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Guest-Editors / Editeurs Invités
Zuzanna Szatanik and Michał Krzykawski

BODIES OF CANADA

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Conceptualizations of Canadian Space
and the Rhetoric of Gender

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Conceptualisations de l'espace canadien
et la rhétorique du genre

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REVITALIZING RIAS

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
Editor-in-Chief

So, everyone needs to do something a little different once in a while. Sometimes that means being open to meeting new people, stretching yourself to learn something new, updating how you do something you've been doing in the same way for years, changing how you look, taking on new interests, doing things you thought you'd never do, and, in the process, learning amazing things about yourself that you never knew and/or couldn't have imagined. But doing it all differently also puts the spotlight on transformation, and although you can never know in advance everything that will come out of such transformation, you can certainly guide its course by developing a vision that reflects where you think you'd like to end up. This has been the work undertaken by the editors of the *Review of International American Studies* over the past year, since the last issue on *Modernity's Modernisms: Hemi/Spheres, 'Race', and Gender* came out in winter 2010. From that time, the task of revitalizing *RIAS,* to create a stronger, more vibrant and intellectually challenging forum for exploring and discussing issues of interest and importance to the membership of the International American Studies Association (*RIAS*' sponsoring organization), and concerned with the global, hemispheric, and transnational study of America and the Americas, has been the primary concern of the *RIAS* editorial team.

One of the first signs of this transformation, as you will see in the current issue, is that *RIAS* has a new face, with

an updated graphic design that we hope will make it more aesthetically pleasing, not to mention more readable (thanks for this new design go to the tireless efforts of Paweł Jędrzejko, *RIAS* co-founder and Associate Editor). But this is, of course, not the only indication of the journal's ongoing metamorphosis into the new *RIAS.* The current issue, *Bodies of Canada: Conceptualizations of Canadian Space and the Rhetoric of Gender*, guest edited by Zuzanna Szatanik and Michał Krzykawski of the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, itself represents a bold beginning to the expression of the new vision marking the transformation *RIAS* has undergone over the past year, and will continue to undergo in the coming months.

Emphasizing a conscious recognition of the heightened importance of cultural understanding and community for the 21st century, *RIAS* will continue to reflect IASA's conception of itself as an organization dedicated to the regional, hemispheric, national, transnational, and global study of America and the Americas. In addition, however, the journal will seek to provide a forum for comparative and interdisciplinary dialogue and international exchange on topics of interest to the IASA membership and the larger American Studies community. This will include the effort to maintain *RIAS'* hemispheric and global commitment to publish work in languages other than English, as can also be seen in the current issue, which includes an essay written in French. In pursuing its professed global and hemispheric interests, *RIAS* will seek to publish work that is otherwise regional, national, or transnational. We will especially be looking for work that reflects global concerns and/or the examination of hemispheric or hemispherically inflected interrelationships in ways that can foster understanding or interrogate notions of America and the Americas, and/or reconfigure traditional understandings of American Studies. Of particular interest will be work that suggests the possibility of re-thinking the kinds of normalized, and often naturalized, boundaries that disable dialogue across disciplinary, cultural, national, and other kinds of boundaries and borders, as do the essays gathered under the topic of the current issue. By publishing such work, the goal of the new

RIAS will be to find and open up new questions rather than close off debate, and to encourage dialogue, rather than re-articulate seemingly static truths. Our aim will be to keep *RIAS* as much as possible on the pulse of field, to interrogate new developments and re-think old perspectives, keeping our cutting edge—and yours—as sharp as we can on the intellectual journey we hope to share with you, our readers. Enjoy!

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
RIAS *Editor-in-Chief*

LA RÉVITALISATION DE LA RIAS

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
Éditrice en chef

Eh bien, chacun de nous a besoin de faire quelque chose de différent de temps en temps. Pour cela, il faut parfois être prêt à renconter de nouvelles personnes, à abandonner soi-même pour apprendre quelque chose de nouveau ou à reviser la façon de faire qui n'a pas changé depuis des années; il faut être disposé à changer de look et à s'intéresser à des choses nouvelles ; il faut enfin être ouvert à ce qu'on croit qu'on aurait jamais fait, et par conséquent découvrir quelque chose d'étonnant sur soi qu'on ignorait et/ou qu'on n'aurait jamais imaginé. Or, faire tout cela doit entraîner une transformation. Même si l'on ne sait pas d'avance tout ce qui peut en découler, on est pourtant capable d'orienter son déroulement en caressant une idée qui exprime où l'on croit que cette transformation va aboutir. Depuis la publication en hiver 2010 du dernier volume de la *Revue d'études américaines internationales* consacré aux *Modernismes de la modernite: les Hemi/spheres, 'la race,' le genre*, c'était précisement l'entreprise faite par le comité d'édition. Dès lors, la tâche qu'on s'est assigné était de créer un espace plus large, plus dynamique et encore plus stimulant intellectuellement, qui serve à explorer des problèmes d'importance pour les membres de l'Association d'études américaines internationales (IASA) qui parraine la RIAS, ces problèmes étant abordés dans le contexte des études globales, hémisphériques et transnationales sur l'Amérique et les Amériques.

L'un des premiers signes avant-coureurs de cette transformation, comme vous pourrez le constater en lisant ce volume, est que la *RIAS*, grâce à des efforts inlassables de Paweł Jędrzejko, l'un des co-fondateurs et éditeurs associés de la *Revue*, a désormais une nouvelle conception graphique. On espère que ce changement de style rendra la *Revue* esthétiquement agréable et plus lisible. Bien évidemment, ce rafraîchissement graphique n'est pas la seule indication de la métamorphose de la nouvelle RIAS. Le volume que vous tenez en main, qui s'intitule *Les c-or(p)ganismes du Canada. Conceptualisations de l'espace canadien et la rhétorique du genre*, rédigé par Zuzanna Szatanik et Michał Krzykawski de l'Université de Silésie en Pologne, représente lui-même une ouverture courageuse à une nouvelle vision que la *Revue* a caressée cette dernière année et qu'elle continuera de développer dans les mois qui viennent.

Tout en insistant sur la nécessité de reconnaître délibérément une importance accrue de la compréhension culturelle au 21e siècle, la RIAS restera fidèle à la conception de l'IASA qui est dévouée à étudier l'Amérique et les Amériques dans leurs contextes régionaux, hémisphériques, nationaux, transnationaux et globaux. En plus, la *Revue* cherchera à créer un espace de dialogue interdisciplinaire et d'échanges internationaux portant sur les problèmes d'envergure pour les membres de la *RIAS*, de même que pour toute la communauté engagée dans les études américaines. Du coup, on entreprendra de maintenir un engagement hémisphérique et global de publier des travaux en langues différentes que l'anglais, comme c'est le cas de ce volume qui contient, entre autres, un article en français. On tiendra particulièrement à publier des travaux abordant des questions globales et/ou portant sur l'examen des relations réciproques, hémisphériques ou hémisphériquement infléchies, de façon à favoriser leur compréhension et à interroger les notions d'Amérique(s), de même qu'à reconfigurer des idées traditionnelles sur les études américaines. On appréciera particulièrement les travaux dont le but est de re-penser les limites normalisées, et bien souvent naturalisées, qui entravent le dialogue au-delà

des clivages disciplinaires, culturels, nationaux et d'autres. Il en est ainsi des articles réunis dans ce volume dont la publication répond à l'objectif de la nouvelle *RIAS*: trouver et élargir des questions nouvelles au lieu d'enfermer le débat ; encourager le dialogue au lieu de réaffirmer des vérités immuables. Tout cela afin d'être à l'écoute de ce qui se passe, afin d'interroger de nouvelles approches et de re-penser de vieilles perspectives. En effet, on veut maintenir notre (et le vôtre, chers lecteurs et chères lectrices) caractère tranchant et concis de cette aventure intellectuelle qu'on veut partager avec vous. Bonne lecture!

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
Éditrice en chef

Cyraina Johnson-Roullier
Éditrice en chef

BODIES OF CANADA

Conceptualizations of Canadian Space and the Rhetoric of Gender

> *[T]o be gay (or lesbian or transgender or intersex or intertextual or any of the vast array of peregrinations from the ho hum, humdrum orthodoxy of heterosexuality) and Canadian is to be doubly queered.* (*LaBruce, 2006: 15*)

Zuzanna Szatanik
Michał Krzykawski
Guest-Editors

While conceiving the original call for papers for the present—'Canadian'—issue of RIAS, the editors' main focus had been on discourses of space and gender. Our primary reason for this was that within the context of Canadian culture and literature the correlation between these two concepts has been strikingly manifest. In early English-Canadian texts, one often observes a 'feminization of space' (Best, 1995: 183) which is, however, characteristic of the literature of colonization in general. The process of taking over and possessing a foreign land implies, as W. H. New asserts, 'penetration (of continent, of body)' (1997: 114) which is typically construed as feminine, i.e., unknown, unfamiliar, and potentially hostile. What appears to be characteristic for Canadian literature specifically is a suspicion that such penetration is neither satisfactory nor complete, regardless of how strongly one wishes this to be so. All the same, the feminization of the Canadian landscape brings hope of its domestication and taming as 'the female body delivers a conception of bounded, mappable space, space which can still be understood as totality even if it is internally fractured or carved up' (Best, 1995: 184).

Likewise, this interconnection between woman's body and space, represented as a territory to be conquered and a space

to be shaped, is strikingly present in Québécois literature, just one example being the metaphor of 'femme-pays' so dear to Québec's national poet Gaston Miron, as well as the nationalist discourse. According to Diane Lamoureux, the modern national narrative of Québec aims at identifying 'la belle province' with its territory and 'unlike French-Canadian nationalism of the previous period, Québec's modern nationalism sees territoriality as a basis to construct the nation and the frontiers of the future sovereign state' (1999: 29). This transition from 'ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism' (Lamoureux, 1999: 29) is marked by the rejection of femininity that is seen as external and its transformation into 'feminine nature entirely constructed on the basis of the concept of maternity' (Lamoureux, 1999: 33).

The dialectics of exclusion and reappropriation of femininity is at the heart of the social contract which interlaces, according to Pateman, with 'the sexual contract' (1998: IX), where it is only in the private sphere that woman can reach citizenship. Fundamentally devoted to reproducing and bringing up future (male) citizens, she is dismissed from the public sphere being reserved for her (?) brothers with whom she can only fraternize.[1] Indeed, when Rousseau talks about women, this 'precious half of the Republic, which makes the happiness of the other,' (2004: 8), he evokes their 'chaste influence, solely exercised within the limits of conjugal union, is exerted only for the glory of the State and the happiness of the public' (1923). Reading bodies of Canada now must certainly challenge the codification of social roles characteristic to the modern narrative and open onto the largeness of what we (want to) understand as Canadienness.

In this collection of articles on Canadian and Québec literatures, we have been interested in the form that such a feminized body/space takes in light of theoretical explorations which have focused on decentralization and disunity

1. As Derrida claims in *Politics of friendship*, 'the fratriarchy may include cousins and sisters but [...] including may also come to mean neutralizing. Including may dictate forgetting [...] that the sister will never provide a docile example for the concept of fraternity' (2005: viii).

(of identities, cultures and nations), and dominated current debates on Canadianness—namely discourses of the postmodern, the feminist, and the postcolonial. The articles collected here, however, demonstrate that the bodies of Canada are, above all, queer. Many of our contributors chose 'queer' as a broad theoretical ground upon which conceptualizations of Canadian space and the rhetoric of gender intersect. In fact, the affinity between the two adjectives—'Canadian' and 'queer'—has been the subject of an ongoing debate which has gained momentum since the publication of the groundbreaking collection *In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context* (2001), edited by Terry Goldie. Not only does this volume show 'the possible range in academic studies of gay and lesbian cultures in Canada' (Goldie, 2001: 6), but it also points to the openness of the term 'queer'. Whereas most frequently the term itself functions as a designation for non-normative sexualities, it actually subverts all 'proper deafinitions',[2] and as such urges one to reassess various kinds of 'norms'. In this sense, queer theory often parallels existing conceptions of Canadianness, founded on the notions of fragmentation and unfixedness. In Jason Morgan's words, 'Canadian nationalism is demonstrated to be queer because it transgresses the normative basis of the nation' (2006: 223). The transgressiveness of this 'queer' idea of 'Canada' and its 'bodies' is reflected in the recent popularity of the prefix 'trans-' in the field of Canadian studies: the shift from 'multiculturalism' to 'transculturalism', the launch of the TransCanada project, the resulting publication of the seminal *Trans.Can. Lit*. (Kamboureli and Miki 2007) and, on a more institutional scale, the final report of the Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences in Québec published by Bouchard and Taylor. 'Trans'—meaning 'across, beyond, through'—'connotes movement to "the other side" of something [...], into another state or place [...], a transcending of a border' (Sikora, 2010).[3] Such 'peregrinations'

2. *Proper Deafinitions* is a title of Betsy Warland's collection of 'theorograms'.
3. Coincidentally, as Sikora remarks, etymologically, 'queer' comes from an old Germanic word also meaning 'across'.

seem to facilitate ex-centric playfulness, subversion of centers, and de-marginalization of various minorities.

Indeed, the Canadian voices heard in this collection often belong to gender, sexual, and/or ethnic Others, and the analyses presented here focus on how Canadian authors unfix the notion of identity in ways that speak to the complicated materiality that 'queerness' identifies. Significantly, problematic Canadian selves, whose 'queerness' is debated in the articles of the present issue, inhabit equally problematic and 'queer' Canadian bodies. Inscribed in, and repetitively illustrative of, the Canadian landscape, these bodies are concurrently too large to contain and too fragmented to characterize. As Aritha van Herk remarks in the opening essay, 'Bawdy Bodies: Bridging Robert Kroetsch and bpNichol', 'the [Canadian] nation is so overwhelmingly large that we (Canadians) don't know how big we are or might be, how small we need to grow to understand the space we occupy' (van Herk). Canada's body is then 'large and unwieldy', and because it is so, it is also difficult to characterize in conventional terms—therefore, strangely, the notion of 'queerness' often provides a context for understanding. The point is reminiscent of Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*, where the writer depicts her fat heroine, Joan Foster, as devoid of any distinguishing characteristics ('all fat women look the same, they all look forty-two')—a 'huge featureless blur' (Atwood, 1982: 82). Like Foster—playing 'kindly aunt and wisewoman to a number of [popular] girls in the class' (93)—'Canada is too big to be anything but benevolent and placid' (van Herk). The body of Canada that looms out of van Herk's paper is, therefore, kinky—or queer—rather than bawdy, one that is too unbounded to be penetrated and too gigantic to tender pleasure.

Within Western culture, the obsession with size that van Herk mentions with reference to Canada is a markedly feminine preoccupation. If, however, the author talks of 'a woman's experience' at all, she 'tells it slant', in her own autobiographical poems that complement her analysis but which themselves are not the object of interpretation. Conversely, her reading concentrates on two 'indubitably and self-consciously male'

Canadian poets, Robert Kroetsch[4] and bpNichol. Both are viewed as 'embodiments of the unwieldy male body aching to subvert identity, yearning to map by touch and tenderness [...]' and, therefore, as transgressively unmasculine. Both poets 'articulate bodies preoccupied with language because the space of the nation cannot be drawn' (van Herk). A similar concern with language is a fundamental aspect of Eva C. Karpinski's article, 'Bodies Material and Immaterial: Daphne Marlatt's Ghost-Writing and Transnationalism in *Taken*', although here the body is 'indubitably female'. Moreover, Marlatt's writing is also actively involved in 'bridging', i.e., in establishing links, connections, and collaborations. As a 'leading practitioner of écriture au féminin' (Karpinski), she remains in a dialogue with such Quebec writers as Nicole Brossard, Louky Bersianik, and Madelaine Gagnon, as well as representatives of the so-called French feminism[5] for whom the body is the foundation of writing.

Marlatt's development of 'a transnational feminist critique that explores the linkages and connections among nations, heteropatriarchies, colonialisms, and militarisms' (Karpinski) springs from her awareness of various separations which characterize the experience of the body marked by gender, sexuality, nationality, race, and personal history. Like Alberta author Janice Williamson, Marlatt plays with the form of her texts, as well as with the 'phantom limb of memory' (Karpinski). Her fragmentary narratives, often taking the form

4. Soon after the present issue of *RIAS* had been submitted for publication, Robert Kroetsch died tragically in a car accident on June 21st 2011.
5. It needs to be noted, however, that the notion of French Feminism, according to Christine Delphy, is 'a pure and simple *invention*' (1995: 19) characteristic of the English and American feminist thought, which has little to do with the feminist movement in France. Indeed, of the French Feminism's 'Holy Trinity' (Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray) two theorists are outside the feminist debate in France and do not profess to be feminists. According to Delphy, the notion of French feminism misidentified French women writers such as Cixous and Leclerc with French feminist thought. This remark seems to be particularly important in the context of Québécois feminism of the seventies which, on the one hand, was significantly inspired by French *femmes écrivains* and, on the other hand, considered them as feminists.

of a series of snapshots, speak, however, 'against separations' (Karpinski), and are 'a place of return, of the dead, of "you/I" or ghost selves' (Karpinski). Such 'ghost selves' simultaneously represent connections between life and death, the past and the present, the so-called 'real' and the memorized, and point to the liminality and transgressiveness of the body.

Liminality is also the main focus of Małgorzata Myk's 'Traversing Gendered Spaces with Nicole Brossard's Lesbians: Figurations of Nomadic Subjectivity in Picture Theory'. Brossard's bodies are 'unearthly' because the roots holding them are 'aerial', which enables the 'traversing of spaces' mentioned in the title of Myk's essay. The particular body, however, around which the analysis revolves, is marked as 'lesbian' and thus appears to be 'differently female'. For Brossard, the lesbian body is 'a figure of transgression capable of displacing and resignifying patriarchal codes' (Myk). Employing the tenets of 'nomadic politics' ('a matter of bonding, of coalitions, of interconnections' [Braidotti qtd. in Myk]), Myk proposes a dialogue between Nicole Brossard, Rosi Braidotti, and Elizabeth Grosz, and hence reads their texts as interconnected and complementary.

A similarly enriching exchange—between Trinidadian Canadian writer, Dionne Brand, and American feminist poet, Adrienne Rich—is a starting point for the fourth essay in this collection: Laura Sarnelli's 'Overlapping Territories, Drifting Bodies in Dionne Brand's Work'. The lesbian body as conceptualized by Brand maintains its subversive qualities and becomes a 'site of resistance to the cultural violence and silence into which it has been forcibly cast' (Sarnelli). The discovery of the eponymous 'overlapping territories' is made possible through the liberating 'loca-motion' of the drifting body—which replaces the search for its proper 'location'—and 'the erotic energy of the excess produced by two female desiring bodies looking at each other' (Sarnelli). Importantly, Brand's questioning of fixed 'locations'—or stability of 'homes'—springs from the fact that she speaks from the position of a triple marginalization, namely, one of a black/lesbian/woman. Therefore, she writes against neo-colonial,

patriarchal, and heteronormative discourses, in order to move from 'being placed to becoming place', and envisages the black lesbian body as engaged in the process of becoming a 'bridge between spaces and geographies always already fluid and floating' (Sarnelli).

The concepts of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality are central to Jess Huber's 'Queering Bodies, Queering Boundaries: Localizing Identity in and of the Body in Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*'. In Goto's novel, the questions of 'nationality, ethnicity, community and identity formation' within the Canadian context are translated into 'the concrete lived experience' of the narrator's body' (Huber). By means of othering, or queering, of this body, 'Goto provides a model for the openness that comes with […] an acknowledging of what is happening corporeally, bodily, on a daily basis as opposed to self definition by vague and abstract concepts like nations and sexuality' (Huber).

Even though Huber's essay attempts to delineate possible ways out of positions of oppression, it also points to the problematic nature of Canadian multiculturalism. As such, it addresses the question of whether the discourse of Canadianness—originally constructed around the civilizing mission of two founding nations whose cultural superiority to the colonized remained unquestioned for a long time—can indeed avoid 'a devaluing or ignoring of the "marginalized challenges" […] of the ex-centric' (Hutcheon, 1989: 17). In the same vein, although 'queering' of the body/nation has been described mostly in terms of discursive playfulness, Huber makes it very clear that what underlies 'queering' is the painful experience of alienation, marginalization, and oppression, shared by many 'Canadians'.

The interconnected concepts of 'marginality' and 'liminality' have long been inscribed within English-Canadian academic discourses of identity, and have been appreciated for their transgressive potential. Undoubtedly, they have proved to be effective interpretive tools. Questions appear, however, about the relatedness of these notions to the actual, lived experiences of other (than Anglo-) Canadian bodies (for instance,

the bodies of the Quebecois). Accordingly, Isabelle Lachance's 'La Sourisqoise en ses plaisirs. Analogie entre la femme sauvage et la Nouvelle-France chez Marc Lescarbot', studies the parallel representations of New France and the Souriquois (Micmac) woman in Lescarbot's Histoire de la Nouvelle France. Here too, the native woman, inscribed in the yet unexplored but perceived as fully explorable landscape, becomes a useful representation of the colony's potential. Depicted as modest and welcoming, she is, like Pocahontas, a colonialist fantasy and an element of the colonial propaganda.

The closing article of this issue—Vanja Polic's 'Tenderness of Space and Outlandish Woman. *The Tenderness of the Wolves* and *The Outlander*'—discusses a similar analogy 'between the body of text and the body of colony' (Polic). In this context, stereotypical images of the Canadian landscape, as empty and hostile 'backwoods', 'are [...] used to reveal both the space and women as sites of inscription by a white European man [...]' (Polic). Within the new colony, the woman's body 'is a site of power discourse', and is appropriated, together with the land, to become a '"womb of empire" whose function [is] to populate the colony with white settlers' (Polic). The article then emphasizes the parallelism between the rhetoric of topography and that of the body, the same juxtaposition which inspired this issue of RIAS.

The analogy between the two seemingly divergent notions is particularly evident when texts that address them touch upon issues of literal or metaphorical liminality, concerns that many of our contributors chose to discuss. In the context of the ongoing debate over Canadian identity, which has revolved around bringing into existence an image of Canada that would inspire a sense of unity among the citizens of the country, the liminal body becomes a transgressive counter-image. Even though the papers collected here approach the concepts of body, space, and gender differently, they all suggest the 'queerness' of the various bodies of Canada and their invisible parts 'connected to an interiority of hope' (van Herk) which goes beyond the (in)famous Canadian longing for unity.

Zuzanna Szatanik
Michał Krzykawski

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C-OR(P)GANISMES DU CANADA

Conceptualisations de l'espace canadien et la rhétorique du genre

> *Être homosexuel·le (ou lesbienne ou transgenre ou intersexué·e ou intertextuel·le ou n'importe qui dans ce large éventail de pérégrinations depuis l'orthodoxie monocorde et monotone de l'hétérosexualité) et canadien·ne, c'est être doublement* queeré·e.[1] (*LaBruce, 2006: 15*)

Zuzanna Szatanik
Michał Krzykawski
Editeurs Invités

L'idée générale du premier appel à contributions pour ce numéro de la *RIAS* (*Révue d'études américaines internationales*), qui est cette fois entièrement consacré au Canada, se focalisait avant tout sur les discours de l'espace et du genre. La raison pour cela était que la corrélation entre les deux concepts est particulièrement manifeste dans le contexte de la culture et la littérature canadiennes. Dans les premiers textes canadiens-anglais, on peut observer par exemple la 'féminisation de l'espace' (Best, 1995: 183) qui caractérise pourtant toute la littérature coloniale. En effet, comme le remarque William Herbert New (1997: 114), le processus de la conquête et de la prise de possession d'une terre étrangère fait penser à 'la pénétration (du continent, du corps)', cette terre étant imaginée comme féminine, c'est-à-dire inconnue et potentiellement hostile. Ce qui semble propre à la littérature canadienne, c'est la suspicion que cette pénétration, si grand que soit le désir de pénétrer, n'est jamais ni satisfaisante ni totale. De toute façon, comme 'le corps féminin encourage le concept d'un espace limité et cartograpiable, qui peut être

1. Sauf indication contraire, c'est nous qui traduisons les références en anglais.

toujours compris comme totalité malgré sa fracture et son morcellement internes, la féminisation de la terre canadienne caresse un espoir de domestication et d'apprivoisement' (Best, 1995: 184).

Cette interdépendance entre le corps féminin et l'espace, l'un et l'autre étant représentés comme un territoire à conquérir et une terre à travailler, est également manifeste dans la littérature québécoise, pour évoquer la fameuse métaphore de 'femme-pays' si chère à Gaston Miron, poète national du Québec, que dans le discours nationaliste. Comme le remarque Diane Lamoureux, le récit national moderne du Québec identifie la belle province à son territoire et 'contrairement au nationalisme canadien-français de la période précédente, le nationalisme québécois moderne voit dans la territorialité la base à partir de laquelle construire la nation et les frontières du futur Etat souverain' (Lamoureux, 1999: 29). Ce 'passage d'un nationalisme ethnique à un nationalisme civique' est marqué par le rejet de la féminité considérée comme extérieure et sa transformation en 'la nature féminine [qui] est tout entière construite à partir de la maternité' (Lamoureux, 1999: 29–33).

La dialectique de l'exclusion et de la réappropriation de la féminité est au cœur du contrat social qui, comme le remarque Pateman, se conjugue avec 'le contrat sexuel' (1998: IX), où ce n'est que dans la sphère privée que la femme peut accéder à la citoyenneté. En effet, principalement consacrée à la reproduction et à l'éducation des futurs hommes-citoyens, elle est chassée de la sphère publique strictement réservée à ses (?) frères avec qui elle ne peut que se fraterniser.[2]

En effet, quand Rousseau parle des femmes, 'cette précieuse moitié de la république qui fait le bonheur de l'autre', il évoque leur 'chaste pouvoir, exercé seulement dans l'union

2. Comme le remarque Derrida dans ses *Politiques de l'amitié*, 'la phratriarchie peut comprendre aussi les sœurs mais comprendre peut vouloir dire neutraliser. Comprendre peut commander d'oublier par exemple [...] que la soeur ne fournira jamais un exemple docile pour le concept de fraternité' (2006: 6).

conjugale, [qui] ne se fait sentir que pour la gloire de l'Etat et le bonheur public' (1992: 12). Il est indéniable qu'aujourd'hui, la lecture des c-or(p)ganismes du Canada doit mettre en question la codification des rôles sociaux propre au récit moderne et s'ouvrir vers le large de ce que nous comprenons ou voulons comprendre comme 'canadianité'.

Dans ce recueil d'articles sur les littératures canadiennes et québécoises, notre intêret particulier se concentrait sur la forme que prend ce corps/espace féminisé à la lumière des textes théoriques portant sur le décentrement et la désunion (des identités, des cultures et des nations) et propres aux discours sur le postmoderne, le féministe et le postcolonial qui ont nourri les débats actuelles sur la canadianité. Or, les articles réunis dans ce recueil montrent que les c-or(p)ganismes du Canada sont avant tout *queer*. Beaucoup de nos contributrices ont choisi *queer* comme champ théorique dans lequel les conceptualisations de l'espace canadien et la rhétorique du genre s'entrecroisent. En fait, l'affinité entre les adjectifs 'canadien' et '*queer*' s'est installée dans le centre du débat actuel qui gagne du terrain depuis la publication d'un recueil révolutionnaire 'In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context' [Dans un pays queer. Études gay et lesbiennes dans le contexte canadien], édité par Terry Goldie en 2001. Cet ouvrage montrait non seulement 'l'étendue possible des cultures gay et lesbiennes au Canada dans le monde de la recherche' (Goldie, 2001: 6), mais aussi l'ouverture a la notion de *queer*. Si celle-ci désigne le plus souvent les sexualités non-normatives, il faut dire qu'actuellement, elle subvertit toutes les '*deaf*initions propres'[3] et encourage à réviser différents types de 'normes'. De ce point de vue, la théorie *queer* trouve ses échos dans les conceptions de la canadianité fondées sur les notions de fragmentation ou indétermination. Comme le remarque Jason Morgan, 'le nationalisme canadien est manifestement *queer* parce qu'il transgresse les fondements normatifs de la nation' (2006: 223). La transgressivité de l'idée *queer* sur le Canada

3. '*Deaf*initions propres' [*Proper Deafinitions*] est le titre du recueil 'theorograms' publié Betsy Warland.

et sur ses 'c-or(p)ganismes' se reflète dans le préfixe 'trans-' qui est récemment devenu très populaire dans le champ des études canadiennes. Le passage du 'multiculturalisme' au 'transculturalisme', le lancement du projet TransCanada, la publication, en 2007, d'un livre novateur de Kamboureli et Miki *Trans.Can.Lit*, et enfin, du côté institutionnel, le rapport final de la Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles au Québec publié par Bouchard et Taylor. Évoquant 'à travers, de travers et au-delà', 'trans' suggère le mouvement vers "l'autre côté" de quelque chose [...], vers un autre pays ou lieu [...], le dépassement d'une frontière (Sikora, 2010).[4] Ces pérégrinations semblent faciliter des jeux ex-centriques, le subvertissement des centres et la démarginalisation des minorités diverses.

Certes, les voix canadiennes entendues dans ce recueil appartiennent-elles souvent aux Autres, aussi bien du côté du genre que de celui du sexe ou de l'ethnie. Les analyses réunies ici montrent comment des auteur·e·s canadien·ne·s déstabilisent la notion d'identité afin de faire parler cette matérialité embrouillée qu'appelle le/la *queer*. De façon substantielle, les 'je' canadien·ne·s problématiques dont le caractère *queer* est abordé dans les articles qui suivent, habitent également les c-or(p)-ganismes canadiens, eux aussi étant problématiques et *queer*. En même temps, traduisant répétitivement le paysage canadien dans lequel ils s'inscrivent, ces c-or(p)ganismes sont trop larges pour être renfermés et trop fragmentés pour être caractérisés. Comme le remarque Aritha van Herk dans son essai intitulé 'Bawdy Bodies: Bridging Robert Kroetsch and bpNichol' qui ouvre le recueil, 'la nation [canadienne] est si extraordinairement large que nous (les Canadien·ne·s) ne savons pas comme nous sommes ou pourrions être grands et comme nous devons devenir petits pour comprendre l'espace que nous occupons' (van Herk). Le corps du Canada est alors 'large et pesant' et, par conséquent, difficile à caractériser à l'aide des termes conventionnels, ce qui ouvre étrangement la voie à la notion de *queer* qui sert de contexte

4. D'ailleurs, Sikora remarque qu'étymologiquement, le mot '*queer*' vient de la vieille langue germanique où il signifie 'à travers'.

pour la compréhension. On pourrait évoquer ici *Lady Oracle*, roman de Margaret Atwood dont l'héroïne obèse, Joan Foster, est décrite comme dépourvue de traits particuliers ('toutes les femmes grosses ont l'air pareil. On dirait qu'elles ont toutes quarante deux ans)—une immense masse indistincte (Atwood, 1982: 82). Tout comme Joan Foster qui joue 'une tante bienveillante et une sage femme pour certaines filles de la classe' (93), 'le Canada est trop grand pour n'être que bienveillant et tranquille' (van Herk). Par conséquent, le corps du Canada qui apparaît dans l'essai de van Herk est moins un corps léger (*bawdy body*) qu'un corps qui a des goûts spéciaux (*kinky*): un corps *queer*, celui qui est trop illimité pour être pénétré et trop gigantesque pour offrir le plaisir.

Dans la culture occidentale, l'obsession de la taille dont parle van Herk dans le contexte canadien est une préoccupation bel et bien féminine. Cependant, si jamais l'auteure parle d'une 'expérience de femme', elle ne le fait pas sans ambages. En effet, ses poèmes autobiographiques qui complètent l'analyse ne font pas l'objet d'interprétation. Au contraire, la lecture se concentre sur deux poètes canadiens 'indubitablement et consciemment masculins' que sont Robert Kroetsch[5] et bpNichol. L'un et l'autre sont interprétés comme 'des incarnations du corps masculin pesant qui brûle de subvertir l'identité, qui désire se tracer par le toucher et la tendresse [...]', et qui est, par conséquent, transgressivement démasculinisé. Les deux poètes 'font parler des corps préoccupés du langage car l'espace de la nation ne peut pas être dessiné' (van Herk). Le même souci du langage est fortement présent dans l'essai d'Eva C. Karpinski, intitulé 'Bodies Material and Immaterial: Daphne Marlatt's Ghost-Writing and Transnationalism in *Taken*'. Or, le corps ici est 'indubitablement féminin'. De plus, l'écriture de Marlatt jette des ponts en nouant des liens, des relations et des collaborations. En tant que 'praticienne importante de l'écriture au féminin' (Karpinski), Marlatt est en dialogue avec des écrivaines québécoises comme Nicole Brossard, Louky Bersianik, Madelaine Gagnon et d'autres

5. Juste après la mise en publication du présent numéro, Robert Kroetsch est mort dans un accident de voiture le 21 juin 2011,

représentantes du *French feminism*[6] qui trouve dans le corps la source de l'écriture.

La conception marlatienne d'un 'féminisme critique transnational qui explore les liens et les relations entre les nations, hétéropatriarchies, colonialismes et militarismes' (Karpinski) résulte de sa conscience aiguë de différentes séparations caractérisant l'expérience du corps marqué par le genre, la sexualité, la nationalité, la race et l'histoire personnelle. Tout comme Janice Williamson, auteure albertienne, Marlatt joue avec la forme de son texte, de même qu'avec 'le membre fantôme de la mémoire' (Karpinski). Or, ses récits fragmentaires, qui prennent souvent la forme d'une série d'instantanés, parlent '*contre* les séparations' (Karpinski). En même temps, ces 'je spectraux' représentent des relations entre la vie et la mort, le passé et le présent, le réel et la mémoire, tout en débouchant sur la liminalité et la transgressivité du corps.

La liminalité est également le sujet principal de l'article de Małgorzata Myk 'Traversing Gendered Spaces with Nicole Brossard's Lesbians: Figurations of Nomadic Subjectivity in *Picture Theory*'. Les corps brossardiens ne viennent pas de cette terre car leurs racines sont 'aériennes', ce qui leur permet de 'traverser les espaces'. Cependant, le corps particulier analysé dans l'article est un corps lesbien et il apparaît comme 'différemment féminin'. Pour Brossard, le corps lesbien est 'une figure transgressive qui est capable de déplacer et resi-

6. Nous évoquons cette appellation avec des réserves. Comme le remarque Christine Delphy, la notion de *French feminism* est 'une *invention* pure et simple' (1995: 19) qui caractérise le discours féministe anglais et américain, cette invention n'ayant rien à voir avec le mouvement féministe en France. En effet, deux théoriciennes qui auraient fait partie de la fameuse 'Sainte Trinité' du 'féminisme français' (Cixous, Kristeva et Irigaray) se situent hors du débat féministe qui se déroule en France et ne se revendiquent pas comme féministes. Selon Delphy, la notion de *French feminism* résulte d'une assimilation abusive des 'femmes écrivains' (par exemple Cixous ou Leclerc) avec le mouvement féministe (1995: 17). Cette remarque semble particulièrement importante dans le contexte du féminisme québécois des années soixante-dix qui, d'une part, se nourrissait des textes écrits par les écrivaines françaises et d'autre part, il considérait celles-ci comme féministes.

gnifier les codes patriarcaux' (Myk). En évoquant les principes de la 'politique nomade' ('une matière de liens, de coalitions et d'interconnections' [Braidotti citée par Myk], l'auteure propose un dialogue entre Nicole Brossard, Rosi Braidotti et Elizabeth Grosz en lisant leurs textes comme interconnectés et complémentaires.

Un pareil échange enrichissant, cette fois entre Dionne Brand, écrivaine trinidadienne canadienne, et Adrienne Rich, poète féministe américaine, déclenche l'essai de Laura Sarnelli's 'Overlapping Territories, Drifting Bodies in Dionne Brand's Work'. Le corps lesbien tel que le décrit Brand maintient ses qualités subversives et devient 'un lieu de résistance à la violence culturelle et au silence dans lequel il a été jeté' (Sarnelli). La découverte des territoires se récouvrant [*overlapping territories*] est possible grâce à la libération de la '*loca*-motion' du corps flottant, qui remplace la recherche de son propre 'emplacement' [*location*], et de 'l'énergie érotique excessive produite par deux corps féminins désirants qui se regardent' (Sarnelli). Il est à souligner que la problématique de l'emplacement figé ou de la stabilité des 'chez-soi' [*homes*] abordée par Brand découlent de sa triple marginalisation en tant que noire, lesbienne et femme. Par conséquent, elle écrit contre les discours néo-coloniaux, patriarcaux et hétéronormatifs afin de se déplacer de 'l'être emplacé au devenir emplaçant' [*from 'being placed to becoming place'*] tout en evisageant que le corps lesbien noir peut être investi dans le processus de devenir 'un pont entre espaces et géographies toujours déjà fluides et flottants' (Sarnelli).

Les concepts de race, de genre, de sexualité et de nationalité sont abordés par Jess Huber dans son article 'Queering Bodies, Queering Boundaries: Localizing Identity in and of the Body in Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*'. Dans le roman de Goto, les questions de 'nationalité, ethnicité, communauté et formation de l'identité' évoquées dans le contexte canadien se traduisent par 'une expérience concrète, vécue par le corps de la narratrice' (Huber). En rendant ce corps autre et *queer*, 'Goto nous fournit un modèle d'ouverture qui vient avec la reconnaissance de ce qui se passe chaque jour au niveau

matériel et corporel et de ce qui s'oppose à la définition de soi à travers les concepts de nation ou de sexualité, si vagues et abstraits soient-ils.

Même si Huber cherche dans son article à retracer des pistes possibles qui se situent en dehors de la position de l'oppression, elle aborde également la nature discutable du multiculturalisme canadien. La question que l'auteure semble poser est si le discours sur la canadianité, originairement construit autour de la mission civilisatrice de deux peuples fondateurs dont la supériorité culturelle par rapport au colonisé a longtemps été incontestable, peut vraiment éviter de 'dévaluer et méconnaître les "défis marginalisés" [...] des ex-centriques' (Hutcheon, 1989: 17). C'est dans la même veine que Huber, bien qu'elle rende le corps/la nation *queer* plutôt à travers un jeu discursif, montre que ce qui met en relief le caractère *queer* est en même temps une expérience douloureuse de l'aliénation, de la marginalisation et de l'oppression, expérience partagée par beaucoup de Canadien·ne·s.

Les concepts de marginalité et de liminalité, si interconnectés soient-ils, ont longtemps été inscrits dans les discours universitaires portant sur l'identité au Canada anglophone, qui reconnaissaient leur potentiel transgressif. Certes, les deux concepts se sont avérés des outils interprétatifs très efficaces. Or, la question qu'il ne faut pas tarder de poser est si le caractère relationnel de ces deux notions se montre valable lorsque celles-ci sont rapportées à des expériences vécues par d'autres c-or(p)ganismes que ceux qui appartiennent au Canada anglophone, par exemple les c-or(p)ganismes de la Nouvelle France. Ainsi l'article d'Isabelle Lachance, intitulé 'La Sourisqoise en ses plaisirs. Analogie entre la femme sauvage et la Nouvelle-France chez Marc Lescarbot', interroge-t-il les représentations parallèles de la Nouvelle France et de la Souriquoise (ou Montagnaise) dans *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* de Lescarbot. L'auteure montre comment la femme souriquoise, inscrite dans un paysage qui reste à explorer mais qui est imaginé comme pleinement explorable, devient une représentation utile du potentiel de la colonie. Décrite comme modeste et accueillante, la Souriquoise incarne, tout comme Pocahon-

tas, une fantaisie colonialiste et elle constitue un élément de la propagande coloniale.

L'article de Vanja Polic 'Tenderness of Space and Outlandish Woman. *The Tenderness of the Wolves* and *The Outlander*' qui clôture le recueil interroge une analogie similaire 'entre le corps du texte et le corps de la colonie' (Polic). Ici, les images stéréotypées du paysage canadien, cette province perdue [*backwoods*] déserte et hostile, 'sont [. . .] évoquées pour montrer que l'espace et la femme sont des lieux d'inscription pour un homme européen blanc [. . .]' (Polic). Au sein de la nouvelle colonie, le corps féminin 'est un lieu du discours du pouvoir', et, tout comme le pays, il est approprié pour devenir '"l'utérus de l'empire" dont la fonction [est] de peupler la colonie avec des colons blancs' (Polic). Ainsi l'article de Polic souligne la relation entre la rhétorique de la topographie et celle du corps, qui a inspiré ce volume de la RIAS.

L'analogie entre ces deux notions apparemment divergeantes est particulièrement visible dans les textes qui abordent le problème de liminalité litérale et métaphorique, ce problème étant évoqué par beaucoup de nos contributrices. Dans le contexte du débat actuel sur l'identité canadienne, qui a fait naître l'image d'un Canada inspirant le sens de l'unité entre les citoyen·ne·s du pays, le corps liminal devient une contre-image transgressive. Certes, les articles réunis dans ce recueil interrogent de façon différente les concepts de corps, d'espace et de genre. Cependant, ils dévoilent tous le caractère queer de divers c-or(p)ganismes du Canada et leur parties invisibles 'liées à une intériorité de l'espoir' qui va au-délà du fameux désir canadien de l'unité.

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BAWDY BODIES:
Bridging Robert Kroetsch and bpNichol

The landscape is locked deep inside my body.
Returning to the Battle River country, heart of the central Alberta parkland,
I endure a painful arousal,
the residue of those many thwarted couplings I knew as a young woman.
It was the size of my desire that troubled me,
the way it grew when I wasn't looking.
And waits now, to ambush my desertion.

****

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Canada

'We may not be big but we're small' is the mantra for Canadian humorist Stuart McLean's variety show, *The Vinyl Cafe,* and the motto for the record store that his fictional character, Dave, runs. The double-back of negation for the catchphrase is as telling as the ironic definition that won the contest held on Peter Gzowsky's popular radio show, *This Country in the Morning* in 1971; the call was sent out to complete a parallel to the phrase, 'As American as apple pie' by completing 'As Canadian as – – –'. The winning answer still speaks volumes: 'As Canadian as possible under the circumstances'. These two aphorisms gesture toward the always ironic interface of Canadians in terms of size and influence, credibility and plausibility. Our determination to invert our own expanse and measurability results in a tautology of essence and existence. A Canadian is likely to mumble an embarrassed excuse that sounds something like 'we may not be small but we're big'. In fact, the nation is so overwhelmingly large that

we (Canadians) don't know how big we are or might be, how small we need to grow to understand the space we occupy.

