

implicites des idéologies en présence. Notre analyse relationnelle permet alors de constater la merveilleuse implosion des discours, intentionnelle ou non, qui s'écroulent dès le point final *D'un océan à l'autre*.

Notes:

1. C'est d'ailleurs le sujet d'un article publié en 1981 par Richard Chadbourne de l'Université de Calgary. Ce dernier tente de réhabiliter Robert Larocque de Roquebrune au fronton des lettres canadiennes-françaises et de démontrer que la critique a été injuste à son égard. Voir son article dans *The French Review*.
2. Sauf indication contraire et pour des raisons de lisibilité, nous utilisons l'édition jeunesse de ce roman paru chez Fides en 1958.
3. Ce martèlement revient particulièrement à trois reprises à la page 9, 18 et 33. On peut lire à la page 9 de l'édition de 1958: "Si vous voulez parler des métis, colonel, je vous dirai qu'au point de vue de mes études, ils ne sont nullement intéressants. [...] Je préfère encore les sauvages de la province de Québec qui sont purs de tout alliage et qui n'ont pas dégénéré jusqu'à avoir du sang français ou anglais dans leur veines..."
4. Fait intéressant à noter: ce regret de métissage disparaît de l'édition jeunesse publiée chez Fides en 1958, ainsi qu'une explication de l'origine historique du métissage canadien-français attribuant au célèbre ministre Colbert sous Louis XIV la tentative infructueuse d'inciter les Canadiens français à "[s'allier] à des sauvagesses" (1924 20). Ces retranchements pourraient être l'objet de changements idéologiques entre les deux éditions.
5. On peut lire: "[...] en lui le mélange de la race indienne avec le sang français semble avoir produit un déséquilibre" (31).

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Terrorism Then and Now, Here and There: Canada, the Final Frontier

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THEN: What reverberations occurred when the postmodern discourse was evaporated by 9/11 rhetorical strategies? And, since that date was able to abscond another (Chile: 1973), what invisible hand conducted the airwaves, public spaces, digital horizons, juridical sites, market squares, so as to turn the world into a Guantanamo *state of mind*?

NOW: Canada has repeatedly been indexed by the UN as *reach for the top*.¹ They classify it as a model country to live in, praising its multiculturalism for the peaceful co-existence amongst the many ethno-cultural groups that constitute its everyday reality. How does the country narrate itself in such a way as to produce this image of a successful and peaceful amalgam of different constituencies? Also, what kind of history is this narrative able to represent and sustain given that there is an undercurrent of political and cultural tensions yet to be fully addressed in the Canadian literary production of the last several decades?

HERE AND THERE: Three novels constitute the material of our critical discourse. Here, terrorism is both a trope and analysis of history as it develops in other countries, as well as Canada. Via *Black Bird* by Michel Basilières, we reposition Caterina Edwards's *The Lion's Mouth* and Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Parallel to this, the cultural complexity present in Canadian society and literature – which has yet to claim its canon² – must be targeted as constituting a body-in-becoming, an allusion to the dialectics of authenticity. If Canada is able to contribute more than the governed domestication of itself – the geocultural spectacle – as indicated by the UN, this must be finally found in its artistic production. The paradigm shift that numerous critics have incorporated without question – as the events of 11 September 2001 unfurled through the mediatic circle,³ as social and political polarization ensued, as the world was reduced to an "us versus them" binary – standardized the lowest common denominator, violent confrontation, as the only possible resolution in this New World Order. It is not by chance that Canada has fulfilled its role of a pacifier through the UN, where up to recently Canada's army was used as a peace keeping force. The necessary changes to this world-wide image with the war in Kosovo (1999); the active, belligerent role in Canada's army as part of NATO's forces, were later fully exploited by Harper governments' management skills to present the militarization of the multicultural. Yet, the pacifier role that Canada previously occupied on the world stage can be reformulated as a critical distancing that is still available to Canada's literary production. With this in mind, authors such as Badami, Basilières and Edwards are more central than we make them out to be: in their novels their presentation/analysis of terrorism has much more to say about the problems of terrorism than some of the political literature⁴ that has circulated since 9/11. The reflections that sustain the complexity of the rubric of terrorism nuance that very word away from the binary by reintroducing the reader/social subject to history. If anything has come to light of the marriage made in heaven between postmodernism and 9/11 rhetoric, it has been the absence of history in the media, as if such instruments like television were inherently anti-historical. Is an attempt to mitigate this collateral damage to be found in Canadian literature?

