layers that define it (insulaarity, belonging to Scandinavia, etc.).

To speak about the imagined North thus imposes a reflection on the idea of place, on the relationships between the material place, lived, imagined, and represented, on the notions of space and place, on the systemic and diachronic constitution of sign systems, on multiculturalism, on the individual and the universal, and on the inclusions and exclusions of certain discourses of the Western definition of North. Therein lies a whole methodological, theoretical, ethical, and political program, still largely being constructed, but which permits at last to include cultural and human aspects in the general research on the North and the Arctic.

This system of signs has the dual feature of having been seldom elaborated by those who live there and having been thought of in large part by others who have never been there. This does not take away its coherence and its power from a discursive and imaginary point of view, but it poses considerable challenges for true knowledge of the cold world, for recognition of the discourses, needs and aspirations of those who live there and for, from a cultural and intellectual point of view, thinking of the North, the Arctic and the cold world by itself. This sign system also imposes, due to its historicity – made by discourses from the outside, on territories thought of as

3) On the relationships between space and place in the North, see the compilation Le Lieu du Nord. Vers une cartographie des lieux du Nord.
des représentations du Nord convainc plutôt que le « Nord » a été défini comme « espace » et non comme « lieu » : l’insistance sur ses caractéristiques liées à la vacuité, à l’immensité et à la blancheur a conduit au développement d’un système de représentations qui fait parfois fi de l’expérience humaine du territoire. Pendant des siècles, la connaissance phénoménologique du Nord n’a pas été une évidence : les Occidentaux préféraient voir dans le Nord un territoire au-delà de l’écoumène (qu’ils s’évertuaient toutefois à tenter d’explorer, ce qui a pris du temps, tout en l’imaginant à partir de textes) et donc soustrait à la connaissance. De plus, ils ignoraient (par méconnaissance, puis par exclusion) une partie des discours de ceux qui y vivent (Inuits, Sâmes, Cris, etc.). Dans bien des récits occidentaux, le « Nord » renvoie ainsi à une matrice neutre sur laquelle on peut situer un récit sans égard à la réalité matérielle ou phénoménologique, pour autant qu’on respecte une série de critères et de caractéristiques qui sont propres au « Nord » dans l’imaginaire. Des récits des explorateurs à la poésie, de la culture populaire, filmique et commerciale aux arts visuels, de la chanson au roman d’aventures, tout un imaginaire forgé de représentations et de perceptions renvoie à un « Nord » des représentations et des perceptions qui peut être considéré historiquement comme une construction humaine et culturelle, le tout dans une cohérence esthétique transversale qui traverse les époques, les genres, les techniques et les cultures, tout en s’adaptant aux contextes. Les cultures qui s’en revendiquent allient une part de particulier et une part d’universel dans une synthèse qui leur est propre, qui les définit : ainsi l’Islande s’approprie à sa manière l’imaginaire du Nord en l’ajoutant aux autres couches identitaires qui la définissent (l’insularité, l’appartenance à la Scandinavie, etc.).


Ce système de signes a la double particularité d’avoir été peu élaboré par ceux qui y habitent et celle d’avoir été pensé en grande part par d’autres qui n’y sont jamais allés. Cela n’enlève pas à sa cohérence et à sa puissance d’un point de vue discursif et imaginaire, mais cela pose des défis considérables pour une véritable connaissance du monde froid, pour une reconnaissance des discours, besoins et aspirations de ceux qui

spaces rather than as places, and controlled by powers that only see it as a reservoir of resources to assure their vitality – certain ethical constraints and requirements, to be able to extract all the complexity.

An inclusive program to “recomplexify” the cultural Arctic

To study the imagined North means to analyze, in a multicultural and circumpolar manner, the different representations of North, the winter and the Arctic from an interdisciplinary perspective. By relying on the concepts of cultural “nordicity” and “winterity” and on the definition of North considered as “first and foremost a cultural discourse, applied by convention to a given territory” (7) one can study the historical evolutions and the variations of this discourse, and consequently the evolution of the idea of the Arctic and the idea of North.

If we consider the North the way that I propose, via cultural representations, this allows for considering all of the aspects mentioned as one. Cultural representations have been a source of motivation and proposition for scientists, they have permitted human and social changes, they are linked and participate in general history and they form, when one considers them as a whole, a historic and coherent suite in the arts. Thus, this perspective allows for an unrivaled meeting, on common ground, of different traditions of knowledge. These converged to try to realise, as the thinkers on the North and the Arctic have long called it, an “interdisciplinary” and “multicultural” approach, the only possible approach to take into consideration the complexity and the fragility – from an environmental, social, and cultural point of view – of this ecosystem.

By defending the idea of a circumpolar and no longer territorial conception of the cold world, the latter is positioned as a whole that calls for solutions, reflections, and common positions, all the while taking into account the different cultures and languages that compose it. In this context, it seems impossible to propose an acceptable vision of the cold world, without articulating it in a multilingual, multicultural, and often conflictual, way.

The research in cultural studies on the North, supported by an examination of cultural representations, aims therefore at a renewal of studies on the relationships of humankind with its imagination, by a discursive analysis of the issues of the North, the Arctic, and the winter, as well as by a multinational, multidisciplinary, and pluralist approach. Consideration of the cultural and human aspects is an integral and necessary part of all research on and in the North; yet, therein lies a whole chunk of often forgotten or neglected Arctic or Nordic policies, agreements targeting the
y vivent et pour, d’un point de vue culturel et intellectuel, penser le Nord, l’Arctique et le monde froid par lui-même. Ce système de signes impose aussi, en raison de son historicité – fait de discours de l’extérieur, sur des territoires pensés comme espaces plutôt que comme lieux, et contrôlés par des puissances qui n’y voyaient qu’un réservoir de ressources pour assurer leur vitalité – certaines contraintes et prescriptions éthiques, pour arriver à en dégager toute la complexité.

**Un programme intégrateur pour « recomplexifier » l’Arctique culturel**


Une telle position intellectuelle permet de poser un regard qui considère les apports scientifiques, historiques, sociaux et artistiques par l’entremise des représentations, source de motivations et de propositions de la science, vecteurs de changements humains et sociaux, déterminants de l’histoire et suite conséquente de réalisations artistiques. Ainsi, cette perspective permet une rencontre inédite, sur un terrain commun, de différentes traditions du savoir. Celles-ci convergent pour tenter de réaliser, comme l’ont longtemps appelée les penseurs du Nord et de l’Arctique, une approche « interdisciplinaire », et « pluriculturelle », seule possible pour tenir compte de la complexité et de la fragilité – d’un point de vue environnemental, social et culturel – de cet écosystème.

En défendant l’idée d’une conception circumpolaire et non plus territoriale du monde froid, on pose ce dernier comme un tout qui appelle des solutions, des réflexions et des positions communes, tout en tenant compte des différentes cultures et langues qui le composent. Dans ce contexte, il apparaît impossible de proposer une vision recevable du monde froid sans l’articuler de manière plurilingue, pluriculturelle et, souvent, conflictuelle.

La recherche en études culturelles sur le Nord, prenant appui sur un examen des représentations culturelles, vise donc un renouvellement des études sur les rapports de l’homme à son imaginaire, par une analyse discursive des enjeux du Nord, de l’Arctique et de l’hiver, ainsi que par une approche plurinationale, pluridisciplinaire et pluraliste.
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governance of the cold world, as well as scientific or technical research projects. For example, the historic 1977 agreement made with the Cree and the Inuit of the North of Quebec, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, often cited as a model of the first contemporary agreements between the State and its Indigenous people, makes absolutely no mention of Indigenous cultures, other than traditional practices that have direct repercussions on the shared or exclusive use of the territory. Ignoring the cultural and human aspects of the North leads to denying the complexity of circumpolar relationships and representations, and can lead to the establishment of policies that are maladapted to the territory. This is why one must reflect on the principals, the methodology, and the practices that set and establish the definition of North and the Arctic in a sociocultural perspective, because they have fundamental political and ethical implications.

Several basic principles and several intellectual positions on the definition of the Arctic should be kept in mind, among them: the variety of the terms that it covers; the necessity of a circumpolar perspective; interdisciplinarity; taking into account Indigenous and non-indigenous points of view; “natural” and urban aspects; multilingualism; multiculturalism; and finally, the need to propose a new vocabulary to “recomplexify” the Arctic.

A quick inventory of the terms used to designate and circumscribe the cold world reveals an overlap of definitions that intersect with each other and distinguish themselves from each other, and that are sometimes used without discernment. There are of course the terms “Arctic,” “Antarctic,” “Polar Region,” and “Arctic Circle,” which point to regions that are well enough defined, yet the rigidity of the borders is called into question by geographers. Additionally, there is the “North,” the “cold world,” even the “winter,” that are based on more moveable concepts, variable according to the perspective of the speaker: What is cold? Where is the North, according to whether you are placed in London, Mexico, Buenos Aires, Nuuk, or Yakutsk? Then, there are historico-political entities: Scandinavia, Russia, Siberia, Canada, Nunavik, Alaska. Finally, there are the groupings that superimpose these wholes: the Inuit world, the North Atlantic region, the circumpolar zone, the circumnordic zone, etc. Each term has its own values, an insistence on certain characteristics (geography, politics, language, culture, climate) and neglect others; each term displaces by its use the usage of other notions that define in a general manner the cold, polar, Arctic, Nordic, and winter world. To take note of the existence of these notions permits, at the very least, to specify the object of one’s thinking and one’s Nordic research.

Most of the thinkers of the Arctic world insist that one consider the region as a circumpolar “whole,” as the sum of the different States, nations, cultures, histories,

4) For more on this important treaty and its aftermath, see for example Regard sur la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois.
La considération des aspects culturels et humains fait partie intégrante et nécessaire de toute recherche sur et dans le Nord ; pourtant, c’est là tout un pan souvent oublié ou négligé des politiques arctiques et nordiques, des ententes visant la gouvernance du monde froid, ainsi que des projets de recherche scientifique ou technique. Par exemple, l’entente historique conclue avec les Cris et les Inuits du Nord du Québec en 1977, la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois, souvent citée en modèle des premières ententes contemporaines entre un État et des peuples autochtones, ne fait aucunement mention des cultures autochtones, outre les pratiques traditionnelles qui ont des répercussions directes sur l’utilisation conjointe ou exclusive du territoire. Ignorer les aspects culturels et humains du Nord conduit à nier la complexité des rapports et des représentations circumpolaires, et peut conduire à l’établissement de politiques mésadaptées au territoire. En ce sens, il convient de réfléchir sur les principes, la méthodologie et les pratiques qui déterminent et fondent la définition du Nord et de l’Arctique dans une perspective socio-culturelle, puisqu’elles ont des incidences politiques et éthiques fondamentales.

Il faut rappeler quelques principes de base et quelques positions intellectuelles sur la définition de l’Arctique, parmi lesquels : la variété des termes qu’elle couvre ; la nécessité d’une perspective circumpolaire ; la pluridisciplinarité ; la prise en compte des points de vue autochtones et allochtones ; les aspects « naturels » et urbains ; le multilinguisme ; l’interculturalisme ; et enfin, le besoin de proposer un nouveau vocabulaire pour « recomplexifier » l’Arctique.

Un rapide inventaire des termes utilisés pour désigner et circonscrire le monde froid dévoile une superposition de définitions qui se recoupent et se distinguent les unes les autres, et qui sont parfois employées sans discernement : il y a bien sûr les termes « Arctique », « Antarctique », « Région polaire » et « Cercle arctique », qui renvoient à des territoires assez bien définis, mais dont la rigidité des frontières est remise en question par les géographes. Puis, il y a le « Nord », le « monde froid », voire l’» hiver » , qui renvoient à des considérations plus mouvantes, variables selon la perspective du locuteur : qu’est-ce qui est froid ? Où est le Nord, selon que l’on se place à Londres, à Mexico, à Buenos Aires, à Nuuk, à Iakoutsk ? Ensuite, il y a des ensembles historico-politiques : la Scandinavie, la Russie, la Sibérie, le Canada, le Nunavik, l’Alaska. Enfin, il y a des regroupements qui se superposent à ces ensembles : le monde inuit, la région Nord-Atlantique, l’aire circumpolaire, l’aire circurnordique, etc. Chaque terme porte des valeurs, une insistance sur certaines caractéristiques (la géographie, la politique, la langue, la culture, le climat) en en négligeant d’autres ; chaque terme déplace par son emploi l’usage des autres notions qui définissent de manière générale le monde froid, polaire, arctique, nordique et hivernal. Prendre conscience de l’existence de ces notions permet, à tout le moins, de préciser l’objet de sa pensée et de sa recherche nordique.

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The Arctic must be able to define itself as an idea by itself, although it has historically been thought, defined, and governed, especially over the last century, by parallel influences of power from the South. Iqaluit was long determined by Ottawa, Fairbanks by Washington, Nuuk by Copenhagen, and Yakutsk by Moscow. We have seen, from the point of view of the Western imagination, the Arctic as it was positioned by the culture is the combined product of the English, German, and French cultures, to which has been added US-American popular culture. From the point of view of material exploitation, the railroads transport the minerals from the North that the South needs for its development, the electric lines bring electricity to the large cities, the roads allow wood to reach its “markets” of the South. The North is thought of by the “southist” culture and it responds to its material needs. From this point of view, it cannot be surprising to note a simplification of forms and functions when it is a question of cultural representations of the North and the Arctic.\(^5\) far, empty, pure, “in danger,” “fascinating,” white, cold, and icy, the “North” finds its characteristics outside of itself,\(^6\) in a thinking that circumscribes it in function of the imaginary and material needs of the South. A “circumpolar” vision would impose, on the contrary, considering the North en soi, in an ontological and definitive manner, to take into account the links that unite the different parts that compose it, as well as the distinctions between their cultures, their positions, and their historicities.

This vision allows for presenting the “North” simultaneously as a self-defined whole and as a diverse whole that reveals its richness and complexity. Because there is a price, according to the Quebecois linguist and geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin, for considering the Arctic in a monodisciplinary perspective: “The monodisciplinary approach does not allow for producing enough of the pertinent and necessary knowledge to understand such a complex question.” (86) By its fragility, by its climatic exception, by the degree of under-knowledge that characterises it, the “North” must be considered from a multidisciplinary point of view, “holistically” if you like – which joins the Inuit notions of “nuna” and of “sila.” What is true for ever other region is even more so for such a fragile sociocultural ecosystem. This implies a constant dialogue between the sciences and the social sciences, but also between social sciences and cultural studies and between cultural studies and the practices of cultural creation. This multidisciplinary point of view is not a luxury of the mind: it is a requirement that must be imposed on any research, intervention, and Nordic exploration project.

Some geographers have compared the Arctic to the Mediterranean, not because of its climate of course, but because populations live around the pole stemming from

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5) On the relationships of simplification and complexity, linked to concepts of ecology in the contemporary œuvre, see for example my article on the circumpolar artist Patrick Huse in “Simplification / Complexity of the Arctic: The Work of Norwegian Artist Patrick Huse”, pp. 49–53.

6) On some characteristics of the North as discourse, see Daniel Chartier: “Au Nord et au large. Représentation du Nord et formes narratives” (n. 6).
La plupart des penseurs du monde arctique insistent pour que l’on considère la région comme « un tout » circumpolaire, comme la somme de ses différents États, nations, cultures, histoires et rapports. L’Arctique doit pouvoir se définir par elle-même comme une idée, alors qu’historiquement elle a plutôt été pensée, définie et gouvernée, depuis un siècle surtout, par les influences parallèles de puissances du Sud. Iqaluit a longtemps été déterminée par Ottawa, Fairbanks par Washington, Nuuk par Copenhague et Iakoutsk par Moscou. On l’a vu, d’un point de vue imaginaire occidental, l’Arctique tel que posé par la culture est le produit combiné des cultures anglaise, allemande et française, aux quelles s’est ajoutée la culture populaire états-unienne. D’un point de vue de l’exploitation matérielle, les voies ferrées transportent du Nord les minerais dont a besoin le Sud pour son développement, les lignes électriques apportent l’électricité aux grandes villes, les routes permettent au bois de joindre ses « marchés » du Sud. Le Nord est pensé par la culture « sudiste » et il répond à ses besoins matériels. De ce point de vue, il ne faut pas se surprendre de constater une simplification des formes et des fonctions quand il est question des représentations culturelles du Nord et de l’Arctique : loin, vide, pure, « en danger », « fascinant », blanc, froid et glacé, le « Nord » trouve ses caractéristiques hors de lui, dans une pensée qui le circonscrir en fonction de besoins imaginaires et matériels du Sud. Une vision « circumpolaire » imposerait au contraire de le considérer en soi, de manière ontologique et définitoire ; de prendre en compte les liens qui unissent les différentes parties qui le composent, ainsi que les distinctions entre leurs cultures, leurs positions et leurs historicités. Cette vision permet à la fois de poser le « Nord » comme un tout autodéfinitoire et comme un tout varié qui en dévoile la richesse et la complexité.

Car il y a un prix, selon le linguiste et géographe québécois Louis-Edmond Hamelin, à considérer l’Arctique dans une perspective monodisciplinaire : « L’approche monodisciplinaire ne permet pas de produire assez de connaissances pertinentes et nécessaires à la compréhension d’une question, toujours complexe. » (Hamelin 1996 : 86). Par sa fragilité, par son exception climatique, par le degré de sous-connaissance qui le caractérise, le « Nord » doit être considéré d’un point de vue pluridisciplinaire, « holiste » si on le veut – ce qui rejoints les notions inuites de « nuna » et de « sila ». Ce qui est vrai pour toute autre région l’est encore plus pour un tel socio-culturo-écosystème fragile. Cela implique un dialogue constant entre les sciences et les sciences sociales, mais aussi entre les sciences sociales et les études culturelles et entre les études culturelles et les pratiques de création culturelle. Ce point de vue pluridisciplinaire n’est pas un luxe de l’esprit : c’est une exigence qui devrait être imposée à tout projet de recherche, d’intervention et d’exploitation nordiques.

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a rich variety of origins, simultaneously Indigenous (Inuit, Cree, Sami, Innu, etc.) and non-Indigenous (Icelandic, Finnish, Russian, US-American, etc.). Research on the North that only considers one or the other of the Indigenous or non-Indigenous perspectives will necessarily lead to a misinterpretation of the region. The exclusion of the one or the other does not allow for considering the ensemble of the relationships that are at stake in the North.

There is an important requirement from the ethical point of view of research: as Indigenous voices have historically been ignored and few of them are preserved in cultural institutions, they require particular attention today. I submit here the example of the village of Hebron, on the coast of Labrador. This village, occupied by Inuit, administered by Moravian missionaries in the name of the government of Newfoundland, and supplied by the Hudson’s Bay Company, was savagely closed by an administrative decision in 1959. Today, if one wishes to reconstruct the events that led to this tragedy – several Inuit, forcibly removed, died in the years following the closure of their village – one can read the government archives in Newfoundland; one could also easily find the reports and records of the Hudson’s Bay Company, which have been the subject of publications and heritage protection; one could also easily consult the meticulous correspondence of the Moravian missionaries, which have all been digitized and are available in the archives of the congregation. But what is missing? The reactions, the opinions, and the voices of the Inuit who, not disposing of any institutional instruments to conserve their memory, have disappeared. The Indigenous point of view necessitates a special attention on the part of the researcher to emerge; sometimes, if it cannot be found, a space must be left for a “history of silence,” significant of the issues and relationships of force in the North, for ethically and honestly recounting certain historical events. The history of Hebron, that Carol Brice-Bennett describes as “dispossession,” is a clear case of it, but certainly not unique in the Arctic world.

Popular representations of the Arctic present it often as a white, cold, distant, uninhabited and uninhabitable, frozen, and empty world. It goes without saying that the Arctic is seen in this sense as nonurban and “natural.” beyond the ecumene, it symbolizes for the culture a space of emptiness and desolation. One has to admit that the Arctic region is sparsely populated, if we compare it to more temperate zones. The demographic disposition of the Earth clearly shows a concentration of the human population, in the broad periphery of the equatorial zones. However, the cold world also counts villages, cities, and even metropolises, which face considerable human, social, technical, cultural, and energy challenges, as well as a pronounced alternation

7) Carol Brice-Bennett’s Dispossessed: The Eviction of Inuit from Hebron, Labrador retraces the history and the consequences of an involuntary movement of the Indigenous population of Labrador; this case is not unique, and other forced movements (in Alaska, in Greenland, in Russia) had equally tragic repercussions.
Certains géographes ont comparé l’Arctique à la Méditerranée, non en raison de son climat bien sûr, mais parce que vivent autour du pôle des populations issues d’une riche variété d’origines, à la fois autochtones (Inuits, Cris, Sâmes, Innus, etc.) et allochtones (Islandais, Finlandais, Russes, États-Unis, etc.). Une recherche sur le Nord qui ne considérerait que l’une ou l’autre des perspectives autochtone ou non autochtone conduirait nécessairement à une mésinterprétation de la région. L’exclusion de l’une ou de l’autre ne permet pas de considérer l’ensemble des relations qui sont en jeu dans le Nord.

Il existe une prescription importante du point de vue de l’éthique de la recherche : comme les voix autochtones ont historiquement été ignorées et sont peu conservées dans les institutions culturelles, elles requièrent aujourd’hui une attention particulière. Je donne ici l’exemple du village de Hebron, sur la côte du Labrador. Ce village, occupé par les Inuits, administré par les missionnaires moraves au nom du gouvernement de Terre-Neuve, et approvisionné par la Compagnie de la Baie-d’Hudson, a sauvagement été fermé par une décision administrative en 1959. Aujourd’hui, si l’on souhaite reconstruire les événements qui ont conduit à cette tragédie (plusieurs Inuits, déplacés de force, sont décédés dans les années qui ont suivi la fermeture de leur village), on pourra lire les archives gouvernementales à Terre-Neuve ; on retrouvera aussi facilement les relevés et rapports de la Compagnie de la Baie-d’Hudson, qui ont fait l’objet de publications et de sauvegarde patrimoniale ; on consultera aussi aisément les minutieuses correspondances des missionnaires moraves, qui ont toutes été numérisées et qui sont disponibles aux archives de la congrégation. Mais que manque-t-il ? Les réactions, les opinions et les voix des Inuits, qui, ne disposant d’aucun instrument institutionnel pour conserver leur mémoire, ont disparu. Le point de vue autochtone nécessite de la part du chercheur une attention spéciale pour émerger ; parfois, à défaut de le retrouver, il faudra laisser une place pour une « histoire du silence », significative des enjeux et rapports de force dans le Nord, pour éthiquement et honnêtement raconter certains événements historiques. L’histoire de Hebron, que Carol Brice-Bennett qualifie de « dépossession »8, en est un cas manifeste, mais certes pas unique dans le monde arctique.

Les représentations populaires de l’Arctique le présentent le plus souvent comme un monde blanc, froid, éloigné, inhabité et inhabitable, glacé et vide. Il va sans dire que l’Arctique est vu dans ce sens comme non urbain et « naturel » : au-delà de l’écoumène, il symbolise pour la culture un espace de vacuité et de désolation. Il faut admettre que la région arctique est peu peuplée, si on la compare aux zones plus tempérées. La disposition démographique de la Terre illustre clairement une concentration de la

between the summer and winter seasons, which oblige the construction of dual architectural structures. Montreal, for example, with its 3.5 million inhabitants, can be considered – not for its latitude at 45 degrees, but in regard to the severity and length of its winter season – as the coldest large city (of more than a million inhabitants) in the world. What does it mean, beyond the direct climatic constraints, to live in a city with an alternating subtropical and subarctic climate, if we evaluate it from a social and cultural point of view? The impact of Nordic conditions on the built environment, urban planning, the management of resources, and collective and individual adaptation of lifestyle has been little studied up until now, notably because the popular image of the North refers rather to a sparsely inhabited region, desolate, and of low population. Yet, this is not always the case. Here again, the images make a way to grasp the complexity of the North and the Arctic. To understand the circumpolar world well, it is thus necessary to take into consideration the urban and non-urban problems that characterize it.

To understand the different points of view that oppose each other and interact in the circumpolar world, one must recognize at what point several languages, whether they are Indigenous, non-indigenous, and foreign, have constructed the idea and the paradigms of it. Languages that are little-spoken in the world but are spoken in the North (for example, Danish and Norwegian) have had a great influence on the definition of the Arctic, notably by the explorers originating from these countries who published numerous narratives of their travels. Foreign languages, for example German, have few ties with the colonial exploration or expansion of the North, but play an essential role in understanding it. Finally, the circumpolar region is one where the Indigenous languages remain the liveliest in the world: Cree, Inuktitut, Greenlandic, Yakut, although their knowledge outside of their primary zones is limited, remain the usual languages, and the languages of cultural creation and transmission. It is therefore necessary to presume a multilingual dimension in all research projects on the North and the Arctic and recognize that monolingualism and even bilingualism lead to a biased or incomplete vision of the North. The solutions, though heavy, are multiple: personal knowledge of several languages, translation, as well as multilingual teams, which can iron out misconceptions of the issues.

The North constitutes an “intercultural laboratory.” Out of habit, we see the cities of the twentieth century as the first hotbeds of intercultural exchanges. However, the isolated posts of the Arctic were often, since their foundation, places of convergence for men and women from different cultures, in a contact and trading situation: this is the same in the case of missions, then the mines, sites of dam construction, perhaps places of confinement, which relied on a population of varied cultures, coming both from different regions of the countries concerned and, by immigration, from overseas. Furthermore, each circumpolar culture is the product of a synthesis of two
Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

Daniel Chartier
Qu’est-ce que l’imaginaire du Nord?

population humaine dans le large pourtour de la zone équatoriale. Pourtant, le monde froid compte aussi des villages, des villes et même des métropoles, qui font face à des défis humains, sociaux, techniques, culturels et énergétiques considérables, en plus d’une alternance prononcé entre les saisons estivale et hivernale, qui oblige à la construction de doubles équipements architecturaux. Montréal, par exemple, avec ses 3,5 millions d’habitants, peut être considérée – non en raison de sa latitude à 45 degrés, mais en fonction de la sévérité et de la durée de son hiver – comme la grande ville (de plus d’un million d’habitants) la plus froide au monde. Que signifie, hors des contraintes directement climatiques, vivre dans une ville au climat en alternance subtropical et subarctique, si on l’évalue d’un point de vue culturel et social ? L’incidence des conditions nordiques sur le milieu bâti, la planification urbaine, la gestion des ressources et l’adaptation collective et individuelle des modes de vie a été peu considérée jusqu’à présent, notamment parce que l’image populaire du Nord renvoie plutôt à une région peu habitée, désolée et de faible population. Or ce n’est pas toujours le cas. Ici encore, l’imaginaire fait écran pour saisir la complexité du Nord et de l’Arctique. Pour bien comprendre le monde circumpolaire, il importe ainsi de prendre en considération les problématiques urbaines et non urbaines qui le caractérisent.

Pour arriver à comprendre les points de vue différents qui s’opposent et interagissent dans le monde circumpolaire, il faut reconnaître à quel point plusieurs langues, qu’elles soient autochtones, allochtones et étrangères, en ont construit l’idée et les paradigmes. Des langues peu parlées dans le monde mais l’étant dans le Nord (par exemple, le danois et le norvégien) ont eu une grande incidence sur la définition de l’Arctique, notamment en raison des explorateurs originaires de ces pays et qui ont publié de nombreux récits de leurs voyages. Des langues étrangères, par exemple l’allemand, ont peu de lien avec l’exploration ou l’expansion coloniales du Nord, mais jouent un rôle essentiel dans sa compréhension. Enfin, la région circumpolaire est celle où les langues autochtones demeurent les plus vivantes au monde : le cri, l’inuktitut, le groenlandais, le iakoute, bien que leur connaissance hors de leurs zones primaires soit limitée, demeurent des langues usuelles, de création et de transmission culturelles. Il faut donc prévoir une dimension multilingue dans tout projet de recherche sur le Nord et l’Arctique et reconnaître que le monolinguisme ou même le bilinguisme conduisent à une vision biaisée ou incomplète du Nord. Les solutions, quoique lourdes, sont multiples : la connaissance personnelle de plusieurs langues, la traduction ainsi que les équipes plurilingues, qui permettent d’aplanir la méconnaissance des enjeux.

Le Nord constitue un « laboratoire interculturel ». Par habitude, nous voyons dans les villes du XXe siècle les premiers foyers des échanges interculturels. Pourtant, les postes isolés de l’Arctique ont souvent été, dès leur fondation, des lieux de convergence d’hommes et de femmes venus de différentes cultures, en situation de contact et
What is the Imagined North?

or more cultures, from the South and from the North. Multicultural interactions are thus definitive of the North and the Arctic. Depending on the place, there is more or less diversity, more or less harmonious, between those of Indigenous and non-Indigenous origins. The Greenlandic identity, for example, is today a synthesis of several centuries-old Inuit cultures combined with those of the missionaries, the Danish colonizers, and recent immigration.

The circumpolarity, multidisciplinarity, Indigeneity, urbanity, multilingualism and interculturalism each impose methodological precautions on research on the North and the Arctic, and they are prerequisites without which the circumpolar region finds itself once again “simplified” and robbed of its capacity to think for itself. Furthermore, as Louis-Edmond Hamelin has shown in his work, the “North” calls for the creation of new terms and its own vocabulary to appreciate its specificity and its originality. These neologisms, among which we count terms that have become part of common speech in French today, like “nordicité,” “hivernité,” and “glissité,” invented for the French language, but widely translated into several other circumpolar languages, allow for the opening of a new field of research on the North, at the same time respectful of the differences that compose the region and the convergences that make it different from the rest of the world.

Conclusion

In all research on the North and the Arctic, the cultural and human aspects must be considered, even though these have been marginalized by Western tradition that projects on the cold world its “Arctic dreams” – to borrow Barry Lopez’s expression – by a rich imaginary, a fascinating system of signs, constructed over centuries of discourse, but from which the considerations of those who live there have been precisely excluded, as well as a part of the geographic reality of the region. We must propose and defend the idea of “recomplexifying” the North, the winter, and the Arctic, to re-establish an “ecology of the real” that takes into account the richness and the variety of the circumpolar world.

To achieve this, the following hypotheses must be defended, according to which a) the North and the Arctic are composed of places in constant interaction; b) the cultural and human aspects predetermine the relationship to the territory; c) the North and the Arctic must be envisaged in a multicultural and circumpolar manner, according to an interdisciplinary perspective; d) a circumpolar conception presents the North as

8) By Louis-Edmond Hamelin, in addition to La Nordicité du Québec (Québec: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2014), see: Écho des pays froids (n.10); Discours du Nord, Quebec: GÉTIC, Université Laval, 2002; Le Québec par des mots. Partie II: L’hiver et le Nord, Sherbrooke: Presses de l’Université de Sherbrooke, 2002.

9) See Barry Lopez: Arctic Dreams. Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape.
d'échange : c'est à la fois le cas des missions, puis des mines, des sites de construction de barrages, voire des lieux de réclusion, qui comptaient sur une population aux cultures variées, venue à la fois de différentes régions des pays concernés et, par l'immigration, de l'étranger. De plus, chaque culture circumpolaire est le produit d'une synthèse de deux ou plusieurs cultures, du Sud ou du Nord. Les interactions pluriculturelles sont ainsi définitoires du Nord et de l'Arctique. Selon les lieux, il existe une mixité plus ou moins grande, plus ou moins harmonieuse entre les origines autochtones et allochtones. L'identité groenlandaise, par exemple, est aujourd'hui une synthèse de plusieurs cultures inuites centenaires, alliées à celle des missionnaires, des colonisateurs danois et à une immigration récente.

La circumpolarité, la pluridisciplinarité, l'autochtonité, l'urbanité, le multilinguisme et l'interculturalisme imposent chacun des précautions méthodologiques pour la recherche sur le Nord et l'Arctique, et ils sont des prérequis sans lequel la région circumpolaire se retrouve une fois de plus « simplifiée » et dénuée de sa capacité à se penser par elle-même. De plus, comme l'a démontré dans ses travaux le géographe et linguiste québécois Louis-Edmond Hamelin, le « Nord » appelle à la création de termes nouveaux et d’un vocabulaire propre pour rendre compte de sa spécificité et de son originalité. Ces néologismes, parmi lesquels on compte des termes aujourd'hui entrés dans la langue courante, comme « nordicité », « hivernité », « glissité », inventés pour la langue française, mais largement traduits dans plusieurs autres langues circumpolaires, permettent d’ouvrir un chantier nouveau pour la recherche sur le Nord, à la fois respectueuse des différences qui composent la région et des convergences qui en fondent la différence par rapport au reste du monde.

**Conclusion**

Il faut considérer, dans toute recherche sur le Nord et l'Arctique, les aspects culturels et humains, bien que ceux-ci aient été minorés par la tradition occidentale, qui projette sur le monde froid ses « rêves arctiques » – pour reprendre l'expression de Barry Lopez (1986 : 464) –, par un imaginaire riche, un système de signes fascinant, construit par des siècles de discours, mais duquel ont précisément été exclues les considérations de ceux qui y vivent, ainsi qu'une part de la réalité géographique de la région. Il faut proposer et défendre l'idée de « recomplexifier » le Nord, l'hiver et l'Arctique, pour rétablir une « écologie du réel » qui tienne compte de la richesse et de la variété du monde circumpolaire. Pour y arriver, il faut défendre les hypothèses selon lesquelles

a whole which calls for solutions, reflections, and common positions, all while taking into account the different cultures and languages which compose it, in a multinational, multilingual, multicultural, and often conflictual manner.

Without this double effort, first, of understanding and questioning the sign system that is the imagined North, from both a multicultural and historic point of view, and second, of establishing ethical principals to achieve research that is multidisciplinary, multilingual, and in agreement with the object studied, the North, the winter, and the Arctic will remain spaces considered empty and devoid of their cultural richness. We will thus also renew commonly held ideas about the Arctic and concerning the people who live there.

Translated from the French by Christina Kannenberg.

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(a) le Nord et l’Arctique se composent de lieux en interaction constante ; (b) les aspects culturels et humains prédéterminent le rapport au territoire ; (c) le Nord et l’Arctique doivent être envisagés de manière pluriculturelle et circumpolaire, selon une perspective interdisciplinaire ; (d) une conception circumpolaire pose le Nord comme un tout qui appelle des solutions, des réflexions et des positions communes, tout en tenant compte des différentes cultures et langues qui le composent, d’une manière plurinationale, plurilingue, pluriculturelle et, souvent, conflictuelle.

Sans ce double effort, d’abord, de compréhension et de remise en question du système de signes qu’est l’imaginaire du Nord, d’un point de vue pluriculturel et historique, puis de précaution éthique par des principes de réalisation de la recherche, multidisciplinaire, plurilingue et en accord avec l’objet étudié, le Nord, l’hiver et l’Arctique demeureront des espaces vidés de leur richesse culturelle et propres à la reconduction de lieux communs.

Bibliographie


The North Within

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Abstract
To Canadians, “the north” is larger than a geographic space, but performs as an imaginary and imagined realm of idea and inspiration. As such, it transcends its own materiality and demonstrates the conundrum of belonging and estrangement; Canadians belong to the idea of north more than the north belongs to Canadians. The cultural influence of this all-encompassing idea and area goes far beyond its dimensions to measure Nordicity, intimacy, and directionality. Contrary to the idea of north as a direction or as the object of expedition and exploration, the north proves to be a world of stories more than charts. This paper seeks to address the language, depiction, and documentation of the north as practices of inscription and exclusion.

Keywords:
North; place theory; imagination; myth; landscape; exploration

Résumé

Mots-clés :
Nord; théorie des lieux; imagination; mythe; paysage; exploration
Who can argue with the power of that assertion, its astonishing structural clarity? In an exhaustive and bewilderingly borderless space and time, the very idea of direction is almost obliterated, the prevalence of abstract orientation taking over the true bearings of destination. In a world of crypto-currency, algorithmic identity, and social disconnection pretending to be connection, the north seems a steady beacon, a declaratory point of disembarkation.

Where can a contemporary, largely western, and certainly urban Canadian writer living between the wavering parameters of changing inclinations and time, seek north? There are surely explanations for why the compass yearns north, for the trajectory of dreams and direction. Science, this planet’s magnetic field, and that strange explanation that the North Pole is technically the South Pole of the earth’s magnetic field, do not explain the attraction of the horizon encapsulated by the Canadian north. But north is the line along which this country lies, the position that extends toward the zenith or the nadir. North is our apex, hypothermic and gelid, poetic and provocative, fearsome, rumoured, a world of polarization and contrast. Except that like human inability to fathom that the North Pole is technically the South Pole, the north is a realm elusive as our myopic attempts to define, contain, or measure its reaches. There are arguments that the north is so fascinating it must be avoided, and avowals that seekers of north encounter only “secrets; enigmas; mysteries” (Wiebe:1989, 113), which renunciation strikes me as a means of quarantining that world from the imagination.

Discourse around the north reveals most fiercely the inadequacy of language or vocabulary available to encompass such a vast and intriguing space and place, although Canadians do narrativize and represent, deconstruct and examine, translate, metaphorize, and preach, read, and perspectivize north. This conjectured and conjured north arouses both wonder and wander, while never managing to summarize or capture the complexities of what Canadians live as a northern nation. To some extent, our sense of the north within has been inscribed by Gilles Vigneault’s marvellous song, “Mon Pays,” written for Arthur Lamothe’s 1965 National Board film, La Neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan. Its inimitable opening line, “Mon pays, ce n’est pas un pays, c’est l’hiver” – “my country is not a country, it’s winter” – figures the combined frustration and tenderness of the Canadian search for a north within. Aside from the song being anointed a Quebec anthem, and covered by dozens of singers, it gestures toward the ineffable and enigmatic quality of this northern world, especially in the concluding lines, which riddle the other side of the north within:
Mon pays ce n’est pas un pays, c’est l’envers
D’un pays qui n’était ni pays ni patrie
Ma chanson ce n’est pas une chanson, c’est ma vie
C’est pour toi que je veux posséder mes hivers
(http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mon-pays/)

Translated as:
My country is not a country, it’s the reverse
of a country that was neither country nor homeland.
My song is not a song, it’s my life.
It is for you that I want to possess my winters. (Vigneault, web)

These enigmatic and yet crystalline phrases speak to an ongoing and insistent quest
for definition and ownership but propose as well how to escape that same encompass-
ing desire, the conundrum of a place beyond borders or politics or perimeters, verge-
less and undefinable and intimate.

The north occupies Canada as a placeless place, more than “geographic space”
(Duncan: 2000, 582) and far more than landscape. It is a space “made meaning-
ful” (Cresswell: 2004, 7) in ways that shatter materiality, and become placeless but
alternatively place-full, replete with a rich temporality. Place theory insists that
“insideness” measures the capacity to understand place and our attachment to or
claim to a place. “To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and
the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place”
(Relph: 1976, 49). Other critics argue that “the deepest forms of place attachment
are expressed through behavioral insideness, which reflects a profound appreciation
of the significance of a particular place and its identity, and existential insideness,
which expresses an implicit knowledge that this is the place to which you belong”
(Tomaney: 2016, 95). Place theory relates most directly to localities, communities
and the built environments of human beings, but in this case, the application of
“insideness” arguably measures the dimensions of how Canadians, even if they have
never been north of Edmonton, regard the north as “theirs” because they belong to
the idea of north, as critic Sherrill Grace has so aptly encapsulated. It is this elusive
but resonant idea of north that becomes the congruent touchstone of identification
for Canadian sensibility. Sensibility rather than “identity” is the means by which
to examine the complexities of this belonging; and Canadians belong to the north
more than the ubiquity of their claiming it as theirs. Just as consequence is more
important than plot, the elusiveness of sensibility weathers the extent to which the
north exerts its cultural influence.
This influence has little to do with Burke’s theories, arguing that “sensibility and the imagination were more appropriate to the median climates of the south” (Sarafianos 2012: 85), producing a greater number of artists of every genre, than northern climes. Instead, we must understand that in the complex tissue of how place inhabits humans—and particularly Canadians, for whom the north is both placeless and eternally ensconced in the imagination—the north becomes the sensibility of Canadian inclination, both directional and abstract. This north “within" reaches far past the 49th parallel or north of sixty or beyond that circle of ice light. The hyper-cryptic north within inflects both cultural munificence and inadequacy. Canadians are dwarfed by their own real and imagined world.

The National Snow and Ice Data Centre offers a map with “three definitions of the Arctic: the tree line; the 10 degrees Celsius isotherm; and the Arctic Circle at 66° 34’ North” (http://nsidc.org/cryosphere/arctic-meteorology/arctic.html). The region of the North Pole consists of an ocean surrounded by land, not land surrounded by ocean. This ocean, like no other deep on Earth, refuses to be what is expected of ocean and instead recites its thalassic difference by evading even its own scrutiny. Scientists define the Arctic as the region above the Arctic Circle, the imaginary line circling the globe at 66° 32’ N. The Arctic Circle marks the latitude above which the sun does not set on the summer solstice, and does not rise on the winter solstice. At the North Pole, the sun rises once each year and sets once each year: there are six months of continuous daylight and six months of continuous night. Summarized in this way, as matter-of-fact scientists do, it is almost unfathomable to touch the heart of this North’s extremity, this furthest outpost of the earth and yet no outpost at all, but a shimmering paradoxical centre, for at the pole, there is no “direction.”

There are other designations of Arctic. Some say it is the area north of the tree line, where the landscape is frozen and dotted only with shrubs and lichens. Others demarcate it by warmth, where the average daily summer temperature does not rise above 10 degrees Celsius. The quarrel, it is evident, is with language, a persistent inability to designate or specify, to make the words enact their expression, some onomasiological ambush or quicksand, which still cannot capture North in any complete dimension. The grand pere of northern-ness, Louis-Edmond Hamelin, found a measurement for norticity in degrees of intimacy, based on a continuum of geographical and human components. His index of Valeurs polaires (Polar values) took into consideration not just temperature and vegetation, latitude and economic activity and types of snow, but that nebulous element that we understand as “north” without pinning it to an ice floe or a fixed line (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordicity). He does propose measurable subdivisions that, despite their limited language, exert a magnetism with their drama of intimacy: the near north, middle north, far north and extreme north. Perhaps it is the simplicity and directness of adjectives, but these designations frame the
north as the imaginary destination of desire for most of us. Why dream of Venice or Florence, of Marrakech or Buenos Aires, Cusco or St. Petersburg or Kathmandu, when we can dream north, dream of north, and seek the north that resides within. But allowing north to be purely north, a real world, but also a world we encounter in dreams and imaginings, is not in the nature of humans. Too much, it is not enough for us to allow “the reverse of a country that was neither country nor homeland” (Vigneault), but a life that allows us to possess winters and to allow those winters to possess us.

Instead, north has been alienated, has become the object of an expedition. A wonderful quote from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World*, a novel which concerns the expedition to a plateau in the South American Amazon basin, and which encompasses that desire to chart and map and claim. It involves dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures, ape-men and diamonds and museums, all the accouterments of adventure. I will not recapitulate the unlikely plot but at one point, Professor Summerly and Professor Challenger are arguing:

“We have spent two long days in exploration,” said he, and we are no wiser as to the actual geography of the place than when we started [. . . .] The farther we go the less likely it is that we will get any general view.”

“. . . .

“You are all turning your brains toward getting into this country. I say that we should be scheming how to get out of it.”

“I am surprised, sir,” boomed Challenger, stroking his majestic beard, “that any man of science should commit himself to so ignoble a sentiment . . . . I absolutely refuse to leave until we are able to take back with us something in the nature of a chart.” (Conan Doyle: 1912)

He could be speaking for every Arctic explorer. Expedition and its self-immolating desire to chart infects the north, its legacy and legends, that regard of “the north without.” Research offers an enormous list of voyages and explorations, all either bent on solving the question of the Northwest Passage, or intent on furthering knowledge about the Arctic reaches, their passability or impassibility. This preoccupation has found in Canada’s north occasion for such “men of science” to fulfill their ambitions, to alleviate their thirst for adventure, and to claim an authority or “discovery” that elevates them to heroes.

The formulaic motif repeats with variations: a tale of intrepid deeds and daring endeavors, seasoned by the frisson of danger. In this story, the main character, almost invariably male, sets out to discover some passage or mineral or precious light only accessible by going north. That character is confronted with difficult conditions and
physical challenges which he overcomes, proving his strength and resourcefulness. It is, as critic Sherrill Grace has claimed, "the narrative of courageous men battling a dangerous, hostile female terra incognita to prove their masculinity and the superior force of their technology, or to die nobly in the struggle, or to map, claim, name and control unstructured space" (Grace: 2007, 16). The discourse of heroism that surrounds these various tales is certainly reminiscent of boys’ own adventures, whether the outcome is survival or death.

This story can be charted, although it works best if set in Victorian times. Here are the plot lines. A man is given funding by a powerful political body. He collects a ship and supplies (at least three years’ worth) and other men, and sails toward the frozen seas. He determinedly chooses a passage choked with ice, “… a ploughing train of ice … [that] does not always clear during the short summers...” (Beattie: 2014, 93), and unsurprisingly is locked in ice for a winter or two, in a ship ill-equipped for extreme temperatures, and without any means of overland travel. Cultural “factors”—meaning fear and prejudice—prevent the men from seeking help from or adopting an Inuit diet, hence, survival is optional. Most of the men die, from scurvy or discouragement or starvation, with sub-currents of murder and cannibalism and loneliness. They are so hungry that they boil their boots, and thus the leader becomes famous as “the man who ate his boots” (Brandt: 2010, 7). Eventually, they all die, although back in their colonial home, they are painted as heroes, surely still alive, somewhere. Various expeditions of similar character suit up as search parties and head for the Arctic, repeating the pattern, with more ships and men lost looking for the lost expedition than the expedition itself lost. Finally, one intrepid explorer takes the time and energy to talk with Inuit hunters, and “discovers” the real story: the ships were icebound, stranded, some of the men tried to reach land and safety on foot, but succumbed to a litany of bad weather, bad temper, botulism, starvation, and scurvy, along with a soupçon of lead poisoning.

Of course, that leaden tale does not erase such heroes from history. They are elevated and eulogized, various expeditions try to solve the mystery of their ends, and seek to discover new leads or new clues about their remains. Those expeditions in turn collect specimens and note currents, tides, and ice, are foiled by sudden mists and misled by mirages, some of them financed by gin-magnates and others by grieving widows. Some survive and some are frozen into the ice and walk out to “escape,” or saw through the ice to get to open water. Some have the good sense to take advice and food from the Inuit. They hope for open water; they hope for rescue by a whaler. They wait for the ice to melt, then give up, and pray that some ship will see them, rescue them, and take them home. Lives are dealt like cards, but not wisely. Ships’ surgeons perform amputations and operations, and prescribe remedies for illness. These follow-up expeditions claim to chart the “true” position of the magnetic pole,
that roaming dot that refuses to stay put and moves as elusively as the shimmering northern lights. Still, these intrepid men name islands after themselves, some real and some imaginary, and usually, if they return having lost a few toes to frostbite, receive gold medals and knighthoods. Their busts are cast in marble, and they are elevated in cathedrals above poems composed by Poets Laureate, like Alfred Lord Tennyson’s ode to Franklin on the Cenotaph in Westminster Abbey:

NOT here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage now
Toward no earthly pole.

Additionally, of course, such memorials are embellished by grieving widows, who after elevating those explorers as beloved chiefs of gallant crews, perishing in the search for passage, perish themselves, to become additional lines on the cenotaph: “AFTER LONG WAITING, AND SENDING MANY IN SEARCH OF HIM, HERSELF DEPARTED, TO SEEK AND FIND HIM IN THE REALMS OF LIGHT” (Potter: 2016, 12).

But is that terminal conclusion the end of boys’ adventures? Others now follow in the quest for completion, for the navigable Passage, now capitalized and even more powerfully mythologized by scientists and historians, forensic anthropologists and toxicologists. Culture too is mesmerized; witness Canada’s most iconic song, Stan Rogers’ “Northwest Passage” which describes the urge “to find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea” (Gudgeon 2008). Graves are “discovered” and exhumed and theories promulgated, and the Inuit tilt their heads to the side and look puzzled, for they always knew there were graves on that island, and for them, nothing new has been “discovered.” But the Inuit believe in stories, while boys’ adventures rely on inaccurate charts. Eventually, a contemporary expedition, with the assistance of Twin Otters and government funding and underwater technology, drags sonar equipment across the ocean floor and locates a ghostly shape on the Arctic seabed, which is declared to be the “doomed” ship, with Prime Ministers and presidents of various Royal Societies celebrating its “discovery,” incentive for political furtherance and further expeditions and speeches and various proud backslappings. Books entitled Lost Beneath the Ice: The Story of HMS Investigator (Cohen: 2013) proliferate. All contribute to Margaret Atwood’s contention that Franklin’s expedition is an example of an iconic Canadian obsession: “In every culture many stories are told, (but) only some are told and retold, and these stories bear examining” (Atwood: 1995, 11). Many scholars have addressed the transition from science to thrill, from thrill to science, and from event to political expedience. This Arctic is a circle that loops around politics and sovereignty and visuality and obsession. It rides on the shoulders of the designation “Arctic,”
but resists the idea of north (once again, see Sherrill Grace and her brilliant *Canada and the Idea of North*), and fails to investigate or understand the difference between expedition outward and those seeking the north within, that fundamental if elusive direction that enables the imagination to read snowflakes and to travel mirages. The adventuresome exercise of the Arctic evades the way that it is employed as what the German philosopher Simmel calls an “exclave from life’s coherence” (Simmel 1983, 33); he addresses the conception of adventure as a “holiday” from life with additional piquancy of stepping out of time. It is in this space that Eglinger says, “the polar explorer turns into an adventurous hero of mythopoetical imagination” (2010, 16). And the consumable Arctic overrides the pneuma of “north.” That is what is arguably missing from this “obsession” with expeditions and outcomes.

Most artists and writers are invested in a north less scientific than imagistic, less male than ungendered, less factual than fictional. There exists the Canadian Arctic, real and imagined, with its prevailing images, whether of environment, people, landscape, animals, or adventure. There is Arcticism (pace Said’s *Orientalism*) with its reliance on masculinity, sizeism, exploration, remoteness, science, indigeneity, and the romance of the unknown and unknowable. It is difficult to see past such heavily inscribed depictions, which have not only shaped the discourses of the north but immobilized the language that we bring to those discourses, whether exploration accounts, travel-writing, political texts, diaries, or historical examinations, along with novels and songs. The documents with which we measure or seek to understand the north must be scrutinized as cultural practices of inscription and exclusion. As Eglinger argues, “the documentation of achievements becomes the actual achievement” (7, emphasis in text), and the experience of north, the north itself, must remain elusive. Even critiques of how expeditions and adventures have perpetuated themselves, take on their cultural orientation. Those who are not trapped in the ice, who do not die, who survive their northern sojourns, are stylized as better or more competent explorers than those who fail. The unforgiving judgment that “adventure is a sign of incompetence” a saying ascribed to Vilhjalmur Stefansson (Plimpton, 135) underscores this topos; Frank argues that the best explorer is the scientist “who does not blunder into adventures because he systematically has planned every nut, bolt, and screw” (Frank, 125). These are stories that rely on accepted tropes: travel, adventure, and a quest for escape from the contemporary world and its high-tech demands. Nothing has changed. The already-traced Eurocentric construction of the people of the north and of the north itself is now part of our neo-colonial and neo-ecological desire for the north to remain a kingdom of the imagination, as untouchable as it is desirable. That goes hand in hand with the romantic image of the Arctic as hidden paradise, an El Dorado of mysterious and luxuriant vegetation where the most intrepid find a trap door to a different world, the reward for this arduous journey discovery of the universe’s hidden secrets.
At the end of Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein*, the “hero” and his monster wander the earth, Frankenstein tracing the steps of his fiendish invention. Cursed by the devil and motivated by revenge, he follows his creation, who taunts him by saying, “Follow me; I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost to which I am impassive” (Shelley, 162). The two move deeper and deeper into a world where the snows thicken and the cold increases. By dog sled, Frankenstein follows the monster to the edge of the frozen ocean, where ill and suffering from exposure, he ends up in the cabin of a ship immured in mountains of ice, in a ship that had been on an expedition “full of dangers and terror” (Shelley, 170) to the north. There he slowly succumbs to death, and the novel ends with the dreadful creature finding the ship, mourning over his creator’s body, and confessing his misery and remorse for killing Frankenstein’s family and love. Then, he leaps out of a window and the last we see of that poor entity is on an ice-raft being borne away by the waves, until he is lost in darkness and distance. Dante too reserves the ninth circle of hell for those who have committed treachery; they are frozen in a lake of ice. The connection? Perhaps the greatest treachery possible is man’s delusion that he can uncover the secrets of the earth. That Frankenstein’s monster vanishes in the farthest reaches of north suggests that it is there the greatest secrets lie, monsters and men and the retributions of gods. But the Inuk writer Rachel Attituq Qitsualik says, “The Inuit cosmos is ruled by no one. There are no divine mother and father figures . . . There are no eternal punishments in the hereafter, as there are no punishments for children or adults in the here and now” (web)

It is up to the imagination to solve or transcend almost any problem and it is the imaginary universe of north that possesses the greatest and most unimaginable riches and diversity. And so, the search continues, an expedition to find the north within, a topography of yearning for a country of the imagination that belies its own mystery, but that resides within, and inscribes on every Canadian the curious punctuation mark of a Nordic people.

Occasionally, science manages to be delicious. “In the Arctic, people can sometimes see and hear things that they cannot see or hear most other places on Earth. These phenomena are caused by special atmospheric conditions. Microscopic ice crystals are suspended in the air, changing how light and sound travel over distances. Layers of hot and cold air refract, or bend, light rays. Light bounces off the surfaces of clouds, water, and ice to create optical illusions. People also sometimes report that they can hear noises from much further away in the Arctic. As with optical phenomena, this phenomenon occurs because cold atmospheric conditions bend sound waves differently than the air at lower latitudes” (https://nsidc.org/cryosphere/arctic-meteorology/phenomena.html). While such physical phenomena can stretch the imagination, they cannot match the effect of the north on the north within, the Aurora over
the city of Iqaluit in Nunavut, hanging like a shaken curtain of light, the corona that forms a luminous disc around the sun when light is diffracted by water vapor, water sky and ice blink when light reflects from sea ice, and not least, optical illusions that bend the light towards the eye of the beholder. If this is not magic, then magic does not exist. And that is why Canadians seek to find the north within.