There is continued and continual discourse on Canada's large and unwieldy body, an over-traded discussion that inevitably reverts to sizeist essentialism. Size has become Canada's excuse for incoherence, a rationale for the regional discussions that paper the nation's house. The magnitude of the country's dimensions suggests intrepid unmanageability at best and lumbering obesity at worst. Here is a country where one province can be the size of four European nations, the largest of those provinces measuring more than a million and a half square kilometers. Canada performs, in all of its efforts to accommodate such dimensions, a fetishistic reliance on numbers, for it seems that only numbers can communicate this experiment that has sewn itself into a quilt-like country still stitched together one hundred and forty-four years after 'confederation'. And Canadians succumb to that *idée fixe.* We brag about the distances that separate citizens as if they were connections. But what has not been addressed is the extent to which the preoccupation with Canada's largeness—if not its largess—has perversely created a Foucauldian counter-discourse of docility, some gentle-giant throwback endorsing the inherent innocuousness of size. Canada is too big to be anything but benevolent and placid. And it is certainly too mild-mannered to be bawdy.

Gothic yes. Laurentian certainly. Ambiguous without a doubt. Cross-gendered possibly. Ambidextrous conceivably. But bawdy? Unlikely. In truth, the bawdy only pretends to be vulgar. It is less Fescennine than alert to its voluptuous potential. Bataille declared that the larger sense of eros to transcend the smaller thanatos, reminds the bawdy about 'the interdependency between systems of power and the limits of the body' (Turvey-Sauron, 2007: 198), all exposed by the erotic experience. This largess is the hallmark of the Canadian bawdy, nervous about the contents of the body but excited too about how big the body feels, how bodacious and lubricious the whole idea of body and its bawdy performance proclaims.

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In terms of the erotic body, Canada has been inscribed as impenetrable expanse, a mass of land and water that cannot be explored with the delicate attention that smaller countries incite. Distance and its amplitude effectively resist microscopic scrutiny, and so thorough analysis becomes impossible, a task of such magnitude that the observer or explorer throws up his or her hands and resorts to generalization. The complexity of the Canadian experience may not be cosmopolitan, but it is overwhelming, and as such, cannot accommodate much 'noticing'. A marked resistance to the delineation of detail facilitates that tendency. Viewers intent on the intimate facets of Canada are doomed in advance; their efforts to reduce an enormous canvas to a molecular scale or to move from panorama to attenuated cincture result in frustration. This size-distortion has the effect of directing body-awareness in Canada toward language. In Canadian historical terms, respected critic W. H. New contends that ethnicity, region and gender 'all fastened on language as a means of redefining the parameters of power and the character of available history' (New, 1989: 214). And if language is a vast domain, its syntax and semantics provide a canopy of camouflage, perfectly suited to the Canadian topography—and yet by default male. If writing in Canada articulates any erotic female gesture, it is, as New so astutely observed, because women 'regarded language as a *body* rather than a *landscape*' (New, 1989: 265) and wrote their body as a *doppelgänger* to the nation. The consequent 'durations of silence' (New, 1989: 266) take as their embarkation work by writers seeking to '*touch* rather than to *explore;* they resist the controlling, imperial implications of the related images of mapping/exploration/penetration' (New, 1989: 267). But those master narratives of cartography and expedition are difficult to elude in a space, political and imaginative, that is simply—well, bulky—and not just immense, but Brobdingnagian. However much Canadian theorists relegate venture and document to the colonial impulse, they nevertheless return to its codes, even when smithed by parody and irony.

By inverse reasoning, it becomes useful to circle the idea of the diminutive as an expression of the Canadian bawdy. Any Canadian bawdy falls inevitably on the failsafe side of indecorous, toward the muted district of Rabelaisian, and into the mannerly sector of lewd. The nation is not only accursed with magnitude, but retro-starchy in its allegiance to vintage Victorian principles. Baudrillard would have made a fine Canadian politician; having found it useful to embrace instability, Canadians practice his version of delusion. But to engage with the question of bawdy bodies in the competing and complementary narratives of nation and gender, it becomes necessary to practice selective myopia.

Two examples of liminally-mapped bodies argue for a corporeal overture toward a tentatively articulated Canadian bawdy. bpNichol published his irrepressibly funny anatomical autobiography, *Selected Organs: Parts of an Autobiography,* in 1988, just before he died. An icon of Canadian literature, Nichol subverted form in every way possible. He produced poetry, novels, comics, images, musical scores, children's books, short fiction, collage, concrete poetry and translations, all of his works intent on blurring borders. Nichol is revered by writers in Canada, both for his wide-ranging production and for his personal magnetism; his influence continues to the present time. Robert Kroetsch published his ironic and self-mocking *Too Bad: Sketches Toward a Self-Portrait,* in 2010, having moved himself into an assisted living home as preparation for old age. Another version of iconic Canadian wordsmith, Kroetsch has been billed as 'Mr. Canadian Postmodern' by critic Linda Hutcheon for his engagement with different theoretical motives and motifs. He too has produced multiple volumes in many different genres: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, chapbooks and travel writing, and he too has influenced the body of Canadian writing. Yet both writers are, like the country itself, almost invisible. So large that they can be ignored, they inscribe an arc on the body of the nation's literature. And they both articulate bodies preoccupied with language because the space of the nation cannot be drawn. Indubitably and self-consciously male, Nichol and Kroetsch are nevertheless

embodiments of the unwieldy male body aching to subvert its identity, yearning to map by touch and tenderness rather than roads, bridges or monuments. Their bawdy is shy, almost reticent, and comic, resisting inevitable self-aggrandizement through a self-mockery that makes both endearingly über-Canadian. They incarnate the clumsy, desiring body fantasizing the bawdy while necessarily occupying an inescapably mortal body. And the mortal body's limitations address how the body in Canada struggles to know itself.

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bpNichol stood on a bridge.
It was the letter H he was fondest of, two I letters linked, *pontine*.
The bridges of Canada, historic and soaring as well as
ramshackle, mean to connect,
leap across our inevitably too much water as if they are lovers
meeting after years apart.
The dazzle of bawdy bridges, the snug of two shores.
I didn't get a chance to know beep well.
I knew his bawdy as a snort of laughter, deep and
engaged, rewarding conversation.

I know Kroetsch well. He is my grandfather in
disguise, my old lovers grown young.

****

bpNichol's *Selected Organs: Parts of an Autobiography* declares itself an 'interim autobiography' (Nichol, 'Some Words of Introduction": n.p.) partial, unfinished, and contingent. Robert Kroetsch's *Too Bad* refuses to perform the task of autobiography and instead declares itself a compilation of sketches: 'A disclaimer: This book is not an autobiography. It is a gesture toward a self-portrait, which I take to be quite a different kettle of fish' (Kroetsch, 2010: epigraph). But whether their authors' deflections are disingenuous or devious, these texts perform as effectively articulated *dinggedicten,* poetic forms that attempt to describe objects from within rather than externally. *Dinggedicten* insist on the intimacy of occupation, of the poetic within the 'thing'. In this

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case, *dinggedicten* arise from the body, the body as implement and instrument, entity and commodity. That the body is not a 'thing', not an article but a soma, a living, breathing organism, makes the premises inspiring *Selected Organs* and *Too Bad* even more interesting. Here are two quintessentially Canadian texts that occupy the bodies of the writers describing those bodies (occupied by the authors) from within their experience. The double entendre at work here is wonderfully evocative: the body is thus bawdy-fied by the ironic distance employed as a means of inhabiting the body in order to write that body. The negotiation between and across subject and object becomes part of the body's bawdy.

That Kroetsch and Nichol are iconically male writers does not inhibit the delicacy of their *dinggedicten* as counter to their bodily biographs. In 'no ideas but in things', Kroetsch depicts the essence of the *dinggedict* with reference to William Carlos Williams:

Ideas are things, Doc Williams said
He was a poet. Now he's dead.
Desire done with, appetites fed. (2010: 61)

And yet, the appetite becomes the catalyst for the faux-autobiograph, the examination of the parts as a means of avoiding the body and its life entire. These two texts, *Too Bad* and *Selected Organs,* hypostatize what some might consider self-regard or even narcissism. But as archetypal Canadian bodies, they see themselves as partial, fragmented, and incomplete, not always readable, and certainly never knowable. Like every concept of space, they rub against each other and ignite in order to inscribe somehow a body of Canada, a body in Canada, a bawdy strip-down of the body in Canada. Kroetsch's playful interrogation of the persona's penis amplifies this conceit in his poem, 'The Unnameable'.

He called his thing his thing.
What a thing to call his thing.
Thing, in a way, is nothing. (Kroetsch, 2010: 93)

That ludic mockery betrays an anxiety about the unnameable and unknowable body, the body as mysterious force that pro-

pels its occupant in unexpected directions. Desire is a curse, but also a driver, an inspiration for the bawdy outcomes that seek if not satisfaction at least relief. And not coincidentally, the 'thing' itself performing, showing off.

> He called his dink his dink.
> He said it liked to bonk.
> Too bad it couldn't think. (Kroetsch, 2010: 93)

The tussle between the physical and the intellectual is a constant point of interest for the *dinggedict,* worrying at the thingness of things and their relation to understanding. And arouses a similar worry about the absences of the body, what it lacks in its performance of itself. In tabulating what we are missing, we give voice to hunger. bpNichol opens the autobiographical *Selected Organs* with 'The Vagina', lamenting, 'I never had one' (1988: 9). Having lived 'inside this male shell all of my life' (9), he yearns for that mysterious muscle as a complement to his own 'thing'. His interest goes far beyond the bawdy to the extent that language declares itself the *dinggedict.*

> I always wanted one. I grew up wanting one. I thot that cocks were okay but vaginas were really nifty. I liked that name for them because it began with 'v' and went 'g' in the middle. I never heard my mother or my sister mention them by name. They were an unspoken mouth & that was the mouth where real things were born. (Nichol, 1988: 10)

That mouth where 'real things' are born is the articulating instrument, the portal that signs its relation to subject and citizen, declaring a body. Nichol's wanting a vagina as a strategy for explorations of the body becomes the doorway through which connection occurs: the enabling of the bawdy for the body.

> When sex happened I realized it was all a matter of muscles. I liked the way her muscles worked. She liked the way my muscle worked. It wasn't the one thing or the other thing but the way the two of them worked together. (Nichol, 1988: 10)

The 'thing' here is only satisfying in relation to the other 'thing', the two together performing the *dinggedict* of pleasure.

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In his seminal discussion of *Selected Organs*, entitled 'Stretch Marks: Conceivable Entries into bpNichol's *Selected Organs*', Mark Libin argues that the book serves as a textual body inseparable from the living, breathing body that incited its pages, and that the two together shape an entirely reinvigorated and specifically identified material body. He references as well how these 'entries' provide an interesting contrapuntal reading to the *blasons anatomiques,* 16th century French micro-poems of exaggerated mode addressed to individual parts of the female body. Critics contend that the authors were poet-painters intent on displaying their own ingenuity as much as dis-membering (in literary terms) the female body (Vickers, 1997: 5). More germane perhaps is the interesting connection between the isolationist approach to this 'described body' (Vickers, 1997: 18) and the unspoken desire of the blazoners for the touch of the whole. Surely that is the key behind these emblematic micro-poems: as *dinggedichte* serving to catalogue desire, they attempt a touch that articulates the parts and the whole in concert with one another, actually suggesting a way to access a Canadian erotic. And in a country like Canada it is necessary to be polyamorous, for we can never quite see the body we love entirely, only parts, fractions, segments and splinters. Mere components.

It is the bawdy delight of touch that language explores; and it is language that can take on the size of life. Robert Kroetsch's essay, 'For Play and Entrance: the Contemporary Canadian Long Poem', strategizes reading the long and 'large' Canadian poem with the rhetoric of love-making. From delay to a tempestuous incompletion, the essay celebrates the 'life-long poem' (Kroetsch, 1983: 94) for its interest in the discrete, the identifiable that refuses to gesture toward the symbolic. Talking about Nichol's *The Martyrology* (the life-long poem that only stopped with Nichol's death in 1988), Kroetsch says, 'In Nichol we have, supremely, against the grammar of inherited story, the foregrounding of language. But the limits of language are such (the spirit become flesh; the Word become words) that *all* should be written down. The failure of language becomes its own grammar of delay' (Kroetsch,

1983: 94). And thus its own seduction and its own *dinggedict,* a telling of the story from within the story, through the rhetoric of the limited and liminal body, with the medium of language, the bawdiest of all instruments. Critic Smaro Kamboureli argues that within his many different texts, bpNichol's 'autobiography functions not as a genre that seeks to encompass the life of the self by encompassing meaning and an ordering shape to it, but as a writing activity that unravels the complexity of the self by exploring its signification' (Kamboureli, 1991: 152). The relation of that actively curious signification in relation to its 'thingness' is the provisional field enabling then a bawdy body.

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The old axiom about the disappearing author offers a detour.
I think of disappearance as power: the ability to come and go as I please,
to pass through closed doors and locked windows.
Invisibility is a country worth visiting.
And why can't the body fulfill a symbolic function?
The sculptors knew it could.
Yet, I've no wish to play the part of Rodin's secretary, like Rilke;
even less his muse, stranded Camille Claudel,
Give me a vanishing author over a sculptor busy turning bodies into stone

****

The body is a bewildering site, full of trickery and impatience, apt to stumble or to fall at unexpected moments, performing as betrayer or savior, sometimes both. And such spectacular treacheries remind its inhabitants of the secret life that all bodies harbor, the genes and combinants that comprise the whole, the parts that conspire to perform the bawdy. Kroetsch examines the confounding solipsism of who we are in "Just Be Yourself 1."

Lucretius had hit it dead on: we are all made up
of atoms. We can't see the atoms of which
we are made. The self is unlikely. (2010: 28)

As a nation that can't see the size of what we declare, we look inwards to decipher the secret that we Canadians are certain is hiding within the body politic, the figurement of invisibility the

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source of our disquiet. We should by now have learned from the Americans. As Eleanor says in Don DeLillo's *Underworld,* 'The biggest secrets are staring us in the face and we don't see a thing [...] the bigger the object, the easier it is to hide it' (DeLillo, 1997: 316). Our very largeness makes us invisible, as dismissible as sky and earth. Too big to hide, we do not need to be hidden but block the view that would discover us. The larger the presence the more likely it conducts absence, vanishes without leaving an impression. In Kroetsch's poem, 'Making an Impression', about a list of the persona's various falls, he moves from the innocent position of 'I was standing still when I fell off my feet' (Kroetsch, 2010: 84) to

You've got to appreciate my predicament,
I'm a ghost. No one can see me until
it's too late. Lying in the snow.

I'm an imprint. An indentation.
Lying in the snow I'm an absence
that anyone should recognize as me. (Kroetsch, 2010: 84)

The fall is both the fall from grace that expels humans from the garden and the fall from self-esteem that occurs with any fall, the terminal velocity of humiliation when the body ends up 'lying in the snow'. For sure this is a Canadian body (the snow carefully underlines that fact), but it is also an aged body, invisible until it needs to be noticed, the fall betraying the body's reliability in a sadly bawdy display of loss, the body sprawled in the snow.

That ghostliness serves as metaphor for what is both unpredictable and unseeable, turning to the dark interior of the body, through what Nichol describes in 'Sum of the Parts' as 'the old problem of writing about something you know nothing about' (Nichol, 1988: 52). And here is another source for the bawdy's delicious lewdness, its cryptic and salacious secrets, their incipient ribaldry. How to explore the unknown world? Close your eyes, reach out and feel the edges of the canorous song it sings. For there is the biggest mystery, the mysterious life of the body that goes on without consulting us, we who are the owners and occupants of that strange anatomy. 'So many

things inside me I am not in touch with. So many things I depend on that I never see, pray I never see' (Nichol, 1988: 51). Nichol articulates the virtually erotic trust that the body inspires as it performs its inevitable and invisible work within: 'this is the real organ music, the harmony of these spheres, the way the different organs play together, work, at that level beyond consciousness of which all consciousness is composed, the real unconscious, the unseen' (Nichol, 1988: 5–52). Mysterious and yet utterly compelling for our having to rely on the cooperation of the components we billet, the signifiers for the organs are not the same as 'the collected workings I think of as me' (Nichol, 1988: 52). These invisible 'parts' are connected to an interiority of hope. Silently they perform important roles, but are best kept anonymous, mysterious. Nichol notes, 'If you're unlucky you get to meet them. If you're lucky you never get to meet them at all, they just nestle there, inside your body, monitoring, processing, producing, while you go about your life, oblivious' (1988: 51). The intimacy of 'meeting' the parts of the body that one shudders at is another reflection of the extent to which the body requires its own privacy to function. If the organs of the body are over-scrutinized, they articulate an incompleteness that decries the body as a whole. The surprises of the body are the synecdoche to Canada's regions. This may be a Canadian malaise: we keep dissecting the nation in an effort to understand it, and so we do damage to the perfectly functioning organs. Leave them alone, no incisions, no X-rays, no annual checkups. Just blind trust.

****

My scars are more subtle than plentiful:
Some cross-hatchings on my knees from pitching into gravel when I was learning to ride a bike;
my smallpox vaccination;
an inverted Y on my left thumb from an aggressive paring knife;
the half moon on my neck from a small surgery.
The invisible scars are more visible, longer lasting.

****

And yes, the bawdy Canadian comprises what we bawdy Canadians can't see, the view from without, how we are regarded by the rest of the world, those others who serve as mirrors. Or who casually observe what we need mirrors to see. 'Like your back. Every stranger on the street has had the chance to look at it but you only know it thru mirrors, photographs that other people take of you' (Nichol, 1988: 53). The broad back of Canada: you make a better door than window, we used to say to people who were in the way, meaning we wanted them to move. But Canada can't move. It is iced in, held by the Atlantic and the Pacific and the Arctic oceans, keeps trying to peer around itself, see if it can catch a glimpse of what it looks like from behind. Eager for a camera to catch it off-guard, walking down the street all jaunty and anticipatory. Canada is the invisible nation, so big that it can't be seen, and certainly can't be read. Still searching for a way to draw itself, achieve the self-portrait that captures its essence.

In his meditation on masturbation, 'Mirror', Kroetsch declares the mirror as accomplice to the crazy impossibility of naming the double.

It was the improvements in mirrors that improved
the portraits of self. Titian as an old man.
Rembrandt over and over. Schiele masturbating. (2010: 20)

We are desperate to register our own desire, are compelled to watch ourselves in the mirror to ensure that we are not a mirage, that one movement matches another. But in Canada, our bawdies refuse to imitate themselves exactly and the reflection is always making a small gesture different from the original-although we are confused about that image, never sure which is the original.

How would you paint your image while dying?
How would you teach others to copy your self-portrait?
How would you paint your image while wacking off?

The glass turns your right hand into your left.
You will be judged nevertheless. (Kroetsch, 2010: 20)

And doubtless found wanton. There's no point covering the mirrors in rooms where the writer writes. And bareness has nothing to do with that particular image.

****

I'm distracted by the Rembrandt reference in Kroetsch's poem.
The Dutch painter with his determined repetitiveness,
trying to change his looks by painting self-portrait after self-portrait.
He becomes more and more frightened as he grows older,
the mirror no kinder than time.
But he is determined to turn himself into Amsterdam;
he teaches a nation to record its own golden age.
Rembrandt's eyes do not align perfectly.
Experts have used those portraits to diagnose him
with stereo blindness, or divergent strabismus,
a disability that actually advantaged the painter because it enabled
him to translate a three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional canvas.
(Or perhaps he gave that slight asymmetry to the characters
in his portraits as a subterfuge.)
So does the body align itself with fate,
however much we despair of its imperfection.
Fallen arches lead to long sessions in a library;
Chickenpox leaves random coins of scar.

****

Ultimately, it is the body that decrees the writer. The 'Workman hips', bpNichol claims, turned him into a writer. As a boy in Grade 4, he tried to jump across a ditch full of icy slush, and landed

> like some bad imitation of a ballet dancer, struck, my left leg burying itself in that slush right up to my hip, stuck, my right leg floating on the top. My hips kept me afloat [...]. The fireman said that that ditch was so deep and the sludge so like quicksand I would've drowned if it hadn't been for the strange position of my legs and hips. And the cold I caught from being stuck in the ditch turned into bronchitis and they kept me home from school for over two weeks and during that time I wrote my first novel, *The Sailor from Mars,* all 26 chapters written by hand in a school copy book. (1988: 39–40)

The body of Canada invents the scribes of the bodies of Canada, frostbite and bronchitis, chilblains and snow blindness,

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all an erotic of nature in concert with the body that learns to survive its accidents. 'Whenever people ask me "how did you become a writer", I always tend to say "I just fell into it"' (Nichol, 1988: 40). Or ran toward it, as fast as possible.

****

I envy long-distance runners,
the triathloners who can persuade their bodies to do more than anybody can.
They claim that it's all about oxygen uptake, whatever that means.
Another example of an element so big it can't be seen, atmospheric.
Endurance is a stoic fatigue,
the bawdy of exhaustion another conversation entirely.
Intensity is replete with strength, amplitude, magnitude.
The largess of a body.
More like the body makes accommodations for its location,
then sets out to fit that goal.
Get me from point A to point B.
And make it snappy.

****

Dinggedict or not, the body lives within us as we live within the body and the marks it displays as witness to character. This is a reciprocal gesture, and so we pore over its pores, its infinitesimal renewals and negotiations with itself, acts that we are bystander to and yet curiously contaminated by. We feel the need to confess and yet cannot confess that which we do not know, our bodies revealing us in ways that we cannot access, and yet, try to surprise with the various tools at hand, the x-ray or the blood pressure cuff, the paper cut that proves our blood is still red. 'We cherish our scars for their boasting rights' (Kroetsch, 2010: 30), our bodies revealing us in ways that we cannot suppress. Scars signal a body's past, bawdy or not, earned *in extremis* sufficient to leave a lasting mark. Vision provides its own fragmented version, but the best bawdy of body locates itself as touch, the body touching itself as if to ascertain existence or reassure itself of its own corporeality. 'Why do we so often touch our own faces?' asks Kroetsch's persona of himself, his many faces preparing to meet the faces that they meet.

Psychologists have lots of theories. I figure
Our fingers are checking for damage. (Kroetsch, 200: 30)

Or pleasure. Nichol enumerates the fingers holding, playing, writing, fingering. 'Early on he learned the fingers gave you pleasure. You could feed yourself, play with yourself, finger things out, as you had to' (1988: 35). Make those fingers do what digits are required to do, the integers of bawdy, intent on reaching for what they want, snaring what they need.

And then one day he realized that of course he was always staring at his hand when he wrote, was always watching the pen as it moved along, gripped by his fingers, his fingers floating there in front of his eyes just above the words, above that single white sheet, just above these words i'm writing now. (Nichol, 1988: 36)

The *dinggedict* is intent on its reading, being read in the writing, caught in the act of writing down its writing down, and even caught in the bawdy act of enjoying itself.

A kiss, that too is a kind of scar; we are certain
the world can read our rejoicing. (Kroetsch, 2010: 30)

The risk of pleasure is that it will leave a mark, a clue, a trace, ambivalent, private or shared.

And then there are the body's remnants and fluids, dead cells and metabolic excretions, gaseous and extra-cellular, the work of maintaining homeostasis. A cleansing going on within and without, and the leftovers soiling our apparel. Robert Kroetsch's 'Laundering the Poem' in *Too Bad* picks up on the desirable erasures of cleanliness and writing, with a gesture toward laundry's own incipient bawdiness.

I wrote the idea on a serviette;
I put the serviette in my shirt pocket;
I put the shirt and the serviette,

in the washing machine [...] (2010: 69)

Of course, the words are erased by the laundering, as is the persona's 'memory of the idea/I had put on the serviette

and into the pocket' (69). But in a last ditch effort to rescue his own lost poem, he claims, 'I just want the censors to know. At last, I have written a clean poem' (69). The 'lost' poem is an erasure of dirt, the persona at last shriven, the bawdy undone by the miracle of soap and water, a censorship of the body's effluent and aging, stains and sweat. Laundry is an occasion for jocularity, the task that makes us claim blamelessness.

****

Beep's laundry.
I had to drive home from the writing retreat,
an hour and a half in the car to check my mail and water my tomatoes.
That's a short distance in Canada, a mere errand.

I was at the retreat with Fred Wah and bpNichol.

I asked Fred Wah if he needed anything from Calgary.
No, he had his owner's manual with him, he said,
enough pictograms to last, and a few rooftops on the side.
I asked Beep if he wanted anything. That's what we called him: Beep.
He blushed.
I couldn't read his mind,
thought he was thinking bawdy beep thoughts,
but he asked me if I could meet him outside.

Beep was the kind of man you'd agree to meet anywhere.
We stepped out the door onto a green lawn.
'I'd never ask this usually', he said,
'but I didn't bring enough clothes along and I need to do some laundry'.

I looked at him and it dawned on me.
'You want me to do some laundry for you?'
He nodded shyly. 'If it wouldn't ruin your reputation'.
I fell over laughing.
The lawn was crowded with dandelions.
It was that time of year.
Dandelions are the most cosmopolitan of trans-plants, part of our national [mosaic.
I took Beep's bag of t-shirts and rather saggy briefs home
and threw them in the washer
while I inspected and then watered my garden.
I knew it was an unlikely story, my doing Beep's laundry.
I'd keep it quiet.

When they were clean and dry I folded his clothes
neatly into squares, and drove the hour and a half
back, windows wide open, speeding and singing
along to Leonard Cohen's *I'm Your Man*.

I handed over the bag of laundry without contraband, and beep
took it and thanked me, a little breathlessly, I thought
for a man of such aplomb.
I wanted to tell him that in Canadian French, briefs are called
bobettes, but that seemed too personal, too pompously national a reference
and so I left the annotation undersaid.

I've been known for my obsession with laundry ever since.
If you want a laundress, I'm your woman. That would be
synecdoche more than metonymy. And in truth,
dirty laundry is redundant.

****

'Too bad!' declaims the persona behind the lost virility of Robert Kroetsch's sketches, 'too bad' that the body fails us, refuses to do what it's told, becomes grouchy and recalcitrant, discontinues its bawdy adventures. 'Argue against the charms of immortal life' (Kroetsch, 2010: 96) we may, because the body does choose to deceive itself, to imagine that it will escape death by virtue of its engagement with the oldest of bawds, life itself, even knowing that the larger the life, the harder it falls. bpNichol dedicates the section entitled 'The Lungs: A Draft' in *Selected Organs* to Robert Kroetsch. Once a guest at Kroetsch's home, he describes waking early and getting up to read when Kroetsch appeared at the top of the stairs and 'came down the stairs [. . .] muttering to himself, "life, the great tyrant that makes you go on breathing". And I thought about breathing. I thought about life. I thought about those great tyrants the lungs, about the lung poems I've tried to perfect in various ways. [...] I thought "life's about going the lung distance"' (Nichol, 1988: 26). No pun intended.

Even the bawdy body grows old, gets tired of the risk. Kroetsch depicts death as a cartoon character, comical rather than frightening. In 'Comic Book' he writes,

Death is a small intruder. He is painted red.
Yes, he is male. Look at the extended scrotum
(it's the heat), balls the size of avocados.

He has webbed feet (evolution gone haywire),
six fingers on each hand, but no thumbs.
The poet bpNichol might call him St. Ark. (2010: 6)

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This final observation, that Nichol would know what to name the bawdy figure of death as it appears in a comic book, depicts finally the ekphrasis of the nation's fascination with its own body. Only a bawdy saint can reflect how our Canadian salvation and damnation are figments inspiring laughter and disgust at this nation's large and indefinable corpus. We scrutinize our parts in an effort to understand the whole. We can't figure the geography out. We stumble through love and lust and life, enumerating the parts that we recognize. At least they will explain a fraction of the whole, a fragment of the entire. We settle for a *dinggedict.* At least that will explain the unexplainable. At least, it will etch a pictograph on the enormous map of Canada.

****

What is inside the body, hiding in its dark space?
I have an organ I call grief.
It could be vestigial like my appendix, which I still have,
or tonsils which are not vestigial, but which I still have,
or glandular like a thyroid.
He's thyroidal, they say, about someone with protuberant eyes,
as if the thyroid were pushing from within, determined to get noticed.

But this grief gland is not tubular or alveolar,
not endocrine but serous.
It waters itself with waiting, with the memory of waiting,
desire for its own extinction.

Grief plays the same game as desire; it yearns to be extinguished.
It pays regular visits to my father's hope, my mother's determined
eloquence, and then comes back to me, as if to trick the passage of time.
I struggle to imagine my parents as bawdy, but they
were, the two who made me, lurking
inside my body, where they play together, now.
My father cultivates the back quarter,
the land that had a view of Dried Meat Lake. My mother has brought
my father lunch and he climbs down from the tractor.
They sit in the shade of the big rear wheel and eat Gouda
sandwiches unwrapped from wax paper, apples and a jar of tea.

That was their form of foreplay, a promise
of the slow long evenings that followed June.

I didn't understand that they were Canada in
love, having left the mangled body of the old country in
order to make a new body here.

I am that body.
Here.

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BODIES MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL:
Daphne Marlatt's Ghost-Writing and Transnationalism in *Taken*

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> *To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize the 'way it really was.' [...] It means to seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.*
> *Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'*

From the early 1980s, West Coast writer Daphne Marlatt has been a leading practitioner of *écriture au féminin*, or writing in the feminine, in English Canada. [1] In her essay 'Musing with Mothertongue', published in the first issue of the feminist experimental journal *TESSERA*, which she co-founded and co-edited from 1984 to 1992, she rethinks a woman writer's relationship to language, echoing Hélène Cixous's call 'for a language that returns us to the body, a woman's body and the largely unverbalized, presyntactic, postlexical field

1. A variant of *écriture féminine* (the term associated with Hélène Cixous, first used by her in 'Sorties' in *The Newly Born Woman*), *écriture au féminin*, or writing in the feminine, has been practiced by Québec writers Nicole Brossard, Louky Bersianik, and Madelaine Gagnon, and then adopted and transformed by English Canadian writers Gail Scott, Daphne Marlatt, and Lola Lemire Tostevin among others. *Écriture au féminin* has been influenced by French poststructuralist and feminist theory, but also 'localized' in the North American context through the influence of the women's movements in the U.S. and Canada, as well as the specifically Canadian inflections such as the legacy of the British Empire and Québec society's traditional Catholicism. Mutual influences and collaborations between Anglophone and Francophone feminists have been channeled through the journal TESSERA, which Marlatt helped to establish together with Barbara Godard, Kathy Mezei, and Gail Scott.

it knows' (Marlatt, 1998: 13). In dialogue with Nicole Brossard, Monique Wittig, and Julia Kristeva, who all in different ways view the female body as positioned outside of the patriarchal social contract and symbolic representation, Marlatt describes women's experiences of their bodies as erased from writing, as 'the unsaid, the yet-to-be-spoken, even the unspeakable' of a patriarchal language (1998: 15).

However, from her unique location as a white lesbian feminist writer whose imagination has been shaped by the geography of the Empire, including her Penang childhood in colonial Malaysia, her family's nostalgia for Britain, and her immigration to Canada at the age of nine, she expands the meaning of women's liminality so as to include other forms of marginalization that return as 'ghosts' to haunt hegemonic discourses through which they have been oppressed and repressed. At the same time, she signals that any 'return to the body' at this historical moment must recognize the political meaning of this body's whiteness. In my discussion of Marlatt's 1996 novel *Taken*, I argue that by attending to the hauntings of these material and immaterial liminal bodies in the spaces of representation, she extends the practice of Canadian *écriture au féminin* and feminist discourse beyond the framework of gender and nation, developing a transnational feminist critique that explores the linkages and connections among nations, heteropatriarchies, colonialisms, and militarisms.[2] While *Taken* continues Marlatt's attempt to politicize the interconnectedness of language, body, place, and memory that she initiated in her long poem 'Month of Hungry Ghosts',[3] the novel further complicates

2. I am using here the concept of transnational feminism as elaborated by Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, who insist that the regional and the local must be seen as permeated by national and global political and economic power. The term 'transnational' for them 'signals attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits of culture and capital' (2002: 73) in the globalized world that makes nation-based models no longer sufficient for explaining people's identities and social relations.

3. It first appeared under the title 'In the Month of Hungry Ghosts' in *The Capilano Review* in 1979, and was subsequently included in *Ghost Works*, published in 1993. Like in *Taken*, in the 'Month of Hungry Ghosts'

her struggle to understand the effects of (post)colonial experience, by contemplating it against other 'moments of danger', historical and contemporary, such as the Asia-Pacific War episode of World War II and the Gulf War of 1991. As a result, she produces a strong indictment of masculinist power and militarist domination, of patriarchal systems that impose inequalities and separations in every sphere of life.

For Marlatt, writing is all about embodiment and connectedness, from the body of language in which we are all embedded, to the writing subject's historical body as the terrain of subjectivity and memory, the body of writing, and the reader's body engaging with the text. Following Brossard's and Wittig's formulations, she embraces the idea that the body is the fundamental level where 'sense' originates and that women, lesbians, and other subjects of difference must take their bodies as 'the literal basis for our writing' (1998: 40). According to Marlatt, the scene of writing is always physically grounded, connected to the real and metaphorical bodies 'present at the moment of writing' (1998: 109), bodies that traditional writing and critical practice renders invisible. She dismisses 'the notion of the solitary i in a room writing' because it 'ignores the interplay of all that affects the writing' (109), from the writing room, a view from the window, the animals and objects present, and the invisible addressee, to the entire network of socio-economic and global political relations that situate the writing subject in the contemporary world. The body as a signifier attaches itself also to Marlatt's understanding of intertextuality as the presence of other invisible 'bodies of work' that are dialogically invoked in the text 'as it responds to them' (1998: 111). This process involves intratextual references to her own earlier work.

Marlatt relies on autobiographical experiences derived from her troubled relationship with her mother and revisits Penang after her mother's death in an effort to 'rip out of myself all the colonialisms, the taint of colonial sets of mind' (1993: 92). Already in this early text she offers a sustained critique of white privilege, playing on the semantic resonances of the phrase 'hungry ghosts' (as the word 'ghosts' in Chinese, which is one of the languages spoken in Malaysia, also means white people).

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In the rhetorical play of the body in Marlatt's feminist poetics and politics of writing, we can recognize an implicit critique of Western hegemonic narratives of self as bounded, rational, individualistic, a product of multiple demarcations and denials of relationality. She adopts a number of strategies to decenter the primacy and singularity of this disembodied humanist subject, distancing herself from the dominant tradition of writing as an act of singular consciousness. Instead, she foregrounds writing as reading and listening, the modes of interrelatedness and exchange in which the boundaries of the self are dissolved. She symbolically abdicates the ego, primarily through the rejection of 'the phallic signifier', by dropping the upper case in the pronoun 'I' (Marlatt, 1998: 35).[4] Moreover, she embraces the principles of feminist narratology, recognizing narrative linearity, teleology, and logic as inhospitable to female subjectivity. Consequently, *Taken* exemplifies what Marlatt calls 'a narrative in the feminine' (1998: 61), where the unitary writing subject is diffused into multiple pronouns of discourse: 'i', 'she', and 'you', sometimes coalescing into 'we' ('we' of the lesbian couple, or 'us versus them' of the white family and its colonial servants). It is a loosely-structured, multi-layered text, with several intersecting narrative planes, including a contemporary one, written in the first person 'i', and historical ones, taking place some fifty years back, written in the third- and second-person ('she' and 'you'). These non-linear, lateral narratives focus on two sets of characters: the first-person narrator Suzanne, who is Marlatt's narrative persona, and her American lover Lori on the one hand, and Suzanne's parents Esme and Charles on the other hand. Their stories unfold against the background of the First Gulf War in Iraq and World War II in the Pacific respectively. Heavily relying on flashbacks

4. Marlatt's reflection on the use of the personal pronoun 'i' is inspired by Monique Wittig's rejection of '*je*' as unmarked by gender and therefore pretending to be universal, that is, male. Witting splits it into '*j/e*', to dramatize not only this split in the speaking subject who is female, but her exclusion as a lesbian' (Marlatt, 1998: 40). For Marlatt, 'the complex i (fem.)' is a gendered pronoun, 'neither capitalized nor capitalizing on the other' (1998: 137).

and interspersed with epistolary fragments, they are punctuated by a captivity narrative using the anaphoric 'you', which describes the fate of white colonial women, like Esme's friend Peggy, in a Japanese internment camp.[5] Such a discontinuous narrative structure, full of mirroring, echoes, and refractions, corresponds to the novel's concern with multiple separations —those between mothers and daughters, between lovers, as well as racialized colonial separations and the ones caused by war and death.

As a 'semi-autobiographical' novel (Marlatt, 1998: 215), *Taken* confounds generic boundaries between autobiography and fiction and contests the confinements of writing and life, of truth, artifice, and memory. In 'Self-Representation and Fictionalysis', Marlatt's important statement from 1990 regarding her theory and practice of life writing, she discusses the ontological and ethical difference of autobiography as *écriture au féminin*, looking at the questions of what it is and what it does. She introduces the notion of 'fictionalysis', defined as 'a self-analysis that plays fictively with the primary images of one's life, a fiction that uncovers analytically that territory where fact and fiction coincide' (Marlatt, 1998: 124). Fictionalysis differs from male-authored canonical autobiography in that instead of 'following a singular lifeline, a singular i [...] it drops out of narrative as heroic climax and opts for narrative as the relation of context, of what surrounds us' (Marlatt, 1998: 127). *Taken* illustrates that one's life doesn't comprise only 'facts' but also 'the phantom limb' of memory as well as what Marlatt calls 'the imaginary', which is a residue of the subject's desires, dreams, imagination, and projections. The reality of the phantom limb is what 'we cut off from us by cognitive amputation, [what] comes back to haunt us' (1996: 113). Like the imaginary, it is linked to the reality of the body, of its pleasure and pain,

5. Marlatt used Lavinia Warrner and John Sandilands's *Women Beyond the Wire* (1982) and Agnes Newton Keith's *Three Came Home* (1947) as sources for her accounts of imprisonment, explaining her intention to address 'the women of these camps in the second person [...] But i'm writing to different women of differing ages through the all-encompassing "you" which is sometimes singular & sometimes plural' (1998: 151).

of hands remembering, of 'a flash, flush of sensation' through the flesh (1996: 43), of 'what gets passed along in body tissue, without words' (1996: 25). For Suzanne, the author's persona, to remember involves 're-listening [...] a puzzling out of intuitions, senses, glimpses of a larger context' (Marlatt, 1996: 42). She self-reflexively questions the elusive borderline between memory and invention, combining anamnesis and imagination to produce a 'strange composition of fiction and memory so interlaced it is difficult to tell the difference' (1996: 30). At the same time, as she reaches out to understand her dead mother and her absent lover, she also confronts the ethical prerogatives of life writing as inseparable from the question 'How do you represent others?' that Marlatt asks in her essay (1998: 13). According to Marlatt, women's analysis of their lives inevitably leads to 'a beginning realization of the whole cloth of ourselves in connection with so many others' (1998: 15). Her ethics of self-representation approximates what Gayatri Spivak calls 'symptomatic reading', which is related to Spivak's ethical concept of translation as 'a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self (1993: 179). Applied to life writing, 'symptomatic reading' enables a rewriting of self through other and a complex foregrounding of the sexual, racial, and cultural specificity of bodies. Against the bias of inherited forms of language and representation, which Marlatt associates with the 'white, heterosexual, middle-class, monological, probably Christian and usually male' subject (1998: l26), she redefines autobiographical *écriture au féminin* as a political and interactive process:

> Autobiography has come to be called "life–writing" which i take to mean writing for your life and as such it suggests the way in which the many small real-other-i-zations can bring the unwritten, unrecognized, ahistoric ground of a life into being as a recognizable power or agency. (1998: 127)

As the staging of those 'real-other-i-zations' in *Taken* shows, the use of imagination is crucial to implementing the imperative of relationality, as part of the process of rethinking our attitudes to alterity. Imagination is indispensable not only to flesh out 'the bare bones of facts' (Marlatt, 1998: 125)

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and make hidden possibilities real, but also to be able to exercise empathy and reach out for connection. Marlatt's practice of fictionalysis contributes to feminist narratology by providing a fictional vehicle to bring out the neglected reality that mainstream representation classifies as the 'taboo' of a lesbian relationship, the 'trivial' aspects of domesticity, the 'lesser' predicament of women behind the front lines, the 'unspeakable' truth of white women's collusion with colonial racism, or the 'irrelevant' ecological or anti-militarist conscience.[6] The innovative and experimental character of this type of writing lies not only in its constant challenging of boundaries, but also in a total re-visioning of life writing as an ethical project of 'self writing life' rather than 'the life of a unified self' (Marlatt, 1998: 125). In *Taken*, autobiographical anamnesis works beyond its surface meaning of recalling to mind individual and collective memories, becoming also, in its clinical sense, a record of particular patriarchal dis-eases.

In Marlatt's novel, the possibility of an ethical model of life writing is embodied by the narrator's reinvention of her mother's subjectivity in fiction. As the writer's persona, Suzanne actually 'mothers' her mother into being, in a double sense of giving a fictional 'birth' to 'Esme' as a character and focalizer of her own story, and showing her as a daughter, in relation to the narrator's grandparents, Aylene and Viktor. As in Marlatt's earlier writing, the mother is a haunting presence, holding a rhetorical power of anacoluthon over the texts written by the daughter.[7] In fact, there is an almost metaphysical continu-

6. In this respect, Maratt's theory of fictionalysis has been influenced by Nicole Brossard's 'fiction theory', which deconstructs the relationship between what is considered 'fiction' and 'reality' in a male-dominated framework of representation. Brossard reverses the established hierarchies and shows that the realities of women's experiences of their bodies, such as maternity, rape, prostitution, chronic fatigue, or abuse, must be articulated against the masculinist 'fictions' of capitalism, militarism, and pornography (Brossard, 1988: 75).