Doomed to Confess: Confessing to Doom

Over twenty years separate Caterina Edwards's *The Lion's Mouth* (1982) and Michel Basilières' *Black Bird* (2003) and almost twenty five years separate Edwards's novel from Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (2006). In congruence with the over-determined cultural trope that has reigned over us in the last eight years, the first novel reveals a representation of endogenous terrorism in Italy between the late Seventies and the early Eighties of the last century. The second, our pivot, illustrates exogenous terrorism in Canada in 1970 from the vantage point of a post-9/11 reality. Again, from a post-Twin Towers-attack perspective, the third novel explores exogenous-endogenous terrorism between Canada and India, which culminates in the 1985 Air India Bombing.

What divergent and congruent topoi bind the novels to one another, through the lens of a poetics of displacement? After all, in between Edwards's novel and the latter two publications, we had amongst other resonating events: Live Aid, 1985, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, 1989, the World Wide Web starting in 1992, the Project for the New American Century, 1997-2006, 9/11, the Occupation of Iraq, 2003. Throughout, an on-going, centrifugal process: the diffusion of a homogenous image-culture substituting the written/literary word as the principle of critical reflection. It is not without irony that Canadian media-mogul Moses Znaimer has declared that "[t]elevision is the triumph of the image over the printed word" (Znaimer qtd in Sassaman). According to Znaimer the war between the image and the printed word is over: image has won the day. Yet, all three novels, through multiple perspectives, respond to image-culture homogeneity, at times disrupting its claim of totality while addressing national and international manifestations of terrorism.

In *The Lion's Mouth*, the protagonist is diegetically doomed to confess his betrayal and his complicity in the killing of an Italian magistrate by the Red Brigades. In *Black Bird*, doom is of the ironic kind as the characters who are imbricated by the historical politics of French-English tension into which they are born navigate the hall of mirrors called their lives, perpetuating certain cycles and disrupting others. They do so with the ease of revolutionary fervor and mindlessness, whether that be violence or writing as embodied by the fluttering, mischievous, omnipresent black bird. Finally, in the *Nightbird*, doom, metaphysical and concrete, is not only the outcome of terrorism but the shadow that pursues the characters of a multicultural, heterogeneous world that encompasses global social and political realities that move between India and Canada.

Frontiers

At the centre of Edwards's novel, terrorism is associated with the extreme left, in this case the Red Brigades. However, the term "terrorism" to any modern and critical reader will be an object of shifting, moral semantics. What term, if not the above, has been, after WWII, the most sought-after as the fabric of colonial-post⁵ countries produced its sweaty, bloody tears? Easily invoked, the category has assumed chimerical resonance and other-worldly menace, depending, of course, on the position assumed in the power struggles about the world.

In relationship to Italy, terrorism must be then historically situated since the term was first used in the Italian media to describe neo-fascist bombings to instill fear in the masses; the target was always anonymous crowds in banks, trains, railway stations, city squares. As the so-called *strategy of tension* in Italy developed from 1969 onward, and as extreme left revolutionary dreams targeted individuals who had been identified as the loci and/or symbols of power, culminating in the execution of the leader of the Christian Democrats, Aldo Moro, terrorism became a post-political blanket-term to qualify actions on the left and the right. Yet, as indicated

by Guy Debord in his revealing critique *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, with regards to the history and development of terrorism, it is state generated and therefore an instrument of social control. This has been verified by a number of sources as an outcome in a variety of different national political systems.⁶