North and south are more than directions. As a contemporary, largely western, and certainly urban Canadian writer living in southern Canada, my north is contingent: I live 259 kilometers north of the 49th parallel and the border crossing into Montana at Carway, Alberta. Only the three prairie provinces rest entirely north of the 49th parallel – the others dip below that line, stagger toward and incorporate the geographical and cultural boundary between Canada’s northern-ness and America’s westerly drive. Only the Territories of Canada’s Arctic evade the border’s southbound touch, which is their magical distinction.

And so I dream of escaping, of returning to Ellesmere or to little Cornwallis Island, or to the any Arctic Island, or perhaps even to Beechey, which buries a few explorers’ graves. But whatever my own yearning for “expedition,” I know that north is north and to find the north within I must possess the winters that possess me.

Works cited


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II

NARRATING THE NORTH

FAIRE LE(S) RÉCIT(S) DU NORD
Conceptualising the North: Re-Imagining the Spaces of the North in Jacques Ferron’s *L’Amélanchier* and Mohammed Dib’s *Les Terrasses d’Orsol*

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Abstract
This article is a study of the representations of the spaces of the North in a cross-cultural context and from a postcolonial francophone literary perspective. It aims to analyse what narrative functions and values are assigned to the spaces of the North in the two texts selected in the postcolonial context of Québec (Ferron) and Algeria (Dib). Whilst Ferron explores the mythical dimensions of the space(s) of the North within the situated histories and memories of the space of Québec, Dib’s concept of the North is developed from the position of migration that is *deterritorialised*. The article will argue that the space of the North in the two texts analysed can function either as a mythical (Ferron) or as a socio-political (Dib) construct, making it a highly ambivalent concept and an *empty signifier* as Ernest Laclau defines it. It will conclude that in Ferron’s case, the idea of the North is conceptualised as a mythical construct through the function and strategy of *re-orientation*; as such, it remains mystified for the reader. Contrary to this, in Dib’s text, the North is conceptualised through the function of absence and the construction of *non-place*.

Keywords: space, spatiality, semiotics, North, empty signifier, non-space, comparative francophone postcolonial studies, Québec, Algeria.

Résumé
Introduction

The North is a space that is impossible to define completely. Its meaning is constantly shifting, as Peter Davidson implies in his book *The Idea of North*: “wherever it is located, it always points to a further north, to an elsewhere” (Davidson 2005: 7). To a Southerner it means something essentially different to what it means to a Northerner. The North like the South can be exoticised, mythicized, but it can also be deconstructed, demystified. The concept of the North is unpindownable, it is highly ambivalent. It can be understood as an “empty signifier”, a concept that Ernest Laclau defines in his essay “Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics” (Laclau 1996). In this article, I will try and unveil the ambivalent nature and function of the idea and the concept of the North based on the analysis of the two texts selected. I will present and discuss two main conceptualisations of the North as they appear in Jacques Ferron’s *L’Amélanchier* (Ferron 1970) and Mohammed Dib’s *Les Terrasses d’Orsol* (Dib 1985). My choice of these two texts is based on the results of a larger research conducted on the representations of space, place and spatial loss in North African and Canadian writing in French (Jasmina Bolfek-Radovani 2015). Both Ferron and Dib are considered to be important authors in the literary area they belong to. Although the two texts chosen here are among their most accomplished works, little attention has been given to a systematic analysis of the representations and values of the space of the North in these two works. Using semiotic analysis, my aim in this article is to show that the space of the North as real and imagined territory manifests itself in two different ways in these texts, giving rise to the space of the North that is highly ambivalent, as previously mentioned. The North is constructed as a mythical construct, a mystificatory tool and symbolic device of nation-building (Ferron), and it is used to deconstruct or demystify the socio-political discourse on space (Dib) unveiling the *geographies of power* or, what the human geographer Doreen Massey calls, “power-geometries of space-time” (Massey 1999: 13). In the analysis presented,
I will argue that in Ferron’s case the space of the North remains mystified to the reader; the idea of the nation-state is represented through an imagined space of the North that serves to re-orientate the main subject and the reader. In other words, through the deployment of the spaces of the North represented in *L’Amélanchier*, Ferron aims to construct the identity of the Québécois nation. On the other hand, in Dib’s text the space of the North comes to signify a non-place, allowing Dib to deconstruct and demystify the spaces of the North represented through the function of absence at the semiotic, socio-political and psychoanalytical level.

The North and the strategy of re-orientation in Jacques Ferron’s *L’Amélanchier*

Jacques Ferron was born in Louiseville (the province of Maskinongé, Québec), in 1921. No longer alive, he remains one of the most important Québécois writers today. A doctor by profession, he began his writing career in the theatre. In 1962, his first major work, *Contes du pays incertain* (Ferron 1962), a collection of short story-tales, was published, for which he later received the prestigious Governor General Award. This was followed by the publication of *Contes anglais et autres* (Ferron 1964), *La Nuit*, later re-written by Ferron and published as *Les Confitures de coings* (Ferron 1972) and *Le Ciel du Québec* (Ferron 1969). In 1970, Ferron wrote what was to be, according to a number of critics, his most accomplished text, *L’Amélanchier* (Ferron 1970). Beside his literary and medical interest, Ferron was also very active politically. In 1960 he participated in the founding of the *Action socialiste pour l’indépendance du Québec* and in 1963 he formed his own independent party, *Parti Rhinocéros*, and remained its candidate during several federal elections. Although Ferron’s work includes theatrical pieces, novels and short stories, his writing style is most often associated with the subversion of the traditional storytelling genre. Pierre L’Hérault speaks of the phenomenon of the *repiquage du conte* in his analysis of Ferron’s work (L’Hérault 1980: 22). This process of *repiquage* to which Ferron himself refers to when speaking about Québécois folktales fulfils a unique function. It transforms space from an unfamiliar to a familiar one through the process of *localisation*. The marks of *localisation* used have the function of enabling the storyteller (and the reader) to translate the unfamiliar world of uncertainty into one that is familiar, thus opening up a new space of collective identity and consciousness. Through the use of folktale, Ferron interrogates his relationship to the space of the nation-state. He explores the collective myth of the return to the origin or land that figures so prominently in the Québécois imaginary. As L’Hérault observes when speaking about the role that the

1) The source for this summary is Pierre L’Hérault’s essay *Jacques Ferron, Cartographe de l’imaginaire.*
trope of the homeland or le pays as an imagined space plays in Ferron’s Contes (Ferron 1968):

Loin donc d’être un refuge et déboucher sur le mythe, l’imaginaire québécois de la légende est un moyen de s’approprier la réalité (…) Et le pays cesse d’être un lieu de peur pour devenir un lieu habitable, grâce à la force de l’imaginaire (L’Hérault 1980:23).

The recreation of historicity as deployment of l’image matricielle in Ferron’s work, argues L’Hérault, passes precisely through imaginary space as a space of collective memory. Thus, Ferron’s practice of localisation in the space of the imaginary allows him to recreate the individual and collective space of the imagined nation-state; it allows him to recreate an imagined community as Benedict Anderson would define it (Anderson 1983). However, Ferron’s use of the practice of localisation can be interpreted as an expression of the writer’s anxiety in relation to Québec as a viable or actualised national space, as well as an expression of the sense of dépaysement that is characteristic of a number of Québécois writers (such as Gaston Miron) in the period of nationalistic Québec that follows the Quiet Revolution (Zoppi 1998).2

L’Amélanchier is an autobiographical novel narrated by a child and, later, a young woman called Tinamer de Portenqueu who, crossing into adulthood, realises that she has been living in a state of dérive at the same time as she has already become a writer. It is at that moment of turning back and recounting one’s memories, a moment that occurs in parallel to one’s sudden realisation of passing of time and of a loss of innocence, that the story begins. In the novel, the spaces of the North appear as spaces signifying the quest for origin, the quest for identity, through the process of localisation and the strategy of re-orientation. At the beginning of the novel one is introduced to the heroine, Tinamer de Portenqueu, about to embark on writing her life story:

Mon enfance je décrirai pour le plaisir de me la rappeler, tel un conte devenu réalité, encore incertaine entre les deux. Je le ferai aussi pour mon orientement, étant donné que je dois vivre, que je suis déjà en dérive et que dans la vie comme dans le monde, on ne dispose que d’une étoile fixe, c’est le point d’origine, seul repère du voyageur. (Ferron 1970:27)

As shown in the above quotation of the opening paragraph of the book, the place of origin is symbolically represented as a stable and constant space of the North that allows Tinamer, the voyageur, to orientate herself on the voyage of life. The act of writing stands in opposition to forgetting or to the state of dérive in which Tinamer, the

2) Gaston Miron’s poetry collection L’Homme rapaillé (Miron 1970) was published the same year that Feron published L’Amélanchier. Among other things, the Italian critic Sergio Zoppi argues that Miron’s poems can be seen as an attempt to transform the abstract and unfamiliar space of Québec into the habitable, familiar place of his native Gaspésie through a variety of textual strategies.
subject and the narrator, finds herself before she starts writing her memoirs or her autobiography, something that constitutes the main subject of Ferron’s book. Thus, writing becomes a strategy of re-orientation of space.

The types of spaces that dominate in L’Amélanchier are spaces that relate to nature. The most frequent tropes of space and place relate to natural spaces such as /forêt/ (forest), /clairière/ (clearing), /bois/ (wood), /jardin/ (garden), /arbre/ (tree) (138 occurrences). These are in opposition to urban spaces (53 occurrences). To illustrate this, table 1. on the following page shows the semiotic analysis of the spaces mentioned here that were conducted on the text. The sememes that dominate within the category of natural spaces are those of /bois/, /forêt/ and /arbre/. The spaces of nature or the sememes /bois/, /forêt/ and /arbre/ or /wood/, /forest/ and /tree/ that have the highest occurrence often appear in the text in connection with the evocation of an imaginary space, which is also the space of Tinamer’s childhood memories. The only natural space that is marked by phoria or ambivalence is the space of the forest. As is characteristic for fairytales, the forest is experienced both as an enchanting and a strange, daunting place in which extraordinary characters make their appearance. A series of characters appear/disappear such as Monsieur Northrop, an Englishman carrying a compass that was once a rabbit – an obvious reference to Alice in the Wonderland - and who is always in a hurry, or the priest Messire Hubert Robson who a century ago lost a girl called Marie Mahon and who has been searching for her in the Canadian forests ever since. Thus, in L’Amélanchier, the space of the forest is not only invested with the values of nature, but also with those of the cultural and collective memory, imagination, as well as limitlessness and deepness.

The narrator’s native space, the comté of Maskingongé, appears less frequently in the text than other types of spaces, such as, for example, the natural spaces shown in table 1. However, it appears more frequently than spaces such as /Canada/, /Bas-Canada/ or /Québec/. This confirms what L’Hérault says about Ferron and the relative abundance of toponyms of Québec in relation to the sparse occurrence of toponyms of Canada in his text. According to L’Hérault, the abundance of toponyms of Québec in relation to the sparse occurrence of toponyms of Canada in Ferron’s work, shows that Ferron’s representation of space is firmly anchored in the Québécois spatial im-

3) They constitute 57% of the total number (138) of sememes of space in this category.

4) Phoria is a value that belongs to the thymic category. It is considered as a compound value (in the same way aphoria is) that is used in semiotic analysis to explain the state of ambivalence (both positive and negative) of the subject in relation to a certain object. The positive state or value is designated as euphoria, whereas the negative state or value is designated as dysphoria (Hébert 2006).

5) It has been argued elsewhere (Nardout-Lafarge:1998) that the names of Québec, Canada, Gaspé or Kamouraska (to name just a few) are all of Indian origin; both spatial and geographic loss in Québec are inscribed in the history of the name, according to Nardout-Lafarge.
aginary whereby Québec becomes an image signifiante, a mythic place. It is therefore not surprising to find that the comté of Maskinongé, although less frequent than other types of spaces, is given a central place in L’Amélanchier. This is achieved through Léon de Portenqueu’s recounting of the story of the bible of the Maskinongé and of the de Portenqueu family, in which the county of Maskinongé becomes both a place of symbolic rupture and a place of origin or of beginning of a history that is distinct from both French and British histories, and in which the idea of métissage and of the First Nations’ cultural heritage plays a pivotal role.

The opposition or the distinction upheld between the natural and the urban spaces, and the positive vs. negative values attributed to these spaces, can be interpreted

6) As L’Hérault noted, the image of the homeland or le pays in Ferron’s work is often expressed through the following four ideas/places: Maskinongé, Gaspé, Jacques-Cartier, Québec (L’Hérault 1980:45).
7) Léon de Portenqueu is Tinamer’s father.
as a typical example of mystifications of space that the French social theorist Henri Lefebvre refers to in his analysis of the representation of space (Lefebvre 1974). The negative values attributed to urban space in L’Amélanchier are identified as threatening spaces of American progress and modernity. The urban and social space of the street and the city of Montréal designated metonymically by the working quarter of Hochelaga are being given negative connotations that have the power to corrupt. This can be noted in the following passage:

Par devant la maison, du mauvais côté des choses, passait la rue comme ailleurs, rivière grise et morte d’asphalte refroidi dont la coulée remontait à l’ère tertiaire, époque où ma pauvre mère avait été fillette dans le quartier Hochelaga. (Ferron 1970: 44)

The sememe /rue/ or /street/, is clearly being endowed with a negative value; it is described as a space that is located on the bad side. Equally, through the inclusion of the Hochelaga quarter in his description, Ferron gives the urban space a clear socio-political dimension in his text. Ferron’s urban spaces in the text stand in opposition to the individuality, subjectivity and individual identity with which natural spaces in the novel are endowed. One of the most important transformations at the level of the narrative occurs when Tinamer enters school, as it is at that moment that the distinction between good and bad becomes blurred in the narrative until these two spaces eventually switch sides. The same negative values assigned to the spaces of the street and the city of Montréal in particular, spaces that designate technological progress and the process of Americanisation, are also assigned to the space of the labyrinth. The space of the labyrinth is viewed as a deprived space of urbanisation and technological progress brought in by American culture expressed in the image of le naseau de Papa Boss as shown in the following extracts:

La rue devant la maison portait le nom de Bellerive, une des centaines et des milliers d’alias du labyrinthe, un faux nom pour compliquer le dédale urbain, suburban et multimunicipal. (Ferron 1970: 45)

pour parfaire le labyrinthe américain et faire monter, très haut, le naseau du Papa Boss, de nouvelles émanations de la civilisation pétrolière. (Ferron 1970: 120)

As can be seen from above, the figure of the labyrinth in the context of Ferron’s text is represented as the urban space of American culture evaluated dysphorically. Thus, and contrary to the feeling of euphoria (or later phoria) associated with natural spaces described previously, the social, urban spaces identified in the novel are viewed negatively; they are invested with a strong feeling of dysphoria.
As demonstrated above, Tinamer’s *re-orientation* in space is made possible by an investment of the opposition of natural and urban spaces of the North in the book and the positive and the negative values associated with these spaces. From the point of view of the construction of the narrative, *L’Amélanchier* represents an interesting challenge; the text generates a circular narrative within the realm of the imagined space of subjectivity and introspection. In *L’Amélanchier*, the linear progression of the story starting with Tinamer’s *initial* state, childhood, and ending with her *final* state, adulthood, is intertwined with the initial and final states of her as the narrator and of a fictionalisation of her own past and present (Martin 1997). Viewed as a sign of a fractured identity and memory that seems often embedded in postcolonial Francophone autobiographical discourse, the strategy of narrative circularity can pose a complication for the identification of the final and the initial state of the narrative. There is an inherent internal tension within Ferron’s text at the level of the narrative. At the primary level of reading, events from Tinamer’s life can be followed in chronological order from her childhood to the present time of adulthood. At the second, more interesting level, Tinamer’s story becomes an identity quest and a discourse on identity, a discourse that is revealed in the penultimate chapter (Chapter 12), and that functions as the secondary starting point of the narrative. It is through the process of rewriting life as memory that Tinamer takes possession of her own past. Following this interpretation, Chapter 13 can be identified as the final state of the story. Marking the time of the mythological present, this chapter represents the point in the narrative at which Tinamer’s writing of her memoirs has already been completed. The real and narrated or imagined time and space find themselves compressed into a single moment of the space-time matrix, as indicated in the passage of Ferron’s book cited previously. So, the different levels of reading reality and memory install a narrative circularity or ambiguity at the centre of Ferron’s text that function as a meta-discourse on the processes of autobiographical memory and writing. They introduce a narrative circularity or ambiguity on the processes of production of discourse on identity. This discourse on fixed identity is closely linked to a mystificatory discourse on space. Ferron’s text recreates an imaginary or an imagined space of the North conceptualised as a mythical construct that is

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8) According to Martin, the analysis of the narrative level of meaning starts with the examination of the global structure of the text and the identification of the initial and final states of the story that, according to semiotic theory of narrative, must be in opposition.

9) Narrative circularity can be noted in number of texts written by North African authors writing in French to which Mohamed Dib, the author analysed in the second part of this article, belongs to.

10) The initial state of the story begins with the description of Tinamer’s childhood and her native space (from paragraph 3 in chapter 1 of the book), ending with the chronological present that is also the starting point of the writing of her memoirs (recounted in the first two paragraphs of chapter 1 of the book).
defined by this identity discourse. In other words, through the deployment of the spaces of the North, Ferron recreates Québec’s collective identity and memory.

To conclude, Ferron’s *L’Amélanchier* can be viewed as a text on the theme of loss and recovery of identity in the Québécois context and the return to one’s origin. In that sense it can be understood as an *identity quest*. The space of the North is deployed as a mythical construct, a symbolic device of nation-building through the construction of the imagined and imaginary natural and urban spaces represented. The imaginary, native, natural spaces are opposed in the text to socially constructed spaces, as spaces of urbanisation and industrialisation that are defined by a number of conflicting and opposing discourses on the socio-political and cultural spaces of Québec that are the result of the process of Americanisation. Both natural and social spaces can be interpreted as being represented through the spatial relationship *internal – external* or *imagined – real*. The function of this relationship would be to reinstall the “re-orientation” between the past and present of Québec and between the internal spaces of the imaginary and external, socially constructed spaces of the *real* through the act of writing. By using the technique of localisation and *re-orientation*, Ferron’s text generates traditional representations of native space and place that remain mystified for the reader. This type of conceptualisation of space of the North is essentially different to the one offered by the Algerian writer Mohamed Dib. The different values assigned to the idea and the concept of space of the North in Ferron’s vs. Dib’s text point to its construction as an empty signifier and as mentioned in the introduction. The Argentinian political theorist Ernest Laclau defines the empty signifier as follows: “An empty signifier is, strictly speaking, a signifier without a signified” (Laclau 1996: 36). Indeed, in Laclau’s definition of the concept is entailed the idea of the “floating signifier” or of a signifier void of meaning (that can be filled with any meaning), and as will be shown in the analysis of Dib’s text that follows.

### The North and the strategy of *determinitorialisation* in *Les Terrasses d’Orsol*

Whilst Ferron uses the fairytale and the strategy of re-orientation to construct the collective myth and the imaginary space of Québec seen as an imagined North, in Dib’s text *Les Terrasses d’Orsol* (Dib 1985) the space of the North is deployed through the process of determinitorialisation and the construction of *non-place*. As will be shown, Dib’s *non-place* is located in the imaginary space of the city and the representation of the binary pair North-South, which is translated in the text into the opposition between the West and the Arab-Muslim world at the semiotic, the socio-political and the psychoanalytical level. In his work *Lecture présente de Mohamed Dib* (1988) the
French critic Charles Bonn gives the following interpretation of the concept of non-place or non-lieu in Dib’s text:

Non-lieu où aboutit la quête, dans un ailleurs qui n’est à tout prendre qu’une antériorité à laquelle on n’avait pas assez pris garde, Les Terrasses d’Orsol comme La Danse du roi, mais aussi comme la fin de Qui se souvient de la mer, récuse un ancrage référentiel qui permettait de le réduire à un ‘sens’ lisible dans la ‘réalité’ (Bonn 2018).

Unlike Augé’s concept of the non-lieu as a place of absence of a fixed identity defined anthropologically, Dib defines the concept of non-lieu semiotically (Augé 1992). As Bonn posits, this concept produces an absence of meaning in Dib’s text in which the relationship between the sign and its referent is broken. In Les terrasses d’Orsol, the space of the North as a non-lieu is further deconstructed through the critique of the discourse of exclusion (inside-outside) and Dib’s deep concern for the question of alterity and communicability of meaning in the Algerian and French, but also in the global context.

Mohammed Dib was born in Tlemcen, Western Algeria, in 1920. In 1952, two years before the Algerian revolution, he married a French woman, joined the Algerian Communist Party and visited France. In 1959, he was expelled from Algeria by the French authorities for his support for Algerian independence and has lived in France until his death in 2003. Les Terrasses d’Orsol is part of what some critics call the Nordic cycle consisting of four texts written between 1985 and 1994: Les Terrasses d’Orsol (Dib 1985), Le Sommeil d’Eve (Dib 1989), Neiges de marbre (Dib 1990) and L’Infante maure (Dib 1994). The Nordic cycle is classified as belonging to Dib’s later work under the theme of the cycle of exile and a mystical search for meaning. However, Dib’s use of the writing strategy of deterritorialisation and his exploration of the imaginary space of the North as a non-place (visible also in his exploration of the imaginary of North American spaces) does not follow a linear, gradual and temporal progression. Rather, it can be read as a fundamental mark of Dib’s writing. It shows his early concern with the socio-political aspect of space seen as the interconnectedness between space, social relations and power, something that human geographers such as Doreen Massey define as spatiality or the hidden relationship between space and social relations. As Massey argues in her latest work on space (Massey 2005), the existence of “implicit”, “hegemonic imaginations” of space are not an inherent part of our thinking and practice. Instead, they are inherited through a number of discourses on space that have permeated both intellectual and popular thinking in the West, and have led to the production of a Eurocentric conceptualisation and imagination of space (Massey 2005).
Dib’s examination of the space of the North allows him to explore the problematic space of the postcolonial Algerian nation-state in the context of its relation both to France and the West. However, as a writer in exile his work also speaks of the writer’s unbroken connection with the native space and his problematisation of the issues of cross-cultural communicability and système de références. In his essay L’Arbre à dires (Dib 1998), Dib discusses the ideas of cultural and linguistic translatability in the context of the relationship between Algeria and France, defining and posing the question of the existence of the same frame or system of reference within these two cultures (Dib 1998).

Les Terrasses d’Orsol is a novel describing the increasing sense of alienation experienced by Eid, and his gradual fall into madness. Eid is a chargé de mission who has been sent to Jarbher, a city located in the North, by his government in Orsol without exactly understanding what his mission is. He starts writing weekly reports on the strange humanoid creatures he sees in the caves and the abyss located at the borders of Jarbher, but he receives no acknowledgement or further instructions from his government. The central question that will be posed in this analysis is how is non-place deployed in Dib’s novel. It will be shown that the notion of non-place is constructed as a function of absence. It is constructed as absence of a number of oppositions at the level of the space of perception, as can be seen in the semantic pairs jour–nuit (day–night) and lumière–ténèbres (light–darkness) represented in table 2. on the following page, something that I will get back to later in my analysis.

A number of spaces identified in the text represent the space of the North. Among these the most significant ones are the urban spaces relating to the city of Jarbher and Orsol. During the course of the novel, we learn very little about these two spaces, except that the main action takes place in Jarbher representing a city in Northern Europe. As is the case with the imaginary toponym Orsol (the main character’s native city), the toponym Jarbher points to the construction of a non-lieu. We only know that Jarbher is a city located at the ocean (Dib 1985: 85) and through which runs the river Slän (Dib 1985: 167), that its hinterland is mountainous and that its habitants like spending some of their time in wooden houses on the islands located opposite the city (Dib 1985: 162). These descriptions point to an imagined city in the North that stands in opposition to the Southern city of Orsol evoked nostalgically by the main character throughout the text. As can be seen in table 2., there is a clear difference in the number of occurrences in the text of the two cities. The city of Orsol is mentioned only in a small number of flash-backs; this low occurrence in the text contributes to

12) Language is full of stereotypical statements about spaces and places that we constantly use without thinking. Phrases in English such as “at the end of the world” or “in the middle of nowhere” used when describing or referring to unfamiliar or foreign places, participate in the creation of the hegemonic discourse on space and spatial imagination. The same can be said of expressions in French such as perdre le Nord.
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its “problematic” status (Bonn 2018). Orsol is described as the place where one drinks tea in the shade of the plane trees (on boit du thé à l’ombre des platanes), where one runs towards the sea flickering under the weight of the sun (court au devant de la mer vacillant sous le poids du soleil), or where the smell of the perfume of jasmine exhales at night from its white and quiet patios (ses blanches et tranquilles terrasses) (Dib 1985: 87–88). Thus, the cities of Orsol and Jarbher firstly seen as mirroring opposites progressively become to designate the same signifying absence. At the beginning, images of the magnificent and glorious city of Jarbher that represents progress, modern living and industrialisation (that all come at a high cost) are contrasted with the poetic images evoking memories of the lost city of Orsol. However, by the end of the novel, Eid is seen wandering through the empty urban spaces of Jarbher without memory, disoriented, a feeling which, in the end, leads to madness brought by the impossibility of his return to his native city and his incapacity to integrate himself in the social life of the Northern city and its circles.

Throughout the book, the urban space of Jarbher mostly signifies a space of ghosts and traces of images of strange yet familiar places that reveal an ambivalent feeling towards the space of the modern Western city. Indeed, both a euphoric and dysphoric value is attributed to the city of Jarbher. The following passages taken from the beginning and end of the book illustrate both the euphoric and dysphoric values attributed to the city, described at the beginning of the novel as a labyrinthine space in which the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isotopies of space / Semes</th>
<th>Total occurrence of sememes</th>
<th>Thymic category</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jour (day)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>86% dysphoria</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuit (night)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>92% dysphoria</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lumière (light)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79% dysphoria</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ténèbres (darkness)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92% dysphoria</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(city of) Orsol</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>93% dysphoria</td>
<td>Orsol–Jarbher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(city of) Jarbher</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>49% dysphoria</td>
<td>26% phoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14% euphoria</td>
<td>Island–Jarbher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Representations of isotopies of space day-night, light-darkness and Jarbher-Orsol in Les Terrasses d’Orsol.
main character feels disoriented. By the end, Eid is disoriented and experiences a loss of memory expressed as absence and loss of meaning:

Comme toujours en traversant la ville j’étais ému par l’impérissable lumière de paix dans laquelle j’allais. (Dib 1985: 69)

Et il essaye de faire demi-tour, ou de se rappeler, il s’élance (en pensée), et ce sont les mêmes rues, les mêmes passages, sûr de pouvoir remonter ainsi le cours de ses souvenirs, mais rien ne se produit, il n’y parvient pas, et ce sera une autre nuit. (Dib 1985: 197)

The city of Jarbher appears here as a symbol of the space of the void, or a space void of memory, signifying absence. In difference to Jarbher, the imaginary city of the South Orsol has a low occurrence in Les Terrasses d’Orsol. It appears as a reflection of a place living in the narrator’s memory. Feelings of nostalgia and melancholia are experienced by Eid towards his cité insaisissable or the unreachable city that remains rayonnante de blancheur immaculée or “radiant in its immaculate whiteness” in his memory, and as seen in the following passage:

Orsol hante de plus en plus mes pensées. Rayonnante de blancheur immaculée ainsi que telle cité de légende dans toute sa présence remémorée, ma bonne ville ne me semble pourtant pas pouvoir être plus lointaine. Elle me manque. (Dib 1985: 97)

The imagery of whiteness – in reference to the whiteness of the city’s houses - is used here to describe the narrator’s native city. Orsol is most probably a reference to the city of Algiers; while the silence and indifference of the State or État is almost definitely a reference to the state of Algeria that Dib was forced to leave in 1959. In the novel, light and darkness, day and night are both perceived as dysphoric spaces equally endowed with a negative value, they are semiotically equivalent. An opposition of meaning can be noted in the semantic pairs jour–nuit (day–night) and lumière–ténèbres (light–darkness). This absence of opposition is realised through the attribution of the material and transcendent quality of whiteness and light to both of its comprising elements. So, /night/ and /darkness/ become equated with their oppositional pairs /day/ and /light/. Interestingly, not only in this text, but in other texts too, Dib makes a recurring use of the tropes of snow, desert and steppe. In his writing, these tropes signify whiteness as absence or loss of meaning. In Les Terrasses d’Orsol, this imagery of whiteness that is normally associated with the trope of the North – as in the whiteness of snow, for example, - is linked to the notion of absence or loss of meaning. There are numerous occurrences in the text in which the sememes /blanc/, /blancheur/ participate in the annihilation of the binary relation-
ship day–night marking this loss of meaning. The whiteness of night is referred to in the following passage:

aussitôt, ce pont de lumière se met à scintiller, posé même à l’eau, arche d’hypnos dont nous n’arriverons pas à détacher les yeux […]. Le ciel est clair, encore blanc, presque bleu maintenant que la nuit est tombée, mais il redeviendra plus clair et il le restera uniformément jusqu’au matin. (Dib 1985: 152)

As with the tropes /white/ and /whiteness/ that participate in the annihilation of the binary semantic relationship day–night, the semantic pair light–darkness also produces an absence of meaning in the text. The meaning of the sememe /lumière/, light, is invested with the material quality of blindness, liquidity as in the following quotation:

Mais c’est que toute la lumière est là, liquéfiée. Un infini de lumière et il déroule ses lourds plis brillants, ne cesse de se mouvoir, de se rapprocher sans jamais arriver (1985: 13).

However, the sememe /lumière/ is also invested with a mystical, threatening quality of the malediction or a curse in reference to a lumière dehors and a lumière dedans – external light and internal light. The double opposite meaning that the trope of light has in Dib’s text annihilates the existence of the opposition light–darkness and further destabilises the meaning of the text. It has to be noted here that the semantic pairs light–darkness and day–night have been assigned a spatial character in the analysis. The main character, Eid, experiences these categories primarily spatially rather than temporally. A “multiple temporality” (Adjil 1999: 110) is at work here, and it is this temporal relationship that annihilates the opposition of meaning in the pairs described above. Indeed, the spatio-temporal relationship that is characteristic of linear discourse or narrative is progressively destabilised by a variety of narrative devices such as the switching between pronouns je and il or the intermittent repetition of Quranic lines that are being recited by what seems to be a second narrating voice or the narrator’s alter-ego. The deconstruction of time and space that finds its expression in the chapters on Eid’s stay on the island and on his return to the city marks the start of his progressive sinking into madness. Interestingly, the Algerian critic Bachir Adjil explains this non-distinction between figures of night and day as a sign of the already mentioned multiple temporality in which the present and the future co-exist, something that seems to be typical for Arab classical literature: “Cet oxymore du clair-obscur appartiennent au schème coranique de la création des deux entités temporelles que sont le jour et la nuit” (Adjil 1999: 110).13 This significantly different interpreta-

13) As part of this quotation, Adjil refers to the sura of the L’Ascension: n° 17 verse 12.
tion of temporality adds an important dimension to the idea and production of non-place in Dib’s novel as one that resists Western conceptualisations of space.

Dib’s move towards deterritorialisation installs a dynamics of presence–absence of meaning inscribed as a culturally determined opposition inside–outside, giving rise to a critique of the discourse of exclusion and enabling the deconstruction of the Western discourse on space. Both the socio-political and the psychoanalytical aspects of the space of the North represented by the city of Jarbher are deconstructed by Dib in the conversation that Eid has with a stranger, an Algerian migrant, on a bridge over the river Slàn. The two talk about the city and the space on its borders where the caves with animal creatures are. Here, the space of the caves under the city with these creatures that have been humans once, can be seen as a metaphor for the repressed (collective) unconscious that stands in opposition to the space of the above or the space of the organised Western society that strives to control, censor and govern human drives and emotions. The display of denial and indifference on the part of Jarbher’s inhabitants every time Eid questions them about his experiences and their authenticity reinforces the fundamental distinction that Dib establishes in the novel between the normalizing forces of Western society propagated by the values of bourgeois life, and the assumed abnormality of the repressed spaces of the unconscious. It is in this conversation that Dib’s critique of the discourse of exclusion becomes fully visible.

To conclude this section, the space of the city in Dib’s Les Terrasses d’Orsol is constructed in the space of difference between the West and the East, and between the North and the South. The absence of reference to any real space allows for the construction of the imaginary space of the city as an elsewhere or a non-lieu (Bonn 2018). More importantly, the space of the non-lieu in Les Terrasses d’Orsol allows for the demystification of spatiality to take place through the destabilisation of the space of perception and the annihilation of spatial oppositions such as day-night and light-darkness inscribed within the imaginary space of the city, leading to the production of absence of meaning. For Dib, the process of the demystification of spatiality must pass through the processes of deconstruction of language and meaning. Spatial loss, in this context, is determined by and represented in the loss of meaning.

Conclusion

In this article I presented the analysis of two distinct conceptualisations of the space or the idea of the North in the work of two writers and their novels. The analysis showed that the space of the North is conceptualised as a highly ambivalent concept or as an empty signifier in Laclau’s sense. Through the use of
the strategy of re-orientation, Ferron’s text generates traditional representations of Northern spaces of Québec that create a space of the North that remains mystified for the reader. The narrator’s native and natural imaginary spaces of childhood are opposed to the socially constructed spaces of the city as spaces of urbanisation and industrialisation in which coexist a number of conflicting discourses on the socio-political and cultural spaces of Québec that are the result of the process of Americanisation. This movement between the mystification of natural space and the need for demystification of the socio-political space of the city installs a discourse or a paradigm of ambivalence in L’Amélanchier. In contrast to this, an essentially different conceptualisation of the space of the North is at work in Dib’s Les Terrasses d’Orsol at the semiotic, socio-political and psychoanalytical level. Dib’s strategy of deterritorialisation operates as a function of absence, creating both a critique of the discourse of exclusion and deconstruction of the Western representations on space that leads to a demystification of spatiality in the novel. The imaginary space of the city is constructed in the space of difference and sameness between the North and the South and the West and the Arab-Muslim world. It gradually becomes a space of non-place signifying this function of absence.

Works cited

Conceptualising the North: Re-Imagining the Spaces of the North in Jacques Ferron’s *L’Amélanchier* ...


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Le Nord retrouvé

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Résumé
L’article « Le Nord retrouvé » présente le concept de nordicité comme un élément littéraire. Le Nord, qui indique premièrement une orientation, fait partie de l’identité des personnages dans les romans québécois contemporains, dont Nikolski de Nicolas Dickner. Une analyse consacrée à ce roman révèle à quel point les histoires individuelles sont liées à l’Histoire du Canada. Le Nord y figure comme symbole, mais également comme territoire des défis géo-politiques.

Mots-clés : Québec; Grand Nord; littérature; sociologie; famille

Abstract
The article presents the concept of nordicity as a literary element. The North, firstly indicating orientation, is a part of identity of characters in contemporary Quebecois novels, as for example in Nikolski by Nicolas Dickner. Life stories of individuals in this analysed novel are connected with the History of Canada. The author uses the North mostly for its symbolic meaning but finally reveals also geopolitical challenges of this territory.

Keywords: Quebec; Far North; literature; sociology; family
**Le Nord comme lieu commun**

Perdre le nord signifie être désorienté, perdre la direction, par conséquent le sens de sa vie. Le Nord est donc un point de repère, un point stable. Or, depuis toujours, les marins dirigent leurs bateaux selon la position de l'Etoile polaire qui leur montre la bonne direction et le nord supposé. Le pôle magnétique est un phénomène physique qui s'est inscrit non seulement dans la tradition de la pensée, mais aussi dans la littérature.


Les visages de l'Amérique du Nord sont divers dans l'œuvre de Nancy Huston. Le Québec, notamment, est un endroit où l'on peut avoir accès à la culture et à la langue françaises. Le Canada, cependant, est présenté comme un pays dur, celui du froid :

Un vent sauvage souffle du Canada – le seul nom de ce pays évoque des espaces nus à travers lesquels il a dû plonger, venant du Pôle Nord et se précipitant vers le sud, s'accélérant et hurlant dans le vide CAAAAAAA-NAAAAAA-DAAAAA-

(Jorge Calderón de Simon University essaie de comprendre l'identité de Huston vue depuis la France, le contraste entre l'Europe et l'Amérique, entre le Nord et le Sud (Calderón 2007). En analysant l'œuvre de Huston, David J. Bond de l'Université de Saskatchewan s'arrête sur les notions d'identité et de dédoubllement dans ses textes (Bond 2001). Pour Huston, le contraste entre l'Europe et l'Amérique se manifeste souvent comme celui entre le Nord et le Sud. Elle l'explique :

de glace. On admire sans bien savoir quoi en dire, ni comment vous interroger là-dessus. On sait qu’il y fait froid. « Dieu ! qu’il fait froid ! » Trente ans après avoir quitté le Canada, je revendique le droit de prononcer cette phrase à Paris, et d’avoir froid à Paris, […] sans qu’on me réplique à chaque fois : « En tant que Canadienne, pourtant, vous devriez être habituée » […] me renvoyant, sinon dans mon pays d’origine comme les pauvres sans-papiers, du moins à mes origines… Le Nord, c’est aussi une façon de parler. En fait, Calgary, ma ville natale, est situé à la même latitude peu ou prou que Paris, ma ville adoptive. Le Nord, c’est une image. Une image pour dire qu’il y fait froid, et qu’il n’y a personne. The true North strong and free, c’est donc chez moi, mon hymne national […] Strong and free veut dire fort et libre. Mon pays c’était le Nord, le Grand Nord, le nord vrai, fort et libre. Je l’ai trahi, et je l’ai perdu. (Houston 1999 : 13–15)

Le Nord comme topos littéraire

En littérature européenne, l’inspiration par le Nord est beaucoup moins productive vis-à-vis de celle qui l’a nourrie depuis la Renaissance, à savoir l’inspiration venant du Sud. Ce n’est qu’avec le romantisme, qui cherche à trouver un contrepoint à l’Antiquité, qu’on voit la littérature se tourner vers le Nord. Toutefois, il ne s’agit pas à l’époque du Nord arctique, bien que celui-ci apparaisse également, en tant que symbole de la pureté, du froid et de la liberté. Sa couleur blanche contraste avec les couleurs vivantes du Sud. Par ailleurs, il semble que l’idée du Nord est liée en Europe principalement à l’exploration du continent américain. Ainsi la nordicité repose-t-elle pendant longtemps sur une appropriation physique du territoire difficilement accessible et habitable du Canada.

Le Nord dans la littérature québécoise

La thématique liée au Grand Nord semble être un élément stable dans la littérature québécoise. Son image a cependant connu des changements fondamentaux dans le temps. La littérature du XIXe siècle présentait ce territoire sous l’angle physique. L’imaginaire nordique s’inspirait de l’exploration et de l’appropriation du pays, souvent à la limite de la survie. Or, les études consacrées au phénomène de la nordicité en littérature contemporaine, comme par exemple celle de Michel Nareau, montrent le Nord d’une part dans les rapports intertextuels avec les œuvres des auteurs américains, états-uniens, et d’autre part comme élément indéterminé. Le Nord y figure plutôt comme un mythe : celui de la Terre promise, de sa mission providentielle et de sa propension à une régénération (Nareau 2004 : 44).
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de nombreux romans ne fixent pas de cadre géographique précis. Les constructions discursives de l’identité québécoise – notamment l’ancrage territorial et le rapport aux Autochtones – peuvent ainsi être questionnées par le Nord, considéré à la fois comme imaginaire pluriel et composite, et comme lieu distancié et relationnel. (Nareau 2004 : 43)

Le Nord dans *Nikolski* de Nicolas Dickner

Se démarquant de l’indétermination onomastique du Nord constatée par Michel Nareau, Nicolas Dickner lui donne un nom. Dans son roman intitulé *Nikolski*, il s’agit d’un lieu précis, puisque ce titre renvoie directement à un petit village, trouvable sur une carte géographique, situé sur l’île Umnak dans l’archipel des Aléoutiennes, qui appartiennent aux États-Unis et se trouvent non loin de l’Alaska. Ce village est un endroit isolé, habité, selon le narrateur du roman, par 36 personnes, 5000 moutons et un nombre indéterminé de chiens.

Malgré ce fort ancrage géographique, le titre du roman a une valeur symbolique. Le nom du village est un fil rouge fermement tissé dans le canevas du texte. Ce toponyme montre en effet le rapport étroit du personnage à l’espace, qui se manifeste à plusieurs reprises et à plusieurs niveaux dans le roman.

Nicolas Dickner a réuni ici beaucoup de motifs qui émergent, juxtaposés, formant une mosaïque de données historiques, présentées en parallèle aux vécus des personnages principaux. La méthode de l’écriture rappelle celle du patchwork, donnant un texte cousu de pièces hétérogènes, à l’instar du Livre sans couverture que possède l’un des protagonistes du roman, livre également appelé livre sans visage ou livre à trois têtes, en raison de son contenu spécifique réunissant trois œuvres originales différentes et incomplètes, reliées ensemble. Le chiffre trois est symbolique dans le roman, dont la composition respecte le nombre trois en exposant les histoires de trois personnages principaux: le narrateur (qui reste anonyme), Noah Riel et Joyce Doucet.

Le premier chapitre commence en 1989. Le narrateur est en train de liquider les affaires de sa mère dans l’appartement de celle-ci après son décès. Il se souvient de sa vie en feuilletant ses journaux intimes contenant des détails qu’il a déjà oubliés :

Le dernier journal se terminait sur une page non datée des environs de 1971. Je le refermai, songeur. De toutes les omissions qui rythmaient la prose de ma mère, la plus importante était Jonas Doucet. Il ne subsistait de ce géniteur évanescent qu’une liasse de cartes postales rédigée d’une main indéchiffrable, dont la dernière remontait à l’été 1975. J’avais souvent essayé de percer le secret de ces cartes, mais on ne pouvait rien comprendre à de pareils hiéroglyphes. Même les sceaux de la poste en révélaient davantage, jalons d’une trajectoire qui partait du sud de l’Alaska, montait vers le Yukon, redescendait vers Anchorage et se terminait dans les Aléoutiennes – plus exactement sur la base militaire où mon père avait trouvé du travail. (Dickner 2007 : 17)

Parmi les souvenirs matérielisés, l’existence d’un objet, qui permet de rafrîchir la mémoire du narrateur, émerge de l’oubli. Cet objet lui rappelle le monde de son enfance tellement lointain, c’est un cadeau que son père lui a offert :

la boussole envoyée par Jonas pour mon anniversaire. Cette boussole me revint à l’esprit avec une précision étonnante. […] Unique preuve tangible de l’existence de mon père, elle avait été l’étoile polaire de mon enfance, l’instrument glorieux qui m’avait permis de traverser mille océans imaginaires ! Sous quelle montagne de débris reposait-elle maintenant ? (Dickner 2007 : 18)

Quand il trouve finalement le compas, la description qu’il en donne est détaillée :

Il ne s’agissait pas d’une boussole à proprement parler, mais plutôt d’un compas de marins miniature, composé d’une sphère de plastique transparente remplie d’un liquide clair dans lequel flottait une seconde sphère aimantée et graduée. L’inclusion d’une sphère dans une autre, à la manière d’une minuscule poupée gigogne, assurait une stabilité gyroscopique à l’épreuve des pires tempêtes : peu importe la force des vagues, le compas garderait le cap et l’horizon. (Dickner 2007 : 19)

Il est à noter que le narrateur s’endort dans la maison de sa mère au milieu des déchets qu’il trie, avec le compas posé sur son front. Le lendemain, il sent un vide
énorme. Il convient de souligner à quel point la vie humaine est considérée du point de vue spatial :


La valeur symbolique de cet objet est expliquée par les réflexions ultérieures du narrateur, qui est toujours en train de rechercher une bonne direction : « Certaines personnes prétendent conserver en tout temps une conscience précise du nord. Moi, je suis comme la plupart des gens : il me faut un point de repère. » (Dickner 2007 : 19).

Quand il travaille dans la librairie où il est employé, il sait par exemple, du moins l’affirme-t-il, que le nord magnétique se trouve à 4.238 kilomètres en ligne droite derrière une étagère qui contient tels et tels livres... Or, une fois le compas redécouvert, tout change. En effet, le compas ne pointe pas exactement vers le nord. Indépendamment des phénomènes liés au magnétisme naturel de la planète et à la pérégrination du Pôle nord prouvée par les scientifiques1, il faut admettre une erreur dans le fonctionnement de cet objet. Le narrateur constate que le compas, au lieu de pointer vers le nord, indique la direction de l’île d’Umnak dans les îles Aléoutiennes où se trouve le village de Nikolski (village de son père Jonas Doucet) et c’est pourquoi il donne au compas ce nom exotique – le compas Nikolski. Le portant autour de son cou, il l’expose sans cesse aux yeux des autres, et se montre toujours prêt à raconter son histoire.

Il semble que dans sa paisible vie de libraire, qui lui laisse assez de temps pour rêver et contempler le fleuve Saint-Laurent par la fenêtre, le compas tient le rôle d’un objet magique qui fait partie de son identité et dont le contact physique cause ses métamorphoses. Le compas Nikolski, remplaçant symboliquement son père, apporte une valeur nouvelle à sa vie, un certain enracinement dont il se sentait privé. La fonction initiale du compas est de lui montrer la bonne direction. Dans ses réflexions, le narrateur avoue qu’il se sent seul : sa mère est décédée, tous ses amis se sont dispersés, tandis que lui, il n’a pas changé :

Je travaille ici depuis maintenant quatre ans, une période qui tend à paraître passablement plus longue qu’en réalité. Entretemps, j’ai quitté mes études, ma mère est morte et mes

rares amis d’enfance se sont volatilisés. [...] ils ont tout simplement disparu, avalés par le cours des choses. (Dickner 2007 : 22).

Il n’a jamais quitté le monde clos de la librairie et sa vie monotone montréalaise. En comparaison avec les aventuriers dont il aime lire les histoires, il se considère lâche, un « rat de bibliothèque » (Dickner 2007 : 162).

**Noah Riel**

Le second personnage que Dickner met en scène, Noah Riel, se révèle également être un fils de Jonas Doucet, homme que sa mère Sarah a rencontré par hasard. Or, Sarah Riel est Amérindienne et, en épousant un Blanc, elle a perdu définitivement son statut d’Autochtone et le droit d’habiter dans une réserve. Dans la personnalité de Noah, le sang amérindien se mêle à celui de Jonas Doucet, l’un des descendants des Acadiens qui ont vécu la fameuse déportation. Au début de l’histoire, Noah mène une vie de nomade, seul avec sa mère dans une roulotte parce que son père Jonas n’est pas resté longtemps avec eux. Sarah et Noah peuvent seulement deviner où il se trouve d’après les cartes postales que Jonas leur envoie de temps en temps. Sur l’une d’elles figure une vue du village de Nikolski. Les traces de Jonas Doucet, ce personnage mystérieux, sont alors très pauvres : outre les cartes postales seul demeure un livre abîmé à trois têtes que Jonas a laissé dans la roulotte. Néanmoins, pour son fils Noah, ce sont des symboles de l’existence de son père et une confirmation de ses racines.

Le personnage de Noah Riel sert à l’auteur à développer le motif du nomadisme et de l’errance :

Noah aimait le contraste entre les deux versants de sa généalogie, le paradoxe d’être à la fois descendant des réserves et de la déportation. Son enthousiasme reposait toutefois sur une erreur historique, puisqu’en réalité ses ancêtres n’avaient pas été déportés. A l’instar d’un certain nombre d’Acadiens, ils s’étaient esbignés peu avant le grand Dérangement afin de chercher refuge à Tête-à-la Baleine, village isolé du golfe du Saint-Laurent où aucune route ne se rendait. C’est dans cet endroit retiré que, deux siècles plus tard, naissait le père de Noah : Jonas Doucet. (Dickner 2007 : 30)

En 1989, après avoir quitté la roulotte de sa mère, Noah, nomade né, alors âgé de 18 ans, ne sait pas quelle direction prendre : il rechigne à aller vers le Nord à cause du froid, au Sud parce que s’y trouvent les États-Unis et ne veut pas non plus aller à l’Ouest parce que c’est là que son père « habitait avec une tribu d’Aléouttes sur une île perdue de la mer de Béring, se nourrissait de saumon cru et chauffait sa yourte avec
des bouses de mouton séchées – modèle paternel peu édifiant. » (Dickner 2007 : 45). Il décide finalement de prendre la direction traditionnellement considérée comme favorable, celle de l'Est, la direction de Montréal. La ville et la vie sédentaire représentent une expérience que Noah vit d'abord difficilement. Ses gènes de Sauvage l’empêchent de s’adapter à l’espace exigu et clos de la vie civilisée :

Son arbre généalogique comptait quelques ramifications francophones, mais au-delà de trois générations on n’y trouvait que de vieux Indiens nomades, sédentarisés à coups de traités, puis parqués sur d’innombrables réserves aux noms exotiques. […] Une demi-douzaine de ces aïeux hantaient encore la roulotte, assis pour l’éternité à la table de cuisine en arboire étoilée. Fantômes tranquilles et muets, ils regardaient défiler le paysage en se demandant où diable étaient passés tous les bisons. (Dickner 2007 : 30)

**Les Doucet**

Tandis que Noah n’a pas de père, Joyce, le troisième personnage du roman, se sent quant à elle orpheline de mère. C’est la mère qui disparaît sans laisser de traces en quittant sa famille. Pour boucler le cercle familial, le mystérieux Jonas Doucet figure également dans sa vie : c’est son oncle, mais Joyce n’a rien d’autre en commun avec lui que le nom de « Doucet ». Les trois personnages ne se connaissent pas. Cependant, le hasard veut qu’ils se rencontrent, séparément, respectivement l’un avec l’autre, toujours attirés par les objets qui portent la mémoire familiale : le compas Nikolski et le Livre à trois têtes. Les objets les lient ensemble à leur insu. A la fin du roman, au cours des derniers jours du deuxième millénaire finissant, tous trois se mettent en route et changent de vies. Noah perd ses habitudes de nomade car il doit s’occuper de son fils Simon, Joyce – recherchée par la police pour cause de piraterie électronique – quitte en hâte Montréal pour fuir en République dominicaine. Le narrateur est prêt à quitter la librairie, tenté par une évasion hors de sa vie fade et calme.

**Les choses**

Dans l’histoire personnelle des protagonistes du roman non seulement figurent plusieurs objets symboliques hérités du père, mais les choses s’imposent dans tout le texte. Le motif de la réification de la vie et de la dépendance de l’homme aux choses est complété par les passages où le domaine matériel est considéré du point de vue historique. Les vestiges historiques sont en effet les témoins muets d’une signification qui s’est perdue. Ils sont l’objet d’étude de l’archéologie, basée sur l’observation des traces de l’homme qui sont souvent des déchets. Dans cette optique,
il faut comprendre le goût de l’auteur pour les descriptions et les situations liées au phénomène écologique de la production des déchets.

Dans ce roman postmoderne les choses jouent un rôle essentiel. Au niveau personnel, la réification se manifeste par le compas, la boussole que le narrateur trouve parmi les affaires de sa mère lorsqu’il fait un grand rangement après le décès de celle-ci. C’est le seul objet qui lui rappelle son père, disparu dans le Grand Nord. Outre le compas existe également un livre incomplet, qui a été fabriqué avec les restes de trois livres originaux, raison pour laquelle le narrateur en parle comme d’un Livre à trois têtes. Le personnage de Joyce vit dans son appartement au milieu du matériel électronique qu’elle ramasse dans les centres de stockage de déchets. Les trois axes qui relèvent du matériel se caractérisent donc par la fausseté, l’inachèvement et l’hybridité, comme les résultats d’une mutation. La subjectivité qui donne à ces choses leur valeur, cède à l’objectivité avec laquelle les choses sont considérées du point de vue général, comme éléments de l’histoire de l’humanité.


En 1953, le gouvernement canadien a relocalisé plusieurs familles d’Inukjuak dans deux villages artificiels : Resolute et Grise Fjord. C’est à environ 75° de latitude. Tellement au nord qu’en décembre le soleil arrête de se lever.

2) Il s’agit effectivement d’événements réels, qui se sont passés dans le Nord du Québec. Depuis les années 1990 le gouvernement canadien a révisé cet acte de déportation. Un certain nombre des Inuits a pu retourner sur ses terres ancestrales en 1989, ce qui a en même temps causé des ruptures de liens familiaux entre ceux qui sont restés dans l’Arctique et ceux qui sont repartis. En 1991, Stephen Hazell, le directeur exécutif du comité de ressources de l’Arctique, a critiqué les démarches du gouvernement canadien dans les années 1953. Selon lui, il s’agissait d’une cruelle expérimentation avec des humains installés dans des villages artificiels, dont le seul but, comme il l’a avoué, était de prouver la présence des Inuits dans ces régions, et par conséquent, la présence canadienne. « The federal government’s decision in 1953 to ship Inuit from northern Quebec more than 2000 km north to the High Arctic as part of a human experiment was not only poorly executed. It was wrong. But the government’s 1990 decision not to recognize the contribution of Inuit to enhancing Canadian sovereignty in the far North, and to refuse to apologize for the unwarranted suffering endured is worse. » Voir : Hazell, Stephen. 1991. « The High Arctic Resettlement Experiment: A Question of Fundamental Justice ». In : Northern Perspectives 19, 1 : 30–31. En ligne: http://carc.org/pubs/v19no1/3.htm (Consulté le 30 septembre 2015).

**Conclusion**

Le Nord dans *Nikolski* de Nicolas Dickner se présente comme un territoire référentiel mais également conflictuel. La liberté des explorateurs et des aventuriers est éclipsée par la souffrance et l’humiliation des Autochtones qui sont obligés de quitter leurs villages. Or, dans le roman, le Nord possède une valeur métaphorique, celle de l’orientation de la vie et de la bonne direction. C’est cette acception qui fait émerger plusieurs relations intertextuelles et introduit d’autres connotations du mot, différentes ou comparables à celles que nous avons mentionnées à propos de Huston ou des autres auteurs dans l’introduction.

Cependant la nordicité représentée par le village de Nikolski en tant que symbole ne rentre pas dans le mythe du Nord. C’est le lieu d’évasion du père, inaccessible pour ses fils. Cet endroit perd finalement entièrement sa puissance d’existence réelle et devient complètement fictif, sans connotations de lieu de régénération ou de liberté. Dans *Nikolski*, le Nord canadien ne se reflète que négativement, comme pays de déportation, d’une erreur politique, sans aucune autre valeur.