7. Anacoluthon is a rhetorical figure that involves an abrupt change from one syntactic sequence to another (like a transition from mother to daughter), and therefore creates the effect of the unfinished, latent meaning haunting the sentence.

ity of images between the two Penang narratives, as if *Taken* were haunted by 'Month of Hungry Ghosts'. The 'eclipsed' mother of 'Month of Hungry Ghosts', whose presence is 'interlinear', that is, felt in the blank spaces of the text, or assuming the shape of memory, as in the sequence 'memory, *memor*, mindful mer—mer—os' (Marlatt, 1993: 55), partially materializes as a moth in the last scene of the narrative, leaving a one-syllable trace of her name (the moth in 'mother').[8] In *Taken*, the moth returns in a line quoted from Shelley—'The desire of the moth for the star'—joining back 'moth' to 'moth-her', mother, Esme: 'She the dull brown moth? No, silver-winged and flecked with sorrow' (1998: 97). That the moth, a night butterfly which in Greek means *psyche* and is thus an analogue for the human soul, should appear in both 'Month of Hungry Ghosts' and *Taken* (just like butterflies that often used to adorn tombstones) is suggestive of writing as a place of return, of the dead, of 'you/I' or ghost selves—'those visitants from previous and other ways of being' (Marlatt, 1993, viii). In fact, 'ghost-writing' is the term Marlatt chooses to define her autobiographical *écriture au féminin* in *Ghost Works*. In her reading of another 'mother-text' written by Marlatt, *How Hug a Stone* (1983), also collected in *Ghost Works*, Lianne Moyes points out that 'ghost-writing' is Marlatt's equivalent of Derrida's *différance*, referring to it as 'the shadow-presence of meanings that will not let [any] pair settle into a tidy opposition' (Moyes, 1991: 209).[9] Marlatt replaces the binary economy of language that insists on the difference between sense and nonsense,

8. At the end of 'Month of Hungry Ghosts', in a conversation with her sister, Marlatt's persona uses the female pronouns 'she' and 'her' in a way that deliberately blurs the difference between their mother and the moth (1993: 125). Barbara Godard detects in Marlatt's moth a reference to Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, suggesting an instance of postcolonial intertextual play (1985: 493). Interestingly, Virginia Woolf's *Waves* was originally to be called *The Moth*.

9. In Derrida's classic formulation, 'every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences' (1982: 11). This definition suggests that every word, through difference and deferral, is haunted by excess of signification, by 'ghosts' of other meanings.

and between self and other, with the 'both/and vision' (1998: 133). In an interview, she comments:

> The either/or seems to be actually embedded in the definitional activity of language. As a poet, and [...] a feminist writer, I am mostly having to resist that, to work against it. The question is, how to get to a multivalency of meaning based on equivalency without losing meaning altogether? (Carr, 1991: 104)

Her postmodern stance is consistent with her ideological resistance to the monological voice that suppresses multiplicity and plurality of life and language. It is also related to her fascination with the endless productivity of language and her use of 'word chains' as 'touch points, touch words in the "secret narrative" of the compositional process' (Marlatt, 1998: 55). Working through the process of association that activates multiple meanings can be seen as part of an attack on a patriarchal language, with its repression of the effects of heterogeneity that is forced into a corset of binary oppositions.

The first two words of *Taken* already announce this 'ghostly' excess of signification that will haunt the entire text: 'GHOST LEAVES', hesitating between noun-adjective and noun-verb collocations. The opening pun, as well as Marlatt's dedication to her late parents and the epigraph from Phyllis Webb, intimates that this writing (or all writing as 'already written') is bound up with mourning and presents itself as a ritual of remembering the dead, which is the sentiment also articulated later by the narrator:

> Who do i burn incense for? Each descent into memory (poling through murky waters) stirs up the dead. Stirs their words to the surface where they blow like ashes suddenly wind-struck. The words i've heard, the phrases i seem to remember, part of a background that shaped me, take on a glow of meaning i never sensed. (Marlatt, 1996: 29–30)

Marlatt's obsession with history as both personal and communal experience, metaphorized as ghost-writing that performs both her mother's 'return' as Esme and the 'haunting' of colonial history in the space of Canadian

fiction, connects individual and collective stories of suffering and separation through the idea that 'pain and grief live on, even disembodied' (1996: 31). The word 'ghost' takes on a new meaning here, evoking whiteness as a category through which Esme's identity is constructed in the colony as *memsahib*, a European woman. Local ghost stories, told among white colonials, hark back to the repressed 'fascination with what was other, what preceded them, what kind of power [it was] that could evade their rational control' (1996: 30). In another context, the presence of ghosts also conveys a sense of hunger for 'the life unlived, the knot that draws desire back, something unresolved and ongoing' (1996: 24–5). All those displaced people afflicted with nostalgia are ghosts 'that occupy a place but not in the flesh' (1996: 7). Suzanne's 'phantom limb' of her childhood memories is like a ghost that 'goes on living' (1996: 120). Finally, writing turns 'real' people into ghosts of themselves, into characters such as Lori or Peggy, 'who can't leave the scene of their interrupted loves and intentions' (1996: 38). Another example of a word that sets off a chain of textual play is the title itself. 'Taken" has sexual connotations, suggesting passive femininity, woman's sexuality that has been 'taken from her' rather than 'given' by herself (1996: 11). Esme prays to be 'taken' with Charles, not to be left alone (1996: 12). Taken up with motherhood, she also hears 'take in the way Australians pronounce 'a pretty tyke' (1996: 84). 'Taken' means both to be taken captive, made prisoner, and to be taken with, captivated. Most important, however, 'taken' refers to 'the snapshots we take and are taken by' (1996: 130), thus foregrounding the importance of photographs in the novel.

Photographs are absolutely central to Marlatt's conjuring of the ghosts of history, as well as to her narrative technique and to her preoccupation with framing and reframing of gender, race, and sexuality, so as to bring the liminal to the foreground. Her attraction to the photographic medium goes back to her collaboration with the photographer Robert Minden, first on a documentary history and then on a collection of poems and images of the Japanese Canadian fishing village in her *Ste-*

veston publications (Egan 2005). It was also evident in the first edition of 'In the Month of Hungry Ghosts', where pictures from the family album were reproduced so as to disrupt the unity and continuity of the text. The fascination that photographs hold for a writer may be explained by Susan Sontag's theory of the 'dual powers of photography' that make it a literalized version of literature's unattainable ideal of representation, which is 'both objective record and personal testimony, both faithful copy or transcription of an actual moment of reality and an interpretation of that reality' (2003: 26). In Marlatt's case, the more immediate appeal of photography seems to lie in its quick shifts of focus, matching her use of the narrative technique of 'montage, juxtaposition, superimposing disparate and specific images from several times and places' (Marlatt, 1998: 24). Reaffirming both the presence and absence of bodies and places captured in them, photographs are ghostly and have a haunting quality to them.[10] Sontag views photography as an elegiac art, a twilight art: 'All photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability' (1977: 15). Marlatt's narrator Suzanne ponders the transience of experience that photographs paradoxically both expose and attempt to arrest: 'What is this urge to fix an image so it won't fade over time? Positives preserved in all their purity as if to evidence what we actually experience—quicksilver, transient' (1996: 95). Photographs function as basic units of memory, its 'freeze-frames' (Sontag, 2003: 22). They 'lay down routes of reference, and serve as totems of causes', crystallizing sentiments around them; they 'help construct—and revise—our sense of a more distant past, with the posthumous [presence]' (Sontag, 2003: 85). Although there are no 'real' pictures in *Taken*, numerous photographs are referenced and described on the pages of the novel. These family snap shots construct moments from the past around which memories cluster, providing points of entry into the past and opening it to new reading and interpretation. By virtue of

10. As Sontag says, "Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else; they haunt us' (2003: 89).

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their very absence, these 'told' photographs are less related to memory than to imagination. The pictures give Suzanne imaginary access to history, to the photographed reality she has never known. To quote Susan Sontag again, 'The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: "There is the surface. Now think—or rather feel, intuit—what is beyond, what the reality must be like if it looks this way"' (1977: 23). Indeed, when Suzanne is unable to recall the events from the past, she spins a story around an image that helps to trigger her imagination.

It is precisely the function of the writer's imagination to undo the freeze-frame. Marlatt's narrative method in *Taken* is an attempt at undoing the frozen frame of photographic (mimetic) representation by infusing 'life' into photographic images, inserting them into the movement of textuality. At the same time, she uses photos and the concept of photography to problematize representation as framing. In fact, (un)framing is one of the themes she has been preoccupied with from her first book, the long poem *Frames of a Story* (Rae, 2008). Photographs are not 'simply a transparency of something that happened' (Sontag, 2003: 46); they involve active selection and framing since to photograph is to manipulate what to include and what to exclude. Family 'snaps' and cine films that we view through the narrator's eyes in *Taken* reveal themselves as powerful tools for constructing gender through repeated performances of 'takes' on white femininity, masculinity, and the heteronormative family. They create the illusion of family continuity and gender coherence through the iteration of reproducible images and patterns that become intelligible as normative scripts, so in the end photos instruct us what we need to remember. They are a quick way of memorializing gender and familial scripts. In her essay 'Self-Representation and Fictionalysis', Marlatt makes an explicit connection between photography and writing, deconstructing the so-called 'fact' as

> 'the (f)stop of act' as Annie puts it in Ana Historic, isolating fact like the still photo as a moment frozen out of context, that context which goes on shifting, acting, changing after the f-stop has closed its recording

eye. The fact a still frame. The self framed she suspects, caught in the ice of representation. (1998: 122)

The imposition of an arbitrary freeze-frame can be seen as a form of epistemic violence as it distorts complex and mobile subjectivities and limits itself to representing only certain 'acts' from multiple and diverse narratives of human lives. In particular, by bracketing off the 'f', Marlatt hints at the bracketed female, reaffirming the claims of *écriture au féminin* regarding women's exclusion from writing and representation, the problem of their objectification, and the need to bring the feminine, as well as other excluded marginalities, the lesbian and the colonial other, back into the picture. Talking about deconstruction of gender in Marlatt's writing, Caroline Rosenthal points out that the recording eye, the camera lens, is the patriarchal gaze that constructs 'a feminine act' as stereotypical domestic, docile, and passive femininity, a foil to 'heroic and active' masculinity (2003: 81). As a specific genre, the family photo album that appears in *Taken* can offer insights into modern Western technologies of domesticity and motherhood, into disciplining male and female bodies into appropriate gender roles: he in an army uniform; their wedding photo; she pregnant; then as a young mother 'leaning against a pillar the baby is perched on' (1996: 84), and so on. In her portrait of Esme, which is an exercise in empathy, Suzanne is trying to understand gender, race, and class constraints and adjustments that have turned an ambitious and rebellious girl into a young colonial wife who gradually 'disappears' into domesticity. Esme's limited choices are compounded by her colonial class privilege preventing her from pursuing a career in nursing. As Suzanne ponders the pictures from her parents' 'Melbourne days', taken soon after she was born, she finds images of modern motherhood inspired by the post-war Western 'culture of experts', such as Dr. Spock, who replaced 'excessive contact' between mother and infant with bottle feeding and instilled in women a lot of insecurities through obsession with hygiene and insistence on 'keeping a regular regimen'; in these pictures, she sees her parents becoming 'contemporary, fluent in the idiom of adverts, news

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photos, film images that surrounded them' (1996: 84–5). Technological rationalization is introduced even into the field of housework: 'Pedometers attached to the heels of British housewives revealed that they walked five miles in an average day' (1996: 94). Suzanne draws a vision of rigid gender binarism, casting constructions of Esme as a house-bound 'dutiful wife' (1996: 20) against images of Charles' absent, duty-bound, heroic masculinity.

However, the presence of the lesbian plot in the novel 'undercuts binary notions of femininity and masculinity' (Rosenthal, 2003: 67) and challenges the frozen scripts of gender and heterosexuality. According to Rosenthal, Marlatt's highlighting of a lesbian relationship 'shows that heterosexuality is a *regulatory fiction*, which "frames" men and women into one story by ruling out more complex constructions of gender and sexual identity' (2003: 67). By showcasing the repressed female desire and scenes of lesbian lovemaking, she destabilizes the heterosexual gender matrix. The lesbian narrative in the feminine differs from the male-scripted conventional narrative, underwritten by compulsory heterosexuality, in that it narrates the selfhood that is not heroic but 'multi-faceted', the one that 'stands in relation to all that composes it [and] undoes oppositions in a multivalent desire for relationship, whether with women or men, children, cats, trees [...]' (Marlatt, 1998: 65–66). Yet, Marlatt's lesbian narrator recognizes the grip of compulsory heterosexuality and the pressure of normative scripts of marriage and family life on lesbian couples. Consequently, Lori is hiding a lesbian relationship from her demanding mother, realizing that she has betrayed her mother's expectations by breaking 'the familial ties we each were meant to perpetuate' (1996: 77). Marlatt contemplates how the daughter's sexuality complicates the relationship between mother and daughter and how the mother, identified with conventional heteronormative scripts, haunts lesbian relationships: 'As daughters of our mothers, and particularly as lesbian daughters of our mothers, we stand in a curious relation to that script because we were raised with it [...]. [Its traces] enfold me still in the culture

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at large' (1998: 66). Suzanne's musings echo this quandary: 'We carry marriage stories in our blood, our mothers' stories shadowing the ones we're trying to invent' (1996: 47). The heteronormative expectations are so deeply engrained in our representations that the lesbian narrator is aware of being implicated in them even while refusing them.

Focus on mothering and mother-daughter relationship has been an important aspect of *écriture au féminin* in its attempts to find new ethical models for rethinking relationality. Writing the mother back into the real is a form of ghost-writing bringing back those bodies that have been rendered immaterial, that do not matter in patriarchal scripts. Spanning different times and geographic spaces, from Canada, to colonial Malaysia, Australia, and the United States, *Taken* shows that what daughters inherit is a threat of the patriarchal phallic mother, visible in several parallel mother-daughter relationships involving Esme and Suzanne, Aylene and Esme, and Lori and her 'smothering' mother. In this context, Suzanne's efforts to reconnect to the mother validate the significance of the mother-child, and particularly mother-daughter relationship, as part of a search for an alternative feminist ethic. Here Marlatt's writing brings to mind the work of the contemporary feminist philosopher Bracha Ettinger, whose revisionist psychoanalytic theories can give a new lease on life to *écriture féminine* and *écriture au féminin*, through their shared pursuit of ethical models derived from the specificity of women's embodiment and the simple but culturally repressed fact of each individual's passing through the mother's body. Claiming that 'Several comes before the One', Ettinger introduces the concept of 'matrixial' relations modeled on the late prenatal relationship between the maternal body and the fetus, which envisions the possibility of 'subjectivity-as-encounter' that replaces the dominant, masculinist, individualistic view of human subjectivity as premised on separation (Ettinger, 1992: 200). Her model has wide-reaching philosophical implications for rethinking human inter-dependency in terms of 'compassionate hospitality' (Ettinger, 2006: 61). According to Ettinger, in a matrixial encounter between self and other,

‘the private subjectivity of the individual is momentarily unbounded’ as it is transformed in a psychic interweaving ‘with threads emanating from objects, images, and other subjects’ (2006: 62).[11] This conception seems to illustrate what I earlier described as Marlatt’s relational embodiment. In *Taken*, the importance of such a matrixial relation is introduced right at the beginning, through the description of a photograph showing Charles and Esme on the day she discovered that she was pregnant. Esme’s pregnant body symbolizes ‘compassionate hospitality’, expanding and making room for the other as she contemplates, ‘How the tiny being growing deep inside her doesn’t know despair. Goes on growing, pushing her waist, happily oblivious inside her flesh’ (1996: 18). In pregnancy, as in a matrixial encounter, the woman and the child become an ‘interbeing’:

> Mother and child. That nameless interbeing we began with. Anxiety pushes me out of bed to write her, reach her, bring her bodily out of the nothing, which is not nothing because she is there, leaning against me on the other side of a thin membrane that separates, so thin we communicate, but not in words. (Marlatt, 1996: 21)

In this passage there is a slippage from the membranes of the mother’s pregnant body to the page on which the narrator writes to connect to her absent mother. At the same time, the image of the ‘interbeing’ becomes a metafictional trope of textual invagination, of the text folding in onto itself. Such experimental figurations of pregnancy that articulate different modes of interdependence contrast sharply with a male perspective on pregnancy in Charles’s proprietory reac-

11. Ettinger’s philosophy of matrixial femininity is offered as a way out of the dichotomy feminine/masculine that belongs to the phallic order of the One: ‘Here, “feminine” does not design the opposite of the masculine [. . .] Feminine is to be understood, matrixially, as a differential potentiality before and beyond this [phallic] dichotomy’ (Ettinger, 2006: 68). Susan Knutson, in her feminist narratological reading of *How Hug a Stone*, recognizes what we might call a ‘matrixial relation’, where the mother is archetypal matrix: ‘While acknowledging the mother as matrix, Marlatt disrupts the default operation of binary gender by ensuring that her subjective “we”, which comes through the mother, unambiguously includes both men and women’ (Knutson, 2000: 47).

tion to Esme's photograph: 'His child in her, a living merger of their two selves' (1996: 44), which reinforce the idea of two distinct, separate subjectivities.

Moving to another level of framing, Marlatt interrogates the connections between patriarchy and imperialism in the gendered and racialized spaces of the British Empire. Suzanne's metaphor of her father as King George and her mother as 'Britannia ruling a turbulent household' (1996: 98–99) signals the collusion of home, nation, and empire. The novel reveals what the critic of British colonial history, Vron Ware, calls 'relational connectedness' in colonial constructions of white femininity through demarcations of race, gender, class, and sexuality, imposed on white colonizer women as different from white men and non-white men and women (Ware, 1992: 119). Ware also points to 'the instrumentality of white women, either active or passive, in different forms of racism' (1992: 127). Who these women were, how their identities as subjects of the British Empire, their power and authority, were constructed through 'their capacity to define those others' (Ware, 1992: 122), can only be understood with the help of a transnational perspective that moves us beyond the domestic and national borders, connecting these two spheres to a larger sphere of the Empire. Yet, perhaps because it recalls her parents' life, Marlatt's analysis of British colonial life in Malaysia, spanning two generations, aims at understanding its privileges and pretensions as well as its fears and alienations. She places Suzanne's parents against racialized colonial hierarchies, social ranking, and prejudice, by inserting the information that Esme's father, Dr. Aloyan, was a Chief M.O. in Penang before the war, 'but his wife's Anglo-Indian lilt and the family name suggested something not quite British' (1996: 22). Suzanne is trying to understand the mentality of the colonial wives of her grandmother's and mother's generations, recognizing that gender subordination complicates colonial power dynamics and that despite white women's complicity with the Empire, 'power remained in the hands of the Doctor, the Sahib, the Tuan' (1996: 108). However, Marlatt's compassionate descriptions of the alienating effects of colonialism on Esme's life, her 'hemmed-in'

existence (1996: 41), her powerlessness masked by her status as a memsahib, are always contrapuntal, always framed by this other unspoken pain and grief caused by colonial violence. So we also see Esme dismissing a sick servant; Aylene's fear of physical contact with colonial 'others' and her racism; Europeans leaving behind the non-white personnel, betraying 'their Asian business colleagues, their medical and government staff, to the enemy' (1996: 48) during the evacuation of Penang in February 1942. Showing how the gendered and racialized spaces of home and Empire are cut across by the split between the public and domestic worlds, Suzanne experiences a disjunction between her father's, as opposed to her mother's, 'version of empire' (1996: 99). Her father instructs her in the geography of Malaya, 'So she would know where she lived, what she was (always with reservations) part of' (1996: 98), and he introduces her to stamp-collecting—both activities relating to the imperial imposition of a conceptual grid onto the world. But she questions 'the inner geography of home', confusing meaning of 'his world' and 'her world' (1996: 98–99). This domestic split translates into the allegory of the Empire: 'His world' was the world that 'he fractured into names on the globe: Great Britain where King George lived, and the pinker territories of what had been her (this was confusing, why not his?) Empire: Canada with its seal fur, South Africa with its diamonds, India with its tea plantations [. . .]' (98). Family and nation are conflated in this imperial allegory. Ironically, pink on the map is the color of both white skin and gender—suggesting the imposition of whiteness onto a global space while simultaneously feminizing the colonies, enhancing their passive and submissive position in the gendered hierarchy of the imperial nation, where the King, the father of the nation, rules England, the mother country, and the colonies are 'on the fringe of the mother country's skirts' (1996: 7).

Marlatt's critique of colonial separations finds its topographic equivalent in the proliferation of islands and gulfs in the text: Australia, England, Malaysia, Vancouver Island, or the Persian Gulf function both as geographical and sym-

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bolic sites, public and private, all part of a transnational web that connects the local to the global. However, their meaning remains open to ambiguity: besides the obvious sense of isolation and divide, of being sidetracked and marooned, they hint at 'good' separations, such as a deliberate refusal to get back to the mainland/mainstream, especially if being part of 'the main thing' implicates us in 'the human struggle for dominance' (1996: 86). Maps, locations, distances, both inner and outer, figure prominently in Marlatt's attempt to conceptualize the connection between language, place, and power. From the imperial geography of the Straits Settlements in Malaysia, to 'a mapless world' of the camp (1996: 88), and 'the inner geography of home' (1996: 98), knowing 'where one is' is associated with having or losing control. Moreover, all these places are connected through the media that operate transnationally, linking people in one part of the world to the rest of the globe. The media produce news coverage and images for consumption, through their interpretive frames imparting knowledge and imposing identities. Watching different fronts of World War II, Esme and Charles receive information that flows across national borders, connecting London, where the decisions are made about the Pacific theatre of war and where Charles's father struggles with rationing, decisions that affect the lives of people in Australia, Java, Singapore, and Penang. Similarly, Suzanne watches from the safety of her living room in Canada as the high-tech 'war machine gears up across all media' (1996: 15) and the images from the Gulf War flash across the screen. She hears sinister undertones in 'apocalyptic fears' unleashed by President Bush's globalizing pronouncements of '"a new world order" against "pan-Arab jihad"' (1996: 35). She also registers the increasing global control and manipulation of information by governments which are imposing heavy censorship on the media and forcing them to rely on military experts for analysis.

Taken targets specifically imperialist wars as ultimate 'separations' among people, the ultimate failure of imagination confronted with real-life atrocities. Significantly, the theme of war is introduced through the metaphor of photographic

representation: 'war time, black and white time, whole cultures reduced to dirty adjectives under the acrid developer of national will' (1996: 3). According to Sontag, photographs have an established role in what she calls 'the iconography of suffering' (2003: 40). War and photography are intimately linked, since for most people their knowledge of war is inevitably 'camera-mediated' (Sontag, 2003: 24). War not only causes displacement but also generates a crisis of epistemic proportions in the lives of people affected by it. Marlatt's narrative seems to suggest that in a world ravished by war love cannot survive: Esme is doomed to die 'insane in a foreign country' (1996: 12), while Lori and Suzanne separate. Nevertheless, to keep a sense of connection, the characters write letters to each other 'to recoup their membership in a world that is shattering around them' (1996: 16). Faced daily with the madness of the Gulf War and memories of Vietnam and World War II, Suzanne writes her history 'to avoid disappearing into guesswork coloured by fear, loss' (1996: 116). Yet neither she nor Esme, both of whom 'merely live with the news' (1996: 30), can escape the insidious effects of distant events that infiltrate their lives. Suzanne witnesses the daily trauma of death and destruction:

> 91 children among 288 bodies recovered in rubble, Iraq reports in the wake of American bombing of—what? Language floats. An air raid shelter, Iraq asserts. Military bunker, the U.S. counter-reports. Disputed terms echoing back and forth across communication waves. A CNN print displays painfully small bodies wrapped in blankets, blurred figures bending on the street to fold back a corner, confirm the unthinkable. (Marlatt, 1996: 57)

Marlatt's narrator is aware of the dangers of image manipulation that Sontag warns against in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, where she reminds us that 'the photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph' that will be received by 'the diverse communities that have use for it' (2003: 39). Moreover, Sontag also cautions that saturation with images showing the suffering of others can turn 'the image as shock' into 'the image as cliché' (2003: 23). What Suzanne observes is that 'Tuned to a consuming serial drama,

we begin to think like them as the space around us fills with controversy' (1996: 38) while the shock of witnessing atrocities gradually wears off.

Without being overly didactic, Marlatt articulates her conviction that we are all caught in the same story 'although we don't meet the same fatality' (1996: 30) and that 'we *are* complicit, yes' (1996: 130). We are all transnationally connected to the events happening elsewhere, citizens of the countries dropping bombs on children in Iraq or in other places, so that the neoliberal discourse of global 'democracy' can be disseminated in order to discipline racialized bodies. Listening to the news, to the sounds of bombs and Baghdad blowing up, Suzanne and Lori are 'appalled for different reasons, historically accountable and furious' (1996: 81). The language of war propaganda, whose rhetoric recognizes no grey areas, illustrates the most sinister aspects of binarism. War time claims language as another battlefield, turning words into weapons. The media demonize the enemy and euphemistically erase the humanity of ordinary people embroiled in the struggle. Censorship, verbal assault, and brutal manipulation of meaning force Marlatt's narrator to express her disgust in one sentence: 'i envy beings without words' (1996: 35). From the perspective of a transnational feminist consciousness, the narrative reveals that constructing such national and ideological separations ultimately serves the neocolonial interests of the oppressive patriarchal and militarist systems. By juxtaposing Suzanne's concerns about 'those who actually live through the "smart bombs"' (1996: 30) and Esme's earlier concerns about the lives of the Tamil beggars and the rickshaw wallahs (1996: 14), Marlatt practices relationality that allows her to link these older histories of colonialism to new forms of global domination.

To recreate the war scenes, Marlatt adapts her narrative composition to the method of cinematic montage of juxtaposed images and abrupt cuts. Since her vision of war is textually mediated, she relies on television coverage and newspaper scrapbooks, incorporating elements of such cinematic clichés as the war melodrama or even the spy thriller.

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Thus, for example, she describes Charles as if 'he had accidentally stepped into [some adventure flick], caught up in a role already written for him' (1996: 62). However, these heroic and masculinist generic conventions are persistently undermined not only by the italicized narrative of the underreported experiences of women inmates in Japanese camps that redefine the meaning of heroism, but also by the presence of a larger, transnational feminist perspective that insists that these war crimes must be considered in a wider context of patriarchal violence against women and their bodies:

> But why women? Why was it always women whose bodies were found this way? And who were they? What lives had they been living that had been stopped so abruptly—new shoes perhaps, one of them proud of her new shoes that very day. It was never they who were remembered, only their murderers. Dr. Petiot, Dr. Landru, Jack the Ripper. With or without war. (Marlatt, 1996: 92)

By challenging the standard scripts of violence and war heroism, Marlatt's *écriture au féminin*, to use her own words, 'turns what has traditionally been considered background into foreground, what has been labeled trivial into the central, what has been belittled as personal and feminine, into the largely human' (1998: 113). There is a sharp contrast between 'good old boys' (1996: 15), whose male comradeship gets 'memorialized in poems' (1996: 91), and civilians, including pregnant women and children, who get killed, bombed, lost during evacuation, or locked up in camps. As motherhood, too, is put in the service of militarism – even on the linguistic level, when we hear of 'This "Mother of Battles"' (1996: 104), Marlatt's war exposé gradually incorporates a reflection on the relationship between mothering and the oppressive structure of the nation and the family that lay their claim on women's bodies. Like other wartime wives, Esme cannot understand why Charles leaves her pregnant while he wants to risk his life for the sake of his country. Her questioning—'What was a country anyway? She had never had one' (1996: 58)—mirrors Virginia Woolf's in *Three Guineas*. We witness Esme's transformation from an irreverent schoolgirl into a matron, 'solid,

stamped with public approval' as she begins to understand that as a mother she holds 'the future of the nation in her hands' and that her only redemption as a woman is through maternity (1996: 112). While her story illustrates the process of mother becoming 'mater' becoming 'matter', by contrast, her lesbian daughter Suzanne rewrites the national and familial scripts assigned to women's bodies. Asking a provocative question: 'how does one manage, after all, to remain a person?' (1996: 124), Marlatt's text defies patriarchal discourses that demand of women to be good mothers of the nation.

Finally, a new meaning of transnationality emerges from the novel's attention to the linked ecosystems that we all inhabit. At the same time as she infuses gender stereotypes with subjectivity, Marlatt sublimates the meaning of mothering in relation to ecology:

> The eye, unfocused, gazes at water, air, all that envelops us, pre-dates us. Post-dates us, too. Mourning the loss of being before knowing narrowed into the dangerously exclusive we label meaningful, or what counts [...]. And what about all that mothers, has mothered us into existence? Relations beyond number. (1996: 116)

She mourns a life-giving environment threatened by war or exploited for profit, by having Suzanne contemplate the local wildlife and natural beauty of Vancouver Island against the backdrop of repeated images of oil-greased birds in the Gulf. A pacifist-ecological stance is consistent with Marlatt's writing *against* separations, and the entire text is grounded in a desire for connection. It is associated with her philosophy of the body which, rather than seen as a self-contained entity, is experienced as enmeshed in a web of relations, physically passing through the mother and then through the place that is its environment. It is through the continuity and contiguity of bodies that we are connected to the m/other, in a fluid exchange, which Marlatt literalizes by means of the mixed-blood and mother's milk metaphors, thus inscribing the other into her ecological circle of human interconnectedness. The narrator drops a few hints suggesting that her mother Esme might have been Eurasian.

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There is a story handed down, including a fantasy of Chinese or Indian blood somewhere in the family, which is supposed to account for the women's beauty. Suzanne cannot untangle the mystery of whether 'they had spent so long, three generations born in the East, that they themselves began to feel un-English', or whether 'it was easier to make a life, to pass as English, if you erased the mixed part' (1996: 107). Nevertheless, her genealogical fantasy reconnects her to the lost women in her ancestry and enables her to construct a new matrilineal history of interracial marriages, that has been covered up by Anglo-conformity imposed by family patriarchs (1996: l07). Her preoccupation with the question of who it was who had preceded them brings her closer to the recognition that 'what "doesn't matter"', what has been suppressed, returns to haunt us (1996: 113). Nursed by the ayah, like her grandmother and mother before her, Suzanne wonders who that first ayah had been for each of them and what she had 'covertly passed to [them] in her milk, what tastes, what feelings?' (1996: 113). The image of the ayah's milk, apart from its obvious symbolic status in the economy of exploitation and appropriation of the bodies and labor of colonial 'others', is here recoded as a gesture of symbolic acknowledgement of the possibility of mothering across race. The blood and mother's milk mark the traces of return of the other woman, the invisible subaltern absent from the official narratives of history.

What Barbara Godard calls 'the paring away of self to give space to the other' (l985: 481), in Marlatt's writing often takes the form of questioning and identification. These rhetorical questions about the unthinkable, about differences and exclusions, open up the space of interrogation of singular modes of experience, making it possible to leap out of self and to approach what the other must be experiencing. Similarly, imaginative projections and identifications make it 'thinkable' to be someone else's 'other'. In one spectacular flashback, the narrator recalls an encounter with alteritv, which provokes a duel of gazes between herself and another girl, the tailor's little daughter—her colonial double. The young narrator begins

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to speculate, 'what it might be like to be that girl [...] staring between people and cars at me, outsider in her father's? uncle's? shop, while i, guardian of this gorgeous mother, just as rudely stare back' (1996: 43). Despite their competing 'territorial' claims, here the reversal of the gaze is more than an orientalizing fantasy, as it actually helps the white girl to see the other as subject and herself as 'other'. However, Marlatt is aware of power dynamics involved in such encounters with otherness. In her 1989 essay entitled 'Difference (em)bracing', she utters a warning against misuses of relationality. She is critical of what she calls 'getting to know you words', suspecting 'a hidden imperialism in them: making the other the same and therefore plausible, i.e., plausibly me' (1998: 132). Rather, she is trying to get at 'the plausible implausibility of living difference as both other and not-other. Other me besides me' (1998: 133). Her ethics of alterity is reflected in her use of the pronoun 'you' as a conduit of dialogic reciprocity. Additionally, in *Taken*, she uses a corresponding linguistic strategy aimed to safeguard difference against easy domestication as she persistently foregrounds the heterogeneity of language by means of saturating the text with Malay words, which keeps the reader at a respectful distance.

In the final analysis, *Taken* proves to be an epistemologically enabling text, tapping into liminal sources of knowledge that make traditional demarcations of national spaces and identities insufficient. If Marlatt's simplest definition of writing is 'that which moves between self and other' (1998: 215), she is writing here in this in-between space, where in-betweenness can mean both a space of marginality or exclusion from the dominant and a space of connectivity and sharing. She helps us to understand that the meaning of difference depends on how it is used, for connection or for separation. Difference as *différance*, a principle of proliferation of signs and identities, must be celebrated against the prohibition on meaning and heterogeneity, instituted by all empires of the mind. However, difference in the sense of separations due to material inequalities produced by socio-political and historical conditions cannot be ignored either. They both matter.

Marlatt's accomplishment in *Taken* is to give new relevance to *écriture au féminin* by providing a historicized, transnational perspective, which allows us to see the connections between different bodies in the intimate and the global scale while reinforcing the need for relationality in the contemporary conflict-haunted world.

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TRAVERSING GENDERED SPACES
with Nicole Brossard's Lesbians: Figurations of Nomadic Subjectivity in *Picture Theory*

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> *Abstraction urges the future like reality. To see: infraction/ reflection or hologram. Each time I lack space on the her/i/ zon, my mouth opens, the tongue finds the opening.*
> *Nicole Brossard* (2006: 25)

> *Faith in the creative powers of the imagination is an integral part of feminists' appraisal of embodiment and the bodily roots of subjectivity. Nomadic subjects attempt to valorize the cognitive, theoretical and political importance of inventing modes of representation which adequately express the complex singularities that feminist women have become.*
> *Rosi Braidotti* (2006: 273)

Published in French in 1982, *Picture Theory* is undoubtedly one of Nicole Brossard's most formally and thematically complex works and a superb articulation of the discursive strategy of the French Canadian women's language-oriented writing known as *écriture au feminin* (writing in the feminine), not to be confused with Cixous's *écriture feminine* (feminine writing), that Brossard's translator and scholar Barbara Godard aptly defined as 'a theoretical and strategic move into abstraction prompted by the impossibility to narrate' (1982: 7). In her insightful 2000 study *Narrative in the Feminine: Daphne Marlatt and Nicole Brossard*, Susan Knutson describes *Picture Theory* as a feminist work that establishes a woman-centered world in which the default human perspective is female, and which experiments with non-patriarchal figures and codes (194). As a radical experiment in theoretical fiction (*fiction théorique*), the text communicates the imperative

to configure an autonomous model of female subjectivity and simultaneously acknowledge and affirm the reality of lesbian identity and lesbian embodiment. Following complex trajectories of the comings and goings of a group of five lesbian women who are activists, writers, intellectuals, feminists, and lovers, this rhizomatic non-linear composition defies the Derridian law of the genre fluctuating sensuously between poetry, prose, and theory in its subsequent sections tellingly titled, respectively, the Ordinary, Perspective, Emotion, Thought, and Hologram. The chapters create a purposefully irregular movement tracing the scenes from everyday life of women, both their activity in the public sphere and their private lives underwritten by desire, through their mutual efforts to formulate a feminist perspective that would ensure their inclusion in reality, whose monolithic patriarchal structure appears overwhelming and unbearable, and to use the abstract potential of the utopian impetus of their emotion and thought to approach a politically viable albeit still necessarily utopian vision of female and lesbian presence in the world. The text insistently challenges patriarchal discourse by directly engaging with, on the one hand, the Modernist oeuvre of James Joyce and philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein that partly endow *Picture Theory* with structure, and on the other hand the long-standing tradition of subversive writing of Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes, and Monique Wittig through a combinatory inter-genre fiction that eludes the confines of both the hegemonic masculine symbolic and the deceptively gender-neutral poststructuralist models of narrating identity. At the heart of Brossard's project lies the difference of the lesbian body and its transgressive potential, as well as the text's central model of the hologram (defined by Lorraine Weir as 'a trope of intertextuality encoding layers of centers as one transparency might contain multiple images superimposed in the course of successive exposures, each image capable of being resolved in turn without affecting the others' [350]) operating as the multidimensional lens in which the figure of a woman reflects and yields an infinite

number of shifting perspectives refigured by the theoretical and literary influences of Stein's subversive broken syntax, the Modernist sophistication of Barnes's lesbian texts, as well as Wittig's radical conceptualization of lesbian subjectivity and corporeality. Through challenging and deconstructing the paradigmatic essentialist mythologies of volatile femininity, and by foregrounding lesbian difference, Brossard creates a highly complex and multilayered body-text that counters the available ready-made conceptions of female identity to reconstitute the reader's notion of femininity in anti-essentialist terms and to rehabilitate the dynamic active materiality of the woman's body in such a way as to mobilize potentialities for a radical conceptual change in the way the female identity and corporeality could be approached, theorized, and narrativized.

While Pierre Joris places Brossard's writing at the center of his formulation of a nomad poetics whose 'openness […] has to be instable enough to allow for change […] [through] a dynamics of "becoming"', her nomadism must be seen as further complicated by its commitment to both the philosophical feminist project and the political goals of feminism (128). Brossard's body of work is strictly related to her 'poetic politics',[1] a transgressive textual practice that has taken different forms, but that has always been preoccupied with endowing women with identity and mental space in both language and reality colonized by patriarchal exclusionary sexual politics, and, as Alice Parker observes, is written against 'the unthinkable place of woman in language which has been preempted by a colonized female body' (76). This essay is an attempt to read *Picture Theory* in the context of Rosi Braidotti's figuration of nomadic subjectivity, proposed in her 1994 study *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, as well as Elizabeth Grosz's politics of corporeal feminism and her speculative notion of nomad desire. I will argue that the narrative of *Picture Theory* can be productively read in the light of Braidotti and Grosz's feminist

1. See Brossard's essay 'Poetic Politics', *Fluid Arguments*. p. 26–36.

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speculative theorizations of nomadism as a kind of strategically deployed utopian vision with considerable political potential. As Braidotti puts it:

> [A]n iconoclastic, mythic figure such as the nomadic subject is consequently a move against the settled and conventional nature of theoretical and especially philosophical thinking. This figuration translates therefore my desire to explore and legitimate political agency, while taking as historical evidence the decline of metaphysically fixed, steady identities. (1994: 4–5)

The female characters of *Picture Theory*, whose composite hybrid shifting identities work as models for rethinking female subjectivity in a characteristically Brossardian but also Braidottian manner across different geographical as well as social and political spaces, emerge as pretexts for a larger formulation of nomadic subjectivity in Braidotti's sense of 'the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity' (1994: 22). At the same time, Brossard's text offers a multifaceted pictorial image of a radically transformed feminist nomadic subject imagined as exterior to phallogocentric constructions of femininity. In their respective accounts of subjectivity, Brossard and Braidotti put particular emphasis on the political implications of embodiment in feminist theorizations of femininity, and it can be argued that they adopt, as Braidotti puts it, a 'radically anti-essentialist position' in conceptualizing the nomadic subject (1994: 4). This paper will further try to determine whether the utopian model of a nomadic female subject can become politically useful. Whereas Braidotti refers to her model as a useful myth, Brossard imagines her figuration in only apparently contradictory terms as an abstraction that is nevertheless always 'written against the abstract body' (2006: 81). In this context, I will examine the feminist model of nomadism that feminist thinkers and theorists such as Brossard, Grosz, and Braidotti advocate, paying special attention to the interrelated questions of nomad desire and utopian feminist practice.

'AERIAL ROOTS'[2]: FEMINIZING NOMADISM

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Commonly associated with Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical model, nomadism has a long-standing, albeit chiefly masculine, tradition in contemporary philosophy. Cultural critic and translator Brian Massumi defines nomad thought in the foreword to his translation of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, and further characterizes their *oeuvre* as the most prominent present-day articulation of 'a smooth space of thought [...] [that] goes by many names. Spinoza called it "ethics". Nietzsche called it the "gay science". Artaud called it "crowned anarchy". To Maurice Blanchot, it is the "space of literature". To Foucault, "outside thought"' (xiii). While the philosophical nomadism evoked here is attributed exclusively to male philosophers, it has been also refigured and productively deployed by many female philosophers and feminist theorists who by now forged their own mode of theoretical reflexivity regarding nomadism, and who have been insistently and systematically rewriting the originally decidedly masculine conceptualizations of nomad thought to make the practice of nomadic thinking usable for the goals of feminism.

In her on-going theoretical project advanced in *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), *Metamorphoses* (2002), and *Transpositions* (2006), Rosi Braidotti has offered women a speculative future-oriented model of nomadism inviting a feminist tradition of nomad thought as a necessary supplement to its dominant masculine theorizations. Proposing her figuration of nomadic subjectivity via Deleuze, Braidotti acknowledges Luce Irigaray's major contribution to feminist philosophy as well as a feminist version of nomadism, and further notes:

> The array of terms available to describe this new female feminist subjectivity is telling: Monique Wittig chooses to represent it through the 'lesbian', echoed by Judith Butler with her 'parodic politics of the masquerade'; others, quoting Nancy Miller, prefer to describe the process as 'becoming women', in the sense of the female feminist subjects of another story. De Lauretis calls it the 'eccentric' subject; alternative feminist subjectivi-

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2. *The Aerial Letter* (1988: 106).

ties have also been described as 'fellow-commuters' in an in-transit state, or as 'inappropriated others', or as 'postcolonial' subjects. (1994: 3)

Her list is by no means exhaustive and could be immediately supplemented by a number of other feminist figurations, such as, for instance, Donna Haraway's figure of the cyborg or Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of *mestizaje*, or, more to the point, Elizabeth Grosz's significant feminist revisions of the Deleuzo-Guattarian thought. Both Grosz and Braidotti subscribe to the form of materialist, or in Grosz's terms, corporeal feminism that emerged in the 1990s. Their departures from dualistic thinking, and more importantly from psychoanalysis, reconceptualization of desire as a positivity, as well as rehabilitation of issues such as embodiment and sexual difference distinguish their versions of feminism from poststructuralist constructivist approaches of the linguistic turn such as, for example, Judith Butler's. Braidotti's feminist appropriation of the Deleuzian model emerges as nomadism with a (sexual) difference that aims at acknowledging an alternative form of a hybrid and adaptable subjectivity while accounting for women's lived embodied existence. Braidotti argues that this goal can be achieved by returning to the neglected question of female embodiment and by further problematizing the binary of sexual difference, and consequently developed into a kind of nomadic political project, building on the feminist practice of strategic essentialism. Refiguring femininity as 'the site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, defined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle, and sexual preference', Braidotti envisions her concept of nomadic subjectivity as a politically empowering myth with, as I see it, utopian inflections, similar to other feminist theoretical fictions (1994: 4). Hers is a passionate feminist politics, an interdisciplinary project that does not alienate or exclude women for whom high theory appears inaccessible and elitist. Its chief forces are enhanced mobility, desire, and transgressive energy of nomadism as vehicles of feminist intellectual practice that aims at reclaiming social sectors annexed by patriarchy as well as identifying new spaces for both theory and practice.