Finalities

In Basilières' novel *Black Bird*, le Front de liberation du Québec (FLQ) was considered by some as revolutionary and resistance-forming – from a leftist perspective along the lines of Fanon – albeit for the nationalistic project, inevitably a right-wing enterprise. In Basilières, the power-struggle denunciation is actually the various languages terrorism takes. The novel presents a setting which is inescapably a space of multiple voices: Montreal or Montréal or Ville-Marie (as it is invoked through the character Marie's own full name: "Ville-Marie de l'Incarnation Desourche" (88)). From its very outset, its geo-political inception is a multiplicity which cannot be reduced to a/the singularity so common in post-9/11 discourses, where dialectics is reduced to a pro-forma intellectual discourse embracing, ironically, the patriotic toga of the Statue of Liberty. The points of view that inform the Chaplin-esque/Dominique Michel-esque rendition of the "FLQ sympathizers" are imbued with an explosive irony that unmasks the efficiency of terrorism as a confederacy of dunces⁷ who, finally, are buffoons constructed and/or mandated by the state. Again, the ironic harmony that sustains the novel presents us with the non-sympathizers, composed largely of Anglophones, who are themselves not the sharpest tools in the sheds. In *Black Bird*, urbanization – i.e. modernity – does not necessarily mean that the project of a rational intelligent society comes to fruition. If anything, and according to the lens of capitalism, there is a selective process at play whereby Nature migrates to the City and whereby those who rise to the top are not necessarily the end-result of social Darwinism. The black humour that sustains *Black Bird* is the disrapture that freezes the main characters/actors in their respective shortcomings: intelligence, political acumen, social strategy, religious beliefs or, finally, any strategies of survival. In the novel, the city itself is not the centre of the world. Montreal, as a modern, gothic city, births, erupts, and oozes these characters out of its dark crooks and crannies – even its mortuaries, cemeteries and hospitals. As Basilières' Frankensteinian construction, Montreal does not realize its multicultural dream as a cosmopolitan society. The social engineering of the multitude in this urban space fails dramatically under the patient hands of the character of Dr. Hyde, who is a composite of both fictional and real luminaries – Dr. Wilder Penfield (1891-1976), Dr. Ewen Cameron (1901-1967), Dr. Byron Hyde (still alive) – and yet this tragic caricature is the operative of a successful labotimization of the political aspiration of Quebec's people. This is represented through the guise of the heartless *reconstituted* Hubert, who as the leader of the cell, ironically purports to care for the nation of Quebec but only does so narcissistically: he sees himself reflected in the image of the Quebec he wants to create. Killed, by chance, by the leader of the nationalist movement, he is reconstituted with different organs and body parts, but lacks the heart that will bring to life the monstrous human project: iconically, the heart can only come from Frère André, who represents the spirit of Quebec's people. Terrorism manifests itself predominantly through Marie, Hubert's girlfriend and comrade (French side), who is intricately linked to her Anglophone and Francophone heritage and her twin (English side), who, as part of the Desouche family, embodies the twisted, double-helix history of Montreal. The DNA of the Desouche family tills into itself all the many strands of Quebec's history. And yet, the act of the cold-blooded murder of the fictionalised character John Cross is not the sign of Quebec's affirmation of its difference, rather the eruption of its composite history: its multifaceted reality, the hybrid quality. The novel denounces as *bicultural*

*shearing*⁸ the idea of *pure laine*. Any nationalist manifestation is disrupted in this novel by showing that Quebec's history is a composite opposed to a parlance of national purity: herein lies the paralyzing contradiction between socialist aspiration and nationalistic endeavors. Marie represents the historical agent which must, in turn, terrorize history. According to Basilières' cynical ironic eye, terrorism is the failure to see reality in its multiplicity and the attempt to reduce complexity to simplified, monolingual trappings that betray their stringent man-made parameters. Reality, lived reality, escapes from these ideological constructions in so much as Marie's twin, Jean-Baptiste, is recognized as a poet – misread by an immigrant, reading from an Irish point of view his French fable, his artistic text turns out to be a political manifesto rather than poetry. Through a tongue-in-cheek commentary on ideologized forms of poetry (Neruda at his worst) and the socio-cultural fancy of some manifestos (Marinetti at his best), ultimately, this *persona* misunderstanding turns Jean-Baptiste into what he has always aspired to be – an artist. *Black Bird*, both in its form and context clearly demands the reader's participation: the text cannot fulfill itself without the reader's engagement. This is then the parallel praxis that illustrates the basic pitfall of Canadian/Quebec society: the great divide. The two solitudes are such because the two so-called founding nations, restrained to particular geo-political spaces, both willingly fail to recognize that their twisted histories and continuous dispersion and interaction over the last several centuries have dismissed from history the nation's colonial reservoir: the aboriginal people, and then the rest of the migrant multitudes.