Le rapport entre le personnage et le territoire est conçu clairement par l’auteur à plusieurs degrés. Dans cette optique, il est possible de comprendre Dickner lorsqu’il affirme : « Le territoire ne se mesure pas en kilomètres. Tu dois aussi considérer les ancêtres, la postérité, la tradition orale. [...] Le territoire, c’est surtout l’identité. » (Dickner 2007 : 138).

Le narrateur entre finalement en possession d’une partie manquante, la carte des Caraïbes qui avait jadis été arrachée du livre. Cependant, à la fin du roman, les objets hérités du père, à savoir le compas et le Livre à trois têtes qui rappellent de façon permanente le village de Nikolski dans les Aléoutiennes, disparaissent. Le narrateur fait tomber par inadvertance le compas dans les tuyaux d’aération. Quant au Livre à trois têtes, l’autre souvenir de l’existence de Jonas Doucet, il finit dans la boîte de li-
quidation : « Tout ne peut pas être parfait. Je souris, hausse les épaules et, après avoir recollé la carte des Caraïbes à sa place, remets le Livre à trois têtes dans la boîte de liquidation. » (Dickner 2007 : 298).

La valeur du compas, objet symbolique pour les personnages du roman qui ignorent le fait qu’ils appartiennent à la même famille, se manifeste lors de la soirée que le narrateur passe avec Joyce Doucet. Quand il perd le compas à cause d’elle, c’est Joyce qui dit : « Alors trinquons à la mémoire de ton père, de ta mère, de ta famille éparsillée et de ton vieux compas à cinq piastres qui jusqu’à la fin, aura vaillamment indiqué le nord. » (Dickner 2007 : 260).

Bibliographie


Sitographie


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Ce Nord tout en feu : *Les héritiers de la mine* et *Il pleuvait des oiseaux* de Jocelyne Saucier

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**Résumé**

**Mots-clés** : Littérature québécoise, roman québécois, Jocelyne Saucier, apocalypse, imaginaire du feu.

**Abstract**
Two of Jocelyne Saucier’s novels are located in Abitibi and northern Ontario and placed under the sign of a murderous fire: *Les héritiers de la mine* (1999) and *Il pleuvait des oiseaux* (2011). In both cases, the fire takes on a symbolic value, underpinned by religious imagination. The theme is discussed as a structuring element at different levels of narration.

**Keywords**: Quebec literature, Quebec novel, Jocelyne Saucier,

L’action des Héritiers de la mine se situe à Norco, ville ouvrière qui avait poussé autour de la mine de zinc de la Northern Consolidated à la fin des années 1950. Les héritiers de la mine, c’est la famille Cardinal dont le père, Albert Cardinal, est le découvreur de l’immense gisement qui aurait dû assurer la prospérité de la famille et de la région si la chute du prix du zinc n’avait pas sonné le glas de l’entreprise qui s’est retirée en laissant les mineurs à leur désespoir. Les Cardinal, une famille nombreuse de vingt-et-un enfants, a un secret que les monologues intérieurs de sept d’entre eux dévoilent au fur et à mesure, trente ans après la catastrophe, lors d’une réunion où Albert Cardinal se voit décerner la médaille de l’Association des prospecteurs. L’unité de lieu - un hôtel où la cérémonie a lieu – et les monologues intérieurs qui sont autant de confessions confèrent au récit une tension dramatique et une ligne narrative qui culminent par la catharsis finale. Le secret, en fait est double : la mine et la mort. Le secret de la mine est matérialisé par le filon d’or pur que le père découvre au moment d’une descente fortuite dans la mine. C’est cet or que la famille veut s’approprier. Pour pouvoir le faire, il faut faire le vide autour de la mine abandonnée, contraindre les habitants à quitter la ville. Ainsi éclate la guerre entre les culs-terreux et les enfants du clan Cardinal qui portent tous des sobriquets parlants : Geronimo, LaTommy, ElToro, LePatriarche, LaPucelle, Mustang, Magnum, LeTaon, etc.

La mort est celle d’Angèle, sœur jumelle de LaTommy. Elles se ressemblent au point qu’on les confond, elles partagent les mêmes sentiments, elles sont même douées d’une sorte de télépathie mutuelle. Ce couple parfait se scinde au moment où une famille anglaise de Montréal, les McDougall, veut les adopter. Alors que Carmelle, alias LaTommy, refuse de se séparer du clan, Angèle est attirée par la découverte du monde et par le bonheur. La vie de l’Adoptée, comme on la surnommera, sera désormais partagée entre le Montréal huppé de Westmount et le collège des religieuses d’une part et Norco et sa famille d’autre part où ses frères et sœurs l’admirent et l’aiment en même temps qu’ils la persécutent et l’humilient par toutes sortes de brimades.

Vient le moment où l’avion de la géophysique aéroportée qui survole la région annonce la reprise imminente de l’exploitation de la mine par la Northern Consolidated. Pour effacer les traces de leur activité clandestine les membres du clan décident de faire exploser la mine contre la volonté du père, résigné à se rendre à la police. Angèle qui sait que les charges déposées par Geronimo et Tintin ne seront pas suffisantes
sans l'explosion simultanée dans la galerie principale, se sacrifie, à l’insu de tous. Or, il faut encore sauver Geronimo, le meneur du clan, devant la colère des culs-terreaux, et cacher la mort d'Angèle aux parents. LaPucelle, une sorte de mater familias, qui est la première à comprendre l'ampleur de la tragédie, force LaTommy à mettre la robe d'Angèle et à jouer la comédie du départ simulé d'Angèle pour Montréal. La voiture du Patriarque amène également Geronimo qui ne se rend compte du désastre qu’au moment où la voiture s’arrête à la sortie de Norco et que LaTommy se change pour rentrer à la maison, abandonnant la robe d'Angèle dans la voiture.

Cette mort et ce mensonge contribuent à la désagrégation de la famille. LePatriar-che s’exile en Australie, Geronimo expie sa faute comme chirurgien qui porte aide et secours aux blessés de tous les conflits entre Afghanistan, Tchad ou Tchétchénie, La-Tommy se marie à un Inuk en tentant de changer d’identité, Tintin et LaPucelle se ré-signent à la non-vie, l’un en marge de la société, dans la broussaille du nord où il élève des enfants qui ne sont même pas à lui, l’autre en abandonnant l’idée de constituer un foyer à elle. Il en va ainsi pour tous les autres qui, s’ils ne savent pas avec certitude, se doutent du malheur survenu. Ce sont les aveux au moment de la réunion qui dissipent le mensonge et reconstituent la famille.


Le feu d’abord qui est relié à la chaleur torride du Nord :

C’était une journée d’été, de celles qui vous embrasent de la tête aux pieds et ne vous laissent aucune goutte de sueur à sécher au soleil. L’été à Norco était saharien jusqu’en août. Nous vivions dans un tourbillon de vapeur sèche sous un ciel vibrant de cruauté jusqu’à ce que, pris de pitié, il décide de crever son eau et nous écrase de pluies diluviennes pendant des semaines. (Saucier 1999 : 104)

En abrégé, le monologue d'ElTorro résume symboliquement l’histoire du roman : l’ambiance désertique et implacable de la ville, la guerre du feu, déclenchée par le clan, la purification par l’eau lustrale qui accable, telle une punition, mais qui est aussi le rachat de la faute.

Mais d’abord c’est la guerre, racontée, ci-dessous, par LaTommy :

Norco, pendant ces deux semaines, était assiégé par un soleil d’enfer. […] Norco cuisait au soleil. La ville n’était qu’une enclave, une trouée minuscule dans la forêt, un îlot pelé, […] elle était devenue une immense plaque chauffante que nous parcourions en tous sens, du matin au soir, gris de poussière, bruns de soleil, noirs de rage conquérante […]. Nous étions en guerre. (Saucier 1999 : 78)
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Je n’ai jamais été aussi furieusement Cardinal que pendant ces deux semaines. J’étais de tous les commandos. [...] J’allais épier les fiers-à-bras, leur voler les outils, de l’essence, crever leur pneus, ô plaisir suprême, lancer une allumette dans une baraque, courir me mettre à l’abri avec les autres, et regarder [...] tout ce bois qui brûlait, la baraque en flammes, la machinerie, tout cela qui se consumait en fumée épaisse [...] Et il y avait tous ces feux qui éclataient un peu partout dans l’herbe sèche. (Saucier 1999 : 79)

Aux couleurs de la passion guerrière liée à la fois au feu et à la terre – le rouge, le brun, le gris, le noir – s’oppose la couleur du ciel angélique – le blanc. Voici l’apparition d’Angèle, vue par LaTommy, au milieu de la furie :

La ville fumait encore quand tu es revenue. [...] Le feu s’est promené de tous bords, tous côtés, cet été-là. Feu de poubelles, feu de broussailles, feu d’herbe, il courait un peu partout [...]. Nous visions, en fait, le dépôt de dynamite. [...] Tu avais l’air d’une princesse. C’était comme une bouffée d’air frais, une fleur du printemps dans l’odeur aigre des champs roussis. La robe toute blanche et frémissante de légèreté, les souliers, les gants, le chapeau et jusqu’à ce petit collier fin de perles satinées, tout avait la blanche beauté d’une créature venue du ciel. Tu étais un enchantement. (Saucier 1999 : 80–82)

À la blancheur s’ajoute le bleu du ciel qui accompagne la transfiguration de LaTommy au moment où elle ne résiste pas à la tentation de mettre la robe d’Angèle :

Je portais ta robe bleu ciel la première fois où j’ai senti mon corps se glisser dans le tien. [...] Une robe en organdi bleu soulevé de petites fleurs blanches serties dans un entrelacs de broderies et qui scintillait dans une échappée de soleil sous l’unique fenêtre de la chambre. (Saucier 1999 : 93)

L’agencement de l’image est parlant : ouverture de la fenêtre vers le ciel d’où la lumière solaire fuse sur une robe aérienne. Il résume le lien entre Angèle et l’autel de la Vierge (Saucier 1999 : 90) en annonçant à la fois son aspiration au bonheur, indiquée, curieusement, par les *Nourritures terrestres* d’André Gide (Saucier 1999 : 91), et le caractère sacrificiel du personnage.

Le sacrifice est consommé au fond de la mine, endroit sombre, mais où l’image aérienne d’un oiseau et l’éclat du soleil et du feu pénètrent sous l’aspect de l’or tel qu’il se présente au Père, au moment de la découverte :

Ses paupières battaient l’air comme des ailes d’oiseau-mouche, une force irradiante, « une boule de feu », la traversé de part en part, tout son corps était agité d’un tremblement fiévreux, et pendant ces quelques secondes d’éternité où il a pensé mourir, il a eu la révélation d’une veine de quartz aurifère. (Saucier 1999 : 140)
La présence de l’élément aérien au fond de la mine se transforme en verticalité qui, dans un mouvement ascendant-descendant structure la scène de la mort d’Angèle, telle que LaTommy l’a vécue par télépathie gémellaire :

Elle était dans le chantier d’abattage, près du pilier central, et elle a vu le toit de la mine s’ouvrir au-dessus d’elle. Très clairement, dans le noir le plus complet, comme dans un film qui se déroule au ralenti, elle a vu le roc se fendre de part en part au-dessus d’elle, les masses de roches de détacher les unes des autres et entreprendre leur chute. En l’éclair d’une seconde, elle a vu les aspérités et les arrêtes de la roche qui allait s’effondrer sur elle et, au bout d’un long tunnel, l’œil de la mort qui l’attendait. […] Elle est morte avant d’avoir reçu la première roche. (Saucier 1999 : 199)

L’horizontalité de la surface – Norco présenté comme une île désertique au milieu de la forêt boréale – et la verticalité qui la traverse du ciel jusqu’au fond de la terre sont complétées par les couleurs, à la fois réelles et symboliques. Les éléments se mêlent, appelant l’un l’autre pour se compléter. La segmentation sémantique de l’espace en unités signifiantes (Lotman 1990) comporte des éléments symboliques, tels le pont qui marque le passage d’un lieu à un autre, et qui est aussi accompagné de couleurs « élémentaires », comme dans ce récit de Geronimo :

Et c’est en apercevant le pont couvert, au détour de la courbe qui descend lentement vers la rivière, que j’ai su que j’allais à la rencontre de ma douleur. De l’autre côté du pont, il y avait cet endroit, marqué au fer rouge dans ma mémoire, où le regard noir de LaTommy s’était abattu sur moi. […] En sortant de la pénombre du pont couvert, je nous ai vus, Émilien, LaTommy et moi, là, en plein soleil, en plein cauchemar, dans la vieille auto d’Émilien. « Regarde-la bien maintenant. Entends son cri. Vois toutes ces roches qui s’abattent sur elle. Vois ce que tu as fait. Tu as tué Angèle. » (Saucier 1999 : 173)

Ainsi se complètent la disposition thématique, déployée en récit, la disposition spatiale, recoupant la verticalité et l’horizontalité, et la disposition symbolique des quatre éléments, modulés en couleurs.

Le jeu symbolique des éléments avec, comme dominante le feu, caractérise aussi le roman Il pleuvait des oiseaux. La trame prend pour point de départ le récit apocalyptique du grand incendie de la forêt ontarienne de 1916. Une photographe, qui sera surnommée Ange-Aimée, est sur la piste de Ted (ou Theodore et finalement Feodor) Boychuk, un des survivants de l’incendie de Matheson et qui est devenu une légende : il avait traversé le feu et le territoire dévasté, témoin de la mort de sa famille, témoin des vies perdues et sauvées miraculeusement, mais aussi amoureux.
des jumelles Polson, Angie et Margie, pour qui il cueille un bouquet de fleurs qu’on lui a vu porter, à travers le feu, tout au long des six journées que l’incendie a duré. Errant, à la fois aveugle et voyant, taciturne, il ne parlera qu’à travers la peinture dont l’unique thème sera la catastrophe de Matheson. Ange-Aimée retrouve sa trace dans le grand Nord, au milieu des forêts où elle tombe sur un duo de personnages curieux : Charlie, un ancien employé des postes à la retraite qui a survécu à sa mort annoncée et qui s’est réfugié dans la forêt pour échapper à l’enfer des hôpitaux et des traitements ; et son compagnon Tom, ancien contrebandier, musicien et alcoolique, qui a trouvé dans la forêt un abri contre sa propre déchéance. Leurs cabanes au bord du lac voisinent avec celle de Ted Boychuk qui les avait accueillis. Ces fuyards qui craignent comme la peste les cages dorées et liberticides de l’humanisme bienfaisant des services sociaux et médicaux ont décidé de passer leur vieillesse en liberté, liés par le serment du suicide consenti et assisté si le corps tombait en déchéance.

Ange-Aimée arrive au moment où Ted est mort. Ses deux amis, méfiants, ne livrent leur témoignage qu’à petites doses. Pourtant, une complicité s’établit, une communauté se forme, à laquelle se joint Steve, le gérant d’un hôtel fantasque perdu en plein Nord, et Bruno, qui fait le trafic de la marihuana, cultivé en cachette sur le terrain de chasse de Charlie et Tom.

Or, un jour, Bruno amène une vieille dame toute frêle : c’est sa tante Gertrude dont il a découvert l’existence à la mort de son père et que la famille avait enfermée pour de longues années dans un asile de Toronto. Bruno décide de la sauver de l’enfer psychiatrique et demande à ses amis de l’aider. L’enquête de la photographe se double donc de l’histoire de la nouvelle communauté. Charlie et Tom consentent à montrer les trois cents soixante-sept tableaux racontant les six jours d’errance de Ted. Gertrude, surnommée Marie-Desneige à cause de sa transparence et son intuition contemplative, perçoit dans le magma des couches de couleurs, les éléments de l’histoire de Ted. Les tableaux parlent, la quête de la photographe aboutit au moment où une descente de la brigade des stupéfiants menace la fragile communauté : Marie-Desneige et Charlie, tombés amoureux l’un de l’autre, s’enfuient non sans avoir aidé à mourir et enterré Tom qui sent son corps arrivé au non-retour de la déchéance physique. L’hôtel est abandonné, Bruno échappe à la police, la photographe perd la trace de tous ses amis. Seuls restent les tableaux qu’elle complète par ses propres portraits photographiques des survivants de l’incendie et qu’elle expose à Toronto dans les locaux d’une ancienne distillerie, devenue espace culturel polyvalent.

Dans ce roman où l’amour, la dignité devant la mort, la soif de la liberté et le rachat du mal par l’art s’opposent tant au mal présent qu’à l’apocalypse d’une catastrophe naturelle, l’imaginaire élémentaire forme la charpente symbolique que les couleurs – rouge, or, brun, gris, noir, blanc et bleu – secondent en soulignant le jeu des éléments.
Feu, air, eau et terre se mêlent dès la description des Grands Feu de Timmins, de Matheson et d’ailleurs en impliquant à la fois la verticale et l’horizontale de l’espace nordique, tout comme dans Les héritiers de la mine. Seul manque le souterrain, l’abîme de la mine, car même les caves ou les fossés où les victimes cherchent en vain un abri sont envahis ou aspirés par le feu. La surface de la terre se transforme en un fond de mer de flammes poussées par le vent :

C’étaient des feux transportés par des vents violents sur cinquante, cent kilomètres, détruisant tout sur leur passage, des forêts, des villages, des villes, des vies. C’était une mer de feu, un tsunami de flammes qui avançait dans un grondement d’enfer, impossible d’y échapper, il fallait courir plus vite que le feu, se jeter dans un lac, une rivière [...] attendre que le monstre se repaissse de sa fureur, [...] ne laissant derrière lui qu’une terre noire dévastée, une odeur de fin de combat et ce qu’on découvrira et ne découvrira pas sous les cendres. (Saucier 2011 : 67)

Cette image frappe les survivants interviewés par la photographe :

Quand les flammes ont atteint le ciel, avait-elle dit, c’était comme si nous nagions au fond d’une mer de feu. (Saucier 2011 : 81)

C’était une journée chaude, sèche, on se serait cru au Sahara s’il n’y avait eu cette forêt résineuse qui se déployait comme une offrande au soleil. [...] Il était passé midi et le vent s’était levé, un vent d’une puissance incroyable qui a rassemblé les feux d’abattis en une torche immense. Le ciel est devenu noir charbon [...]. Il faisait nuit noire, la fumée avait complètement masqué le soleil. (Saucier 2011 : 71)

Feu, eau et vent échangent leurs couleurs. Le noir, couleur habituelle de la terre, envahit le haut du ciel, à la semblance de la voûte de la mine des Héritiers de la mine. Mais cette apocalypse comporte aussi la promesse d’un salut, aussi fallacieux et illusoire soit-il :

Dorée, finissent-ils par dire, il y avait une lumière dorée dans l’accalmie. La lumière de Dieu qui venait nous chercher, disent-ils. Ils ont tous eu le sentiment d’avoir vécu la fin du monde.

Quatre hommes attendaient la venue des anges dans un étang. De l’eau jusqu’aux aisselles, de longues trainées boueuses sur le visage et de grands yeux hébétés, ils se croyaient les derniers humains de la terre. Avec eux dans la lumière dorée, un orignal qui avait trouvé refuge dans l’Étang et, perché sur l’épaule du plus jeune d’entre eux, celui qui a raconté, un oiseau qui pépiait à s’égosiller. (Saucier 2011 : 73)
La promesse angélique du rachat qui suit la chute et la souffrance est liée à la couleur du ciel, mais aussi au thème des oiseaux, messagers angéliques du ciel, et à la lumière dont ils sont porteurs. L’élément ascendant, aviaire et aérien se rattache, dans le roman, à certains personnages féminins, telle Angie Polson :

La petite vieille était une survivante du Grand Feu de Matheson. Elle lui avait parlé d’un ciel noir comme la nuit et des oiseaux qui tombaient comme des mouches. Il pluvait des oiseaux, lui avait-elle dit. Quand le vent s’est levé et qu’il a couvert le ciel d’un dôme de fumée noire, l’air s’est raréfié, c’était irrespirable de chaleur et de fumée, autant pour nous que pour les oiseaux et ils tombaient en pluie à nos pieds. (Saucier 2011 : 81)

La chute des oiseaux revêt l’aspect de la chute des anges, anges innocents, victimes du mal déclenché. Or, le mal qui frappe les oiseaux peut être combattu par un oiseau courageux, animé par le feu de la vie, de la passion et de l’amour. Mieux qu’Angie Polson, entourée d’oiseaux au moment de l’interview de la photographe, c’est Gertrude, cette vieille dame frêle, oiseau courageux qui a su résister tout au long des soixante-six ans d’isolement à l’asile psychiatrique. C’est une femme-lumière, mais qui est animée par un feu intérieur :

[...] moi je pouvais observer à mon aise […] et c’était fascinant, tout ce blanc déversé sur la poitrine de la vieille dame qui illuminait la salle. (Saucier 2011 : 56)

[...] c’est le regard de braise qui était allé chercher Bruno dans le salon encombré d’oncles, de tantes, de cousins et de petits-cousins. (Saucier 2011 : 59)

C’est ce personnage aérien qui attirera le terrestre Charlie pour former un couple qui se complète :

Elle, si menue et si fragile, petit oiseau toujours sur le point d’être emporté par un vent de panique, et lui, massif, si lourd et si lent, un bloc de granit que rien ne semblait pouvoir ébranler. […] Un vieil ours tenant sur terre une créature aérienne. (Saucier 2011 : 106)

Gertrude, surnommée Marie-Desneige, nom aussi parlant que celui d’Angie – Ange, représente ainsi l’air saturé de feu intérieur. C’est ce feu, dominé par le ciel, qui rejoint la terre incarnée par le trappeur mâle et qui, par son don céleste qu’est son intuition, va déchiffrer les peintures abstraites de Ted Boychuk, pénétrer dans la masse des couleurs élémentaires de ses tableaux pour reconstituer les scènes qu’il avait vécues et transposées en peintures :
C'était un épais sfumato traversé de lignes noires derrière lequel on pouvait deviner la présence d’un artiste véritable. Sous le gris fumeux, des taches de couleur qui se rejoignaient en une ramification cerclée d’une ligne bleu indigo. […] La toile s’éclairait en son centre d’une profondeur que les autres [toiles] n’avaient pas.
Ils sont morts, tous, ils sont nombreux dans la caverne.
Quoi ? Qu'est-ce que tu dis ?
Ils sont six, peut-être plus, le point rose à l’intérieur de la tache orangée, ça pourrait être quelqu’un de plus petit, un enfant peut-être, un tout jeune enfant, probablement un bébé, et ils sont tous morts, regarde comme le bleu qui les entoure est dur et froid. (Saucier 2011 : 113)

Non seulement l’enquête de la photographe s’étoffe de témoignages, la mémoire re-constituée l’emporte sur l’oubli, la vie sur la mort, mais les couches de couleurs livrent leur sens, en une sorte de mise en abîme du récit même.

**En guise de conclusion**

Il semblerait acquis que l’imaginaire poétique, pour être complet et efficace, doit incorporer les quatre éléments constitutifs de l’univers imaginaire – terre, air, eau feu. Or, c’est le feu qui domine, sans les exclure, les trois autres dans les deux romans analysés. Il pénètre au fond de la mine, transforme la terre en poussière et cendres, il se fait mer et air, provoque la pluie d’oiseaux, attire les pluies lustrales. La domination aussi bien que les mélanges et interactions des éléments se traduisent en couleurs, s’impliquent dans l’agencement spatial et actionnel du récit, et cela tout autant sur le plan matériel que métaphorique et symbolique. C’est au niveau symbolique qu’un autre élément, l’air, s’affirme à travers l’image des oiseaux et les personnages féminins « angélisés » – Angèle, Angie, Ange-Aimée, Marie-Desneige. Il serait tentant de voir dans le feu la composante indomptée ou indomptable ou de la nature ou de la nature humaine, alors que l’air serait l’élément spirituel, avec une forte composante transcendantale, liée à l’imaginaire religieux et à l’art. Certaines figures angéliques, mariales, de Jocelyne Saucier, associées à l’air et à la lumière suggèrent cette interprétation. Ainsi, la dichotomie feu/air (matière/esprit) forme la tension fondamentale, structurante des récits et leur ressort actionnel.
Bibliographie


THE NORTH
MISE-EN-GENRE

LE NORD,
MISE-EN-GENRES
Abstract
Contrary to the claims of some that polar themes are a common feature of Canadian science fiction and fantasy, the far north rarely appears in Canadian fantastic literature. When northern settings are used they serve various thematic and symbolic purposes, and are not, as has been argued, merely part of a Canadian obsession about the north as a fundamental element of national identity. In such texts as Robert Watson’s *High Hazard* (1929), Stephen Franklin’s *Knowledge Park* (1972), and Tony Burgess’s *Pontypool Changes Everything* (1998), the north is portrayed as an Otherworld, a region embodying characters’ hopes and fears, and a gateway allowing both protagonists and readers to enter a different, even transcendent realm. As such, the north in Canadian fantastic literature embodies and perpetuates a long-standing Canadian myth: Canada as a place of potential renewal or potential threat, and certainly a space where the familiar and traditional are undermined, and perhaps even destroyed.

Keywords:
speculative fiction, nordicity, Canadian literature, Tony Burgess, Stephen Franklin, Robert Watson

Résumé
Beyond the North: Nordicity in Canadian Fantastic Literature

For some time now, scholars have been exploring themes of the North in Canadian literature. Sherrill E. Grace, Renée Hulan, Shelagh D. Grant, and, more recently, L. Camille van der Marel and Christina Kannenberg have been analyzing how for authors, the North is less a geographical than an imaginative and ideological space, while Margaret Atwood in Strange Things humourously exposes the myths underlying Canadian views of the North. As Grace says, “North is an idea as much as any physical region that can be mapped and measured for nordicity. . . . we are shaped by, haunted by ideas of North, and we are constantly imagining and constructing Canada-as-North” (xii). She sees the North as a “discursive formation” in Foucauldian terms, one shaped, not merely expressed, by novelists (xiii-xv). For perhaps two centuries, writers in Canada have projected their own assumptions and desires on to the region, for various purposes, to the extent that critics have been able to trace common thematic and metaphorical features in depictions of the North across genres.

One area that has received little attention thus far is how the North is portrayed in Canadian fantastic fiction. One reason for the scholarly neglect is that contrary to the claims of some—above all, John Robert Colombo—that polar themes are a common feature of Canadian science fiction and fantasy, the far north is not a common setting or theme in Canadian fantastic literature. Robert Runte, in his critique of Colombo’s arguments concerning Canadian fantastic fiction, rightly debunks Colombo’s circular argument, one that defines as Canadian any text about polar regions regardless of country of origin (or even which Pole). Yet some authors on both sides of Canada’s linguistic divide have written science fiction and fantasy works about the North, and when they do they treat the region in much the same way as their more-or-less realist counterparts do. In fact, we can apply what critics like Grace and Hulan in particular say about the North in Canadian literature to the nation’s fantastic fiction, little of which they deal with. To focus on English-language works, it is clear that in these texts the North serves various thematic and symbolic purposes, and not just the pervasive view in the country of the North as a fundamental element of national identity. In such texts as Robert Watson’s High Hazard (1929), Stephen Franklin’s Knowledge Park (1972), and Tony Burgess’s Pontypool Changes Everything (1998),

Mots-clés :
fiction spéculative, nordicité, littérature canadienne, Tony Burgess, Stephen Franklin, Robert Watson
the North is also portrayed as an Otherworld, a region embodying characters’ hopes and fears, and above all a gateway, allowing both protagonists and readers to enter a radically alien realm. Northern spaces can become refuges from southern crises, such as nuclear or environmental disaster; pristine “New World”s allowing for social, scientific, and philosophical innovations; or regions where the very substance of the characters’ familiar universe break down. As such, the North in Canadian fantastic literature embodies and perpetuates a long-standing Canadian myth: Canada as a place of potential renewal or potential threat, and certainly a space where the familiar and traditional are undermined, and perhaps even destroyed.

First, we need to place these novels in their literary contexts by reviewing the tropes of fiction about the North that Grace and Hulan have identified. Grace argues that the North “is, above all, Other, and as such emphatically a construction of southerners . . . ideas of North tend to serve southern Canadian interests, be they psychological, spiritual, physical, material, or political” (16). Canadian authors, and others, have portrayed the North ambivalently, as a region of danger, even threat, but also as a site of sublime beauty and spiritual renewal. The North may be “deadly, cold, empty, barren isolated, mysterious” and therefore an ideal setting for adventure fiction, that is, “the narrative of courageous men battling a dangerous, hostile, female terra incognita to prove their masculinity and the superior force of their technology” (16). It may also be “a friendly North of sublime beauty, abundance, natural resources waiting to be exploited, and of great spiritual power; this North is ˝God’s country˝” (17). Hulan points out that depictions of the North during the nineteenth century also reflected Romantic notions about the need for humanity to connect with nature (5). Thus, according to Shelagh D. Grant, “The British aesthetic myth blended with the American wilderness myth to reinforce a romantic image of north as expressed first in literature and art” (Grant 37). Hulan refers to the metaphorical image of the North as “the sense of mystery and the unknown” (6). Each period of Canadian literature—Victorian, modern, postmodern—has treated the North according to its cultural values and assumptions, so that the reality is filtered by aesthetic beliefs, political ideas, and so on, becoming an imaginative construction (Grace 23–24). Both Grace and Hulan see the North as a gendered space, a “femme fatale” or virgin territory that is simultaneously challenging and alluring. Furthermore, the North offers a site for nationalist myths, as Canadians see their country as a whole—not only the part of it above the sixtieth parallel—as the Great White North, thereby distinguishing it from the country’s southern neighbour.

Another important factor in our visions of the North is generic. Canadian popular literature set in the North follows a series of conventions derived from American and British adventure fiction; for example, the North becomes our version of the American West or exotic parts of the British Empire, filled with threats both human and
natural.\textsuperscript{1} As Hulan shows in her survey of fiction for children and adults, narratives set in the North, like adventure fiction elsewhere, are tales of initiation for young boys and men, who must learn to survive and triumph in the face of great obstacles and even danger. Storms, wild beasts, and evildoers of various sorts beset them, and their ordeals contribute to their becoming “real men.” The climate constitutes a distinctly Canadian challenge for popular-fiction characters; unlike the heroes of Westerns, or of tales set in Africa or South America, Canadian protagonists seldom have to worry about hostile natives, but do have to be concerned about the temperature. The heroes are usually southern men who have “moral lessons to learn and spiritual ordeals to undergo” (Grace 183). The hero “must prove himself in a series of tests that, if passed, will confirm his superiority over the North (rivers, cold, emptiness, its wild animals, and other human beings)” (Grace 185). As Hulan says, “In literature, people go north to escape, to prove themselves, to learn something, and usually to leave again” (6). Interestingly, Grace further describes the pattern as “white, masculinist agency prevailing over a feminized anachronistic space” (185). For Anne McClintock, an anachronistic space is “prehistoric, atavistic and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity” (qtd. in Grace 185)—a point that will be especially applicable to Watson’s novel, as we will see shortly.

The works of Canadian fantastic literature analyzed here offer speculations that include portrayals of the North as the realm of both a pristine, if harsh, wilderness and a source of future renewal. Such fiction goes beyond the adventure paradigm, implying that what is found in the North reflects not only past and present challenges but also future possibilities of personal, national, and even human transcendence. Looking at novels from three periods—that is, early adventure fiction, nationalist and internationalist ideas of the 1970s, and postmodernist fiction of the 1990s—reveals how Canadian authors have envisioned and used the North to explore such ideas, and how changing ideological, cultural, and aesthetic approaches to the region led to its different treatments over time.

\textit{High Hazard} adopts the conventions of adventure fiction that we have been tracing, while also modifying them. The characters are typical for the genre, from the southern hero who travels to the North and faces challenges, physical, moral, and otherwise, to the villains and love interests. For example, the protagonist is Eric Gilchrist, who has suffered a failed love affair and signs on to be a manager at a trading station in the Arctic. Like other adventure heroes, then, he has strong personal reasons for wishing to leave his home, and he goes North to escape something in the South and to isolate himself from society. The other hero of the novel is Jim Drake, an undercover police-

\textsuperscript{1} On the conventions of adventure fiction in general, see Cawelti; as for Canadian popular fiction of the period, see Clarence Karr’s study, esp. 37–39, 164–65. Karr argues that “the Canadian frontier emerged as a favoured setting for internationally popular fiction” (26).
man and another Anglo-Saxon man who, it turns out, also goes North for understandable or justifiable reasons. Meanwhile, the characterization of the villains places the novel squarely in the early-twentieth-century adventure tradition: such corrupt and malevolent figures are frequently racialized, most often as Asian. The evening before his ship leaves, Eric rescues two women from some Chinese white slavers; by a remarkable coincidence the women turn out to be fellow passengers on his ship, the Lady Rathlin, Coralie Stockton and her friend Elizabeth Harte-Meyer. The chief villain is Coralie’s boyfriend, who goes by the Anglophone name Earle Sangster but is really a French-Canadian con man named Laroche. Thus, like Eric, Laroche is also going North in order to escape, although for very different reasons. It seems, then, that any male non-Anglo-Saxon character who goes to the North is inherently suspect.

Conventional treatment of race even applies to the novel’s romantic subplot. Eric falls in love with the captain’s daughter, Della, but is then attracted to Coralie. It turns out that Della is mixed-race and is therefore ultimately unsuitable for Eric; she is the conventional Native girl in popular fiction, whether adventure fiction, Western, or science fiction, who represents primitive sexuality (see, for example, Monkman 44; Johnston 53–54) and who almost invariably pays for her involvement with a White character with her life. In Fear and Temptation, Terry Goldie notes that in many texts “the unacceptability of interracial love is raised, but the problem is erased by the death of the indigene woman in the service of her love” (70). Above all, he argues, the Indigenous woman represents the land itself; referring to the two dominant stereotypes of the female Native, he writes, “The maiden represents the optimism that the land holds, the potential of a positive indigenization; the squaw represents the pessimism, the potential that this alien realm will be a negative indigenization, a destructive takeover of the soul” (73). Complicating but not essentially changing the situation is that Della is half-Native; the literary conventions maintain their hold. Della, like the land, is attractive and somewhat alien—perhaps attractive because she is alien; at the end of the novel, she conveniently dies to prevent miscegenation as so many such Native female love interests do, and Eric and Coralie are rescued and marry.

As for the North itself, it is portrayed not only as a region for characters to seek refuge, either from personal tragedy or the law, but also as a site of moral purity, a realm of pre-Adamic innocence. At one point, when he has revealed his true identity, Drake tells Eric how much he envies Eric’s journey from the corrupt South to this pristine natural world: “Gee, what a rest it would be. What a glorious change away from crooks and scheming, plotting and thieving, and all that low-down stuff. You’re lucky” (94–95). The only source of evil is malicious human beings. Laroche later returns in another implausible plot twist as the plane carrying him and Drake crashes near the ship, and he becomes an ongoing source of danger for Eric and the others. This Romantic image of the North as a natural source of spiritual renewal pervades
adventure fiction of the period, and shapes the region’s portrayal in this text.

Yet the North is also conventionally a testing-ground for characters in such fiction—indeed, that is one of the spiritual benefits that it offers adventure heroes who go there—and that is equally true, if in somewhat unconventional ways, in *High Hazard*. The Lady Rathlin runs into a terrible storm that takes the lives of all the characters except Eric, Della, and Coralie. The rest of the novel is a tale of survival in the harsh North, and above all a voyage into unknown regions that harbour astonishing and even more unlikely mysteries. The characters survive thanks to Della’s Native skills, even to the extent of her being able to fight off a polar bear and wolves, while Coralie—a rich young woman who has never had to do much of anything, and is therefore unable to function in a primitive environment—remains fairly useless. One of the ways that fantastic literature conveys its themes is by literalizing the metaphorical—for example, questions of the meaning of humanity may be embodied in a robot or Frankenstein’s Creature—and the idea of the North as a primeval space is made quite literal in Watson’s novel. In a plot development that hearkens back to John Symmes’s hollow Earth theories, Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* (1838), and Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World* (1912), our adventurers travel through a cavern in which they are attacked by “a huge monster, neither man nor beast, but something of both” (285–86). They escape other “man-beast”s and find themselves in a land filled with white, woolly elephants, perhaps based on the woolly mammoth, and other ecologically misplaced creatures. The North here is an atavistic land in which the primeval is more than just an impression; it is the home of prehistoric creatures preserved by the cold and isolation. The conflict is thus not only between Eric and Laroche but also between White male and an inhospitable environment, masculine fortitude and female ineffectuality, and the modern—with all its seagoing and aviation technology—and the ancient. As this is a science-fiction novel, the characters here voyage beyond normal Earthly space and time into a realm where nothing is knowable or predictable. During the storm, “it was as if the demons in hell were in league with the furies of the Arctic to prevent them accomplishing their object. Man-made machinery seemed futile against such untiring forces” (104). Later, the characters must endure cold, attacks by both familiar predators and bizarre fantastic creatures, and their own potentially fatal inexperience and the “civilized” qualities that render them unfit—in Darwinian terms—for this environment.

In the end, the novel is little more than a melodramatic potboiler, yet it is noteworthy for the way it highlights this early image of the North: physically and morally unsullied, barren, hazardous, unpeopled—Della is the closest we come to seeing Natives living and functioning in that landscape—and filled with wonders. The scene as the ship travels up the British Columbia coast is a good example of the natural sublime that is a common feature of descriptions of the North by Southern authors.
in both fiction and non-fiction; at the same time, given that this is a science-fiction novel, it evokes the unearthly, and thus the genre’s version of the sublime, the sense of wonder: the coast offers

an everchanging yet strangely repeating panorama of bays, inlets, rocky headlands with their lighthouses, fairy-like islands embroidered with grassy patches, their outlines broken by gnome-like firs and lurid arbutus trees; past hamlets by the sea, Indian villages, unexpected log cabins on the very edge of Nowhere; and ever the vast forest-lands marshalled like soldiers on parade and crowding down to the sea-line where the greenish, white-capped rollers of the Pacific Ocean tumbled and broke angrily over the log-strewn, pebbly beaches, as if disputing the right of the forests to encroach on their preserves; while beyond, and on ahead, in unending glory rose pinnacle and peak, peak and pinnacle, the snowhooded mountains of the great Coast Range, one above another, on and on, covering their nakedness where they could with great fleecy blankets of clouds, penetrating the sacred precincts of heaven itself, and at last becoming lost in its infinity. (52–53)

*High Hazard* confronts Eric and the reader with a kind of cognitive transcendence that renders even our notions of the sublime inadequate. In realist adventure fiction, the North is full of extreme but familiar wonders, challenges, and threats, and the reader can marvel at its recognizable “magnificent desolation”; here, entirely new worlds open up, as Watson tries to raise the bar of how thoroughly Other the North is. The novel makes full use of the North’s remoteness, physical and cognitive, to his reader to push the boundaries of what the region can be in his own and the reader’s imagination.

Franklin’s *Knowledge Park* is a very different kind of novel, a technological and political utopia of sorts that treats the North as a land open for national and international benefit. Alexander Mansell, otherwise known as the Originator, had earlier come up with the idea for a centre of world knowledge—a kind of international Library of Alexandria, with a likely pun on his name—to be built in the Canadian North. The novel recounts the development of Knowledge Park, a dream that comes to fruition despite the foreseeable political challenges both within and outside Canada. The novel features little plot, and the characters are simply spokespersons for points of view or sources of information about the Park’s design and construction. All that occurs during the novel’s present, in fact, is a celebration of the Park’s anniversary on July 1, Canada Day, in the “new century” (actually, the year 2000). The Park was built at Bill Lake because that lake straddles the Ontario/Quebec border, thereby representing the contribution of Canada’s two linguistic-national groups.

For both Alexander and the author, Knowledge Park is, in fact, an expression of Canada itself, as Alexander’s co-author Harris MacNeil writes in his history of the project:
More by accident and inclination than by outright design, Canada long ago chose the mosaic instead of the melting pot; an imperfect mosaic, to be sure, providing a tenuous harmony amid diversity, but capable of improvement in a way that a melting pot society is not. For you cannot unscramble an omelette into its constituent eggs.

The human achievement of Knowledge Park thus far, or so I see it, has been to create a true international proximity; to transpose the ideals of the Olympics from the foot runner, the figure skater and the discus thrower into the full realm of learning; to expand and enrich the mosaic, to sharpen its definition and at the same time increase its flexibility. It remains a mosaic, yet it now possesses the changing facets and the infinite variety of a slow-moving kaleidoscope. (138)

This notion of Canada as a mosaic is very much a product of the time the novel was written: the 1970s, that is, the period of multiculturalism as an official policy. What Mansell has done, then, is reproduce in physical form the values that characterize Canada as he, the author, and supposedly the reader, understand it. He and Canada have overcome political, linguistic, and cultural differences to create something that is constituted of and yet transcends its component elements: a sum that is far greater than its ethnic, linguistic, and regional parts.

The nationalist vision and agenda are clear, and so is the view of the North that makes this project possible. For Alexander, the North is the means by which Canadians can distinguish themselves and also protect themselves from the American influence and the threat that the United States poses to the country’s borders, identity, and even psychological condition. He tells Harris what he hopes to achieve:

“It isn’t only a question of living conditions. It affects how we feel about ourselves. It’s living strung out along the border which gives us our elephant and mouse attitude and makes us feel small. If we took advantage of the bigness of Canada and shifted ourselves northward, we’d begin to feel bigger and more independent.” (55)

He also explains his choice of location in terms that echo Watson’s depiction of the North as a physical and mental blank space on which those from the South can impose their vision:

“The advantage of the Abitibi country...from a practical point of view, is its emptiness. The area is relatively uninhabited. There are timber rights and mining claims, but the cost of resettlement and compensation would not be high. Another advantage is there is a virtually unlimited source of power from all the rivers flowing into James Bay and a virtually unlimited source of paper.” (55)
The North, then, offers political, cultural, psychological, and economic resources, benefits that can help Canada become more self-confident and self-sufficient. Indeed, Mansell is successful, as Canada—thanks largely to his project—becomes the world’s centre for publishing and a truly peaceable kingdom. In fact, it appears that Canada has been responsible for bringing world peace, and it no longer needs or has an army (78). Much of the world has been inspired by Canada’s political example to create federations of states, like the West European Confederation and the Federated States of East Africa (91), the implication being that Canada has devised the best possible way to reconcile regional and national—and now international—interests and governance. This has been Canada’s proper, even preordained, role on Earth: to be a world leader, not through strength of arms but by its global vision and tolerance.

In a striking passage that contrasts Canadian efforts with American expansionism during the nineteenth century, the narrator tells us: “Manifest destiny moved north ten degrees of latitude from the banks of the Potomac and the 39th parallel to the shore of Lake Abitibi and the 49th parallel. It was a different destiny, less imperious and in no way territorial, but no less manifest” (119). That is, Canada has acted in accordance with a more pacific, benign, internationalist, tolerant, and forward-looking version of Manifest Destiny. What is remarkable is the degree to which the “Canadian model” (if we can call it that) is seen as not merely morally superior but also inevitable: it is not just a way to attain a new world order but also a “destiny” and one that is “manifest,” or self-evident. Again, the suggestion is that this is Canada’s purpose—if not God-given, then historical. In keeping with Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier’s prediction, the twentieth century does indeed belong to Canada, and the country’s world leadership will continue into the twenty-first as well. Canada, not the United States, has become a beacon unto the world. Incidentally, Canada in this novel largely means the English and French settler communities and other immigrants; the Natives are not virtually invisible in Franklin’s novel, as they are in Watson’s, but they are conveniently out of the way, having their own province now (91). At least they have their own library in the Park (122), which is perhaps some compensation for their being generally ignored by the planners, financiers, and builders of the institution.

Knowledge Park is thus very much a product of its era, reflecting the political, ideological, and cultural beliefs of the day, particularly regarding the role of the North in Canada’s culture and national identity, and the same can be said for Tony Burgess’s Pontypool Changes Everything. The novel is thoroughly postmodern in its fragmentary structure, its eschewing of conventional characterization and plot, its epistemological confusion, and above all its focus on language. It is a zombie apocalypse narrative, but even the tropes of zombie fiction are subverted; here, the virus is spread through language, not physical assault, and it attacks language, rendering its victims inarticulate. In her study of the novel, Aalya Ahmad analyzes the novel in the context
of other recent zombie narratives, which she interprets as the expression of those in abject positions:

Zombies function [...] as gray go-betweens between subaltern and supremacist, black and white, selves and others, lurching over borders as inexorably as they break through farmhouse walls . . . raising the radical possibility of an apocalypse that not only exposes, but also destroys entrenched systems of power feeding on racism, patriarchy, gross inequality and other institutionalized follies. (132)

Novels and films about the zombie apocalypse portray these monsters as rising up against the living, although the latter are often as zombie-like in their own ways as the "walking dead" in their submission to the late-capitalist global economic system. In Burgess's case, the focus is on humanity's growing inability to communicate and to empathize, a condition that afflicts both infected and uninfected characters alike (Ahmad 141–42).

While fitting into this generic context, Burgess's novel offers a regionalist revision of the typical zombie narrative, as it is very much grounded in a particular setting, the Canadian North (Ahmad 140). The novel is an example of what Cat Ashton calls Northern Ontario Gothic: a subgenre that makes use of the region's remoteness, climatic and geographical harshness, and population of (perceived) misfits and outsiders to produce tales of madness and violence. She writes, "Gothic fiction deals with anxiety about identity, about the fragility of stability, and about the present's uneasy relationship with the past. The disruption of stability, identity, and the past have the potential to make the Gothic into the uncanny shadow of the national narrative, and Gothic fiction very easily becomes a regional phenomenon" (160). In the Canadian Gothic, the colonial past is a source of tension between past and present, settler and Native, urban and rural; as Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte write:

Historically, Canadian writers have used gothic tropes to articulate their sense of the contingency of their presence in Canada. Initially, it is fair to say, the Gothic emerged as a way of responding to the unfamiliar by demonizing and even fetishizing the 'unknown'--be it human or landscape. Often this monstrous presence was figured as an Indigenous one—a danger lying just beyond the garrison but not sufficiently removed. Over time, Canadian writers began to appropriate this force, to bend it to a national purpose, and to map the parameters of an identity that might embrace what was resonantly local so that the Gothic became a way to insist on, rather than deny, a colonial history. In effect, the gothic mode was used to articulate a suitably 'haunted' version of Canadian identity, one that lent the Canadian locale a 'feel' of authenticity because it had been rendered '(un)homely' (that is, both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time). (xvii)
Ashton builds upon their account to argue that in novels portraying Northern Ontario, the “tension between centre and periphery is one of the central tensions in Northern Ontario Gothic” (161); the four novels she analyzes “constitute protests against marginalization” (171). Throughout Pontypool Changes Everything, there is a sharp contrast set up between Southern and Northern Ontario. Southern Ontario is the world of security, order, and rationality; Northern Ontario is the realm of danger, the irrational, and atavistic horror. While driving on Highway 7—part of the Trans-Canada Highway—Les describes the region as a place of transformation and violence, a grotesque alien place:

To the north the land sits high in the sun, like a cresting wave. The land is a market of conversions: farms into gravel pits, gravel pits into heavy machinery depots. And then these depots become the instant little communities that the machines have abandoned. Many people have travelled this highway to Port Perry, and many have carried tragedy. Children catching fire in the back seat with the meningitis that kills them between towns. A young man cradling a severed forearm between his thighs. The terrible family trips that end in violence on a sideroad. . . . The north, on the right, has always risen in an opera of murder; it will broadside every family member, set in motion the suicides of giant people. (37)

In a scene of pure Gothic horror, bizarre creatures take over such geographical features as Lake Scugog, including “fox-fish” and “rat-fish,” and “things monstrous because they live too long”; meanwhile, two children, Julie and her brother watch as “a growing herd of zombies is passing through the underbrush” (214). As in Watson’s novel, going North means entering an entirely different realm where the rules and even the epistemology of the South no longer apply.

When reports of the epidemic reach the cities, the forces of the South—the Ontario government, medical officials, and others—do try to exert control, even taking draconian measures. According to anchorman Grant Mazzy’s television news report,

“People with AMPS are registered upon diagnosis and are required by law to report to a designated physician weekly. Emergency facilities are now being prepared for those victims who pass into the dangerous later stages. The government has made failure to comply an imprisonable offence. Meanwhile, some northern communities are showing signs of panic and there are instances of people taking matters into their own hands.” (153–54)

Later, the government takes an even more radical approach, killing everyone who is not only infected but even suspected of potentially becoming so. These efforts are futile; as Ahmad notes of such narratives, “the zombie, once unleashed, freely ranges over cities and countries, in massive hordes that overwhelm organized resistance, no
matter how expert or militarized” (131). Some degree of natural order remains in the
North, but

In the cities there are greater confusions. As fall approaches several things are contributing to
a late-autumn military mania. The disappearance of Toronto’s most popular anchorperson,
Grant Mazzy; the undeniable presence of cannibals much further south than anyone
wanted to accept. Although a plethora of laws exist that might deal with a new breed of
violent crime that is highly contagious, and in spite of the horrific acts being committed by
Ontarians everywhere, none, not a single person, can be held accountable. (253–54)

As long as the zombie hordes had affected only regions already dismissed as mar-
ginal, society paid little attention; now, there is a panic. Modern society is unequipped
to deal with such a situation, and reacts with mass, random slaughter, ably assisted by
helicopters from the American military. This is in no sense a conventionally romantic,
nationalistic, or site-of-masculine-testing view of the North; this is instead, in its vio-
lence, a North that eludes all familiar definitions or understanding. Seldom has the
region been portrayed as so fully Other.

In these fantastic novels, as in non-fantastic Canadian texts, the North is a space
beyond. It is a world of escape, refuge, mystic transcendence, or unknowns and even
unknowables; in the case of Franklin’s novel, it is a space of the future, represent-
ing current hopes and dreams while lying beyond them, while in Burgess’s novel it
is where even our most fundamental realities break down. Whether it is a land (and
sea) of terror, hope, or horror, the North in Canadian fantastic literature frequently
is more than a place where we can escape our Southern lives. It is a land that itself
eludes us, refusing to be bound by our definitions of space, time, and reality.

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North and South of the 49th parallel in Seth’s 
The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists

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Abstract
In Seth’s graphic novel The G.N.B. Double C, “north of the 49th parallel” Canadian representations of Canada’s north comprise “south of the 49th parallel” American elements in an unsettling reminder of the influence of a southern outlook on the Canadian north.

Keywords: north, graphic novel, Seth

Résumé

Mots-clés: Nord, roman graphique, Seth
I couldn’t imagine why the 49th parallel would represent any kind of real division in North American comics as a whole. Wouldn’t all of us (…) have had more or less the same comics?


In a response to Matt Kuhn’s query “why the 49th parallel would represent any kind of real division in North American comics as a whole,”1 this essay considers depictions and perspectives from north and south of the 49th parallel in the graphic novel The G.N.B. Double C: The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists by Canadian author Seth. Following some brief contextual information about the graphic novel genre in general, about the author Seth, pen name for Gregory Gallant, and about the Montreal-based publisher Drawn and Quarterly, the essay turns to the representation of Canada’s north in The G.N.B. Double C with particular attention to the curious character of Kao-Kuk, an Inuit astronaut, and the equally curious igloo-shaped Northern Archives situated in Canada’s far north. The novel’s narrative includes numerous additional “north of the 49th parallel” elements, from voyageurs, canoes, coureurs de bois, and bears, to Canadian Mounted Police and Glen Gould’s “Idea of North.” Together these imprint The G.N.B. Double C as Canadian “north of the 49th parallel” in perspective. At the same time, the novel and Seth’s distinct use of the visual-textual relationship of graphic novels bring in perspectives from “south of the 49th parallel” such that The G.N.B. Double C draws a line at and then over the 49th parallel. This inscribes a political dimension to the work, an aspect of graphic novels that critics have noted, in particular in relation to a “melancholic tone” shared by many 1990s autobiographical comics.2 In this melancholy, evoked in Seth’s work by the persistence of the past, Dee-

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1) “The Canadian Cartoonists,” Modern Ideas 8 June 2014. Modern Ideas is the online journal of Modern Alchemy LLC, a graphic design studio in Lakewood, Ohio. Modern Alchemy was founded in 2006 by Matt Kuhn. In his 8 June 2014 article, Kuhn writes: “I think I very easily assumed that nearly everyone in GNBCC was fanciful, not only because I had not heard of them but because the whole idea that a distinct cartooning community existed in Canada seemed, well, silly. I’m not sure how far to go into this because I think Canada is just great (excepting the present government, an exception that also goes for my own state and nation fwiw) and have no desire to belittle it… and yet I guess that even I still have some tendency to think of Canada, or at least Anglophone Canada, as a kind of Mini-Me America. I mean, Canada’s population is not tiny and obviously some people have followed their muse into cartooning… but I couldn’t imagine why the 49th parallel would represent any kind of real division in North American comics as whole. Wouldn’t all of us (again, Quebec potentially excepted) have had more or less the same comics? Obviously in the days of the traditional “funny pages” you got a slightly different selection from one city to another, but I would have guessed that Toronto and Edmonton and Winnipeg were mostly drawing from the same overall pool of syndicated strips as Chicago and Boston and Dallas. Most strips are sufficiently generic in their cultural background that they would seem to “work” for just about any affluent urban society; I know that at least some of the biggies are even syndicated in translation. Why would Canada actually have an entire separate comics history that I’ve never even heard of?”

na Rhyms identifies a “specifically Canadian political position” (Rifkind and Warley, 5). For Rhyms this stems from “a strong interest in marginal identities and the social values that engender difference” (Rhmys, 75). A key marker of political difference, the 49th parallel between Canada and the United States also marks social and cultural difference – at least officially. In reality, there has been a historical upward flow of social and cultural impact from below the 49th parallel, and a struggle from above to stem the flow in an effort to preserve Canadian rather than an American identity and values. Seth’s work traces this effort with respect to Canadian cartoons and cartoonists.

Kathleen Dunley discusses how in The G.N.B. Double C Seth reclaims from the past Canadian cartoons/ists who have been mistaken for American or forgotten altogether. Just as his work presents a cartoon practice that is distinctly Canadian -- including in its American influence – Seth’s depiction of Canada’s north in The G.N.B. Double C shows that “north of the 49th parallel” Canadian representations comprise “south of the 49th parallel” American elements, a somewhat sobering contribution to growing awareness and understanding of realities versus myths about Canada’s north that are the result of burgeoning scholarship on the subject today.