Grosz's philosophical reflections on nomadism, corporeality, sexual difference, and desire have been a powerful call for construing subjectivity as a sort of body-mind continuum, presupposed on anti-hierarchical harmonious intertwining of both psychical and corporeal faculties, figuratively represented as the Möbius strip. The political viability of her balanced model is contingent upon the return to the embodiment and sexual difference whose significance, as she argues, has been systematically downplayed in philosophical discussions of identity. According to Grosz, a return to the body precludes the 'neutralization and neutering of its specificity which has occurred to women as a consequence of women's submersion under male definition' (1994, ix). Another fundamental aspect of Grosz's speculative model that can be readily identified in Brossard's writing is her concept of nomad desire, elsewhere in her work also referred to as lesbian desire. Grosz looks away from the privative notion of desire as found in the thought of Plato, Hegel, Freud, and Lacan. Instead, she turns to a different, and often devalued, line in the Western philosophical tradition that she sees as originating with the thought of Spinoza, in particular his notion of desire as a force of positive production, as opposed to desire as lack. The notion was further developed by Deleuze and Guattari who see desire not exclusively as libidinal, but rather as a kind of affective (i.e.: corporeal) activity. Importantly, nomad desire as Grosz conceptualizes it is also part and parcel of Braidotti's theory. In *Metamorphoses*, Braidotti critiques the privative model of desire and says passionately: 'Translated into nomadic language: I actively yearn for a more joyful and empowering concept of desire and for a political economy that foregrounds positivity' (57). An indispensable driving force of the dynamic ontology of becoming, nomad desire is an underlying trait of Braidotti and Grosz's theories and as such it also deeply informs all aspects of Brossard's feminist project.

In Brossard's oeuvre, questions pertaining to nomadism and lesbian desire feature prominently in her theoretical writings, in particular in the collection of essays *The Aerial Letter* that followed the publication of *Picture Theory*. In this work, seen as Brossard's most important explication of *écriture*

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au feminin, the writer looks back at her early gender-neutral writing inspired by Blanchot's figure of the neuter, and more generally, as Karen Gould reminds us, 'modernity's ostensibly gender-neutral preoccupations with rupture, deconstruction, and transgression' (53).[3] She critiques her own early reliance on writing in the neuter as an ineffective strategy that does not only fail at putting a female writer at a safe distance from patriarchy but also condemns her to anonymity and precludes any sense of agency. Consequently, she moves from the poetics of the neuter towards a linguistically-based politics of embodied writing, *écriture au feminin*: 'Women write, but at this point in time, they write more than ever with the conscious knowledge that they cannot write if they camouflage the essential, that is, that they are women' (Brossard 1988: 73). Brossard explains the transformation of her poetics by saying that the neutral body had to be replaced by 'the body [that] has its reasons, mine, its lesbian skin, its place in a historical context, its particular environment and its political content' (1988: 77–8). The focus on sexual difference in feminine writing is necessary, according to Brossard, if women want to deconstruct the false imaginary created according to essentialist masculine parameters and to create their own symbolic. This negative imaginary based on the principle of one (male) sex must be replaced by women's embodied writing through which they can conceive of themselves outside patriarchy and male-oppression, imagine themselves as autonomous, create positive images of femininity for themselves, and thus re-enter reality on their own terms. Brossard writes: 'The female body, long frozen (besieged) in the ice of the interpretation system and in fantasies relentlessly repeated by patriarchal sex, today travels through, in its *rapprochement* to other women's bodies, previously unknown dimensions, which bring it back to its reality' (1988: 83). Along similar lines, as Louise H. Forsyth aptly observes in her foreword to *The Aerial Letter*, Brossard's rejection of gender-neutral language and her subsequent emphasis

3. For Blanchot's sense of the neuter that informed Brossard's early poetics, see chapters 'René Char and the Thought of the Neutral' and 'The Fragment Word' in *The Infinite Conversation*. pp. 298–313.

on the body have been brought about by a recognition that 'human beings can never achieve the state of pure thought' because '[t]hey are always in a physical body, in the material world, and in the flow of historical time. Their thought is always, therefore, a function of their material condition' (26). Brossard's feminist project can be therefore inscribed in Grosz's politics of corporeal feminism in so far as it insists upon the need for balancing the reality of the transgressive quality of bodies and the emotional landscape of thought, bridge the realities of body and mind, through the embodied practice of writing in the feminine (NB: the body-text is also frequently referred to as 'cortex' in Brossard's writing, which is an amalgam of French words 'corps' and 'texte', and at the same time relates in complex ways to the activity of the brain):

> Taking on reality in order that *an aerial vision of all realities arises from the body and emotion of thought*. Realities which, crossing over each other, form the matrix material of my writing. This text matter, like a fabulous mathematics, relates words to one another. All bodies carry within themselves a project of sensual high technology; writing is a hologram. (1988: 68, my emphasis).

Brossard envisions a horizon, or rather *her*izon, of the future in which the feminine intellectual practice would be conceived of as distinct from the masculine legacy instead of merely deriving from it or being *rooted* in it and thus being always in some way both indebted and inferior to it. As Forsyth notes: 'Roots unseen and unnoticed, though nonetheless vital as the original, nourishing part of plants or words, serve well as an image for the situation of women in patriarchal culture. This situation must be reversed so that roots, without being ripped from their essential environment, are brought to the light' (17). Experimenting with images of roots and radicles (simultaneously playing with the meaning of the latter through its similarity to the word 'radical'), Brossard perversely proposes a reversal of the tradition of women's writing and further says:

> Now with intensity, will I root myself in the place that resembles me. Now with intensity will I initiate myself to other women. The roots are aerial.

The light which nourishes them, nourishes, at the same time, the tender shoots (the culture) and the root. The root is integral and aerial, the light is coherent'. (1988: 106)

As Alice Parker observes, *Picture Theory* is informed by such an 'aerial perspective'; a *her*izon of 'a three dimensional consciousness' that can be imagined as a practice of re-inscribing and re-imagining of the patriarchal legacies and conceiving of female subjectivity anew from a multitude of different perspectives, which, however, cannot be experienced in reality (81). For Brossard, the image of aerial roots marks a necessary transition in ways of conceptualizing subjectivity from the notion of identity firmly anchored in patriarchy to a vision of the new nomadic 'aerial' integral subject position whose inherent imperatives of mobility and transformation empower women to break through the stifling patriarchal ways of thinking. Importantly, Brossard's reconceptualization of subjectivity, articulated in *Picture Theory* as an imperative to 'reconstitute the original woman from aerial roots' (2006: 174), actually predates Braidotti's feminized figuration of a nomadic subject. Brossard's nomadism is thus realized through this 'aerial' and markedly utopian perspective.

'Identity in the Trajectory of the Body'[4]: Brossard's Essential Woman and the Anti-Essentialism of the Nomadic Subject

In her 1998 study *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard*, Alice Parker writes that *Picture Theory* focuses on an ontological problem of 'alter[ing] the structures of subjectivity in order to constitute a lesbian presence in the world' (80). Such refiguring of subjectivity, as Parker further states, occurs in the text through the anti-representational and multi-dimensional textual practice that 'dislodge[s] the voluntarist pretensions of logocentrism and mimesis, destabilizing metaphysical, linguistic and literary structures' (88). Indeed, Brossard's experimental fiction works toward a radical reconceptualization of the essentialized unitary notion of femininity construed according to masculine parameters. She envisions

4. *Picture Theory* (2006: 111).

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an alternative subject position that is never a stable or fixed one, and that is referred to in the text by a number of different attributes, such as: aerial, subliminal, essential, formal, integral, or generic. This fluctuating terminology always dovetails into her underlying idea of woman as the one who speaks from the position of an autonomous subject. The text's refusal to pin down a single definitive term that would designate this new form of subjectivity effects a process of displacement and differentiation that mimes and subverts the literal meanings and chiefly negative connotations of the words 'essential' and 'generic'. In *Picture Theory*, Brossard playfully reinvents these two adjectives by simultaneously highlighting their negative connotation of sameness and their inherent original positive meaning as productive of new multiple shifting definitions for different female subjects, as well as potentially constructive of alliances between women despite their differences. In particular, radically departing from the patriarchal notions of femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, Brossard's figure of the lesbian becomes an identity characterized by the abundance of meaning and transgressive potential; she situates herself outside of patriarchy, but becomes 'aerial' in the multiplicity of available shifting positions and locations, is 'integral' to reality and language, forms 'subliminal' images that are activated in the consciousness, operates as 'formal' through entering theory, and makes a lesbian difference in the imaginary governed by only one (male) sex. Her position is no longer presupposed on lack and absence, but on the affirmation of excess of meaning and proliferation of perspectives. Earlier in the text, we find a condensed articulation of the idea of the essential woman as inextricably related to the question of female embodiment and sexual difference, another key aspect in Brossard's version of nomadic subjectivity:

I am the thought of a woman who embodies me and whom I think integral. [...] The generic body would become the expression of woman and woman would have wings above all, she would be sign. [...] I would see this manifestly formal woman inscribe reality [...]. (163)

For Brossard, the binary of sexual difference needs to be reexamined and deconstructed if women want to sidestep the patriarchal reality structured according to the economy of only one (male) sex. The deconstructive effort notwithstanding, the author suggests that the difference in the binary gender scheme can be effected through the affirmation of the generic lesbian body as a figure of transgression capable of displacing and resignifying patriarchal codes: 'Yes this body takes up a strategic stand in the streets of the Polis of men, yes, this body dis/places the horizon of thought, if it wants, this body is generic' (2006: 157). In *Nomadic Subjects* Braidotti defines nomadism in terms of sexual difference 'as providing shifting locations for multiple female feminist embodied voices' (172). In her critique of sexual difference, Braidotti views it as 'an epistemological and political process' (148). In particular, she is critical of the dismissal of sexual difference as essentialist; she is equally wary of a short-sighted embrace of the gender-neutral approach which she sees as dangerously veering toward rehabilitating masculine patriarchal models of unitary identity under the cover of promoting an illusory symmetry between genders, or a post-gender sexually undifferentiated form of subjectivity. Instead, she calls for valorization of sexual difference as a 'nomadic political project' by emphasizing that 'the difference that women embody provides positive foundational grounds for the redefinition of female subjectivity in all of its complexity' (149). The validity of this approach lies in a set of important interconnections between female identity, feminist subjectivity, and, what Braidotti explains as 'the radical epistemology of nomadic transitions from a perspective of positive sexual difference' (149). Brossard's writing offers a similar yet much more bold and radical attempt at bypassing the problem of sexual difference. Deeply preoccupied with the female body as an active and transgressive materiality that relentlessly inscribes reality from which sexual difference has been erased and which has been imagined as governed by men, her chief concern is the specificity of the lesbian body and the radical rupture that it makes in the binary scheme of sexual difference. Following Monique Wittig, Brossard

envisions the transgressive utopian potential of the lesbian identity and the lesbian body that defy essentialist notions constructive of heteronormative perspective on femininity that is always considered against the default heterosexual masculine perspective. Committed to a radical departure from the heteronormative perspective, Brossard's vision of the lesbian, rather than emphasizing the malaise of her victimized position on the margins of the patriarchal society, finds empowerment through embracing the minoritarian position that the lesbian comes to occupy and in the affirmation of the lesbian difference in language: '[Y]es, language could be reconstituted in three dimensions from the part called pleasure where the lesbian body, language and energy fuse' (2006: 176).

There is a pervasive sense of heightened awareness of the potential of lesbian identity and its minoritarian position, as well as the kind of difference that it can make in the patriarchal world that *Picture Theory* dismantles and deeply refigures from the ordinary scene of feminist struggle to the utopian vision of female and lesbian autonomy and freedom from the forces of social construction. The urban radical lesbians of the text are engaged in an intellectual networking practice and together produce energy capable of altering the structures of reality: 'These were women who had read a lot of books and who all lived in big cities; women made to endure in time, sea, city and love. Border crossers, radical city dwellers, lesbians today electric day, their energy took on form like electricity through the structure of matter itself' (85). Brossard's women actively participate in the creation of a new subversive global feminine consciousness of becoming, through mobilizing the corporeal/textual *dérive* (drift) that carries them through time and space on the waves of bodily desire: 'Perspective: metaphysical photos or about the singular interior, all knowledge braided, global feminine working on architecture, time, I/her force familiar in becoming. Identity in the trajectory of the body, a condensation of inscriptions: celebrates the her/i/zon' (111). Seen as a form of dynamically evolving collective identity, Brossard's 'global

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feminine' can be also considered *vis-à-vis* Braidotti's notion of the nomadic politics practiced by a collectivity of subjects who have abandoned all claims to forming a fixed and unitary identity for themselves (1994: 22). While Braidotti envisions this nomadic consciousness via Foucault's notion of counter-memory, as a 'form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity' (23), Brossard engages in an analogous form of resistance through affirming solidarity and intersubjectivity, emphasizing that 'networks exist' yet at the same time reminding women, quoting from Wittgenstein, that there might be a discrepancy between the individual knowing the rule and acting accordingly, since '[*f*]*ollowing a rule is a practice and therefore one cannot follow a rule privately*' (174–5). Importantly, neither Brossard nor Braidotti endorse nomadic subjectivity as an individualistic or isolationist solipsistic position of a solitary woman warrior. Instead, they speak of a nomadic consciousness as a form of intersubjectivity: 'The nomad is a transgressive identity, whose transitory nature is precisely the reason why s/he can make connections at all. Nomadic politics is a matter of bonding, of coalitions, of interconnections' (1994: 35).

'ITINERANT AND SO MUCH A WOMAN'[5]: SEXING SPACE THROUGH NOMAD DESIRE.

In her article titled 'Deconstructing formal space/accelerating motion in the work of Nicole Brossard', Louise H. Forsyth writes that in Brossard's writing space is 'constituted by movement and form, by the transformation back and forth of energy and matter through pulsing acceleration, as opposed to space which has been mapped by tradition and convention' (334). Indeed, *Picture Theory* has come to be defined as a dynamic textual space activated through a series of interrelated and constantly evolving spatial metaphors and images, such as the aerial letter, hologram, white scene, spiral, horizon (often provocatively spelled as *her/iz/on*), perspective, or surface of sense. Brossard offers a set of shifting multidimensional images that mobilize the

5. *Picture Theory* (2006: 162).

text serving as an imaginary alternative to conventional linear narrative underwritten by the hierarchies and binarisms characteristic of patriarchal thought. In her article 'Moving into the Third Dimension: Nicole Brossard's *Picture Theory*', Katharine Conley concentrates on the interrelated questions of spatiality and mobility in *Picture Theory* as the main vehicles of the text. She locates Brossard's focus on space and movement as an articulation of *écriture de dérive*; subversive non-linear writing that is perpetually adrift. Conley further explains that writing marked by the *dérive* is characterized by the ebbs and flows of thought drifting across textual and actual spaces, deriving from Brossard's engagement with other texts, as well as an ecstatic movement of thought oriented toward the future. This kind of nomadic writing not only presupposes a radical intellectual networking of female characters inhabiting the Brossardian fictional world, but also suggests a dynamic form of interactive textuality that engages the reader whose 'gaze upon the screen of words activates them, setting them into mental circulation' (127). What further corroborates Brossard's dynamics of spatial metaphorics is the role played by desire and its multiple functions in activating both the conceptual logic and the emotional register of the text. The desire of Brossard's text can be better explained if we read it through the lens of Grosz's proposition that lesbian desire is in fact nomadic.

Theorized by Grosz in her compelling 1994 speculative essay titled 'Refiguring Lesbian Desire', lesbian desire is reconsidered within and without the sphere of same-sex sexual practices among women and emerges as a nomadic force capable of 'mak[ing] things happen, mov[ing] fixed positions, transform[ing] our everyday expectations and our habitual conceptual schemas' (69). Grosz envisions here a sort of 'excessive analysis' outside the well-charted territories that have been negatively theorized through the one-dimensional paradigms of 'psychoanalysis, theories of representation and signification, and by notions of the functioning of power relations—all of which implicitly presume the notion of a masculine or apparently sexually neutral subject and the ontology

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of lack and depth' (69). Significantly, Grosz sees lesbian sexuality and desire 'in terms of bodies, pleasures, surfaces, [and] intensities' (76). In her project, desire and sexuality are 'actions, movements, [and] practices' enacted daily by our bodies seen in the following way:

> To use the machinic connections a body part forms with another, whether it be organic or inorganic, to form an intensity, an investment of libido, is to see desire and sexuality as productive. Productive, though in no way reproductive, for this pleasure can serve no other purpose, can have no other function than its own augmentation, its own proliferation: a production, then, that makes but reproduces nothing—a truly nomad desire unfettered by anything external, for anything can form part of its circuit and be absorbed into its operations. (78–79)

A possibility of imagining lesbian nomad desire realized through literary language as a kind of lesbian *war-machine* clearly evokes Wittig's writing. As such, it strikes me as particularly useful for thinking about the kind of desiring production that Brossard mobilizes in *Picture Theory*. Hers is a *war-machine*-like text in which the desiring production of textual and actual space is contingent upon a recognition of the transgressive materiality of the desiring lesbian body, and in which Brossard simultaneously attempts to carry out one of the fundamental tasks that she envisions for the literary criticism of the 1980s: 'To make ideological and theoretical space for a new consciousness' (2005: 23).

While Brossard's radical project certainly feeds off the fiction of feminist utopia, it is no longer conceptualized as merely a dream or a desire for a no-place, but an active conceptual quest for a new form of nomadic subjectivity:

> I'm the thought of a woman who embodies me and whom I think integral. SKIN (UTOPIA) gesture is going to come. [. . .]
>
> Utopia <u>integral woman</u>
>
> [. . .] The generic body would become the expression of woman and woman would have wings above all, she would be sign. Plunged into the centre of the city, I would dream of raising my eyes. FEMME SKIN TRAJECTOIRE. *Donna lesbiana* dome of knowledge and helix, already I would have entered into a spiral and my being of air aerial urban would reproduce itself

in the glass city like an origin. I would see this manifestly formal woman inscribe reality then, ecosystem. (2006: 163; emphases in original.)

Whereas Brossard realizes that utopia may not 'ensure [women's] insertion into reality', she believes that the 'Utopian testimony on [women's] part could stimulate in [them] a quality of emotion favorable for our insertion into history' (2006: 81). Her attempt to refigure utopian space as embodied and marked by sexual (lesbian) difference can be productively read alongside Grosz's theorizations of utopia in her 2001 book *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, where Grosz proposes a reconsideration of the traditional conceptualizations of utopian spaces and postulates a concept of embodied utopia as a privileged space of *becoming* traceable beyond the usual understanding of utopia as 'the present's projection of a singular and universal ideal' (146). She argues that utopia should be reconceptualized as 'a mode of temporality and thus a mode of becoming' that takes into account the movement of time and engages in 'the process of endless questioning' (136, 150). For Brossard, the thought of utopia does not stop at a desire for non-existent ideal spaces, the idea of which one embraces in search of a certain undefined future-oriented fictitious horizon of thought. It is not so much a *no-place* any more, but rather *an act* of a radical intellectual networking practice of women that relentlessly inscribe reality, remodeling it to serve feminine needs. In one important sense, therefore, Brossard's embodied utopia is a transgressive vision of the evolving autonomous interworld of lesbians outside of the heterosexist order of patriarchy. In another sense, as Susan Knutson observes in her narratological reading of *Picture Theory*, the text emerges as a feminist 'protean travelogue' that reinvents the notions of narrative and spatiality (197).

Foregrounding the notion of spatiality as constantly activated and traversed by her feminist nomadic characters, Brossard clearly privileges urban spaces as sites of feminist struggle. In *Nomadic* Subjects, Braidotti writes that urban space is 'one huge map that requires special decoding and interpreting skills' so that 'the city becomes text, signify-

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ing artifact' (20). Mapping gendered urban space throughout her text, Brossard underscores the energy, spectacular quality, and mobility characteristic of urban space that is always inextricably conceptually linked to and complicated by questions of embodiment and sexual difference. Forsyth identifies this link commenting on Brossard's earlier work *French Kiss* and notes: 'The space of the city, with its arteries and incessant movement, is homologous with the space of the body' (338). In *Picture Theory*, urban space is always embodied in ways that can be further illuminated by Gail Weiss's phenomenological figuration of *urban flesh* as a new mode of 'understanding the dynamic relationship between bodies and cities' (164). Doing away with the violent artificial nature/culture divide (analogical to the Cartesian mind/body dualism), Weiss theorizes the city not so much as the confining Foucauldian emplacement, but rather as a fluid, richly textured emotional cityscape defined by a heightened awareness of corporeality, as well as by the bodies' constant mobility and transactionality. She points to the ways in which the body in urban space 'exceeds its epidermal boundaries', relentlessly spreading and expanding 'in its ek-static projection toward its future projects' (157). In *Architecture from the Outside*, Grosz similarly complicates the relationship between bodies and urban architecture by identifying its 'outside' as 'the lived and gendered body' and pointing out that, whereas architecture does not exclude embodiment, what seems to be absent from it is the idea of sexual difference (13). Even though Grosz repeatedly emphasizes the absence of woman-only urban spaces, she is aware that the social production of such spaces would be a separatist and reactive practice; instead, she calls for 'rethinking [of] the relations between women and space' (25). Brossard's writing features the same set of concerns. As Forsyth observes: 'Rejecting the commonsense view that the forms and coordinates of space are simply there, Brossard conceived that operative notions about human space form part of a network of patterns produced by collective behavior. Far from being immutable, they can and should be examined, renewed, replaced' (336). *Picture Theory* does just

that in as much as the female characters remodel *urban flesh* through a desire for refiguring the space and through collective intellectual activity. As embodied, urban space is no longer seen exclusively as a scene of patriarchal oppression but also becomes a site of radical possibility:

> At sunrise, we were five women madly seeing the origin of bodies going into the city, where writing surfaces again, condenses, solution of waters, sweat beading on our foreheads. [...] Studious girls, we will divert the course of fiction, dragging with us words turn and turn about, igneous spiral, picture theory, an existence in these terms while the crepuscular bodies, we walk in the direction of the boat, surrounded by tourists. An expression can be read right on our faces: tending to abstraction is an issue. (99; emphasis in original.)

Since the cityscapes of Brossard's text are imagined as gendered spaces from which the idea of sexual (and lesbian) difference continues to be effectively erased to the advantage of the male sex as the only sex that rightfully occupies the cities, Brossard's warrior-like female urban radicals must boldly claim their inclusion in the male city and face the imperative of engaging in a desiring production: the practice of transgressing masculine space, relentlessly sexing it with their bodies, inscribing it with writing, formulating new subject positions for themselves, and thus changing the space they inhabit. What transpires in Braidotti's examination of the semantic root of the word 'nomad', *noumos,* is that it used to signify a 'principle of distribution of the land, and as such it came to represent the opposition of the power of the polis because it was a space without enclosures or borders. It was the pastoral, open, nomadic space in opposition to which the sedentary power of the city was erected. Metropolitan space versus nomadic trajectories' (1994: 27). Whereas the cities of *Picture Theory* become significant sites of feminist activity, the other plane of resistance across which feminist movements are enacted is precisely this open-ended nomadic space, seen in the text as both virtual (imagined) and real. In Brossard's text, the island off Cape Cod where the women get together for a short vacation becomes another crucial destination and image. Knutson points out the essential ambiguity that Bros-

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sard plays with using the French word 'vacance' which actually signifies both 'void' and 'vacation' to denote that the women gather together to counter the symbolic absence of the female culture and build culture 'au feminin' (in the feminine) (199). Temporarily liberated from the distractions and spectacular excesses of the city, they come to the island as an *actual,* rather than virtual, site of pleasure and intellectual activity that is immediately interpreted as a promise of freedom: 'We moved ahead toward the island without having to dream it [...]. The island was in front of us, concrete like a milky goat announcing liberty' (73–4). As the women joyously *interpellate* each other, calling each other into being and reconstituting each other as subjects, they initiate a symbolic exchange that involves the undeniable pleasures of reading, writing, and discussions that finally lead to encountering a utopian vision. Importantly, the opposition between urban space and the island in *Picture Theory* is blurred; after all, the two major metropolitan areas mentioned in the narrative, New York City and Montreal are simultaneously cities and islands. Brossard's writing clearly resists dichotomies; instead, she focuses on the possibilities of multiple nomadic trajectories displayed on the horizon of thought that is always in the process of becoming. In *Picture Theory*, the island sojourn functions as a necessary suspension of feminist urban combat, offering a space of repose, intellectual regeneration, lesbian pleasures of amorous encounters, but also a space where motivation for further struggle can be effectively gathered: 'Gravitate aerial and engrave the shores with suspended islands. I shall then be tempted by reality like a verbal vision which alternates my senses while another woman conquers the horizon at work' (2006: 163). Nomadism in *Picture Theory*, therefore, becomes a matter of *traversal* and not *crossing* of the actual and virtual borders, and, as Brossard points out in *Fluid Arguments*, denoting a crucial shift in thinking from transgression to a future-oriented sustainable vision (86).

* * *

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CONCLUSION:
ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF WRITING *I AM A WOMAN*,
UTOPIAN FEMINIST PRACTICE,
AND THE QUESTION OF NOMADIC ETHICS

Brossard, like Braidotti, refuses to accept the simplified, romanticized position of a solitary migrant nomad whose erratic peregrinations become an evasive tactic disconnecting her from social reality and freeing her from accountability for the actual and intellectual movements she chooses to make. Braidotti frames her theoretical model as 'a passionate form of post-humanism, based on feminist nomadic ethics' inherent in the 'nomadic consciousness [as] an epistemological position' (1994 29, 23). A similar stance reverberates in Brossard's frequently quoted statement that 'There are words that, like the body, are irreducible: to write *I am a woman* is full of consequences' (2005: 107). But what *are* the consequences of saying *I am a woman writer, poet, theorist*, and of positing feminist nomadic ethics informed by nomad desire? What are the consequences of bringing Brossard's desiring textual practice and Grosz's and Braidotti's models of feminized nomadism together? What, to evoke Hélène Cixous's famous words from 'The Laugh of the Medusa', does Brossard's writing *do*?[6]

The model of nomadic subjectivity that Braidotti proposed in *Nomadic Subjects* provoked a number of questions about accountability and ethics of nomadism as a privileged position available to the chosen few who can afford the luxury of 'non-belonging', becoming conveniently disengaged from discussions of the politics of location, and shirking responsibility for their movements and actions. In answer to these criticisms, Braidotti proposed a model of nomadic ethics that hinges on the idea of intersubjectivity as an 'effect of the constant flows or in-between interconnections' not to be confused with 'individualism or particularity', because, as she further emphasized, 'subjectivity is a socially mediated process' (2002: 7). For Braidotti, corporeality becomes a fundamental aspect

6. Shifting the emphasis from representation to performativity, Cixous opens her influential essay by saying: 'I shall speak about women's writing: about *what it will do*'. p. 245.

of a non-dualistic ethics of mind and body acting in unison through 'the desire to become and to increase the intensity of one's becoming' (134–5). In *Transpositions*, she argues that such a 'non-unitary vision of the subject endorses a radical ethics of transformation' (265). By the non-unitary subjectivity, she means 'a nomadic, dispersed, fragmented vision, which is nonetheless functional, coherent and accountable, mostly because it is embedded and embodied' (4). Braidotti's theory offers such an evolving model by repeatedly urging feminists to join her in a quest for a stimulating and sustainable vision that continues to evolve. Undeniably, during over forty years of writing Nicole Brossard has been offering her readers such an evolving open-ended vision. What underwrites it is a desire that can be called lesbian, nomad, and utopian. Considering both Brossard's more theoretical writings and the fiction theory of *Picture Theory* in conjunction with, rather than merely through, Grosz's and Braidotti's theory, the intersections of which have been a focus of this essay, it becomes evident that nomadic subjectivity *in the feminine* has had a long-standing tradition in feminist thought and literature. The sustainability and significance of feminist work performed in *Picture Theory* are not going to lose currency as long as the words 'woman' and 'lesbian' continue to either remain unspeakable or wrapped up in negativity and harmful mythologies. The focal point of abstraction that in the text concentrates on the impossibility to narrate woman (or lesbian) and paradoxically endows her with form bringing her back to reality and to language accounts for the most crucial aspect of the book that lies in the potential that abstraction and utopian thinking carry: 'Each abstraction is a potential form in mental space. And when the abstraction takes form, it is radically inscribed as enigma and affirmation' (2006: 85). In one important sense, therefore, the text repeatedly urges us to see that it is precisely in utopian thinking and abstraction where 'reality condenses' (174).

While there is no single model of feminist thought that can speak with equal significance, emphasis, and currency about and to every woman, there are models that have imaginative,

emotional, and intellectual potential for transformation and that seek a vision that is sustainable. Brossard's writing, which in many ways predates and prefigures the concerns found in Braidotti's and Grosz's theoretical work, may not be an all-encompassing project that holds equal value for a white lesbian academic living in a big city and, say, an Afro-American mother of six living in a small town somewhere in the deep American south. It is, however, an imaginative intellectual project proposed by a Québécoise speaking and writing in a particular language from a particular location defined by its own political and social context and its own sense of urgency. From the vantage point of a lesbian author writing in French despite gaining considerable popularity in North America after publication of English translations of her works, and from the position of a feminist activist who participated in the radical social and political transformations of Québec during and after the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, Brossard continues to make her own unique contribution to the discussions of the politics of lesbian difference by saying something apparently very simple yet surprisingly current and resonant for all women: 'The difference is that I cannot live deferred' (1988: 51). Her writing may be approached in relation to Braidotti's model of feminist nomadism in as much as it is an embedded, embodied, future-oriented quest for a reinvented grammar of feminist language-oriented experimental writing. Imbued with powerful political energy, it formulates a 'revised ontology' of the writing in the feminine (Parker 1988: 110). It is also a sustainable vision of intersubjectivity made manifest in a collective presence of integral radical feminists called forth into the critical space of *The Aerial Letter*[7]. Brossard makes women, and lesbian women in particular, *visible* and *readable* against the disturbing or otherwise anodyne ontologies of either 'monstrosity' of the female body or 'volatile' female corporeality according to which, as Grosz reminds

7. The translator of *The Aerial Letter*, Marlene Wildeman, explains the significance of the original French word *l'intégrales* as 'a singular noun populated by the plural collective subjectivity' (see Wildeman's footnote to *The Aerial Letter*, p. 114).

us, 'the female body has been constructed not only as a lack or absence but with more complexity, as a leaking uncontrollable, seeping liquid; [...] a formlessness that engulfs all form, a disorder that threatens all order' (1994: 203). As a sophisticated exercise in innovative writing, and as an indispensable exercise in abstract thinking, the utopian vision of *Picture Theory* manages to sidestep the problem of speaking about the lesbian body in negative or abstract terms by arriving at an affirmative vision of the woman who loves other women and who indeed 'had come to the point in full fiction abundant(ly) to re/cite herself perfectly readable' (165).

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OVERLAPPING TERRITORIES, DRIFTING BODIES
in Dionne Brand's Work

Poetry is here, just here.
Something wrestling with how we live,
something dangerous, something honest.
Dionne Brand, Bread Out of Stone

Is poetry a bridge,
I want poetry to help me live,
keep me from despair.
To imagine something different is the task.
Adrienne Rich, Listening for Something

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In the documentary film *Listening For Something*, produced out of the National Film Board of Canada in 1996, Trinidadian Canadian poet, writer and filmmaker Dionne Brand engages in an intriguing and compelling conversation with the renowned American feminist poet, Adrienne Rich. Through an intimate close dialogue pervaded with an intense poetic erotics, two women from different generation, race, and class, discuss and confront each other on touching as well as burning questions, such as nationalism, citizenship, belonging, racism, and sexuality. The unfolding of their voices and stories evokes stimulating suggestions and thought-provoking cues to imagine the relationship between body, place and national identity in Canada from a transcultural and gendered perspective.

In her discussion of the idea of the nation, Adrienne Rich refers to Virginia Woolf's famous claim in *Three Guineas*, 'As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world' (Brand, 1996a). Rich contests the essentialist undertones of Woolf's

statement, arguing that such comment poses the danger of excusing women from the responsibility of actively participating in the politics of national communities. By taking responsibility for her location in the United States, Rich understands the impossibility of renouncing her national status wilfully, claiming, therefore, her particular national affiliation and the materiality of her own body. In her essay 'Notes toward a Politics of Location' Rich declares: 'As a woman I have a country; as a woman I cannot divest myself of that country merely condemning its government or by saying three times "As a woman my country is the whole world"' (1986: 212). Rich claims her belonging to the American nation in order to understand how 'a place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create' (1986:212).

Dionne Brand, however, argues that Virginia Woolf might have been right, and that feminist politics should be conceived in terms that reach beyond national paradigms. Brand rejects the concept of the 'nation' as a viable model for community because national forms of unity are predicated upon exclusions, as inclusion in or access to Canadian identity, nationality and citizenship depends on one's relationship to whiteness. As she declares in the documentary film: 'The nation-states we live in are constructed by leaving out' (1996a), thus upsetting the traditional Canadian fiction built around the myths of tolerance and multiculturalism asserted by its nation-state policies. Rich, on the other hand, agrees with Brand in acknowledging the alienation and the fragility of the democratic promise of the Euro-American nations, since 'the democracy that was envisioned was an exclusionary democracy, it was for white males and propertied people and we've certainly known of the exclusion of African Americans' (1996a). In Brand's words, 'One does have a sense that one lives in an American Empire and that no other kinds of voices will be entertained' (1996a).

Brand's rejection of national identity—both Caribbean and North American—comes in response to her exclusion from national imagination. Given her multiple dislocations between two nations, Trinidad and Tobago, and Canada, and given her

liminal location as a woman and as a black lesbian, Brand openly critiques identity politics, offering counternarratives which figure new spaces to inhabit. The notion of the 'counter-narratives', as proposed by Homi Bhabha, is produced by those subjects who, by positioning themselves on the margins of the nation—migrants, diasporic people, sexual minorities—provide new models to imagine community differently (see Bhabha, 1994: 139–170). He argues that the nation as narrative strategy continually mediates between the pedagogical time, which objectifies its citizens into a single, stable narrative of history, and the performative time, whereby citizens constantly challenge and reconstruct nationhood. It is precisely this performative time that disseminates and destabilises the hegemonic national narrative's *telos*, the moment that allows for struggle and change. According to Bhabha, the nation as performance highlights a conception of identity not as static or teleological, but rather as dynamic and plural.

Brand's texts reflect what Peter Hitchcock, drawing on Bhabha's theoretical insights, defines as 'transgressive imagiNation'. Hitchcock proposes this critical concept to explore the way in which a literary text 'exceeds, challenges, demystifies, or transcodes the components of national identity' (2003: 9). Indeed, Brand herself admits in quite incisive tones that she 'write[s] for the people, believing in something other than the nation-state in order to be sane' (1996a). As the geographical boundaries of nations do not reflect her imagined community, Brand's works reveal the unfolding of fluid textual maps which re-chart and re-configure transnational diasporic communities between the Caribbean and Canada, making these very spaces flowing, shifting, where territories overlap and desiring bodies wander adrift.

MAPPING THE CARIBBEAN CANADIAN SPACE AS BODY

> *There is the sense in the mind of not being here or there, of no way out or in. As if the door had set up its own reflection. Caught between the two we live in the Diaspora, in the sea in between.* (*Brand, 2001: 20*)

In *Listening for Something* the ongoing dialogue between Rich and Brand is intercut with sequences showing both poets reading from their respective poetry while the cam-

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era roams across the landscapes of the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, visually conferring the suggestion of an ongoing diasporic movement. In this poetic streaming of voices, sounds, places, and landscapes, a recurring image emerges: the flowing and ebbing of waves. As Benìtez-Rojo suggests, the Caribbean is 'a cultural sea without boundaries, a paradoxical fractal form extending infinitely through a finite world' (1996: 314). The Caribbean is, indeed, imagined as a hybrid erotic space-the constant flux, mediations of places, languages, and cultures, ongoing boundary crossings, 'the unpredictable flux of transformative plasma', 'a repeating island' (Benìtez-Rojo, 1996: 314). In this sense, the Caribbean can be considered a heterotopia, in Foucaultian terms, a space where different places and diverse forms of belonging and social relations coexist and conjoin. Carole Boyce Davies conceives of the Caribbean not as a geographical location, but rather as a social and cultural space extending beyond its territorial delimitation. Caribbean space, in her formulation, is seen as a series of diasporic locations and cultural practices; her idea of 'portable identities' between the African American and Caribbean spaces bears witness to the necessary fluidity that members of a specific migrant community must hold in order to act politically in accordance with the demands of place. Davies proposes, in this context, the concept of 'twilight zones', spaces of transformations from one condition /location to another (2005).

The watery imagery of Caribbean culture is reflected even further in the potentially subversive figuration of 'tidalectics' coined by Kamau Brathwaite, of which he writes:

> Why is our psychology not dialectical-successfully dialectical-in the way that Western philosophy has assumed people's lives should be, but tidalectic, like our grandmother's-our nanna's-action, like the movement of the ocean she's walking on, coming from one continent / continuum, touching another, and then receeding ('reading') from the island(s) into the perhaps creative chaos of the(ir) future (1999: 34).

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With the obvious word-play on the terms 'tide' and 'dialectic', Brathwaithe conceives of 'tidalectics' as the rejection of Hegelian dialectic. Crucial to the poet's notion is the idea of movement based on ebb and flow, a movement that points to the circular and repetitive, rather than the linear and progressive. Most importantly, this metaphor conveys the idea of space in terms of feminine figuration, like an ancestral female silhouette through which territories overlap and histories and times intertwine. It is a powerful trope to reconfigure geographical borders and Western notions of place, space, belonging, and location from a gendered as well as postcolonial perspective.

> Caribbeanness is the conscience of a space. It is a spatial logic of connection, not an integer of geographical location per se. If one of the major problems in the application of Western theory in particular is that it *locates* the margin, Caribbeanness crosses the borders of that fixation. It does not simply imagine a territory, but destabilizes the territoriality of subjecthood (Hitchcock, 2003: 31).

Caribbeanness, then, can be imagined as a space of exchange that diffracts and recomposes, an amniotic landscape that engenders and regenerates the categories of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity into conceptual geographies which prove to be necessarily liquid, fluid, deterritorialised. In this context, the figuration of tidalectics is useful to articulate a kind of reterritorialisation that foregrounds the complexity of Caribbean Canadian space in the work of Dionne Brand, through her depiction of an embodied queer topography.

The collection of poems *No Language is Neutral* from which Brand reads in her documentary film represents an attempt to theorise the body, sexuality, and belonging beyond the confines and limits of a discursive space which, far from being neutral, is ideologically gendered and raced. Brand's poetic language reveals an ongoing oscillation between two languages, standard English and what Brathwaite defines as 'Nation language' (Brathwaite, 1984). According to Teresa Zackodnik, Dionne Brand 'locates her critique of language not in an attempt

to resurrect or construct a neutral language, nor from a liminal position between standard English and nation language, but in the heteroglossia of both languages, which articulates, even while it determines, her identity as dialogical and dialectical' (1995: 194–210). While I appreciate Zackodnik's analysis of Brand's language as a type of Bakhtinian heteroglossia which commingles different languages, I am uncomfortable with her definition of identity as 'dialectical'. Brand's sense of place and/as self, in fact, seems more likely to be created and defined in terms that go beyond that logic, through the creation of 'another tense', another language with which to express the fluidity of an identity in a constant process of becoming. Brand searches for a language that could express the ephemeral boundaries between bodies and subjectivities, that could give voice to the body and the self in an alternative socio-sexual economy. She finds that language in, and through, the desiring black lesbian body.

I want to wrap myself around you here in this line so
that you will know something…This
grace, you see, come as a surprise and nothing till
now nock on my teeming skull, then, these warm
watery syllables, a woman's tongue so like a culture…
language not yet made…I want to kiss you deeply,
smell, taste the warm water of your mouth as warm as
your hands. I lucky is grace that gather me up. (Brand, 1990: 36)

Brand makes an effort to write a 'herstory' and a genealogy for the black lesbian body, a body which is not only inscribed and positioned in different spaces—Trinidad, Toronto—but also marked and written upon by particular regimes of discursive power-neo-colonial, postcolonial. In Trinidad and Tobago, a woman whose sexuality does not conform to 'compulsory heterosexuality' is not allowed to be a citizen; as M. Jacqui Alexander argues: 'Not just (any)body can be a citizen any more, for *some* bodies have been marked by the state as non-procreative, in pursuit of sex only for pleasure […] *these* bodies, according to the state, pose a profound threat to the very survival of the nation' (1994: 11). Brand moves the critique to identity politics which rely upon stable and fixed definitions

of subject positions in order to make abject bodies and subjectivities intelligible. Brand traces an imagined genealogy of lesbian identity, giving a queer description of that ancestry in a culture where established lineage holds considerable significance: 'there are saints of this ancestry/too who laugh like jamettes in the/pleasure of their legs and caress their sex in mirrors' (1990: 51).