Erewhon

In Badami's novel, terrorism is intertwined with Indian nationalisms and religious faiths, in this case Sikh, Hindu and Muslim. In order to sustain the narrative Badami's novel rests on a Hobbesian *promise*: homo homini lupus (and, Fate as dividend), which can only be contained by a metaphysical cage. Composed of several intersecting narratives that take place in Canada and India, the novel is nevertheless a disquisition about displacement, history, political turmoil, religious constraint, destiny, and personal identity. Yet, these various currents converge in a narrative that, ironically enough, creates a grand view that mimics a grand narrative. Badami's attempt to illustrate, through generations of immigrants, the fate of the 20th century as destined to implode in a grandiose failure, is symbolized by the 1985 Air India bombing that ends the novel: what is neither of the earth or of the sky is the failure of the utopian discourse per se. This failure is then the attractor point for salient 20th discourses that are made to rotate around the utopian vertigo: multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism. As Badami declares the failure of the utopian vertigo so does her own narrative implode in a postmodern sense: it dissipates across boundaries, unresolved, locked to the political doom of solitary enterprises as the narcissistic lure of image-culture domestication: exposure.⁹

Utopic vertigo, centers of gravity

Again, what do these three novels, produced over the last twenty-five years, concerning "terrorist" events of the late sixties in Italy, early seventies in Canada, and early eighties in Canada and India, say about the changing face of "terrorism", the later-historical time-periods of their narration, and about Canada, given all the authors' geo-political positioning? When it first appeared, Edwards's novel, *The Lion's Mouth*, subverted early on the formation of an Italian Canadian literary form, anchored as it was in the first stage of displacement: from there to here. Italian Canadian novels, plays, and especially poetry reflected the vision of the result of a migration that had as its last grand movement the early Fifties. In general, the questions addressed percolated around the double-bind of a migratory identity, alienated, frozen into its

context, never more than a cultural hybrid, never less than a sought-for authenticity. Excellent work came of this, unquestionably a Mary Di Michele or a Peter Oliva, amongst others, are no mere appendages of any world literature, and so beyond any nationalistic domestication attempt. However, the implosion of negative nostalgia surrendered, as it should have, numerous mediocre writers especially of the second-wave, and a critic or two, to a cemetery of narcissistic kitsch. Somehow, most still walk the roads of inter-post-lament, albeit limping but helped along by the crutch of a postmodernism that rabidly cultivated such personal, commodifiable reflections. What Edwards introduced into the Italian Canadian literary body, was to make displacement visible as *dynamic humanism*, a movement that does not end from here to there, but is sustained by reflection, and by the layering identities so as to produce polyphonic realities and individuations. To Canadian literature per se, Edwards, in 1982, was a dangerous overcoming of postcolonial rigidity, still embedded in its Atwoodian-mother-country pseudo-dialogue of conquest and submission. In contrast to this, Badami, in 2006, enters an already established poetics, a genealogy of displacement nuanced by each voice rendering nationalistic boundaries de-potentialized as constraints of literary criticism. Her rendition ties Canada and India, at different temporal junctures, as the surplus of a renewable empire, centering marginalities as added value of homogenizing practices. The awareness of the image-culture that keeps re-surfacing in Edwards, producing the necessary distancing for understanding "il look" as the point of departure (Italy: the Eighties) for a post-political¹⁰ life, is an integrated motif in Badami that manifests itself in historical revisionism(s), and nationalistic/ethnic reconstructions in her 2006 novel.

Basilières' vantage point is to reveal through its own form-content the imbrications of Edwards's and Badami's novels. There cannot be a discussion about how "terrorism" is defined without a critical contextual analysis of the development of the nation-state in the West. The conquering of the frontier – a frontier which is forever displacing itself about creates an excess through the clash of territorial claims a culture of conflict, which cannot be resolved without historicizing the permutations of resistance to domination and claims of sovereignty through the inhabited spaces. Land, possessed land, gives credit to this fundamental notion of revendications since it is able to remove from its reality the trajectorial, nomadic, migrations that have been fundamental in world-construction. Therefore, any formulation of terrorism is fundamentally flawed by an ever-changing paradigm of belonging and possession through technological and linguistic means. If these novels can direct readers towards a more nuanced understanding of Canadian participation in these very discourses, it is exactly through this flux of nominating without possessing the very landscapes that are painted in front of our eyes, animated by fiery struggles, vociferous claims and finally empty assessments of entitlement.