As Sherrill Grace points out in Canada and the Idea of North (2011), there is a great deal of research and scholarship on Canada’s north available today, including her own impressive addition to this body of work. In an extensive interdisciplinary investigation of the “idea of north,” Grace explores a wide range of representations, expressions, and experiences of Canada’s north, from well before Confederation to the turn of the twenty-first century. Explorers, settlers, and before them Indigenous peoples; writers, painters, musicians, and film-makers; historians, geographers, economists, and politicians are among the many whose conceptualizations of the north are part of Grace’s sweeping study. She identifies myths and realities about the north and prominent spokespersons on both. The names will be familiar: Margaret Atwood, Glen Gould (whose 1967 sound-recording of his trip to Canada’s north inspired Grace’s title), the Group of Seven (Canada’s famous school of painters), Louis-Edmond Hamelin (the Canadian geographer who articulated the notion of nordicity), Harold Innis, Stephen Leacock, R. Murray Schafer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Rudy Wiebe. These and many others have turned their attention to Canada’s north and to the “themes” associated with it, which are also broadly familiar: the north as “deadly, cold, empty, barren, isolated, mysterious ... a dangerous, hostile, female terra incognita” (Grace 16) or the north as “friendly,” spiritual, sublime, full of promise and resources – the north as future.

Within this extensive research and commentary on the north, Grace’s preferred lens is the arts. “When all is said and done,” she suggests, “it is probably the novelist who has had the greatest impact on the Canadian imagination [about the north] ...
Novels, especially popular novels, stay in print or are turned into movies, and novels, especially by major writers, are translated, put on school and university syllabi, and studied at home and abroad” (xv). Canadian novelist Aritha van Herk’s works are compelling examples of this, with novels such as *The Tent Peg* (1981) and *Places Far from Ellesmere* (1990), or creative non-fiction works such as *A Frozen Tongue* (1992). Van Herk contributes to what is for Grace – and for other “southerners” – “one of the most important aspects of North: North as a ‘mental background’,”-- a “mentality” or an “idea” (15). The north as idea is Grace’s focus -- and the focus here: “the creation in words, sounds, images, signs, and symbols of a northern mentality” (Grace, 15). Of this, Seth’s *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* is a prime example. Published a decade after Grace’s study, *The G.N.B. Double C* adds to the catalogue of representations of the north a form of narrative increasingly prominent on the Canadian reading and publishing scene: the graphic novel. Seth is among forerunners of the form in Canada and the Montreal publishing company Drawn and Quarterly is pre-eminent in the field -- both north and south of the 49th parallel.

The definition and scope of the graphic novel, a relatively recent term from the 1960s, remain under debate but broadly speaking they refer to stories – fictional and non-fictional -- presented in comic-strip format and book form as opposed to periodical form. It is in the relationship between the visual and the textual that the graphic novel offers unique possibilities for insight and understanding, with the visual and the textual sometimes expanding, sometimes contradicting each other. Seth makes good use of this feature of the graphic novel. His work is known for its depiction of small-town southern Ontario, particularly in the early-to-mid 20th century. This lends a frequently nostalgic even melancholic tone to his texts.

The author’s career launched with *Palookaville*, a semi-autobiographical story written in the early 1990s, then collected under the title *It's a Good Life, If You Don’t Weaken* and published in 1996 by Drawn and Quarterly. Established in 1990 as an alternative to the alternative comics scene of the day, Drawn and Quarterly has published the “who’s who” of Canadian cartoonists and graphic novelists, including such notables as Chester Brown, Julie Doucet, and Seth. *The G.N.B. Double C: The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* constitutes somewhat of a departure in Seth’s work given his interest in depicting small-town Ontario settings. The title flags the more “northerly” outlook of the narrative and its connection to the topic of Canada’s north. The most northern components of the narrative include the character Kao-Kuk, an Inuit astronaut, and the Arctic-based, igloo-like Northern Archives. Kao-Kuk is among the first figures to which Seth’s unnamed narrator – and stand-in -- draws readers’ attention as he enters and tours the local branch of The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists, an aging building in the fictional Ontario town of Dominion. Kao-Kuk is paneled between Nipper and Chopper, the former a famous creation of...
Canadian cartoon icon Doug Wright; the latter a lay on the infamous Canadian beaver. Should these not be familiar enough as "north of the 49th parallel" figures, the figures of Constable Henderson of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the voyageur Lacombe in a canoe on a Lawren Harris-like lake surely are. Joining these "north of the 49th" references as the narrator makes his way through the G.N.B.C.C. club and on to the G.N.B.C.C. archives are further references: Pierre Elliott Trudeau, expressing regret that he never succeeded as a cartoonist; Johnny Canuck; moose and bears; portraits of the Founding Fathers and of the Death of General Wolf on the Plains of Abraham; and the trapper Trepanier who, together with the voyageur Lacombe, brings in Quebec content via references to folk-tales like the flying canoe, place-names such as Trois-Rivières, and traditional Quebecois family names like Tremblay.

Among these "north of the 49th" references Kao-Kuk occupies a significant place and portion of the narrative. Created by Seth's fictional cartoonist Bartley Munn, Kao-Kuk of "the Royal Canadian Astro-Men" is a striking departure from stereotype. The latter traces back to Nanook of the North, Robert Flaherty's 1922 film in which "Eskimos" are represented as "child-like, fur-clad, smiling primitives" (Grace 4) in a land of eternal winter, ice, and snow. The film also presents Nanook as representative of all Inuit people (Grace 5), undercutting both the individual humanity and the complex multiplicity of Canada's northern peoples. By contrast, Munn's/Seth's Kao-Kuk is identified as Inuit, presented as an individual, and, as an astronaut, is definitely unbound from the stereotypical "land of ice and snow." Depicted orbiting his space capsule among the stars over planet earth, Kao-Kuk seems to offer a new non-Nanook of the North Inuit image. In the trademark visual-textual combination of the graphic novel, however, the accompanying text recalls the "Eskimo stereotype" of Nanook of the North's origin south of the 49th parallel. Kao-Kuk's name, the text reads, was merely pulled out of the air by his creator Munn because "it sounded Eskimo" (47). Moreover, Munn felt that the "Eskimo"'s "unique understanding of isolation and his experience with vast emptiness made him the perfect choice for space exploration" (46). Obvious here is the familiar trope of north as empty and isolated along with the "touch of exoticism" ascribed to the north and its peoples. Kao-Kuk's "legendary tracking skills' were often called upon" (47), the narrator observes, "but essentially he fit the whitebread, silent, square-jawed type" (47) – the stereotype of the Hollywood hero -- facing the usual "parade of evil Americans, Russians, and space aliens" (47). Kao-Kuk's story takes a familiar Hollywood-like turn as the Inuit astronaut finds himself "utterly alone" (50) in a world destroyed by atomic war. Kao-Kuk's narrative ends "disappointingly, back at status quo" (52) in a return to the influence of Nanook of the North / south of the 49th parallel representations of Canada's north and its peoples.

Disappointed though they may be, the fictional Munn's readers manage to content themselves with Kao-Kuk's story. As Seth's readers we may see ourselves in their...
satisfaction with status quo, even as we perceive the power of the “south of the 49th” perspective on Kao-Kuk’s story, and by extension on Canada’s north. Seth’s *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* becomes an unsettling reminder of the impact of a southern outlook on the Canadian north.

Similarly unsettling, however tongue-in-cheek, is *The G.N.B. Double C*’s segment about the Northern Archives, home of the Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists archives. The panel sequence is again rich in “north of 49th” references. For example, the idea for the northern archive building is launched during Canada’s Centennial in 1967, with plans for the building the centerpiece of a futuristic Canadian Expo pavilion. Construction is underway by late 1967 and, despite an “impractical”, “even nonsensical” location, “so far north in such a remote spot” as to be “ridiculously out of the way” (81), the novel’s narrator admits, it is completed in 1969. In a series of panels reminiscent of Glen Gould’s “Idea of North” expedition, Seth’s narrator recounts his trek to the Northern Archives, starting at Toronto’s Union Station and continuing by train, boat, bus, and finally dog sled. However gruelling the travel, the trek to the Northern Archives is “entirely worth it,” the narrator assures us, “to study the treasure trove of cartooning housed there” (84).

The treasures in question further inscribe Canadian content -- and further tongue-in-cheek. They include a 1760 comic about General Wolf as General Fox; cartoon efforts by members of the Group of Seven, Lismer, Harris, Casson; and a superhero series called *Canada Jack* by a “mysterious” Sol Gertzman, an echo of Canadian writer Mordecai Richler’s 1989 novel *Solomon Gursky Was Here.* As before with Kao-Kuk, the “north of 49th” Canadian content of the archival treasures again encompasses “south of 49th” dimensions, as the graphic novel’s text and image work with and against each other. The *Canada Jack* sequence is an excellent illustration of this.

“An odd mish-mash of disparate elements” (98), this “very rare” (45) 1960s series focuses on “strangely Canadian” topics such as radio broadcasting, highway construction, city planning, and Expo 67. Moreover the series does not follow “the usual hero vs villain formula” (47) nor does it present the usual “south of the 49th” superhero. Canada Jack has the trappings of a Hollywood-style superhero (costume, secret identity, a love interest) but his preference for walking rather than flying and his patriotic enthusiasm for Canada’s Expo 67 mark him as Canadian. This is only “natural,” the narrator observes, “since Canada Jack is essentially a Mountie” (99). What is not “natural,” however, the narrator notes, is the appearance of Snoopy, the popular pet dog of the American cartoonist Charles Schulz’s beloved series *Peanuts.* How to account for Snoopy’s appearance if not for the popularity of the American cartoon in Canada?

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3) The multi-generation story of a fictionalized Canadian family, held by some to be the Bronfmans, in the context of such historical events as the Arctic Franklin Expedition, another “north of the 49th” allusion.
As the text asks “Why use Snoopy is you’re not a Peanuts fan?” (101). Notable, however, is how American “Snoopy” is “Canadianized” in his “out of character” smiling enthusiasm. Indeed, “Snoopy is all wrong!” the text reads; “He talks aloud and smiles constantly” (100). The sequence is brought to a close with musings about the identity of Canada Jack’s creator, the elusive Sol Gertzman: “a born and bred Canadian? A new immigrant? It’s anyone’s guess,” the text proposes (102) in what essentially confirms the allusion to Solomon Gursky of Mordecai Richler’s novel.

“South of the 49th” references in Seth’s The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists -- in the first instance with respect to the depiction of Canada’s North but also with regard to Canadian cartooning in general -- are subtle but meaningful. The examples of Kao-Kuk and the Northern Archives introduce intriguing new visions of the Canadian north and its peoples, even as they present lingering aspects of “south of the 49th” concepts of “north of the 49th” people and places. Seth’s fictional characters, Kathleen Dunley observes, “all have a Canadian flavour, but remain fictions – Seth’s dream vision of what Canadian cartooning could have been, or perhaps should have been” were it not for “how Canadian popular culture struggled to complete with American influences” (141). In The G.N.B. Double C, however, Seth’s recuperation of Canadian cartoonists, whether fictional like Bartley Munn or non-fictional like Doug Wright, and Canadianization of the American superhero icon and of Peanuts’ Snoopy character, trace a line – and the breaks in it - at the 49th parallel. The overall unsettling effect of the novel and of the closing images of a headless statue in a garbage-strewn fountain is an important “on guard” about Canada, its culture and its north. That a contemporary work and popular genre such as Seth’s graphic novel The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists should capture the political and cultural complexities and realities the 49th parallel today makes it a valuable resource in Canadian Studies, effective in teaching for its simultaneously amusing and insightful presentation of stereotypes and realities about Canada from north and south of the 49th parallel alike.

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*Nanook of the North*. Dir. Robert Flaherty. Pathé Exchange. 1922. Film.

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Le Nord canadien mis en scène. Lecture des pièces *Terre Océane* de Daniel Danis et *Yukonstyle* de Sarah Berthiaume

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**Résumé**
Dans cette étude, nous nous proposons d’explorer les façons dont les dramaturges Daniel Danis et Sarah Berthiaume mettent en scène le monde nordique pour lever le voile sur la force évocatrice de cette terre des ancêtres. En effet, selon les traditions spirituelles autochtones, chacun des quatre points cardinaux représente un mode de perception différent. Au nord est associée la sagesse. Ainsi ce retour aux origines traduit-il la recherche d’une autre vérité possible, d’un rapport intime non seulement avec la terre mais aussi avec le cosmos.

**Mots-clés :** nordicité, espace lisse, espace strié, spiritualité amérindienne, esprit de famille

**Abstract**
This article discusses the way two quebecois playwrights, Daniel Danis and Sarah Berthiaume, deal with the idea of North in order to lift the veil and show the evocative power of the land of their ancestors. Indeed, according to the spiritual practices of the indigenous people, each of the four cardinal directions is associated with a different way of how they perceive the world. North represents wisdom. So the authors’ return to the origins is in fact the quest for another version of the truth, for understanding the experience of a close relationship not only with the land but with the entire cosmos as well.

**Keywords:*** nordicity, the smooth, the striated, Native American spirituality, family
Selon les recherches des penseurs de la nordicité culturelle, en particulier celles de Daniel Chartier, l’imaginaire du Nord renvoie à « une série de figures, couleurs, éléments et caractéristiques transmises par des récits, romans, poèmes, films, tableaux et publicités qui, depuis le mythe de Thulé jusqu’aux représentations populaires contemporaines, en ont tissé un riche mais complexe réseau de significations symboliques » (Chartier 2008 : 22). Parmi les constituants qui permettent d’exprimer l’idée du Nord, ou la nordicité, Daniel Chartier indique notamment les éléments tels que l’iceberg, l’ours polaire, le froid, les aurores boréales, l’absence de repères, la désolation, la solitude, les lieux éloignés, le nomadisme, le refuge, l’insistance sur les couleurs bleue et blanche, la neige, l’absence d’arbres, mais aussi l’exploration physique qui se transforme en quête spirituelle (ibid. : 24).

Or, selon le « père » du concept de nordicité, le géographe Louis-Édmond Hamelin², « le Nord incarne une réalité concrète, un objet, tandis que la nordicité, c’est une pensée, une réflexion » (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 39). Autrement dit, si la première notion indique une position géographique, un territoire concret, l’autre représente plutôt une conception liée avec l’expérience de ce territoire. Dans cette étude, le concept de nordicité sera traité en tant qu’idée du Nord, pour reprendre le titre de la dramatique radio du pianiste Glenn Gould (The idea of the North, 1967), une idée qui repose sur « le rapport de soi à son environnement » (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 17), un rapport intime et donc témoignant du désir de l’insaisissable.

Le choix du corpus de la présente réflexion, limité à deux pièces Terre Océane (2006) et Yukonstyle (2013)³, a pour objectif d’identifier les stratégies de représentation scénique de la nordicité privilégiées par les dramaturges québécois, Daniel Danis et Sarah Berthiaume. On verra que l’imaginaire du Nord se réalise ici de façon à tenir compte des images faisant partie de l’imaginaire collectif traditionnel qui reposent sur le contraste (le grand silence blanc des espaces immenses et illimités opposés à la ville comme lieu de malheur de l’homme occidental). Néanmoins cette conception évoquant l’idée de vagabondage et d’errance, de quête du sens profond de la vie, est mise en doute par les ténèbres de notre civilisation qui s’étendent sur cette terre imbibée d’une spiritualité refoulée.

1) Je m’illumine d’immense.

2) Louis-Édmond Hamelin a introduit la notion de nordicité pour la première fois en 1965 dans son article « Au Canada français. Leçons télévisées sur les pays froids de latitude » publié dans la Revue de géographie alpine de Grenoble Voir le site Internet: http://puq.ca/hamelin/bibliographie

3) Pour les citations, nous utilisons les abréviations suivantes : TO = Terre Océane, YS = Yukonstyle.
Ainsi, même si le territoire du Yukon, situé à l’extrémité nord-ouest du Canada, évoque la splendeur des espaces vierges et la grandeur des paysages (vastes lacs, glaciers majestueux, sommets enneigés), Sarah Berthiaume montre dans sa pièce Yukonstyle que, là aussi, la détresse affective (tous sont devenus « pas trustables ») menace d’étouffer complètement la puissance de ce territoire mythique. Par contre, les personnages égarés du monde moderne de Daniel Danis se réfugient dans la nature sauvage du Grand Nord qui les accueille d’une manière moins traumatique et plus directe en les plongeant dans la plénitude d’une vie où rien n’est divisible. Malgré ces différences, il est clair que les deux dramaturges mettent en scène le monde nordique pour lever le voile sur la force évocatrice de cette terre des ancêtres grâce à laquelle les personnages, se retrouvant dans un lieu qui les bouleverse par son immensité, et quoique sans savoir ce qu’ils cherchent, finissent par devenir « plus réceptifs » et « plus attentifs à l’autre », comme le constate Antoine (TO : 82).

En effet, selon les traditions spirituelles autochtones, chacun des quatre points cardinaux représente un mode de perception différent. Au nord est associée la sagesse. Ainsi ce retour aux origines traduit-il la recherche d’une autre vérité possible, d’un rapport intime avec le cosmos. Les dimensions de nouveauté, de beauté, de pureté ainsi que de suspension temporelle contribuent à la création de la paix intérieure qui s’impose comme vecteur de guérison et d’espoir pour les personnages. Par ailleurs, ces voyages initiatiques aux sources invitent également les lecteurs et les spectateurs à s’ouvrir à l’Autre et à une nouvelle réalité, proche de la « pratique de la philosophie de la coexistence » dont parle Louis-Édmond Hamelin (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 82).

Dans un premier temps, nous aborderons donc l’attrait du Nord, puis nous étudierons les façons dont la sagesse autochtone, en tant qu’un des traits caractéristiques de la nordicité canadienne, exerce une influence non seulement sur la vie au nord mais aussi sur le travail de ces deux dramaturges.

**Fuir très loin de la ville**

S’aventurer au nord c’est fuir la situation dans laquelle on se trouve pour quelque raison, qu’elle soit économique, existentielle ou sentimentale. Il semble que, depuis les années 1990, « la fièvre du diamant a succédé à la ruée vers l’or des années 1930 » (Cousin 2014) et que les opportunités de travail attirent de plus en plus les étrangers même si, comme l’explique une Marocaine, « il faut effectivement être un peu dingue pour venir s’installer dans cette région » (ibid.). Qu’importe, l’esprit du Nord qui respire sur l’idée que tout y est possible attire ceux qui rêvent d’y faire de l’argent mais aussi ceux qui, tout simplement, ont envie de grand air : « la faune est éclectique et jeune » et « l’esprit pionnier est identique » (ibid.) à celui qui régnait à l’époque de Jack.
Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

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London. Cependant, cet aspect du Nord canadien n’intéresse guère les dramaturges choisis, dont les personnages se retrouvent presque par hasard là où « l’étoile de l’ours déchire la nuit » et « l’aurore boréale brûle les cieux », pour reprendre les paroles du chanteur Zachary Richard (Dans le Nord canadien). La vie d’Antoine (Terre Océane), cinéaste montréalais, est perturbée par l’arrivée de son fils, jusqu’alors inconnu, qui est mortellement malade. Ne pouvant s’occuper seul de lui, Antoine décide de partir avec l’enfant à la campagne, chez son oncle Dave. Dans Yukonstyle, Kate, une adolescente qui voyage à travers le Canada, descend à Whitehorse, même si « elle aurait dû rester dans l’autobus encore une nuit » (YS : 10), sans savoir où elle est, « habillée en poupée à moins 45 degrés Celsius » (*ibid.*). Pour les deux protagonistes, il s’agit d’une vraie rupture : ils se trouvent malgré eux face à une destination inconnue et imprévisible, devant cette immense blancheur sans traces.

**Nomos versus polis**

L’opposition entre l’espace ouvert (*nomos*) et la cité (*polis*) établie par les Grecs anciens s’apparente à celle entre l’espace lisse et l’espace strié, pensée par Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari (1980 : 600) : « Dans l’espace strié on ferme une surface, et on la ‘répartit’ suivant des intervalles déterminés, d’après des coupures assignées ; dans le lisse, on se ‘distribue’ sur un espace ouvert […] ». Bien que « ces deux espaces n’existent en fait que par leurs mélanges l’un avec l’autre » (*ibid.* : 593), on voit dans Terre Océane, que cette opposition tient bon. À Montréal où vit Antoine « les lumières de la ville jaunissent le ciel » (TO : 17) tandis que tombe « une neige lourde et mouillée » (*ibid.*), qui ne parvient pas à lisser la structure striée car « la fenêtre ouverte avale des flocons étoilés remplis de secrets d’architectures que seules comprennent les montagnes de neige éternelle » (*ibid.*). À l’opposé des flocons étoilés, qui suggèrent la disparition des formes dans une mer blanche et infinie, « la noirceur dans le condo découpe le corps d’Antoine » dont « la peau éclate de rides nouvelles » (*ibid.*) ; il ne voit même pas la neige, il ne sent qu’une pluie incessante et « chaque partie de [sa] peau [lui] semble quadrillée au marqueur noir » (TO : 33). Par contre, à la campagne où il emmène son fils malade, les corps s’estompent : « les trois bouffons de joie s’enroulent dans la blancheur et d’une saisie de soleil taquin, des cristaux d’humidité dans l’air s’illuminent » (TO : 54). C’est là qu’il commence à percevoir la beauté du paysage hivernal « quand il neige amoureusement sur la terre déjà blanche d’hiver » (TO : 50). Ainsi, dans Terre Océane, l’espace est reconnu comme un espace infini et lisse, ce que Louis-Édmond Hamelin appelle « le mythe du grand espace » (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 73), en ajoutant que celui-ci n’est pas seulement immense mais également froid.
C’est justement la froideur et une vie soumise aux exigences du gel qui envahit toute la pièce de Sarah Berthiaume, dont les premiers mots sont : « Whitehorse. // La nuit. // L’hiver. // Moins 45 degrés Celsius » (YS : 109). Le corps d’une jeune fille nomade, Kate, surgit en contraste avec ce paysage « sur la limite entre le froid et la mort » (YS : 11) : « Crissement de la neige sous ses bottes à plateforme. // Froufrou de dentelle sur ses cuisses engourdies » (YS : 10), ce qui montre combien est erronée l’idée qu’elle a du Nord, à l’instar de la plupart des Canadiens du sud. C’est d’ailleurs Garin, un jeune mé-tis, qui reformule la devise fameuse du Yukon, « Larger than life », ajoutant que l’hiver du Yukon est « longer // colder // darker // than life » (YS : 32). D’une part, cela laisse entendre que l’étendue blanche n’est pas une représentation de la beauté physique et spirituelle perçue comme harmonieuse. D’autre part, le mot « darker » évoque le contraire de la légende des terres du Yukon qui « ne deviennent paysage que parce que les chercheurs d’or les ont sillonnées, parce qu’elles ont incarné un rêve de richesse, de sauvagerie et de nature » (Rigeade 2013). Par ailleurs, l’espace lisse qui prédomine dans Terre Océane, évoquant la force de guérison, est largement strié dans Yukonstyle. Ce sont d’abord des maisons mobiles remplaçant les cabanes des chercheurs d’or, qui imposent une structure du territoire que Louis-Édmond Hamelin appelle « ran-gique » (Chartier et Désy 2014 :70). Cependant, grâce au caractère temporaire de ces habitations (ce qui est mobile renvoie au nomadisme, au changement) il est permis d’imaginer que cet espace strié qui ressemble à une ville se laisserait facilement lisser. Ainsi, la force du territoire, comme nous allons le voir, n’est-elle que temporairement absente ou plutôt insensible dans ce monde où les habitants sont débordés par son immensité : « Y a trop d’espace, dehors. [...] Trop de forêts, de vent, de montagnes, de bouette, de ciel » (YS : 47). Pourtant, cette plénitude n’est pas une source de bonheur, comme dans Terre Océane, mais une source de solitude et d’isolement.

La solitude et l’isolement

Alors que dans Terre Océane la vie d’Antoine à Montréal, stressante et pleine d’angoisse, marque un contraste avec celle qu’il mène à la campagne, où règne ce grand silence blanc qui a gardé sa dimension chamanique incarnée par l’oncle Dave, dans Yukonstyle Sarah Berthiaume montre que le Grand Nord mythique est aussi un royaume de solitude qui ne rime pas nécessairement avec la paix intérieure mais aussi avec « les névroses, les ténèbres d’une civilisation occidentale venue s’échouer là, avec sont lot de violences raciales et sociales, d’individualisme, de misère affective » (Pauthe 2013 : 72). L’idée du Nord de Daniel Danis est proche de celle de Glenn Gould pour qui, vivre au Nord, c’est fuir la civilisation occidentale, aller au-delà de ses limites. Sans doute ce décor nordique correspond-il à un état d’esprit à partir duquel le musicien a élaboré...
sa conception du sublime (Neumann 2011 : 35). Par contre, ce qui intéresse Sarah Berthiaume, c’est cette double dimension du Nord, car non seulement le blanc évoque la pureté et l’appel à la méditation, mais encore il « déstabilise les repères et menace d’absorber tout ce qui l’entoure dans le néant qu’il représente » (Chartier 2008 : 25).

Dans Terre Océane, au contraire, l’isolement correspond à un état de plénitude associé à une concentration intense sur les moments de bonheur partagé avec les autres. Avant de se laisser transformer par la force du Nord, Antoine se sent rongé par la solitude qui est pour lui pareille à une pluie froide (TO : 33). Cependant, au fur et à mesure que l’oncle Dave conduit doucement le petit Gabriel vers la compréhension de la vie et de la mort, Antoine se trouve lui aussi plongé dans la terre océane, cette métaphore de la dimension cosmique de la nature qui les absorbe. Antoine et Gabriel reprennent le goût de vivre : ils dansent sur la neige, initiés par l’oncle Dave « à cette tradition nordique : fortifier le corps pour l’année à venir en se nettoyant la peau de neige du matin de l’An naissant » (TO : 54). Isolés en peine nature, les trois hommes ne souffrent pas d’être seuls. Cet éloignement du monde est présenté comme un isolement thérapeutique, surtout pour Antoine :

J’introspecte avec minutie les tressaillements de mes sentiments.
Je ressens la colère, la joie, la paix, le dégoût, l’ivresse béate, la peur, la jalousie, dans tous les muscles complexes de mon visage.
Probablement à cause du froid compact de cet après-midi, m’apparaît une prégnante conscience de mon squelette, de mes nerfs attaché aux os, de mes muscles, de la circulation du sang dans mes veines.
Une puissance agréable et saine me donne à vivre un moment de repos. J’ai oublié l’enfant malade pendant quelques moments. (TO : 70)

Aussi le contact avec la nature dans cet isolement imposé volontairement se manifeste-t-il comme une expérience extatique, c’est d’ailleurs ainsi que Glenn Gould a décrit la solitude (Neumann 2011 : 40).

La tête renversée, défilent sous les yeux du garçon les branches de pins, des bouts de ciel, des oiseaux excités de l’imminence du printemps. [...]
Seul, [Gabriel] contemple. Les yeux grands, les narines gorgées d’air sucré et hallucinant, tellement qu’une plongée soudaine de mille poissons arc-en-ciel surgissent d’entre les branches des douces et longues épines. [...]
Gabriel baigne dans cet état de béatitude jusqu’au retour à la maison. (TO : 79–80)

Par ailleurs, ces états d’âme sont inspirés par l’espace lisse qui les entoure et qui « peut aussi prendre valeur de révélateur » (Chartier 2008 : 27) : « Sur le coutumier
poids de la neige janviérienne se couche le soleil bleu des fins de journée » (TO : 70) ; « cette mer blanche fondante » (TO : 80)

Dans Yukonstyle, en revanche, cette réduction chromatique « induit un sentiment d’égarement et […] une perte des repères qui donne l’impression d’un avalement dans le néant » (Chartier 2008 : 27). Cela est certes une autre manière de concevoir le paysage typique du Nord et d’interpréter son effet produit. Comme il y a « trop de vide, partout, autour », le corps humain risque de devenir rien, « rien qu’un petit flou sur la map du Yukon » (YS : 47). Or, tout cela impose une solitude insupportable car « être tu-seul, ça devient… ça devient impossible » (ibid.) d’autant plus que l’hiver y dure longtemps et enveloppe les corps dans son épaisse noirceur :

YUKO. – Le noir nous grignote
Quelques heures de plus chaque jour
GARIN. – Le noir s’immisce en nous
Dans nos yeux, nos peaux, nos os (YS : 32)

Par ailleurs, cet aspect sombre de la vie au Nord est souligné par le fait que la rudesse du climat n’est pas la seule difficulté à affronter. Sarah Berthiaume, qui s’était elle-même exilée au Yukon pour quelque temps, montre que la misère du monde occidental (alcool, drogue, prostitution) s’est emparée de cette immensité du paysage. Si Kate, qui semble sortir d’un autre monde – la façon dont elle est habillée prouve qu’elle n’a aucune idée du Nord (YS : 10–11) – risque de « se faire agresser par une gang d’osties de Natives » (YS 13), si les Natifs « se retrouvent à quêter en gang à la porte des liquor stores parce qu’ils [ont] pas de job » (YS : 17), c’est que le Nord est aussi un territoire de grande hostilité. En effet, malgré le manque de ressources humaines dans le Nord, ces régions sont affectées par le chômage. Ce paradoxe s’explique par le fait que « les employeurs privés préfèrent y emmener des travailleurs spécialisés du sud » (Maximova 2014 : 421). L’auteur se montre très sensible aussi à cette dimension sociale du Nord. Lorsque Kate et Garin regardent à la télévision une émission sur le procès de Pickton, Garin ajoute encore un élément troublant pour donner une image inquiétante du mythe du Nord qui affecte surtout la population autochtone : « Veux-tu que je te dise pourquoi il tuait des putes, Pickton ? Hen ? Pickton tuait des putes parce que la police le laissait faire. C’est juste pour ça. Parce que les putes, les Indiennes, surtout, tout le monde s’en câlisse. Même la police » (YS : 35).

Dans cet univers menaçant, Kate en voyageur solitaire qui n’a peur de rien est seule capable de faire face au froid extérieur (ses vêtements légers au début de la pièce l’indiquent) mais aussi à celui qui gagne les cœurs des hommes :
KATE. – Le noir nous laisse juste la résilience qu’il faut
Pour passer l’hiver. [...] 
Et croire qu’au bout du compte
Quelque chose nous attend. (YS : 32)

Aussi est-elle seule capable de voir le corbeau noir, Goldie, l’Indienne mi-oiseau, 
la mère de Garin. Ainsi, à l’instar des chercheurs d’or, elle va trouver son or (Goldie), 
mais non pas en métal jaune, mais sous forme d’une évolution intérieure.

Au pays du Grand Esprit

Le noir (le corbeau et les corps réduits à des points noirs dans Yukonstyle ; les rondelles de 
bois posées sur le chemin de neige et les corps qui dansent sur la neige ou apparaissent 
devant la fenêtre givrée dans Terre Océane) et le blanc (les paysages de neige dans les 
deux pièces) représentent une réduction chromatique, un monde réduit à l’essentiel, 
deux non-couleurs utilisées ensemble pour symboliser une réalité à la fois double et 
indivisible. L’opposition chromatique, comme dans les tableaux de Paul-Émile Borduas, 
exprime, d’un côté, une dualité inhérente à tout humain, et d’un autre côté, la fusion 
de l’humain et de l’infini symbolisée par les corps qui s’enroulent dans la blancheur 
(Terre Océane) ou s’unissent et nagent dans la lumière évoquant une aurore boréale 
(Yukonstyle). Dans cet univers hostile et énigmatique à la fois, sous l’influence d’une force 
inconnue d’eux, symbolisée par le chamanisme de l’oncle Dave (Terre Océane) et le cri du 
corbeau, emblème du Yukon (Yukonstyle), les personnages sont poussés les uns vers les 
autres comme dans une danse rituelle, se laissant posséder par l’esprit des ancêtres. Cet 
hiver au grand Nord qu’ils passent ensemble est comme une étrange initiation, durant 
laquelle ils vont essayer de reconnaître un autre aspect d’eux-mêmes en entrant dans un 
nouveau système de relations affectives et en se réinventant une famille de hasard, une 
communauté de secours s’annonçant comme une certaine forme d’interdépendance qui 
les rend à la fin émotionnellement plus stables. Dans ce sens, les deux pièces reprennent 
la perception du Nord canadien considéré comme un lieu de purification spirituelle où il 
est possible, selon Glenn Gould, de vivre à la manière de Thoreau, telle qu’elle est décrite 
da Walden (Neumann 2011 : 36), autrement dit, en suivant la voie de la sagesse fondée 
sur le respect de la nature et sur la compréhension de l’Esprit qui est en toute chose.

Ce nouveau regard

Selon les traditions spirituelles autochtones, chacun des quatre points cardinaux 
représente un mode de perception différent. Au nord sont associées la sagesse et
Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

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la maturité («Guide sur la spiritualité chez les Amérindiens»). Pour comprendre la sagesse amérindienne il faut faire la distinction entre les cultures autochtones et les non autochtones. Louis-Édmond Hamelin signale que les premières se fondent sur la fusion entre la terre et l’être tandis que les secondes envisagent l’être séparé du terrain sur lequel il évolue. Il précise qu’il y a au Nord « un rapport à la terre qu’on peut rapprocher du holisme [...]. Tout, dans le holisme, est ensemble : la rivière, le caribou, le phoque, l’Inuit, tout ça fait partie d’un bloc » (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 75). Par conséquent, l’union de l’homme et de la nature est une manifestation évidente de cette sagesse qui « s’exprime [...] par une sorte de mysticisme de la nature et à travers une indéniable communion avec la grande énergie cosmique [...] qu’on nomme ‘le Grand Esprit’ et bien souvent aussi ‘le Grand Mystère’ » (Languirand et Proulx 2009: 13). Il s’agit évidemment de la représentation d’un Dieu qui s’annonce aussi par l’esprit de la Terre Mère. Ainsi les deux pièces qui font l’objet de notre réflexion se proposent-elles aussi d’inviter leurs spectateurs (lecteurs) à entreprendre un voyage en territoire spirituel amérindien qui, comme l’explique Louis-Édmond Hamelin, « ne tient pas son caractère principal d’être situé au Nord » (Chartier et Désy 2014 : 65), mais dont l’idée du Nord ne peut pas se passer.

Pour tracer un parcours dans cet espace il faut donc établir d’abord un rapport intime avec le cosmos comme c’est le cas dans Terre Océane où les secrets du monde naturel sont dévoilés à ceux qui, comme Antoine et son fils Gabriel, savent se montrer plus réceptifs aux énergies de la nature habitée par le divin. Avec l’oncle Dave, son guide spirituel, Gabriel a appris à s’étonner et à s’émerveiller devant la beauté et la force de la nature et c’est pour cela qu’il plonge dans la béatitude de l’extase, comme nous l’avons montré plus haut. Dave, bûcheron et chaman, s’efforce, petit à petit, d’apprivoiser la mort en préparant le petit Gabriel à son passage dans l’Au-delà, en fabriquant des rondelles de bois pour guider ses pas et pour l’apprendre à conduire son corps avec ses pensées : « Quand t’arrives au bout du chemin de rondelles, c’est pas le vide. Ça a l’air d’un vide. En vrai, tu dois jouer. [...] imagine-toi la mer, tu rentres dedans [...], tu sors à quelque pas, tu grimpes une montagne, ainsi de suite, jusqu’aux confins de l’essence du vivant » (TO : 65). Mais il lui apprend aussi à goûter à la vie et à éveiller tous ses sens en jouant et en s’amusant sur la neige dans la forêt. En même temps, Antoine lui aussi se laisse envahir par l’esprit divin de la nature. Il se lance corps et âme dans une danse de guérison et invoque le roi de la forêt pour qu’il sauve son fils (TO : 52). Dans Yukonstyle, l’apparition de Goldie, sous forme de corbeau, oiseau qui dans la mythologie indienne est à l’origine du monde, introduit un élément surnaturel. Toute en flamme, « comme un feu de camp // allumé à coup de delirium tremens » (YS: 39), avec son cri elle s’impose comme la voix de la terre (le corbeau est aussi l’emblème du Yukon), qui brûle sous cette neige en incarnant l’illumination et la purification. À la fin de la pièce, Kate la voit emportant Dad’s, « l’un sur le dos de l’autre » (YS: 66), « les
lueurs vertes et or qui éclairent le parking du liquor store // Ça n’est pas une aurore // C’est eux » (YS: 63). Ainsi la mort de Dad’s est-elle associée avec la lumière de l’aurore, tout comme celle de Gabriel l’est avec « un soleil radieux de mai » (TO: 85) pour suggérer une renaissance spirituelle.

Par ailleurs, les dramaturges utilisent tous les deux une langue narrative à l’intérieur des dialogues à travers laquelle les personnages entrent en contact avec des pensées intimes, ou des forces cachées, comme s’ils accédaient à une sorte d’extra-lucidité qui les dépasse :

Une chose silencieuse a dû se produire en lui qui lui échappe. Antoine cherche à nommer ce qu’il ressent à propos de cette émanation. (TO : 82)

Un prénom fait son chemin du chaud de mon ventre au bord de mes lèvres. Et s’échappe en fine buée dans le blanc cassant des néons. (Kate, YS, 65)

Ancrés dans le paysage nordique et ouverts sur le cosmos, ils portent un regard neuf sur la réalité comme si cet univers étrange dans lequel ils se sont plongés les traversait et se faisait voix. D’ailleurs, Sarah Berthiaume le dit explicitement dans la préface de sa pièce :

J’ai voulu une langue québécoise, mais avec un rythme près de l’anglais ; j’ai aussi voulu des passages narratif qui serviraient de contrepoids à la rudesse des dialogues et à la pauvreté de la langue des personnages. Je voulais ces envolées poétiques comme des zébrures d’or qui illuminent une nuit polaire. Comme si le Yukon traversait les personnages et les rendait plus grands qu’eux-mêmes. Comme s’il parlait à travers eux. (YS : 7)

Cette « langue-paysage » (Rigeade 2013) met l’accent sur l’existence de deux mondes différents, l’un spirituel et l’autre englobant la réalité ambiante. Cependant, comme les passages des dialogues à la narration sont imperceptibles, ces deux mondes pénètrent l’un dans l’autre et s’entremêlent. Cela signifie que le visible et l’invisible, le monde spirituel et le monde matériel appartiennent à une même réalité qui « témoigne d’une alliance profonde de l’être humain avec toute la création » (Languirand et Proulx 2009 : 13). Reste encore à examiner comment la force spirituelle de la Terre Mère s’extériorise, en d’autres termes, comment elle influence les êtres.

Une famille retrouvée

Dans l’une et l’autre pièce apparaît un personnage (Gabriel dans Terre Océane, Kate dans Yukonstyle) que personne n’attend et qui se trouve lui-même projeté dans un
milieu presque malgré lui : Gabriel, le fils adoptif qu’Antoine connaît à peine, vient perturber sa vie parce que son ex-compagne ne peut plus s’occuper de l’enfant mortellement malade, tout comme Kate, voyageuse solitaire, fait irruption chez Garin, son père Dad’s et leur colocataire Yuko. Il semble que leur rôle n’est pas seulement de découvrir la sagesse de la vie et de la mort inspirée par l’héritage spirituel amérindien, mais encore d’agir sur les autres tout en leur permettant de s’ouvrir les uns vers les autres ainsi que vers le cosmos ou le Grand Mystère. Comment est-ce possible ? Eugène Minkowski nous rappelle que grâce à son aspect spirituel, chaque personnalité « crée autour d’elle, par des facteurs fugitifs et inconscients, comme l’odeur, une atmosphère particulière susceptible de pénétrer dans les autres, de les influencer directement » (1999 :119). De surcroît, cette atmosphère discrète entre en contact avec ce que Michel Collot appelle la « pensée-paysage » pour assurer les contacts avec les êtres formant « un système d’interdépendance » (Rigeade 2013). C’est pourquoi un groupe d’individus disparate au début finit par produire un climat particulier que nous pourrions appeler « un désir collectif » ou « un éros de groupe » (Guattari 2014 : 137) capable de pousser les êtres à « Construire un autre monde possible » (Ibid. : 135) suggéré par la voix narrative qui n’appartient pas aux personnages et qui les dépasse, mais grâce à laquelle ils peuvent étendre leurs limites. Ainsi, l’alternance de scènes dialoguées et de récits n’a-t-elle d’autre rôle que d’introduire une nouvelle dynamique qui s’impose comme une force de cohésion.

Cette force est comme un appel. Le passage intense de Gabriel, dont le nom évoque une présence angélique, a complètement changé la vie d’Antoine. Il est devenu « plus réceptif » et « plus attentif à l’autre » car Gabriel a « interpellé, au profond de [s]on cœur, une tendresse oubliée » (TO : 82). De même, Kate aide Yuko à oublier son passé et la mort de sa sœur, elle invite aussi Garin à s’approcher de Yuko et à s’ouvrir à l’amour dont il se croyait incapable : « Mais il faudra attendre longtemps avant que Garin apprenne à dire ces choses // Il faudra des années avant qu’il sache parler d’amour » (YS : 63).

En outre, Gabriel et Kate apportent une nouvelle dimension élargie de la vie. Gabriel en montrant que l’âme retourne auprès du Grand Esprit : « Vas-y, vas-y, Gabriel, avec tes ailes de poisson, plonge dans la terre océane » (TO : 84) ; Kate en voyant que la communion avec les âmes des ancêtres est possible lorsque Goldie vient emporter Dad’s : « Je vois // Leurs deux corps se fondre en or // Scintiller // Puis, redevenir corbeau // Et partir à tire d’ailes // Dans la nuit cassante du Yukon » (YS : 66).

Enfin, l’un et l’autre créent une ambiance de famille, une famille fondée sur l’interdépendance des âmes qui se retrouvent pour vivre une période intense de leur vie et partager leurs sentiments. Antoine se sent tout imprégné de la présence de Gabriel qui l’a aidé à reconstruire un foyer familial : « Antoine écrira à Charlotte : […] Un million de minutes sonnent en images dans ma tête, Gabriel, Dave, Florine, la campagne,
les murs, nos gestes, tout... et toi aussi » (TO : 82). Dans Yukonstyle, entouré d’une vastitude illimitée, le corps a besoin de toucher « quelqu’un pour se souvenir qu’il est un corps », comme le dit Dad’s (YS : 47). C’est pourquoi dans l’espace limité de leur maison mobile ils s’approchent et se touchent pour lutter contre le froid : Yuko frotte les pieds gelés de Kate et crée une intimité qui lui permet de s’exprimer sur son passé. Cependant, réchauffer les pieds d’une nomade (Kate), c’est lui permettre de disparaître « across Canada » (YS : 82) un jour, la laisser partir, comme Antoine se prépare à se séparer de Gabriel en contemplant son regard lumineux : « Une chose silencieuse a dû se produire en lui qui lui échappe. Antoine cherche à nommer ce qu’il ressent à propos de cette émanation » (TO : 82).

Conclusion

En fait, cette chose qui leur échappe mais dont ils sont déjà tout imprégnés s’appelle l’amour. Gabriel, messager de Dieu, qui est venu faire partager un sentiment religieux cosmique et Kate qui porte une nouvelle vie dans son ventre, l’enfant dont elle voulait se débarrasser en arrivant au Yukon et dont le nom, Prosper, lui a été soufflé par cette force invisible en elle, semblent apparaître sur scène pour faire entendre cette voix venue du fond des siècles et dire que la « voie spirituelle autochtone ancestrale, réinterprétée pour aujourd’hui, vaut non seulement pour la guérison et la renaissance intérieures des Amérindiens, mais également pour la manifestation du potentiel spirituel et l’affirmation du meilleur de soi, en tout être humain » (Languirand et Proulx 2009 : 12). Ce que le prénom Prosper semble annoncer, c’est que l’idée du Nord de Glenn Gould dans laquelle s’insère le concept de nordicité globale de Louis-Édmond Hamelin envisage un tout-Canada, plus d’harmonie dans les rapports entre le Nord et le Sud, entre les Autochtones et les non-Autochtones.

Une utopie ? Peut-être, ou peut-être pas, comme raisonne Kate à la fin de la pièce.
Bibliographie


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A Vision of the Canadian Aboriginal North in *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*

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**Abstract**  
This article aims to explore the representations of the North in the 2001 Canadian film *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, directed by Zacharias Kunuk. It was the first feature film to be written, directed and acted completely in Inuktitut, the language of Canada’s Inuit people. Set in the vast Arctic landscape in a distant past, the Inuit legend of Atanarjuat and his older brother Amaqjuaq depicts the indigenous philosophy deeply embedded in the Inuit oral tradition. *Atanarjuat* represents an attempt of the Inuit peoples in Canada to offer an inside view of this popular legend. By resisting appropriation, the film accomplishes its initial goals: to show how for thousands of years Inuit communities have survived in the Arctic, and to introduce the new storytelling medium of film which becomes a tool to re/enforce a sense of pride and belonging to the Inuit community in the Canadian north. The views of Raheja (2007), Ginsburg (2002), Clifford (2000), MacDougal (1997, 1994), Ruby (1996) and other ethnographers and film critics have been employed to support our findings.

**Keywords:**  
*Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, north, Inuit, Fourth-World cinema, myth

**Résumé**  
Introduction: Two dis/similar filmic stories

Many of its aspects make the film *Apocalypto* (2006) absolutely mesmerising at first watching. The unexpected lush setting of the Mesoamerican rainforest, the strange sound of the Yucatec Maya language, the tattoos and scarification customary for that civilisation, the premeditated cruelty against their own kind, the quiet patient endurance of women, all these features make one believe that the producer, Mel Gibson, created a masterpiece of seemingly ethnographic recuperation of a collective story, more than original in comparison to the typical Hollywood production. In view of this, it is disappointing to learn that Gibson and his script co-author Farhad Safinia’s main goal was to make an original film in the action-chase genre. The chase indeed takes a good half of the film, and often leaves the viewer breathless just as it should, according to the genre, but what may spoil the effect of the film for a more sophisticated spectator is its lack of authenticity. In many an archeological, architectural, historical and ethnographic detail, *Apocalypto* is a Hollywood-fabricated spectacle rather than an insight into a lost culture (Lovgren 2006; McGuire 2006; Garcia 2006). However, despite all these shortcomings, we find the film magically beautiful, thought-provoking, and awareness-raising.

Halfway through the film *Atanarjuat. The Fast Runner* (Zacharias Kunuk 2001), one is reminded of *Apocalypto*, although seemingly there was no room for comparison. While the hero of *Apocalypto*, Paksiw (Jaguar Paw) is shown in the exotic jungles of Central America as representative of the Mayan civilisation steeped in lively colours, the main character Atanarjuat, whose name in English reads as Fast Runner, lives in cold and eternally white arctic spaces of North America where the concept of colour...
would be almost non-existent to the Inuit if not for the shades of animal fur. On closer consideration, it turns out that the two films have a lot in common despite that radical difference in setting. The director, Zacharias Kunuk, also chooses a native language, Inuktitut, the dialect of one of Canada’s Inuit peoples, which in the case of both films “allows the audience to completely suspend their own reality and get drawn into the world of the film,” according to Gibson. Analogous to the impressive body tattoos of the men in Apocalypto are the gently drawn stylised seal whiskers on the faces of the women in Atanarjuat. Body decoration is evidently a universal feature of mankind, present in all cultures and all historical periods. Further, while men engage in acts of atrocious cruelty in both films, women struggle patiently in their different ways to survive and protect their children and the community. It may be surprising that the trope of chase figures as the central element in Atanarjuat as well. Both heroes accomplish incredible feats because they escape and defeat their pursuers against all odds in their own manner: Paksiw is exceptionally ingenious while Atanarjuat is a fast runner, faster than the adversaries who chase him. Most interestingly, the time frame for both films seems to be the 16th century. Apocalypto is set around 1511 in pre-Columbian South America where Paksiw, through super-human effort, saves his family against the backdrop of his people’s encounter with the European explorers. At about the same time, a similar drama is enacted in the frozen tundra of the sixteenth-century pre-settler Nunavut (Ginsburg 2002) where Atanarjuat successfully deals with a curse. In fiscal terms, both films were equally profitable, tripling the budget in the box office. Finally, reviewers agree that Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, though a far cry from a Hollywood spectacle, in April 2015 deserved the position of number 1 Canadian film of all time, according to the fourth edition of Canada’s All-Time Top Ten List. Remarkably authentic and anthropologically accurate, this film is even more intriguing and engaging than Apocalypto.

Visual anthropology or not?

In the Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology Jay Ruby was tasked with defining the concept of visual anthropology and ethnographic film within it. His words explain why it is easy to confuse ethnographic film, indigenous cinema and Hollywood spectacles:

There is no standard agreed-upon definition of the genre, and the popular assumption is that it is a documentary about “exotic” people, thereby broadening the term “ethnographic” to stand for any statement about culture. Some scholars argue that all film is ethnographic (Heider 1976), whereas others (e.g., Ruby 1975) wish to restrict the term to films produced by or in association with anthropologists. (1996: 1346)
Though we are inclined to support the view that all films have ethnographic elements in the sense that they may offer insights into a particular culture, it is indisputable that these different genres have different meanings in film theory. Therefore, neither Apocalypto nor Atanarjuat satisfy the criteria of ethnographic film-making. According to David MacDougall, “... the canonical ethnographic film, framed in intercultural terms - /is/ a film made by one cultural group (usually Euro-American) attempting to describe another (usually of the Third or Fourth World1)” (1997: 284).

Gibson’s movie is a romantic, exotic and spectacular aestheticization of the Other, who in this case are the representatives of the Mayan culture of the 16th c. while Atanarjuat does not have the scientific approach that is a prerequisite for ethnographic films, especially the traditional ones. These are both feature films, where Apocalypto is a mythic action-adventure, while Atanarjuat is an epic film which qualifies for the category of indigenous cinema.

The question which can be raised here is the one David MacDougal poses in his essay “Whose Story Is It?” (1994)2. Namely, this renowned anthropologist identified the problem of the author’s voice in ethnographic works and emphasised the complexity of the politics and ethics of representation in visual anthropology. The threat of distortion and the trap of appropriation of the culture through the appropriation of the voice are acknowledged as important issues whose significance is widely accepted today in cultural studies broadly speaking. MacDougal is asking whose the voice of the film is because the situation can be highly ambiguous: is the film making indigenous statement or using it for its own purposes? This opens ontological and moral dimensions an average viewer is not necessarily aware of, which in turn means that they may not be able to interpret the film properly or even that they may be manipulated by the ‘voice.’

For this reason, Apocalypto is not the voice of the Mayan people though it uses indigenous speech, nor is it an ethnographic film though it abounds in exotic local detail. It speaks the fiscal language of its producers and voices the mercantile values of Hollywood filmography, far from objectivity, scientific precision or even fair play. Atanarjuat, on the other hand, seems to be closer to visual anthropology because both the producers and the actors were telling their collective story through the medium of film. Still, as McDougal said for the characters of Rauch’s film Jaguar, “This is their

1) Fay Ginsburg in her 1995 article “Mediating Culture: Indigenous Media, Ethnographic Film, and the Production of Identity” explains that “the term ‘indigenous media’ respects the understandings of those Aboriginal producers who identify themselves as members of ‘First Nations’ or ‘Fourth World People,’ categories that index the sense of common political struggle, shared by indigenous people around the globe” (211). Fourth cinema becomes a tool of resistance and resurgence in constant negotiation with the power structures. Ginsberg describes it as “small-scale, low-budget, and locally based” (211). It was not easy to anticipate the fast rise of the indigenous cinema in less than a decade.

2) It is interesting that the question of authenticity and ownership was articulated in Canadian fiction by Rudy Wiebe in his story “Where’s the Voice Coming From”, published as early as 1974, even before postcolonial academics introduced the term ‘cultural appropriation.’
story, and yet through the strange circumstances of filmmaking here they are, playing their story (1994: 30). Atanarjuat is a feature film produced by Indigenous people who gave us a filmed version of a segment of their culture. It perfectly fits MacDougall’s conclusion regarding ownership in anthropological films dealing with rituals: “These films serve political and ritual purposes. Even if it is not always evident to the outside viewer, they are part of a continuing process of cultural reinforcement and contestation. They have themselves become emblems” (1994: 34).

Indeed, Atanarjuat has become one more emblem of Inuit culture whose success in promoting and reinforcing it is remarkable although its only concession to the non-Inuit speakers is the subtitling of indigenous speech. The indigenous culture is presented with verisimilitude in mind, but the fact remains that actors were employed and the director staged every minute of the film, guided mainly with artistic not with scientific and anthropological intentions.  

**Atanarjuat within Indigenous cinema**

It is claimed that “indigenous films are slowly climbing their way into the mainstream” (Peet 2015). Indeed, 2002 seems to mark a turning point after which the rise of indigenous cinema could not be denied. To quote Cousineau: “After Atanarjuat it became obvious to the system that people wanted to make those films, that they needed to make them, and that the outside world was interested in receiving them” (Mayer 2015). The global success of the fourth-world cinema is undeniable, but the questions John Adair articulated in Through Navajo Eyes (1972) have not been fully answered to this day, though they are still relevant for this developing cinematic field as well as for the Indigenous people:

...what kind of visual and temporal style and aesthetics might Navajo use if they were trained to use the camera? What would they choose to record, how might they frame and compose their images, and how might they lead our eyes to “see” their world from a Navajo perspective? (Wilson 2009)

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3) Jay Ruby reminds us of a unique example in old anthropological filmography: “In The Silent Enemy: An Epic of the American Indian (1930), director H. P. Carver employed an all-native cast to tell the tale of an Ojibway warrior. The film begins with Chief Yellow Robe, the lead actor, in a complete Indian costume, confronting the camera directly to inform audiences, ‘This is the story of my people...Everything that you will see here is real...When you look at the picture, therefore, look not upon us as actors. We are Indians living once more our old life’” (Ruby 1996: 1348). Atanarjuat is similar in its approach. It is a story of the Inuit people, told in visual language, where the participants both are and are not actors because they are living once more, though for the sake of the film, their old way of life. In the words of Isuma-TV, it is a “re-lived” cultural drama, combining the authenticity of modern video with the ancient art of Inuit storytelling” (Isuma-TV).
A variety of relevant answers to these questions are being given by the contemporary Indigenous filmmakers through their acclaimed productions, which seems to be the best aesthetic strategy in view of Jay Ruby’s belief that “/n a postpositive and postmodern world, the camera is constrained by the culture of the person behind the apparatus; that is, films and photographs are always concerned with two things – the culture of those filmed and the culture of those who film” (Ruby, 1996:1345). To avoid these constraints, the most authentic visual communication is probably achieved when the two cultures coincide and Fourth-world films become “articulated sites of indigeneity” (Clifford 2000: 388).