These lines point to the always already existence of women loving women, as well as its cultural and linguistic value in history. These 'saints' are 'like jamettes', loose women who are not afraid of expressing their sexuality and eroticism openly, representing, thereby, a threat to dominant order and authority. The very notion of jamette reveals the idea of a transgressive identity, a transgressive space, a 'taking space' which also means a 'making space' through the subversion of patriarchal and heterosexist norms (Davies, 1998). In her discussion of black female bodies in the Caribbean space, Carole Boyce Davies argues: 'Island space, women's space are all imagined spaces of absence/presence. Caribbean ocean spaces cover the unfathomable existences, unknown except by the daring, but nevertheless still with their own palpable existences and histories. The ocean is nevertheless a place of escape when island spaces become too confining' (Davies, 1998: 345–346).

Yet, the actual geographical land Brand chooses 'to light on', Canada, proves to be no less unsafe and confining than the land that she has left behind. If in Trinidad and Tobago the black lesbian woman is subdued by the dominant power of language in the context of a 'heteropatriarchal recolonization', in Canada different politics and ideologies-national, multicultural-come into play, which relegate the immigrants to the abject position of 'visible minorities'.[1] As Claire Harris asserts, black women in Canada are 'eternal immigrants forever poised on the verge of not belonging' (1996: 258).

Brand traces a map and a poetics of black Canadian space, 'the tough geography', through and on the lesbian body: 'I trace the pearl of your sweat to morning, turning

1. On the concept of visible minorities in Canada, see Bannerji, 2000.

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as you turn, breasts to breasts mute prose we arc a leaping, and no more may have passed here except also the map to coming home, the tough geography of trenches, quarrels, placards, barricades' (1990: 40). The image of the lovers' bodies meeting in an erotic 'breast to breast' touching is situated in a political context where these bodies struggle for their legitimacy. The sexualised black lesbian body in Brand's writing becomes a discursive site of resistance to the cultural violence and silence into which it has been forcibly cast.

In the collection of poems *Land To Light On*, Brand disrupts the myth of an 'imagined community' defined by precise geographical boundaries inside which citizens find their place:

I'm giving up on land to light on, slowly, it isn't land,
it is the same as fog and mist and figures and lines
and erasable thoughts, it is buildings and governments
and toilets and front door mats and typewriter shops,
cards with your name and clothing that comes undone,
skin that doesn't fasten and spills and shoes. It's paper,
paper, maps. Maps that get wet and rinse out, in my hand
anyway. I'm giving up what was always shifting, mutable
cities' flourescences, limbs, chalk curdled blackboards
and carbon copies, wretching water, cunning walls. Books
to set it right. Look. What I know is this. I'm giving up.
No offence. I was never committed. Not ever, to offices.
Or islands, continents, graphs, whole cloth, these sequences.
Or even footsteps. (Brand, 1997: 47)

As these lines highlight, the poet is highly aware of the discursive constructedness of countries' borders, whose performance is constantly reiterated by normative governments, books, and papers. Canadian land is depicted here as an instable, ever shifting space, where maps that should define and fix its frontiers 'get wet and rinse out', where cities become places of 'transmigrations and transmogrifications' (Brand, 2001: 62).

Brand's overt rejection of nation(alism), her giving up on imagined boundaries, is triggered by her constant facing up to the 'unbearable archaeology' of alienation and abjecthood. This sense of pain and not-belonging is conveyed in these concise lines: 'In this country where islands vanish, bodies submerge,/the heart of darkness in this white roads,/snow at our

throats' (Brand, 1997: 73). The image of black bodies drowning /sinking in the wilderness of white Canadian landscape, where islands fade out, unfolds a veiled topography of racism hiding beneath Canada's myth of tolerance and civility.[2]

Yet, there is no nostalgia for those vanishing islands. Indeed, Brand's writing offers a clear critique to the diasporic trope of a mythologized 'homeplace'. The memory of the Caribbean of her childhood is, in fact, connected with a heightened awareness of her own dislocation and her fundamental detachment from that place.

the taste of leaving
was already on my tongue…
Here was beauty
and here was nowhere. The smell of hurrying passed
my nostrils with the smell of sea water and fresh fish
wind, there was history which had taught my eyes to
look for escape even beneath the almond leaves fat
as women… (Brand, 1990: 22)

In her birthplace, the poet already feels alien, a migrant looking 'for escape.' Guaya in Trinidad, is an idealised place in her poems while, at the same time, it is a place where the body feels all the burden and violence of the colonial heritage. Unable to find comfort within the Caribbean of her past or the Canada of her present, the speaker defines her sense of belonging in terms of elsewhereness or, as the title of Brand's first novel suggests, in terms of 'another place, not here'. This sentence is evoked for the first time in *No Language is Neutral* as to foreshadow a theme that will become of crucial concern in her poetics:

In another place not here, a woman might touch something between beauty and nowhere, back there and here, might pass hand over hand her own trembling life, but I have tried to imagine a sea not bleeding, a girl's glance full as a verse, a woman growing old and never crying to a radio hissing of a black boy's murder. (1990: 34)

2. On this topic, see also Brand, 1994: 10.

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These evocative lines bear witness to the necessity of theorising and configuring a space of living for diasporic and queer subjectivities, a place in excess between 'beauty' and 'nowhere', between here and there. As Susan Friedman has argued, homecoming desire is an embodied visceral longing, a desire felt in the flesh, in the affective body (2004: 1–24). Dionne Brand gives up to the idea of a homeland geographically defined, and searches for her own provisionally imagined 'terra', her own land to light on, elsewhere: hence it follows that the 'nowhere' becomes the 'nowHere', the here and now of the body which turns into a discursive site of belonging and identity. As the following lines suggest: 'your planet is your hands, your house behind your eyebrows' (Brand, 1997: 44). It is precisely the erotic autonomy of the lesbian body that allows for the creation of this inhabitable space.

A woman who looks
at a woman and says, here, I have found you,
in this I am blackening in my way. You ripped the world
raw. It was as if another life exploded in my
face, brightening, so easily the brow of a wing
touching the serf, so easily I saw my own body, that
is my eyes followed me to myself, touched myself
as a place, another life, *terra*. They say this place
does not exist, then, my tongue is mythic. I was here
before. (Brand, 1990: 51)

In the erotic energy of the excess produced by two female desiring bodies looking at each other, the poet is released to another space. She becomes other than herself, (in) another place, 'another life' where she can speak her own language, 'grace'. She represents herself by describing herself as place. This is not a new place, since it has always existed, and is now reconfigured by redesigning its own ideology, history, and language so as to reflect what it has excluded. Brand upsets the dialectical relation between 'beauty' and 'nowhere' by reversing the island/ocean metaphor: the Caribbean sea becomes the no-place that needs to be re-presented and conjured in order to make sense of. The poet assertively glides out on the sea level and creates her own sense-making

through the black lesbian body. She moves from being placed to becoming place.

CARTOGRAPHIES OF DESIRE

> *No I do not long, long, slowly for the past.*
> *I am happy it is gone. If I long for it,*
> *It is the hope of it curled like burnt*
> *Paper...If I long for anything*
> *It is shadow I long for, regions of darkness.*
> *(Brand, 1997: 68)*

Brand writes not only a queer genealogy of the body, but also a different mythology of origins, as she assertively declares: 'We stumble on the romance of origins' (1997: 35). The question of belonging in Brand's writing can be analysed from the perspective of Elspeth Probyn who conceives of it as a place of departure, an ongoing process stirred by queer desire. By re-elaborating the notion of Deleuze and Guattari's flexible cartography from a queer perspective, Probyn argues that the concept of belonging must follow that cartographic logic whereby maps overlap, 'it is not a question of looking for an origin, but rather of evaluating *displacements*' (Probyn, 1995: 5). Mapping, or rather, counter-mapping, is a paradigmatic topos in Brand's work which reflects her attempt to propose counter visions of diaspora and identity beyond Western ontology and epistemology. Brand wants to draw new maps that can allow for the complexity of belonging, disarticulating it from questions of origins.

A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging, is one of Brand's texts which presents itself as a kind of overlapping maps, a mixture of incoherent fragments-memoirs, travelogue tales, poems-standing out against a fluid, flexible cartography. The metaphor of the map as 'shifting ground' disrupts the idea of the linearity of movement between fixed, tangible origins and arrivals. According to this new cartographic logic, 'the journey is the destination' (Brand, 2001: 203). As Dionne Brand argues:

> My characters [...] can only deliberately misplace directions and misread observations. They can take north for south, west for east [...] They can

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in the end impugn the whole theory of directions. […] After the Door of no Return, a map was only a set of impossibilities, a set of changing locations. (203, 224)

Brand theorises alternative spaces which destabilise the teleological vision of 'origin/return' (Clifford, 1994: 306) as well as the bounded, rigid paradigms of nation-states. The desire to belong—to an ancestral land, Africa, to the homeland, the Caribbean, to a new diasporic community, Canada—is disrupted through the figuration of drift:

We have no ancestry except the black water and the Door of No Return. They signify space and not land. […] Our ancestors were bewildered because they had a sense of origins—some country, some village, some family where they belonged and from which they were rent. We, on the other hand, have no such immediate sense of belonging, only of drift. (Brand, 2001: 61, 118)

In her attempt to trace a 'tidalectics' of queer diasporic space, Brand imagines a cartography of desire moving from territorially situated bodies and languages to deterritorialised identities and drifting bodies. From this perspective, the body can be conceived not so much in terms of location, but rather, in terms of '*loca*-motion' (Probyn 5), a floating body in, and toward what Anne Marie Fortier defines as 'diasporic horizons'; in her words, 'the projection of (queer) belongings and culture within a spatio-temporal horizon defined in terms of multi-locality, cultural diversity, dispersal, and conflict' (2001: 407).

The poetic and evocative undertones of Brand's poetry reverberate in her first novel *In Another Place Not Here*, where the narration oscillates between past and present memories, shifting and undefined spaces and places. As the title of the book suggests, the novel focuses on dislocation in both time and space, as it explores the implications of a doubly diasporic movement and the subsequent postcolonial multiple dislocations involved in the migration of peoples in the second half of the twentieth century from the Caribbean to Canada. The process of 'diasporization,' founded on colonial slavery, the middle passage, and that of re-diasporization from the Caribbean, is represented in the novel through a poetic fluid-

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ity between time and space and a non-linear narrative divided between the perspectives of two black immigrant lesbian protagonists, whose voices are registered by the distinctive rhythms of their speech, from Elizete's potent demotic to Verlia's terse idiom. The two protagonists move between hybrid and fluid locations, Toronto, Trinidad, Grenada, St. Lucia, in a deterritorialised diasporic space transgressing national borders. Elizete and Verlia's experiences seem to suggest that the space of 'here' for those living on the margins of the nation, both in the Caribbean and in Canada, is predicated upon an ongoing disjunction and dislocation. The metaphor of drift configures belonging as a provisional psychic space which expresses the very logic of an interval, in the words of Sara Ahmed, 'the passing through of the subject between apparently fixed moments of departure and arrival' (2000: 77).

The very title of the novel, *In Another Place No Here,* poses crucial questions: where is this 'elsewhere' for queer diasporic subjectivities? Is it an utopian space? Or is it an atopic space? It could be guessed that it is certainly a place of imagined pasts, but also of projected futures and unrestrainable desires. An elsewhere discovered maybe, for only brief, but intense moments, in the pleasure and sensuality of the lesbian body. Erotic queer desire revises the heterosexist and patriarchal paradigms of the nation, evoking thereby Audre Lorde's theorisations on the power of the erotic, the erotic as power. Sexuality in Brand's writing is assertively inscribed in the narratives of Caribbean transnationalism.

In the novel Brand contrasts the violence and rigidity of heterosexual relationships by describing the intensity of lesbian desire through liquid imagery, ocean, water, sweat: 'That woman like a drink of cool water [...] I see she. Hot, cool and wet. I sink the machete in my foot, careless, blood blooming in the stalks of cane, a sweet ripe smell wash me faint. With pain. Wash the field, spinning green mile after green mile around she. She, she sweat, sweet like sugar' (Brand, 1996b: 3–4). The very erotic female body becomes an agent of passage, a bridge, an arch between liquid geographies: 'A woman can be a bridge, limber and living, breathless, because she don't

know where the bridge might lead, she don't need no assurance except the arch and disappearance [...] A woman can be a bridge from these bodies whipping cane. A way to cross over' (Brand, 1996b: 16). The final scene of the novel depicts the image of Verlia leaping from a cliff; the ocean, the site of an ineffable trauma, becomes a psychic territory, a passage toward an imagined elsewhere.

> She is flying out to sea and in the emerald she sees the sea, its eyes translucent, its back solid going to some place so old there's no memory of it [...] Her body has fallen away, is just a line, an electric current, the sigh of lighting left after lighting, a faultless arc to the deep turquoise deep. She doesn't need air. She's in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy. (246–7)

The lesbian body as site of becoming-place and belonging is predicated precisely upon the movement of queer desire. This potent figuration echoes the Deleuzian notion of nomad desire as it has been revised by Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz refigures lesbian desire in terms of bodies, pleasures, intensities, beyond the psychoanalytic ontology of lack; from this perspective, desire is no longer conceived of as endless deferment, but rather, as a productive, positive force making rhizomatic connections and entailing ongoing processes of becoming. As Grosz poignantly makes clear in her discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's implications of the notion of becoming,

> It is not a question of being (—animal, —woman, —lesbian), of attaining a definite status as a thing, a permanent fixture, not of clinging to, having an identity, but of moving, changing, being swept beyond one singular position into a multiplicity of flows, or what Deleuze and Guattari have described as 'a thousand tiny sexes': to liberate the myriad of flows, to proliferate connections, to intensify. (1995: 184)

Throughout Dionne Brand's literary and filmic production an unfolding of these topics can be envisaged. Indeed, her work reveals a constant movement between the theorisation of an erotics of queer black corporeality to the figuration of bodies as 'desiring machines'. The cartography of desire between the Caribbean and Canada is traced out through

the representation of erotic, sensual, affective bodies, made of flesh, smells, sweats. The black lesbian body is performed as becoming-place, becoming-water, becoming-bridge between spaces and geographies always already fluid and floating.

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QUEERING BODIES, QUEERING BOUNDARIES:

Localizing Identity in and of the Body in Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*

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In any discussion of Canadian literature, a few preliminary ground rules, or boundaries if you will, must be established. The first of course being whether the term 'Canadian literature' includes texts written in languages other than English or if the term 'Can Lit' is being used to define mainstream English speaking literature and marginalizing works that do not fit within this framework. Having established whether the text in question is inside or outside predominantly accepted definitions of Canadian literature with reference to language, the question then becomes how to define Canadian? To envision such an attempt here is outside the scope of this paper, however, one example of a fictional attempt will be discussed: Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*. This science fiction/magic realist/fantasy/feminist/bildungsroman is a fragmented text that demonstrates Goto's proficiency in queering bodies and barriers while fragmenting boundaries.

What could be more 'Canadian' than to queer boundaries when we live in a place where we can buy cereal in French and English in English speaking Canada, and then travel to French speaking Canada and meet Quebecers who form a 'nation "within a united Canada"' (Harper, 2006), whatever that means. Both Separatists and Federalists alike are still pondering Prime Minister Harper's attempt to engage in constructive debate about the rights and privileges of Quebec and those so Quebecly inclined. Of course given the technological age which has and will continue to rupture and recreate boundaries, read-

ers of online news outlets were invited to vote on 'Your View: Should Quebec be recognized as a nation within a united Canada' (CBC, 2006). I am quite sure that many online and offline readers would have liked to vote on what exactly a nation within a united Canada means? Certainly this is a question of 'culture' or 'nurture', as 'nature' is pretty clear on being topographically united. The fact that questions of nation, nationhood, nation building and national unity are so prevalent as to permeate literature, news media, kitchen table discussions and House of Commons debates however, speaks to an increasing inability to define what 'Canada' is and means.

In an attempt to answer these kinds of questions about nationality, ethnicity, community and identity formation, Hiromi Goto directs readers to the body: the concrete lived experience of one unnamed narrator. In *The Kappa Child*, the unnamed narrator tells her own story of being impregnated with and by a mythical Japanese spirit called a kappa. This medically unrecognized pregnancy that occurred not by consummation with a male subject but rather a sumo wrestling match with a gender ambiguous kappa, helps the narrator accept and release her violent and traumatic past as she works towards self acceptance. To say that Goto is attempting to break down boundaries of nation is a limited statement at best as her work 'grapples with the problems of assimilation, difference, and belonging in the face of the seemingly monolithic idea of a "nation" that excludes minority groups' (Sasano, 2010: 1). The unnamed narrator is 'othered' in more ways than she would prefer to count as a lesbian, Japanese Canadian, gender ambiguous, lonely person who is pregnant with a fetus who wanders in and out of her womb (Goto, 2001: 108). The text she is narrating is also operating in a refusal to specify an allegiance to an English speaking Canadian 'nation' as Goto frequently refuses to translate for her readers. Passages such as '"Easter ni shut up yuwanaino", Okasan calls from the bathroom' (Goto, 2001: 21) in which Japanese and English combine and collide are common. Goto is at work in this text queering every possible boundary that exists from nation to ethnicity to gender to sex to sexuality

to pregnancy to hysteria to family to childhood and from childhood into a loosely defined adulthood.

Though the use of the term 'queer' is and will continue to be contentious, I use the term 'queering' here in an active, verb, and verbal sense to mean making strange, marking, creating or engendering difference. Of course I do align the term queer and its inclusivity with theoretical debates on the usefulness or uselessness of the term. Jay Prosser's reading of Judith Butler provides a poignant discussion of just how inclusive the term queer should be, and whether by continuing to expand the term, certain injustices are not committed (Prosser, 1998: 279)? For the purposes of this examination however, I will use the term queering more often than the noun queer to signal and signify active, shifting, moving, and collapsing boundaries. I am suggesting that Goto is making strange the idea of defining one self or one's self by arbitrary and shifting boundaries that have little to do with the lived experience with which any one person deals. Instead, Goto provides a model for the openness that comes with definition by the corporeal, an acknowledging of what is happening corporeally, bodily, on a daily basis as opposed to self definition by vague and abstract concepts like nation and sexuality. I argue instead for a queering of, a making strange, a fragmenting of boundaries in order to understand the queering of the body that occurs in this text. My goal is to identify the narrator as narrator, as story teller, by her own terms whether or not we as readers and scholars may be uncomfortable engaging in the narrator's self belittling at times. This narrator enacts and possesses a complex identity in that she has no control over what happens to her body, the driving motion of the text, until the end of the text when she literally begins to 'let go' (Goto, 2001: 270). By actively queering the body of the narrator, making different, altering, changing her experience of her corporeality, Goto is able to provide readers with a text in which boundaries are deemed unnecessary and fragmented identities breed self acceptance.

While many critics may agree that Goto is engaged in discourses that question boundaries and 'issues of marginalization' (Libin, 2001: 93), there is no consensus as to exactly how her

texts 'should' be read. Scholars such as Mark Libin attempt to 'move closer to the marginalized space out of which Goto writes' with a view towards 'befriending' the 'racialized' text (Libin, 2001: 94). While a respectful attempt, the suggestion that Libin who situates himself as a privileged white male can move into a space out of which Goto writes fundamentally reinforces a kind of 'us' and 'them' rhetoric and further promotes a critical and cultural difference between 'whiteness' and 'non-whiteness'. Libin's work becomes, then, more about his position as reader than an analysis of Goto's text. He refocuses the attention to himself as critic instead of the unnamed narrator who cannot seamlessly move closer to the space Libin inhabits. A much more realistic description of the kinds of borders and barriers Goto is working 'without' and 'within' comes from Nancy Kang who reminds readers and critics alike that 'queer Asian Canadians, particularly lesbians, have to worry about layered alienations: racism, sexism, homophobia, and generationally or ethnically polarized groups. While some Asian female bodies may be valorized through the lens of heterosexual erotic fantasy, outside of that, many become personae non-gratae' (Kang, 2001: Ecstasies). Goto's unnamed narrator is one such persona non-grata. She operates outside of any easily identifiable position of privilege and would be hard pressed to view life in the way of a lesbian utopia Kang eventually suggests. While Kang and Libin's attempts to identify the narrator using terms that speak to nationality and sexuality, I argue that we as scholars need to respond to the unnamed narrator by queering the terms that are too often used to dictate identity. Unlike Libin who is writing about his own comfort level, I prefer to wonder and question with the narrator instead of simply identifying her as outside the margin and belonging to polarized groups.

One of the most interesting scenes in the text in which borders and boundaries are tackled head on occurs when the family is moving cross country. When the family stops at a motel, the narrator's father Hideo wants to pay for the room with a cheque and 'the motel man' (Goto, 2001: 70) asks for identification. Instead of producing identification,

Hideo questions why he cannot be trusted. The manager says that it is simply policy and that Hideo is 'not a local' (Goto, 2001: 70) which is seemingly not offensive. The offence comes when the ignorant motel man asks where the family will be putting down roots? When he confirms that what Hideo is pointing at is 'the old Rodney farm' the following exchange ensues with the motel man beginning:

"I hope you make a good go of the place. I always thought it was terrible what was done to you people."
Which ones? I thought. Which ones does he think we are?
"What did you say?" Dad took a quick step toward the gulping man.
Okasan raised one hand but it dropped heavily beside her body.
"No offense intended," Motel Man stammered. "I figured you folks to be Japanese."
"We are CANADIAN!" Dad roared.
"No need," Okasan nervously plucked Dad's sleeve. "No need to shout," she murmured.
Swinging arc of arm. Smack. A hand-shaped stain on my mother's cheek, the color of pain and humiliation" (Goto, 2001: 70).

In perhaps one of the best examples of ignorance and privilege, a motel man attempting to be neighborly and sympathetic proves his ignorance by reducing the identity(ies) of a family to their perceived race/ethnicity. The power 'balance' already obstructed by race which angers Hideo, is further imbalanced by his wife's attempts to calm the situation. The reader is left with an image of four young girls watching their mother get hit in front of a stranger. The rest of the scene, the exchange of money is not reported. Instead the line after humiliation speaks to the prairie dust and then moves inside to the hotel room. 'Thus, in true Canadian fashion, Goto's protagonist partially defines herself in relation to other cultural myths and identities; yet oddly enough, through the act of incorporating and simultaneously resisting these cultures, Hiromo Goto manages to construct a new western Canadian myth and a new western space in her fiction' (Beeler, 2008: 67). While Goto may be constructing a new myth of the prairies, the unnamed narrator has slim pickings for positive identification in this scene. "Canadian" is associated with a violent

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father attempting to align himself with a nice but ignorant man, and "Japanese" identity signified by the title Okasan, is aligned with calm passivity which results in victim status. The prairie of course continues to be the dry, barren dust contrasted with the lush wetness of kappa life and stories.

In this particular scene however, what is clearly evident is that the body, corporeality, skin, heavy hands beside bodies and arcs of arms are very clearly aligned with identification. Hideo's skin 'reveals' he and his family to be reduced to the 'you people' victims and he in turn victimized his 'inferior' wife while his daughters stand as helpless witnesses to violence and essentialism. When the four sisters finally find relief from the trauma of the prairie motel scene, the heat, the dust, the forced meal of fried chicken earlier in the day, emotional trauma, and exhaustion finally take over and the girls are unable to contain their bowels (Goto, 2001: 72). As Emiko gently cleans her daughters and allows them to rest in the cool sanctity of the wet bathtub, the chapter ends with the loving Okasan giggling and saying 'there's a story about a kappa who liked outhouses' (Goto, 2001: 73). Although bodies and body theory may be common in feminist theorizations, less than a few literary scholars would prefer to read about diarrhea in analysis. This kind of wetness as contrasted with prairie dryness is likely not what Beeler had in mind. However, the cleansing bath and privacy of a Hideo free space operates as the wet, cool, calm after the desert storm. The boundaries of moistness and dryness however begin to collide, breakdown, become queer in an uncomfortable scene for the narrator and her sisters as they listen to their parents having sex in the dark a few feet away. The narrator even feels betrayed by her mother as the narrator asks 'how could she' twice (Goto, 2001: 79). What remains to be seen, is that whenever boundary or limits collapsing occurs, there is a corporeal element present in this text.

When being Canadian is associated with violence and ignorance, one may question how national identities and definitions by ethnicity even make sense for a young girl attempting

to maintain a positive view of her self? In an introduction to an anthology containing Goto's short story 'Stinky Girl', Smaro Kamboureli reminds readers that 'multiculturalism has been attacked for offering a policy of containment, a policy which, by legislating "otherness", attempts to control its diverse representations, to preserve the long-standing racial and ethnic hierarchies in Canada' (Kamboureli, 2007: xxix). If the macro government and nation building agencies and proponents are engaged in policies of further defining and making strict the boundaries and lines of ethnicities, turning inward to the local, localized, and localizing may seem to be an answer. For Goto's narrator however, the local will have to be even more micro than her own family unit. As she lays in the middle of a field in the middle of the night as she and her family dig a trench to steal water from a neighboring farm to grow Japanese rice in Alberta, the narrator ponders her options thinking 'there were none. I was ten years old and I didn't have any money [. . .] Going to white outsiders wasn't an option for an Asian immigrant family like us. If you ditched the family, there was absolutely nothing left' (Goto, 2001: 199). Acknowledging commonly held beliefs, whether stereotypical or practical depending on the family, Goto positions her narrator as being an outsider even within her already marginalized family. Goto also highlights prevalent themes in the criticism of literature that so much as mentions a character struggling with conflicting identities. In an article titled 'Canadian Nationalism, Canadian Literature and Racial Minority Women', Arun Prabha Mukherjee notes that non-Canadian born writers find themselves in a category of 'immigrant writing' that

> supposedly comes in two kinds: if it deals with subject matter that alludes to where the writer came from, it is perceived as nostalgic; and if it has Canadian content, it is automatically considered to be about an immigrant's struggle to adjust to new realities. As [M. G.] Vassanji has pointed out, white immigrant writers have not had their writing branded in this way. (Mukherjee, 1999: 159)

As theorists like Kit Dobson and others engaged in transnational criticism propose opening borders to wider are-

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nas of analysis, I propose to analyze Goto's text according to the framework set out or avoided within her own rhetoric. Though Goto is involved in these debates does not mean we as scholars should continue to place Goto and her work into neat and manageable boxes also known as 'immigrant writing' or 'minority women's writing'. While being in the margin allows Goto to provide a text rich in play and playfulness, this marginalized position also means that this author is facing an audience who more often than not would prefer 'to label' instead of engaging in the practice of the unnamed narrator who is unable to fit inside labels and finally finds solace in the acceptance of a labelless position.

As the scales of analysis and indeed audiences become larger and more loosely defined by specific nation based borders, Goto presents us with a work that is decidedly micro in its practice, rhetoric, and even publishing. This Alberta based and published book is the story of a person who has a community of two friends and her grocer, one childhood neighbor, and a family she rejects; but not once is there a mention of school or other jobs. She has one boss whom she rarely sees as they communicate via radio and every significant event whether in the flash back memory scenes or the present magic and mystery of the pregnancy are felt and dealt with in a corporeal manner. Nothing about this text can be generalized, and theories of globalization or transnationalism suggest a wider array of analysis that would not be appropriate for a text written with such minute attention to detail. The title bodies in Canada then holds new meaning as this particular novel queers borders of geography, sexuality, and frequently race in favor of a local and localizing trend.

This self-reflexive text that speaks of 'the saturation of the past with the present is an ongoing story' (Goto, 2001: 215), is presented in such a fragmented way that memories of the narrator's past constitute entire sections of the text that are also juxtaposed with passages in italics in which the fetus appears to speak and bubbles appear or parables are related (Goto, 2001: 60, 74–75). What is important about the attention to the past, to memories, to

the localization of the narrator as child in her life and mind, are the allowances Goto is able to make for her characters. While certain moments, conversations and sentences committed to public hearing would not be appropriate for an adult character to voice, Goto's foray into the thoughts of children are what take this text from one that engages in debates about race, racism and racial identity, to one that actively investigates the inner workings of internalizations regardless of race. Throughout the text, the narrator as child carries with her and reads the literature of Laura Ingalls Wilder. These prairie tales are the narrator's first, and of course most problematic introduction to people who identify as First Nations. Some of the memory passages detailing the narrator's childhood even appear intertwined with both the narrative and rhetoric of Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie.* When looking at her father in the hot sun, the narrator thinks 'he could pass for an Indian' (Goto, 2001: 44). Of course when the narrator actually meets her neighbor, even a child for whom forgiveness and allowances may be made, realizes the errors in internalizations.

> Gerald Nakamura Coming Singer was incomprehensible. In Laura Ingalls' book-world, Indians meant teepees on the prairies and that was that. Indians didn't equal someone who was both Blood and Japanese Canadian. Indians certainly never meant someone who lived next door on a chicken farm.
>
> "Call me Janice," she croaked and thumped me on my arm, when I called Gerald's mom, Mrs. Nakamura Coming Singer.
>
> I eye-glanced at Gerald's face for signs. Flipping from his face to his mother's, searching for where the ancestry bled into more Japanese and less Indian, but I couldn't tell, and only stared with my pea-sized eyes until Janice noticed.
>
> "Whatchya staring at, kiddo? You never seen a First Nations person before?"
>
> "First Nations?"
>
> "Yeah, kiddo. Don't cut me any of the 'Indian' crap, how they keep on teaching that shit in school, I'll never understand!" She scowled and flicked paper into a cigarette with her tongue (Goto, 2001: 188–189).

Because Goto places this scene in the context of the pea-sized eyes of a 'racially othered' child, we as readers are less inclined to be put out by the internalized ignorance

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in this scene. The same allowances cannot and would not be made if an educated adult reader were to be asking these kinds of blunt, no matter how honest, questions. While 'the problem and practice of classifying Indigeneity has been something "given to" and "expected of" Aboriginal people' (Heiss, 2001: 206), readers of this particular text must be held accountable for their own internalizations. Though allowances are made for a child narrator, the same allowances cannot be made for my privileged Caucasian students who ask of Goto without shame or apology in the middle of class 'why can't she just write Mom instead of Okasan?' While some readers of this article may find offense in my suggestion that readers need to examine their own internalizations, others may delight in Goto's willingness to deconstruct borders and her active '(dis)placing or (dis)locating the national narrative of subjectivity, for example, into the diaspora of cross-cultural, -racial, -gender, -class, and -erotic identifications' (Dickinson, 1999: 157).

The deconstruction and queering of boundaries of appropriateness, ethnicity, discussion, and childhood continue with the narrator as child's first discussions with Gerald. After the quiet child finally speaks they discover that not only does the narrator speak English but Gerald in fact does speak (Goto, 2001: 167). After several more minutes of silence Gerald asks the narrator 'you a boy or a girl' (Goto, 2001: 168)? She retorts 'you blood or Japanese' (Goto, 2001: 168). The lines are drawn literally in the prairie dust sand. These children, echoing what they have seen and been taught, are expecting those they meet to fall on one side of a line or the other. When neither is true the conversation shifts. The narrator actually becomes so comfortable in Gerald's calm, non-violent male presence that she falls asleep. When she wakes he gently comforts her and tells her that she spoke in Japanese and English when she was asleep. In the same way that Goto queers what the reader expects of children—to play nicely together instead of engage in hugely political questioning—so too does she complicate the notion of the 'child'. The narrator had

> always hoped that childhood could be a book, a sequence of pages that I could flip through, or close. A book that could be put away on a shelf. Even boxed and locked into storage should the need arise. But, of course not. Childhood isn't a book and it doesn't end. My childhood spills into my adult life despite all my attempts at otherwise and the saturation of the past with the present is an ongoing story. (Goto, 2001: 215).

In a text entitled *The Queer Child or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*, Kathryn Bond Stockton writes that 'the child is precisely who we are not and, in fact, never were. It is the act of adults looking back' (Stockton, 2009: 5). This point of view that would challenge many readers to revisit they ways in which they conceptualize the children in their own lives very accurately summarizes the narrator in Goto's text. The narrator defines her sister as having 'never grown up. She isn't a child and she isn't an adult, she lingers somewhere in a region where general modes of human conduct are skewed in a Micely manner' (Goto, 2001: 19). The skewing of general modes of human conduct is a description that obviously mirrors the narrator's own actions. Even though I argue for a queering of boundaries and in fact a shifting away from using commonly defined labels, Goto's text has much in common with a bildungsroman or coming of age text. However, in true queering fashion, Goto does not present a linear narrative of growth. Instead, the reader becomes accustomed to the narrator looking back on, remembering, and attempting to move past her childhood into something resembling adulthood. Working as a collector of abandoned shopping carts and having a sexual relationship consisting only of a vibrator however, does not a 'stable' adult make. The narrator is far from stable in this text as she moves in and out of emotional trauma and in and out of her pregnant state. It is through the body, corporeality, the queering of the corpus that the narrator finally finds some sense of self.

In an article entitled 'Towards a Queer Genealogy of SF' in which Wendy Gay Pearson includes *The Kappa Child* in her discussion of science fiction, queer genealogies become engaged in processes of undoing. Pearson writes:

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> queer genealogies of sf, then, are engaged as much in a process of un/doing history as they are of un/doing gender. Indeed, the process of undoing is inseparable from the process of doing, since the former depends upon the latter; if we can return momentarily to [Judith] Butler, it would seem that undoing may be less a refusal than a failed iteration, even where that failure is, to some extent, deliberate and agential. (Pearson, 2008: 75)

The idea of undoing as a failed performance rather than a specific active attempt not to do or to fragment, suggests that the idea of queering, making different, placing the action in an active rather than accidental sense can both define and fail to define the narrator's actions. As Sandra Almeida argues, the narrator's 'abject body, and what it now contains—the alien creature—and the memory it triggers, become key to the protagonist's understanding of her experience of dislocation and unbelonging' (Almeida, 2009: 56). Goto's attempt to undo or redo the concept of pregnancy involves a failing and triumph for the narrator. Having previously been unable to imagine her self as pregnant, the narrator begins to become very defensive about her non-pregnant, pregnant state. The undoing or failure to repeat normative performances constituting regularity means for the narrator that she is further marginalized as a person who is pregnant but yet not pregnant by any medical definition. The narrator however, reacts and responds to all moments of trial corporeally. As she yells at her compassionate friends for questioning her pregnancy, she says 'I feel awful. I wish I could cut the words right out of my face' (Goto, 2001: 153). This abject body, the site of the undoing, or failure, or enlightened queering as I would argue—that is, existing in a queer identity that involves not only sexuality but an altering and challenging many different labels or markers of identity—harbors the fetus which eventually will lead to self healing, but in this moment, journeys with the narrator as her subconscious attempts to deal with trauma in her dreams. Feeling as though she could literally cut off pieces of her body that cause harm to others, the narrator dreams that during a meal her father 'pulled pieces out of Okasan. Balled them up. Handed them to us to eat and

they tasted so good we ate and ate and ate, Okasan asking us if we liked it, we should have more, enryo nashi' (Goto, 2001: 159). In a chapter about boundaries between friends and lovers, doctors and patients, fetuses and mothers, daughters are fed their mother's flesh in a dream by their father and their mother asks them how they are enjoying her body? The body in this moment is synonymous with consumption, and yet it is flesh being consumed. This pseudo cannibalism represents not only an active queering of the boundaries of dreams and reality as the dream is strikingly similar to the narrator's wish to cut the violent words from her face, but also signals a fragmenting of both the body of the narrator and her mother. This fragmenting is not an undoing or failure to repeat a normative process or practice, but rather an attempt by Goto to illustrate shattering boundaries of language, custom, gift giving, violence, consumption, family and perhaps sanity. The narrator wakes up and the narrative shifts into a passage in italics that reads 'perhaps in dreaming, the world grows material' (Goto, 2001: 160).

As the narrator's sense of self grows, and her non-pregnant, pregnant body does not, the reader's appreciation for the intensity of Goto's commitment to localizing the text in the corporeal grows as well. As the narrator 'stroke[s] the unpregnant curve of [her] belly in a pregnant woman type of way' (Goto 2001: 13) the reader is reminded that this unpregnant or non curve in the narrator's belly is visible only to her through touch. The narrator is not visible as pregnant in the same way that a comparatively 'thin' woman who carried weight only around her middle and also displayed a protruding belly button may be 'read' or 'perceived' as pregnant. The narrator, though not visibly pregnant, is still subject to 'overlapping and contradictory discourses around identification, recognition, visibility, and belonging' (Pearson, 2007: 77). Goto, once again preempting the discussion in the academy, overtly deals with the politics and practical side of issues of visibility and representation. Instead of writing a text that deals with race and questions of ethnicity and nationhood in dialogue or perception alone, Goto presents a narrator who

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muses on the subject of recognition. In a queering, not undoing or failure or passive avoidance, an active moment of queering, Goto manages to make strange(r) both Hegel's master/slave narrative and Lacan's mirror stage.

> I don't think of myself as a complainer. Maybe bitterly realistic and sarcastic to boot, but it's hard to be otherwise. Especially if you're an ugly, pregnant Asian born into a family not of your choosing. The odd thing about your looks is that you never see your own face. Funny how that works. How your reflection isn't really who you are, just an image of your real self contained in glass. You go your whole life without seeing yourself as you really are. All you know is how you are treated. (Goto, 2001: 13–14)

Because all we know is how we are treated, according to Goto's narrator and indeed much of Western cultural and philosophical thought, what the readers need remember is that the narrator is most often alone. If indeed, all she knows is how she is treated, then we as readers need to read her as a very unreliable narrator. Yes, she endured violence and belittling for much of her life, but in her life as a pregnant collector of shopping carts, she is treated well by friends who love her and sisters who want to know her as an adult. Goto of course queers, alters, makes strange, deconstructs this notion of recognition by an other and refractures the notion into an image in the mirror. Instead of a physical other in the form of a person, Goto refigures Hegelian recognition to appear more like an ongoing engagement with a mirror. Though the narrator calls the mirror a device that is able to present only an image, the narrator is so often alone that the reader must rely on that mirror. The most often and frequent physical descriptions of the narrator have to do with her 'ugly salvation' (Goto, 2001: 181). Throughout the course of the text, the narrator says this about her body: 'my short calves and my inadequate flat feet ache after a few hours. Corns grow profuse on my bratwurst toes. But I still walk. As swiftly as I can without my short-legged trot looking ridiculous', 'Jules looks up, direct, his gaze so crisp, I turn my head away before he can identify all of my weaknesses. How it's safer to have an ugly face, an even uglier mouth, filled with bite', and the 'ugly pregnant Asian' comment becomes

a refrain (Goto, 2001: 184, 187, 13). The irony becomes that the narrator sees not only her body as ugly, but also her actions.

In one of the memory based chapters, the narrator tells of having to help dig tunnels through the fields so her father could steal water from the neighbors. Gerald comes outside to tell the narrator that if they are stealing water they had better be quiet since he could hear them. The narrator shows off her muscles earned from nighttime digging and Gerald pats her and says 'you're strong' (Goto 2001: 200). She feels tears welling up in her eyes and bits her lip, breaking the skin, to avoid crying.

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> "Don't," Gerald whispered. Awkwardly pulled me close and licked my lip with his small, neat tongue.
>
> I scrambled back, shocked, embarrassed, elated, I don't know what. And not knowing made me furious. Chin pushed out, my head thrust forward, I drew my hands back then shoved with all my farmer strength. Gerald smashing into the ground.
>
> "Hey, sissy boy!" I sneered. "I don't let sissy boys touch me. Ever." This hateful coil of ugliness twisting in my gut, the words stinging something inside me, but unable to stop. "Why don't you get your baby butt home."
>
> [Gerald quietly goes home and the narrator finishes]:
>
> "Yeah!" I yelled. 'Go on! Sissy! Pansy! Go on home to your slut mother!" I screamed until I was hoarse and gasping.
>
> A heavy hand on my shoulder, I almost fell out of myself, squeaked in sudden fear.
>
> "Good for you," my father nodded approvingly. "Shouldn't be friends with weaklings."
>
> Dad was proud of me.
>
> I stumbled. My face caved in. I tipped my head backward and howled, howled to the indifferent sky, my father stunned to see me wailing, just stood and stared. The fat sun rising keen and relentless, I howled until my mouth was parched and cracked. I howled until my voice had left and salt grained my skin.
>
> I dropped the shovel at my father's feet. Walked slowly, warily back to the house". (Goto, 2001: 201)

Because the narrator is so accustomed to describing her self as ugly as an adult, it is not surprising that this child cum adult looking back would frame the telling of her hateful acts towards Gerald in corporeal terms. Ugliness twists in her guts, her face caves in, not unlike the moment she wanted

to cut words out of her face, her throat is raw from screaming and she is terrified of touch whether that touch comes from her father or from Gerald. Instead of a scene that traffics in rhetoric or emotion that reinforces Gerald as sissy, since he is treated as such and the narrator is treated as strong by her father, Goto presents a scene in which the body is paramount. Touch signals rage in the narrator and then uncontrollable sadness. When the narrator realizes that she is aligning her self with her violent father who is now proud, her face caves in. She does not feel as though her face caves in, but in this moment, her flesh actually recedes into her body, possibly consumed in the same way that her father fed his daughters their mother. Hideo is figured as 'the most powerful and complex adversary in this woman warrior's journey' (Kang, 2010: 27); most powerful adversary possibly because the narrator begins to see her self reflected in the image her father portrays. It is not until the narrator beings to accept and perform her pregnancy that she starts to live a gentler, less violent and obstructive life.