Potentialities, immunities

The narrative of *The Lion's Mouth* presents us an Edmontonian writer from Italy displaced as a child, Bianca, who reconstructs through three failed attempts to write a novel, at three different temporal stages, her relationship with Marco, her cousin in Venice. Marco then resonates with Bianca's relationship with Italy, her desire to seduce her origins and be seduced back; as such seduction presents a physical longing, often unacknowledged, but which is the inevitable subtext of human displacement. At the heart of the matter, in Marco, but in the narrative as well, is the ultimate act of betrayal – *traduttore traditore* – where to betray oneself is to reveal oneself. Caterina Edwards's novel best corresponds to a poetics of displacement in so far as Bianca embraces her multiplicity of identities that erupt out of the displacement from Italy to Canada and the subsequent back and forth cultural gymnastics. It uses those multiple

identities as a framework for a supra-identity – that is the narrative at play – keeping at bay its implosive aspect by providing it authorial governance, the postmodern no-no: intentionality. Here, nostalgia is not a frozen landscape; rather nostalgia becomes a positive act of navigating dynamic displacements which sustain the protagonist's multiple points of view. In other words, Bianca is an Angel of History whose gaze becomes unfixed from the ruins of the past and who, through displacement, is able to imagine and render visible in writing what the ruins once were: the architectural landscape as humanistic reservoir before they came undone. In doing so, the novel makes visible the postmodern trap of reducing everything to the *phatic present*.¹¹ Venice, like Edmonton, is built from a conquerable space, and yet unlike Edmonton, Venice anchors itself within the fluidity of history.

The act of terrorism in the novel revolves around the fact that Marco, by an act of naïveté sustained by sexual-relations as power-relations, is indexed as a fellow traveler by the Red Brigades, someone who lends himself to manipulation. In the end, Marco is the messenger, who with his message becomes responsible for the death of someone else. Once the process of self-consciousness erupts and he becomes aware of how he is manipulated, his last resort is his secondary life-buoy, his religious background which entails the sacrifice of one's self, by placing in the statue of the mouth of the lion his name as the culpable one. He denounces himself as the unwilling collaborator of a terrorist network that spilled out beyond a precise group encompassing the not-so-innocent by-standers. The sacrifice purifies society and purifies Marco, while his sacrifice of self, by making the situation known to the anonymous public, is the final step to personal, and societal break-down.

If the previous novel addresses the problem of terrorism as an exogenous reality, Michel Basilières in *Black Bird* presents us with a fictionalized historical rendition of the October Crisis of 1970 in Quebec. The composite embodiment of Pierre Laporte and James Cross (historical figures) become John Cross, the murdered victim in the novel. This synecdochal construction, nevertheless, assumes a vindication against British imperialism and is therefore a manifestation of endogenous terrorism that reverses the process shown in the other two novels, whereby the authors report exogenous terrorism from the proximal safety of Canada. In this case, Canada becomes the dangerous site of terrorism for the colonizing other which reverses the colonizer-colonized relationship and removes the immunity associated with foreign diplomacy. Ironically enough, this composite character – John Cross – embraces the Christian God of Quebec's oppression as his savior, in the hope of swaying Marie away from her resolution to make of his life an exemplary death. However, in her rage, she strangles him with his own crucifix and as he mouths lines from the FLQ manifesto, he voids the words of meaning, much like masses do by endlessly repeating religious, and/or political incantations that carry the spell of power:

It wasn't even ironic, as perhaps Cross had intended it, much less an appeal to any personal morality it might waken in her. It neither strengthened nor weakened her resolve, it neither amused nor chastised her. Somehow John Cross had drained the phrase of any meaning just as she was extinguishing his life. Words. All that remained of it were words. (264)

As with any great novel, and this is an extraordinary novel, there is an inexorability in the narrative that makes of each action a step without returns, meaning that this is the only possible composition that could result from the elements that Basilières has chosen to represent as if the novel itself would represent a manifest destiny. In so doing, the novel claims its uniqueness, its unrepeatability. Whereas in *Badami*, the narrative trick of resorting to Fate allows the writer to play Pontius Pilate with the notion of history, Basilières delves fully into history, since he knows that the representation of history is nevertheless the ludic entanglement of facts,

chance and fiction. The winner is s/he who in the struggles that history produces is able to narrate that spectacular triumph and in so doing, erases all the subaltern stories that do not and cannot be exposed in the triumphant narrative. It is precisely here at this moment that this author denounces and undermines the principal constituencies of postmodernism. When history is embraced as a mechanism of representations which swing between reality and fiction, the very production is a composite of aspiration (individual and national) and the cold reality of the limits (linguistic and cultural) that human beings carry with them in their construction of reality. One could be tempted to see in this process that the author so brilliantly exposes a meta-historical approach, in a certain sense a Nietzschean point of view, were it not for the overflow of the undercurrent of a salutary, cynical metaphysics that permeates each page. The paradoxical use of religion, the supernatural, the quasi-impossible, the magical are all *memes* of the very DNA of any narrative. At the same time that these elements are fully appropriated in order to denounce social conditions that are still present in Quebec society, they are nevertheless transfigured and parodied as formative identity mechanisms. This element of backwardness is then tied to a class-system so that it is for the reader to cull from the text the parodic element. Simultaneously, the dialogue and engagement with history that re-imagines the past, piques the interest of the reader and calls to action (as opposed to postmodern in-action), to consider history as a continuous project. In other words, readers must actively engage with the past if they want to live in history rather than dwell in those magical encasements à la Eliade, whose members innervate society with *naturalized capitalism*.