The success of *Atanarjuat* is one of the first examples of this new trend in cinematography. The high acclaim of film critics and audiences, and numerous awards including the prestigious Golden Camera at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001, inspired a body of academic work.

For example, Monika Siebert of Syracuse University in her article “Atanarjuat and the Ideological Work of Contemporary Indigenous Filmmaking” (2010) exposes the formal puzzle of the film which recreates the Inuit way of life in pre-contact times but ends with outtakes which subvert the illusion of indigenous sustainability because they show the actors in a contemporary environment and modern-day clothes. We believe, along with Clifford, that an even greater and misleading illusion would be representing the Inuit way of life as frozen in time, as early ethnographic films did. The point is that Indigenous cultures survive, some even thrive today, though not unchanged since all cultures change:

So these persisting – not exactly “living” – cultures use prosthetic processes, that is, added or connecting devices more like political alliances than grafted limbs or hybrid growths. Nothing weird or bizarre, then, about Indian Gambling Casinos, or Aboriginal video productions, or Hawaiian reggae, but just the normal activity of cultures, changing and adapting in the contact zones of colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial situations. (Clifford 2000: 374)

It is surprising and obsolete, to say the least, to expect that native cinema should show ’stills’ of their past as if it were their present when their communities are undergoing rapid changes. The practice of Fourth cinema is one of them just as using motor sledges or wearing branded clothes. The subtle subversion of *Atanarjuat* is in fact exactly in turning against exoticization by busting the myth of petrified civilisation while preserving the memory of it.

Further, the ideological trap which Siebert identifies is related to the fact that the film has been funded by the Canada’s National Film Board seemingly to allow for indigenous self-representation but actually to provide for Canada’s multicultural feder-
alist project. Instead of now unacceptable politics of appropriation, displacement and exclusion, a new strategy is employed to support representing indigeneity as distinctive only to secure national cohesion at the expense of political autonomy of aboriginal peoples. Playing Indians\(^4\) is for that reason now reserved only for ‘Indians’ so that in *Atanarjuat* an all Inuit cast is engaged along with an all-Inuit crew (except for one person) to create a story told from a categorically indigenist point of view. However, Siebert claims that the story diverts the gaze from the present to the past so that the protagonists become simply actors playing roles, and not their own reservation or urban realities, marked by unemployment, poverty, alcoholism, and alienation, as well as cultural resistance. According to her, instead of Inuit cultural and economic empowerment, the film offers a mythical story of the by-gone times rather than an ideological investment in Inuit sovereignty, rhetorical, cultural, political, and economic. In the end, Monika Siebert concludes:

> So here’s an illustration of a terribly vicious circle: a need to perform cultural difference in order to gain recognition, which in turn precipitates official incorporation into the state and its capitalist economy, which, in yet another turn, results in erasure of any meaningful difference (that is difference in social and economic arrangements) behind the screen of difference performed. (Siebert 2006: 25)

This conclusion is also questionable despite its heuristic logic. Writing six years before Siebert, Clifford addresses the same question of difference and provides an answer we would like to back up:

> Many people continue to feel themselves whole and different despite the fatal impact and all the many subsequent changes. They continue to feel themselves Native Pacific Islanders, or Native Americans, or first Nations peoples of Canada. Even though they may not speak their native languages, though they may be good Christians or good businessmen, these groups have built alliances linking elements of the old with the new; and while certain cultural elements have dropped away, others have been added in. (Clifford 2000: 374)

Cultural identity of a group does involve the elements of nationhood, social status, and economic arrangements, but cannot be reduced solely to them though it can be threatened by their aggressive imposition. Communal identity is not easily erased though it is constantly reshaped.\(^5\) The depiction of an Inuktitut-speaking

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4) Though genuinely interested and concerned, we are acutely aware of our outsider position in relation to Indigenous traditions we are trying to inform ourselves about. The word Indian is used in the text without any prejudice against the Aboriginal peoples.

5) “Manuel Castells underlines the fact that today our world and our lives, as well as our identities, are strongly being reshaped by globalization and information technology revolution. People are influenced by
community of the 16th c. by modern Inuit people who made *Atanarjuat* proves the (changing) persistence of that identity and the survival of its more than meaningful difference.

Although critical of almost every aspect of the film, not only of its possibly auto-subversive ideological underpinning, even Siebert cannot object to the use of digital video technology for the purpose of self-representation. Masterfully employed, digital video replaces the orality of traditional story-telling without destroying it. In favour of the new technologies of representation, Faye Ginsburg describes the rise of Inuit television in her article “Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media” (2002). The Inuit Broadcast Corporation (IBC), licensed in 1981, had a mission to provide for the absolutely non-existent aboriginal content or local broadcast in the CBC’s media invasion of Inuit communities after the launching of a satellite to broadcast to northern Canada. Communications technologies have proven crucial in providing long-distance communication and raising awareness of their significance in preserving cultural heritage but also in politically mobilising Inuit. Only a year after the creation of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in 1999, the first of its kind in the world, according to Ginsburg, Kunuk’s Igloolik Isuma Productions premiered *Atanarjuat*, the first feature film written, produced and acted by Inuit. The unexpected success of the film supports the arguments that new technologies of representation have been boosting and revitalising indigenous peoples in the North instead of having the potentially deleterious effects. The willing participation of the Inuit deemed by Ginsburg an act of self-determination, self-empowerment and political maturity (contrary to what Siebert would say), contributes to the new dynamics and power-relations in the North. Ginsburg closes the Inuit part of her article with these words: “The fact of their appearance on television on *Inuit* terms, inverts the usual hierarchy of values attached to the dominant culture’s technology, conferring new prestige to Inuit ‘culture-making’” (Ginsburg 2002: 44).

What is more significant is the attitude of the Fourth world themselves, as illustrated by Ariel Smith, an Indigenous filmmaker creating since 2001 who has had lived experiences with difference, abuse, and marginalization:

> Native cinema is bigger than the individual movies we make. As Indigenous peoples living in colonial times, our presence – our very existence – is in itself a political statement, and our uncensored artistic expression is itself a beautiful declaration of sovereignty, and self determination. (Smith 2015)
Indigenous cinema becomes a handy tool to reclaim the history and land of Indigenous people, to create original conventions and techniques of filmmaking, and to maintain an autonomous identity moving away from the practices of national film and generally Western influences (Herrington 2011: 2). *Atanarjuat* contributes to all these aspects of Inuit culture, and sets standards for how modern film technology can be applied to these purposes.

The use of modern technology has been thoroughly explored by Michelle Raheja in her article "Reading Nanook’s Smile: Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)” (2007). She focuses on visual sovereignty “as a way of reimagining Native-centred articulations of self-representation and autonomy that engage the powerful ideologies of mass media, but that do not rely solely on the texts and contexts of Western jurisprudence” (Raheja 2007: 1163). The point which is brought to light is the actual lack of clearly definable political sovereignty with regard to native peoples so dispersed and disunited all over North America that only expressions of sovereignty can indicate a degree of cohesion. Therefore, similarities in performance, songs, stories, dreams, and visual texts coming from old times, and modern documentary, experimental, dramatic, ethnographic, and feature films along with video and TV programme materials constitute elements of collective visual sovereignty, more than important in preserving spiritual traditions in contemporary culture-making. In this context, *Atanarjuat* does play a very significant role, according to Michelle Raheja.

The film exercises authentic indigenous aesthetics in various ways. For example, to the non-Inuit viewer the way time is presented may be confusing because the past, present and future co-exist and scenes depicting them are linked without any hint to the uninformed viewer. For that reason, the beginning of the film requires focus in order to understand what is happening ‘now’ (in Western conceptualisation of time) and what happened twenty years before. The filmmakers refused to give hints to those who are unfamiliar with Inuit traditions and world-view⁶. Also, Inuit visual sovereignty is expressed through representation of spiritual traditions and discrete cultural practices in their original form (at least to the best of their knowledge). The members of the family are shown going about their daily work of cooking, hunting, fire-keeping, house-building, clothes-making, equipment maintenance etc. which may be puzzling to non-Inuit viewers because they are exclusive to the Inuit world.

⁶) In her 2009 article ““Today is today and tomorrow is tomorrow”: Reflections on Inuit Understanding of Time and Place,” Nicole Gombay gives a useful explanation: “In a sense, what I am proposing is that at a fundamental level, one which is predicated on, and yet also constructs their understanding of place, Inuit are encouraged to perceive and behave as though each moment were meaningful, and so they inhabit what Momaday (1987: 158) calls ‘an extended present’ or Carpenter (1956: 3) calls an ‘everlasting now’. This is predicated on the mindset that one cannot and should not assume control over the world. Adopting such an attitude means giving over to being in a state of perpetual becoming. Nothing is what it seems and one must simply take each moment as it comes.”
For that reason, *Atarnajuat* resembles the practice of salvage ethnography since it records/recreates cultural specifics though, as explained above, this is not an example of ethnographic filmmaking *per se* since expert ethnologists’ explanations are naturally missing from this work of film art. Even in the sphere of the spiritual, always more sophisticated than the mundane world, where the invisible clash of opposed forces is represented as a conflict between emblematic animals, the viewer is expected to decipher what is going on without a clue. It is rather obvious that the filmmakers did not want primarily to educate the non-Inuit public on their cultural specifics and spiritual traditions, but, foremost, to indulge in self-representation (the film was originally meant exclusively for Inuit audiences). Evidence of that are long (some may say uninteresting) shots of frozen landscapes. To an untrained eye, they show an unchanging scene – ice and snow everywhere, that only Coleridge could make dramatic and threateningly attractive.7

The particular geographical space of the Arctic, a frozen landscape seemingly unexciting and unvaried except for the equally frozen seascape, is a trade mark of Inuit aesthetics so that a persistent focus on it, absent from typical Western cinematographics, exemplifies visual sovereignty as an aspect of collective identity reinforcement. Although the image of Canada being “a few acres of snow” initiated by Voltaire survived to this day, snow storms and icy spells are usually depicted mostly in urban environments since man is not supposed to be part of vast frozen wilderness which is, in fact, still home to some Inuit bands. Therefore, long shots, adapted from Inuit oral tales, and panorama of the permafrost region are not simply a filming technique but a way of showing respect to the North that still nurtures the Inuit. As Laura Herrington claims, it proves “the possibility that an indigenous culture can maintain its separate identity through changes, adaptations, and integration of modern technologies—i.e. camera and cinema (2011: 15).

7) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner”
...And through the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken --
The ice was all between.
The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!...
Myth in the North

The idea of attachment to apparent Northern nothingness is not always comprehensible. For example, even W. L. Morton who acknowledges the significance of the North for Canadian history, asks a question like this: “How indeed can something which is after all only a freezing emptiness, an arctic void, a blizzard swept desert, a silent space, dark as the other side of the moon half of each year, mean anything at all?” (Morton 1970: 32). Provoked by this question, Sheng-mei Ma in his essay “The Myth of Nothingness in Classics and Asian Indigenous Films” (2013) claims that sand and ice comprise a vast nothingness, but not a black hole of human experience. On the contrary, out of emptiness and void, a mythology is born. The frozen wasteland is not inhabited by primitive unsophisticated people who should be therefore rightfully marginalised, but by human communities imaginatively responsive to their environment. It has often been noted that though desolate, the landscape in Atanarjuat constitutes an important non-human character. Indeed, nature is fore-fronted from the beginning of the film, either in its harsh and threatening aspects or in its stunning sunlit beauty. The Inuit develop a relationship with the land, and their stories are part of the stories of nature, as Ma says. So, the North is not simply a backdrop to what happens in the film but almost an agent of the action. It is metaphorically significant that the stranger who brings evil into the community comes from the North, and dramatically affects their life and survival capacity.

A brief summary of the plot usually begins with Atanarjuat, a young man who wins the love of Atuat against Oki to whom she has been promised in marriage. Oki’s flirtatious sister Puja charms Atanarjuat to become his second wife and later seduces even his brother Amaqjuaq only to betray both of them to her brother Oki who kills Amaqjuaq. Atanarjuat escapes naked and saves his life running barefoot across the frozen sea. Helped by Qulitalik, Oki’s great uncle, who left the village many years ago, Atanarjuat returns for revenge but spares Oki’s life in the spirit of restoring peace. Qulitalik’s sister Panikpak puts a walrus tooth necklace around Atanarjuat’s neck thus making him a new leader while Oki and Puja are banished.

However, what precedes this part of the plot happened about twenty years earlier when a strange shaman, Tungajuaq, came from up north and caused the death of Kumaglak, the leader of the tribe. The cause and the effect are clearly indicated by positioning the title of the film between this scene and the one showing Qulitalik’s parting with Panikpak and leaving their formerly close-knit community with his wife. When evil enters the band and Kumaglak mysteriously dies, good Qulitalik leaves it to return only when it becomes existentially necessary. As he predicts (“Tulimaq is the one they’ll go after now”), Tulimaq and his two sons Amaqjuaq and Atanarjuat will be from then on victimised by Oki’s family until balance is restored.
It is almost inevitable to read any contemporary art coming from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Canadian and American people as a political agenda aimed at correcting historical wrongs and improving their position at present. In the case of *Atanarjuat*, if nothing else, the original language of the Inuit used in the film is an apostrophe of the autochthonous condition of these people that sets them apart from the early settlers, their descendants and the modern-day immigrants. Yet, involving ideology, however justifiable and compulsory, does not give full justice to this work of art which seems to be in the first place an illustration of the myth-making instinct of the Arctic people. This mental and imaginative impulse ranks them equal to all great civilisations of the world which also depict the clash of good and evil in their mythologies, and the loss and restoration of balance as the driving force of communal life.

As represented in the film, Inuit mythology acknowledges the existence of evil and accepts it as a natural force. The narrator says: “We never knew what he was or why it happened. Evil came to us like Death. It just happened and we had to live with it.” Evil is connected to the arrival of a stranger dressed in white furs who comes from the north. The symbolism of colour white and his exceptional powers make him represent the deadly aspect of the North, the cold North that kills by exposure or starvation, the usual causes of death among the Arctic people. When death happens, nothing can be done about it except endure its consequences. Tungajuaq the visitor is more powerful even than their shaman Kumaglak so that when they play a power game, Kumaglak drops dead, and Tungajuaq wins the right to decide who will be the next leader of the tribe. The magic walrus-tooth necklace goes to Sauri.

However, it seems that Inuit mythology does not simply externalise evil. When Tungajuaq puts the shaman’s necklace around Sauri’s neck, he warns him with the words: “Be careful what you wish for.” It becomes clear that Sauri wanted the position of shaman and wished his father dead so that his wish summoned Tungajuaq as a materialisation of his thoughts and an instrument of murder. This ancient philosophy is evidently in line with modern science which explains thought as a form of energy that can affect our reality. If one can control a computer game using only thoughts, then the power of thoughts is much greater than our modern civilisation believed. To the Inuit civilisation, this was quite familiar. Tulimaq shouts in anger at Sauri: “You helped him murder your own father!” confirming the fact that it was not only the evil shaman who caused Kumaglak’s death, but also the evil desires of his own son. The warning “Be careful what you wish for” was providential because Sauri wished his father dead, and he himself was later killed by his own son Oki.

Not only should one be careful with their thoughts but with their words as well. At one point, Oki in exasperation cries at Amaqjuaq: “I will kill you” which to a non-Inuit viewer is an inconsequential threat of a helpless angry person. Not so with the Inuit. Amaqjuaq with a serious expression on his face repeats to his brother Atanarjuat what
Oki told him, and Atanarjuat does not reassure him. Quite the contrary. They both understand that thoughts become words and words become actions. Having loudly spoken his thoughts, Oki now has a license to kill Amaqjuaq which he does. All this proves that the film *Atanarjuat* reveals a very sophisticated world view incorporating a complex mythology and system of beliefs.

Part of it is the very phenomenon of Inuit shamanism which implies the existence of spirits. Everything in this world, be it animate or inanimate, has a form of spirit, and since these unseen forces are very powerful the Inuit fear them. How powerful they are is demonstrated in the power game that the two shamans play. They are both tied with leather thongs and practically immobile so that the fight between them is in fact the fight between their spirits represented as a polar bear and a walrus. The necklaces of polar bear claws and walrus teeth owned by them symbolically link the shamans to these animals which being spirits are invisible yet capable of affecting their environment. The stone lamp breaks in half and the local shaman, Kumaglak, suddenly dies. Although this kind of animism as a religious belief precedes modern religions, it has to be treated as equal to them in terms of beliefs, emotions, sacred objects, rituals and symbols. It springs out of environmental nothing, so to say, but helps the Inuit people understand their world and organise their life in a meaningful way.

Its commensurability with the European imaginary is evidenced by the power game itself. It reminds one very much of the beheading game played in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a 14 c. English romance, in which the Green Knight challenges King Arthur in the spirit of fair play to cut his head off. The Green Knight clad all in green resembles Tungajuaq dressed all in white where both colours stand for the power of natural forces. Tungajuaq challenges Kumaglak and he accepts the spiritual duel in a friendly way just as Sir Gawain accepts the duel with the Green Knight. Both games determine the plot of the two stories and the life course of the persons involved. Most of all, this similarity is illustrative of the myth-making ability characterising different civilisations and invalidating culture hierarchies. The North as well as the South sparks the imagination of the people who live there, and the film *Atanarjuat* seems to be foremost a reworking of an old myth and not a “performance necessitated by the politics of recognition” (Siebert 2006: 24).

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8) Our further research will be aimed at exploring various games played in the film: wolfing, punching heads, pulling lips, tying limbs, to show their universality and therefore essential connectedness of mankind.
Conclusion

The last mythical element to be mentioned here is the idea of animistic reincarnations introduced by the film. Not only does each person possess a spirit, but the spirit (or multiple spirits depending on the Inuit tribe) does not die with the person. It moves into a new-born body giving it some qualities of the old owner. Atuat is as beautiful as Panikpak’s mother whose name she shares, and little Kumaglak, Atuat’s son will be a wise leader as Panikpak’s murdered husband. It is interesting that the spirits do not remain within one family but move between them connecting them after periods of discord. When the evil afflicts the tribe, taunting, murder, patricide, adultery, deceit, and rape are its particular forms. They are the maladies that make the community sick, and in order to be reintegrated they need to heal. This is achieved by Atanarjuat, of course, who matures physically and spiritually through his ordeal and becomes capable of forgiveness because he is now the stronger one. He will not kill his brother’s murderer because the killing needs to stop. However, Oki and his sister Puja are banished from the community by Panikpak, the woman who sees and knows more than the others. She recognises the spirits of the dead in Kumaglak and Atuat, she magically summons her brother Qulitalik to their help, and at the end she sings the song which opened the film. The cycle is completed, the interdependence and continuity are secured, everything is connected through the spirits, and the community is healed. The Inuit mythical story specific to the North is told only to those who already understand it, but to no others, as Panikpak promised at the beginning. However, the film Atanarjuat is there for all those who want to hear the voice of the Ab/origina ls and understand the revitalising power of aboriginal myth. One is inevitably reminded of that famous indigenous challenge to settler/colonials in Canada: If this is your land, where are your stories? Atanarjuat depicts one of these stories revived by the Fourth world film, as Ginsburg explains:

Indigenous people are using screen media not to mask but to recuperate their own collective stories and histories—some of them traumatic—that have been erased in the national narratives of the dominant culture and are in danger of being forgotten within local worlds as well (Ginsburg 2002: 42).

After its immense success, Atanarjuat now not only (re)claims ownership of the land but also becomes “aboriginal cultural property” (Sutton 1978:1), actively used as a tool to deal with “colonial oppression, exploitation and exoticization” (Herrington 2011: 1) but even more importantly as a tool to re/enforce a sense of pride and belonging to the Inuit community in the Canadian north.
Filmography


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A Vision of the Canadian Aboriginal North in Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)

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The “confluence of spirit, idea, and image”: The North in Canadian Culture in the Interwar Period

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Abstract
This article looks at examples from literature, drama and painting to see how representations of the Canadian North contributed to defining the cultural identity of the nation. Well-known paintings by the Group of Seven inspired poems, novels and plays offering a uniquely Canadian atmosphere in the interwar period, and a recent exhibition confirms that curators show an interest towards these works even in the new millennium.

Keywords:
Group of Seven, Arctic Expedition, Hermann Voaden, wilderness, Bertram Brooker, Think of the Earth

Résumé
L’auteur de l’article étudie, à partir d’exemples puisés au domaine de la littérature, du théâtre et de la peinture, la manière dont les représentations du Nord canadien ont contribué à la définition de l’identité nationale. Les œuvres bien connues du Groupe des Sept ont inspiré aussi bien des poèmes que des romans, voire des pièces de théâtre, proposant une atmosphère particulière du Canada de l’époque de l’entre-deux-guerres. Une récente exposition témoigne de l’intérêt porté à ces tableaux, même de nos jours.

Mots-clés :
Groupe des Sept, expédition dans l’Arctique, Hermann Voaden, nature sauvage, Bertram Brooker, Pense à la Terre
In this article we wish to evoke some cases to help understand how arts and artists contributed to highlighting the North as decisive element of Canadian identity. Although the process started already at the end of the nineteenth century, it is still relevant in the new Millennium: in October 2015, *The New York Times* had an article about a new exhibition of seldom-seen paintings by Lawren Harris to be opened in Hammer Museum, Los Angeles on October 11, 2015. “The Idea of North: The Paintings of Lawren Harris” would later be on display in Boston and Toronto (in the Art Gallery of Ontario, July 2 – September 11, 2016), as well. The originator was award-winning American comedian-playwright-actor-banjo player Steve Martin, himself an owner of three canvasses by Lawren Harris, who simply wanted to give more recognition to the Canadian painter in the U.S. The article quotes Andrew Hunter of AGO saying that Harris’s paintings “were so tied to an idea of Canada that we didn’t see them as paintings — they were icons” for Canadians in the 1960s and 1970s. How could these pictures about cold, isolated places in the North become national icons half a century later?

If we cast a quick glance at the work of ‘Confederation Poets’ we can see that they were moving in this direction already in the early 20th century: several poems by Duncan Campbell Scott and Charles D. G. Roberts are located in the North. Popular culture in the early 20th century also found the North as the site for stories or novels attractive for a wider readership, e.g. *The Prairie Wife* (1915) and its sequences by Arthur Stringer, adapted to film in the mid-1920s. Speaking of films, Melnyk (38) points out that

> [T]he Hollywood representation of Canadian subjects as a sub-genre of the American western captured certain aspects of Canadian identity, however inaccurately. ... it described Canada as a northern country defined by snow and cold. ... If nothing else, Hollywood films gave Canada a distinct identity ... An excellent example of how non-Canadians were able to make a mark for themselves using Canadian material was the 1922 classic *Nanook of the North* by Robert J. Flaherty.

Some of these themes appeared even earlier in the new painting style and choice of topics introduced by the Group of Seven artists, who liked to glorify Canada's “virile

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1) E.g. “The Forsaken” (1903) by D.C. Scott takes place “In the heart of the north-land” (272); in his “The Height of Land” (1916) he mentions “The lonely north enlaced with lakes and streams” (278); in 1931 Roberts published “The Iceberg” (218–226), a long poem about his experiences in the Arctic region.
natural beauty” and “offered wild, windswept wilderness as a metaphor for the hardi-
ness of a ‘northern’ people” (Melnyk 40).

Lawren Harris, who studied in Berlin and first painted streets and industrial plants in Toronto, claimed in 1928:

Our art is founded on a long and growing love and understanding of the North in an ever clearer experience of oneness with the informing spirit of the whole land and a strange brooding sense of Mother Nature fostering a new race and a new age. ... So the Canadian artist was drawn north. (quoted by Silcox, 30)

The first step in this direction was in 1921 when Harris and Jackson discovered the north shore of Lake Superior as a “perfect painting country” (Murray, 31). Concerning locations further north, Silcox explains that

[only Jackson, Harris, and F. H. Varley travelled to the Far North and the Arctic and painted there. ... the idea of 'North' itself, for Harris, was first a spiritual truth, then a concept, and finally a visual experience. The farther north Harris went, the closer he seemed to get to the ideal confluence of spirit, idea, and image. (Silcox, 37)

Harris and Jackson actually even joined the Government Arctic expedition where they “painted a large number of sketches ... (and) learned to explore each region for those particular areas where form and character and spirit reached its summation” (Harris 1984, 30). Harris started to paint bare Northern landscapes around 1922 – these landscapes offered him a possibility to move in the direction of abstraction around 1930 and to express a divine presence in the mid-1930s.

Harris’s snow-capped Arctic mountains were symbolic of a remote, pure region of light from which Canada’s spiritual energy came. ... The power in Harris’s Arctic paintings reflects the conviction he had about this and also provides a dimension to the basic idea that the Group of Seven advanced in their missionary idealism: that the North was strong and true and free, and that Canadians were a northern people. (Silcox, 380)

It was not only the topics and paintings of the Group of Seven, and particularly Lawren Harris, but his figure lay behind some literary works, as well. As Betts suggests, “the protagonist of Brooker’s acclaimed novel [Think of the Earth, 1936, KK] has many loose resemblances to Harris. The character is a mystic who looks to the mountains, the Canadian mountains, as the icon of northern spiritual intensity and purity, as a metaphor for the spiritual impulse in his mind” (in Harris 2007, 86). A few years later, Mrs. Bentley in As for Me and My House by Sinclair Ross evokes in her journal
entry that Philip makes sketches during their visit to the farm that show “just the hills, the driftwood logs, and stunted trees” (132) as if she wished to sum up North Shore, Lake Superior by Lawren Harris.

There was, however, a totally different Canadian North along the Pacific coastline: when Emily Carr returned home from France in November 1911 she was fully determined “to picture totem poles in their own village settings, as complete a collection of them as I could... With this objective I again went up north next summer and each successive summer during the time I taught in Vancouver” (Carr, 427). Her pictures of the early 1910s show not only totem poles and native villages, but also thick foliage.

As Northrop Frye, himself a great admirer of painting in general and of works by members of the Group of Seven in particular (as were other theorists, including Hugh Kenner and Charles Taylor), emphasizes, “It is not always realized how closely analogous the developments of modern literature are to those in the visual arts” (Frye 2003, 53). And indeed, in Canadian art of the 1920s we can find a great number of examples both for the close collaboration of artists in different fields (e.g. Group of Seven painters like Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer and A. Y. Jackson were working for Hart House Theatre with stage designs) and for influencing one another. The theatre being a forum par excellence for artists of different genres, their reflections on the idea of the North in the late 1920s and early 1930s can prove how important it was for suggesting a new element in the cultural identity of the nation.

Sherrill Grace, in the “Introduction” to the anthology Staging the North. Twelve Canadian Plays, offers insightful remarks after a short survey of men of letters in Canada dealing with the challenge of the North, starting with founding member of the Canada First Movement R. G. Haliburton, who in 1869 had a public lecture on “The Men of the North and Their Place in History”, and mentioning examples from the 20th century, as well.

In the interwar period, Herman Voaden was a pioneer in the field of drama and theatre, together with Merril Denison (even if the latter’s volume was entitled The Unheroic North, 1923) and Gwen Pharis Ringwood. Voaden himself dedicated Six Canadian Plays (1930) to the north – by ‘north’ meaning north of Lake Superior, just like the Group of Seven painters. Of their work Grace also emphasizes that they served as “icons of cultural identity, using powerful images of a deeply felt nordicity” (xi), but she stresses at the same time that “this North is a southern construction” (x), adding that “to the southern mind, the North is a paradox: it is at once empty – with noth-

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2) “Haliburton’s North of white racial purity, romantic idealism, spiritual inspiration and masculinist adventure is fundamentally the North of Lawren Harris and the Group of Seven, of Herman Voaden, Grey Owl, and Stephen Leacock ... There have always been other Norths ... Quebec has a long cultural and literary tradition of North as le pays d’en haut ... and the Norths of the Klondike Gold Rush, of oil and mineral exploration ... and of ‘Eskimo’ art from Baffin Island have steadily expanded the parameters and the images of where and what North is and means.” (Grace, x)
ing but lakes, rivers, forests, muskeg, taiga, tundra, and ice – and full – full of exotic peoples, caribou, mineral riches, unsolved mysteries and ghosts" (xi). For Voaden the Group of Seven painters could set the tone for other forms of art as to how to view the 'new country' and how to turn these new visions into artistic expression. His objective was to create a tradition in the staging of plays

that will be an expression of the atmosphere and character of our land as definite as our native-born painting and sculpture.... If the strength and individuality of the work of our painters — their artistic achievements in form, rhythm, design, and colour, and their spiritual contributions in austerity, symbolism, and idealism — if these can be brought into our theatre and developed in conjunction with the creation of a new drama that will call for treatment in their spirit and manner and be closely allied to them in content and style, we shall have a new theatre art and drama here that will be an effective revelation of our own vision and character as a people. (Voaden, 4)

And indeed, Voaden’s own plays of the late 1920s and 1930s attempt to move beyond the traditional possibilities of a mainly verbal form of expression and invite musical and visual elements to produce a complex stage image, most often about the experience of the Canadian North. He claimed to be a follower of German expressionist theatre:

The challenge to our dramatists is to seek an ever varying expression of our life, in poetry and symbolism as well as prose and realism; and to join hands with our painters, sculptors, dancers, and musicians to create new combinations of the arts, lifting them all to inspired levels of beauty and significance in which they may be universal, being the reflection of the vision and beauty of a new people in a new land. (Voaden, 5)

In 1929 Herman Voaden argued that our native playwrights should discover new materials in character, motive and action, particularly in the direction indicated by our painters.... [W]hat we need above all is courage: the determination to be no longer merely imitative, but to proceed with originality and imagination, knowing better what is being done outside Canada, and striking out along new paths in stagecraft, with a firmer will to recognize and develop our own native drama. (Quoted in Rubin 1996, 87)

*Wilderness. A Play of the North* was the first step toward finding his own voice in drama. It is also one of the first examples of a “southern tradition of plays about the Canadian North” (Grace 1999, xv) that can be linked with the artistic efforts in painting
and film to identify Canada as a country of the North. As the author points out in the introduction to this short one-act play, "It is realistic – traditional in form. ... Of all my plays, Wilderness owed most to the Group of Seven.... Of all their paintings, I liked best MacDonald’s ‘Solemn Land’ (Algoma) and Harris’ ‘Above Lake Superior’, with its mood of austerity, loneliness and peace" (Voaden 1930, 4). The play, which had a studio production at Yale in 1931, shows the strong influence of Riders to the Sea by Irish playwright J. M. Synge, as well as evoking a motif of Maria Chapdelaine by the ‘tourist writer’ Louis Hémon, the best-known literary representation of rural life in Québec to that date (which Voaden adapted to the stage in the 1930s). Voaden used the North as a setting where the sea, the source of danger in Synge’s play, is replaced by the blizzard, which is equally perilous. As the playwright insisted, “the North possesses unique vitality – and elemental strength which uplifts and sublimates the strong and those who give themselves to it gladly, while it warps and beats down the weak and those foreign to its spirit” (Voaden 1930, 5).

Wilderness is set in the “kitchen-living room of a small frame house in a fishing village on the rocky north shore of Lake Superior” on a “late afternoon of a warm April day, 1930” (Voaden 1980, 88), with two main characters: Ella Martin, in her sixties, and Mary Brown, a young teacher who is a newcomer to the settlement, rents a room from Mrs. Martin and falls in love with Ella’s son, Blake. Ella Martin reminds one of Maurya in Riders: she lost her husband the previous year, and now her son perishes in the blizzard. She does not like the North and is tired of life. The setting is realistic, though many elements in it have a symbolic function: in the gloomy room, the red blanket on the coach and the white oilcloth on the table offer a contrast of colours, which is further accentuated by the semi-darkness indoors and the bright sunshine seen through the open door. The late afternoon soon turned to sunset: the coming of the night that suggests death, while April evokes Easter and its mystery. The only ‘event’ in the monotony of the sparsely populated settlement is the train crossing it four times a day – its noise giving a rhythm at the climax of the play – which only makes Mary lonelier than ever as Voaden makes use of expressionistic sound effects on the stage:

*The sound of the train is now distinctly heard. It began as a faint murmur – a low pattern of sound in the sombre silence of the wilderness, and gradually increased until its thrum is now ominous and insistent. During the following speeches it mounts to the proportion of thunder, with Mary’s gathering terror, coming suddenly to a stop with her sharp realization of what may have happened.* (Voaden 1980, 94)

The train refers to technical modernization and to the possibility of leaving the place, but it is also the vehicle of communication with the outside world since it brings letters into the community. Mary feels utter abandonment under these conditions.
but is ready to accept what Blake told her, namely that “there’s a great future for the north country – ... it won’t be long before there’ll be mines and railways and water-power dams and roads and cities everywhere” (Voaden 1980, 90). As Mary remembers how they enjoyed spending time in the wilderness, Blake shows the same character traits as Tavistock half a decade later in Brooker’s Think of the Earth:

MARY: ... On the big hill I’ve known him to get very solemn and quiet: “Sometimes I’m afraid of things,” he’d say, “they seem to come flaming on me too brightly. God’s to be seen in the silver and gold of dawn – in the crimson and purple of sunset,” and he’d lift his arms as if he was worshipping.

... Sometimes he’d forget I was with him and his eyes would be strange.
(Voaden 1980, 93)

What looks like an exalted state for Mary is simply “bush-craziness” for Blake’s mother, who states that “He liked the woods more’n he like you ‘r me” (Voaden 1980, 93). Finally the young woman has to realize that no hope is left; Blake disappeared in the snowstorm: his comrades could not even find his dead body. His mother summed up what might have happened to him: “The snow kept gettin’ deeper and deeper an’ the blizzard blinded him. ‘N he fought on an’ on til he come back on his own tracks. ‘N then the darkness set in - ‘n he give up – ‘n the snow was warm” (Voaden 1980, 96).

For Mary, the tragic turn of events means an epiphanic moment:

Then he’ll live as he said in the woods and the rocks and the skies – and in my heart too.... I begin to understand his faith. It will be my faith.... I too shall hear the wilderness calling, calling my life into a great adventure. It will be my land. I’ll belong to it. I’ll be part of its winds and woods and rocks – part of its flashing Northern Lights. (Voaden 1980, 96)

For the mother, the loss of her son means that there is nothing left in life for her. She utters the last word – “Rocks!” – “[w]ith loneliness, bitterness, and great finality,” while Mary pronounces the same word “[a]s if whispering a magic charm” (Voaden 1980, 97) after “the shadow of a night hawk swoops by” making her feel as if Blake’s soul were passing by her. The two women seem to embody the duality of the Northern experience seen from the South: the mother remembers only the negative elements, she is not enchanted by the bitter conditions and blames the North for losing her husband and her only son. For the young teacher, on the other hand, staying in the North becomes a mission: she is ready to realize Blake’s romantic ideas and expose herself to the call of the wilderness. And for Voaden, the playwright, the North seems to offer a starting point for theatrical experimentation in the vein of expressionism, implying
that the visual and acoustic elements of the performance are as important as the dialogues themselves.

As a conclusion, we can state – on the basis of the above examples – that the North became an important subject matter in various genres and forms of artistic impression in the first three decades of the twentieth century: the artists’ fascination with the North helped them offer a clear cultural vision for the nation in this period. The North for them was not a geographical unit or a special climate, but a metaphor for transcendental visions, a symbol for overcoming hardships as well as for becoming victims of Nature’s powers. Several decades had to pass, however, before the indigenous inhabitants of this North would enter the stage and offer their versions/visions of the North based on the traditions of several generations and on their own firsthand experiences.

Works cited


Katalin Kürtösi

The “confluence of spirit, idea, and image”: The North in Canadian Culture in the Interwar Period

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Visual and Audible Expressions of the North based on the Works of Selected Canadian Artists and Henry Beissel’s Cantos North

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Abstract
The article focuses on the visual and audible expressions (the image /"image-ings" and sound effects) of Canadian artists and poets (C.D. Shanly and Henry Beissel) and their interpretation of the North. Since there is an abundance of works related to this topic, I have limited my focus of the artistic works (paintings specifically) to W. B. Bruce’s (The Phantom Hunter) and Lawren Harris’s arctic paintings (Lake and Mountains, Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone, Mount Robson, and Mount Lefroy). The aim of the article is to compare and analyse the poems with the selected paintings and to illustrate (through word selection, metaphorical images, colours, images, formations etc.) how and to what extent the visual (the paintings) and audible (the poem) complement each other and give an added force to how we perceive these works through our senses.

Keywords: The Northwest Passage, myth of the North, visual snow-scapes, C.D. Shanly, Henry Beissel, W.B. Bruce, Lawren Harris, Group of Seven

Résumé
Cet article se penche sur les expressions visuelles et sonores (image / «image-ings» et effets sonores) d’artistes et de poètes canadiens (C.D. Shanly et Henry Beissel) et leur interprétation du Nord. Compte tenu de l’abondance de travaux traitant ce sujet, la présente étude se focalise sur les œuvres plastiques (plus particulièrement picturales) notamment celles de W.B. Bruce (Le Chasseur fantôme) et sur les scènes arctiques de Lawren Harris (Lac et montagnes, Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone, Le mont Robson et Le mont Lefroy). Le but de l’article est de comparer et d’analyser les poèmes avec les toiles sélectionnées et d’illustrer (à travers une analyse du choix des mots, images métaphoriques, couleurs, images, formations etc.) comment et dans quelle mesure le visuel (les tableaux) et l’audible (le poème) se complètent et confèrent plus de force à la façon dont nous percevons ces œuvres.

Mots-clés : Passage du Nord-Ouest, mythe du Nord, paysages de neige, C.D. Shanly, Henry Beissel, W.B. Bruce, Lawren Harris, Groupe des Sept
The article focuses on the visual and audible expressions (the image and sound effects) of Canadian artists and poets and their interpretation of the North. As the literary and artistic interpretations on and about the North are countless, I have limited my article to the artistic works, specifically the paintings, of William Blair Bruce, and The Group of Seven (with a focus on Lawren Harris’s Northern paintings). These paintings will be compared and contrasted with the epic work of Henry Beissel (Cantos North -1982) in seeking to establish and understand the concept of what the North has come to mean and how the myth and fiction of past centuries has given layers of theories and misconceptions.

How does one begin to define a conceptual understanding of the North? This is an entity that is loaded with theories, myths, and legends that have accumulated during the past centuries. The obvious starting point is to try and define the whole concept of the Canadian North. Therefore, it can be stated that the North is at once a geographical fact and a fluid, ungraspable metaphor. The myth that has evolved dates back many centuries, which has held many adventurers and seafarers intrigued and occupied. The mysteries evolved mostly due to the fact that the areas of the Northern hemisphere were difficult to navigate, because of the unfavourable weather conditions prevailing for most of the year. These areas were unaccountably viewed as a blank space and as such allowed a whole series of speculations and theories to build up.

One of the most enduring theories was the existence of the Northwest Passage. This was supposed to flow between the land bridge and America through which one may reach North Eastern Asia, the Orient, and its riches. The appropriation of those territories was therefore considered crucial by the great European monarchies. The charting of the Arctic was a very slow and gradual process over the past centuries roughly from the early fifteenth to the early twentieth century in which each and every expedition drew further territories on the map. Though these territories were considered empty by the white European man, one of the first discoveries within these areas was the fact that it was in fact inhabited by the Inuit and Native Peoples. This of course did not stop further expeditions, but enforced the realization that inland expeditions may rely on the resources and guidance of the local population.

The mystery surrounding the Arctic and the Northwest Passage created a myth of the North that was imagined as being empty and void of human inhabitants. The erasure of the Native Peoples and the Inuit from the landscape was important in maintaining this myth throughout the centuries. After all, an uninhabited and seemingly empty landscape allowed the European monarchies unlimited and undisturbed access to these lands. The notion of charting “seemingly” undiscovered and new areas (thus the term “Terra Nova” is often used) gave the expeditions further zest and bravado. The intention of these adventurous men and wealthy merchants was ultimately two-fold: to attain fame and huge profit from whatever “riches” could be had.
Hundreds of men sacrificed their lives in search of the Northwest Passage, a myth that kept expeditions going until the early twentieth century. Whether it was worth it is certainly questionable. Nevertheless, the continuous output of works written on and about the north since the sixteenth century has remained constant. The paradoxical fascination for this vast, empty, barren and hostile land defies comprehension and reason, which is imagined as a “sinister and menacing” (1971: 142) monster by Northrop Frye that arouses “stark terror” (1971: 138) in those who envision it. Nevertheless, the North seeks to define and formulate the ungraspable with the fantastical. Noteworthy examples are many, Sherrill Grace for example, refers to the powerful “visual images” (2009: 20) that have influenced Europeans throughout history as Gerardus Mercator’s Map of the Arctic (1569)\(^1\), which combine fact and fiction in its imagining of the North. The “image-ing” (Grace 2009: 20) of the North as Grace notes provides countless fanciful visual and audible representations past and present.

In defining or “image-ing” the North Henry Beissel’s epic work, Cantos North (1982), envisions a “vast blank canvas of a land” (1982: 7). This short, but extremely complex description carries within it the many and varied meanings that have accumulated in the past. The formation of definitions, therefore, is an often discussed issue that concern the Canadian North. Inevitably, one must distinguish between the North’s image and its reality. A certain fact is that nearly half of Canada’s land mass lies north of the sixtieth parallel. Where is the North or rather from where do we define the North? One often accepted view is that Canada’s North is part of the great sweep of northern lands and seas above where most Canadians live (“The Canadian North”). Other notions view the Canadian North or the North as a political definition for a region that consists of Canada’s three territories: Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Yet, an alternative definition that concerns the description and natural phenomena in general, says that it is that portion of the country that lies north of the tree line (this includes Canada’s geographical centre): covering most of Nunavut, and the northerly parts of the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Labrador. Based on this popular imagination white people do not seem to perceive the North as a whole, but rather “regard only particular and very localized northern situations”, which would include references to the Northwest Passage, a particular Arctic expedition, the Inuit, the cold and possibly the Klondike (Hamelin 1989: 7). The whole notion reflecting on Cartier’s expression with reference to the North, “the land God gave to Cain,” still echoing in scientific literature in mid twentieth century (Hamelin 1989: 8).

\(^1\) Gerardus Mercator (1512–94), a Flemish cartographer, is well known for developing the Mercator projection map. This colourful map of the North Pole is a mixture of contemporary medieval information and myths from exploration in the Arctic regions and undiscovered areas of open waters. (“Mercator Gerardus”)
Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

The idea of the North seems altogether ungraspable and its conceptual boundaries are also fluid. "The North occupies the imagination, filling it with dreams of high adventure and fabulous wealth. To a Canadian, North is an idea, not a location; a myth, a promise, a destiny" (Francis 1986: 152). The concept of nordicity, thereby, depends on the measure of northernness that other Arctic territories share. This means that Canada is a country situated in the northern part of North America, whose population is concentrated along its borders with the United States and is often assumed not to have a 'south'. Why? This is due to the fact that 'the South' is only perceived as a region when it is contrasted to or viewed from those in 'the North' ("Canada's Northern Strategy"). If we are not looking for physiographical or political definitions, but merely wish to approach this from a traditional and partly literary angle we may say that

It is the land of the midnight sun, of the Klondike Gold Rush and the Northwest Passage, of Robert Service and "The Cremation of Sam McGee," of the search for the lost Franklin Expedition and the law of the North-West Mounted Police. It is also towering mountains, rushing rivers, and Canada's first self-governing Native territory. This is the North, truly the beautiful land. (Hughes 2003: 14)

The conceptual images of the North projected by outsiders are often based on the North as visual “image-ings” (as quoted from Grace) rather than the reality of the region. The popular view of the North as a “cold, forbidding, and inhospitable wilderness” (Coates 1989: 3) has done more harm than good in terms of development. These northerly areas are often viewed as being barren and desolate (as previously quoted from Beissel) and without any form of human habitation (and often photographed as such), is only one of the false conceptions that still survive in our minds.

Notable artistic representations of the Northern regions throughout the past centuries have been numerous, but the quantitative output tends to increase during the course of the 19th and early 20th century. This era produced countless artistic and literary depictions of the North in the form of paintings, travelogues, diaries, novels, short stories and films. The many works in general focus on the Northern terrain as an empty (hence uninhabited, “Terra incognita”) and barren land. The Native Peoples and the Inuit are virtually excluded from most accounts both visual and written.

One of the most well-known and popular images depicting the vast snowy northern landscape was given expression in William Blair Bruce’s painting The Phantom Hunter (1888), recently renamed The Phantom of the Snow.

With this painting the Hamilton-born painter became an instant success and the painting was accepted in the 1888 Paris Salon, thereby distinguishing him as Canada’s first notable impressionist painter. This is a “narrative, mimetic painting, with representational figures in a recognizable northern snow-scape” (Grace 2001: 116).
The work was inspired by C.D. Shanly’s poem “The Walker of the Snow” (1859), in which a hunter meets his death by freezing. The allusion to the immense power and strength of the natural elements illustrated in the painting, which overpowers the human being and his ability to survive under such harsh conditions is reflected upon in the following extract from the poem.

For I saw by the sickly moonlight,
As I followed, bending low,
That the walking of the stranger
Left no footmarks on the snow.

Then the fear-chill gathered o’er me,
Like a shroud around me cast,
As I sank upon the snow-drift
Where the Shadow-hunter passed.

(Shanly, *The Walker of the Snow*)
Therefore, “the haunting image of the solitary trapper abandoned in the barren snow-scape has become a metaphor of individual struggle as well as a pictorial touchstone of northern identity” (“Art Gallery Hamilton”). Here, white man is presented as an epic hero, who struggles with the natural elements, whereby this individual battle is highlighted and magnified to achieve a highly melodramatic and sentimental image. The portrayal of the “solitary trapper” presents man desperately fighting against the all-encompassing cold and inhospitable landscape. This is, however, a lost battle which continues until the very last breath. No positive outcome is possible.

The interpretation of the poem offers several layers of readings making it out to be much more complex than a first reading may suggest. The poem introduces an element that is based on legends and folktales about the “Shadow Hunter”, a figure, who “bears resemblance to the Windigo of Ojibwa and Cree mythology” (Grace 2009: 25).

The poem designates a frame structure, in which the “Walker of the Snow” relates the events, in other words the story, of the past to a “good Master”. The demarcation of time becomes insignificant as past seems to merge with the present. Emphasis is laid on the timelessness of the event. The highly dramatized Gothic presentation of the scenery, enhances and gives added force to the visual and audible expressions (that influence our perceptions of sight and sound), through the images of “cold December”, “pale moon”, “sombre wood”, “no sound of life or motion”, and the “wailing of the moose-bird” (Shanly). This creates a chilling and threatening atmosphere, which is appropriately illustrated in Bruce’s painting through the use of cold grey, white and black tones.2 The “story-within-a-story” feature of the poem relates the appearance of the “Shadow hunter” as a “dusky figure …in a capuchin of gray”, who “left no footmarks on the snow” (Shanly). The poem and painting together create a Gothic ghost story and this chilling suspense is further enhanced by the highly eerie and uncanny situation of the “I” persona. His loneliness, isolation and the emerging darkness deepen his uncertainty emphasizing the “fear-chill” that falls upon him appearing twice in the poem. Into this loneliness appears the “dusky stranger” out of nowhere, who however does not communicate in any way, merely “travelled side by side” with him (Shanly). The isolation, loneliness, deprivation, inability to communicate are key entities within the poem. The contradiction that surfaces at the end of the poem, when the “I” narrator steps out of the “story” into the present time of the poem is rather confusing. The story ends with the “Walker of the Snow” having been found “with my dark hair blanched and whitened / As the snow in which I lay/ …I had seen the Shadow Hunter/ And withered in his blight” (Shanly). These lines clearly indicate that

2) The painting, according to Grace, is not as cold and solemn as the reproductions tend to suggest, but warmer “with flecks of peach tones” that give it an “inner warmth and glow”. And the sky for example which is seen as being dark in the reproductions have areas of pale turquoise, with stars in the sky, one of which is the North or Pole Star, this being very bright (Grace 2001: 116).
the man dies during the night and the “stranger” with the “capuchin of gray” is the masculine presence of death. According to Grace,

Death in the form of this ghostly male “Shadow Hunter” travels, as does the storyteller, who, we should remember, is himself a hunter, as the story-teller’s only companion. In at least one reading of the situation, he is the storyteller or Doppelgänger (and thus his soul), which passes from him and leaves him behind as part of the feminine, natural world he has dared to penetrate. (Grace 2001: 112)

The valley that the storyteller, in other words the “Walker of the Snow”, has entered is the “female space” (Grace 2001: 113) associated with the deadly natural elements (the moon, snow, the frozen December night, stars, etc.), which do not allow him to leave the “haunted valley” (Shanly). He falls and dies and becomes one with the snow, thus he is embraced and taken in by Mother Nature. The painting clearly shows this fallen figure and part of his face, which according to Joan Murray3 “[…]represents Bruce’s own collapse and disorientation of 1885–86’, and she says that ‘the face so far as it can be seen, is his face’.” (Grace 2001: 115)4 If the face is that of Bruce, then the portrait is in fact a “self-portrait”, as Grace acknowledges, and the key words listed above, that refer to the emotional and psychological turmoil of the storyteller in the poem and the fallen figure’s hopelessness, reflect the artist’s mental disorientation and the two mutually complement each other and give the painting added force.

The idea of isolation, fear and loss of orientation that is heavily emphasized in Shanly’s and Bruce’s work may be connected with Henry Beissel’s epic poem. Beissel provides numerous references to the images of the “Shadow Hunter”, the “Walker of the snow” and Bruce’s “Phantom” in Cantos North (1982: 31), which is evident in the following extract:

up north
my love
where you follow
tracks in the snow

you fail to recognize
till you fall
to a cold embrace

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3) Joan Murray is a leading scholar on William Blair Bruce’s work (Grace 2001: 115).
4) According to Joan Murray, W. Blair Bruce had a nervous breakdown and he returned to Canada from Europe in 1885. It was here in Canada that he sketched a snowbank scene behind his family’s Hamilton home (Grace 2001: 115)
in the arms
of a familiar shadow
final as a statement:
folie de la neige.

This extract is taken from the Canto titled Compass and Circles. The compass is the instrument used to help orientation and navigation, however the “circles” (“we have run circles” as Beissel writes) are a suggestion that something has gone amiss. The circles are also cycles that contain the cycle of nature and plant life, the cycle of human history, the cyclical motion of the planets and the Earth, and the natural elements (reflecting on the feminine symbolic entity), but “We are each compass / and circle drawing / our solitary lives / clockwise / on the ground” (Beissel 1982: 31–2). If the cyclical motion is an eternal renewal of life (thus cycles), then this creates a paradox. Though the “walker of the snow” seems to know his way, Bruce offers help by placing the North Star in the right hand corner of the painting. Perhaps showing that there is a way out and orientation is possible, if one is able to see, but the delusion and fear that overcomes the individual results in madness and frenzy blocking all visual perception. In the North “Our circles shrink to a still point” (Beissel 1982: 31), and this is where the human being is forced to stop and consider, because the “North is / where all parallels converge / […] into the mystery / surrounding us” (1982: 35). This “mystery” baffles the white man and as he cannot relate and understand its essence he (man in general) must inevitably fall. Here, we come across words that are obvious references to Shanly’s poem and Bruce’s painting: “tracks”, “snow”, “fall”, “cold embrace”, “familiar shadow” (Beissel 1982: 31). The “familiar shadow” is a clear indication of the symbolic image of death and its perpetual presence. And the “cold embrace” clearly indicating the feminine aspect of Earth that takes back the masculine hunter into its heart, “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). The final statement, folie de la neige, however, written in French and in italics (to give it major emphasis) sums up Beissel’s conceptual belief of the North and may be translated as the “delusion or madness of the snow”. Interestingly, Beissel presents white man as the colonizer and conqueror figure in his epic work, who is tricked and misled (and deservedly so according to Beissel) by the natural elements. This further highlights the mad frenzy and depths of despair of the individual on the verge of death in the cold and isolated landscape (to be seen in Bruce’s painting, heard in Shanly’s and Beissel’s poems). The climax of the situation, presented in the aforementioned works, is charged with tension (marked by delusion) from which death is a welcome release. The visual and audible illustrations presented, therefore, mutually complement and simultaneously highlight one another in their depictions of the North.
The image of the Northern myth in Canadian art in the first half of the 20th century was strengthened by the paintings of the ‘national movement’ in Canadian art, The Group of Seven. They identified the Canadian being through the Canadian landscape, and this became the essence of their painting. For them and through their works the North became a mirror of national character and identity. They portrayed the rugged terrain of the Canadian Shield and the changing seasons in the Northern woods. The would-be members of The Group travelled to Algonquin Park, Ontario, in order to sketch along with Tom Thomson. Between 1918 and 1921 several of the Group, including Harris, Jackson, Lismer and Johnston travelled to Algoma country (northern Ontario), north of Algonquin Park, above Georgian Bay and east of Lake Superior. Another region the artists enjoyed exploring and found inspiration was the north shore of Lake Superior. In their exploration of the north shore of Lake Superior they were able to discover new sources of visual inspiration. The artists of The Group believed that nature was more than simply a visual feast of form and colour, and sought in their work, like other landscape artists of similar belief, like the Romantics, to transcend mere physical description of the outside world. They regarded nature as a powerful spiritual force.

The image of the North as being mysterious and mystical definitely inspired The Group’s Romantic nationalist vision (Hulan 2002: 140). They realized that the Canadian northern landscape, as it is different in its colour scheme, immensity and appearance cannot be painted using the colours and methods studied in Europe. Therefore, they experimented outdoors en plein air in natural surroundings and concentrated on observing the slightest nuances under different weather conditions in colour, movement and light effects. “For The Group, especially for its most articulate spokesman, Lawren Harris, the natural environment was the North, although, the discovery that Canadian nationality was connected with the north was hardly new” (2002: 140). Harris painted for five successive autumns in Algoma and Lake Superior (1917–22), in the Rockies from 1924 on, and in the Arctic in 1930 in his personal search for a landscape that would enable him to express his spiritual beliefs. In their work The Group focused on the idea of the “Canadian North” and “Canada as north,” thereby conflating this image, but their images (here the reference is only to the landscapes) consist of only the natural elements.