Nancy Kang writes that 'the kappa, whether as childhood myth or embodied presence, reconfigures the limits of the possible and the real. Indeed, the narrator's voice is intermingled with that of *The Kappa Child*'s, an in utero/ex utero duet that catalyzes the woman warrior's belated growing-up process' (Kang, 2010: 31). The relationship with the kappa however is not as perfect as critics would have readers believe. Near the middle of the text, the narrator starts to believe she is no longer pregnant, that 'maybe the creature is gone' (Goto, 2001: 194). She slides her 'fingers over the wide spread of my belly, but there is no answer. Never mind! See, Dr. Suleri was right all along. I'd better pull myself together before I go too far down the paths of my parents. Addiction. Fits. I refuse to inherit these unwanted gifts' (Goto, 2001: 194). The problem for the narrator is that Goto is queering the boundaries between child and adult, parent and child. As the narrator stares at her 'double row of toes in the reflection of bathwater' she experiences 'a longing to inhabit that upside-down place where I'm the opposite of myself' (Goto, 2001: 194). Unfortu-

nately for the narrator, the self is not as cut and dry as an object and its opposite. To suggest that the narrator could become the opposite of her reflection in the bathwater would mean that she would have to have a concrete idea of the object of which she wishes to be the opposite. At this moment in the text she cannot simply be the opposite of her father because she is so aligned with him. This moment also represents a point of inbetweenity as the narrator does not feel the fetus inside her: she is and is not pregnant. Kang writes that

> [T]he kappa, alongside the narrator, suggests a genertive site between such traditional binaries as male/female, native/transplanted Asian, and myth/reality. The text is not, however, a conventional mediation on liminality, or the threshold state between one state of being and another, because The Kappa Child is a part of and yet apart from its presumptive human parent. (Kang, 2010: 33)

The text can fit on neither side of a binary, nor can it fit properly into what Kang believes to be the in between state. This particular scene creates an even queerer moment for the narrator. Having staunchly defended her pregnancy to her friends and doctor, she now feels a loss, a loneliness, the kind of loneliness that comes only when the impossible pregnancy is gone and may not return with no signs of a birthing or releasing. The Kappa Child has agency and appears and disappears in and from the narrator's body at will. This agency and inability of the narrator to hold or contain the fetus in her womb suggests that yet again, the kappa pregnancy falls outside of the available labels we could choose for definition. The movement then, as the book continues, becomes a neither/nor engagement with binary definitions rather than an either/or. Neither one of the definitions of pregnant/non pregnant, Asian/Canadian, lesbian/nonlesbian, child/adult seem appropriate. Unlike other texts, this novel is not as concerned with the narrator as part of a larger immigrant community. Instead she is incredibly isolated until she becomes not alone in her body, and then becomes further isolated when she feels even more alone in her body. The borders of nation cease to matter when the borders of the self and other are so intertwined, intermingled,

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intermeshed through intercourse and active discourse with a mythical yet not so imaginary fetus.

When the novel begins to move from the tragic moments of the narrator's childhood into the joyous moments of self acceptance and adulthood, the reader finally sees the narrator with a smile on her face, a face no longer described as ugly. Though her remarks are specific to Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*, these observations are perhaps more poignant when applied to *The Kappa Child*. 'Through these unconventional scenes of ecstasy, Goto rescripts female desire, subjectivity, and pleasure. What is noteworthy in each of these instances is that self-fulfilment, though achieved through the body, rarely comes about through the typical heterosexual coupling' (Ty, 2004: 167–168). In other words, not only does self-fulfilment occur through the body, the lived experience of the narrator in her own undefinable skin, but self acceptance and love occurs in a queer, not so traditional or definable way. Self acceptance, however corporeal, involves a visit from the Stranger who when least seen, impregnanted the narrator via sumo wrestling.

On one of her long walks through downtown, the narrator stops into the restaurant where she met the Stranger the first time and sees her sisters Slither and Mice eating together. Slither had tried to call but reminds the narrator that no one knows where she lives. Through the course of eating with her sisters, the narrator sees her sister Mice as the scholar she is, attending a conference at the university, not the Micely child. The narrator also realizes that Slither is a compassionate woman, not a girl who lacks depth. When she goes to use the washroom, the narrator encounters the Stranger again who strongly suggests the narrator have her hair cut because the Stranger tells the narrator you are 'wasting your great face with this odds-and-ends, deck brush hair gone wild' (Goto 2001: 248). The Stranger, likely part kappa, part manifestation of the narrator's choosing, sees the narrator as having a great face. What a surprise to the reader who has no doubt come to think of the narrator as she sees her self.

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The barber however, sees the narrator not as a her self, but rather, as one who needs a hair cut with an electric shaver that 'takes all of five minutes' (Goto, 2001: 248). The implication in this scene is that the narrator is perceived as male and given a masculine cut (Goto, 2001: 249). When she leaves, the narrator exits with a wide grin and leaves a 'five-dollar tip for an eight-dollar haircut' (Goto, 2001: 248). The simple act of a barber seeing a person in pajamas with ragged hair and giving a 'masculine' hair cut with clippers fundamentally changes the way the narrator perceives 'her' self. This scene also forces readers and scholars to question whether continuing, or having even used from the beginning, female pronouns is at all appropriate in the case of this unnamed narrator? This narrator clearly struggles with identity and is by the end of the text identifying with her so called masculine hair cut wondering 'now that I've changed my hair, should I change my wardrobe' (Goto, 2001: 249)? She never once in the text calls her self female, male, saying only 'I'm not a guy' (Goto, 2001: 119). What remains clear is that for this narrator the body dictates gender, not necessarily even sex, but gender. The narrator's physicality of her body, adornments, pregnancy is known to only those whom she has told, or with whom she has been intimate, but her hair cut is witnessed by strangers who comment (Goto, 2001: 250). Her gender then, becomes defined in the masculine arena and her sex remains ambiguous. Presumably she is female as she identifies as being, not only having, a sister (Goto, 2001: 246), however, the presence of a male nurse goes unnoticed (Goto, 2001: 103) and a sumo wrestling match on an airstrip with a green, genderless spirit could very well have impregnated a man or sexually neutral person. The predominant practice in *Kappa Child* criticism however is to consider the narrator female. I of course wish to make strange that practice and at least suggest that nowhere in the text does the narrator confirm, in the positive, 'I am female'. The narrator renounces masculinity twice, once as a child and once as an adult, but she does not then affirm a sexual or gender identity (Goto, 2001: 168, 119). Her sexuality however, is affirmed by the narrator's desire for her friend Midori and then Bernie, the grocer,

but never defined (Goto, 2001: 235, 274). Lines of sexuality in this text remain queer rather than held steadfast as the narrator was attracted to Gerald at one time, and Bernie has a child: that, even in this novel, biologically suggests an acquaintance with heterosexuality (Goto, 2001: 204, 169). As the narrator continues to refuse self definition, localizing her identity through daily experiences, she visits her sister which proves insightful for both narrator and reader.

After attempting to kill her father, the narrator drives back to the city and goes to her sister's apartment. After sleeping for a long while, Slither very gently helps the narrator realize how ignorant she has been in her anger for so many years. Slither has been through counseling and reminds the narrator that she should let their mother 'have something for herself, now' (Goto, 2001: 267). Slither's insight surprises the narrator who sarcastically says to her self 'did I think I had a monopoly' (Goto, 2001: 266)? As the narrator sits in conversation with her mature, settled sister, one more surprise comes before leaving. Slither asks that the narrator now call her Satomi saying 'Slither was funny when we were children, but we're adults now' (Goto 2001: 268). The narrator asks her sister if she is happy, having trouble heeding the request as 'Slith–Satomi' becomes 'Sli–Satomi' in the narration (Goto, 2001: 268). As the narrator learns that Satomi has had someone in her life for a long time, the narrator is left wondering how much she has missed because she 'never cared to ask' (Goto, 2001: 266). As the narrator grows in maturity and acceptance, she begins to understand that her grown adult body, her lived corporeal experiences are beginning to manifest in varying ways including emotional maturity.

In 'Bodies that Matter', Judith Butler writes on the subject of materiality and materialization that are in Goto's work, akin to manifestation. While the kappa suggests that 'in dreaming, the world grows material' (Goto, 2001: 160), Butler suggests that:

> to be material means to materialize, where the principle of that materialization is precisely what 'matters' about that body, its very intelligibility. In this sense, to know the significance of something is to know how

and why it matters, where 'to matter' means at once 'to materialize' and 'to mean'. (Butler, 1993: 32)

What is poignant about aligning Butler's theorization with the musings of one fictional kappa fetus is the idea that mattering, to mean, to be recognized by someone or something, is and is of, corporeal. In Goto's work, dreaming becomes an enacting of guilt or fears and in Butler's writing, significance signals a materialization, a manifestation, an action.

The term intelligibility also takes on new meaning in the context of a body that contains a fetus that does not remain in the womb but literally wanders out. In a queering of a Freudian slip, or stroll, or jump, this fetus wanders from the womb all the way up to the protagonist's ears in one scene as what Mice saw when the narrator was frightening her sister was the likeness of green in and around the narrator's face (Goto, 2001: 108). While neither significance nor meaning can be reduced to the body and defined solely in and of the corporeal, what is useful about fiction is that fictional texts can inform theory. Butler seeks to understand the systematic and systemic faculties at work in defining and regulating bodies and Goto is presenting an entirely poetic and potent example that theorists might otherwise ignore.

To return to a discussion of appearances and fragment this particular narrative, I feel called to remind my reader of the narrator's intense engagement with defining her self as an ugly pregnant Asian. In a moment of queering, certainly not undoing or failing to perform, the narrator decides to watch the lunar eclipse with a green kappa like Stranger who while in the van drinks from a flask and tells the narrator 'don't be a party pooper! I thought you were a fun guy' (Goto, 2001: 119). The narrator responds that she does not drink and drive because 'it's an ethical thing', she frowns and continues 'and I'm not a guy' (Goto, 2001: 119). The narrator is quick to confirm that she is not a guy, however, she does not place her identification in the positive form saying 'I am_____'. The Stranger responds in a wonderfully post everything fashion saying 'Guy, girl, so what?' Then scoffs. 'Do I look like someone who cares' (Goto, 2001: 119)? Continuing to oper-

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ate within the continuum of appearances, the Stranger asks the narrator if the Stranger looks like someone who cares, not acts, or even appears. How do I look to you? Do I look like someone who cares what gender you present? Does my body appear to you materially as one that could be bothered to care how you recognize me or what my recognition of you may cause? This is a particularly disarming moment for the narrator since she is used to operating purely within the biological realm of sex, and not within the behavioral or social realm of gender as this scene is pre-haircut. The problem comes for the reader in that the narrator is not a reliable narrator. We have no real idea of her appearance, of the body she presents to those within the text as at every opportunity possible, she describes her self as ugly. After she and the Stranger have decided to climb over the barbed wire fence, using the Stranger's leather jacket as protection, the narrator relates what follows as such: 'the Stranger winked, kissed me full on my ugly lips, and hopped out of the van' (Goto, 2001: 121). The narrator in this text cannot be said to be actively performing any gender, but rather she actively avoids performing 'either' gender. She wears pajamas all the time, has a job as a collector of abandoned shopping carts, appears as male or female depending on who is gazing and aligns her self with her sex rather than femininity or a feminine gender ideal. What the narrator does perform however, is an image of an 'ugly pregnant Asian' (Goto, 2001: 14). She performs an image of her body she believes is being reflected back to her when in reality, she is the one in complete control of her image. The reader has no visual to confirm or deny the very subjective claim of ugly. Instead, the reader is left to watch the narrator perform her non-pregnant, pregnant body in a variety of ways—none of which relate solely to gender—all of which are rooted, localized, materialized, in the biological. By this moment however, we as readers have come to complicate this notion of performance and recognition. What I have neglected to mention however, is Goto's commitment to maintaining the ambiguity of the narrator's gender.

What may surprise the reader is that the narrator, however skewed in her own ability to care for her self, is well aware of the genderization of society as she is unable to pin point the Stranger's gender identity. While they are trespassing on Calgary International Airport property, the narrator says 'if I were to go to jail, it would be for a better reason than for being caught running around an airstrip with a retro-dressed person of questionable gender and racial origin' (Goto, 2001: 121). After they become naked, the narrator cannot help but stare as she reports: 'when the Stranger turned to face me, I could only gaze with wonder. No nipples. No bellybutton' (Goto, 2001: 122). They begin to sumo wrestle and the Stranger becomes increasingly more kappa like and feminine pronouns are now used. The reader who has read the glossary in the back of the text knows that kappas can be beaten only by spilling the bowl of water on their heads (Goto, 2001: 277). However, at this moment in the text the narrator is so confused by the mystical and magical events of the evening she reports the end of the sumo contest as follows:

> Stranger hit the ground before I did, the beret knocked off a strangely shaped head, something cool-wet spilled, covered me in liquid sweetness. I thought that she came. Came in waves of pleasure. Hearts pounding. The celestial bodies slow moving across the fabric-space of time. Arms clasped around each other, still. (Goto, 2001: 124)

In keeping with the queerness of this text, the moment of conception, of impregnation of a lesbian woman with a kappa child, occurs with the meeting of two lips:

> Stranger nimbly clambered over my exhausted body and nudged between my legs. Blissfully, I let them part. Mouth. Wetness. Cool as a dappled pond in a grove of trees. The Stranger blew. (Goto, 2001: 124)

When the narrator provides her own analysis of this scene later in the text, she reminds readers of the moment of conception saying 'there was no penis! There was no penetration' (Goto, 2001: 155). The reader by this point may reply, 'of course there was no penis'. However, for Goto to include these details in numerous different ways continues to show the manifesta-

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tion of her commitment to relaying all events in a corporeal manner.

The scene of sumo wrestling, the manifestation or materiality of a pregnancy for the unnamed narrator marks the beginning, the creating of meaning for the narrator that involves more than negative and belittling body memories. In a discussion of 'The Body in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*' Smaro Kamboureli theorizes the permeability of the body saying:

> [The] fact that the body becomes part of a network of forces that dismember and warp it, that it dissolves under the weight of history, is exactly what I mean by saying that the body is permeable. (Kamboureli, 2000: 187)

The body of the narrator in this text is entirely permeable. She desires to hide this body, to cut out this body, to pleasure this body, to be less alone in this body, align this body with the moon cyclic cycles. Still, the narrator doubts the materiality of what could be a form of psychosis, just a manifestation rather than the magical result of a sumo wrestling contest. In a poetically titled section 'Silences as the Talking Cure', Kamboureil writes 'hysteria—be it conservative or subversive, self-afflicting or contagious—is conventionally seen as a sign of dis-ease, the body speaking on behalf of the afflicted subject; it has to be moved beyond, cured, eased' (Kamboureli, 2000: 207). The beauty of Goto's work in *The Kappa Child* is that the mythical manifesting pregnancy is not viewed as hysterical. The fetus has agency and apparently understands English because as the narrator speaks of her loneliness 'carrying some unmanifested creature inside my body hardly counts as a legitimate companion. But I get an annoyed poke in my right armpit for thinking this too loud' (Goto, 2001: 148). Even though there is a moment when the narrator relates that 'the word pseudocyesis reverberated loudly in my head and I had to hold it still' (Goto, 2001: 151), throughout the text, the narrator and those who care for her treat her pregnancy with respect. The body becomes the ultimate signifier, both holder of and site in and on which meaning is made. The body does not signal dis ease but rather movement, healing, flow,

even in the absence of menstruation. What I am suggesting is that a link existing between a female body 'afflicted' being outside the centre, prompts or makes material a desire within the narrator once the body is accepted to remain further from the centre, to find joy in the margins: to queer the labels once previously applied and abandon the need for such boundaries and limitations.

At the end of the text, the moment when corporeal and not so corporeal self acceptance occurs comes in the company of friends. When the narrator sees Genevieve and Midori, the narrator begins to actually care and acknowledge their lives and how she has missed them (Goto, 2001: 270). They love her new haircut and are delighted by the literal change in heart (Goto, 2001: 270–271). Genevieve asks if the narrator is still pregnant and the response is 'maybe, but it's okay' (Goto, 2001: 271). This inability to know for sure whether she is pregnant, and the willingness to remain less than fully aware, signals a final commitment to queering boundaries and localizing identity in the moment, the corporeal. The narrator is full of realizations at this point in the text that come with varying touches. Genevieve and Midori go with the narrator to the market to pick up Bernie who willingly goes along for the ride after embracing the narrator (Goto, 2001: 272). As they sit together on a blanket to witness the most recent celestial event, Bernie and the narrator share an intimate silence and touch that is broken by Genevieve's silliness prompting the narrator to realize and question 'my friends are silly and beautiful beyond belief. How have I been this lucky and not known' (Goto, 2001: 274)? As the friends and lovers sit and wait for the moons to collide, the dryness of the prairie gives way to rain and a possible birthing takes place. The last paragraph tells of the narrator seeing 'kappa rising from the soil. Like creatures waking from enforced hibernation, they stretch their long, green limbs with gleeful abandon. Skin moist, wet, slick and salamander-soft, kappa and humans dance together, our lives unfurling before us. And the water breaks free with the rain' (Goto, 2001: 275). This beautiful, holistic, some would say corny or stupid, moment occurs and divides readers. There are

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those who have read carefully and journeyed with the narrator who cannot help but feel a smile creeping across their own faces as the embodied reader engages with this finally settled narrator who identifies along no lines and accepts joy in her life. And there are those who cannot wait to close the book and comment on the many ways this text needs to be classified and categorized and label this yet another foray into 'Asian Canadian writing' or 'immigrant writing.' The end of this text however, leaves questions of nation and ethnicity behind as the narrator realizes a cohesive, stable to her, identity that is rooted and localized within the permeability of her body.

As Goto celebrates the birth of a settled, accepting self for her narrator, the reader may remember Charlotte Sturgess's observations about the shifting space of identity in literary sites of play. Sturgess writes that '"identity" is no longer to be seen, or theorized, as an unmediated, fixed link between nation and individual, but as a negotiation of subject positions within a network of material forces affected and inflected by class, gender, and race' (Sturgess, 2003: 12–13). As words like transnational, genderqueer, and ambiguous become applied more frequently to labels as diverse as female, Asian, young and lesbian, I cannot help but maintain an argument for and towards queering rather than existing inbetween lines that stand in opposition. To make strange, to embody and to embrace what queering can and does offer seems like the most poignant advice to take from Goto's work. Fiction can, and has been informing theory from Kristeva to Eagleton and I argue there will come a time when theorists have no choice but to seek advice from the hopefulness embedded within fiction that queers. To echo Donna Haraway and her manifesto for situated knowledges, I would proudly stand queerly around a cyborg and a kappa.

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LA SOURIQUOISE EN SES PLAISIRS.

Analogie entre la femme sauvage et la Nouvelle-France chez Marc Lescarbot

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En m'attardant sur la représentation de la Souriquoise dans l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* de Marc Lescarbot, publiée entre 1609 et 1618, je m'intéresserai, pour reprendre les termes tirés d'un article de Louis Montrose sur la question du genre dans le discours des découvertes, à 'la projection, dans le Nouveau Monde, des représentations européennes des genres et des comportements sexuels', ainsi qu'à 'l'articulation de ces représentations aux projets d'exploitation économique et de domination géopolitique' (Montrose, 1991: 2) et ce, tout particulièrement en contexte de propagande coloniale. Depuis les travaux fondateurs de Michel de Certeau, on sait comment la mise en texte du projet colonial imbrique l'image des habitants des territoires visés dans un ensemble de nécessités—rhétoriques, politiques, voire fantasmatiques—propres aux récits écrits à cette occasion (voir Certeau, 1988: xxv-xxvi). C'est à une telle opération que s'adonne Lescarbot au dernier livre de son ouvrage, qui '[c]ont[iendrait]' soi-disant 'les mœurs et façons de vivre des peuples de la Nouvelle-France' (Lescarbot, 2007 [1611][1]: 241), mais qui, sous le couvert

1. Cette étude se penche plus spécifiquement sur la 'Description des mœurs souriquoises comparées à celles d'autres peuples' de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* de Lescarbot, telle qu'éditée par Marie-Christine Pioffet sous le titre de *Voyages en Acadie*. On notera en outre que le titre 'Description des mœurs etc.' donné au dernier livre de l'*Histoire* par M.-C. Pioffet n'est pas de l'auteur, qui le décrivait plutôt comme '[c]ontenant les mœurs et façons de vivre des peuples de la Nouvelle France, et le rap-

de donner à lire la diversité du monde, la réduit en chapitres thématiques, en arguments colonialistes, en répertoire d'usages et coutumes locaux qu'il souhaite ouvertement voir relégués au passé. Force est donc d'admettre que cette partie de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* présente avant tout un exercice de réduction de la diversité du Nouveau Monde, ce dont, par ailleurs, l'auteur ne se cache pas, souhaitant ouvertement qu'à sa lecture, les descendants des Sauvages d'Amérique, et plus spécialement ceux des Souriquois dont l'historien souhaite faire les alliés des Français, 'sa[uront] à l'avenir quels étaient leurs pères, et béni[ront] ceux qui se seront employés à leur conversion, et à la réformation de leur incivilité' (*HNF-V*: 242).

Envisageant le récit lescarbotien à l'aune des discours médical et moral ainsi que de la philosophie politique qui lui sont contemporains, cette étude, qui pose 'le moment colonial [comme] historique' et, dès lors, 'entretient avec lui [un rapport] de l'ordre de l'énonciation' (Bayart, 2010: 98), se penche d'abord sur la fonction d'acclimatation au territoire nord-américain que Lescarbot confère à une certaine culture du plaisir, qui devra être fondée en Nouvelle-France parallèlement à la colonie. Cette nécessité y motivera d'ailleurs la présence des femmes ; une présence contrôlée cependant, le discours sur les relations entre les sexes s'inscrivant dans une perspective plus large qui en fait le miroir d'un ordre politique idéal. À partir de là, l'image de la Souriquoise, en tant que représentante féminine des alliés des Français, plaide pour l'établissement de la colonie sur la terre occupée par son peuple: d'une part, en raison des vertus dont elle fait montre en regard d'une femme européenne incarnant quant à elle l'état de corruption d'un Ancien Monde dont le seul espoir de réforme morale réside bel et bien dans le Nouveau Monde ; d'autre part, parce que la tempérance qui la caractérise en tout, par comparaison avec d'autres figures féminines du continent américain, atteste des qualités naturelles du territoire visé par

port des terres et mers dont a été fait mention ès livres précédents'. Afin d'alléger les références, j'emploierai désormais pour désigner cette édition de l'*Histoire* ouvrage le sigle *HNF-V*.

les revendications territoriales énoncées dans l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. En cela, il est intéressant de remarquer que l'élaboration d'une identité propre à la colonie naissante et encore fragile constitue bel et bien un exemple de quête de 'ce soi perdu, pur, véritable, sincère, original et authentique souvent inscrit dans un processus d'élimination de tout ce qui est considéré autre, superflu, artificiel [et] corrompu' (Minh-ha, 1997 : 415 ; je traduis) qui caractérisera les populations colonisées elles-mêmes dans leur mise en cause des régimes coloniaux.

PLAISIR ET ACCLIMATATION

Longues attentes dans les ports, querelles entre marchants, administrateurs et explorateurs, traversées périlleuses, arrivées incertaines, campements à la dure, défrichage, confrontation à des nourritures et à des matériaux inconnus, voire douteux, sans parler des bêtes sauvages et autres moustiques témoignant bien que 'Beelzebub […] tient là un grand empire' (*ibid*.: 305) : voilà bien la réalité que l'historien tente d'édulcorer, en alliant sans faille joie de vivre et réussite de la colonisation de la Nouvelle-France: 'Mais celui qui voudra prendre plaisir, et comme se jouer à un douz travail, il sera assuré de vivre sans servitude' (*ibid*.: 378). Loin des tourments qui ont marqué les établissements espagnols au Mexique, où l'essentiel des colons furent attirés par les richesses minières, la Nouvelle-France assurerait quant à elle une vie 'en repos et joyeus[e]' (*ibid*.: 441). L'historien-voyageur se présente d'ailleurs lui-même, ainsi que les hommes avec lesquels il a partagé son bref séjour dans l'établissement de Port-Royal (mentionnons seulement Samuel Champlain et Jean de Poutrincourt), en instigateurs de ce nouveau mode de vie en terre étrangère ; il affirme ouvertement en avoir 'fait essai, et […] pris plaisir, ce que n'avaient jamais fait tous ceux qui nous avaient devancé[s] soit au Brésil, soit en la Floride, soit en Canada' (*ibid*.: 427). Mais le plaisir n'est pas seulement une condition de la réussite coloniale, c'est aussi une véritable médecine : utile, il s'inscrit dans un ordre fonctionnel et, pour ainsi dire, hygiéniste. Lorsqu'il établit la liste des différents remèdes au

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scorbut, citant parmi plusieurs sources l'Ecclésiaste, l'historien conseille aux futurs colons 'de se réjouir et bien faire, et prendre plaisir à ce qu['ils] f[eront]' (*HNF-V*: 126) ; de même, dans une brochure de 1610, la *Conversion des Sauvages*, il avertit ceux que l'*Histoire* qualifie de 'grondants, grognants[,] malcontents [et] fainéants' (*ibid.*: 127) du danger de mort qui les guette, puisque vivant sans plaisir, ils s'en iraient prestement 'promener aux Champs Elisées' (Lescarbot, 1610: 42).

L'instauration de l'Ordre de Bon Temps, où les plaisirs de la table sont principalement suscités par des denrées prélevées localement, participe d'ailleurs de cette prescription : Lescarbot affirme que les colons s'y joignent 'pour [se] tenir joyeusement et nettement' (*HNF-V*: 204-205). Quand le propagandiste contredit vivement '[p]lusieurs de lache cœur qui […] dis[ent] […] qu'en la Nouvelle France n'y a nul plaisir' (*ibid.*: 490) dans une épître dédicatoire qu'il adresse 'À la France' tout entière, ce qu'il dénonce chez ses détracteurs, c'est la recherche déshonnête de la volupté ; partant, il ne formule pas tant un réquisitoire ascétique qu'il n'inféode la recherche du plaisir à la finalité coloniale, posture discursive qui accrédite certainement une vision de l'impérialisme non seulement en tant qu'il 'impose de [nouvelles] règles' sur le territoire visé par la découverte et l'exploration, mais surtout en tant qu'il s'exprime à travers un grand nombre d'activités dont la 'production de savoirs', incluant le savoir-vivre et le savoir-faire, 'qui consolident et naturalisent la présence' (Mills, 1994: 32 ; je traduis) du colonisateur sur ce territoire. Ainsi, en adhérant aux usages de l'Ordre, il s'agit principalement d'*incorporer* une terre vécue sous le mode de la permanence et non de l'exploration ou du passage (voir Leed, 1991: 112). Manger des fruits de la Nouvelle-France, c'est en quelque sorte s'y acclimater et, surtout, amoindrir l'altérité d'un territoire qui peut rendre malade, voire mener à la mort, ce qu'attestent les épisodes tragiques de scorbut qui ont ponctué les voyages français en Amérique septentrionale jusqu'à l'établissement de Port-Royal, épisodes que l'auteur prend soin de relater par le biais de sa description des établis-

sements de Cartier à Stadaconé, du marquis de la Roche sur l'île de Sable et de Dugua de Monts sur l'île Sainte-Croix.

FEMMES, PLAISIR ET POLITIQUE

Néanmoins, ce procédé d'incorporation, qui met en relation étroite les hommes à la terre qu'ils convoitent et habitent encore de manière incertaine, montrerait rapidement ses limites en l'absence des femmes. Au même titre que le déséquilibre des humeurs préside à l'éclosion du scorbut, le déséquilibre de l'ordre naturel et divin provoqué par l'absence des femmes peut être fatal : '[U]n préservatif nécessaire pour l'accomplissement de réjouissance, [...] c'est d'avoir l'honnête compagnie un chacun de sa femme légitime : car sans cela la chère n'est pas entière, [...] il y a du regret, le corps devient cacochyme, et la maladie se forme' (*HNF-V*: 127). Cette vision de l'organisation sociale de la colonie s'adosse à une image de la 'société conjugale'—exposée par exemple dans la *République* de Jean Bodin, dont l'influence sur Lescarbot est connue (voir Pioffet, 2004)—'si étroite, & en même temps si universelle, qu'elle comprend toutes les especes de sociétés possibles' (Bodin, 1755 [1576]: 32). Cette position sera réaffirmée dans la *Conversion des Sauvages*, où l'auteur déplore que le commissionné d'Henri IV, Pierre Dugua de Monts, ait négligé de joindre à son troupeau de vaches (!) 'quelque femme de village' qui non seulement 'entendist le gouvernement d'icelles' (Lescarbot, 1610: 40), mais encore qui aurait pu tenir honnête compagnie aux colons : 'Sans [femmes] la vie est triste, les maladies viennent, & meurt-on sans secours. C'est pourquoy je me mocque de ces mysogames qui leur ont voulu tant de mal [...]. Que s'il y a des femmes folles, il faut estimer que les hommes ne sont point sans faute' (*ibid.*: 41). Il va sans dire qu'ici, l'auteur fait d'une pierre deux coups. D'une part, il se fait champion des dames, ce qui aura certainement agréé à d'éventuelles protectrices intéressées par les avancées de la colonie—pensons seulement à la marquise de Guercheville, voire à Marie de Médicis elle-même. D'autre part, il confère une utilité à la présence féminine dans la colonie tout en passant sous silence sa fonction procréa-

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tive. On comprend aisément pourquoi à la lecture du récit de la faillite de la colonie de l'île de Sable, établie en 1598 par le marquis de la Roche. Les colons rescapés se seraient 'present[és] à sa Majesté vétuz de peaux de loup-marins' (*HNF-1617*: 22) ; 'qui eût laissé là perpetuellement ces hommes avec nombre de femmes, ilz fussent [...] devenuz semblables aux peuples de la Nouvelle France' (*ibid*.: 23), puisqu'il 'n'en faut qu'une pour peupler tout un païs' (*ibid*.: 22). Par où l'on constate non seulement les limites du savoir de Lescarbot dans le domaine de la biologie humaine et son rejet tout biblique du tabou de l'inceste, mais surtout l'angoisse suscitée par la seule présence de la femme, qui, mal planifiée, sera la cause même de la faillite de la civilisation dans le Nouveau Monde.

Cela dit, le plaisir partagé avec la femme dans l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* est non seulement garant de la santé des futurs colons, mais il participe à la revendication de pouvoir inhérente à la propagande coloniale. Bien que Lescarbot voit chez les Souriquois, alliés des Français, des hommes de loin plus recommandables que leurs ennemis Armouchiquois, si 'vicieux et sanguinaires' (*HNF-V*: 259) qu'il convient, au moindre méfait, de les 'traiter avec terreur' (*ibid*.: 127), les plaisirs des Souriquois, et particulièrement la *tabaguia*, les disqualifient et ce, précisément parce qu'ils la rendent conditionnelle à la ségrégation des sexes : 'En quoi on peut remarquer un mal [...] qui n'a jamais été entre les nations de deçà [i. e. de l'Europe], [qui] ont admis les femmes en leurs banquets' (*ibid*.: 342). Ce procès moral est d'importance, surtout si l'on considère que Jean de Léry rapporte quand à lui sans affect dans son *Histoire d'un voyage en terre de Brésil* 'qu'en toutes les danses [des] sauvages [...] les femmes ny les filles [ne sont] jamais meslées parmi les hommes' (Léry, 1994 [1580] : 253). Lescarbot, en évaluant les mœurs conjugales des Souriquois selon des critères humanistes formulés au moins depuis la *Déclamation des louanges de mariage* d'Érasme, raffermit non seulement la morale du plaisir honnête qu'il élabore ailleurs dans son ouvrage, mais encore, en se réclamant d'un ordre divin, son discours constitue une véritable revendication de pouvoir :

To vindicate political power, the reference must seem sure and fixed, outside human construction, part of the natural or divine order. In that way, the binary opposition and the social process of gender relationships both become part of the meaning of power itself; to question or alter any aspect threatens the entire system' (Scott, 1988: 49).

En discréditant la tabagie en tant que plaisir—et non en tant que rituel par exemple—Lescarbot substitue le Français au Souriquois comme possesseur légitime de la terre à coloniser, de la même manière qu'il neutralise l'autorité de ce dernier sur cette terre en posant le premier comme nouveau détenteur d'un 'bio-pouvoir' s'exprimant principalement par le biais de 'mécanismes disciplinaires' (*cf*. Foucault, 2004 [1978] : 7 et suiv.) visant à juger et punir les écarts de conduite des populations autochtones (notamment les 'crimes' des Armouchiquois, nous l'avons vu), mais également à réprimer les formes locales d'administration et de contrôle, comme nous le verrons plus loin.

À l'instar du mari s'appuyant sur son autorité naturelle pour pousser sa femme à mal agir 'ordonne ce qui est contraire [à la loi divine]' (Bodin, 1755 [1576] : 29), le Souriquois, en n'obéissant pas à la nouvelle éthique du plaisir civil élaborée par l'historien, se place malgré lui 'sous la puissance d'autrui' (*id*.), pour reprendre encore une fois des termes de théorie politique familiers à Lescarbot. Mais si Bodin voyait en cette puissance le patriarche ou le roi, il va sans dire qu'ici, elle n'est autre que le colonisateur lui-même. C'est dans ce cadre qu'il faut lire certaines remarques de l'auteur que l'on ne peut rapporter qu'à une propension pour les motifs galants. Selon le chapitre 'De la civilité' du dernier livre de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, les Sauvages d'Amérique auraient entre eux et envers les étrangers des marques de politesse qui s'apparentent à celles des peuples de l'Antiquité ; cependant, pour ce qui est des plaisirs de l'amour, ils se seraient montrés 'brutaux avant la venue des Français en leurs contrées' (*ibid*.: 380), ayant même appris de ces derniers 'l'usage de ce doux miel que sucent les amants sur les lèvres de leurs maîtresses, quand ils se mettent à colombiner et préparer la Nature à rendre les offrandes de l'amour sur l'autel de Cypris' (*id*.). Si de tels

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propos ont de quoi surprendre dans le corpus souvent austère de la littérature des voyages de l'époque (voir Poirier 1993: 74), il faut voir que le baiser appartient bel et bien chez Lescarbot à des préliminaires dont les fins débordent largement la couche des amants et que, dans l'*Histoire*, la louange des plaisirs de la vie conjugale ne constitue pas, loin s'en faut, une manière de voir en l'épouse l'égale de son mari devant Dieu (voir Lazard, 2001: 39).

La Souriquoise, 'terre' d'élection

À la figure féminine plutôt abstraite dont la fin est bien de parfaire un plaisir envisagé sous un angle utilitaire, puis politico-moral, je joindrai à partir de maintenant une deuxième, plus précise parce que centrée autour de la représentation de la Souriquoise en tant qu'incarnation de la terre coloniale. Il convient cependant de préciser dès maintenant que cette relation d'équivalence ne s'établit pas explicitement chez Lescarbot ; elle se révèle plutôt à travers un faisceau d'indices que j'évoquerai ici, avant de m'attarder spécifiquement à la fonction du plaisir de l'ornement corporel chez la Souriquoise en regard du discours propagandiste de Lescarbot[2].

'Coloniser est un acte essentiellement masculin : c'est conquérir, pénétrer, posséder, féconder' (Goutalier et Knibiehler, 1985: 19 ; voir également Mills, 1994 : 30), lit-on communément dans l'historiographie postcoloniale. Force est de constater que le récit même de l'arrivée de Lescarbot en Nouvelle-France donne lieu à une scène de rencontre quasi charnelle :

> [O]n recherche la terre comme une bien-aimée, laquelle quelquefois rebute bien rudement son amant. [. . .] Mais tandis que nous poursuivions notre route, voici de la terre des odeurs en suavité non pareilles apportées d'un vent chaud si abondamment, que tout l'Orient n'en saurait produire davantage. Nous tendions nos mains, comme pour les prendre, tant elles étaient palpables (*HNF-V*: 169).

2. Les plaisirs attribués aux Amérindiens ont également servi d'ancrage à la promotion de la stratégie missionnaire. À ce sujet, voir I. Lachance (à paraître).

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Alors que la préservation de la virginité des filles en Amérique suscite peu d'intérêt de la part de l'historien—sous prétexte que les peuples se soucieraient d'appliquer cette norme seulement en cas de surpopulation (voir *ibid*.: 253)—la virginité de la terre à occuper, elle, se voit presque mythifiée: '[I]l se trouv[e] dans les prez [de Port-Royal] plus de deux pieds de terre, non terre, mais herbes melées de limon qui se sont entassées les unes sur les autres annuellement depuis le commencement du monde, sans avoir été fauchées' (*ibid*.: 182). L'assimilation de la culture de la terre vierge à la défloration de la femme s'accentue encore dans le dernier livre de l'*Histoire*, à la lecture croisée des chapitres 'De la nourriture des enfants' et 'De la Terre'. À la formule lapidaire résumant le fondement agriculturiste de la future colonie que dispense le premier: '[L]a terre ne nous trompe jamais si nous la voulons caresser à bon escient' (*ibid*.: 254), le second répond par un commentaire philologique fort opportun: si les Hébreux nommaient la femme '*Nekeva* [...], c'est-à-dire *percée*', c'est parce 'qu'il faut qu[e la femme] soit percée si elle veut imiter la Terre' (*ibid*.: 378). Aussi l'invitation lancée dans ce même chapitre à 'mett[re] la main [dans le] sein' de la Nouvelle-France, pour voir si ses 'mamelles [...] rendront du lait pour sustenter ses enfants' (*ibid*.: 426) n'est pas sans faire écho aux réprimandes que Lescarbot adresse, au chapitre 'De la nourriture des enfants', à ses compatriotes françaises qui 'veulent que leurs mamelles servent d'attraits de paillardise [...] se voulant [ainsi] donner du bon temps' (*ibid*.: 251) au lieu d'allaiter leurs enfants comme le fait la Souriquoise, elle dont les 'tétins ne servent point de flamme d'amour' (*ibid*.: 252), ce qui ne l'empêche aucunement d''aim[er] [...] communément [son] mar[i] plus que [les femmes de] deça' (*ibid*.: 380).

À l'instar du Souriquois dont la tabagie constituerait un plaisir incomplet qui le disqualifie d'emblée en tant que possesseur légitime de son territoire, la Souriquoise, en obéissant sans le savoir aux prescriptions des médecins européens de l'époque dans leur 'campagne [...] en faveur de l'allaitement maternel' (Lazard, 2001: 57), participe, mais de manière positive, à la légitimation de la Nouvelle-France en tant que

terre coloniale, en concentrant la critique de l'impudicité que Lescarbot, partisan de la Réforme catholique et d'ailleurs traducteur de César Baronius et de Charles Borromée (*cf*. Baronius, 1599 et Borromée, 1613), reprend de la morale protestante en opposant une France courtisane et dissolue à une Nouvelle-France prude et bienséante ; une France qui se prostitue à une Nouvelle-France qui se voue à la nourriture de ses enfants. La *Carte geographique de la Nouvelle Franse [*sic*] faictte par le sieur de Champlain*[3], publiée en 1612, soit un an après la publication de la deuxième édition de l'*Histoire* Lescarbot, contribue elle aussi à la promotion de la Souriquoise en tant qu'incarnation d'une terre coloniale convenable. Un encadré y représente deux couples: les Montagnais, nommés Souriquois par Lescarbot, et les Armouchiquois, leurs ennemis. Alors que le vêtement de l'Armouchiquoise et celui de son compagnon diffèrent peu, la Montagnaise s'en distingue par le port d'une chemise, qui s'ouvre pour découvrir un sein nourricier. La première porte ostentatoirement tabatière et pétunoir ; en fumant, on pourrait croire qu'elle tente d'échapper à la nature froide et humide que la doctrine médicale de la théorie des humeurs attribuait à la femme. Alors que le Montaignais est affublé de caractéristiques sédentaires et 'civilisées' (le bouclier pour se défendre, l'arc et le couvre-chef qu'il partage avec l'Européen), le 'sauvag[e] armouchiquois' présente des caractéristiques nomades: armé de javelots sommaires, il s'adonne à la marche, alors que le Montagnais est immobile. Bien qu'ils s'opposent sous plusieurs aspects, chacun des deux couples reconduit néanmoins des rôles sexuels semblables: l'homme représente la conservation de l'ordre politique de sa société—ordre territorial et militaire ; la femme, sa valeur morale—irréprochable du côté de la Montaignaise, féconde et travaillante; douteuse du côté de l'Armouchiquoise, hardie, masculine et sans enfant. Chez Lescarbot, la cruauté dont cette dernière fait montre

3. On peut consulter une copie numérisée de cette carte à dans le site de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (http://services.banq.qc.ca/sdx/cep/document.xsp?db=notice&app=ca.BAnQ.sdx.cep&id=0003816241 ; coupure nº 1).

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en cherchant du 'contente[ment]' (Lescarbot, *HNF-1617*[4]: 633) dans la torture et la mise à mort des prisonniers de guerre en fait d'ailleurs l'antithèse de la Souriquoise et une preuve de plus de l'infériorité morale des Armouchiquois.

Vaillante et susceptible de perfectionnement moral, la Souriquoise est garante de la viabilité de sa société. S'exerçant à tous les travaux domestiques pendant que son mari 'tranch[e] du Gentilhomme, et ne pens[e] qu'à la chasse ou à la guerre' (*HNF-V*: 380)—ce qui constitue certainement, au cœur d'un discours agriculturiste et sédentariste une attitude tout aussi répréhensible que la ségrégation des sexes—c'est en elle que repose l'ordre moral de sa famille et par là, de sa société: telle sa semblable de l'Ancien Monde 'portant sur elle et marqu[ant] symboliquement la "renommée"' (Berriot-Salvadore, 1993: 106) de son peuple, la Souriquoise de Lescarbot se fera miroir de la terre à coloniser et de ceux qui l'habitent: non seulement ses vertus laissent-elles espérer la réformation aisée des mœurs des Amérindiens par les Français d'Amérique, mais sa subordination annonce celle de tout son peuple à un ordre supérieur, selon un paradigme commun au XVIe siècle voulant que 'la relation de l'épouse [...] à son mari soit spécialement utile pour représenter la relation des hommes inférieurs aux supérieurs' (Davis, 1975: 127) et ce, tout particulièrement pour 'les praticiens de la théorie politique [qui] voyaient dans la sujétion juridique de plus en plus importante des épouses à leur mari une garantie de l'obéissance du couple à l'état absolutiste' (*id.*). Tempérante, elle reflète le naturel d'un peuple 'peu adonn[é] [à] l'acte Vénérien' (*HNF-V*: 392). Décente, ses désirs se confinent à un juste milieu, comme la terre qu'elle foule, ni trop grasse—comme l'est la terre du Brésil ou de la Floride, dont les habitants recherchent d'ailleurs frénétiquement les plaisirs charnels (*ibid.*: 392)—ni trop maigre: 'Cette province ayant les deux natures de terre que Dieu a baillée à l'homme pour posséder, qui peut douter

4. L'édition critique de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* de 1611 par M.-C. Pioffet, publiée en 2007, désignée ici par le sigle *HNF-V* et citée la plupart du temps, ne comporte pas toutes les parties de l'ouvrage. Par conséquent, lorsque nécessaire, je cite l'édition de 1617, signalé par le sigle *HNF-1617*.

que ce ne soit un pays de promission quand il sera cultivé' (*HNF-V:* 426-427)?