Perhaps what is most evident as a topos in the novel is the composite aspect, which is not necessarily a duality, but is a body that entails differences brought together as strands. This is the underlying subtext that renders this book an exception in the English Canadian literary world. Examples abound: the twins; Montreal, the sacredness and secularity that animate the city: religious origins, secular multiculturalism; Dr. Hyde, science and magic; heat and cold; legality and criminality, gift and sacrifice; patriarchy and feminism; Christmas, and Halloween; poetry and manifestos; one-eyed vision, and two-eyed pragmatism; geo-political hierarchical spacing of classes; unquestioned adherence to systems: Aline (religion) Marie (terrorism); two gravediggers vs. two police officers; Uncle, and grandfather; Marie and Jean-Baptiste, Marie and Hubert; Hubert, and his rich father; and, ultimately, complicity, that seems to play the same role that destiny plays in *Badami*. Yet, in *Basilières*, all is sustained by a humour that intoxicates, distances and criticizes, as when the drunk-driver who runs over Hubert who is shouting, in his drunken stupor, pro-Lévesque slogans, is finally the very man-politician himself.

In *Badami*, by default, terrorism is the active residue of an incongruous multicultural system composed according to a series of binaries: India or Canada, Sikh or Hindu, German or Brahmin/white or brown, Indian or Pakistani/Muslim. A postmodern paradox since multiculturalism invokes multiplicity while binaries work as polarizing agents. There are two multicultural sets presented – India and Canada – that intersect, but the representation of multiplicity falls into a state of limbo. Furthermore, according to the novel, both India and Canada fail as locations of plurality since they both polarize communities through Otherness and hatred that erupts into violence. In fact, India is finally the source of conflict because it introduces to Canada historical hatred that characters, namely Pa-ji, have tried to rewrite, and which collides with the events of history as they erupt. At the same time, history fails even at the revisionist level: Dr. Rhandawa's nationalist reading of the Punjab for Khalistan (the independent Sikh nation) implodes. The Indo-Canadian community in Vancouver, as a byproduct of that same tension, erupts into violence: Pa-ji is attacked in the street, men end up fighting and lifelong friendships are eroded. Furthermore, Bibi-ji doesn't warn her life-long but Hindu

friend, Leela of the underground discussions of a potential threat to Air India flights. As such the fragmentation of civil society is revealed – a civil betrayal – because what collapses is a sense of responsibility: the ethics that sustain the social sphere.

Reflections

It would be erroneous to say that postmodernism, and the public discourses on/off 9/11 worked together to Fukuyama-erase history. The *Futurama*-immortality that enchants us, with promissory images of god-like environments, is only that: a compendium of technologies for suspended animations in this eternal present we must live, by observation. If anything, what can be said is that through the various communicative strategies that were embedded in the 9/11-Event, His-Story¹² was kick-started anew, a millenarian project opened up. The erotic climax of postmodernism, it bears repeating, was the affirmation that history had ended albeit with no nuclear blast, only shopping whimpers and complacency. There were no more grand stories to read at night for the *sun* of the future, only the personal would count (everything else was off-limits). Based on this transmigratory model of behaviour – the downsizing of everyday acumen – a common revolution occurred: each, who could, became the center of the world. The internet, taking cue from the television¹³, offered the immediate migration of thought(s). Perhaps, to religiously paraphrase Shakespeare, time did come to a stop so that life could go on. Yet, it could not do; or, this was not the end of the project. The project called for the new world to be the whole world, in the *phatic present*. Love, as *The Beatles* would have it, could not be the unifying principle, if this is all you need then individuals could indeed rise to claim a stake of territory. But, its shadow could unify by fear, and eliminate by practice: **terrorism**, the virtual frontier. 9/11 made New York – America – the centre of the world's future, for a new millennia.