The Group’s paintings depicting the various natural phenomena are basically without human beings. The Aboriginal Peoples never feature on the paintings of The Group, they are dealt with as a non-existent entity. This naturally raises a number of ideological questions, but this is not the present issue of this paper. “The north is represented as a blank page from which the presence of all people have been erased, presenting the viewer with a territory to be occupied and possessed (hence the term “Terra Incognita”), and a symbolic space, a topos being named” (Hulan 2002: 141). The notion
of using the “blank page” imagery with reference to the North is quite common and
refers back to Beissel’s opening phrase of the “vast blank canvas of a land” (1982: 7)
used previously in the article. The visual depictions of the North, therefore, commonly
stress the emptiness of the land with a major emphasis on the immense power of
the natural elements that white man must ultimately conquer.

What Lawren Harris sought in nature, especially the North, and projected through
his paintings was the individual union with the greater self, that is timeless and beau-
tiful, where the personal is to be transcended. As Harris said, “All great art is im-
personal, achieved by a sublimation of a personal ecstasy” (Davis 109). And the easiest
place to see that greater, perfect world is out in nature. His paintings from the late
1920s illustrate his movement from early Impressionism to stark landscapes of the
Canadian North (Algoma, then north shore of Lake Superior) and the Arctic creating
abstract and simplified forms. Examples for the abstract representations of the North
are many, therefore allow me to illustrate this with a few examples. The painting Lake
and Mountains (1928)\(^5\) features an expanse of water in the foreground, with nicely
curving hills or mountainous range, completed with a huge rugged mountain jutting
out into the sky in the background. The illustration of the sky takes up roughly half
the painting giving added force to the higher celestial spheres. The tones used vary
from the various shades of blues, white and black, presenting an altogether “cold” de-
piction of the North. The mountains seem to blend and open up into the vast expanse
of sky, all movement projecting upwards toward the higher spheres. The swirling mo-
tion of the clouds, however, projects a horizontal cyclical movement, which seem to
urge and press this upward movement further. In addition this cyclical movement of
nature (renewal and cycle already referred to earlier) also reminds one of Beissel’s no-
tion of “epicycles/ upon epicycles/ spinning on and off” (1982: 36).

Another example is Lawren Harris’s Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone
(1935)\(^6\), which is in many ways like the previous painting in its use of colours of blues,
greys and white, though in this case there are glaciers in the foreground, however the
image of the water surrounding the mountains is light blue and dark, almost black. As
in the previous painting the mountains and glaciers strive upward, but here one specific
mountain peak with tones of blues and white seem to radiate outwards and upwards.
This immense radiation appropriately defines Beissel’s notion of the North as a place
“where all parallels/ converge/ to open out [...] into the mystery/ surrounding us” (1982:
35). Here too, the visual (the paintings) and audible (the poem) complement each other
and give an added force to how we perceive these through our senses.

\(^5\) Lake and Mountains (1928) requires copyright permission for reproduction; hence a web page link is
provided in the “Works cited” section.

\(^6\) Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone (1935) requires copyright permission for
reproduction; hence a web page link is provided in the “Works cited” section.
Within the series of Arctic paintings two further works should be mentioned by Lawren Harris, *Mount Robson* (1929)\(^7\) and *Mount Lefroy* (1930)\(^8\). These illustrate huge mountains in various shades of browns and white, with their highest points touching the cloud and sky. No stretches of water is seen here. The mountain and the sky dominate the works. Both paintings tend to focus on the middle and top peaks, as if the viewer were suspended in mid-air. The motion of the mountains reaching out towards the sky are painted in the form of vertical stripes, while the sky is painted in different shades of blues in horizontal layers in *Mount Robson*, while there is a noticeable circular, swirling movement in *Mount Lefroy*. These opposing movements enhance a continuous upward motion that strive to reach out and touch the heavenly spheres. This ceaseless upward movement is highlighted by Beissel in his poem and the image the viewer is given is that of a “bizarre patchwork quilt” (1982: 49):

\[
\text{[...]} \text{range after range of mountains}\ \\
\text{hot and cold}\ \\
\text{wet and dry}\ \\
\text{the elements clash in countless valleys}\ \\
\text{fighting their way up for possession of every peak}\ \\
\text{and crevice.}\ \\
(\text{Beissel 1982: 49})
\]

The visual “image-ings” (as mentioned earlier) of the above paintings fully complement the audible expression provided in Beissel’s *Cantos North*. The *Cantos* is a universal epic that discusses Northern Canada with its ancient forests, tundra and eternal ice. The work is a cycle\(^9\) of poems, consisting of twelve Cantos, focussing on Canada as a land, as a state with flashes of history incorporated, and as an idea. The notion of the land as being eternal and existing before the time it was “Gondwanaland” (1982: 8) is heavily interlinked with the myth of the North. As the author stresses, this region with its emptiness, and untouched purity, is a “vast blank canvas of a land” (1982: 7). Beissel fully emphasizes the awe-inspiring nature of the land and the fact that “this vast stretch of frozen country never yielded to imperial command” (1982: 26). The primordial emptiness of the North offers a challenge to white man, but this land cannot be conquered. And only “to endure is to belong” (1982: 39), which Beissel further

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\(^7\) *Mount Robson* (1929) requires copyright permission for reproduction; hence a web page link is provided in the “Works cited” section.

\(^8\) *Mount Lefroy* (1930) requires copyright permission for reproduction; hence a web page link is provided in the “Works cited” section.

\(^9\) The word “cycle” here is used metaphorically to refer to the cycle, circle, circular, and cyclical movements within nature, animal life, plant life, life of human beings, and human history, etc. The circular movement emphasizing the constant, ceaseless and endless motion of life and existence.
explains that “not by mastering the tree do you harvest its fruit but by submitting proudly to its seasons” (1982: 39).

Therefore, “the north is a condition of the south” (Beissel 1982: 44), and “the north is the graveyard of all ambition” (1982: 57), it all begins and ends here, this is the core of mother earth to which man remains bound. This bond or bondage between the human being (here specifically white man) and the North is a “craving of the blood” (Beissel 1982: 32). The North when seen as a monster (N. Frye’s reference) that attracts its prey (this being white man), which in turn wants to conquer (kill, slay to use the animal imagery) the monster, however neither is fully capable of extinguishing the other. Beissel’s answer to this utterly complex dilemma is to submit “proudly to its [the North’s] seasons” (1982: 39).

To submit or to conquer? The visual “image-ings” (Bruce’s and Harris’s paintings) that have been analysed in the present article focus in general on one or other aspect of conquering the northern sphere. The North offers a challenge, which ultimately cannot be rejected by the colonizer and conqueror. This aspect is clearly present in Bruce’s painting where the “Walker of the snow” keeps going against all odds, through which he encounters death itself. In Lawren Harris’s paintings we see a similar concept in the manner of transcendental unity with the heavenly spheres, which in a sense also entails a certain “conquering” or overcoming of the natural elements (the grand and majestic mountains), but never can we speak of “submitting” as Beissel suggests. In his Cantos Beissel gives an account of the creation of the world and the harmonious unity of the natural elements. This eternal unity, according to Beissel, was disrupted by the white colonizer with the intention to conquer and colonize, but ultimately at the cost of hundreds of lives.

To fully understand the North it needs to be experienced and the Canadian northern landscapes featuring in the paintings and artistic representations of The Group of Seven (Lawren Harris) and W. B. Bruce are also an experience projecting vivid “image-ings” of landscapes (with vast expanses of sky, huge glaciers with vibrant colours, rock formations, snow, the Pole Star, darkness etc.), while the poetic endeavours focus on audibility through the highly effective metaphorical images and selected words used to convey and enhance these ideas (as in Shanly’s and Beissel’s poetry). These visual and audible images emphasize and mutually complement the immense power and spiritual force of Nature and the natural elements that have an altogether overwhelming effect on Man (the human being). The poetic endeavours discussed in the essay underline and stress the vibrant and overpowering forces that Man encounters and experiences in the northern regions of Canada. Therefore, both the poetic and artistic works are vital experiments in coming to terms and experiencing Canada’s North and the myth of the North.
Works cited


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L’imaginaire de la neige dans la poésie féminine au Québec

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Résumé

Mots-clés : la neige, l’hivernité, la nordicité, les dimensions de la neige, l’angoisse collective et individuelle, la spiritualité, la corporalité, l’autoréflexivité

Abstract
Based on Daniel Chartier’s study «Aspects des fonctions de la nordicité et de l’hivernité dans la poésie québécoise», the paper analyzes the functions and dimensions of snow in women’s poetry in Quebec after the Second World War. The women authors, such as Brossard, Gagnon, Lasnier, Turcotte, Audet and Desautels, develop in particular existential and aesthetic potential of the snow which corresponds to the existential and aesthetic functions of the winter vocabulary analyzed by Chartier. Unlike the results of his research, we can see on one hand the lack of distinctive, identity and political function of the snow in the women poetry and on the other hand the presence of three additional dimensions of the snow: spiritual, carnal and scriptural. According to the conclusions of Chartier, we observe the alternation of positive and negative connotations of the snow while the negative connotations prevail.

Keywords: snow, winterness, nordicity, dimensions of the snow, individual and collective anxiety, spirituality, corporeality, self-reflexivity

Il va sans dire que la neige représente l’une des composantes élémentaires du vocabulaire de la nordicité et de l’hivernité. Comme mentionné ci-dessus, en 1880 Louis Fréchette reçoit le prix de l’Académie française pour un recueil qui porte la neige dans son titre. Semblablement, en 2009 Roger Chamberland publie une anthologie de la poésie québécoise intitulée Des pas sur la neige. Dans les deux cas, c’est effectivement la neige qui véhicule la fonction distinctive : c’est elle qui sert de marqueur de différenciation par rapport à la poésie française. Partant de l’hypothèse que la neige partage les fonctions de l’ensemble du vocabulaire de la nordicité et de
L’hivernité définies par Daniel Chartier, la présente étude se donne pour but d’analyser les fonctions et les dimensions de la neige dans la poésie féminine née au Québec après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, sans néanmoins aspirer à se vouloir exhaustive. L’analyse scrutera le potentiel existentiel et esthétique de la neige chez les auteures Nicole Brossard, Madeleine Gagnon, Rina Lasnier, Elise Turcotte, Isabelle Gaudet-Labine, Huguette Gauvin, Gemma Tremblay, Martine Audet et Denise Desautels. Ainsi, le corpus prendra en considération les auteures de la génération débutant lors de la Seconde Guerre mondiale tout comme celles qui se sont imposées après 2000, les auteures ayant reçu de nombreux prix littéraires tout comme celles qui sont quasi oubliées. Si nous constatons l’absence de la fonction distinctive, identitaire et politique de la neige dans la poésie des femmes au Québec, il s’avérera nécessaire d’ajouter à la typologie de Chartier trois dimensions supplémentaires fréquemment actualisées par les poétesses du corpus : dimensions spirituelle, charnelle et scripturale. Conformément aux conclusions de Chartier, nous observerons si l’alternance du discours avec le contre-discours a lieu et tenterons de révéler lequel d’entre eux l’emporte.

**La dimension existentielle – l’angoisse collective**


Chez Elise Turcotte, l’angoisse existentielle jaillit des désastres qui ont pour cause la destruction des villes pleurées dans son recueil *Ce qu’elle voit* (2010). Dans « Ville immortelle », la neige est associée au départ, à la mort et au vide :

> Au musée, j’ai volé une partie des lettres immortelles./C’était avant de partir./La mer a reculé et les animaux marins sont morts sur le sable./Il y avait la vigne. Il y avait le feu./La vie était promise, la vie reposait dans la cendre des meurtres./J’ai dû me rendre et mourir./
Je dois maintenant feuilleter les pages et quitter l’abri./Une fine couche de neige recouvre le vide. (Turcotte 2010 : 16)


Les trois auteures actualisent le potentiel destructif de la neige. Le ton tragique de leurs poèmes est tantôt très insistant et engagé (chez Brossard et Gagnon), tantôt mélancolique et résigné (chez Turcotte). En effet, par le biais de la neige, Turcotte exprime son deuil et la neige constitue le décor macabre des catastrophes : elle est un élément passif. En revanche, la neige des poèmes de Brossard et de Gagnon assume un rôle actif. Tout en étant la conséquence du comportement humain, la neige fondante de Brossard et la neige éternelle de Gagnon figurent la cause des catastrophes.
La dimension existentielle – l’angoisse individuelle


La mort et la disparition qui sont à la base de la neige éphémère trouvent leur écho dans l’image de la neige connotant néant, vide, absence et silence. Pour Denise Desautels, la neige est liée à l’absence. Dans La promeneuse et l’oiseau (1980), la présence de la neige peut être devinée grâce à la blancheur, à la poudre recouvrant le sujet lyrique, au froid de l’hiver qui accompagne l’absence d’une amie disparue. L’action du récit poétique Tombeau de Lou (2000) se déroule sous le signe du froid entre octobre et décembre, pourtant la présence de la neige n’est pas une seule fois indiquée. En effet, l’absence de la neige correspond au vide qui s’étale à l’intérieur du...

arche-vélin de ta chair en allée, peaux de la poussée métamorphique d’un silence obligé, étalement d’une poudre sur le tableau des neiges, lit dernier des montagnes du dernier repos, toile blanche du corps gravé, enluminures sacrées, toile chaude du corps fondu. […] Il s’agit de mouvements invisibles et de deux chats perdus, sans mère, sur un tapis de neige sourde ce midi-là inusité. (Gagnon 2002 : 159)


Si Martine Audet oppose la luminosité et l’obscurité de la neige, Rina Lasnier met en relief son poids variable. Légère tant qu’elle voltige dans l’air, elle pèse dès qu’elle touche la terre. Cette dualité est le mieux exprimée dans le poème « Poids de la neige » du recueil L’arbre blanc (1966) :

Léger, très léger le labyrinthe de la lumière/par le duvet nomade de la neige myriadaire,/cette dernière venue jouant à feu-luminaire/sans passer au droit souverain de l’hiver./Mais la neige sédentaire et d’un seul tenant,/le vent la racle et relève ses révoltes nuageuses/pour les dénouer plus loin, privées de centre;/le poids appuyé de cette neige plombée de persistance (Lasnier 1972b : 222).

Dans les poèmes de Lasnier, la neige pèse par son joug que les arbres et les cimes soutiennent avec peine, elle étirent et resserre par sa force concentrique ou par sa gravité.

La dimension spirituelle


La dimension charnelle


La dimension scripturale

Avec ce passage en revue des différentes dimensions de la neige, nous avons vu que celle-ci peut servir de décor à l’angoisse collective et individuelle découlant de l’agonie et du deuil, ainsi qu’aux ébats spirituels ou amoureux. Pareillement, dans la poésie autoréflexive, la neige constitue un décor à l’écriture. Si Nicole Brossard s’en sert plutôt exceptionnellement, comme par exemple dans son poème « Quotidien neige et sud », Madeleine Gagnon en fait pour sa part un motif récurrent. Avant de se mettre à écrire sur l’écriture, elle aime ouvrir ses textes en précisant « 3 décembre. Il neige. » (Gagnon 2002 : 144) ; « La neige a cessé de tomber. » (Gagnon 2002 : 146) ; « Il a neigé partout. » (Gagnon 2002 : 204) ; « C’est midi. La neige couvre les toits, les rues. » (Gagnon 2002 : 146). De plus, elle relie explicitement la neige à la page blanche dont elle partage la couleur et le caractère immaculé, vierge : « Comment écrire le premier vers? Ce blanc, ce moment de silence et la neige aux lettres illisibles, nous conduit nulle part, décentrés. » (Gagnon 2002 : 104). Pareille à la neige, la page blanche fait référence au silence, à l’absence et à la pause :

La neige a cessé de tomber. Tout est gris-bleu dehors. On ne voit plus la ligne d’horizon. Le soir vient tôt. L’hiver est là pour de bon. J’aime son silence feutré. Je suis une femme qui écrit depuis longtemps. […] J’aime écrire simplement toutes ces choses. Il y a des temps pour l’écriture difficile et il y a des temps pour l’écriture limpide. Il y a des temps pour la mesure et il y a des temps pour la pause. La musique se joue autant dans les silences. La poésie se crée aussi dans les blancs, dans les fragments d’absence. Le tableau est un fragment. Mes écritures comprennent des fragments-tableaux. La pause fait partie de la
Ligne mélodique. L’harmonie donne un sens à ces multiples lignes, ces infinis fragments. L’écriture d’une femme, amante, mère et ménagère, est forcément fragmentaire. C’est une question de temps, de rythme, de rapport au temps de la gestation. ‘Manuelle est mon Savoir’ écrivait Mireille, morte le 3 janvier, il y a onze mois. La neige était blanche et glacée, comme aujourd’hui. Nous partagions le même amour des pères, des frères, des fils. Au pays de la neige, il y a cinquante noms pour la neige. Ce midi, 4 décembre, la neige est un diamant. (Gagnon 2002 : 146–147)

Dans ce récit poétique tiré du recueil Les fleurs du catalpa (1986), la neige s’inscrit dans la structure narrative : elle constitue son encadrement.


La dimension esthétique

Le potentiel purement esthétique de la neige est pleinement employé dans la poésie imaginative d’Huguette Gaulin et de Martine Audet. Toutes deux ont une prédilection pour les associations inattendues, le dérèglement des sens rimbaudien et les images poétiques assez abstraites :

nous reprenons notre territoire de/fourrures neigeuses/haches ironiques/et peaux crevées// continent à rebours/ôù elles se creusent/lavé à la potasse du rêve// les cortèges de tortues s’estompent/aux coins saignant de la main//soutenez de l’œil au talon/l’arc accomplit ses glaçons d’endroit (Gaulin 2006 : 25).


L’angoisse existentielle naît aussi de la dualité de la neige, tantôt éphémère, tantôt persistante ; tantôt silencieuse, tantôt bruoyante ; tantôt lumineuse, tantôt obscure ; tantôt légère, tantôt lourde ; tantôt glacée, tantôt brûlante. Dans la partie du recueil Les gisants (1963) intitulée « La neige », Rina Lasnier explicite cette dualité : « La neige, comme l’eau, figure à la fois la mobilité de la vie et l’immobilité de la mort » (Lasnier 1972b : 151). Quand elle tombe, la neige représente un élément dynamique ; elle figure la verticalité, le mouvement, la légèreté, l’éphémère ; elle est bruyante et obscure. La neige « nomade » et « myriadaire » (Lasnier 1972b : 222) sert de métaphore à la vie, à la fuite du temps, à la décomposition et à la disparition. La neige gisante est par contre statique ; elle figure l’horizontalité, la stabilité, la pesanteur, l’éternité, l’attente ; elle est persistante, patiente, calme, silencieuse et lumineuse. La neige « sédentaire et d’un seul tenant » (Lasnier 1972b : 222) est une métaphore pour le néant et la mort. Pour attirer l’attention sur la dualité de la neige, les poétesse ont recours à l’antithèse (cf. le poème « Poids de la neige » de Rina Lasnier) ; l’oxymore : « fourrures neigeuses » (Gaulin 2006 : 25) ; au chiasme : « tes mains pètent/à l’endroit du cœur//à la place des neiges/sont légères/tes mains » (Audet 2000 : 47).

La dualité de la neige joue un rôle important également dans l’actualisation de son potentiel sémantique spirituel et charnel. Néanmoins, les connotations négatives qui...
Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

Veronika Černíková

L’imaginaire de la neige dans la poésie féminine au Québec

priment dans les dimensions existentielles cèdent le pas aux connotations positives. La neige n’y provoque pas l’angoisse mais l’extase, tant spirituelle que charnelle. La neige est plus souvent pure que souillée, plutôt chaleureuse que froide, davantage douce et caressante que mutilante. Le caractère multiforme de la neige se prête à merveille à ce changement, parfois radical, de connotations. La neige est comme une page blanche attendant que le poète lui donne forme et sens.

Contrairement à l’ensemble du vocabulaire de la nordicité et de l’hivernité, la neige dans la poésie des femmes au Québec après la Seconde Guerre mondiale n’est pas dotée de la fonction distinctive, identitaire ou politique, même si chez Nicole Brossard et Madeleine Gagnon il est possible de constater un certain engagement écologique et pacifiste. La fonction mythopoïétique est également absente. Il faut néanmoins préciser que la nature utopique du Grand Nord chez Jean Désy et Jean Morisset est parallèle à la nature dystopique de la neige éternelle chez Madeleine Gagnon. D’un autre côté, les auteures développent le potentiel existentiel et esthétique de la neige qui correspond aux fonctions existentielle et esthétique de l’ensemble du vocabulaire analysé par Daniel Chartier. De plus, nous avons pu reconnaître dans la poésie sous étude trois autres dimensions de la neige : spirituelle, charnelle et scripturale. Pareillement à Daniel Chartier, nous devons finalement constater que l’une des caractéristiques principales de l’imaginaire de la neige est l’alternance du discours avec le contre-discours, tout en soulignant que c’est le contre-discours qui l’emporte : la neige donne le plus souvent lieu à l’inquiétude et à la mélancolie.

Bibliographie


VERONIKA ČERNIKOVÁ enseigne la littérature française et francophone à l’Université de Bohême du Sud à České Budějovice. Elle vient de soutenir sa thèse, intitulée *L’écrivain fictif dans l’œuvre de Gérard Bessette*. Elle se spécialise en littérature québécoise, notamment à la prose autoréflexive. Elle a publié plusieurs articles sur les romans autoréflexifs de Michel Tremblay, Gérard Bessette, Catherine Mavrikakis, Nicole Brossard et Alain Farah.
In Praise of the Human Voice: Robert Bringhurst’s New World Suite No. 3 and Glenn Gould’s The Idea of North

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Abstract
Canadian poet Robert Bringhurst found the inspiration he needed for his New World Suite No. 3 (2005), a complex polyphonic poem for three voices in four movements, in the natural polyphony of the Earth and in the vast world of polyphonic music. In the singing of frogs and birds, in monolingual or multilingual daily conversations eavesdropped in the street, Bringhurst finds the perfectly natural source for his polyphonic poems. This paper examines how Canadian pianist Glenn Gould’s The Idea of North, a peculiar polyphonic documentary, provided him with enough knowledge and skill to produce poetry for multiple voices. New World Suite No. 3 is a work of not just utter architectural complexity, density of meaning and profundity of thought, but also a homage to the human voice and a reminder that caring for the environment is of the essence if humans are to last on Earth among other species.

Keywords:
Canada, Robert Bringhurst, poetry, polyphony, Glenn Gould, North, ecology, intermediality

Résumé
Le poète canadien Robert Bringhurst a trouvé l’inspiration pour son poème New World Suite No. 3 (2005), un complexe poème polyphonique pour trois voix et quatre mouvements, dans la polyphonie naturelle de la Terre and dans la musique polyphonique. Dans les chansons des oiseaux et des grenouilles, et dans les conversations monolingues et multilingues qu’on écoute dans la rue tous les jours, Bringhurst trouve des matériels qu’il utilise pour écrire ses poèmes polyphoniques. Ce chapitre analyse comment The Idea of North, un documentaire composé par le pianiste canadien Glenn Gould, lui a donné des techniques pour écrire ses poèmes pour deux ou trois voix. New World Suite No. 3 est un chef-d’oeuvre caractérisé par une véritable complexité architectonique, densité semantique et profondité de pensée. Le poème est aussi un hommage à la voix humaine et il nous souvient de la nécessité de protéger la Terre pour continuer à vivre avec des autres spèces.

Mots-clés : Canada, Robert Bringhurst, poésie, polyphonie, Glenn Gould, Nord, écologie, intermédialité
I. The music of what is

Canadian poet, philosopher, linguist, typographer, translator and cultural historian Robert Bringhurst is a 21st-century humanist. He belongs to a tradition that goes back in time to the native people of North America, and further back in time to the Oriental sages of India, China and Japan, and to the ancient Pre-Socratic poet-philosophers. He found the inspiration he needed for his New World Suite No. 3 (2005), a complex polyphonic poem for three voices in four movements, in the natural polyphony of the Earth and in the vast world of polyphonic music. Bringhurst claims that, even if our eyes are not trained to read several texts at once, our ears are better schooled in the polyphony found in the world of human and nonhuman voices. The world is, after all, a polyphonic (and polyglot) place. In the singing of frogs and birds, in monolingual or multilingual daily conversations eavesdropped in the street where several human voices interact with absolute naturalness, Bringhurst finds the perfectly natural source for his polyphonic poems. But musicians do have much to teach him as well. In “Licking the Lips with a Forked Tongue”, the afterword to the 2005 edition of his long polyphonic poem, the author explains in detail how the example of musicians as various as Josquin, Bach or Stravinsky, as well as Canadian pianist Glenn Gould’s Solitude Trilogy (1967–1977), a peculiar documentary as well as “one of the most accomplished and important works of literature ever produced in North America, in any medium or language” (Bringhurst 2005: 11), provided him with enough knowledge and skill to produce poetry for several voices.

Listening to the “thoroughgoing polyphonic texture and subtlety of form” (Bringhurst 2005: 10) of Gould’s The Idea of North (1967), the first of three compositions in The Solitude Trilogy, Bringhurst learnt an immense amount about writing for multiple voices. It is our hunch that this trilogy also taught him much about the North as a space of myth where his humanist, philosophical, literary, environmental and political concerns could flourish. In Bringhurst’s complex polyphonic poem, the idea of the North stands for a vaster pristine space or an ecosystem of gigantic dimensions whose very roots must be traced back to pre-industrial societies and to the wisdom incarnate in the native oral literatures of North America. A close analysis of The Idea of North may certainly shed light on our understanding of a complex poem like the four-part New World Suite No. 3, a work of not just utter architectural complexity, density of meaning and profundity of thought, but also a homage to the human voice and a reminder that caring for the environment is of the essence if homo sapiens sapiens is to last on Earth among other nonhuman species.

Bringhurst has got the intimation that the world is a polyphonic place. Humans inhabit a many-voiced Earth where all creatures seek to mean something. If communication is a universal compulsion shared by all living things, both human and non-
human, then it makes sense to affirm that human beings have no monopoly on meaning or language in a broad sense of the word. Bringhurst himself speaks of *the tree of meaning*, which is an apt metaphor to signify that all beings partake of meaning in the gigantic book of Nature that the world is in the poet’s view. But there is much more to this simple metaphor: it points to the fact that meaning emanates from reality itself, that words bloom into existence out of the Earth itself, as if they were tree leaves, or flowers, or grass. Martin Heidegger observed that *die Sprache spricht*,¹ which is to say that language speaks through humans’ lips. Or, to put it differently, not only do we speak a language, but also language speaks *us*. Bringhurst says *die Welt spricht*, or *Alles spricht*, or even *die ganze Realität spricht*. This is a most interesting shift, for the poet transcends the solipsistic human view that meaning is something quintessentially human. In his non-anthropocentric view of the world, every single thing *means* or partakes of the inexhaustible feast of meaning. The tree of meaning has grown innumerable branches, which are the human languages spoken by humankind over time, but it has also grown the voices in which nonhuman beings speak to each other and to us. As Bringhurst himself puts it in his book-length meditation *What Is Reading For?*, there is much reading and writing going on in the world, “there are millions of creatures writing meaning on the air and in the earth, crying and calling and gesturing, making trails and leaving tracks” (2011: 17).

So polyphony is a fact of reality, a fact of life. To say that the world speaks to us in many different voices is to acknowledge the plurality of being, or the polyphonic texture of being. The green world teaches Bringhurst something that is even more elementary: the sacredness at the root of *what is*. The world is plural and every single being in it is unique, precious and worthy of consideration. This seems to be the true basis of his ecological awareness, of his intimation that Mother Earth is a subtle ecology of vast dimensions that needs our attention and respect. Most importantly, this is also the basis of his polyphonic poems, which stem directly from natural polyphony, from his awareness that there is a sense of democratic multiplicity inherent in *what is* that poetry should try to emulate. In actual fact, the whole of Bringhurst’s poetic output can be seen as enacting a shift from *homophonic* to *polyphonic* poems. He threads the inspiring multitude of voices that he finds in the forest into the living fabric of his own poems, which are a tribute to human speech and to meaning, but also a tribute to *what is*. Poetic polyphony thus arises directly from natural polyphony, from singing with the myriad teeming forms found in Nature. In Bringhurst’s own words in his landmark essay “Singing with the Frogs: The Theory and Practice of Literary Polyphony”, a polyphonic poem is “a poem that [...] enacts and embodies plurality

¹) In *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, Heidegger claims: “das Sein istet, die Welt weltet, die Zeit zeitigt, das Nicht nichtet, das Ding dingt, das Ereignis ereignet, die Sprache spricht” (1985: 30) and “Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins” (1985: 156).
and space as well as timelessness and unity. A poem in which what-is cannot forget its multiplicity” (2007: 36).

Walter Pater’s famous dictum that “all art constantly strives towards the condition of music” seems to be the driving force behind Bringhurst’s polyphonic poems. Over the last three decades, Bringhurst has been learning how to tackle polyphony through words. *The Blue Roofs of Japan* (1986), *Conversations with a Toad* (1987), *New World Suite No. 3* (1995/2005) and *Ursa Major* (2003/2009) constitute the polyphonic constellation of poems in Bringhurst’s corpus, as well as true typographic challenges to a man concerned with the solid form of language.² All of them are an extended meditation on being, time and poetry – lyrical and philosophical variations on what stays the same in spite of the passage of time. What the different voices speaking simultaneously at times in these poems say exceeds the sum of the parts. Even if they have got their separate agendas, they do contribute to a more complex message. In his poems for several voices, language solidifies into beautifully designed poetry books printed in several colours where the superimposition of voices is an invitation for readers to relish the inexhaustible beauty of the world, to pay attention to what is in front of them and try to make sense of it.

Because his polyphonic poems strive towards the condition of music, Bringhurst’s work evokes the critical notion of intermediality,³ which Werner Wolf defines in broad terms as being “any transgression of boundaries between conventionally distinct media: such transgressions cannot only occur within one work or semiotic complex but also as a consequence of relations or comparisons between different works or semiotic complexes” (2002: 17 and 2011: 3). In other words, transgression “comprises both “intra-” and “extra-compositional” relations between different media” (2011: 3). By “relation” Wolf means “gestation, similarity, combination, or reference including imitation” (2011: 3), from a mainly synchronic perspective and with reference to individual artefacts. Following Wolf’s intuition, Irina O. Rakewsky defines intermediality as “a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix inter) in some way take place between media. “Intermedial” therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media” (2005: 46).

²) Bringhurst is a poet concerned with typography, which he defines in *The Typographic Mind* as being “the sound of one hand speaking, vivid in the mind’s eye, vivid in the mind’s ear, and silent as a prayer” (2006: 4).

³) As Werner Wolf explains, the term ‘intermediality’, which originated in German research, “was coined by Aage Hansen-Löwe in 1983 on the model of intertextuality” (2002: 16). Somewhere else, Wolf dwells on intermediality as being a defining feature of literature: “literature is itself a medium that has not only influenced other media but has, in turn, been influenced and also transmitted by a plurality of media, so that the study of (inter)mediality is actually the study of an essential aspect of literature as such” (2008: 15). Given its interdiscursive nature, literature is “a verbal form of art that can establish a plethora of contacts not only between individual literary works and genres but also to other, non-literary discourses as well as to other arts and has therefore justly been called an ‘interdiscourse’” (Wolf 2009: 134).
Bearing in mind Wolf’s typology of intermedial forms, Bringhurst’s poems for multiple voices exemplify how literature as a medium can refer to other media (music in this case) in various ways (i.e., intracompositional intermediality, involving a single semiotic system) and, more specifically, how “formal imitation consists of an attempt at shaping the material of the semiotic complex in question (its signifiers, in some cases also its signifieds) in such a manner that it acquires a formal resemblance to typical features or structures of another medium or heteromedial work” (2011: 6).

As pointed out above, Bringhurst found the inspiration he needed for New World Suite No. 3 in the natural polyphony of the Earth, but also in the vast world of polyphonic music – i.e., music which simultaneously combines a number of parts, each forming an individual melody and harmonizing with each other. After all, poetry and music have been traditionally viewed as sister arts, as both are considered “auditory, temporal and dynamic art forms” (Scher 1982: 230–231). In “Licking the Lips with a Forked Tongue”, the author explains in detail how Glenn Gould’s Solitude Trilogy (1967–1977) and the example of musicians as various as Josquin, Bach or Stravinsky provided him with enough knowledge and skill to produce his own poems for several voices. In this respect, Bringhurst was an autodidact: he went through his own crash course on music and explored Gould’s experiment carefully in search of nourishing food for his own poems. In the same landmark essay, Bringhurst writes:

I had been listening for years, with rising envy, to forms employed by jazz and classical musicians. I’d read a bit of Schönberg and Stravinsky [...] But after writing The Blue Roofs I began to listen to music, and to read it, more attentively than I ever had before. Performers from Bill Evans to John Lewis to Glenn Gould, and composers from Steve Reich to J. S. Bach, began to teach me how to deal with divergent, interpenetrating voices. [...] This crash course taught me plenty about structure. It did not, however, answer the question of how to print a polyphonic poem (2005: 4–5).

In terms of Paul Steven Scher’s well-known tripartite framework for word and music studies – music and literature, literature in music and music in literature (1982: 226) – which he had already devised in “Notes Toward a Theory of Verbal Music” back in 1970, Bringhurst’s polyphonic poem falls within the third category and exemplifies an attempt to use musical structures and techniques in the composition of a literary work. In this respect, the suite as a genre (a set of instrumental compositions, originally in dance style, to be played in succession) provides the poet with the structural model for his New World Suite No. 3: four movements going each at a different pace or speed (moderato, andante, adagio and lento), in which the musical instruments have been replaced by three human voices (two male and one female in The Calling version; violin, viola and cello in the 2005 incarnation of the text). The four-part
structure makes this a lengthy literary work of art full of allusions and echoes from Bringhurst’s previous polyphonic poems. The overall effect of the poem depends on musical analogy, not identity, contributing to Bringhurst’s overall effort of making the *Suite* a test of the verbal possibilities of human language, as language, not anything else, in its attempt at emulating natural and musical polyphony. As Rajewsky rightly observes apropos of the “as if” character of intermedial references, prototypically “a given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means” (2005: 53) and “an intermedial reference can only generate an illusion of another medium’s specific practices, [...] [a]n illusion that potentially solicits in the recipient of a literary text [...] a sense of filmic, painterly, or musical qualities, or –more generally– a sense of a visual or acoustic presence” (2005: 55).

At any rate, the overall impression of the *Suite* is that of a beautifully woven tapestry where the three voices coalesce into perfect harmony in everything they have to say, with verbal structures attempting to represent musical patterns and effects. In fact, Wolf claims that, in intermedial imitation, which “involves a kind of translation”, “the signifiers of the work and/or its structure are affected by the non-dominant medium, since they appear to imitate its quality or structure” (2002: 25). In this respect, Bringhurst appears to be emulating certain techniques of counterpoint by having three different voices speak in conjunction with each other. Each voice goes its own way, but they intertwine and interpenetrate at points where the sum of the parts transcends the meaning of each individual utterance. In his imitation of the suite form, Bringhurst will usually repeat, either exactly or with variation, small parts of his poem (single words, phrases or ideas), emulating repetition and contrast as “the smallest real structural units of both literature and music” and as “the two twin principles of musical form”, as Calvin S. Brown points out in chapter IX of his pioneering work *Music and Literature* (1948), on the structural analogies between the two arts. Bringhurst shapes the material of his *Suite* in such a manner that it acquires a formal resemblance to the typical features or structures of another medium, music in this case. Upon closer scrutiny, the structures employed by Bringhurst resemble those of a fugue, a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts. However, in Bringhurst’s poem, musical instruments have been replaced by human voices as the stuff of music and melodies have been replaced by words, phrases or ideas that are approached as if from multiple perspectives. The final result is one of not just complexity, density of meaning and profundity of thought, but also of moving music in this homage to the human voice. In this respect, Bringhurst claims that even if our eyes are not trained to read several texts at once, our ears are better schooled in the polyphony found in the world of human voices:
Which of us hasn’t sat in a café listening to two or three adjacent conversations – four or six voices minimum, with others passing through? Which of us hasn’t walked a city street and heard a hundred different voices, speaking a dozen different languages, spilling through and over one another? [...] In normal conditions, humans all inherit what it takes to learn multiple languages, catch multiple voices, and hear through the biological fence (2005: 9–10).

II. The human voice as Materia Poetica

The Solitude Trilogy (1967–1977) is a collection of three hour-long radio documentaries produced by Glenn Gould (1932–1982) for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The Idea of North was produced in 1967, and two years later, in 1969, came The Latecomers, about life in Newfoundland outports and the province’s program to encourage residents to urbanize. In 1977 came the third documentary, The Quiet in the Land, a portrait of Mennonite life at Red River, near Winnipeg, Manitoba, in which speakers discuss the influence of contemporary society on traditional Mennonite values. The musician produced the documentaries as individual works during a whole decade and then he collected them under the title The Solitude Trilogy, reflecting the theme of physical isolation and withdrawal from the world that unites the pieces. The three pieces employ his idiosyncratic technique of simultaneously playing the voices of two or more people, each of whom speaks a monologue to an unheard interviewer. Gould called this method contrapuntal radio. Ambient sound (the rumbling of a train, the murmur of the ocean or a church choir) and music are heard in the background as part of the aural experience of this polyphonic composition. In “Licking the Lips with a Forked Tongue”, Brighurst dwells on the importance of Gould’s example for the kind of polyphonic poetry he was intent on composing himself:

In 1967, the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould created a work for CBC Radio called The Idea of North. In Canada, this is by far the best-known work of polyphonic literature. The strange thing is, it is almost completely unknown as a work of polyphonic literature. [...] What sets it fundamentally apart is its thoroughgoing polyphonic texture and subtlety of form. The Idea of North doesn’t exist as a written or printed text, nor did it ever exist, like an ordinary work of oral literature, in the form of a live performance. It was stitched together in a studio by overdubbing and splicing miles of tape. [...] The Idea of North is the first of three compositions in this genre that Gould created over a ten-year period. The others are The Latecomers (1969) and The Quiet in the Land (1977); the three together have come to be called The Solitude Trilogy. [...] To me this trilogy is one of the most accomplished and

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4) The term contrapuntal normally applies to music in which independent melody lines play simultaneously. This type of music, exemplified by Bach, formed the major part of Gould’s repertoire.
important works of literature ever produced in North America, in any medium or language. 
[...] Gould’s work, when I finally encountered it, taught me an immense amount about 
writing for multiple voices. But again, it did not answer any questions about how to put 
spoken polyphony on the page, where I habitually work (2005: 10–12).

What Bringhurst must have found truly fascinating about The Solitude Trilogy is 
Gould’s treatment of the human voice – the way he approaches the human voice in 
a musical way.5 As Kevin Bazzana explains in his biography of the pianist, “The prin-
ciple of collage was central to art of many kinds in the sixties […], but of even more 
relevance was the view, shared by many composers of the day, that the spoken word 
could be the stuff of music. […] McLuhan, in a 1965 interview with Gould, remarked 
that ‘the spoken word is music, pure music, at any time. It is a form of singing’” (2003: 
303).6 This must have been an illuminating revelation to Bringhurst, a poet who since 
the early 1970s had been exploring the prosody and music of poetry from different lit-
erary traditions and languages, including Arabic, Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, and who 
since the mid-1980s embarked on experimentation with poetry for several voices.7 
Gould himself was convinced that he could treat human voices as if they were musical 
instrumens. As Bazzana observes in his biography,

His thinking about editing voices and sound effects was musical – it was all about 
rhythm, texture, tone, dynamics, pacing, and the strategic, integral use of silence. 
He would describe structures and effects in his radio programs in musical terms – 
sonata and rondo, canon and fugue, crescendo and decrescendo – and he referred to 
his scripts as “scores.” […] And in the process of editing raw interviews into more pol-
ished vocal “music” he was often splicing word by word, syllable by syllable… […] He 
even took to referring to his radio documentaries by opus numbers, The Idea of North 

Similarly, in New World Suite No. 3 we see Robert Bringhurst handling human voice 
with the same meticulous reverence, as if the two male voices and the female voice

5) In a letter dated 5 April 1971 held at the National Library of Canada, Gould writes: “In my view, 
the treatment of the human voice as an element of texture should, indeed, always be approached in 
glenngould/028010–4030.05.08-e.html 10 July 2015.

6) McLuhan’s words somehow evoke T. S. Eliot’s own musings in his seminal essay “The Music of Poetry”: 
“While poetry attempts to convey something beyond what can be conveyed in prose rhythms, it remains, 
all the same, one person talking to another; and this is just as true if you sing it, for singing is another way 
of talking […] The music of poetry, then, must be a music latent in the common speech of its time. And that 
means also that it must be latent in the common speech of the poet’s place” (1969: 31).

7) After all, as Walter Ong notes, “the poem is the living voice of the poet in a particular manifestation, 
the existential moment par excellence: the aural correlative. For in the poem, we have a process of eternal 
imagination and emotion becoming the working tongue, lip and larynx –the carnate word– of a physical, 
yet permanent voice” (1968: 120).
were musical instruments themselves: viola, violin and cello. Printed in different colours in the form of musical staves, their typographical layout on the page indicates whether they are speaking individually or simultaneously. And the _Suite_ is in four movements: I *moderato*, “All the Desanctified Places”; II *andante*, “Who is the Flute Player?”; III *adagio*, “The Children of Zhuang Zi Confront the Frozen Saskatchewan River”; and IV *lento*, “Winter Solstice, Cariboo Mountains”. As Yvonne Korshak and Robert J. Rubin point out, “As in a polyphonic oratorio, the voices move from solo to singing in combinations with other voices, and so the book holds a score for each voice, the reader’s lines in black and those of the other two voices in ochre and blue. When singers perform together, the black overlaps the other color or colors: thus one can listen to the three voices together visually as well as aurally” (2010: 72). The similarities with Gould’s approach to human voice as stuff for music for his _Solitude Trilogy_ are crystal clear: both the musician and the poet intertwine several voices to evoke the kaleidoscope multiplicity inherent in reality. At a deeper level, thematically speaking, both polyphonic compositions are concerned with exploring a variety of landscapes on the American continent. Both seek to map the world by means of the spoken word, the singing word that is music and poetry at the same time. Whereas Gould’s focus is on Canada, Bringhurst takes the reader up and down the whole continent, the New World, and even invokes other places on Earth. In his Babel-like poem, the harmonization of voices evokes the mind-boggling simultaneity of all places and all times in History, in a way not dissimilar from what T. S. Eliot accomplished in _The Waste Land_ (1922). Unlike Gould, even if Bringhurst was working with the same medium (words), he was trying to capture verbal polyphony on a printed page. Obviously, how to best represent the superimposition and the interweaving of human voices posed a huge typographical challenge to the poet, and so the different textual incarnations of the poem show Bringhurst struggling with presenting lines in staves and printing the three voices in different colours in an attempt to accurately capture polyphony.

Let us return to Gould’s polyphonic work. The first, and most well-known, of the contrapuntal radio documentaries is _The Idea of North_, in which five speakers provide contrasting views of Northern Canada. Among the speakers are Marianne Schroeder (nurse), James Lotz (geographer and anthropologist), Robert A. J. Phillips (government official), Frank Valee (anthropologist), W. V. McLean (retired surveyor) and Glenn Gould himself, representing a cross-section of perspectives on the North. A prologue and epilogue frame the body of _The Idea of North_, which ends with the last movement of Karajan’s recording of Sibelius’ Symphony no. 5. As Bazzana explains, when it was first broadcast by CBC on 28 December 1967, “The Idea of North surprised, challenged, and confused many listeners, but it was still widely praised as ambitious, innovative,
poetic, and technically polished – as, indeed, all of Gould’s major radio documentaries would be” (2003: 305). What Bringhurst admires about this piece of oral literature is the interweaving of human voices, the polyphonic nature of the whole composition, the multidimensional textures of the human voices simultaneously speaking and overlapping in a deliberate manner. According to Bazzana, “In a sense, Gould sought to recapture that intense engagement with disembodied sounds experienced by the first generation of radio listeners” (2003: 304). At some point in the opening of the documentary, Gould himself provides a crucial clue about the ultimate thematic concern of his polyphonic composition:

This is Glenn Gould and this programme is called *The Idea of North*. I’ve long been intrigued by that incredible tapestry of tundra and taiga which constitutes the Arctic and sub-Arctic of our country. I’ve read about it, written about it, and even pulled up my parka once and gone there. Yet like all but a very few Canadians, I’ve had no real experience of the North. I’ve remained, of necessity, an outsider. […] This programme, however, brings together some remarkable people who have had a direct confrontation with that northern third of Canada, who’ve lived and worked there and in whose lives the North has played a very vital role.9

The five voices in *The Idea of North* embrace different conceptions of what the North represents. They “discuss the subjective ‘idea’ and the reality of the North. Montage and voice counterpoint are used to express the antagonism and scope of the country, the loneliness and isolation, the warmth of community living, personal reasons for living there, the fear that human nature will gradually take over from the elements as common enemy number one, and the challenge involved in any decision to live there.”10 The only female voice, Marianne Schroeder’s, speaks of the pristine expanses of frozen landscapes in the North with subtle lyricism and a moving sense of reverence. But even if Schroeder finds the country fascinating, she cannot help feeling overwhelmed by the sheer vastness of the country. The sense of isolation and vulnerability in the face of the immensity of the natural world, particularly in winter, is conveyed with unusual verbal economy: “And as we flew along the East coast of Hudson’s [sic] Bay, this flat, flat country frightened me a little, because it seemed endless. We seemed to be going into nowhere” (Watts 1992: 2). However, she also celebrates the joy of being alive amid so much beauty:


10) See the brief note about the radio documentary published at the CBC Digital Archives website mentioned in the previous footnote.
I always think of the long summer days, when the snow had melted and the lakes were open and the geese and ducks had started to fly north. During that time the sun would set, but, when there was still the last shimmer in the sky, I would walk out to one of those lakes and watch those ducks and geese just flying around peacefully or sitting on the water, and I felt that I was almost part of that country, part of that peaceful surrounding, and I wished that it would never end (Watts 1992: 2).

Time and again throughout The Idea of North, Schroeder comments on the sense of belonging to a recognizably human community: “One could realize the value of another human being” (Watts 1992: 8) and “Sometimes I’ve been lonelier in a city than I ever was in the North” (Watts 1992: 11). Overwhelmed by the sheer vastness of the physical North, geographer and anthropologist James Lotz also dwells on the importance of human bonds, which give warmth and protection in the face of a world that does not care:

I was in many respects solitary, but in a strange way the North has made me more sort of gregarious ’cause the North does show you exactly how much you rely on your fellow man, what the sense of community means. The sense of community in the North, unlike in the South, is a matter of life and death. The thing about the North of course in personal terms is that in the North you feel it’s so big, it’s so vast, it’s so immense, it cares so little (Watts 1992: 8–9).

Similarly, Robert A. J. Phillips, the government official, emphasizes the concept of human community amid a hostile environment: “In some ways you may have gone to the North to get away from society and you find yourself far closer to it than you’ve ever been in your life” (Watts 1992: 7–8). For his part, sociologist Frank Valee dwells on the fear of getting lost amid a vast space where there are no reliable signs to guide one’s navigating through space: “I was so afraid to get lost that the environment around me while being vast in the physical sense, one could see theoretically for a thousand miles there was nothing in the way to block your view” (Watts 1992: 9). And William V. McLean, a retired surveyor who serves as a narrator and helps Gould to understand how “one can best attain an idea of North” (Watts 1992: 3), conceives of Nature as being an enemy:

... the common enemy of both of us whether it’s now or yesterday or forever [...] is mother nature, mother nature. [...] the North is the war [...] ... there was a time, believe me, in living

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11) In his “Conclusion” to Literary History of Canada, Northrop Frye contends precisely that “A feature of Canadian life is [...] the paradox of vast empty spaces and lack of privacy, with no defences against the prying or avaricious eye” (1995: 223).
memory again, when humans used to combine against mother nature. Not, not only because they had to, but because in a sense there was a cleanness, a sureness, or a definiteness about coming up with mother nature that is lacking in our rootless pavements, in our big city anonymity (Watts 1992: 18).12

III. Pieces of Map, Pieces of Music

As Henri Lefebvre points out, “space is never empty: it always embodies a meaning” (2010: 23). It is not a blank slate or tabula rasa upon which human consciousness inscribes meanings. Space is already rich in meanings, emanating from the living and non-living forms that populate it and from a dense layering of cultural signification conferred to it over time by human communities. Landscapes are open books and an invitation for human beings to interpret them. With technological growth on an unprecedented scale unknown in history, the 20th century brought new forms of transport and increasing physical mobility, “altering humans’ experience of movement through space, and perceptions of relationships between space and time (also theorized by physicists, philosophers and psychologists, who would speak of inner space)” (Anderson 2012: 114). One expects to find some kind of correlation between outer and inner spaces, between the pure physicality of the world and the interior geographies of the self, for literary representations of space and mobility are frequently both literal and figurative. What we see in Glenn Gould’s The Idea of North is a bundle of human minds coming to terms with a landscape they find hard to decipher, and a genius, Gould, transforming the overwhelming presence of the natural world into a work of art of lasting value. Because the world is far from being a monolithic entity, he has to resort to the use of polyphony and to multiple perspectives to try to capture the essence of what he has got in front of his eyes and his ears, in the hope that the depiction might be more faithful to the real.

Robert Bringhurst is also concerned with exploring space and cultural identity in his polyphonic poem New World Suite No. 3, which harmonizes polyphony, ecology and philosophy. The title itself makes sense as long as we juxtapose both the term suite (the musical genre used as structural model for the poem's composition) and New World, which stands for America as a whole. In bringing into a coherent Gestalt such disparate elements as a sustained philosophical meditation on time and being, fragments from the history of humankind such as the arrival of European settlers in the New World and the beginning of the scientific

12) In Survival, Margaret Atwood claims that “bare survival in the face of “hostile” elements and/or natives” (1996: 32) is the symbol that best defines Canada. “In earlier writers,” she goes on, “these obstacles to survival are external – the land, the climate, and so forth” (1996: 33). Obviously, the sense of hostility and utter nakedness is further accentuated in the North, as can be seen in Gould’s radio documentary.
Au-delà du 49ème parallèle : multiples visages du Nord canadien

In Praise of the Human Voice: Robert Bringhurst’s *New World Suite No. 3*...

revolution with Copernicus or Galileo Galilei, tattered visions of urbanscapes and ancient sites of the First Nations of America, mythical accounts of constellations in the sky, or an ardent vindication of the ecological integrity of breathing Earth, Bringhurst is offering us an accurate depiction of the world he lives in, our world, which is unity and plurality at the same time. This is one of the reasons why polyphony seems to be the only appropriate means of catching the many-sidedness and interconnectedness of this world.

Music, human voices and maps are all key ingredients in the making of the *Suite*, for cultural and historical syncretism – or *cultural layering and folding*, as Bringhurst calls it – is another remarkable feature of this complex poem. *New World Suite No. 3* is rich in geographical references to places as diverse as ancient sites on the American continent, modern metropolises and names of pitmines. In “Licking the Lips with a Forked Tongue”, Brighurst explains the exact geographical setting for each of the four movements:

Maps as well as voices are braided together in the *Suite*. The names of Aztec, Mayan and Inca sites (Tenochtitlan, Tikal, Cuzco, Pisaq) turn up side by side with the names of ancient North American settlements – some in British Columbia (Ttanuu, Kitwancool) and others in New Mexico (Chaco Canyon, Acoma, Gila, Frijoles). Threaded in with these are the names of some pitmines and cities. The first movement includes some recollections of a desecrated landscape in the Amazonian Basin, side by side with memories of a village in northern Manitoba. The second movement is set in the Hopi country. The third adopts the voices of Chinese immigrants to Saskatchewan. The fourth, based on a mid-winter walk in central British Columbia, superimposes the figures of two hunters, Orion and Prajapati, who are two interpretations of the same constellation: one inherited from Greece, the other from northern India (2005: 13–14).

For Brighurst, *New World Suite No. 3* is not only a grossly simplified portrait of the land in which he lives, but also a grossly simplified set of allusions to the damage done in the New World since the time of the earlier settlers, as well as a gesture of gratitude in the face of the piecemeal richness of memory and tradition that still somehow survives on the living American soil. It makes perfect sense that, in the long and incantatory litany of names he makes the voices speak aloud throughout the poem, the poet should invoke the names of modern cities and ancient sites as if in an attempt to salvage whatever fragments of wisdom might help heal the wounds of the whimpering Earth – raped by the greed of conquerors, not wholly aware of the sacredness of the ground they tread upon nor of the pain inflicted on our only home and *the others* – animals and trees that also have an inalienable right to live peacefully on Earth.
Movement IV, “Winter Solstice, Cariboo Mountains”, is precisely based on a mid-winter walk\textsuperscript{13} in central British Columbia, home to the poet, with its mountains rich in caribou, naked before the immensity of the Pacific Ocean. Bringhurst is not just an avid outdoorsman alert to nuances of meaning found in the book of Nature – to being dancing in daylight or in the night sky. He is also aware of the cultural layering surrounding constellations, those geometrical patterns in the night sky that have held an immense fascination for humans’ imagination since antiquity. The movement superimposes the figures of two hunters, Orion and Prajapati, who are two interpretations of the same constellation, one lifted from Greek mythology and the other from northern India. Thus, in staves 3 to 6, the Orion and Ursa Major myths are juxtaposed with impressive linguistic economy; both share striking parallelisms, for, to begin with, a hunter is stalking preys that are not quite what they seem: “In the night sky, Orion, / disguised as a deer, is out stalking Aldebaran, / the doe, his daughter, forever” (2009: 228). And: “Arcturus, spearing the Great Bear of heaven, sees / in her eyes, now and always, the eyes of his mother” (2009: 22). The first cluster of stars brings together Orion, Aldebaran and, indirectly, the Pleiades; the second cluster of stars reunites mother and son, Ursa Major (the Great Bear) and Arcturus (the bear-guard). By juxtaposing two constellations and two myths together, a rare and precious density of meaning is conveyed to the reader alert to the ripples of meaning emanating from words as if in concentric circles. After all, \textit{New World Suite No. 3} is possibly the most complex of all of Bringhurst’s polyphonic poems and a probing meditation on being, History, myth and ecology. It is also an accomplished vindication of the need for humans to take care of this fragile Earth, our only world and our only home.

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\textsuperscript{13} Bringhurst is heir to H. D. Thoreau. In “Walking”, the Transcendentalist speaks of the noble \textit{art of walking}, which he associates to the free man. His essay is an unforgettable apology of Nature: “I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil, – to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society” (1906: 205).