Aussi n'est-il pas surprenant que la Souriquoise de Lescarbot endosse spontanément la fonction spéculaire attribuée à son sexe au contact des Français. À ce titre, l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* offre au moins deux exemples d'une culpabilité intériorisée agissant comme indice d'une morale sinon irréprochable, du moins réformable. D'une part, s'il lui arrive d'agir cruellement, c'est par coutume, pour se plier aux exigences de certains hommes faisant preuve d'un 'désordonné appétit de vengeance' (*ibid*.: 454), ce dont le récit exemplaire suivant est chargé de nous convaincre: suite à la condamnation à mort d'une prisonnière armouchiquoise, la fille du chef des Souriquois, Membertou, ainsi que d'autres femmes et filles 'en firent l'exécution' (*ibid*.: 396), ce dont les Français 'leur fi[rent] une âpre réprimande […], dont elles étaient toutes honteuses' (*ibid*.: 396-397). D'autre part, si ces mêmes Français ont enseigné le baiser à son compagnon, la Souriquoise, 'par la fréquentation' des colons, aurait acquis la 'honte de faire une impudicité publique' (*ibid*.: 334) ; ainsi, 's'il arrive qu'ell[e] s'abandonn[e] à quelqu'un', précise Lescarbot, 'c'est en secret' (*id*.). On est loin, ici, de la Brésilienne décrite par Léry comme un 'animal se delect[ant] […] fort en [sa] nudité' (Léry, 1994 [1580]: 232) ou de la Floridienne inassouvissable dont le mari 's'occup[e] fort aux Ithyphalles' (*HNF-V*: 747), 'drôleri[e]' qui, avec la 'boulgre[rie]' (*id*.) des Brésiliens, n'aurait pas élu domicile sur la côte acadienne: 'Entre noz Souriquois, assure Lescarbot, il n'est point nouvelle de cela' (*ibid.*: 334), eux chez qui l'historien affirme 'n'a[voir] jamais veu un geste, ou un regard impudique' (*ibid.*: 747)

Alors que la Brésilienne de Léry, pour reprendre ce parallèle, se montre insatiable des 'merceries et marchandises' (Léry, 1994 [1580]: 231) importées par les Français—désir qui n'a d'égal, d'ailleurs, que celui de la 'chair humaine' dont elle 'appet[e] merveilleusement' (*ibid*.: 363)—la Souriquoise de Lescarbot se caractérise par un 'refroidissement de Vénus' (*HNF-V*: 338) qui en fait un être sans envie et, partant, sans jalousie, trait de caractère qui n'est pas sans assurer la 'réus-

site' d'un régime matrimonial polygame, par ailleurs jamais condamné par l'auteur. Mais la valeur largement argumentative que comporte la description de cette figure féminine dans l'*Histoire* se révèle spécialement lorsque l'on confronte son apathie, décrite dans le chapitre 'Du Mariage', avec un passage tiré de *La Defaite des Sauvages Armouchiquois par le Sagamos Membertou & ses alliez Sauvages*. Dans ce poème épique à la gloire des alliés des Français en Acadie, l'appétit sexuel de la Souriquoise est érigé en preuve de la valeur exceptionnelle du guerrier Etmemintoet: alors qu'aucun autre 'vaillan[t] champio[n]' des rangs de Membertou ne fait l'objet d'une description notable, Etmemintoet est quant à lui présenté comme 'l'homme qui de six femmes / Peut, galant, appaiser les amoureuses flammes' (Lescarbot, 1607: f° 12r°, v. 443-444).

DU BON USAGE DES MATACHIAS EN NOUVELLE-FRANCE

Dans l'économie de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, cette Souriquoise-là ne trouve aucune place. De fait, hormis la pratique de la galanterie que son compagnon aurait acquise en même temps que son alliance politique et militaire avec les Français, le seul plaisir que lui accorde l'auteur, soit celui de fabriquer et de s'orner de matachias, contribue, d'une part, à prouver la supériorité morale de son peuple à titre d'allié des Français et, d'autre part, à valoriser la colonie à travers sa figure même. La relation de la Souriquoise à ses matachias, 'ouvrages dignes d'admiration' (*HNF-V*: 389), agit de même comme la preuve d'une humanité partagée, qui se révèle tout particulièrement à travers la pratique des arts: 'Noz Sauvages [i. e. les Souriquois] […] ont l'industrie de la peinture et sculpture, & font des images des bétes, oiseaux, hommes, en pierres et en bois aussi joliment que des bons ouvriers de deça' (*ibid.*: 263). À l'intention du lecteur qui a rencontré sur les rives du Saint-Laurent décrites par Jacques Cartier 'la plus pouvre gence qu'il puisse estre au monde' (Cartier, 1986 [1534]: 114, repris par Lescarbot, *HNF-1617*: 253), Lescarbot souhaite avant tout dissocier pauvreté matérielle et pauvreté morale, l'analogie entre les deux se révélant à travers les suspicions qu'entretenaient les discours sur la santé à l'époque autour des miséreux

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(voir Vigarello, 1999: 76). Car si les Souriquois peuvent se faire 'cauteleux, larrons, & traîtres' (*HNF-V*: 189), c'est légitimement pour combler un besoin ponctuel et non, comme les Armouchiquois, parce qu'ils ont 'la malice au cœur' (*id.*).

En outre, le discours de Lescarbot sur les matachias se présente en quelque sorte comme une forme de 'réification de la culture' (Maligne, 2005: 39) des Souriquois se caractérisant par l''identification d'un groupe humain aux objets qu'il produit ou utilise' (*id.*), processus qui se remarque par exemple chez les indianophiles encore aujourd'hui. Si la pratique anthropologique actuelle emprunte avec raison 'la perspective amérindienne' (Turgeon, 2005[b]: 76) pour reconnaître le rôle d'agents actifs des autochtones dans la transformation de la valeur des perles de verre et de porcelaine importées en Amérique par les pêcheurs et les voyageurs en guise de monnaie et de cadeau, les récits par lesquels les voyageurs de l'époque des premiers contacts se représentent cet aspect de la culture matérielle peuvent être lus, quant à eux, en tant que prise de possession symbolique. Dans cet esprit, on remarque que la fonction d''opérateurs de l'identité' (Turgeon, 2005[a]: 31) des ouvrages de perles, à l'instar du 'système diplomatique' et de la 'tradition politique' (Lainey, 2005: 61) liés à la circulation de ces objets avant la venue des Européens en Amérique (alors que leur échange marquait 'une entente ou la conclusion d'un traité' et 'se faisait selon des règles protocolaires spécifiques' [*ibid.*: 62]), de même que leur capacité à 'exprimer efficacement des valeurs abstraites' ainsi qu'à symboliser 'la complétude, la plénitude et l'immortalité' (Turgeon, 2005[b]: 81) sont évacués de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. En effet, l'ouvrage ne fait allusion aux ouvrages de perles qu'en tant qu'objets esthétiques ou ludiques associés aux activités féminines, et leur refuse explicitement toute valeur spirituelle en précisant qu'ils 'ne […] servent point pour adoration, [mais] seulement pour le contentement de la vue' (*HNF-V*: 263) ou l'embellissement 'de quelques outils privés' (*id.*). Il est certes plus commode pour convaincre de la facilité des conversions de représenter les Souriquois 'n'ador[ant] rien' (*HNF-V*: 256), 'semblable[s] à un tableau nu, […] prêt à

recevoir telle couleur qu'on lui voudra bailler' (*id*.). Il va sans dire que la valeur politique de ces objets est également négligée, que l'on compare seulement le traitement qu'en fait Lescarbot avec celui qu'en offre par exemple le *Brief recit* de Jacques Cartier, où les perles importées d'Europe ou 'patenostres' (Cartier, 1986 [1545]: 155), intégrées à la fabrication des matachias, témoignent des relations que les pêcheurs nouent avec les Amérindiens. Le voyageur raconte ainsi comment, après avoir récité 'l'evangile Sainct Jehan' et 'pri[s] une paire d'heures [pour] l[ire] mot à mot la passion de nostre seigneur' (*id*.), il divisa l'assemblée des Sauvages en trois, donna des 'hachotz' et des 'couteaulx' aux hommes, des 'petites bagues, et *agnuz dei*' aux enfants et des 'patenostres' (*id*.) aux femmes.

La représentation de l'Amérindienne ornée de matachias n'est pas nouvelle quand Lescarbot l'intègre à son ouvrage. Cependant, elle y acquiert un surplus de sens en devenant une allégorie de la tempérance—vertu qui n'aurait pas même besoin de la religion pour s'affirmer, dans la mesure où 'Pline, quoique Païen, ne déteste pas moins [les] excès' (*HNF-V*: 327) quant à l'ornement corporel—alors même qu'elle constituait la marque de l'érotisation d'un territoire pour lequel l'explorateur entretenait de grands espoirs en même temps que d'importantes craintes (voir Leed, 1991: 116), comme cela se remarque par exemple dans la célèbre gravure '*America*' de Jan van der Straet (1580) ou dans les *Sauvages* de Samuel Champlain (1603). Dans la gravure, l'Amérique se voit incarnée sous la figure d'une femme nue, semble-t-il dans l'attente de l'arrivée d'un Vespucci qui 'la baptise[ra] et [l]'éveille[ra] pour toujours' (comme le précise la légende[5]), et dont la jambe visible est précisément ornée d'un ouvrage de perles ; quant au Saintongeais, il associe étroitement l'exposition de la nudité au port des matachias lorsqu'il décrit comment, pour célébrer

5. On peut consulter une copie numérisée de cette gravure à dans le site *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84002156/f1.highres>.

La légende s'y lit comme suit: '*Americen Americus retexit, et Semel vocauit inde semper excitam*' ('Amerigo découvre l'Amérique. Il la baptise et elle s'éveille pour toujours').

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la victoire des guerriers de leur tribu, 'les femmes et filles [...] quitt[ent] leurs robbes de peaux, et se me[ttent] toutes nues, monstrans leur nature, neantmoins parées de matachias, qui sont patenostres et cordons entrelacez, faicts de poil de port-espic, qu'ils teignent de diverses couleurs' (Champlain, 1870 [1603]: 22), cérémonie à laquelle elles s'adonnent également au départ des hommes pour la guerre, se 'despouill[ant] toutes nues' à cette occasion, se 'par[ant] de leurs plus beaux matachias, et se me[ttant] dans leurs canots ainsi nues en dansant' (*ibid*.: 57).

Plaisir raffiné et humble tout à la fois, plaisir foncièrement féminin—'[l]es hommes, assure Lescarbot, ne s'amusent guère à cela' (*ibid*.: 330)—le port des matachias par la Souriquoise, dans l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, demeure honorable et, surtout, il se donne comme marque instrumentalisée de 'civilité', suivant en cela le sens même que l'on trouve du terme *ornamentum* chez Cicéron (dans *L'orateur*, 'l'ornement de la société' [Cicéron, 1768: 517], c'est avant tout le plaisir que les hommes peuvent tirer des arts) et que reprennent à la fois le *Dictionarium latinogallicum* de Robert Estienne (1552) et le *Thresor de la langue françoise* de Nicot (1606), dans lesquels l'*ornamentum* caractérise de même le rapport du plaisir à la vie civile. Chez l'un, 'plaisir honorable' et '*ornamentum*' sont synonymes (voir Estienne, 1552: 930). Chez l'autre, 'ornement' est défini entre entres autres par la locution latine '*cultus huius cultus*' ; la locution 'sans ornement' est quant à elle rendue à la fois par '*inornate*' et, surtout, '*impolite*', c'est-à-dire incivil (voir Nicot, 1606: 447).

En évaluant la relation de la Souriquoise aux matachias à l'aune des préoccupations morales européennes, Lescarbot opère une distinction forte entre le bien naturel et le bien moral. En effet, alors que, si l'on se rapporte encore à la pensée bodinienne, le bien naturel est réalisé par un être dans le stricte 'cadre téléologique de la nature' (Jacobsen, 2000: 72), le bien moral doit faire l'objet d'un 'jugement intellectuel' (*id*.) afin d'être reconnu comme bien pour tous—et non seulement pour un individu en particulier. Aussi le bien moral n'est-il accessible qu'à ceux qui sont 'capables de rendre un tel

jugement' (*id.*). Cependant, alors que cette distinction est opérante dans le cas même où une action spécifique, par exemple une action menant à un état de plaisir, est évaluée en tant que bien moral par la capacité rationnelle de l'agent lui-même, Lescarbot, en attribuant le statut de bien moral au plaisir d'ornement de la Souriquoise, se substitue à elle en qualité d'agent (voir *id.*).

* * *

Même s'il réduit les matachias à un *mundus muliebris* aisément imaginé par son lecteur, l'historien évite de dissocier intégralement les Amérindiens et leurs pratiques symboliques ; il attribue donc, par le fait même, la vertu dont fait preuve la femme sauvage à l'égard des ornements corporels à l'essence même de la Nouvelle-France. Certes, cette dernière ne promet guère de richesses spectaculaires ; en revanche, sa terre récompensera l'effort et le plaisir y ornera la vie, mais sans excès, satisfaisant ainsi au parti pris, nettement exprimé à la Renaissance, 'de voir s'établir les cadres moraux de la vie privée, garants de l'ordre social' (Berriot-Salvadore, 1993: 201):

> Je veux seulement parler des *Matachiaz* de nos Sauvages, écrit Lescarbot, et dire que si nous nous contentions de leur simplicité nous éviterions beaucoup de tourments que nous nous donnons pour avoir des superfluités, sans lesquelles nous pourrions heureusement vivre [...] et la cupidité desquelles nous fait bien souvent décliner de la droite voie, et détraquer du sentier de la justice (*HNF-V*: 324).

Quand l'historien célèbre la vertu dont témoignerait une Souriquoise sans désir et 'se content[ant] d'avoir des *Matachiaz*' (*ibid.*: 328) et lui refuse la pratique d'une 'consommation ostentatoire' (Turgeon, 2005[b]: 81) pourtant attestée par les nombreux exemples de marchandises européennes transformées en ornements, il met de l'avant une figure féminine typique des récits de l'expansion impériale, 'jouant un rôle principalement symbolique, au lieu d'occuper un espace véritable, qu'il soit conceptuel ou physique' (Mills, 1994: 38 ; je traduis), cette figure 'servant' essentiellement 'de point d'appui moral à la mise en place d'un nouveau pouvoir' (*id.*). Il l'oppose

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ainsi à la femme de l'Ancien Monde—principalement afin de disqualifier, à travers elle et le faste de ses ornements corporels—le monde corrompu que les Français quitteront en s'installant en Amérique. Mais l'avantage moral consistant à condamner la superfluité de la parure en tant qu'elle repose 'sur des différences d'essence entre les individus' (Perrot, 1987: 163) n'est pas tant celui du Nouveau Monde sur l'Ancien, que celui de la Nouvelle-France sur tout autre colonie, particulièrement si elle se situe en pays plus clément. En effet, les femmes de la Virginie, usant du cuivre dans leurs ornements, au même titre que les Françaises des métaux précieux et des pierreries, consomment le produit des mines, 'enfers [...] où l'on condamnait anciennement ceux qui méritaient la mort' (*HNF-V*: 327). En comparaison, les 'arêtes ou aiguillons de Porc-épic' (*HNF-V*: 330) des parures confectionnées par la Souriquoise paraissent bien inoffensifs—et correspondent parfaitement au décorum d'une colonie fondée non pas sur la prospection minière, mais sur l'accès à la propriété terrienne pour des fins d'agriculture et, accessoirement, de chasse et de pêche.

Il appert ainsi que, chez Lescarbot, la production d'un savoir sur la Nouvelle-France et ses habitants articulée à la propagande coloniale commande la construction d'un territoire fortement féminisé, à la fois en tant que terre nourricière et 'épouse' du futur occupant. Aussi, en saisissant le territoire revendiqué à travers la figure même de la femme qui l'occupe déjà, l'*Histoire* en propose une représentation relevant non seulement d'enjeux moraux, mais surtout politiques, et propose de ce fait un exemple éloquent une construction spatiale reposant sur un rapport manifeste qui se remarque dans la géographie produite en contexte colonial entre 'les affirmations d'ordre épistémologique tenues sur l'identité féminine et l'interprétation de l'espace lui-même' (A. Blunt et G. Rose, 1994: 5) et tout particulièrement ici, nous l'avons vu, entre ses plaisirs et, plus généralement, ceux des Souriquois et de la future colonie, envisagés sous un angle de qualification ou de disqualification quant à la l'occupation légitime de cet espace.

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TENDERNESS OF SPACE AND OUTLANDISH WOMEN: *The Tenderness of the Wolves* and *The Outlander*

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The novels *The Tenderness of Wolves* (2006) by the Scottish author Stef Penney and *The Outlander* (2007) by the Canadian author Gil Adamson belong to the same genre of popular literature which functions according to the formula 'crime—investigation—resolution'. However, within the relative generic constriction Penney and Adamson also problematize the traditionally accepted binary oppositions of civilization vs. nature; savage/Native man vs. civilized /white man; and man vs. woman. By setting their novels on the Canadian frontier of the late 19th and the very beginning of the 20th centuries, Penney and Adamson concentrate on the marginal characters of settler society, their place in and outside the society. Furthermore, the authors underscore the open Canadian spaces not as a void or an absence—as these spaces have been traditionally and stereotypically perceived in Western European male-dominated culture[1]—but as spaces

1. The phrase 'stereotypical perceptions of Canadian space' used in this article refers to the common practice of colonial and to some extent post-colonial writing to perceive the colonies as empty land. Historically, in the white male Western European gaze, the newly discovered territories were perceived as *terra nullius*, as land to be discovered, conquered and settled by the Europeans, according to the so-called doctrine of imperialism introduced as early as the first half of the 16th century (Riendeau 2000: 22). For literary perception of Canada as a vast and empty space despite the presence of settlers and First Nations, see, for example, N. Frye's notion of 'garrison mentality', or M. Atwood's *Survival*. These two concepts provide good examples of widely known and often

saturated with meaning by/for the other, the meaning which to women protagonists offers an opportunity for both physical and psychological survival and, consequently, a chance to find their own place in Canadian space. In this sense, the novels undertake a dialogue with the 19th-century Eurocentric settler History, 'self-consciously seek[ing] to reconstruct it, to see /reconstruct what came before it' (Hutcheon, 1995: 131) from the marginalized woman's point of view, while staying within their generic framework. That 'loyalty' to the genre, it must be stressed at the very beginning, is by no means to the detriment of crime fiction, for Todorov claimed that great pieces of generic (popular) literature are precisely those which do not transgress the rules of the genre but conform to them (2000: 121). Therefore, the aim of this article is to show how both Penney and Adamson, while firmly situating their novels in the crime fiction genre, rework a set of binary oppositions traditionally established by the white European colonizing male culture.

The foreground in both novels is the crime of murder—in *The Tenderness of Wolves* the protagonist, Mrs. Ross searches for her neighbour's murderer across northern Ontario in order to exculpate her adopted son Francis who has gone missing at the time of the murder and is therefore the prime suspect. In *The Outlander*, on the other hand,

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(ab)used terms and (mis)conceptions used with regard to Canada. Also, M. Seifert catalogues quite a number of stereotypes or auto and hetero images of Canada (2007: 113-117). Some of these are also foregrounded in the novels here analysed: they are perhaps best depicted by the famous quotation of Voltaire's disappointed description of Canada in *Candide* as 'a few acres of snow', or a more recent one of 'Canada as winter'. This latter one is a paraphrase of R. Carrier's answer to the perpetual question 'what is Canadian'. Carrier claims that this question 'brings winter and the north wind howling into my mind, along with snow and ice. For isn't it true that our harsh climate is the main factor in defining the nature of a Canadian? Haven't these climactic elements achieved the status of gods in our mythology'? (Carrier in Van Herk, 2009: 10). And while Canadian literature and poststructural and postcolonial theories have certainly moved away from such notions, in popular literature certain stereotypes persist, some of which are specific auto and hetero images about the landscape/climate in Canada.

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the murderess is known from the beginning: it is the protagonist, Mary Boulton, a young woman who has killed her abusive gambling husband and now flees across the Alberta /Manitoba region from the posse consisting of her brothers-in-law. Broadly speaking, the act of crime in modern societies is seen as the breaching of the 'supposedly universal social and moral order', the transgressing of 'one of the frontiers of the society' (Palmer, 1991: 133). In other words, it signifies a radical break in the social order, aberrance from the permissible, revealing that the society's harmony is just an illusion, and consequently that that which society has sought to keep outside its borders has seeped back in. In *The Tenderness of Wolves* the search for the murderer aims at restoring the social order based on the higher principles of truth and justice, and not on the rule of man which is in the novel represented by wilful and cruel behaviour of Mackinley, a Hudson Bay Company chief investigator who has legal jurisdiction over criminal matters.[2] In *The Outlander*, however, the murder (and not the punishment of the murderer) is revealed as the only means of survival for the heroine and therefore the beginning of her quest for personal freedom, as well as the regaining of psychical equilibrium. Even though *The Outlander* is told from the point of view of the murderer, it obeys the generic rules of plot development from the consequence (murder) towards the cause (reasons for it), except that in this case 'the investigation' revolves around Mary Boulton's lapses in memory in an attempt to reconstruct the past events which eventually led her to kill her husband. Predictably, it turns out that the real criminal was her husband, and to a significantly lesser degree Mary herself for perpetrating the crime.

Therefore, in both novels, true to the schematic requirements of the crime fiction genre, the murder committed

2. It is interesting to note that in this legal representative another 'border', 'frontier' is broken: instead of upholding the law, Mackinley tailors the law to favour his own personal ambitions. This brings to mind G. Whitlock's claim that 'on these frontiers outlaws and sheriffs are not in predictable and fixed opposition but related and interdependent, mixed in hybrid forms which confuse the rule of Law' (1995: 349).

functions as the main motivator for the investigative events that unfold, the events that in their backdrop reveal the stereotypical perceptions of Canadian space reworked in these novels to accommodate the development of female protagonists. The traditional and stereotypical images of Canada are thus deconstructed from their self-explanatory status to reveal that both the space and woman are first marked by the white European man as empty spaces, blank slates (*tabulae rasae*) in order to be used by him as sites of inscription. In other words, woman and space are in both novels shown to be a construct which is, instead of being univocally inscribed by the 'Author', alternatively composed as *bricolage* by a 'scriptor', and semantically imbued in different ways by the (implied) reader.

There, of course, exists an analogy between the body of text and the body of colony. Traditionally perceived as the creator of the text, the Author exists before it, 'thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child' (Barthes, 2001: 1468). Analogously, the new territories 'discovered' by Europeans were pronounced an 'empty space', an abstraction on the map that needs to be claimed and defined, socially constructed through exploration and settlement. The new territories, or settler colonies in the case of Canada, were according to the white male European dominant discourse not only 'discovered' but 'invented', made real by the European presence. By copying the European model of society, the patriarchal societal order attempted to ensure its continuance in the New World; within it there was a designated place for women. And such was the official societal order in Canada at the turn of the 19th century, as portrayed and consequently questioned in the novels here analysed.

Conversely, with the advent of postmodernism and the opening of space to alternative voices and histories, a host of divergent stories come to light, permeating the contemporary culture to such an extent that these alternative stories—in the form of historical meta/fictions, historical biographies, fictional biographies etc.—now 'regularly' appear

in the corpus of popular, generic literature. To use Barthes's famous phrase, the text (and by analogy, woman's body and colonial body) now becomes 'a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture', it becomes a site of multi-dimensional writings which all coexist, blending and clashing (Barthes, 2001: 1468), opening themselves up to various readings. Thus, just as there no longer exists one authoritative reading of a textual body, or one authoritative inscription of the colony/colonial body, in the same way the body is no longer written or bounded by one dominant discourse, one authorial voice, but is shown to be socially constructed depending on a context: it 'is eternally written *here* and *now*' (italics in the original) (Barthes, 2001: 1468). Text/body (body as text) is compiled by a 'scriptor', a narrative instance which 'traces a field without origin—or, which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins' (Barthes, 2001: 1468). The meaning(s) of the text now need(s) to be 'disentangled', not 'deciphered' (Barthes, 2001: 1469), and in this sense the heroines of *The Tenderness of Wolves* and *The Outlander* are represented as the (implied) readers who learn to read the texts of their own identities as well as the text of Canadian landscape in which they are situated. Even within generic fiction of these two novels, the female protagonists are no longer subject to 'thingification' (Césaire in Loomba 2005: 114) by the dominant male European colonizing discourse, but become subjects in their own right, empowered by the fact that they possess agency, the ability and power to act on their own.

To show how this power to act independently develops in the novels it is worth mentioning briefly the basic postulates of the crime fiction, which contain a specific narrative scheme for construction of, in our case, the stories of female identity. According to Todorov's analysis of the typology of detective fiction—one of the most prominent subgenres of crime fiction—at the base of detective fiction lies duality, the existence of two stories: the story of the crime which ends by the time the second story, the story of detection,

begins (Todorov, 2000: 122). The second story gradually restores 'fragments of the "lost" narrative of murder' (Palmer, 1991: 131). Analogously, in both of the novels analysed here, the plots unwind in two narrative strands: the first story, given in the form of analeptic fragments to emphasize the heroines' fragmented identities, tells of the heroines' pasts which are cut off from them by the act of relocation or, more precisely, dislocation even before the murder—usually the key disruptor of the crime fiction genre—has occurred. The second story, the one in the present discursive moment, is triggered by the act of murder and, apart from primarily being the story of investigation, at the same time represents the quest for and a subsequent re/discovery of the protagonists' identities.

Hence, it is worth looking into the female pre-histories, especially since both Mrs. Ross and Mary Boulton share very similar backgrounds and face the same struggle of re-building their sense of self. As children, both protagonists suffered from severe panic attacks (Mrs. Ross) or hallucinations (Mary Boulton), both were brought up according to the Victorian etiquette in relatively wealthy urban families (Mrs. Ross was raised in Edinburgh, Scotland, while Mary Boulton was brought up in Copperfield, probably in Nova Scotia), but never felt part of the 'refined' society (Mrs. Ross at some point admits that she preferred being admitted to the asylum than discussing embroidery and latest Edinburgh fashions). Both women were, after they were married, relocated to the Canadian backwoods where again, they had trouble fitting in. Both still suffer from depression, in the case of Mrs. Ross, and post-partum depression with occasional hallucinations exacerbated by the loss of a child, in the case of Mary Boulton. The novels, in fact, revolve around the women's in/ability to cope with the backwoods society, and around their sense of alienation and non-belonging, as well as with empty spaces and an utter sense of dislocation and existence in a vacuum, both spatial and psychological, which all contribute to the protagonists' sense of a lost identity.

Thus, both protagonists feel doubly marginalized: not only as individuals, but also as members of a settler society with

strictly defined roles for women into which the heroines obviously do not fit. Furthermore, Canada is in both novels depicted as a country consisting of the backwoods in which only tough men can survive, 'Canada as a country of men and for men' (Seifert, 2007: 115), where 'what passes for heroics in a softer world are everyday chores here' (Penney, 2007: 24). It is a strongly gendered place where women are invisible even though they have to be as tough as men to survive: Mrs. Ross says as much regarding Mrs. Pretty, her neighbour: 'sometimes I think she is the perfect model of a backwoods pioneer, being an inveterate survivor, tough, unimaginative and unscrupulous' (Penney, 2007: 142).[3] In the context of the novel, Mrs. Pretty's 'adapted-ness' serves as yet another reminder of Mrs. Ross's incompetence to adapt, conform and survive according to the settler standards.

There is another related point in *The Tenderness of Wolves*, and it concerns the way a woman's body was constructed in a settler colony by the imperial discourse. After admitting that she lost her only child to the backwoods, and that she adopted a son who is as inept at fitting in as she is, Mrs. Ross reports that Mrs. Pretty holds her 'lack of living natural children as a sign of failure to do my immigrant duty, which is, apparently, to raise a workforce large enough to run a farm without hiring outside help' (Penney, 2007: 20). According to the dominant colonial ideology, the ideal of a settler woman lies in her physicality. A woman's body is the site of power discourse indirectly connected to the colonial appropriation of the body of colonial territory: it is seen as a reproductive subject, as a 'womb of empire' whose function was to populate the colony with white settlers, thus enabling the empire

3. This description, in fact, is very similar to the descriptions of settlers that S. Moodie gives in her canonical pioneer memoir *Roughing It in the Bush, or, Life in Canada* (1852), for example in the sketch 'Our First Settlement, and the Borrowing System' where Yankee neighbours display all the characteristics described in the quotation above. It seems that toughness, lack of imagination and lack of scruple are the prerequisites of survival.

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to claim the territory as its own (Whitlock, 1995: 352).[4] Another famous instance of the imperial allegory concerns the identification of the colony with the female body and a woman's position in society. In the words of W. H. New, '[a]llegory of Canada as a feminized, passive, empty space that "waits" for the colonizing European male to "win her", make "her" replete, and precipitate her into "history"' (New, 2002: 17). This imperial allegory, continues New, is present in many of the 20th-century Canadian literary texts and documents, rewriting the relationship between the British Empire and the Canadian nation, preserving the 'imperial allegory's appropriation of gendered relations to questions of nation' (New, 2002: 17).

Continuing her musings on large bush families, Mrs. Ross makes a wider observation which reveals another stereotypical representation of Canada as a void, emptiness, black hole of the land. Large offspring is 'a common response in such a vast, underpopulated country. I sometimes think that the settlers reproduce so heroically as a terrified response to the size and emptiness of the land, as though they could hope to fill it with their offspring' (Penney, 2007: 20–21). Thus the procreation is seen not only as a duty towards one's own nation, but also as a very personal response to the enormity of the land. Accordingly, the Canadian body of land is seen in the novel as a vast expanse, empty plain, a void which suffocates with its vacuity. It is also described as inhuman, yet possessing human traits: 'if this land has a character, it is sullen, indifferent, hostile' (Penney, 2007: 138). It is constantly constructed as inimical, and the leitmotifs in both novels are 'the suffocating silence of the place', 'the indifferent, mocking voice of the forest' (Penney, 2007: 10). The setting /space in *The Tenderness of Wolves* and *The Outlander* is never neutral or observed objectively, it is never shown as 'an empty stage before actors enter it', but is always

4. P. Hulme has written the famous essay about the status of woman and gender in early colonial discourse, 'Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse'. A. Loomba also mentions the analogy between the body of colony and the body of woman (2005: 68).

'the projected space of the mind's eye' (Chatman, 1989: 138). In other words, the space in these novels is highly subjectively construed, always described through the eyes of the protagonists, in their gaze. It is the human imagination that socially construes the space, humanizes it, personifies it, and writes into it in order to be able to understand it (New 2002: 606), because living in such an empty space is like living in an asylum. It is, in fact, Mrs. Ross who, travelling across the Canadian Shield notices that it is a plain open space without a mark on it, its vastness and emptiness is compared to insanity (Penney, 2007: 194). She feels mounting panic that Canada is 'too big, too empty for humans' (Penney, 2007: 191), and it is the feeling that has persisted with her ever since she disembarked to Canada.

Mrs. Ross also finds time to tell a brief history of her arrival to Canada some twelve years earlier, remembering how she thought that because the immigrants were so 'crammed into the hold of a ship' she imagined 'there couldn't possibly be room in the New World for all these people'. However, they scattered from 'the landing stages at Halifax and Montreal like tributaries of a river, and disappeared, every one, into the wilderness. The land swallowed us up and was hungry for more' (Penney, 2007: 9). In building the image of Canada, Mrs. Ross also describes how the land was won from forest by clearing it, how attempts were made to make it feel more familiar by naming different settlements either after animals native to the territory or after the places Scottish immigrants left behind (Penney, 2007: 9). Thus Mrs. Ross repeats the story of the attempts at prevailing over the overall settler feeling of dislocation through naming the foreign space and turning it into place (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 177-178). In yet another instance, Mrs. Ross also comments how another location was called Horsehead Bluff, adding that it was 'so named, with that refreshing Canadian lack of imagination, because it resembles a horse's head' (Penney, 2007: 11). Probably the worst part of the human relationship to space, as portrayed by these two works of crime fiction, lies in the fact that space (Canadian landscape) is represented as always present, indifferent,

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eventually unconquerable both physically and mentally. It can never be adequately grasped or described, it requires humans to adjust to it, and not to shape it to their own will.

Dislocation, as a consequence of voluntary or involuntary migration to a new locale, becomes most obvious precisely in these attempts to convert an uncolonized space into a colonized place, to exert control over it via language. However, the inadequacy of language to describe the experience of a new place results in the immigrants' feeling of alienation to a new colonial space (Ashcroft, et al., 1989: 9–10). And in *The Tenderness of Wolves*, despite the fact that the land is symbolically conquered through the use of familiar notions in place names as well as literally claimed through cultivation, the feeling of alienation still lingers in Mrs. Ross. At the beginning of the novel she is in stale-mate transitional phase from dislocation to adaptation and it is only her journey through the expanses of northern Canada that will get her to move from the spiritual dullness, and enable her to overcome her fear of the vastness of the land. The need for a situation, placement, anchoring, the need to stay integrated, not to lose herself and dissipate in the spatial void is testified in the novel by the great attention that Mrs. Ross pays to geographic details, and detailed records of the landscape. It is, in fact, with great detail and apparently realistic geographic location that Penney builds the Canadian locale on the north shore of Georgian Bay where the Scottish settlements in the novel are situated. By keeping track of the landscape, she hopes to keep track of herself. When she is forced to leave the relative security of Dove River, she also needs to overcome her panic of the open spaces and come to terms with their ultimate unknowableness: the decision to go on the journey represents the decisive point for her regeneration and re/invention in relation to Canada.

In *The Outlander*, the displacement is described graphically, with two references to maps and mapping. Thus mapping and cartography are not used to help in the process of domestication (Van Herk 2002: 82), but are instead used to underline the sense of not-belonging. In the first instance, as Mary Boul-

ton runs through the Rocky Mountains forest without a clear sense of direction, she remembers looking at her husband's map of the North American continent hanging on the cabin wall: 'Each American state had been filled in with a different colour, all of them tidied together like a box of sweets' (Adamson, 2009: 68). As a sheer contrast to the US, 'Canada itself was a broad emptiness of circumscribed territories each holding its name and nothing more. Assiniboa. Keewatin. Alberta. Coloured pink, like all things British' (Adamson, 2009: 68).[5] In the same way in which she is lost in the forest, Mary Boulton felt lost looking at the map. 'Without cities or borders, no line to indicate where she had come from or where she was, the widow had stared at Canada and seen it as others did. An attic. A vacancy. A hole in the world.' (Adamson, 2009: 69). The image of Canada represented in this way cradles at its centre the feeling of alienation that the European settler can feel in the backwoods, a sense of displacement and a feeling of existing in nothingness. To underline the emptiness that is Canada, the US states are coloured, 'tidied', explored, known, everything that Canada is not. Another stereotype appears here, that of Canada as 'America's empty attic and cold kingdom' (Seifert, 2007: 113). The fact that the names of the Canadian territories, the only thing 'existing' in the blank space of the map are mostly Native American names, further underlines a sense of a lack of knowledge about the land as well as its strangeness, mystery.

However, another issue is introduced here: Mary Boulton cannot locate herself on the map, neither her hometown nor her present bush abode. She cannot read this map, she lacks the reading skills to decipher the geographical map that has turned space into such an abstraction that it is impossible to connect the image with the referent (Ashcroft et al., 2000: 178), and in this way she is doubly lost: lost in space and lost in language. This is an important instance in the novel

5. The District of Keewatin was a territory of Canada and later an administrative district of the Northwest Territories, while the District of Assiniboia was a name used to describe the Red River Colony, mainly for official purposes, between 1812 and 1869.

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because it underlines that she as 'the other' is not given the necessary skills that belong to the male colonizer's world where mapping and cartography represent another relevant tool for the appropriation of new lands. Ashcroft et al. also speak of the interconnection of place and its location in language for the settlers, of 'the lack of fit between the language available and the place experienced' (2000: 181), and this notion is relevant for another parallel between the body of colony and the woman, but this time as imposed by the white European male who 'owns' them: the Canadian provinces remain unnamed, and analogously the woman is not given the 'language' to orient herself in space. In both cases the dominant language of European civilization is inadequate to describe (in the case of land) or to explain (to the woman) the realities of place to the non-dominant member of Canadian society.

Furthermore, mapping serves to inscribe emptiness[6] and goes hand in hand with naming, both being 'a primary colonizing process because [they] appropriate, define and capture the place in language' (Ashcroft, et al., 2000: 182). Maps in a colonial discourse serve to textualize the spatial reality of the other, to 'renam[e] spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control' (Ashcroft, et al., 2000: 31–32). Furthermore, by looking at the map, the widow sees it as others do, an empty space. Ambiguously, this 'sight' underscores not only Mary Boulton's existence in the bush, in an absence of civilization to which she was brought after marriage, but also the fact that maps are always drawn ideologically, that 'real space' is encoded and textualised, abstracted into them. The allegorization of space, but to a certain extent the fictionalization of space as well, is defined by maps, as is its arrangement, its 'bringing it to order'. 'Maps claim to be objective and scientific, but in fact they select what they record and preset it in specific ways' (Loomba 2005: 69) depending on the historical context and dominant (colonialist) ideology. One such tactic is the deliberate decision to orientate maps according to the

6. To paraphrase the title of S. Ryan's article 'Inscribing the Emptiness: Cartography, Exploration and the Construction of Australia" in C. Tiffin and A. Lawson (eds), *DeScribing Empire, Postcolonialism and Textuality*.

North-South axis (Ashcroft, et al., 2000: 33), an abstraction unconnected to the real space, the fact which is commented in *The Outlander* as well. As she wanders the forest, wondering which way to go, Mary Boulton asks herself 'was north up? In fact, the widow did not know which territory she might be in or whether she had passed into another world' (Adamson, 2009: 68). In yet another reversal, Mary Boulton is now as lost in the forest as she felt lost by looking at the geographical map.

There is another instance of mapping from which Mary Boulton is excluded again due to her illiteracy, ignorance of the language of the mapping code. As she wanders through the forest, exhausted, she remembers the geographical map and at the same time becomes aware of the nature's map: the forest is criss-crossed, charted by numerous footprints and paw-prints of various animals, by the 'animal paths, itineraries, wandering lines of habit she had not perceived before', by 'rivulets and whorls where mice scurried round rocks and tree trunks' and where there were suddenly discernible 'wider, subtler erosions, where hooves and bellies had drifted and where soft lips had torn away leaves' (Adamson, 2009: 67). Mary Boulton decides to follow this other natural map, haphazardly riding further into the forest. Thus landscape is represented as a text that Mary Boulton does not know how to read (yet), but at the same time as text which also offers an alternative possibility of being read despite ignorance in the white male language of cartography. This text of place shows 'intermingling lines of connection which shape shifting patterns of de- and reterritorialization' (Huggan 1995: 409), in this way engaging itself in 'a more wide-ranging deconstruction of Western signifying systems' (409), showing itself as an 'open' instead of a 'closed' space-construct (409), as the white male European colonizers would have it. Hence, the landscape Mary Boulton travels, and analogously the Canadian Shield that Mrs. Ross travels across, open themselves to a new kind of decentralized mapmaking.

Connected to the notion of an enclosed, safe place that the colonizer strives for in an attempt to 'make order out of cha-

os' in the new territories are utopian notions of creating, in a New World, a humane, pristine place, a community which resembles the primitive communities, pure from base human drives and emotions, a better place as might have been envisioned by the first European settlers. Over and again in *The Tenderness of Wolves* the Himmelvanger ('the fields of heaven') community and Caulfield are imagined as model societies which are invariably revealed as identical to other, 'common' communities. Himmelvanger is imagined and established as a model religious Norwegian commune in which adultery and potentially lethal cowardice occur practically in plain sight; the township of Caulfield is similarly projected as an idyllic small town which will provide escape from the vices of a city, a chance for a new start, but in which, nevertheless, a grisly murder takes place. In other words, in *The Tenderness of Wolves* these places are only projected as havens which can provide a sense of belonging; they are mentally and ideologically constructed in an effort to garrison off all that is morally wrong, and as such they represent 'attempts to fix the meaning of places', to create 'singular, fixed and static identities for places', and consequently to interpret them 'as bounded enclosed spaces defined through counterposition against the Other who is outside' (Massey, 2007: 168). Such interpretations or constructs would, ideally, provide the means for a stable identity to its inhabitants. Notwithstanding such projections, both Himmelvanger and Caulfield are found to be nothing more than the place identical on the outside as well as on the inside. The frontier between what is 'in' and perceived as safe on the one hand, and what is 'out' and perceived as dangerous/deviant on the other, is exposed as a fictional one. In other words, in these crime fiction novels one can just as easily perish within the borders of security since it is not nature (in the sense of landscape and environment) that people need to fear, but human nature itself.

Thus, the binary opposition of nature versus culture remains the basis for the cast of characters in *The Tenderness of Wolves* as well as in *The Outlander*. However, within these firmly set extremes or binary oppositions (established

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by the white European settlers) between the inside and outside, enclosure and the wilderness, civilization and nature, in both novels there exists a whole range of episodic characters who reveal different levels of adaptation to landscape, ranging from the characters reflecting utter identity and mental disintegration to those representing a sense of 'placement', 'situation' and a retrieval of a satisfactory identity which enables survival. This range of characters projects the possible fates for the heroines, and while in *The Tenderness of Wolves* the emphasis is more on the different degrees of in/ability to adapt to the landscape, in *The Outlander*, on the other hand, the stress is more on the degrees of in/ability to adapt to the society of the times.