If Benjamin refers to the drawback of the ruins of history by referring to Paul Klee's Angel in the tension between past and future, American governmental agencies, in their patriotic self-awareness, claimed the Statue of Liberty as the angelic wreck-icon: Apocalyptic at its base, her gaze is chiropactically realigned to look forward, obliterating what is behind her. How can artists do this? Badami (2006) internalizes this from a Canadian perspective: her novel makes quite apparent that multiculturalism is the fragmentation of peoples in the East and the West. More specifically, multiculturalism is a failure whether read through Canadian or Indian biopolitics. Edwards (1982) perceived of this differently in a pre-9/11 world. As Bianca says it: "I will, with the others, make this city, imagine it fully the possibility exists" (178). Basilières (2003), on the other hand, implodes the two solitudes so that the outcome is not a binary, as is the case in Badami's multicultural representation, but instead, a pluralistic Canadian society. This society, whose logistic confines are potentially erasable, encompasses a variegated population whose individuals are inextricably intertwined with one another through their background cultures, and nationalized histories .

This should encourage an assessment of what the Canadian complexity brings to bear on the Western front given the unremitting resort to 9/11 frameworks that served the needs of specific politically dominating constituencies within the neo-liberal parasitism of the lifeworld. In this sense, the three novels illustrate, within the arc of their publication, the three-dimensional reality that inhabits multiculturalism as a lived practice in Canada. Cultural and artistic texts such as these novels re-position what characterizes Canadian literature at large, questioning the prescribed canon so as to overcome strict postmodern hierarchical categories by the introduction of *migrant* as an unstable or fluid term, apt to dispel rigid colonialistic pre-fabrications that still vibrate within terms such as marginal, minority, ethnic, subaltern. Central

then to this is the role of the artistic and cultural text in reading otherness as the *also-political* from the vantage point of lived, multicultural experience. Badami and Edwards refer and question heritages that were/are politically active (Italian, Indian), and subsumed under the rubric of terrorism, the term re-constructed as the particularized key to posit West/East and North/South relations. Yet, through *Black Bird* another position erupts: complicity. Everyone is intertwined, much like Lennon's *Walrus*. Marie kills Anglos and, in so doing, kills her own grandfather. Quebec is part of Canada: to cut it off, to sever it, would be to lobotomize it and turn it into the Frankensteinian Hubert realization. Hubert, as the compilation of many body-parts, is the socially engineered manifestation (the Sixties as the apotheosis of social-economic engineering) and its criticism: the criticism of technology applied to the construction of society. What cannot be programmed, or even reproduced, the novel seems to say is that quiddity, that something which like Frère André's heart, human technology cannot ever reproduce: the history of individuals. So that the complicity evoked by *Black Bird* demands, not existential nihilism or futility linked with postmodern inaction, but action: coming together to build the complex plural societies that we ultimately inhabit.

Notes:

1. "Reach for the Top"/ "Genies en Herbe" is a Canadian television quiz-show for students who compete with their high-school team against other "Reach" clubs across the country, broadcast on national television.
2. By this we mean something more inclusive than the compass-canon posited by Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Northrop Frye, and Laurie Ricou, which has survived for decades and festers within multicultural space(s).
3. The mediatic circle is "a specific constellation of economic, social and political forces" (Anselmi & Wilson, 46).
4. Ideological paraphernalia found in *The National Review*, *The National Interest*, etc., were but the apologia *pro vita sua* of Bush's guided operational performance. Critical literature from time immemorial fills in the gap, as an instrument of knowledge.
5. In contrast to theories of post-colonialism that see this genre as having achieved some form of empowerment, we indicate that the destiny of colonized countries has nevertheless been intertwined with the mother-countries: i.e. Canada and the U.K., and whose ties cannot be rescinded, sometimes to the great detriment of the off-spring country. The recent intervention into the political Canadian fabric by part of the Governor General at the end of the 2008 parliament year is ample proof of a strangling umbilical chord.
6. Although there is a plethora of material on this, the following are illustrative sample of the process of state generated terrorism: *Beyond the Mafia: Organized Crime in the Americas* (1998); *The Globalization of Crime: Understanding Transitional Relationships in Context* (2000); *Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs and the Press* (1999); *Colpo di Stato* (2004); *L'orda d'oro* (1997); *La strage* (1999); *Storia del Partito Armato: 1968-1982* (1986).
7. Our allusion to the Pulitzer-Prize winning novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces* (1980), by John Kennedy Toole, is not gratuitous by any means.
8. With this term we intend to represent how the biological aspect of cultures can be cut off from the sustenance of adaptable, social roles, strictly by racial/racist categorizations.