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ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER

A LA RENCONTRE DE L'AUTRE
The Canadian North in the English Classroom

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Abstract
Focusing on the Canadian North, this study reviews some theoretical questions of teaching language and culture and explores the interrelatedness between language and culture. Apart from dealing with the topic of teaching culture from a theoretical perspective, the paper also discusses certain theoretical considerations concerning teaching about distant cultures as exemplified by the Canadian North. In addition, the essay addresses practical issues about teaching this topic at secondary and BA levels and provides a step-by-step methodological description and an illustration of the preparation of topic-related teaching materials.

Keywords:
teaching culture, distant cultures, Canadian North, language teaching, teaching material development

Résumé
Cet article se concentre sur l’enseignement du Grand Nord canadien. Il examine quelques questions théoriques de l’enseignement de la langue et de la culture. Il explore également l’interdépendance entre la langue et la culture. Le document aborde également certaines considérations théoriques concernant l’enseignement sur les cultures lointaines comme en témoigne le Grand Nord canadien. En outre, l’essai porte sur des questions pratiques sur l’enseignement de ce sujet au niveau secondaire et fournit une description méthodologique étape par étape et une illustration de la préparation de matériel pédagogique liés au sujet.

Mots-clés :
l’enseignement de la culture, des cultures lointaines, le Grand Nord canadien, l’enseignement de l’anglais, la préparation de matériel pédagogique
Introduction

The great majority of people who start learning English want to learn the language primarily so that they can easily communicate in global contexts. In fact, culture is only of secondary importance for them as cultural knowledge about the English speaking countries may not be seen as an essential asset to be able to communicate effectively. Considering the bulk of learners, this instrumental approach to language learning (i.e. language is only a means of communication) is unlikely to change and for this reason, sneaking culture into the curriculum, always pairing up learning about culture with some new linguistic input, may be a solution to combat students’ understandable negligence of culture and cultural information.

Approaching from a theoretical perspective, this study reveals the interrelatedness between language and culture, and considers the consequences of this relationship on language teaching. Next, some theoretical considerations concerning teaching about distant cultures are introduced. This is followed by a review of potential Canadian North-related raw materials for the English classroom. Ultimately, the paper provides a step-by-step methodological description of the preparation of teaching materials connected to the Canadian North, which will be in turn illustrated with the example of the Kuupak house.

Language and culture

This section discusses the relationship between English as a foreign language and culture by exploring diverse views about this interconnection in the literature. As a starting point, it must be noted that English as a foreign language is used extensively in international contexts, where the language exists in a cultural vacuum, i.e. no culture is attached to this international version of English. Bearing in mind such contexts of language use, some researchers including Jenkins (2000, 2002, 2005) and Seidlhofer (2001), argue that no culture can and should be attached to this international variety of English and thus no cultural information as such should be taught. However, the strong motivational power and the mutually reinforcing nature of learning the language and learning about culture should not be neglected and should therefore be utilised as a driving force impacting students. This is claimed by Wardhaugh (2010), who points out that the relationship between culture and language might be a motivational force for learners.

In fact, pairing up language education with learning about culture has been emphasised by many acknowledged researchers. Seelye’s (1984) theory on the development of cross-cultural communication skills maintains that behaviours are culturally
conditioned and that students can be made to realise this through learning languages. Similarly, Byram and Morgan (1994) as well as Hinkel (2000) claim that language education is inevitably culture-based in its approach, i.e. language instruction cannot effectively take place without teaching about culture. This is also supported by Ardila-Rey (2008), who draws attention to the close relationship between language and culture in general. Risager (2007) also underscores that English is closely connected to English-speaking cultures unless English is used as a lingua franca without a definite cultural element. Kramsch (1991) goes even further and maintains that ‘culture and language are inseparable and constitute one single universe’ and this way suggests that it is not possible to teach language without inevitably teaching culture.

Other researchers also state that it is practically impossible to separate the teaching of language from the teaching of culture, which approach is advocated by Jiang (2000) as well as Peterson and Coltrane (2003). Also connecting culture and language, Damen (2003) believes that language is both the means of communication and the mediator of cultural codes and rules, which suggests that language can also be effectively exploited for educating about culture. Eventually, focusing on the production on textbooks that include culture, Mitchell and Myles (2004: 235) put forward a similar argument when they claim that “Language and Culture are not separate but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other”. This seems to suggest that this mutually reinforcing nature of language and culture should ideally be exploited for teaching purposes.

Teaching culture

This section addresses the issue of teaching culture and discusses relevant methodological considerations. As far as teaching culture is concerned, a very broad definition of culture is suggested by the authors, which resounds with Paige et al.’s (2003: 177) definition of learning about culture. They define learning about culture as “[t]he process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills and attitude required for effective communication”. In the scope of this definition, with a view to including the widest possible aspects of culture in the teaching materials designed by the authors and exemplified below by the activity on the Kuupak house, we adopted Brown’s (2007) approach, according to which culture is a way of life presentable to students. In this respect, any such aspect of the target culture can be presented to students that they can relate to and understand. Nevertheless, from a pedagogical perspective, this highly abstract concept of culture can only be tangibly presented to students, in our view, in a pedagogically proper way, through concrete cultural objects and examples. This approach enables students to understand the given
culture more deeply by way of dealing with easy-to-understand objects and examples first and then moving on to learn about more complex issues.

A similar gradualness is underscored by Gochenour and Janeway’s (1993) model of culture learning, which suggests that students should progressively be involved in culture-related issues during the learning process. This entails moving from less complicated and less abstract aspects of culture towards more elaborate ones in a way that this information gets structured for students in a way that they potentially understand even the most difficult aspects of culture later on.

Hofstede’s (2010) famous concept of ‘peeling the onion of culture’ likewise bears implications to the teaching of culture. Hofstede claims that there are different levels of culture that exhibit different levels of abstraction: the less abstract ones are easier to understand whereas the more abstract ones are more difficult to comprehend. From this it follows that tangible cultural products and phenomena, which Hofstede collectively calls cultural practice, should be introduced to students first. In addition, cultural discourse and cross-cultural learning should also be part of teaching culture, Berrell and Gloet (1999) claim. This means that educating about culture should focus on understanding one’s own culture and the target culture, possibly by making comparisons and by carefully examining cultures in cross-cultural and multicultural perspectives exhibiting a tolerant and bias-free attitude.

Another relevant aspect to consider in connection with teaching and explaining culture is the notion Seelye’s (1984) theory discusses as the culturally conditioned nature of behaviours. According to this theory, teaching about culture should extend, on the one hand, to the description, explanation and justification of the behaviours associated with the target culture and, on the other hand, to enabling learners to explore why such behaviours exist and why they are (not) accepted in the culture under scrutiny. Moreover, the same theory advocates not only trying to combat generalizations about cultures but also showing empathy and understanding towards other cultures without passing any judgement about the cultures involved.

Finally it must also be stressed that culture and the manifestation of culture are so diverse and so complex that unless a very thorough investigation into culture is performed in class, students will mostly be able to see the tip of the iceberg of a culture. This is not desired as students may draw false or incorrect conclusions about the culture(s) involved due to the superficial nature of both the presentation and the acquired knowledge. Therefore, in-depth approach is encouraged by Hall (1996), who claims that the explicit manifestations of culture only constitute purely the tip of the iceberg of a culture but these “tips” do not make visible the motives, underlying concepts and non-communicated values associated with the given culture. Therefore, it is important, as also advocated by Nieto (2002), to try to go beyond superficial topics and approaches and to extensively discuss and survey culture-related aspects and in-
formation in class and to address both visible and non-visible aspects of culture in the classroom so that learners are given the opportunity to explore the given culture(s) more extensively and in depth.

**Teaching about distant cultures**

Given the uniqueness of the Canadian North, the issue of teaching about distant cultures must be addressed. Teaching about the Canadian North requires a distinct methodological approach as this culture is presumably lesser known in the learners’ own cultures and is probably culturally more distant than the English-speaking cultures the students have been exposed to. With reference to the practice of teaching culture in general, Holme (2003) has revealed that the great majority of teachers include culture in their teaching irrespective of what practical purpose they teach the language for. Thus it can be maintained that apparently culture is inevitably included in the curriculum.

With respect to culture, the authenticity of teaching materials poses an inevitable question. Addressing the issue of authenticity as far as cultural information is concerned (i.e., the question of what counts as authentic cultural information in which learning context), Krämer (1998: 81) advocates that “cultural appropriateness may need to be replaced by the concept of **appropriation**, whereby learners make a foreign language and culture their own by adopting and adapting it to their own needs and interests” (emphasis in the original). This claim is even more vital if the students’ own culture and the culture about which the students are studying are quite distant from each other, as it may well be the case in the majority of contexts where students learn about the Canadian North. What is important to underline here is that students must be made aware that their native culture and the culture of the Canadian North are so wide apart from each other that students’ usual ‘native’ approach to other cultures is likely to fail in this case. Therefore, students need to start their investigation into the Canadian North by focusing on those relatively few aspects that the target culture and their native cultures have in common and it is only later, in possession of some knowledge about the Canadian North, that they can safely extend the scope of their studies and interest to aspects of this culture quite distant from their own. This approach is also encouraged by Gochenour and Janeway’s (1993) above-mentioned model of culture learning, which proposes the gradual involvement of students in culture-related issues. This gradualness and the depth of insight into a given culture one can attain this way are discussed by Scanlon (1996), who distinguishes four different interactions as far as the depth of learning about culture is concerned. This framework features the following categories: learning about (1) culture as “knowing about”
(studying facts); (2) culture as “knowing how” (gaining real first-hand experience); (3) culture as “knowing why” (interpreting behaviours); and (4) culture as “knowing oneself” (reflecting on one’s attitudes). These depths can be achieved if culture is taught in a gradual and detailed enough way.

The culture of the Canadian North also seems to defy our traditional notions of what culture includes in the context of teaching culture. An approach, which would otherwise be easy to adapt for teaching purposes, is offered by Robinson (1985), who establishes three elements of culture referring to products (including literature, folklore, art, music, artefacts), ideas (including beliefs, values, institutions) and behaviours (including customs, habits, dress, foods, leisure). This classical categorisation may not hold entirely appropriate or valid in the case of the Canadian North, where other elements may be more or less prominent than these three. Such elements with more (or even less) prominence may include for example certain aspects of the natural or the built environment. What becomes obvious from this is that the Canadian North exceptionally well illustrates that relativity of cultures.

**Materials for the worksheets on the Canadian North**

There is a wealth of web-based materials on the Canadian North. Some of these appear in the form of ready-made lesson plans, others can function as raw materials to be turned into classroom worksheets with the help of the method detailed in the section “preparation of teaching materials.” The current section will make an attempt at highlighting those Canadian North-related groups of materials which can be useful for the high school English classroom. These include general information on the North, geographical, historical, social and cultural aspects, and, within culture a wide range of subjects opens up for exploration from food and housing to story telling and arts.

First, for the introduction of the topic, the Nunavut chapter of the Department of Canadian Heritage publication, *Symbols of Canada* can provide the scope of information. For students at a more advanced level of English, the ‘Nunavut” or “Inuit” entries of the online *Canadian Encyclopaedia* can serve the same purpose.

As for geography, *Canadian Geographic Education* covers diverse issues such as the climatic features of Canada’s North and climate change (e.g. “Canada’s arctic Barometer”), physical geography (e.g.: “Arctic Archipelago – Canada’s Amazing Arctic Islands”), fauna and flora (“Arctic Web Quest,” “Harp Seal: Population, Migration and Distribution”), expeditions in the polar region (“and various features of social geography such as environmental problems (“Arctic Cleanup”) or arctic community life (“Some Like it Cold”: Canada’s Northern Communities,” “Living in the Canadian
North”), Some of the issues (e.g. “Arctic and Atlantic Environments: A Comparison,” “Comparing My Community to a Northern Community”) are discussed in a comparative manner, which also facilitates the understanding of the cultural differences arising from the geography of the regions compared.

Even though the materials presented in this section come in the form of classroom-ready worksheets, one must not forget that they have been taylor-made for Canadian school-age audiences, therefore, adjustments and supplementation concerning both language and cultural content may be necessary following the procedure outlined in the next section.

Natural Resources Canada also has a page on the North, the information content of which can be turned into Canadian geography-related materials for the English classroom. It includes many features of physical geography such as sea ice freeze-up and break-up, sea ice conditions, protected areas and maps of various Canadian Northern locations.

What regards history and the Canadian Arctic, one topic which is compatible with secondary English school curricula, is likely to engage students’ attention and suitable to the level of their knowledge of English is the topic of expeditions. The “Lesson Plans” page of Canadian Geographic Education covers the Franklin expedition, of which numerous other resources are available, as well. Similarly, the “Publication Catalogue” of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has a poster of the Canadian Arctic expedition of 1913-18 which can serve as excellent raw material in this topic as well as explorer’s diaries such as Conor Mihell’s “Diary of a Northern Explorer.”

The project entitled “Canada’s First Peoples” run by Joan and John Goldi and supported by Canadian Heritage has an informative and well-illustrated chapter on the people of the Arctic, the Inuit, one subchapter of which focuses on family, social structure and leadership. Another linguistically student-friendly source with focus on Inuit society is “Through Mala’s Eyes – Life in an Inuit Community” published by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada in 2003. The thirteen personalized units of the 90-page publication offer an insight into various aspects of quotidian Inuit reality: where Mala lives, his family, what he knows about the past of his people, local history, different Arctic nations, climate and its effect on the people of the Arctic, travelling, wildlife, homes, hunting and camping.

In addition, one can find sources which focus on one particular aspect of Inuit culture. Food, for example forms the subject of Canadian Geographic Education’s “The Northern Food Guide” or Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada’s “Far North Food: From Char to Processed Snacks.” In both cases, supplying pictorial illustrations can be helpful just as it can generate exciting further activities. As for housing, Nick Walker’s “The Kuupak House” can provide practical starting points for its interesting but not overly difficult vocabulary. The building of igloos is such a widely covered subject that
activities here can aim at identifying the building parts and process without much further guidance.

Further aspects of Inuit culture for exploration may include sports (e.g. “Arctic Winter Games” in the publication catalogue of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada) and art-related topics for which the “Discover Inuit Art” information page published by the same government department proves to be a useful starting point with names of artists and reference to further web-pages. A *Cultural Reader on Aboriginal Perspectives in Canada* covers Inuit art in general, artist Jesse Oonark and has a separate chapter devoted to Inuit stone carvings inviting students to do further Internet research on the subject. Mary Wallace’s *The Inukshuk Book* exemplifies well the popularity of inukshuk as a cultural symbol of the Canadian North. This publication has information on the various inukshuk meanings through which readers can learn about Inuit lifestyles, as well.

Oral tradition, tales, myths and beliefs cover another important and curriculum-relevant cultural aspect of the Canadian North. As for oral tradition and stories, the volume *Northern Voices: Inuit Writings in English* offers a rich collection of narratives, from which the teacher can select the ones that match the theme and the curricular aims of the given class. Lydia Dabcovich’s *The Polar Bear Son – An Inuit Tale* or Michel Bania’s *Kumak’s Fish* present a personalized version of northern lifestyles, the latter comes with a reader’s guide with additional information and questions. The website “Listening to Our Past” has recordings of Nunavut elders telling stories of hunting, travelling, survival and dreams. These recordings can make exciting listening materials when their classroom application is thoroughly prepared.

What regards myth and legend, a very simple introduction can be found in the “Inuit Mythical Figures” chapter of Bánhegyi et al.’s *A Cultural Reader on Aboriginal Perspectives in Canada*. For students with more advanced English, the “Inuit Myth and Legend” entry of the on-line Canadian Encyclopaedia can be a useful point of orientation for students with more advanced English.

Finally, a few other pages on the North which may be of interest to the secondary English classroom. First, *Canadian Geographic* publishes a one-page polar blog in every issue, which features themes such as climate change, fauna, flora, and life in the arctic. The October 2015 issue of the same magazine presented a 50-question quiz on the Arctic in its “The Ultimate Canadian Geography Quiz” series, which can be used as raw material both for further research on Arctic-related issues (geography, people, history, wildlife, ice, water, earch, weather climate, place names, parks and reserves) or for customized quizzes on the Arctic.

Community web-pages for Inuit cultural groups and organizations as well as educational resource pages such as the “Inuit Cultural Online Resource” can also make useful raw materials for the secondary English classroom on Arctic Canada. Most of the
sources mentioned in this section have a social media segment, too, which is equally worth exploring.

Obviously, the cornucopia of materials does not allow for an all-inclusive review of materials on the Canadian North for the secondary English classroom within the scope of the present article, thus the choice of the authors will remain arbitrary, no matter how many titles are added. However, it can be stated that the above collection of sources will make useful raw materials for any teacher intent on introducing the Canadian North in their secondary English classroom.

**Preparation of teaching materials**

The process of preparing teaching materials in connection with teaching about cultures is a complicated one and it entails several steps. Supposing that the topic of the teaching materials has been selected, as a first step of the process of teaching material preparation, various subtopics within the above-mentioned broad topic are selected as potential themes of interest for the activities. This practically means narrowing down the topic and finding some angle(s) to approach it from.

As a next step, the curriculum of English as a foreign language is reviewed with respect to the country where the teaching materials will be used. This step is important because teachers are not ready or willing to include (and as a rule will not include) any material in their lessons that falls outside the scope of prescribed materials and topics. On the basis of this review, a second scanning of the subtopics is performed and a final selection is made with a view to meeting curricular expectations: topics not included in the given curriculum are discarded and topics included in the curriculum are retained and are occasionally expanded. As a third step, the subtopics thus selected are further narrowed down and are focalised to suit students’ interest. In practice, this entails choosing certain aspects or perspectives students are likely to find thought-provoking and intriguing.

For the preparation true-to-life materials, reliable sources containing authentic texts are selected. As to such sources, government-operated web pages, on-line encyclopaedias and archives (e.g. *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, *The History of Canada Online*, *the Canadian National Library Archives*, *CBC Archives*), national and provincial public institutions’ (e.g. National Film Board), universities’ and museums’ websites and on-line publications offer an almost unexplorable wealth of raw materials to be used for teaching purposes. As teachers themselves are likely to lack sufficient background knowledge on the cultural issues to be introduced with the help of these teaching materials, the above sources have the additional benefit of providing educators with some necessary background information they can use for preparation.
The next step in the production of the worksheets is to adapt the materials to students’ level of English, cultural background and interest. In this stage the authentic materials are reviewed and edited linguistically, culturally and presentation-wise. This primarily means simplifying the language but retaining both key vocabulary elements and cultural information as well as finding a suitable way of presenting the materials to the audiences concerned. The following step is to find linkages between the new cultural information presented in the teaching materials and students’ cultural backgrounds by exposing cultural similarities and differences. These connections are included and focalised in the teaching materials and as a rule they refer students to their previous cultural knowledge so that they can understand new cultural information more in depth. All this is planned in a way that less complex issues are addressed first, which are followed by the discussion of more complex ones. This approach also serves the purpose of students’ gradual involvement in the target culture.

Next, with a view to repetition and recycling, teaching materials by the authors are designed to occasionally revisit and revise formerly taught contents by offering students practice opportunities in the framework of diverse activities. In the case of each activity, special care is taken to offer model texts for students to rely on: this linguistic model serves as a starting point for students in their communication. Generally, worksheets start with controlled or guided practice activities and move towards free practice activities. Thereby tasks provide ample opportunities for students to freely use topic-related language in context. In order to aid students’ personalization of the activities in terms of content and language and to encourage learners to solve tasks at their own levels of cultural and language knowledge, open-ended activities are included in each worksheet, which allow students to customize the linguistic output to their own level of proficiency.

**Demonstration: The Kuupak House**

In the last section of the article, the above principles used for the preparation of teaching materials will be demonstrated on an activity featuring the Kuupak house. The unit, in which the activity was used, covers housing in the North (Figure 1).

The short description provided by *Canadian Geographic* makes a suitable raw material for an activity for Northern housing both grammar and vocabulary-wise, and it is narrow enough to be covered in a single activity. As for curricular concerns, housing is on the list of the national curricula in Central-, and Eastern Europe and so are verb forms, on which the gap-fill part of the activity is focusing.
Task Seven: Kuupak House

The pictures show an Inuvialuit driftwood house. Read the statements below the pictures and fill in the sentences with the suitable form of the verbs in bold listed below the text.

The house ______ (1) south. It was ______ (2) into a steep slope on the shore. It was a winter residence but it was ______ (3) in summer before the top ground layer ______ (4).

Sod chunks were ______ (5) over the first driftwood layer. Then more driftwood ______ (6) for stability, and finally, the structure was ______ (7) with snow.

The house could ______ (8) 15 to 30 people. One family ______ (9) at the back of the building, and two families at the side. Inside, the house ______ (10) log walls and roofs. In the middle, there ______ (11) a large hearth, and smoke ______ (12) from a square opening in the flat roof. People ______ (13) the house through a five-meter tunnel which ______ (14) to a wind-breaking porch made from snow-blocks.

be / build / cover / dig / escape / enter / face / freeze / follow / have / hold / live / open / put

Figure 1. Activity featuring the Kuupak house

Student interest is ensured by the unusual context of the topic (i.e. housing in the North) which captures young people’s imagination as practice proves. The authenticity and reliability of the source is supported by the fact that the article was taken from a well-known and recognized Canadian magazine, Canadian Geographic, the educational pages of which also provide extra background information for the teacher wishing to introduce the topic in the English classroom.
Some alterations in the original material are needed language-wise, however, to adapt the material to students’ level of English (i.e. simplification of difficult general vocabulary and grammatical structures). Also, the background information provided by Canadian Geographic Education will fill in the gaps in teachers’ and students’ knowledge of northern housing to be fully able to enjoy the activity. The integrated manner of presentation of the featured topic and grammar is realized through the revisiting of the grammar ‘verb forms’ and the revision and extension of students’ housing-related vocabulary.

Conclusions

The study presented an overview of the theoretical questions of teaching language and culture and discussed the interrelatedness of language and culture. It has been concluded that language and culture are inseparable and that the teaching of these two should ideally go hand in hand. Then the paper addressed the topic of teaching culture from the perspective of the theory of culture teaching and found that gradualness will lead to in-depth understanding about the culture concerned. This was followed by introducing some theoretical considerations concerning teaching about distant cultures and it was established that traditional notions of culture do not necessarily help in understanding such distant cultures as that of the Canadian North and that understanding the Canadian North requires careful methodological planning and a lot of student effort. Then numerous sources concerning teaching about the Canadian North in the English classroom were described and some application-related insights were provided. Finally, a step-by-step methodological description of the preparation of teaching materials was presented along with the concrete example of the activity on the Kuupak house. In addition to reviewing the theoretical considerations involved, this paper presented a description and a detailed guide concerning teaching material preparation, which may serve as a model for educators who wish to produce their own materials on the Canadian North for the secondary English classroom.
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How Hockey Helps Canada to Claim and Keep Its North

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Abstract
A significant part of Canada’s identity can be addressed through contrast with nations which Canada is in one way or another presumed or perceived to be on a par with: the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Culturally, (geo)politically and socially, Canada is most often compared to the USA that recognizes Canada as its North. On the other hand, when considering geographical reality, its significance and influence, as well as the symbolism, beliefs and stereotypes that stem from it, Russia might seem like the alternative “Great White North”. It is then especially interesting to use sport, a well-known showcase of how countries perceive each other and consolidate their own identities, to take a closer look at Canadian identity construction. This paper presents the most prominent features of that process through an analysis of narratives dealing with selected hockey matches between Canada and its two biggest rivals.

Keywords: hockey, identity, narrative analysis, Russian Federation, United States of America

Résumé
L’identité du Canada peut être abordée, entre autres, par le contraste avec les nations avec lesquelles ce pays semble être sur un pied d’égalité: les États-Unis d’Amérique et la Fédération de Russie. Culturellement, politiquement et socialement, le Canada est d’une part le plus souvent comparé aux Etats-Unis qui perçoivent le Canada comme le “Nord”. D’autre part, lorsque l’on considère la réalité géographique, son importance et son influence, ainsi que le symbolisme, les croyances et les stéréotypes qui en découlent, la Fédération de Russie pourrait sembler comme une alternative au “Great White North”. Le sport est une vitrine bien connue de la façon dont les pays consolident leur identité, et c’est pourquoi cet article présente les caractéristiques les plus importantes de ce processus identitaire par le biais d’une analyse de récits traitant de matchs de hockey sélectionnés entre le Canada et ses deux plus grands rivaux.

Mots-clés: analyse narrative, États-Unis d’Amérique, Fédération de Russie, hockey, identité
1. Introduction

This paper examines three groups of narratives and perspectives found in imagining and defining Canada as a country with a specific identity, mentality, values and strengths. Those narratives are, respectively: Canada as the North, Canada as the leading hockey country in the world, and Canada in comparison/contrast to its biggest hockey rivals, the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The primary idea of reviewing and systemising such narratives comes from observing the Canadians speaking (in various different codes) about themselves. In this case, it comes down to what they say about the game of hockey itself and how they feel about it, both in general, and in terms of expressing their own identity. But more importantly, the aim of this paper is to research how Canadians themselves explain those very phenomena and their relationship to them; i.e. which narratives they use while explaining, defining or questioning their own narratives.

The analysis is, therefore, of a qualitative nature rather than a quantitative one, and strives to encompass a range of narrative templates – presented in this paper through various quotes, and observed in and originating from a number of scholarly papers, newspaper articles, studies and surveys. The criteria for including a specific text in this analysis were the following: in case of books, scholarly papers, academic writings, surveys and essays – they had to address Canada, Canadian identity or Canadian Studies in a relevant way; in case of online media texts, polls, and images covering Canada, Canadian identity, hockey in general or specific hockey matches – they had to be published in Canadian media and written, made or conducted by a Canadian author (however, few exceptions were made when the topic was relevant). All of the examples and the quotes from aforementioned texts that were finally presented and discussed in this paper, are those that were seen as the most typical for, and revealing of, a specific narrative.

2. Canada as the North and the quest for (future) Canadian identity

Just by taking a look at various online images setting hockey in the midst of a breathtaking winter nature – the snow-covered Canadian North – we might feel invited to agree that hockey and North, visually and symbolically, can function as two sides of the same idea of Canada as a country. As an example, let us take the poster showing an outside rink in a snow covered mountain area1 claiming: Canadians

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– not giving a damn how cold it is outside since 1867. It comes from a 2014/2015 Molson Canadian beer campaign called *Anything for hockey*, a part of which was an installation of an actual outside rink on a glacier in the Rocky Mountains outside Invermere, BC where the chosen fans had the chance to play. Or a personal photo shot of a “Mountie” from British Columbia² (also taken in Invermere, BC) that went viral in March 2015, and was by many dubbed the “most Canadian photo ever”, quite literally combining the two Canadian motives regularly recognised among the symbols representing Canada the most.

By setting and visualising hockey in such a context, as unaltered by man as possible, it appears to us as a fact which simply comes with the natural setting that Canadians are inhabiting. It is well-known that a number of authors have discussed the concept of Canada as a northern country, but not all of the authors approach it as a self-explanatory concept – they are perhaps more likely to examine the construction of the myth they believe it to be. Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies* (1957) might come to mind as a general starting point for anyone interested in such analysis, and when it comes to hockey, Gruneau and Whitson (in studies such as *Hockey Night in Canada: Sports, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (1994) or *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce* (2006)) thoroughly investigate the main hockey myths of Canada, and the direction they evolve in. However, in order to outline how the Canadian narratives of North are being problematized in the recent Canadian Studies, and how hockey might fit into that issue as well, I have chosen to address the articles by other authors that might offer interesting thoughts on the subject, i.e. by Canadianists Eugenia Sojka (2002) and Myrna Kostash (2004), respectively.

In her article “(De)Constructing Canadian Identities in Selected 20th Century Arts and Interarts Projects” (2002), Sojka gives a short overview of what some of the crucial myths of Canadian identity were, or still are, based upon, and also points out the new tendencies that go beyond those traditional (meta)narratives. Her “examination of a longstanding cultural fiction constructing Canada as a northern country with all its cultural, geographical and psychological connotations, or in other words, the myth of Canada as the North” is explicitly underlined with her conclusions that “these models [...] are fictions that can be easily challenged” (Sojka 2002: 241f.). The myth of Canada as the North is therefore a problematic one, and “with all its monologic implications is no longer a crucial part of the complex nature of Canadian cultural identity” (Sojka 2002: 248).

Another source that provides further food for thought on how that model of Canadian identity and nation functions in the 21st century, and is being reshaped by a new, medialised global society and new Canadian generations that are a part

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of it, is “The Next Canada: In Search of Future Nation” (2004) by Myrna Kostash. She draws our attention to a possibility that the post-Free Trade Agreement (FTA) generation is “a generation whose narratives of experience had been dissolved in borderless, denationalized media, and whose continuity with familial, class and cultural memory had been broken” (Kostash 2004: 247). It is a generation, Kostash claims, which “declares that ‘here’ is not a geohistorical place [...] but a landscape of communications” and explains how “for them the perennial Canadian identity crisis is an opportunity to develop a whole series of morphed electronic identities” (Kostash 2004: 251). Canada is, therefore, developing into a “virtual Canada”, and the 21st century Canadians are becoming “disconnected from an actual, market-driven, globalizing and digitizing corporation with its regional office in the House of Commons” (Kostash 2004: 251). Furthermore, the author suggests that “the younger generation has the capacity to feel at home in a symbolically Canadian media universe while actual Canada [...] disappears. This is deeply radical”, she concludes (Kostash 2004: 252), giving us a picture of how and why the Canadian identity is being transformed and what that means for the myths and narratives that the older generations still might operate from.

The same author also questions ideas of Canadian identity that were seen in the media following the Canadian gold medal at the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympics. “In the pages of newspapers we read of the ‘meaning’ of this Canadian achievement”, she says, quoting the attributes describing it, such as Wayne Gretzky’s about how “it shows our depth” or sports columnist Stephen Brunt’s how it’s “all about celebrating hearth and home” and “the very idea of it concentrating our ‘national longing’ as ‘little guys living next to the big guys’” (Kostash 2004: 252f.). The discourses surrounding the victory have such an emotional dimension since it was both a match against the United States and an end to 50 years without a hockey gold for Canada. Kostash also notices fans’ statements in the media describing the importance of beating the United States in such a match: “We’re not going to be pushed over by Americans anymore”, is one of the examples (Kostash 2004: 253).

But the idea that might give the best possible introduction to the topic of hockey and its significance for the Canadian identity of the 21st century is one that the author shares from another columnist, Edward Greenspon, who “drew another lesson: these young people, come of age after the FTA, personify Canada’s ‘new mood of excellence’, meaning, thankfully, that Canadians are so ‘secure’ in their identity that society can now move from ‘policies based on equity’ to ‘policies based on excellence’” (Kostash 2004: 253). It is a rather provocative conclusion in a couple of ways, but nevertheless a very legitimate one, considering how much thought and space is given to the idea of excellence in our modern society. Interestingly enough, the concept of excellence originates from the ancient Greeks, when it was known as
the term *arete* (Mark 2014). Not only was this term used to describe excellence of any kind, including in sports, but also to point out someone’s moral virtue and social duty: those meanings were interchangeably linked, indicating whether someone has fulfilled their fullest potential as a human being; it was an ideal the very first athletes were striving to achieve too. Nowadays, the concept of excellence may have shrunk in comparison to the original one – emphasizing mostly our admiration and striving for flawless appearance or performance – but it still provides an interesting explanation of where sport might fit both in an individual’s life and as an expression of one nation’s achievement. In the following section it will be interesting to see how Canadians themselves link their hockey achievements to a specific set of Canadian values.

### 3. Canada and its hockey rivals

In order to identify the biggest hockey rivals Canada has had, both throughout history and at this very moment, one does not have to look very far. No matter which poll and from what source, they are all going to point to the United States and the Russian Federation. Clearly, the rivalry with the Russian Federation was most intense during the USSR era, especially in the 1970s and the 1980s, and is to date considered to be the classic, historic hockey rivalry. Recently, the United States might have proved themselves to be a tougher opponent and a bigger threat than the Russians, and therefore seem to be highlighted as the bigger rival, especially by the younger generations that have not witnessed the games of the Soviet era. Such results are to be found in, among others, one poll from *Toronto Sun Online* (qtd. in Zeisberger 2014), that posed the question: “Who do you think Canada’s biggest [hockey] rival is?” The results were as follow: U.S. 67% (417 votes), Russia 26% (165 votes), Sweden 5% (29 votes), Finland 1% (7 votes), Other 1% (9 votes).

Similarly, numerous polls are clearly showing the four most important and memorable games in the Canadian hockey history (qtd. in QMI Agency 2012, 2014, Sportak 2012), namely: 2010 Vancouver Olympics final match against the United States, 1972 Summit Series against the USSR, 1987 Canada Cup against the USSR, and 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics final game against the United States – the first two mentioned events are usually alternating between the first and the second place. But what lies behind these rivalries, what made those wins so memorable – or “typically Canadian” even? That is something Canadian authors themselves deliver a lot of material on and the following paragraphs will address those narratives.
3.1. Canada vs. USA

The comparison between two countries that are sharing the same continent and a lot of their origins and characteristics in general, seems natural, not only to a distant European observer, but to Canadians as well – whether or not they actually like the comparison. Like many other authors, Marek Golebiowski, in “Canadian Values: Continuity or Change?” (2002), explains that “in the Canadian context the almost natural thing to do is to relate Canadian values to American values” (Golebiowski 2002: 92), referring to, among others, Alan Gregg and Michael Posner – the authors of The Big Picture. What Canadians Think about Almost Everything (1990) – and hence further stating:

Canadians’ vision of themselves, when compared to their neighbours to the South, is that of a tolerant, peaceful and independent people, with much lesser propensity to violence than is the case with the Americans. [Canadians believe themselves to be] hard-working, less competitive, better informed [...]. (Golebiowski 2002: 92)

If we take these presumptions for granted, it makes it even more interesting to see how they would fit into the hockey narratives. In his text “Hockey and Canadian Culture” (2010), Paul Martin claims:

[...] The increasingly aggressive assertions that hockey is ‘Canada’s game’ and no one else’s naturally rubs other countries (and many, many Canadians) the wrong way. Such rhetoric, which one hears employed mostly by advertisers such as Molson, Coke, and Tim Hortons and by some commentators, most notably Don Cherry, seems counter to the modesty and humility for which Canada is known. Brash self-confidence seems, to many Canadians, to be ‘un-Canadian’. (Martin 2010)

Leaving marketing strategies aside, we might start wondering whether hockey reveals the un-Canadian side of the Canadians (and why), or does it simply reveal those narratives about Canadian humility and friendliness (often repeated as characteristics that distinguish them from their neighbours to the South) – to be a national myth. Similar questions and paradoxes seem to arise when it comes to the debate about fighting in hockey, as the same author suggests (qtd. in Martin 2010). Still, he does not fail to agree with other authors, such as Bruce Dowbiggin and his book The Meaning of Puck: How Hockey Explains Modern Canada (2008), and so he notices how

[...] it is not a coincidence that the most revered hockey stars in Canada are the ones who are the most humble and, like Crosby and Gretzky before him, are quick to point to their
teammates as the reason behind their individual success. Unlike the more individualistic culture of the United States, Canada and Canadians see themselves, for better or worse, as being more concerned with the success of the collective rather than the individual. (Martin 2010)

Fans themselves are not immune from this debate. Among those who have re-searched the topic more thoroughly, similar questions arise – and some possible answers as well. For example, one of the comments in an online forum thread on HFBoards titled “Paper about Canadian identity and ice hockey” (2012) – where one of the members’ paper is helped being revised by others – reveals the following view:

[... ] You contrast Don Cherry and others supporting a traditional Canadian hockey ‘dominant, war-like’ spirit with a traditional stereotype of Canadians as modest, polite, and diplomatic. Yet these two things are not in conflict. The traditional view is that Canadians don’t talk a big game or draw attention to ourselves. We just get it done on the ice. See Bobby Orr, Don Cherry’s favourite hockey player. He was a very humble, unassuming man who just put his head down after he scored, but he was as tough as they come on the ice as well. (Paper about Canadian identity and ice hockey 2012)

In an article by John Dellapina, appropriately titled “USA, Canada Rivalry Has Evolved Over Time” (2010), and published on the official site of the NHL, one of the most recognisable hockey analysts in Canada and the United States (born American with both American and Canadian passport), Pierre McGuire, is quoted saying the following about the rivalry:

Everybody in Canada sees [United States] as the big brother that you want to hang around with but you’re not sure if you can trust all the time. [...] All of a sudden, with what used to be their game, now the big brother is saying: OK, I’m taking the puck; I’m taking the stick and I’m taking the game. (Dellapina 2010)

For the time being, let us use that quote as a possible explanation of why the rivalry against the United States is getting more and more attention in Canada. Maybe it is primarily (but not exclusively) because of the fact that the opponent recently got much better and poses a real sports threat – bearing in mind that in this way it is also threatening to take away a unique and significant, tangible dominance that Canada had over it, and undermining some aspects of Canadian national mythology and identity that were built upon it.

3) HFBoards are online message boards (an online forum) – with more than 100,000 members – open to hockey fans around the world to discuss all aspects of hockey and its history.
3.2. Canada vs. Russia (USSR)

The rivalry between Canadians and Russians exploded at the time when their countries were not only the best hockey countries in the world, but also belonging to two very distant and completely different worlds in a political and social way. Their games were, therefore, not only a clash between two hockey philosophies (USSR having a reputation as an extraordinary skilled and creative team, opposed to Canadian will, determination and hard work), but also between the two worlds. Even now, somewhat older generations of hockey fans in Canada, but also most of the recent polls in general, are still favoring the games against the USSR as the most memorable ones in Canadian hockey history. This rivalry was immortalised through two events in particular: the 1972 Summit Series and the 1987 Canada Cup, both of them having their own trademark moments.

"Of course, the 1972 Summit Series was easily the most important and dramatic", reads one of the readers’ comments to the article “Top five Team Canada wins in hockey history” (2014) published by QMI Agency in Toronto Sun Online. “The most important lesson learned was that dismissive NHL overconfidence was no match for being properly prepared and trained! That first team was gasping for air in the first game and embarrassed itself”, the very same reader explains: “Thankfully, they loaded up with grit and determination to overcome their early hole” (QMI Agency 2014). Again, brash self-confidence, a rather non-typical Canadian feature, is a subject of critique and so, whenever the Canadians falter in their humility, they are just as well called out for it. Furthermore, a loss should be experienced as a punishment and – as most of the interpretations more often than not suggest – is not a matter of someone else being better, but rather a consequence of Canadians not being themselves and playing at their expected level.

Bruce Yaccato in his article “Top 15 Greatest Hockey Games Ever” (2015) gives us an idea of how this match is perceived up to this day:

It’s difficult to explain how much this win meant to the Canadian national psyche. Only the maple leaf flag, universal health care and heroism in two world wars approach the importance of hockey in the nation’s self-image. Team Canada had been humiliated in the early games of the so-called Summit Series and had to play the last four games in Moscow. With the series tied and the Soviets up 5–3 in the last period of the last game, the nation was on the verge of going into mourning. Such is its spiritual significance, it became for Canadians of a certain age, the Canuck equivalent of Americans asking ‘Where were you when Kennedy was shot?’ Redemption. Vindication. Glory. Don’t even think of telling a Canadian it’s just a game. (Yaccato 2015)
Although the games against the Soviet teams provide a much needed background on the dynamics of the contemporary rivalry, a more recent timeline can reveal a sharper perspective into present-day Canadian hockey identity, i.e. give an interesting insight into whether and how the dynamics have changed. Narratives similar to those explaining the differences between Canada and the United States can be found here as well. In the article “New Cold War: Russia vs. Canada” (2010) by Ethan Sherwood Strauss, there is a quote by Greg Wyshynski, an American sportswriter and creator of a popular hockey blog Puck Daddy, that outlines the nature of the hockey rivalry between the two countries nowadays: “Today, it obviously has the added flair of Alex Ovechkin against Sidney Crosby, which has been boiled down to its essential clichés by Canadian media as the flashy Russian showboat against the humble, stoic boy next door” (Strauss 2010).

One of the more recent games between Canada and the Russian Federation allows us to further reflect upon the idea that Canada’s hockey rivals are only mirrors of what Canadians think they themselves are supposed to be or have failed to be. Unlike the other games mentioned here, this one was played by the Junior Team, i.e. under-20 years old players. It was a final match at the 2011 IIHF World U20 Championship and it turned out to be one of the biggest comebacks in hockey ever: Russia was down 3–0 after two periods and then scored five goals in the third period to win the gold against Canadians that had already been considering the game won. The Canadians were devastated: “It was not just a loss; it was a collapse the likes of which Canada might never have seen. It was among the most spectacular collapses in hockey history”, wrote Bruce Arthur in his article in National Post titled, interestingly enough, “Canada has no monopoly on heart” (2011). In it, he admitted that in that match, it were the Russians who were demonstrating the ideal set of Canadian values: “It was grit, guts, heart, all those adjectives that Canadians sometimes believe to be their own exclusive property” (Arthur 2011). Another author, Rob Longley, writes along the same lines in his article “Oh, no Canada! Loss raises litany of questions” (2011): “For as much as their own country will erupt in deserved celebration at the victory, you can make a case that the Russians did it the Canadian way” (Longley 2011).

No matter the circumstances, it seems that Canada’s losses and victories in hockey are explained through more or less same concepts. Those concepts are therefore revealing the role of hockey in expressing or identifying the desired aspects of Canadian identity. The following section of this paper seeks to investigate how the Canadian authors themselves perceive such narratives.
4. Canadians explaining Canadian narratives

In his paper “Canada seeks national identity through sport” (2011), Aaron Taylor identifies topoi of a great deal of hockey narratives dealing with Canadian strengths and comparative advantages:

The ideals of what make a good hockey player are often present in what make a well-rounded person. A good hockey player is a hard worker, a team player, and dedicated to a fault. Most important, in hockey the size of the heart is more important than the size of the body. This is something that attracts Canadians, perhaps more than anything. As a relatively small country, Canada is often made to feel like the little brother to the neighboring United States. (Taylor 2011)

The comparison to the United States is by this point a familiar one, but it nevertheless conveniently reminds us of the underdog nature that Canadians believe defines them and their efforts. The loss against the Russian junior team exposes the same psychology, Taylor (2011) finds:

After last year’s gold medal collapse against the Russians, which saw Russia score five unanswered third period goals, many Canadians felt that there was a loss of identity. Aren’t we the ones that are supposed to do that? Gutsy-comeback-underdog efforts are things that belong to Canada. We are the nation that never says die. (Taylor 2011)

However, once again there seems to be a divergence between what Canada is on and off the ice. Whereas in the bigger picture the Canadians very well might be perceived as an underdog both by themselves as well as by the others, it would be a rather interesting concept to label Team Canada an underdog in hockey since it is regularly one of the top contenders. Some of the narratives exploiting this perspective are a subject of Adam Proteau’s critique in his article “Canadian Olympic pride is good – but not at the expense of other countries” (2014):

Nobody is saying Canadians shouldn’t be publicly proud of our athletes. But you’d think a country that spends most of its time in the shadow of the United States would be less likely to throw shade at other nations. And that goes double if Canada winds up securing the gold medal in Sochi and the narrative becomes about what great odds they’ve overcome to stand atop the podium. Is there anything worse than a leviathan that pretends it’s an underdog? (Proteau 2014)
(Most of the comments to the article oppose Proteau, showing perhaps that fans are not aware of or not ready to question the narratives they, too, use.) So it seems only natural to wonder what the future of these identity dynamics might be, both on and off the ice. Of course, there is one factor Canada cannot influence, and that is the progress of its opponents. The emphasis is, however, on Canada itself and the tone it will set for its own progress, both in hockey and in general. Possible challenges are by all means identified. In his paper “When Sport Defines a Nation” (2015), Sam Riches draws our attention to the fact that hockey “is now modern, commercial, a sport of privilege [...], and, increasingly, a game that has limited historical and cultural significance for new generations of Canadians”, but further adds in an optimistic manner how “in most respects, this may actually be a good thing. There’s room for re-definition” (Riches 2015). In a way, these thoughts bring the topic of this paper full circle – it is a rhetoric similar to how Myrna Kostash (2004) was problematising the national identity and the challenges and changes it faces in the 21st century. The foundations will not disappear nor should they: “There is still the thrill of spectatorship in hockey, of Canadians organizing around the game – using a cultural activity to help whittle out a collective identity – but hockey can no longer speak to the concept of a unified, singular Canadian”, says Riches (2015), concluding: “To be effective, it must speak to us all” (Riches 2015).

So are there any tangible clues to how hockey, fueled by possible identity issues – or how Canadian national identity, supported by further hockey dynamics – is to be drawn on the map of a modern Canadian society? A good place to start are the results of The 2013 General Social Survey by Statistics Canada (2015), published in October 2015. The survey investigated Canadians’ perceptions of national identity – national symbols, shared Canadian values, and pride were three addressed dimensions – and yielded the following five symbols of Canadian identity as the most important: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, national flag, national anthem, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and hockey (qtd. in Statistics Canada 2015). Although hockey’s place on the list is not questionable – 77% of the surveyed identified it as an important symbol of Canadian identity – “less than half (46%) considered hockey – Canada’s official winter sport, as a very important symbol, with about one in five (22%) believing that it was not very important or not at all important” (Sinha 2015). Furthermore, hockey was ranked among the lowest two at every age and it “ranks as a distant last across all provinces, except Quebec where its importance is similar to the other symbols, apart from the Charter” (Sinha 2015). The question of provincial differences in Canadians’ perceived importance of national symbols would open a further discussion going well back into the history of Canada and hockey in Canada. In any case, the motives behind the survey acknowledge that “Canada’s national identity has continuously changed, being shaped by shifts in the socio-demographic landscape of Canada,
historical events and social relationships” and that “it cannot be considered a stagnant construct, but rather one that evolves over time” (Sinha 2015). One might very well wonder to what extent this applies to hockey and its relevance for Canadians, which brings us to the final thoughts of this paper.

5. Conclusion

Sport remains a rewarding background for exploring national identities and their ways of coping with the changes of a postmodern world, in which new generations might be identified by their market preferences and digital presence rather than by their actual nationality. It is probably safe to assume that in Canada hockey will not lose its symbolic potential and power; however, its role and significance for the modern Canadians might go through a (likely slow and subtle, and most probably unconscious and uninstructed) process of re-evaluation.

Various narratives and metanarratives might leave us with somewhat confusing picture of how Canadians actually, whether consciously or subconsciously, project their identity onto their hockey efforts. Most of the time, it seems that the values that many Canadians believe are immanent to them are exercised (or at least looked for) in hockey, and vice versa: those traits of teams and players are welcomed that reflect the established values. But on the other hand, it is its somewhat twisted mirror image: Canada as a geopolitical underdog often interprets its hockey accomplishments from that same underdog perspective, although it enjoys an obvious dominance in this sport. Any trace of being too self-assured in success on the ice is condemned, which might be more indicative of Canadians’ fear of losing the dominance and the need to reassure and reclaim it, than them judging themselves simply for being ostentatious about it.

Some might argue the idea that Canadians have built a national myth out of turning their struggle with the cruel nature into a victory, but hockey might be good evidence for that: they have mastered the game and yet made it an imperative to stay humble. Maybe they are a perpetual underdog after all: no matter how many times they win, or how far back behind their opponents are, they might feel that every time they have to prove and claim their status again. It remains to be seen when and how, and whether at all, the social and political changes, or the evolution of the game itself, will have an effect on such Canadian narratives.
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A Decade of Stephen Harper’s Northern Policy: Achievements and Failures

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Abstract
Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006–2015) put forward a very ambitious plan to protect sovereignty in the North and strongly promoted it. “Arctic sovereignty” became a key phrase in political discourse during Harper’s decade. This article reviews and assesses the decade of Harpers’ Northern policy. It argues that the North was in fact used as an effective political strategy to unite Canadians around the issue of sovereignty protection, while the initial policies announced were not implemented with the exception of some infrastructure development projects.

Keywords: Canada, Arctic, Harper

Résumé
Le premier ministre du Canada Stephen Harper a présenté un plan très ambitieux pour protéger la souveraineté dans le Nord. La «souveraineté dans l’Arctique» est devenue un mot clé dans le discours politique sous l’administration de Stephen Harper, de 2006 à 2015, soit la symbolique durée d’une décennie. Cet article trace une évaluation de cette décennie de «politique du Nord» de Harper. L’auteur met en lumière que le Nord a été en fait utilisé comme un outil de stratégie politique, en vue d’unir les Canadiens autour de la question de la protection de la souveraineté, tandis que les politiques initialement annoncées n’ont pas été mises en place, à l’exception de certains projets de développement des infrastructures.

Mots-clés : Canada, Arctique, Harper

This is a revised and updated version of “Canada’s Northern Policy: Decade of Conservative Rule”, published in Studia i Materialy. Miscellanea Oecnomicae 4/2017, 209-220.
“Arctic sovereignty” became a strategic phrase in the political discourse following Stephen Harper’s assumption of the office of Prime Minister in Canada in January 2006. Harper put the North high on his political agenda and announced a number of initiatives regarding the region. As Steven Chase noted, the “Arctic file’ allowed Mr. Harper to stand up to the Americans – generally a crowd-pleaser among Canadian voters – not on ideology but over national interest” (Chase 2014a). This article reviews and assesses the decade of Harper’s Northern policy. The author argues that the North was used to unite Canadians around the issue of sovereignty protection as a justification for an increase of Canada’s presence in the region.

1. The North and Harper’s Northern vision

The Canadian North first gained its strategic value with the arrival of European fur traders. Initially the Hudson’s Bay Company controlled the fur trade for several centuries. Ever since the Hudson’s Bay Company had transferred all its land to the newly formed Dominium of Canada in 1869, Canada has steadily affirmed its occupation of the North. The federal approach to the North has evolved. In the first part of the 20th century, the federal government paid little attention to the region. Then the North gradually gained importance during World War II and the Cold War for military and surveillance purposes. In the late 1950s and in the beginning of the 1960s the then Prime Minister John Diefenbaker (1957–1963) committed his administration to securing the Canadian position in the North by economic development. Some projects were implemented, but due to high costs the northern development was put on hold. Subsequently, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (1968–1979; 1980–1984) made some efforts to enhance Canadian sovereignty and to promote economic development in the Arctic, which sparked friction with the US. Under his administration the first comprehensive land claim agreements were signed. This policy was continued by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (1993–2003) in the 1990s, which resulted in the signing of more agreements, one of which led to the creation of Nunavut, Canada’s third territory.

The latest developments connected with climate change have profoundly influenced the Canadian North. Even if experts’ opinions differ over the cause and speed of change, there is agreement on the fact that the global climate is changing. This has been observed especially in the Arctic. Permafrost and glaciers are melting, severe storms flow across the territory and open waters are eroding coastal banks. The AMAP Assessment of 2015 confirmed a continuation of these large-scale trends for the Arctic with strong regional warming, about twice as great as the global rate. The

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1) AMAP: The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme is a working group of the Arctic Council that evaluates the status and the trends of the Arctic ecosystem.
environmental changes have affected the Canadian North in several ways. The melting of polar ice strongly influences both the indigenous people and wildlife, requiring environmental protection but also economic development. A more accessible North has triggered competition for natural resources and shipping routes (AMAP 2015).

Stephen Harper, a Conservative who became the Prime Minister of Canada in 2006 and served to 2015, put the North high on his agenda. He brought back the Progressive Conservative agenda formulated by John Diefenbaker, but in different political and environmental circumstances. It was a new appointment with a new destiny, paraphrasing Slade’s book titled *John Diefenbaker: An Appointment with Destiny* (Slade 2001).

At least three major factors influenced the promotion of the North by the Harper government. First of all, the Conservative Party, despite winning the federal election in 2006, formed a minority government. Therefore Harper looked for ideas that would unite Canadians and increase support for his party in the future. His predecessor Preston Manning had stressed that if the Alliance Party wanted to win an election it needed to be “big”. The search for a larger support base was one of the reasons for the unification of the Alliance Party with the Progressive Conservative Party. The North ideally fitted the idea of “big”: vast and unknown, an ideal theme to unite Conservatives around. In addition, there was Harper’s personal fascination with the North. Together these factors pushed the Conservatives’ administration to the North to revive a robust and positive vision of nationalism and to create a concrete set of opportunities and obligations (Chase 2014b).

Secondly, from the very beginning Harper’s Arctic policy was based on the fear of external threats to Canadian sovereignty and security. To a certain extent this idea was based on the Conservative agenda dating back to the late 1950s when the Progressive Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker highlighted the importance of the North. Diefenbaker promoted military activities and economic development in the Arctic aimed at protecting Canadian sovereignty. Therefore his government launched a national policy of northern development that was spelled out in “A New Vision”, the opening campaign speech delivered in Winnipeg in 1958 (Diefenbaker, 1958). For Diefenbaker the North, with all its vast resources and hidden wealth, was a source of national consciousness (Slade 2001: 74).

Thirdly, climate change made the North more accessible and induced international competition to exploit mineral resources and to secure access to shipping routes. As a result this growing interest, the importance of the North increased, which Harper regarded as a potential threat to Canadian sovereignty.

Seemingly, a combination of these three factors influenced Harper’s approach to the North as a symbol of a positive nationalism and proud heritage that needs to be protected and developed. From the very beginning the Conservative government

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2) The leader and founder of the Reform Party, which gave way to the Canadian Alliance Party.
announced a number of initiatives to secure and enhance Canada’s position in the North. Harper declared Arctic sovereignty a key objective of his government and strongly asserted that the Arctic is fundamental to Canada. This was reflected in official statements and documents on the North, where the issue of protecting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic is almost always highlighted. For example, in a 2008 speech in Inuvik, Harper indicated that “The geopolitical importance of the Arctic and Canada’s interests in it have never been greater. This is why our government has launched an ambitious Northern Agenda based on the timeless responsibility imposed by our national anthem, to keep the True North strong and free” (Harper 2008).

Prior to this, in the 2007 Speech from the Throne, Harper had addressed specific issues relating to the Arctic such as a commitment to complete a mapping of Canada’s Arctic seabed, the creation of a world class Arctic research station and the improvement of living conditions for residents of the North. In July 2007 Harper confirmed that “It is no exaggeration to say that the need to assert our sovereignty and protect our territorial integrity in the North - on our terms - have never been more urgent” (Harper 2007).