In *The Tenderness of Wolves* these episodic characters are distributed on the scale of successful or unsuccessful adaptation to the environment. There are those who have adapted well to Canada, but did so within the garrison and in controlled circumstances, so to speak: Mrs. Pretty the veteran farmer settler is one example, and the cultivated and upper class Knox family who has left town and moved to the 'country' in order to lead a more morally sound life is the other. On the opposite end of the scale are the Hudson Bay Company representatives of the Hanover House Company trading post in the far north, who have gone native, become bushed in the way that confirms the white man's worst fear. Living in isolation from the white Western/settler society, in an area called Starvation Country, they have reverted to a bestial state. They have survived the Canadian landscape physically, but not mentally.

Perhaps the most moving character can be found on the extreme, destructive end of the adaptation scale: it is a new Scottish immigrant Donald Moody, employed by the Hudson Bay Company, and assisting with the murder investigation. He represents the archetypal victim and the 'failed sacrifice' of the 'reluctant immigrant'—a victim of Canada and nature, a settler failure (Atwood 1972: 34–39). Donald 'nurtures a growing hatred for this landscape that is quite unlike anything he encountered before. People aren't meant to be here' (Penney, 2007: 139). He suffers from bloody frostbites;

his glasses, without which he cannot see, are constantly frozen over, further impeding his vision. The kind of adventurous and career life he sought in Canada (to escape from the domineering father) turns out to be a soap bubble, and the image of Canada as 'an adventurous testing ground for male protagonists wishing to flee the constraints' (Seifert, 2007: 114) of the Old World turns out in his case to be grossly fabricated. The tests of endurance the individual is subjected to in Canada are not glorious exploits, but everyday survival in harsh climate; and while it is true that there is 'danger (as advertised), [...] it is the danger of frostbite or exposure rather than unarmed combat with wild animals or war with hostile natives' (Penney, 2007: 27). In the end Donald Moody dies, his death futile in the larger development of events in the novel, his life unrealised.

In *The Outlander*, as was already mentioned, greater attention is paid to that group of characters which fails to adapt to societal norms rather than to landscape, which in one way or another does not fit 'the norm' of the European civilization. As a model example of nonconformity, there is in this novel what one could term an enclave, a utopian community of a different kind, situated in the mining town of Frank.[7] Based only partially on a real town, this imagined, emplotted community uncannily reminds of a side-show by the white dominant cultural standards: it is populated by miners (who are there to provide a specific 'realistic' backdrop), but also by a dwarf; by an Italian giant; by a priest who is trying to build a church from the profit he makes by smuggling horses stolen by the Native peoples; and by a lunatic 'rider of the Apocalypse' who is, as it turns out, a Mountie bushed but also a life-long friend of the priest. When the crazed widow Mary Boulton joins them—she is to be the only woman there—the circus can be said to be complete. All of these people are misfits, rejects, 'outlaws' from society, never quite innocent

7. Frank was the site of the famous Turtle Mountain landslide, when in 1903 ca 90 million tonnes of limestone from the Turtle Mountain (southern Rocky Mountains of Canada) crashed onto the mining town of Frank, Alberta ('Frank Slide' 2010).

before the law; they exist on the very fringe if not outright beyond it in an atmosphere that reminds more of a fairy-tale than of a *sensu stricto* crime fiction narrative. Significantly, after the landslide only the 'freaks' survive; the priest with all of his eccentric humanity perishes as a symbol of the futile hero, 'a casual incident of death', for his death does not save his 'congregation' (Atwood, 1972: 170). The surviving side-show members scatter, some moving to the North, to Yukon (Adamson, 2009: 386), to the still mythical and unexplored place where there is still freedom for the unusual. Interestingly, the American Wild West myth by the end of the 19th century relocated geographically to become the Wild North myth, particularly after the 1897 Yukon Gold Rush (Seifert, 2007: 114). And since the myth of the Wild North was never demystified, but remains in the collective conscious that utopian place of a nostalgic other world, the outcasts can move to this mythical place in order to escape the ever-expanding Western civilization.

Related to this issue is another binary opposition, that of nature versus civilization. On the pole of nature are those male characters who are at one with nature, who epitomize it and are counterpointed to the white European settlers. Their common trait in both *The Tenderness of Wolves* and *The Outlander* is that they are, in the gaze of white male European settler, 'savage' men who have renounced the white society and live according to nature's laws. They are the archetypal 'natural' man who has 'gone native' not, however, in the sense of becoming insane due to overexposure to wild nature as the notion is commonly perceived by the white European colonizer (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 115), but in the sense of a man who, having renounced the white European-based civilization for all its negative aspects, has adapted to nature and found a satisfying way to live in it. To a white 'civilized' person, such men are 'other', an aberration from the norm, they have become part of the hostile nature and as such should be treated with mistrust, garrisoned off like the rest of landscape which, in effect, functions as the other in relation to the European colonizer.

Thus, both novels propose the 'fetish' of 'the noble savage' (White 1985: 183–196): a white wild-man in the case of *The Outlander*, or a 'half-breed' in the case of *The Tenderness of Wolves*. It is the 18th-century construct of a man who lives on the very margins of the white society if not outright beyond them, and who offers a happy alternative to the 'civilized', settler white man, showing that 'true humanity [is] realizable outside the confines either of the Church or of a "civilization" generally defined as Christian' (White 1985: 186). Both novels use this binary opposition between the 'civilized' and 'savage' man to show that there is no ideological 'distinction between the presumed types of humanity on a manifestly qualitative grounds' (White in Loomba 2005: 103). In other words, both novels reveal that this binary opposition, set up in a traditional colonizer discourse as the strengthening of the norm /al through othering and difference, is in fact not valid.

In *The Tenderness of Wolves* Mrs. Ross's 'helper' (to use the *terminus technicus* from A. J. Greimas's actantial model) is William Parker, a half-breed whose father was a tracker and a voyageur for the Hudson Bay Company, as was he until an earlier incident, related to the murder, alienated him from the Company life. Since he is also interested in finding the true murderer—he being suspected of having committed the crime as well as Mrs. Ross's son—Mrs. Ross and Parker join forces. It is this joint journey that will prove to be a revelatory journey, the identity quest, for Mrs. Ross. In *The Outlander* William Moreland, an actual historical person known as the Ridgerunner,[8] served as the model for the character of the man gone native.

8. Real-life William Moreland (1900–1963?) was a rather unique figure who lived in the Idaho area of the Rockies, occasionally working for various logging companies and other seasonal jobs usually away from any kind of settlements. He became famous and legendary for his ability to cross vast distances of rugged and unapproachable terrain in a single day and to avoid being captured by misleading his trackers off his trail (some of his strategies included running backwards many miles to throw the trackers off his trail). The authorities more or less tolerated his eccentricity—living in the forests and taking from logging cabins what he needed—but he did spend some years in a mental institution, after which he again returned to the mountains (Moreland 2010).

In the novel the Ridgerunner takes on the role of Mary Boulton's helper, saving her life in the forest and teaching her how to survive in it. It is Moreland who will eventually prove to be Mary's match, both as an outcast and as a person who has learned to subdue the hallucinatory voices he also hears, helping her to defragment herself and find the identity she feels most comfortable with.

In other words, since these men are fully adapted to living in the Canadian landscape, and are at the same time unconventional and not bound to white settler and patriarchal society, they can offer the heroines auxiliary support in the process of passage from dislocation in that society to adaptation ('placedness', situation) and subsequent identity recovery outside it. The binary opposition of civilization versus nature is thus upheld in the novels, showing that its invalidation, in the time frame that the novels set up, is possible only on an individual basis, by shedding the preconceived society-imposed images of nature and woman. The pivotal moment of revelation in both *The Tenderness of Wolves* and *The Outlander* regarding space and female protagonists occurs when both women finally become able to read landscape, and consequently to accept it. For Mrs. Ross this occurs the moment when she realizes she enjoys the landscape, thus overcoming her feeling of panic at the sight of Canadian Shield which is 'too big, too empty for humans' (Penney, 2007: 191) and replacing it with the realization of another kind: 'I realise that the plain is beautiful. The brightness makes my eyes water, and I am dazzled, not just physically, but awed by this enormous, empty purity' (Penney, 2007: 193). For Mary Boulton, on the other hand, the transformation occurs in the Rocky Mountains where she undergoes a spiritual and physical survival training. What is more, she adapts so well that she adopts the forest as her home. To put it very simply, once

Adamson uses all of the known circumstances of the Ridgerunner's life (letting him tell the story of his life to the widow [Adamson, 2009: 88-94])—his self-proclaimed outcast-ness from society and his unison with nature—but she antedates him by 35 years, making him a 35-year-old in 1903.

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she has learned how to read the text of landscape, it becomes more familiar than human society.

Eventually, the protagonists in both novels, Mrs. Ross in *The Tenderness of Wolves* and Mary Boulton in *The Outlander*, having experienced both poles of civilization and nature, make an informed choice about their lives: Mrs. Ross will return to Dove River on the north shore of Georgian Bay to live with her husband, whereas Mary Boulton will renounce civilization and live in the forest-region of southern Canadian and northern US Rockies with the Ridgerunner, the naturalized/'native' man. Both novels, hence, end with alternative solutions to the 'either: or' equation by proposing that survival does not have to be a choice of one end of the binary opposition, but that it can be a compromise between both. In *The Outlander*, it is true, the ending is a somewhat fairy-tale one, with Mary Boulton deciding to stay in the wilderness with the Ridgerunner and renouncing human society altogether, but in *The Tenderness of Wolves* a more realistic ending opens a possibility for Mrs. Ross to reconstruct and rebuild her settler life. Thus the body of Canada and a female body come to a kind of compromise, and by understanding the former, the latter can accept both itself and the landscape, and consequently reconstitute her own identity of a Canadian woman of a different kind.

In conclusion, both novels, while structurally firmly within the crime fiction genre, show the potential for serious addressing of some of the patriarchal and Euro- and Amero-centric stereotypes about the constitution of space and womanhood, which can frequently be found in popular literature.

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ABSTRACTS/PRÉCIS
(Alphabetized)

Jess Huber
'Queering Bodies, Queering Boundaries: Localizing Identity in and of the Body in Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*'

In *The Kappa Child,* Hiromi Goto attempts to engage questions of nationality, ethnicity, community and identity formation through the concrete lived experience of one unnamed narrator who is impregnated by and with a mythical Japanese kappa. As theorists like Kit Dobson and others engaged in transnational criticism propose opening borders to wider arenas of analysis to engage vast questions involving nations and identity, I propose to localize the debate and root analysis in the corporeal, embodied aspects of one fictional text. The title bodies in Canada then holds new meaning as this particular novel queers borders of geography, sexuality, and frequently race in favor of a local and localizing trend. What the reader may take from this novel when the last words have been read, is that the borders of nation cease to matter when the borders of the self and other are so intertwined, intermingled, intermeshed through intercourse and active discourse with bodies.

Dans son *The Kappa Child*, Hiromi Goto tente d'aborder la question de formation de la nationalité, l'ethnicité, la communauté et l'identité en partant d'une expérience concrète, vécue par une narratrice innommée qui est fertilisée par le kappa, une créature mythique du folklore japonais. A l'instar des théoriciens comme Kit Dobson et d'autres qui, impliqués dans la critique transnationale, postulent le dépassement des frontières pour aboutir à un espace plus large et, par conséquent, pour aborder des questions vitales pour les nations et l'identité, je me propose de situer ce débat et d'enraciner mon analyse dans les aspects corporels et charnels d'un texte fictionnel. Ainsi, les C-OR(P)ganismeS du Canada sont-ils dotés d'un sens nouveau, car le roman de Goto rend *queers* les frontières géographiques, sexuelles et souvent raciales afin de privilégier une tendance locale et décentralisante. Ce qui semble important à la lecture

de ce roman, c'est que les frontières d'une nation ne comptent plus dès que celles de soi et d'autres sont si entrelacées, enchevêtrées et entrecroisées à travers des relations et un discours actif avec le corps.

Eva C. Karpinski

'Bodies Material and Immaterial: Daphne Marlatt's Ghost-Writing and Transnationalism in *Taken*'

Focusing on Daphne Marlatt's 1996 novel *Taken*, this paper argues that by politicizing the interconnectedness of language, body, place, and memory, Marlatt extends the practice of feminist discourse beyond the framework of gender and nation. Attending to the hauntings of (post)colonial history, including the trauma of the Asia-Pacific War and the Gulf War, she explores the linkages and connections among various nationalisms, heteropatriarchies, colonialisms, and militarisms. In the rhetorical play of the body in Marlatt's feminist poetics and politics of writing, we can recognize an implicit critique of Western hegemonic narratives of self as bounded, rational, individualistic. She adopts a number of strategies to decenter the primacy and singularity of this disembodied humanist subject, distancing herself from the dominant tradition of writing as an act of singular consciousness. Her accomplishment in *Taken* is to give new relevance to *écriture au féminin* by providing a historicized, transnational perspective, which allows us to see the connections between different bodies in the intimate and the global scale while reinforcing the need for relationality in the contemporary conflict-haunted world.

L'hypothèse de cet article est que la politisation de l'interconnectivité du langage, du corps, de l'espace et de la mémoire que nous pouvons observer dans *Taken*, le roman de Daphne Marlatt publié en 1996, permet à l'auteure d'étendre la pratique du discours féministe audélà du cadre du genre et de la nation. En prêtant son attention aux spectres de l'histoire (post)coloniale, y compris le trauma de la guerre du Pacifique et celle du Golfe, Marlatt révèle des liens entre plusieurs nationalismes, hétéropatriarchies, colonialismes et militarismes. C'est à travers le jeu rhétorique du corps que nous pouvons reconnaître dans la poétique féministe et politique de l'écriture marlattienne une critique implicite de l'hégémonie occidentale des récits de soi, si limités, rationnels et individualistes soient-ils. L'auteure utilise plusieures stratégies pour décentrer la primauté et la singularité accordées au sujet humaniste désincarné et du coup, elle prend ses distances avec la tradition dominante de l'écriture comme acte de conscience singulière. Ainsi le projet réalisé dans Taken est-il d'une importance nouvelle pour l'écriture au féminin, car il offre une perspective historicisée et transnationale qui nous permet de voir des liens entre des C-OR(P)

ganismeS différents à l'échelle imtime et globale, et qui renforce la nécessité de la relationnalité dans le monde contemporain déchiré par des conflits.

Isabelle Lachance

'La Souriquoise en ses plaisirs. Analogie entre la femme sauvage et la Nouvelle-France chez Marc Lescarbot'

Cet article s'intéresse à la représentation analogique de la Nouvelle-France et de la Souriquoise (ou Montagnaise) dans le discours propagandiste de Marc Lescarbot. Proposant d'échapper aux difficultés inhérentes à la colonisation en mettant de l'avant un modèle d'établissement colonial fondé sur le plaisir en tant que marque de civilité, l'auteur de l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (publiée entre 1609 et 1618) insiste sur l'essentielle présence des femmes afin d'atteindre un équilibre nécessaire à la réussite de cette colonisation. Sur la base de cette prescription énoncée à la fois sous les modes moral et médical, il condamne la tabagie, plaisir le plus 'spectaculaire' des Souriquois, mais dont les femmes sont exclues. Ce faisant, il disqualifie les alliés des Français en Nouvelle-France en tant qu'occupants légitimes et naturels de leur territoire. D'autant plus qu'ils auraient appris par la fréquentation des Français le seul plaisir qu'ils daigneraient accorder à leurs femmes, soit le baiser. Ces dernières font dès lors l'objet d'une rhétorique intéressée à double titre. D'une part, en tant que compagnes d'hommes certes courageux et loyaux au colonisateur mais encore imparfaits, elles deviennent, en raison de leurs comportements irréprochables en regard de la déchéance morale des Européennes, le signe d'une colonie qui peut aspirer à la réussite. D'autre part, à travers l'autre plaisir légitime que l'historien accorde à la Souriquoise, outre la cour amoureuse, elle en vient à incarner une terre propre à accueillir des colons dont le projet d'établissement saura répondre aux plus hautes aspirations morales, une véritable France *nouvelle*. En effet, chez cette femme, l'usage d'ouvrages de perles ou *matachias* en tant qu'ornements corporels révèle non seulement une humanité partagée sous l'égide des arts et donc du plaisir esthétique (éludant du coup les fonctions rituelle et politique de ces objets), mais surtout l'attribut d'une humilité et d'une bienséance qui contraste à la fois avec le faste européen et la sensualité débridée des Amérindiens des contrées australes, de toute manière hors de portée des espoirs coloniaux français en ce début du XVIIe siècle.

This article studies the analogical representation of New France and the Souriquois (Micmac) woman in the propagandist discourse of Marc Lescarbot. In his approach to solving the difficulties inherent in colonization, the author of the first *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (published between

1609 and 1618) promotes a model of settlement based on pleasure. But pleasure, revealing civility or politeness, cannot be reached without the key presence of women. Through this prescription—equally moral and medical—the historian criticizes *tabaguia*, Souriquois' most 'spectacular' but infinitely imperfect pleasure, since women are not admitted to participate. By doing so, Lescarbot discredits French settlers' allies in their legitimate and natural occupancy of the territory. Not to mention that the Souriquois would have learned from the Frenchmen the only pleasure they condescend to their spouses: gallantry. Henceforth, the Souriquoise is in two ways the object of an interested rhetoric. On the one hand, as mate of a loyal and courageous but yet imperfect man, she becomes the sign of the colony's possible success, owing to her highly moral behavior compared to European woman. On the other hand, by taking up to the other pleasure Lescarbot grants her, modest body ornaments, the Souriquoise embodies a colonial land that promises to welcome settlers who wish to live in a superiorly moral colony, a truly *new* France. Indeed, for this woman, not only the use of beaded works or *matachias* as body ornaments reveals a shared humanity with the colonist—a humanity placed under the aegis of arts and, therefore, of esthetical pleasure (covering up the ritual and political role these objects had in reality)—but, most of all, these *matachias* are represented as symbols of an humble and decent nature contrasting both with the European pomp and the uncontrolled sensuality of Natives living in southern territories. Obviously, this rejection comes in useful as Brazil, Florida and Virginia are, from then on, beyond reach of colonial France.

Małgorzata Myk

'Traversing Gendered Spaces with Nicole Brossard's Lesbians: Figurations of Nomadic Subjectivity in *Picture Theory*'

This paper proposes a reading of Nicole Brossard's innovative *Picture Theory* in the context of Rosi Braidotti's figuration of 'nomadic subjectivity' proposed in her 1994 study *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* and Elizabeth Grosz's politics of corporeal feminism and nomad desire advanced in *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* I argue that the narrative of *Picture Theory* can be productively read in light of Braidotti and Grosz's feminist speculative theorizations of nomadism and nomadic subjectivity as a kind of strategically deployed utopian vision with a political potential.

Cet article propose une lecture de *Picture Theory*, œuvre innovatrice de Nicole Brossard, à travers le concept de « subjectivité nomade » proposé par Rosi Braidotti dans *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, de même qu'à travers le féminisme corporel et le désir nomade dont parle Elizabeth Grosz dans *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* Mon hypothèse est que le livre de Brossard, analysé à la lumière des théories

féministes spéculatives de Braidotti et Grosz, révèle une vision utopique avec un potentiel politique.

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Tenderness of Space and Outlandish Women: *The Tenderness of the Wolves* and *The Outlander*'

In two novels belonging to the genre of the detective fiction (Todorov)—Stef Penney's *The Tenderness of Wolves* (2006) and Gil Adamson's *The Outlander* (2007)—the backdrop is analyzed to reveal how the stereotypical perceptions of late 19th and early 20th century Canadian space are reworked to accommodate the development of female protagonists within generic fiction which does not usually allocate much space to character development. The stereotypical images of Canada are thus used to reveal both the space and women as sites of inscription by a white European man. The traditionally accepted binary oppositions of civilisation vs. nature, savage/Native man vs. civilised /white man, woman as subject vs. woman as object, centre vs. periphery, are problematized and deconstructed, foregrounding the marginal characters of the settler society.

Cet article analyse le toile de fond de *The Tenderness of Wolves* de Stef Penney, publié en 2006, et de *The Outlander* de Gil Adamson, publié un an après, deux romans qu'il faudrait qualifier, après Todorov, comme policiers. L'analyse a pour but de montrer comment les perceptions stéréotypées de l'espace canadien à la charnière du 19e et du 20e siècle sont retravaillées afin de pouvoir adapter le développement des protagonistes féminins dans le cadre du genre qui, en général, n'accorde pas beaucoup de place au développement des personnages. Ainsi les idées reçues sur le Canada sont-elles utilisées pour représenter l'espace et la femme comme lieux d'inscription faite par un homme européen et blanc. Les oppositions binaires communément acceptées, telles que civilisation/nature, homme sauvage ou autochtone/homme civilisé, femme-sujet/femme-objet et centre/périphérie, sont remises en question et déconstruites pour mettre au premier plan les personnages marginaux de la société des colons.

Laura Sarnelli

'Overlapping Territories, Drifting Bodies in Dionne Brand's Work'

This paper explores the issue of national and gendered identity as related to the transcultural topographies of Canada in Dionne Brand's work. Given her multiple dislocations between the Caribbean and Canada, and given her liminal location as a woman and a black lesbian, Dionne Brand openly critiques identity politics, offering counter-narratives which figure new spaces to inhabit. As the geographical

boundaries of nations do not reflect her imagined community, Brand's works reveal the unfolding of fluid textual maps which re-chart and re-configure transnational diasporic communities between the Caribbean and Canada, making these very spaces flowing, shifting, where territories overlap and desiring bodies wander adrift. She imagines an embodied cartography of desire between the Caribbean and Canada traced out through the representation of erotic, sensual, and affective bodies.

Cet article aborde le problème d'indentité nationale et de genre en relation avec les topographies transculturelles du Canada telles qu'elles se présentent dans l'œuvre de Dionne Brand. Etant donné ses déplacements multiples entre les Caraïbes et le Canada, de même que son emplacement liminal en tant que femme et lesbienne noire, Dione Brand critique ouvertement les politiques identitaires et offre des contre-récits qui font apparaître de nouvels espaces à habiter. Comme les frontières géographiques des nations ne reflètent pas sa communauté imaginaire, l'œuvre brandienne déploie des plans textuels fluides qui redessinent et reconfigurent les communautés diasporiques transnationales entre les Caraïbes et le Canada. Par conséquent, celles-ci deviennent des espaces flottants et changeants où les territoires se recouvrent et les corps désirants s'égarent. En effet, Brand imagine une cartographie corporelle du désir entre les Caraïbes et le Canada esquissée à travers la représentation des corps érotiques, sensuels et affectifs.

Aritha van Herk
'Bawdy Bodies: Bridging Robert Kroetsch and bpNichol'

How does a body in Canada seek to know itself? Only through the juxtaposition of largeness and detail, and by embracing a fragmented and necessarily incomplete vision. This ficto-critical piece performs a cross-genre reading of Canada's bewildered and bewildering body through two key texts by major Canadian poets. *Too Bad* by Robert Kroetsch and *Selected Organs: Parts of an Autobiography*, by bpNichol, suggest a conduit into the landscape of the body, and how that body seeks to invent itself through a bawdy language. These two Canadian writers, too large to be encapsulated, propose in their work a way of writing the body in Canada through fragments. This reading argues that *dinggedicten,* poetic forms that attempt to describe objects from within, rather than externally, are key to how the bawdy/body can unpack the large and thus unseeable body of Canada, from the perspective that we can never see the body of the whole, only parts, fractions, segments. The analysis addresses how these poets provide a contrapuntal edge to totalizing readings of the Canadian body, examining as well the use of ironic distance as a means of inhabiting the

body in order to write that body. It moves from a discussion of Canada's unwieldy body to the auto-biographical body. Its focus on liminally-mapped bodies and the desires of detail within the experiencing body, vivisects the Kroetsch and nichol texts through van Herk's own autobiographical ficto-critical interventions. Imbricated in the analysis is a meditation on how landscape marks the body and how body becomes itself a nation.

Comment un corps cherche-t-il à se reconnaître au Canada? Ce n'est que par la juxtaposition de la largesse et du détail, de même que par le renfermement d'une vision fragmentée et nécessairement incomplète. Ce texte, fictionnel et critique à la fois, est une lecture genrée croisée du corps du Canada, ahuri et ahurissant à la fois. Cette lecture se fait à la lumière de deux textes-clés écrits par des poètes canadiens d'importance majeure, à savoir *Too bad* de Robert Kroetsch et *Selected Organs: Parts of an Autobiography* de bpNichol, qui évoquent la canalisation du paysage corporel du Canada et interrogent la façon dont ce corps cherche à s'inventer par un langage léger [bawdy language]. Ces deux écrivains canadiens, trop larges pour les enfermer dans une capsule, nous offrent dans leurs ouvrages un mode d'écrire le corps au Canada à travers des fragments. Ma lecture se propose de montrer que les *dinggedicten,* c'est-à-dire des formes poétiques qui tentent de décrire des objets plutôt de l'intérieur que de l'extérieur, sont d'une importance cruciale pour mesurer comment le corps léger ([*bawdy/body*] peut étaler le corps du Canada si large et imperceptible soit-il. Cette perspective suppose que nous ne soyons jamais capables de voir le corps comme un tout, seulement des parties, fractions et segments. Il s'agit de montrer que les deux poètes interviennent sur une marge qui est en contrepoint des lectures totalisantes du corps canadien et d'examiner l'usage de la distance ironique comme moyen permettant d'habiter ce corps et, par conséquent, de l'écrire. En partant de remarques sur le corps pesant du Canada, je passe au corps autobiographique. Mon analyse, qui porte sur les corps liminalement cartographié [liminally-mapped bodies] et les désirs habitant le corps qui fait une expérience, vivisecte les textes de Kroetsch et Nichol à travers mes propres interventions autobiographiques, fictionnelles et critiques. Enfin, il s'agit de méditer la façon dont le paysage marque le corps et dont le corps lui-même devient une nation.

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(Alphabetized)

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'Borrowed Tongues': Life Writing, Migrancy, Translation sera publié dans les Presses universitaires de l'Université Wilfrid-Laurier en 2012.

Michał Krzykawski is an Assistant Professor at the Chair of Canadian Studies and Literary Translation in the Institute of Romance Languages and Translation Studies at the University of Silesia, Poland. His research interests include French post-structuralism and literary and critical theory. In 2010, he defended his Ph.D. thesis devoted to G. Bataille's work as interpreted in the light of post-structuralist texts. He is also interested in Canadian studies, especially the identity discourse of Québec analyzed from a feminist, gendered and postcolonial perspective. His book, *L'effet-Bataille. De la littérature d'excès à l'écriture. Un texte-lecture,* is forthcoming.

Michał Krzykawski est enseignant/chercheur à la Chaire d'études canadiennes et de traduction littéraire à l'Institut des langues romanes et de traduction à l'Université de Silésie en Pologne. Il s'intéresse à la pensée post-structuraliste française, de même qu'à la théorie littéraire et critique contemporaine. En 2010, il a soutenu sa thèse de doctorat consacrée à l'œuvre de Georges Bataille, interprétée à la lumière des travaux post-structuralistes. Ses intérêts de recherche portent également sur le Canada et plus particulièrement sur le discours identitaire québécois analysé d'une perspective féministe, genrée et postcoloniale. Son livre *L'effet-Bataille. De la littérature d'excès à l'écriture. Un texte-lecture* sera publié en 2011.

Isabelle Lachance is a lecturer at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, where she is also a researcher associated with the Canada Research Chair in Rhetoric. She wrote her PhD dissertation on Marc Lescarbot and her master's thesis on Jean-Baptiste Chassignet. Her recent papers and articles have focused on such topics as the self-reflective discourse of the Renaissance historian, the presence of anti-Jesuit polemics in the reports of missionaries of the Society of Jesus, representations of the historical reality in travel stories and *Coppie d'une lettre envoyee de la Nouvelle France*, a little known imaginary travel narrative. She contributed to the critical edition of Nicolas Faret's *Lettres nouvelles* (1625) and Philippe Aubert de Gaspé's *Mémoires*. In collaboration with Marie-Christine Pioffet (York University), she is currently working on an anthology of Marc Lescarbot's short texts.

Isabelle Lachance. est professionnelle de recherche pour la Chaire de recherche du Canada en rhétorique de l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières et chargée de cours à la même institution, Isabelle Lachance est l'auteure d'une thèse de doctorat sur Marc Lescarbot et d'un mémoire de maîtrise sur Jean-Baptiste Chassignet. Le discours autoréflexif de l'historien à la Renaissance, les traces de la polémique antijésuite dans les relations des missionnaires de la Compagnie, l'énonciation des temps historiques dans les récits de voyage ainsi que la *Coppie d'une lettre envoyee de la Nouvelle France*, un voyage imaginaire peu connu, sont quelques-uns des sujets abordés dans ses dernières communications et publications. Elle a également participé

à l'édition critique des *Lettres nouvelles* de Nicolas Faret (1625) et des *Mémoires* de Philippe Aubert de Gaspé. Elle prépare actuellement, en collaboration avec Marie-Christine Pioffet (Université York), une anthologie de textes brefs de Marc Lescarbot.

Małgorzata Myk is a faculty member in the Department of American Literature and Culture at the University in Łódź, Poland. Her most recently published articles are: 'Bret Easton Ellis's Society of the Spectacle in *Glamorama*: Towards a Definition of Postmodern Violence' (in *America: The Natural and the Artificial*, edited by Magdalena Zapędowska and Paweł Stachura, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, UAM, 2010) and 'The Immemorial Waters of Venice: Woman as Anodyne in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*' (*The Explicator* 67.3 [Washington, DC: Heldref Publications, 2009]). Currently, her scholarly interests include women's innovative and experimental writing in the United States and Canada, as well as gender studies and feminist literary studies.

Małgorzata Myk est docteure en lettres et travaille au Département de littérature et culture américaines à l'Université de Łódź, Pologne. Ses articles publiés récemment sont 'Bret Easton Ellis's Society of the Spectacle in *Glamorama*: Towards a Definition of Postmodern Violence' (*America: The Natural and the Artificial.* Magdalena Zapędowska et Paweł Stachura (eds), Poznań : Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2010) et 'The Immemorial Waters of Venice: Woman as Anodyne in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*' (*The Explicator* 67.3 [Washington, DC: Heldref Publications, 2009]). Ses intérêts de recherche portent actuellement sur les écritures innovatives et expérimentales des femmes aux États-Unis et au Canada et sur les études du genre et de la théorie littéraire féministe.

Vanja Polic is an assistant lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. She teaches Introduction to Literary Theory, English Metaphysical Poets, Modern Beginnings of the Novel in 18th-Century England, and Canadian Literature: Multiculturalism and Identity. In 2009 she defended her Ph.D. on the rhetorical practices of self-legitimation in the prefatory materials of the early 18th-century British novel. Vanja Polic's fields of research include identity and urban spaces in contemporary Canadian literature and rhetorical practices of the early 18th-century British novel.

Vanja Polic est enseignante au Département d'anglais à la Faculté des sciences humaines de l'Université de Zagreb, Croatie. Elle donne des cours d'introduction à la théorie littéraire, et sur les poètes métaphysiques anglais, le roman anglais moderne au 18e siècle et sur littérature canadienne : multiculturalisme et identité. En 2009, elle a soutenu sa thèse de doctorat consacrée aux pratiques rhétoriques de légitimation de soi dans le roman anglais au début du 18e siècle. Ses intérêtes de recherche se concentrent sur la question identitaire et les espaces

urbains dans la littérature canadienne contemporaine, de même que sur les pratiques rhétoriques du roman anglais au début du 18e siècle.

Laura Sarnelli holds a PhD in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures from the University of Naples L'Orientale', where she is currently a post-doctoral researcher. Her research interests include queer theory, diaspora studies, and Canadian and African American literature. She has published on Shakespearian criticism, cinema, modern and contemporary Gothic, and postcolonial literature with a specific focus on Caribbean and Canadian women writers. She is the author of *Il libro dei desideri. Scritture di deriva nella letteratura femminile diasporica in Nord America* (2009). Postcolonial melancholia is the subject of her forthcoming work, *The Scar and its Borders: Melancholic Forgetting and Embodied Memory*.

Laura Sarnelli est docteure en letters et cultures anglophones et travaille à l'Université de Naples L'Orientale où elle mène ses recherches post-doctorales. Elle s'intéresse à la théorie *queer*, aux *diaspora studies*, à la littérature canadienne et africaine-américaine. Elle est auteure de plusieurs articles sur la critique shakespearienne, le cinéma, le gothique moderne et contemporain et la littérature postcoloniale, surtout celle des écrivaines canadiennes d'origine caraïbe. En 2009, elle a publié *Il libro dei desideri. Scritture di deriva nella letteratura femminile diasporica in Nord America*. Elle travaille actuellement sur la mélancolie postcoloniale et va publier bientôt *The Scar and its Borders: Melancholic Forgetting and Embodied Memory*.

Zuzanna Szatanik is an Assistant Professor at the Chair of Canadian Studies and Literary Translation in the Institute of Romance Languages and Translation Studies at the University of Silesia, Poland. In 2005 she received her doctorate from the University of Silesia. Her research interests include Canadian literature, American literature, minority literatures, gender studies, shame psychology, and children's literature. She teaches American literature, literary interpretation, and literary theory. She performs the function of the Secretary of the *Romanica Silesiana* Editorial Board, has co-edited three books, and guest-edited an issue of *TransCanadiana*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Polish Association of Canadian Studies. Her book, *De-Shamed. Feminist Strategies of Transgression: The Case of Lorna Crozier's Poetry* is forthcoming.

Zuzanna Szatanik est enseignante/chercheuse à la Chaire d'études canadiennes et de traduction littéraire à l'Institut des langues romanes et de traduction à l'Université de Silésie en Pologne. En 2005, elle a soutenu sa thèse de doctorat à l'Université de Silésie. Elle s'intéresse aux littératures canadienne, américaine et minoritaire, aux études du genre, à la psychologie de la honte et à la littérature pour enfants. Elle donne des cours de littérature américaine et d'interprétation et de théorie littéraires. Sécretaire du comité éditorial de *Romanica Silesiana*, elle est co-éditrice de trois livres et éditrice invitée d'un numéro de *TransCanadiana*, revue à comité de lecture éditée par l'Association polonaise d'études canadiennes. Son livre intitulé *De-Shamed. Feminist Strate-*

gies of Transgression. The Case of Lorna Crozier's Poetry va être publié en 2011.

Aritha van Herk is a novelist, writer, teacher, and editor working within Canadian Literature, belles lettres, and contemporary culture. Her award-winning novels and essays have been published and praised nationally and internationally, and her work is the subject of dozens of studies, theses, and papers. She has published five novels, *Judith, The Tent Peg, No Fixed Address, Places Far From Ellesmere* (a *geografictione* blending geography and fiction), and *Restlessness.* Her critical and non-fiction works, *A Frozen Tongue* and *In Visible Ink,* interrogate questions of reading and writing as integral to contemporary culture. Her *Mavericks: An Incorrigible History of Alberta* won the Grant MacEwan Author's Award for Alberta Writing and the book frames the permanent exhibition on Alberta history at the Glenbow Museum; her latest book, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta,* accompanies that exhibit. She has also edited seven anthologies of essays and short stories, including most recently *Carol Shields: Evocation and Echo* (2009). She is University Professor and Professor of English at the University of Calgary, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Aritha van Herk est romancière, enseignante et éditrice dans le champ de la littérature canadienne, des belles-lettres et de la culture contemporaine. Lauréate de plusieurs prix pour ses romans et essais reconnus à l'échelle nationale et internationale, ainsi qu'analysés dans de nombreux articles et ouvrages universitaires. Elle a publié cinq romans qui sont *Judith, The Tent Peg, No Fixed Address, Places Far From Ellesmere, (*a *geografictione* blending geography and fiction) et *Restlessness.* Ses travaux critiques *A Frozen Tongue* et *In Visible Ink* interrogent la question de lecture et écriture comme faisant une partie intégrante de la culture contemporaine. Son ouvrage *Mavericks: An Incorrigible History of Alberta,* qui a remporté le *Grant MacEwan Author's Award for Alberta Writing*, encadre une exposition permanente sur l'histoire du sol albertain au Musée Glenbow. Son dernier livre *Audacious and Adamant: the Story of Maverick Alberta* accompagne cette exposition. Aritha van Herk est éditrice de sept anthologies d'essais et de nouvelles dont *Carol Shields: Evocation and Echo* publié en 2009. Elle est professeure universitaire et professeure d'anglais à l'Université de Calgary en Alberta, Canada.

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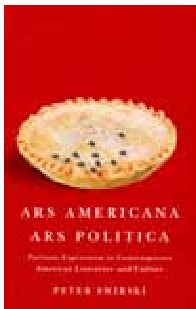

Swirski, Peter. *Ars Americana, Ars Politica: Partisan Expression in Contemporary American Literature and Culture*. Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010.

Financial Times: 'A provocative and energetic book that reaches out beyond academia in an attempt to define the nature of American political literature'. Howard Zinn: '*Ars Americana* is both fascinating and original'.

Swirski, Peter. *American Utopia and Social Engineering in Literature, Social Thought, and Political History*. New York, London: Routledge, 2011.

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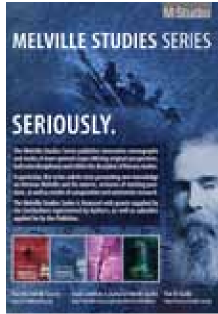

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Jędrzejko, P. (2007, 2008) *Płynność i egzystencja. Doświadczenie lądu i morza a egzystencjalizm Hermana Melville'a*. Sosnowiec, Katowice, Zabrze: BananaArt.Pl/ExMachina/M-Studio.

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Measure and Excess / (Dé)mesures canadiennes

Guest-edited by:
Tomasz Sikora and Michał Krzykawski

Ostensibly dedicated to the virtue of moderation, Canadian culture is also producing intense contestations over the boundaries of the 'proper', the 'orderly' and the 'presentable'. Indeed, the very concept of Canadianness could be seen as a vertiginous space that might be (re)read as a dialectic suspense between moderation and excess. For further information, see http://www.ptbk.org.pl/Aktualnosci,5.html

Apparemment fidèle à la vertu de la modération, la culture canadienne n'est pourtant pas étrangère à toute sorte de représentations intenses qui dépassent même les limites du représentable, du propre ou du mesurable. En effet, le concept de canadianité semble nous jeter vers un espace vertigineux qui se donne à (re)lire comme un suspense entre mesure et démesure. Pour en voir plus : http://www.ptbk.org.pl/Aktualnosci,5.html

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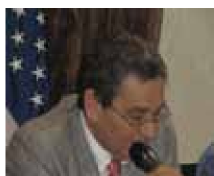

Our sincere congratulations go to our own Giorgio Mariani, IASA Vice-President, and his eminent Co-Chairs of the The Eighth International Melville Society Conference, professors John Bryant and Gordon Poole. The Conference, titled *Melville and Rome: Empire—Democracy—Belief—Art*, held at the famed University 'La Sapienza' of Rome and the renowned Center for American Studies, both in the heart of the Eternal City, gathered over one hundred scholars from the United States, Italy, and twenty other nations—including colleagues from Algeria, Australia, Canada, China, England, Germany, India, Iraq, Israel, Korea, Kurdistan, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine, including world's foremost experts in the field of 19th-century American studies. Keynote addresses were delivered by Leslie Marmon Silko, novelist, and leading Melville scholars: Dennis Berthold, author of *American Resorgimento* and Gordon Poole, editor of *Naples in the Time of Bomba*. The most global of the Melville Society conferences thus far, the event combined the highest level of intellectual debate with the fabled Melville Society cameraderie. Scheduled programs included presentations by artists, a walking tour of Melville's Rome, and a day-trip to Naples guided by noted Neapolitan Melvillean, Gordon Poole himself.

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- Pre-format your text in Times New Roman or Unicode font typeface, 12 point and 1.5 line spacing.
- For emphasis, use italics only. Do *not* underline words, do *not* use boldface.
- All text should be justified with last line aligned left, without kerning or any special text formatting.
- For page setup, use borders of 2.5 cm or one inch at all sides, format A4.
- Minimum resolution for images is 300 dpi.
- Keep titles, subtitles and section headers as short as possible to conform to the technical requirements of the new *RIAS* template.
- Keep in mind that many readers will want to read your text from the screen. Write economically, and use indents, not blank lines between paragraphs.
- Those writing in English should use American spelling (but quotations should remain as they are in the original spelling).
- Those writing in languages other than English should observe the stylistic conventions (capitalization, alphabetical listing of personal names, etc.) linked to these languages.
- Quotations from other languages should be either in translation or appear both in the original and in translation.
- Cited publications are referred to in parenthetical references in the text as follows: '…' (Surname, date: page reference).

- Use single quotations marks. Use double quotation marks for quotations within quotations.
- Longer quotations exceeding three lines should be indented and single-spaced.
- Use single quotation marks around words used in a special sense.
- All punctuation marks that do not appear in the original text should appear outside the quotation marks.
- As to abbreviations, use neither periods nor spaces after and between letters (the US), except for initials of personal names (T. S. Eliot).
- Use em dashes without spaces before and after.
- Footnotes should be numbered automatically 1, 2, 3, etc.
- List your references in alphabetical order of authors' names (type: Works Cited) at the end of your document and format them as follows:

BOOK

Surname, Initials and Surname, Initials (year) *Title: Subtitle*. Place of publication: Publisher.

ARTICLE IN BOOK

Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Chapter', in Initials Surname and Initials Surname (eds) *Title of Book*. Place: Publisher, page number(s) of contribution.

ARTICLE IN JOURNAL

Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Article', *Title of Journal* volume number (issue number): page number(s) of contribution.

WEBSITE

Surname, Initials (year) *Title*. Place of publication, Publisher (if ascertainable).http://xxx.xxx/xxx, mailbase and retrieval date.

ARTICLE IN E-JOURNAL

Surname, Initials (year) 'Title of Article', *Name of Journal* volume number (issue number) http://xxx.xxxx.xx/xxx, retrieval date.

MAILBASE LIST

Surname, Initials (day month year). 'Subject of Message', Discussion List LISTSERVE@xxx.xxx, retrieval date.

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