9. We are reminded of the lyric from Peter Gabriel's song "Exposure": "Exposure / Space is what I need, it's what I feed on / Out in the open..."

10. Post-political discourse is predominantly a rhetorical strategy that conflates the historical political dialectic, grounding itself instead in the a-historical moment within the fluidity or absence of right/left-political actions. (Anselmi & Wilson, *Performative Radicalism*, 2009)

11. By this, we mean the overdetermined belonging in the present, with no sense of history, sustained by a mediatic circle of sensations and induced feelings, an apparatus that turns out to be the best of all possible worlds.

12. Here we refer to Freddie Perelman's notion of the historical process as one of continuous conquest and destruction by part of *naturalized capitalism*. Yet, we would like to claim that there is a history, a canvas where individuals and groups have left their marks and blood, and that is actualized when a context is entailed for any meaningful work. We are also aware that to posit text to context as a relational hermeneutics is to open the door wide to the lamentful crowing of inept solipsism.

13. By "televisional," we simply envision the relation of technology, intentionality, and sponsorship that has marked this world since the mid-thirties of last century.

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L'écriture migrante québécoise en traduction espagnole: une histoire de réussite

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En 1999, dans le cadre du Salon du livre de Paris, où le Québec était le pays invité, plusieurs articles ont relevé le caractère novateur apporté par l'écriture migrante à la littérature québécoise:

Aujourd'hui le Québec offre une littérature éclectique, universaliste, ouverte sur le monde, notamment grâce au sang neuf apporté par tous ces auteurs d'origine étrangère débarqués il y a vingt ou trente ans, qui ont considérablement enrichi, renouvelé la langue et les sources d'inspiration (Le Naire 114).

En effet, même si, tout au long des années soixante-dix, le formalisme féministe s'était éloigné de la littérature explicitement politique des années précédentes, et l'écriture au féminin avait déjà introduit un renouvellement des formes littéraires, les réflexions se limitaient au contexte binational et bilingue. Le dépassement de ce cadre bilingue et biculturel, avec des imaginaires pluriels, hybrides et métissés, ne se produira au Québec que dans les années quatre-vingt.

Si, d'un point de vue national, l'avènement des écritures migrantes remettait en cause l'idée d'une identité nationale québécoise "naturelle" et rassurante sur laquelle s'était fondé le champ littéraire québécois de la Révolution tranquille, d'un point de vue externe, les écritures migrantes renouvelaient la perception de la littérature québécoise à l'étranger, vue comme trop "paroissiale."

La parution à l'étranger d'un grand nombre de traductions d'auteurs migrants au long des années quatre-vingt-dix témoignerait également de ce changement de perception. Comme le précise Michelle Laplante, du Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine (communication personnelle): les écrivains québécois qui attirent le plus d'attention en Europe sont justement les écrivains migrants.

Cependant, ce fait n'est pas fortuit ni tout simplement le signe d'une célébration naïve des imaginaires pluriels et hybrides. En plus du contexte plus ou moins propice à la réception de la traduction de ces écrivains migrants dans les pays étrangers d'accueil (comme nous le verrons plus tard dans le cas de l'Espagne), l'intérêt sans précédent que ces écrivains migrants "québécois" suscitent en Europe est, à notre avis, également attribuable à la célébration et à la promotion officielles (subventions à la traduction, tournées d'écrivains à l'étranger, etc.) qu'en font les gouvernements québécois et canadien, le but ultime étant de représenter un Québec et un Canada internationaux et ouverts à la diversité. Un atout fondamental pour leur image de marque ou *branding* sur le plan international, qui ferait d'eux des modèles à suivre.

Il n'est donc pas étonnant que, malgré les débats autour de la pertinence ou non de l'étiquette "écriture/s migrante/s" qu'entretient la critique universitaire québécoise et le rejet catégorique de cette étiquette par une partie importante des auteurs concernés,¹ du point de vue de leur exportation, les instances éditoriales ainsi que les acteurs supralittéraires (Viala 118) canadiens et québécois qui font la promotion de la littérature québécoise à l'étranger² insistent généralement pour (re)présenter ces écrivains comme *migrants* mais aussi comme *Québécois/Canadiens*. La manière dont les instances éditoriales et critiques des champs récepteurs étiquettent ces écrivains est cependant tout autre.