2. The Northern Strategy

The government policy with regard to the North was spelled out in 2009 in Canada’s Northern Strategy (“Canada’s Northern Strategy”). This document provided an overview of the government’s priorities for the North and was based on four pillars: exercising sovereignty, promoting economic and social development, protecting the environmental heritage, and providing Northerners with more control over their economic and political destiny.

The first and most noted pillar of the Northern Strategy emphasized that Canada exercises sovereignty over Arctic lands and waters – sovereignty that is long-standing, well-established and based on historical title, international law and the presence of Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples for thousands of years. In order to exercise this sovereignty, a reinforcement of Canada’s presence in the North was necessary because “You don’t defend national sovereignty with flags, cheap election rhetoric and advertising campaigns. You need forces on the ground, ships in the sea and proper surveillance” as Harper indicated (Harper 2005). The government thus announced a number of flagship initiatives to strengthen the Canadian presence in the region. It announced its intention to settle two small international disputes: over the Danish claim to Hans Island, a 1.3 km² Canadian island, and a small part of the maritime boundary in the Lincoln Sea; and with the United States over about 6,250 nautical square miles of seabed right in the Beaufort Sea. In addition, other measures included:
• Recognition of the full extent of extended continental shelf in order to exercise Canadian sovereign rights over the resources of the seabed and subsoil in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)\textsuperscript{3}.

• A plan to acquire three Arctic icebreakers. Shortly after the announcement the number of icebreakers was reduced to one, which was supposed to be delivered within ten years. Seaspan Marine Corporation / Vancouver Shipyards was tasked with the construction of CCGS John G. Diefenbaker, a second-highest ice-class ship, with a target for delivery in 2017.

• Construction of eight Arctic Off-Shore Patrol Ships with ice-breaking capability with the first ship ready for delivery in 2013.

• Construction of a year-round deep water naval base at Nanisivik (Baffin Island, Nunavut) for the Canadian Forces, projected to operate in 2012.

• Increasing capacity to monitor surface traffic though the Northwest Passage.

• Establishing an Army Training Centre in Resolute Bay as a year-round multi-purpose facility supporting Arctic training and operations, accommodating up to 100 personnel.

• Expanding and modernizing the Canadian Rangers.\textsuperscript{4}

• Undertaking regular military exercises in the North.

• An annual summer visit by the Prime Minister to the North.

The second pillar focused on economic and social development of the region. One initiative announced by the government was a new geo-mapping project – Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals (GEM), vital for investors. This part of the Northern Strategy also includes investments in infrastructure and social aid.

Environmental protection formed the third pillar. It included the commitment of the government to secure the ecosystem for future generations by investing in research, international scientific collaboration and the special protection of unique lands and waters in the North. The government promised to establish a new world-class research station in the High Arctic, to continue scientific cooperation with international partners, and to create more conservation areas.

\textsuperscript{3} Arctic states have rights to areas on their extended continental shelves beyond their exclusive economic zones. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) explicitly recognizes the rights of coastal states such as Canada over the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil beyond 200 nautical miles from their coastal baselines and sets out a process by which a state may determine the limits within which it may exercise those rights. The intention was for Canada to make its submission in December 2013.

\textsuperscript{4} The Canadian Rangers is a reserve force of the Canadian Armed Forces responsible for providing a military presence and surveillance in the North. Most of them are Aboriginal. They collect data, report unusual activities and support military operations in the region.
The last part of the Northern Strategy dealt with the improvement of governance in the North. The Conservative government committed to giving more responsibilities and rights to the territorial governments and Natives’ organizations. The process of devolution towards Northern communities was initiated by the Liberal government. First the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement allowed for creating the Nunavut Territory in 1999 and then after negotiations the Yukon government received control over lands and resource management in 2003. The Harper administration continued along this path. A devolution agreement was signed with the NWT government, as well as several agreement with Native communities on Aboriginal rights.

3. Implementation of the Northern Strategy

The assertion of sovereignty protection was the main goal of the Northern Strategy. However, the fulfilment of the first priority was not achieved. The disputes with Denmark and the United States were not settled. In fact, in 2009 the Canadian authorities increased the strain on these relationships by renaming the Northwest Passage the Canadian Northwest Passage, thus emphasizing that they are Canadian waters. However, the United States and other maritime countries consider this passage an international strait.

The recognition of the full extent of the continental shelf has not been resolved either and the Canadian case has been pending. In December 2013 the government of Canada delivered only a partial submission to UNCLOS. Since then it has been preparing the other part of its submission. Based on geological evidence the UNCLOS commission will determine the Canadian limits of the continental shelf.

There were major delays and scaling down of the major pledges. The CCGS John G. Diefenbaker icebreaker was presented as an iconic symbol for Canada’s presence in the Canadian Arctic. In reality it was simply a replacement for the current CCGS Louis S. St. Laurent, launched in 1966. The cost was put at $1.3 billion in the 2013 budget; in fact the cost will be almost twice the initial estimate. Latest reports indicate that the new icebreaker will join the Canadian fleet 2021–2022 (Berthiaume 2013). Similarly, the construction of patrol ships has been delayed and the initial number was reduced to five (five vessels were already named), with incentives for the shipyard to deliver six. A contract with the Vancouver Shipyard was signed. The project cost also doubled to around $3.5 billion. Construction commenced in September 2015 and the first vessel, named Harry de Wolf, is scheduled to be launched in 2018. The ships

5) In 2009 the Federal Parliament passed a bill renaming the Northwest Passage the Canadian Northwest Passage. As the bill stated, these waterways are historical internal waters of Canada and are part of the Inuit’s land.
will be less used in the Arctic than their name suggests: they will only operate in the region for four to five months each year and the rest of the time they will patrol in the south (“Arctic and Off-Shore Patrol Ship Project” 2015). Delay and scaling back also affected the naval facility in Nanisivik. The facility is expected to be finally operational by 2018 only as a seasonal refuelling station; the cost would be around $146 million (Bird 2015).

The Army Training Centre was also scaled down, but did open in Resolute Bay in 2013. The year-round facility is used as a base for Arctic operations. The centre also assists the Canadian Rangers and provides emergency response and disaster assistance to civilian agencies. Although the number of Canadian Rangers expanded to 5000 from 4000, this force is too small and ill-equipped to monitor the North. The Rangers still use at least 50-year-old Lee-Enfield rifles, which were allocated to them in 1947. The federal government plans to replace these rifles with a new model made in Canada by 2019. The replacement cost is estimated at around $30 million (Porter 2015). Both the military base and the Rangers have supported the Nanook military exercises that have taken place annually since 2007. The annual summer visits by the Prime Minister to the North commenced in 2006 and serve a different purpose to the military operations. These visits are intended to demonstrate the government’s commitment to the isolated communities of the North and to ensure and show them that they are an important part of Canada. The military presence in the Arctic and the annual tours served as effective communication tools to manifest that the North remains secure within a strong and sovereign Canada. The Prime Minister’s image in military camouflage outfit, while shooting a rifle, flashed around the world.

The government presented several initiatives in the area of economic development, with the majority having rather long term objectives, the exception being geo-mapping (GEM). GEM provides the location of resources and geological characteristics and the primary goal of GEM is to locate areas of high natural resource potential. In 2013 the GEM program was allotted an additional $100 million over seven years to advance geological knowledge in the North (GEM 2017). The geo-mapping is also an important element to support Canada’s claim to its northern continental shelf.

Hopes for rapid economic development generated by climate change will not be fulfilled in the near future. Although climate change has made natural resources more reachable, access is still very costly, especially when shipment access is limited. The use of Arctic waters as a shipment route for tankers or bulk carriers is dangerous. These waters are difficult to navigate, with unmarked shallow areas, icebergs and unpredictable weather. Nevertheless, since the 1980s voyages through the passage have become more common. The number of transits grew from four to around twenty per year, but mostly by small vessels. In 2013 and in 2014 only one cargo vessel made a full transit of the Northwest Passage. So it is hard to predict an increase in shipping
The Harper government only initiated two major infrastructure projects to enhance economic opportunities in the region, much fewer in comparison with those undertaken under Diefenbaker. One project is the extension of the Dempster Highway: the construction of an all-season highway linking Inuvik with Tuktoyaktuk was completed in 2017. The 138-kilometre-long highway, with a gravel surface, connects the Arctic Ocean coast with the rest of Canada’s road network. This $300 million infrastructure extension project was financed by the federal and NTW governments (Bird 2017). The second, shorter-term, project concerns the Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS) in Cambridge Bay. The construction of this $204 million project began in the summer of 2014 and is expected to be completed in 2018 (Thomson 2018). The Station will provide support logistics and maintenance and accommodation for visiting researchers. There will be a research lab, research centres and training facilities.

The federal government together with territorial governments and Aboriginal communities undertook several smaller projects to protect the environment. Additional terrestrial and marine protected areas in the Arctic were established. Changes to the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA) extended the enforcement of anti-pollution and shipping safety laws to a larger area of Arctic waters. The Canadian government also signed agreements with other Arctic nations to collect and share data on population status and trends for Arctic species and ecosystems.

The last pillar of the Northern Strategy has been gradually implemented. The process of devolution of power towards Northern communities was initiated by the Liberal government in 1970. Comprehensive land claims agreements provided indigenous people with rights and responsibilities over the Northern land. One of the agreements allowed for the creation of the Nunavut territory in 1999. Additionally, the federal government transferred more responsibilities to territories including land and resource management. The Yukon government received control over lands and resource management in 2003. The Harper administration followed this path by signing a devolution agreement with the Northwest Territories and continuing negotiation with the Nunavut government. The devolution process has had a great impact on decision-making processes in the North. The Northern governments and indigenous organisations are important players shaping the decisions regarding the North.
Conclusion

“Arctic sovereignty” became a key phrase in political discourse during Harper’s decade. Prime Minister Stephen Harper put forward a very ambitious plan to protect sovereignty in the North and strongly promoted it. This logic of “defending sovereignty” from foreign challenges, as Franklyn Griffiths highlighted, brought a shift from past governments, which favoured recognition – persuading others to accept Canada’s claims without demonstrating a capacity to enforce them – to the Harper government, which favoured enactment (Griffiths, 2009: 435). P. W. Lakenbauer accurately indicated that Harper’s political statements were rooted in assumptions of what Canada should have done and must do to protect sovereignty. Harper’s “use it or lose it” refrain became the dominant political message and became intertwined with a broader swath of unresolved maritime boundaries in the Arctic (Lakenbauer: 424–425).

The government actions left the impression that the Northern territory was at risk but in reality Canadian sovereignty in the North was safe. The small disputes with Denmark and the United States did not pose any serious threats. On the contrary, the Canadian authorities put more strains on these relationships by renaming the Northwest Passage. The United States and other maritime countries still consider the Passage an international strait. However, an ulterior motive may be behind the renaming and the mapping process, namely the desire by the Canadian government to strengthen its position during negotiations on the continental shelf with UNCLOS. Although the government admitted that Canada’s sovereignty was not in danger the government formulated an agenda of what Harper has called a “positive nationalism” (Chase. 2014b). As Jeffrey Brooke indicates, the emphasis on military occupation of the North to protect Canadian sovereignty is in fact a logical outcome of the national myth that Harper’s Conservatives have attempted to lay down, namely the existence of patriotic militarism (Brooke 2015: 338). It seems that Harper used the North as a political means to unite Canadians around threatened sovereignty in order to induce a positive sense of nationalism. These efforts were strengthened by his staging of his Northern trips and the military exercises, all of which were very well covered by the media.

The government maintained that renewed emphasis on the North was rooted in Diefenbaker’s and Harper’s personal fascination with the North, but forgot to mention that many of the so-called new initiatives were introduced by previous governments. The Liberals implemented many projects, especially in the field of environmental protection and the devolution of power. Marcin Gabrys suggests that Harper’s Northern focus was also shaped by the Conservative agenda of the Politics of Memory and by the desire to leave a political legacy (Gabrys 2015: 59).
Although the government strongly emphasized sovereignty protection in its strategic vision, in reality security in the region was not significantly improved during the last decade. The widely publicised announcements of the procurement of eight Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships and icebreakers as symbols to safeguard the North were reduced and delayed. The same problems plagued the naval facility in Nanisivik. The increase in numbers of Canadian Rangers has not made any difference. Apart from the military exercises the only project that was delivered to enhance security in the region is the scaled-back Arctic Training Facility in Resolute Bay. When we look into other initiatives only two major infrastructure projects went ahead: the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway and CHARS structures were finalized.

The discussion about the North focused primarily on security protection and long-term objectives related to natural resources and shipping routes potential. Both themes were widely publicised although security was in fact not threatened and the programme of economic development was put on hold. Climate change made the North more accessible but not necessarily navigable. Generally it is agreed that climate change presents no serious sovereignty problem in the Arctic, especially where commercial navigation is concerned. It seems unlikely that major shipping companies will use the Northwest Passage within the next few years as a regular shipping route.

Analysis shows that of the four pillars as set out in the Northern Strategy very little of substance remains. Importantly, Harper did not take up the plight of the Northern people. Their daily needs were not appropriately addressed. However, the communities are challenged by high cost of living, poor infrastructure, job shortage, and poor access to education. The Northern communities would benefit the most from upgrading infrastructure and business development. Already in 2011 Griffiths indicated that Arctic sovereignty in the legal sense was well in hand but political sovereignty and capacity building for choice are the real challenges. He suggested that the latter can be achieved by establishing a new Arctic consultative process between all the principal players: the federal and territorial governments, the private sector and civil society actors, local government (Griffiths, 2011: 419–420).

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, as an opinion piece in the National Post put it, after ten years of promoting the Conservative myth of the North, “At the very least Harper has put God’s frozen people in the North back on the political map” (Ivison 2010).
Works cited


A Decade of Stephen Harper’s Northern Policy: Achievements and Failures


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The Impact of Membership in the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) on Canada’s Economy

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Abstract
In this article we have tried to show the impact of Canadian membership in NAFTA on the Canadian economy namely its trade with the USA and Mexico. Economic theory teaches us that membership in regional economic integrations in our case NAFTA has positive impact on trade between member countries. By using gravity econometric model to analyze empirical data we have managed to prove that membership in NAFTA had a positive effect on trade between Canada and the USA and Canada and Mexico.

Keywords: NAFTA, Canada’s trade with Mexico and the USA, regional economic integrations, gravity econometric models

Résumé
Dans cet article, nous avons essayé de montrer l’impact de l’adhésion du Canada à l’ALENA sur l’économie canadienne à savoir son commerce avec les USA et le Mexique. La théorie économique nous enseigne que l’appartenance à des intégrations économiques régionales dans notre cas de l’ALENA a un impact positif sur le commerce entre les pays membres. En utilisant la gravité modèle économétrique pour analyser les données empiriques que nous avons réussi à prouver que l’appartenance à l’ALENA a un effet positif sur le commerce entre le Canada et les USA et le Canada et le Mexique.

Mots-clés: l’ALENA, les relations commerciales du Canada, l’intégration économique régionale, les modèles de gravité économétriques

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The political economy of NAFTA

Today every single country in the world is a member of a regional trade agreement or regional trade bloc (even Mongolia succumbed to this trend, though it was the last country in the world to do this). Regional trade has grown faster than global trade in the last couple of decades (Ravenhill: 2008). Due to the shifting political and economic landscape during the late 1980s and early 1990s even the only superpower left in the world, the USA, decided it was in its best interest to form a North American trading bloc by establishing free trade area with its neighbors Canada and Mexico. Nevertheless the USA still remains committed to promoting global trade through the WTO. Regional trade agreements are not forbidden under the rules of the WTO:

a) Article XXIV of the GATT lays down conditions for the establishment and operations of free trade agreements and customs unions covering trade in goods.
b) The Enabling clause (formally, the 1979 Decisions on Differential and More Favorable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing countries) permits regional agreements among developing countries regarding trade in goods.
c) Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATs) establishes conditions that permit liberalization in services among regional partners (Ravenhill 2008: 173)

We should always keep in mind that as Leamer claimed “trade in products is a neighborhood experience”, as trade flows decline dramatically with the distance despite the relative fall in transportation and communication costs (qtd. in Mauro et al 2008: 8). And as Des et al. claim “Global integration has also been accompanied by a sharp increase in regional trade agreements (RTAs), which constitute a logical means by which neighboring countries may take up the challenges and opportunities implied by globalization” (qtd. in Di Mauro et al 2009: 1). So geography plays an important part in regionalism and the only two land neighbors of the USA are Canada and Mexico.

NAFTA was not an easy thing to achieve, since relations between the USA and its neighbors were not always the friendliest. In 1986 the Canadian government felt the need to respond to rising neo-protectionist sentiment in the US Congress, which was at the time very concerned with the country’s rising trade deficits; the Canadian government was fearful that increased US tariffs would hurt the largest export market for Canadian products. The Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) was signed in 1988. The USA and Canadian trade relationship was one of the most intensive prior to this agreement, and the trade barriers were already low so it was not that difficult to remove the remaining few. Under the provisions of the agreement both countries would completely remove all tariff barriers by the 1999 and try and reduce or if possible eliminate all of the non-tariff barriers. The Canadians insisted that any even-
tual disputes among trade partners be brought before a new body, the Canada-United States Trade Commission, and not, as it had been up until then, before the notoriously biased American Chamber of Commerce and other equally biased US trade officials. Investment barriers were also dismantled and a boom in trade and investment followed. Seeing how things had worked out between the USA and Canada, Mexico decided it was time to try and negotiate its own trade deal with the USA. The negotiations between the countries took most of 1992 and became the central theme in the US elections in 1992. Finally, NAFTA came into being in 1994.

NAFTA is basically a free trade area, which is the simplest form of regional trade integration. The lowest level of it is a free trade area: the countries that agree to it remove tariffs and non-tariff protections to create a free flow of goods and services (all or some) between them. Meanwhile, each of the signatories is free to pursue its own trade policy towards other countries that are not parties to the free trade area agreement. There are no common institutions and membership of one free trade area does not prevent a country from joining another free trade areas. Because free trade areas impose relatively few constraints on national decision-making autonomy, they are the easiest of regional arrangements to negotiate (Ravenhill 2008: 174).

What did NAFTA represent for the countries that signed it? What were the stakes for member countries? Hufbauer and Schoot point out that

For the United States, NAFTA was an economic opportunity to capitalize on a growing export market to the south and a political opportunity to repair the sometimes-troubled relationship with Mexico. At the same time, NAFTA was seen as a way to support the growth of political pluralism and deepening of democratic processes in Mexico and as part of the long-term response to chronic migration pressures. (Hufbauer, Schoot, 2005: 2–3)

Gilpin on the other hand points out that

The American decision to participate in the NAFTA negotiations was strongly influenced by political motives, including the need to resolve the issue of illegal Mexican immigration into the United States. Stated crudely, the United States was motivated by a very simple calculus: it had to accept either an ever-increasing flow of illegal Mexican immigrants or greater number of manufactured goods from Mexico. (Gilpin 2000: 242–243)

The argument that Gilpin made about the choice between more illegal Mexican immigrates to the US or the outsourcing of labor-intensive sectors of industry to Mexico by US firms is a valid one. The impact and the numbers of Mexicans or people of Mexican origin working and living in the USA have been steadily growing ever since 1848. As Hakim and Litan point out
Mexicans continue to migrate in large numbers to the United States, principally in search of jobs and higher wages. Mexicans and Mexican Americans now send some $8 billion annually back to their communities. Although the numbers are still modest, a growing number of Mexicans are also finding their way to Canada. (Hakim, Litan 2002: 5)

One of the centerpieces of the US election campaign of 1992 was the NAFTA issue. Bill Clinton, who supported NAFTA, won the election, but Ross Perot, who opposed NAFTA because he thought that the US would lose jobs to Mexico - an eventuality he summed up in the phrase “a giant sucking sound” - came third in the presidential race with 19 percent of the votes. After his victory Clinton managed to get NAFTA ratified but he also managed to negotiate an additional chapters to NAFTA that dealt with labor rights and environmental protection that in turn hurt Mexico’s chances of attracting a lot more foreign direct investment (FDI). NAFTA is seen differently by different parts of US society. The capital owners welcomed NAFTA because they could now more easily make investments in the labor-intensive sectors of industry in Mexico; Mexican labor costs only a fraction of American labor (its productivity is also only a fraction of American productivity as well). Workers in the USA who were working in low paid labor-intensive sectors of the industry viewed NAFTA as an enemy of all things American. Finally, there is a lot of literature on NAFTA coming from the extreme right to moderate right, which view NAFTA as the end of American freedom and as the “first step to rule by the United Nations”. Not all were happy with this. American right-wing and conservative groups (libertarian in their ideology), which fear any state, have made a lot of noise about the coming “merger of the USA with Mexico and Canada within the framework of NAFTA”. One thing is certain: the attacks on NAFTA always manifest themselves most during the US presidential election and are usually waged by Democrats. In the 2004 campaign John Kerry (who voted in favor of NAFTA in 1993 in the US Senate) and John Edwards expressed the opinion that NAFTA should be renegotiated. In 2008 Barack Obama did the same when campaigning in Ohio and other hard-hit industrial places that employ many blue-collar workers (labor intensive industries).

What about Mexico? If there is a country that would benefit from NAFTA, then economic theory teaches us that it would be Mexico with its abundant and relatively cheap labor force. Hufbauer and Schoot explain that “For Mexico, NAFTA represented a way to lock in the reforms of the apertura, or ‘market opening’, that President Miguel de la Madrid inaugurated in the mid-1980s to transform Mexico’s formerly statist economy in the wake of the devastating debt crisis of the 1980s” (Hufbauer, Schoot 2005: 3). Gilpin on the other hand paints this picture of the Mexican reasons for joining NAFTA:
Like Canada, Mexico had previously suffered from American protectionism and desired some guarantee that such behavior would cease. Also, like Canada, Mexico feared negative consequences from the unification of the European Union and its enlargement to include the economies of Eastern Europe. The NAFTA, on the other hand, would give Mexican-based firms privileged access to the American market and would also encourage Japanese and other multinational firms to invest in Mexico (Gilpin 2000: 242).

Krugman also offers similar views on Mexico and its reasons for joining NAFTA. He paints it as a move by the then President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas, in order to secure his own popularity and lock in economic and political reforms (Krugman 1999).

Canadians were not that happy about the CUSFTA, and they were certainly not that happy about NAFTA either. CUSFTA became the dominant issue in the Canadian general election of 1988. Canadians were afraid that, with the free trade agreement now in force, they would have to give up certain aspects of their welfare state, for example state-funded universal health care. Canada’s economic policy had begun to change in the 1980s with the new Conservative administration of Brian Mulroney. It promoted

the end of an economic policy based on resource wealth exploitation. The new policy goal was to increase Canadian competitiveness in manufacturing and services, and for that, to enhance market access to the US was necessary, as well as the elimination of domestic non-tariff barriers in order to attract foreign investments. (Morales 2008: 34)

Being the realists they are, Canadians knew that there was no alternative to NAFTA. However, Hufbauer and Schoot again made an interesting comment on the Canadian position:

Canadian unions felt that Mexico’s low wages would undercut Canada’s competitive advantage in the US market, possibly diverting US FDI away from Canada. Trade between Canada and Mexico was small, the prospective deal seemed unlikely to redress CUSFTA shortcomings on trade remedies, and Canadians were less worried about migration flows than their US counterparts. (Hufbauer, Schoot 2005: 3–4)

But Canadians were also worried that if they stayed out of it the USA and Mexico would go ahead and advance economic integration without them so they decided to join NAFTA. Gilpin points out the following:

The Canadian decision to initiate discussions on NAFTA was part of a general change in the economic ideology that included retrenchment of the general welfare state and reduction of
the high tariffs and other restrictions on foreign (i.e. American) direct investment. Having become a major industrial power in its own right, Canada became confident enough to join regional arrangement. It had also become very concerned over the rise of the protectionist sentiment in the United States and over the European Community’s decision to accelerate creation of a single market (Gilpin 2000: 241).

Canada joined NAFTA under an explicit promise from the USA that “nothing that was agreed upon in the CUSFTA would be revised” (Morales 2008: 35). Within the NAFTA context, Canada is the northernmost member of NAFTA and itself represents the North for the USA and Mexico.

The impact of NAFTA on the Canadian economy

The number one trading partner of Canada through most of its history has been the USA. With CUSFTA and NAFTA, trade and investment between these two countries have significantly increased, since many barriers to these activities between these countries have been removed thanks to NAFTA.

Canada increased its competitiveness by “gaining secure access to a huge American market and thereby providing Canadian firms with economies of scale” (Gilpin 2000: 241). According to Litan and Hakim

Total trade between the United States and Canada amounts to about $450 billion per year, nearly two-and-one half times what it was in the early 1990s. Canada buys some 70 percent of its imports from US suppliers and sends more than 85 percent of its exports to the US market. Nearly two thirds of all foreign investment comes from the United States. (Hakim, Litan 2002: 4)

Finally, the economic and trade relations between Canada and Mexico as the result of NAFTA should not be neglected; according to Hakim and Litan

Although it does not come anywhere close to the amount of either country’s bilateral commerce with the United States, trade between Canada and Mexico increased nearly fivefold in the past ten years. The two countries are now each other’s third largest trading partner - trailing only the United States and the EU. The amount they sell to and buy from each other amounts to some $9 billion, nearly as much as the trade between Brazil and Argentina. (Hakim, Litan 2002: 5)
One of the biggest problems of Canadian-Mexican trade is the lack of adequate infrastructure, as there are no good North-South railway networks, because the US railway network was built on an East-West axis. The naval infrastructure is a bit better with the Canadian port of Vancouver serving as the biggest import/export port for Canadian-Mexican trade.

As a free trade area NAFTA has been a huge success, since trade between its members has risen. One of the more ambitious goals of NAFTA that has been overlooked by many economists is that NAFTA served to bring the Mexican political and economic system closer in line with that of its northern neighbor. As Hufbauer and Schoot put it:

Overall, the three economies of North America have grown significantly during the first decade of NAFTA. Average annual real GDP growth over 1994–2003 was 3.6 percent for Canada, 3.3 percent for the United States, and 2.7 percent for Mexico (despite the sharp recession in 1995). While all three countries grew faster than the OECD average during this period, Mexico’s progress was insufficient to address its long-run development challenges and well below its estimated potential growth rate. (Hufbauer, Schoot 2005: 2)

Regarding Canada-US trade Morales points out that

Primary and primary-based products represent roughly 40 per cent of overall Canadian products entering the US (agriculture, food, cement, mineral fuels, wood, and footwear), while the rest is manufacturing, encompassing all gradients of technological sophistication (from low- to high-tech branches). (Morales 2008: 82)

At the same time in “the composition of US exports to Canada, primary and resource-based products take a minor share (roughly 18 per cent) while mid- to high-tech manufactures account for 65 per cent of overall exports” (Morales 2008: 83). Canada managed to transform itself into the major producer of energy thanks to its development of bitumen and synthetic oil industries, which are mainly powered by the Western provinces.

Now we will turn on the analysis of NAFTA’s impact on the Canadian economy by measuring the impact of NAFTA membership on Canada’s trade with Mexico and the USA by using empirical evidence, which we will gain by building the gravity econometric model of trade between Canada and the USA and Mexico.
Econometric model of Canadian trade with USA and Mexico

For our analysis of Canadian trade with Mexico and the USA we will use gravity econometric models of international trade. Gravity econometric models are based on Newton’s laws of physics. The first gravity econometric model was used by Jan Tinbergen in 1962. Today gravity models are used not only to explain foreign trade and FDI flows but also money laundering between various countries.

The mathematical equation of the gravity model is as follows:

\[ F_{ij} = G \frac{M_i M_j}{D^2} \]

where \( F \) is the trade flow, \( M \) is the economic mass of each country, \( D \) is the distance and \( G \) is constant. Trade flow between two countries is proportional to the product of each country’s economic mass (this is generally measured in GDP), divided by the square distance between countries’ respective economic counters of gravity, usually their capitals (Štiblar 2007). The variables can be in their absolute or logarithmic forms (Gujarati 2003; Stock, Watson 2012). These baseline factors can be expanded by additional factors that represent specific trade flow determinants in the form of dummy explanatory variables such as being a member of a FTA, sharing a common border, FDI, etc.

Zwinkels and Beugeldsdijk tried to show the utility of gravity models in explaining international trade and FDI. Their conclusion is that if time series and cross-country series are not analyzed properly, gravity models become Trojan horse in explaining international trade and FDI flows (Zwinkels, Beugeldsdijk 2009).

The influence of NAFTA on trade between the USA, Mexico and Canada has been econometrically analyzed by Hufbauer and Schoot in 2005 and Hakim and Litan in 2001. They used a standard gravity model but had a smaller time series than we do and did not have the opportunity to see how a fall in GDP would affect trade between these countries.

The proposed econometric model for the estimation of Canadian trade flows is a standard gravity econometric model and goes as follows:

\[ \ln X_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln GDP_i + \alpha_2 \ln GDP_j - \alpha_3 \ln D_{ij} + \alpha_4 \ln N + \varepsilon \]

\[ \ln X_{ij} \text{ = Bilateral trade flows from Canada to the USA or Mexico (l}_\text{tradeCAN-US for Canada-US trade and l}_\text{Canmex for Canada-Mexico trade}^1 \]

1) \( l\text{}_\text{tradeCAN-US for Canada-US trade and l}_\text{Canmex for Canada-Mexico trade} \)
lnGDP_i = GDP of Canada

lnGDP_j = GDP of Mexico or the USA

D_{ij} = distance between Canada (Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Far North) and economic centers of Mexico and the USA

N = stands for a matrix of dummy variables such as a common border, a shared language, NAFTA membership that impact bilateral trade flows.

We expect to find that the GDPs of Canada, the USA and Mexico have a positive influence on trade between Canada and the USA and Canada and Mexico. This is in line with standard economic theory which states that GDP positively influences trade between countries, especially if it is growing, since then there are more opportunities for both import and export of goods.

On the other hand, the distance between countries’ respective centers of gravity has a negative effect on trade between countries. The greater the distance between the countries the greater the barriers for trade between them. Although physical and geographical distance is no longer an issue in international trade, distance plays an important role as a cultural barrier to international trade since it is hard to know consumer preferences half a world away.

Membership in regional economic integrations should have a positive effect on trade between the member countries since both tariff barriers to trade and non-tariff barriers to international trade between the countries have been at least partially removed.

Here is the finding of our econometric model for trade between Canada and the USA. We will use OLS as our estimation for both of our equations.

Model 1: OLS, using observations 1985–2014 (T = 30)
Dependent variable: l_tradeCAN-US

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</table>
The Impact of Membership in the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) on Canada’s Economy

We can see that in accordance with economic theory the GDP of the USA has a statistically strong impact on trade between Canada and USA while the Canadian GDP is statistically not significant for trade flows between these countries. Why is this so? The probable explanation would be that the US GDP is much larger than that of Canada and in addition Canada runs a significant trade surplus with the USA, which means that the growth of the US GDP has a positive effect on Canadian exports to the USA.

On the other hand, membership in NAFTA has a positive effect on trade flows between Canada and the USA, which is in accordance with economic theory. The distance between the centers of gravity of the USA and Canada - in our case Whitehorse (Yukon) and Seattle (Washington) - has a negative effect on trade between Canada and the USA. We took these places as centers of gravity for Canada and the USA because Whitehorse is one of the economically most important places in the Yukon territory (northern Canada), while Seattle is one of the most important centers of industry on the USA West Coast, doing a lot more trade with the Yukon territory than the USA East Coast.

Turning to trade between Canada and Mexico, we find the following:

Dependent variable: l_Canmex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>coefficient</th>
<th>std. error</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>const</td>
<td>11.4887</td>
<td>0.294650</td>
<td>38.99</td>
<td>1.63e-022 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l_GDPmex</td>
<td>0.767777</td>
<td>0.0997712</td>
<td>7.695</td>
<td>8.29e-08 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l_GDPcan</td>
<td>0.889589</td>
<td>0.0965927</td>
<td>9.210</td>
<td>3.53e-09 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>0.491602</td>
<td>0.0611676</td>
<td>8.037</td>
<td>3.96e-08 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Membership in the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) on Canada’s Economy

| Mean dependent var | 5.764743 | S.D. dependent var | 0.549558 |
| Sum squared resid   | 0.117466 | S.E. of regression | 0.067216 |
| R-squared           | 0.986588 | Adjusted R-squared | 0.985041 |
| F(3, 26)            | 637.5297 | P-value(F)         | 1.89e-24 |
| Log-likelihood      | 40.57386 | Akaike criterion   | -73.14772|
| Schwarz criterion   | -67.54293| Hannan-Quinn       | -71.35470|
| rho                 | 0.172121 | Durbin-Watson      | 1.648724 |

| Mean dependent var | 22.88141 | S.D. dependent var | 0.936179 |
| Sum squared resid   | 0.181764 | S.E. of regression | 0.088898 |
| R-squared           | 0.992023 | Adjusted R-squared | 0.990983 |
| F(3, 26)            | 953.4791 | P-value(F)         | 2.92e-24 |
| Log-likelihood      | 29.20055 | Akaike criterion   | -50.40110|
| Schwarz criterion   | -45.21776| Hannan-Quinn       | -48.85982|
| rho                 | -0.135046| Durbin-Watson      | 2.268063 |

Canada and Mexico GDPs have a statistically strong influence on trade flows between Canada and Mexico, which is in accordance with economic theory. Also, membership in NAFTA has a strong positive effect on trade between Mexico and Canada, which is also in accordance with economic theory.

Conclusion

From the econometric analysis we have done in this article we can see that membership in NAFTA had a positive influence on trade flows between Canada and the USA and Canada and Mexico. It should be mentioned here that Canada has a trade surplus with both Mexico and the USA. Membership in NAFTA has certainly been beneficial to the Canadian economy as a whole, since many trade and non-trade barriers have been removed between member states of NAFTA with the result that Canadian exports to these countries rose and with this its GDP also rose. Northern Canada also benefited from NAFTA since it made it easier to export its products - namely minerals and raw materials - to the USA, Canada’s main trading partner. NAFTA also made it easier for Northern Canada to import the goods it needed from its main trade partner, the USA. In the same period (from 1970s onwards) the Canadian welfare state was also somewhat reduced, but this was not done because of its NAFTA membership, as left-leaning intellectuals would argue, but because it was needed in order for Canada...
to remain one of the more competitive nations in the global economy. So what will the future of NAFTA be? Will it remain a free trade area or will it transform itself into something more ambitious like a customs union or a single market alongside the European model? About the future of NAFTA Hussain points out that “North America is neither transforming into a viable regional bloc nor retreating fully to its statist past: it is caught in greater flux, with as many more opportunities as liabilities available” (Hussain eds 2010: 258). Probably NAFTA will remain a free trade area since it is not possible to imagine that USA will part with any part of its sovereignty, be it political or economic in nature, in the near future.

Works cited


NB: All the econometric calculations have been done on data obtained from IMF, Statistics Canada and the United States Census Bureau. Any faults in the calculations lie with the author.
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The Legal Status of Women in Canada –
The Legal Model beyond the 49th Parallel
The Right to Choose – Abortion Law Then and Now

Zrinka Erent-Sunko
University of Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract
Among women’s rights the right to give birth or not occupies a special place. Lately this right has been the object of numerous discussions. By not taking a ‘pro’ or ‘contra’ attitude, this paper aims to provide a historical overview and examines possible similarities and differences of the legal regulations on the issue of abortion in Canada and Croatia. Could “the North” be a legal model for “South” and is there a whole range of different “Norts”? 

Keywords: women’s right, abortion, legal regulation, punishment

Résumé
Parmi les droits de la femme celui de mettre au monde un enfant ou non, occupe une place primordiale. Actuellement, ce droit suscite de nombreuses discussions et polémiques. Sans se déclarer « pro » ou « contra », ce travail se propose de donner un aperçu historique et de rechercher les similitudes ou les différences possibles entre les régimes juridiques sur l’avortement au Canada et en Croatie. Le « Nord » peut-il être pris comme modèle pour le « Sud » ou bien là aussi existe-t-il une multitude de « Nords » différents?

Mots-clés: droit de la femme, avortement, réglementation légale, sanction
No matter whether we look at Canada as “the North” in relation to such a big state as the United States of America, or perhaps a small European state like Croatia, or if we look at the whole range of different “Norths” within Canada, legal status of women deserves to be the object of this research. If the North in the western culture is the fundamental direction, is Canada a good one in the field of women’s rights? The legal position of women, especially the issues of gender equality and the right to choose (abortion), that I am dealing with in this text, are the issues of relevance to contemporary legal systems. These issues can be determined by many factors, one of which is the legal legacy. Can we find a legal model beyond the 49th parallel and is legal history a part of it? Maybe the Northern position is more relevant. Canadian law opposes the gender discrimination on the grounds of its “Charter of Rights and Freedoms” (section 15, part of the Constitution Act, 1982.). These principles are also reflected in the Canadian Human Rights Act (R.S.C., 1985, c.H-6) and the Multiculturalism Act (R.S.C., 1985, c.24) with the provision to protect and promote the rights of aboriginal women and foreigners.

Two hundred years ago the law excluded women from public life. During this long period women were fighting for their public and private rights. The war for women’s rights started at the end of the nineteenth century and is still going on. In the 1970s women in Canada became more aware of their legal rights and after cases as Bliss, Lavell and Bedard (discrimination against female Indians) 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gave a better guarantee against sexual discrimination.

Among many rights that can be mentioned as women’s rights one is especially interesting. That is the women’s right to choose to give birth or not. Here I must state that this research is not about being “pro” or “against.” Rather, it is about presenting the facts. While doing so, one must be aware that Canada and Croatia are in many ways two different countries and that any comparison of their legal regulations must take into account many factors that affected this diversity, such as economic achievements, population, religious and political atmosphere, to name but a few.

I.

Before 1800 there was no statute in England or Canada which prohibited abortion. In 1803, England passed Lord Ellenbourough’s Act or the Malicious Shooting Act (43 Geo. 3, c.58). The sentence for those who performed or attempted to perform a post “quickening” abortion was the death penalty. New Brunswick, the province that passed the gratest number of statutes on abortion in Canada in the nineteenth century, found the model in that Act. As the first province in Canada, seven years after England, New
Brunswick passed the Statute on Abortion. The others followed. Nevertheless, illegal abortions were still common and resulted in the death of several hundred women per year. The mortality rate was as high as the infection rate. Following the English model of Lord Ellenborough’s 1803 Act (Backhouse 1983:67), Canadian statutes also had the English model of the “quickening” distinction until 1841. Then, in 1841, Upper Canada became the first province to abolish the “quickening” distinction (An Act for Consolidating and Amending the Status in This Province Relative to Offences against the Person, 4 &5 Vict., c.27. s.13). The death penalty was replaced with the maximum penalty of life imprisonment. By eliminating the “quickening” distinction, the maximum sentence of life imprisonment became also a penalty for prior “quickening” abortions. In 1842 New Brunswick eliminated the “quickening” distinction and in 1843 changed the sentence to a maximum of fourteen-year imprisonment (An Act to amend An Act further to amend the Law relating to Offences against the Person, 1843, N.B., 6 Vict., c.29, ss.1,2.). In 1849 and 1851 abortion legislation in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia included women as subjects of criminal offences. The first federal consolidation of criminal law in 1869 incorporated provincial abortion legislation. But, it found its penalty model in the English law. In 1861 England raised the penalty from three years to life imprisonment in the Offences Against the Person Act (s.58). Therefore, in 1869 according to Canadian Criminal Code, abortion was a criminal offence liable to life imprisonment. The 1892 Criminal Code (Criminal Code, 1892, (Can.), 55 & 56 Vict., c.29, ss.272–274) took over the prohibition with the life imprisonment:

Everyone who, with the intent of procuring the miscarriage of a female person, whether or not she is pregnant, uses any means for the purpose of carrying out his intention is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life. (Criminal Code, Part VIII3 Offences Against the Person and Reputation).

The penalty for women who procured their own abortion changed from a maximum of life to a maximum of seven-year imprisonment (s.273). Later legislation changed the punishment in the case where the subject of crime is a woman herself:

Every female person who, being pregnant, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, uses any means for the purpose of carrying out her intention is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment of two years (R.S.C. 1970, c. C-34).

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1) Signs of life felt by the mother as a result of the fetal movements, usually first noted at 17 to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

2) English law abolished the quickening distinction in 1837. The death penalty and transportation for fourteen years were replaced by a three-year imprisonment.
After the case of Lottie Leanne Clarke and the results of Canada’s Abortion Law, in the 60s the movement to liberalize the law began. Since Criminal Law Amendment Act (introduced by Pierre Trudeau’s government) was passed on May 14, 1969 abortion in Canada is no longer illegal (Bill C-150 received Royal Assent after its adoption by the House of Commons on 14 May 1969 and by the Senate on 12 June 1969). The Criminal Law Amendment Act decriminalized abortions and legalized them in cases when a committee of three hospital doctors signed a statement that the procedure was necessary for the physical or mental well-being of the woman. The interpretation of Criminal Law Amendment Act by different doctors and hospitals led, however, to uneven access. The so-called Badgley Committee reported in 1977 that abortion law had not been equitably applied in Canada.

In 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada, in the case of R. v. Morgentaler found the abortion provisions in the Criminal Code, section 251, to be unconstitutional (Richer 2008:2–4). Consequently the abortion in Canada was no longer limited by criminal law but by the Canada Health Act. In other words, abortion has been legally unrestricted in Canada since 1988. According to the section 7 of Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.” The Morgentaler decision was a complicated one; in Morgentaler case the Court did not consider the question of whether the “unborn” were part of the word “everyone” who have the independent right to life, liberty and security (Dunsmuir 1998:8). In 1989, in the case Tremblay v. Daigle (Tremblay v. Daigle [1989] 2 SCR 530, para. 38.) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that women alone had the right to make their choice and that fathers had no legal say in the women’s choice to terminate a pregnancy. In this case the Court found that fetus had no legal status as a person. Since a fetus is not considered to be a “legal” person, it therefore has no rights until it is born alive. This is explained in the Winnipeg Child and Family Services (Northwest Area) v. (G.) (D.F. by Justice Mc Lachlin [1997] 3 S.C.R. 925, para. 11.). With the decriminalization of abortion, the question was raised regarding the rights that are to be granted to a fetus or unborn child. After the Morgentaler decision, there were two attempts to enact the new law to re-criminalize abortion, but without success.

The Canada Health Act is Canada’s federal legislation for publicly funded health care insurance (Canada Health Act). That is to say, all abortions are “medically necessary” and the Canada Health Act identifies “medically necessary” as the one which is “physician performed”. According to the Canada Health Act Annual Report 2013–2014:
The Act sets out the primary objective of Canadian health care policy, which is “to protect, promote and restore the physical and mental well-being of residents of Canada and to facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers.”

The Act establishes criteria and conditions related to insured health services and extended health care services that the provinces and territories must fulfill to receive the full federal cash contribution under the Canada Health Transfer (CHT).

The aim of the Act is to ensure that all eligible residents of Canadian provinces and territories have reasonable access to medically necessary hospital and physician services on a prepaid basis, without charges related to the provision of insured health services.” (Health Canada)

According to the Act, abortions must be publicly funded whether performed in a hospital or a clinic, and abortion must be included in provincial billing agreements. It should be equally available to all women regardless of where they live in Canada. But, provinces differed. Some had very few hospitals and clinics that provided abortions or they refused to pay for abortions that took place outside hospitals; in Manitoba there were no providers in the North; in Ontario where there were long wait times in some hospitals; and Nova Scotia provided only limited funding (Abortion Access and Funding). Interestingly, in British Columbia “The Access to Abortion Services Act” (RSBC 1996) provides a “bubble zone” around clinics, hospitals and homes of physicians to prevent harassment by anti-choice protesters, and out of all provinces Quebec provides the best abortion access. In some of the provinces (such as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut), women are not allowed to undergo an abortion without the referral of a physician, and in each of the provinces the gestational limitations are different. Differences between the provinces based on the above-mentioned reasons resulted in differences in the number of induced abortions, as is shown in table 1 (Canadian Institute for Health Information).³

Table 1 Number of Induced Abortions\(^4\) Reported in Canada in 2012, by Province/Territory

There are also differences between the “North” and “South” of Canada. For example, in the Yukon Territory the gestation limit is twelve months and costs are covered if a woman must travel outside of Yukon; with similar cases in the Northwest Territories (where the gestation limit is fourteen months), and in Nunavut. And if we are talking about the North of Newfoundland and Labrador, there are no abortion services and for many women that means a long travel to clinics. The situation in the North of Quebec is the same as in the whole of Quebec: it is the best province for abortion access.

In 2015, when this article is written, Canada has no legal restrictions on abortion although regulations between provinces vary even nowadays (due to geography, \(^{4)}\) See the important notes for the each of the provinces relating to table 1 in CIHI source.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Number of Induced Abortions Reported by Hospitals</th>
<th>Number of Induced Abortions Reported by Clinics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>1,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>0§</td>
<td>2,119§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>9,930</td>
<td>15,470</td>
<td>25,400**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>12,137</td>
<td>15,249**</td>
<td>27,386**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>2,529</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>3,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>0§</td>
<td>2,015§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>2,173</td>
<td>11,114</td>
<td>13,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>4,198</td>
<td>2,930*</td>
<td>7,128*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0§</td>
<td>145§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0§</td>
<td>35§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0§</td>
<td>93§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Reported</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,002</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,706</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>83,708</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{*}\) Clinical data for B.C. is incomplete.

\(^{4}\) See the important notes for the each of the provinces relating to table 1 in CIHI source.
health care system, poverty). However, it seems that liberal Canadian law system in the field of women's rights has been inspired by the concept of the "North". And there is the fact I must underline: although there are no legal restrictions on abortion in Canada, the number of all abortions performed in Canada has been decreasing according to the data by Statistics Canada (in Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report) and the data by Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (table 2).5 Maybe this is due to the increased access to contraception or because of the restrictive access policies in some provinces or campaigns by pro-life organisations. As I read in Karine Richer’s work published for Parliamentary Information and Research Service: “No conclusion can be drawn on this issue, but it is certain that abortion will remain a controversial topic in Canada for years to come.” (Richer 2008: 24).

Historical Abortion Statistics tables show abortion rate (residents) in 1995 16.0, in 2000 15.5 and in 2005 13.7 (Johnstons Archive). Statistics Canada recorded total of 2,838,328 abortions between 1974 and 2006. Canadian Institute for Health Institution tables show a recorded total of 353,034 abortions between 2007 and 2010, which means that the total number of “reported” abortions that took place between 1974 and 2010 in Canada is 3,191,362.6 To get a conclusion on a legal regulation and its consequences, we should relate this number the number of childbirths in that period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98,762</td>
<td>95,876</td>
<td>93,755</td>
<td>90,747</td>
<td>92,524</td>
<td>83,708</td>
<td>82,869</td>
<td>81,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital abortions</td>
<td>47,281</td>
<td>44,375</td>
<td>41,640</td>
<td>38,611</td>
<td>37,150</td>
<td>36,002</td>
<td>35,003</td>
<td>33,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic abortions</td>
<td>51,481</td>
<td>51,501</td>
<td>52,115</td>
<td>52,136</td>
<td>53,374</td>
<td>47,706</td>
<td>47,866</td>
<td>47,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Province/Territory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland/Labrador</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>223 *</td>
<td>1,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>2,126</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>2,157</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>2,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>528 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>27,697</td>
<td>27,295</td>
<td>27,139</td>
<td>26,106</td>
<td>26,245</td>
<td>25,400</td>
<td>25,253</td>
<td>25,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) Although, “it’s difficult to make any firm conclusions about trends in Canada’s abortion rate, and the CIHI data should be treated with caution” (Statistics Abortion in Canada 2015:4).
Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

Zrinka Erent-Sunko

The Legal Status of Women in Canada – The Legal Model beyond the 49th Parallel...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>3,978</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>4,247</td>
<td>4,150</td>
<td>3,998</td>
<td>3,988</td>
<td>3,873</td>
<td>4,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>1,806</td>
<td>1,889</td>
<td>2,019</td>
<td>1,915</td>
<td>1,928</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>1,921</td>
<td>1,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>12,590</td>
<td>13,062</td>
<td>13,150</td>
<td>13,084</td>
<td>13,372</td>
<td>13,287</td>
<td>13,376</td>
<td>13,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>15,770</td>
<td>12,914*</td>
<td>12,461*</td>
<td>12,149*</td>
<td>14,341</td>
<td>7,128*</td>
<td>9,574*</td>
<td>9,196*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See notes on Ontario report.

Table 2 (Source: Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada)

According to the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, the abortion rates in Canada are declining.

II.

On the other hand, far away, and a little bit more to the South, a small European country of Croatia had a very similar situation. By 1952, abortion was a crime punished by imprisonment for both the pregnant woman and the abortion procurer. That law was inherited from the nineteenth century, when Croatia was part of the Habsburgh Monarchy, where abortion was a crime. In the 1852 Criminal Code (Part I, c.XVI art. 144), abortion, then called “pometnuće”, was a crime punishable with six months to ten years of imprisonment for those who procure abortion and a maximum of five years for women. In 1952 the “Law on the Procedure for Carrying out the Permitted Abortion” (Sl. list, 4/52) was passed, thus marking the beginning of a rather liberal legislation. Similarly to Canada, in the 60’s abortion legislation went through a process of liberalization. The reason was a high level of maternal morbidity and mortality at the time.

Based on a medical, eugenic and legal indication, abortion was not illegal from 1952 and based on a social indication it was not illegal from 1960. From 1969 the commission approval was not requested any more and after that time illegal abortions were almost eliminated. In 1978 the “Act concerning the medical measures for materialization of the right to freely decide on the birth of children” (Narodne novine 18/78, 88/09) was passed in Croatia. It was based on the article 191 of 1974 Croatian Constitution (Ustav SRH, Narodne novine 8/1974) which proclaimed that
“it was the human right to decide on the birth of children.” Besides abortion, the 1978 Law concerned fertility regulation, contraception, sterilization and the treatment of infertility. It also amended the Criminal Code.

When Croatia achieved independence from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, the law regulating abortion was not changed although the provision on the “right to decide on the birth of children” is not a constitutional provision any more (Hrabar 2015:796). According to articles 15 to 28, abortion is allowed on request during the first ten weeks of pregnancy. It must be performed by a physician in a hospital within a department of gynaecology or obstetrics or in another authorized health-care facility. If the woman is under the age of sixteen, the authorization of her parents or guardian and the guardianship authority is required. After the first ten weeks of pregnancy, abortion must be approved by a commission of two physicians, and a social worker or a registered nurse:

The commission may consent to an abortion when it is medically established that it would otherwise be impossible to save the woman’s life or prevent damage to her health, whether it be during pregnancy, delivery or post-partum; when the probability that the child would be born with a serious congenital physical or mental defect is medically established; or when the conception is a consequence of a criminal act of rape, criminal act of sexual intercourse with an incompetent person, criminal act of sexual intercourse in consequence of abuse of authority, criminal act of sexual intercourse with a child or criminal act of incest (art. 22 “Act concerning the medical measures for materialization of the right to freely decide on the birth of children”).

The woman can appeal to a commission of the second instance.

In 1990 there were 38644 legal abortions in the public hospitals and that number is declining (Hlača 2009:143). In 2006 there were 4733 and in 2007 there were 4573 induced abortions. According to Table 3 we can say that the number of legally induced abortion is still declining.
Table 3. Total number of legally induced and spontaneous abortions and other abortions recorded by Croatian health institutions from 1992 to 2014 (Hrvatski zdravstveno statistički ljetopis, 2014: 252, tbl 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Broj prekida trudnica (UKUPNO)</th>
<th>Spontani %</th>
<th>Legalno induc %</th>
<th>Ostali pobačaji %</th>
<th>Broj legalno * induc. pobačaja na 100 rođilja</th>
<th>No. of legally induc. abortions per 100 childbirthing women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>26.014</td>
<td>3.396</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>19.673</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>2.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>19.950</td>
<td>3.091</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.282</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>2.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>19.634</td>
<td>3.520</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>12.339</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>3.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>16.400</td>
<td>3.377</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>10.636</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>2.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>15.232</td>
<td>3.190</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>8.907</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>3.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14.700</td>
<td>2.894</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>8.064</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>3.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13.870</td>
<td>2.686</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>7.534</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>3.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>12.814</td>
<td>2.521</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>6.574</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>3.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12.022</td>
<td>2.313</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>6.191</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>3.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>10.969</td>
<td>1.971</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>5.923</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>3.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>10.897</td>
<td>1.852</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5.233</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>3.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10.255</td>
<td>1.906</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.563</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>3.786</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10.234</td>
<td>1.802</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>4.733</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>3.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10.609</td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4.573</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>4.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>1.691</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>4.497</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>4.428</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>1.442</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>4.450</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>4.525</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.413</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.043</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>4.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10.401</td>
<td>1.501</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>4.347</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>4.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10.087</td>
<td>1.696</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>3.671</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>4.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10.288</td>
<td>1.772</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>3.161</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>3.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9.133</td>
<td>1.681</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>3.020</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>4.602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Podatak o broju rođilja iz zdravstvenih ustanova Hrvatske - Data on childbirthing women from health institutions in Croatia

For comparison, in 2010 the abortion rate in Croatia was 4.7 per 1000 women and a year before it was 13.7 in Canada (World Abortion Policies).

III.

As this research is in its beginnings, many questions that are yet to be answered will necessarily be left open. But my task was not to answer the questions or decide should this work be “pro” or “against.” It was to compare Canadian and Croatian abortion legislations and their developments. Both Canadian and Croatian systems are liberal. Although Canadian and Croatian abortion legislations and their developments seem to be very similar, they are based on different grounds. There are many facts I did not mention, such as political system before 1990 in Croatia, demographic structure and economic achievements in both countries, etc. Also there are differences within Canada (the details need further study) that are based on many factors.

If there are to be any conclusions, I must inevitably point out that “North” and “South” are one of many determinants which are not negligible. Perhaps it is especially noticeable on the reality of Canada’s vast territory. Further research may reveal something else. Nonetheless, Canada – as the “North” with a whole range of different “Norths”, and taking into account different historical backgrounds and other circumstances – can
be considered as a useful legal model in the process of drafting a new Croatian law on abortion.

**Works cited**


Beyond the 49th Parallel: Many Faces of the Canadian North

Zrinka Erent-Sunko

The Legal Status of Women in Canada – The Legal Model beyond the 49th Parallel...


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