From Acadian to Africadian
Translation and Analysis of Georgette LeBlanc's *Amédé:*
A Case Study in Translating Sociolect

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Je dédie cette thèse à mon grand-père, Omer Blinn.

Abstract

This thesis will serve as a case study on the translation of sociolectal literature, using my translation into English of Acadian author Georgette LeBlanc's second collection of poetry, Amédé, as a paradigm. Written in the Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French sociolect, this work represents an interesting example of the difficulties that can arise while translating minority language literature, from both a linguistic and discursive perspective. Broadly speaking, the objective of my analysis will be to explore the relationship between the literary representation of sociolect and the creation of underlying networks of meaning, focusing on both the linguistic and discursive aspects of LeBlanc's choices in portraying Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French in order to justify my translation of her work into African Nova Scotian English, also referred to as Africadian English.

Résumé

La présente thèse constitue une étude de cas sur la traduction des sociolectes, utilisant ma traduction d'*Amédé* par Georgette LeBlanc comme paradigme. Écrit en français acadien de la Baie Sainte-Marie, cette collection de poésie représente un exemple intéressant quant aux difficultés qui peuvent surgir lors de la traduction de littératures minoritaires, autant au niveau linguistique que discursif. En gros, l'objectif de mon analyse est d'explorer la relation entre la représentation littéraire des sociolectes et la création de réseaux sémantiques sous-jacents, me concentrant sur les aspects linguistiques et discursifs engendrés par les choix de l'auteure dans sa représentation du français acadien de la Baie Sainte-Marie afin de justifier ma traduction de son œuvre dans le sociolecte des afro-néo-écossais, le *Africadian English*.

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0 Introduction

On a beau célébrer la noblesse de l'oralité,
le temple du monde occidental demeure la bibliothèque.

Georgette LeBlanc

In recent years, the minority French Acadian diaspora of Eastern Canada has witnessed an explosion of artistic output where the uninhibited use of non-standard linguistic forms has played an essential role in the production of new and unique modes of cultural expression. At a time where "the institutionalization of identity is put to the test by the transnational processes of globalization" (McLaughlin and LeBlanc 2009:29, translation mine), the Acadian identity is constantly searching to redefine itself within the framework of a larger Canadian and international *francophonie,* itself increasingly defined by the heterogeneity of its linguistic practices. It's in this context of globalization that a new generation of Acadian artists is carving itself a relevant position within the Canadian arts scene, in many cases by pushing the debate on language and identity to the forefront of public discourse.

In the case of contemporary Acadian literature, this tendency towards globalization has had somewhat of a liberating effect: Once the victims of ideological and linguistic stigmatization, "linguistic minorities are suddenly fashionable icons of the new hybridity" (Heller 1999:15-16); Buzelin further notes that "*[d]ans le domaine de la théorie littéraire, il est clair que les approches post-coloniale et bakhtinienne, approches dans lesquelles les langues et les traditions vernaculaires ont une place tout à fait centrale, jouissent d'une popularité sans précédent*" (2002:4). Notably, this shift has played an important role in helping to legitimize the literary use of vernacular, a practice

long stigmatized under the standardizing influence of the francophone literary system (Buzelin 2002:4) and compounded by the minority status of the Acadian population (see A. Boudreau 2009).

A prime example of this growing institutional interest in regional and vernacular literatures can be found in the recent success of Acadian poet Georgette LeBlanc. Born in the francophone region of la Baie Sainte-Marie in south-western Nova Scotia, LeBlanc has garnered much attention on the national stage[1] for the publication of her four collections of narrative poetry – *Alma* (2006)*, Amédé* (2010)*, Prudent* (2013) *and Le grand feu* (2016) –*,* works written using LeBlanc's regional vernacular, Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French (BSMAF), as the primary narrative language. This sub-variety of Acadian French differs markedly from Standard French lexically, phonologically and morphosyntactically, and is considered to be one of the most conservative varieties of French spoken in North America, having preserved many linguistic features lost in Standard and even New Brunswick Acadian French (see King 2013).

Although the use of sociolect has a notable history in Acadian literature, LeBlanc's works stand out in certain key respects, as evidenced by the textual choices made by the author in her representation of vernacular. Unlike many of her predecessors (and even contemporaries), virtually absent in her writings are any of the textual markers traditionally associated with the transcription of non-standard speech, such as the use of italics, apostrophes, agglutinations, or phonetic transcription. Moreover, equally absent in her texts are any paratextual indications of vernacular such as footnotes, editor's notes,

[1] *Prix Felix-Leclerc, the prix Antonine-Maillet-Acadie Vie, prix littéraire Émile-Ollivier*, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts award, Governor General Award for poetry (nomination).

glossaries[2] or explanatory forewords. As a result, it could be posited that LeBlanc's unabashed and unapologetic use of BSMAF represents an effort to legitimize a variety of French marked by a history of social stigmatization: By choosing to make of BSMAF the primary narrative vehicle of her works, LeBlanc gives a literary voice to a variety of French still considered within certain circles as illegitimate and to be stigmatized on the official linguistic market.

Considered against its socio-historic backdrop, the Acadian literary system as a whole seems to be the product of a broader social movement for linguistic and cultural emancipation where the valorization – or conversely, stigmatisation – of regional forms of communication have both played important roles. Although a few counter examples can be listed – most notably the works of internationally minded authors such as Jacques Savoie –, contemporary Acadian literature has to a great extent concentrated on themes relating to cultural and linguistic identity: From the regionalist and historicist writings of Antonine Maillet, to the post-modernism of Herménégilde Chiasson (see R. Boudreau 2000), omnipresent are reflections on how the underlying ideologies that feed our linguistic representations shape our perception of what it means to be francophone in a minority context (see A. Boudreau 2009). In this sense, Acadian literature can be seen as the artistic reflection of a population still in the process of understanding its history, identity, and alterity within la *francophonie canadienne et mondiale*. To quote R. Boudreau,"*[l]a littérature occupe de toute évidence une place importante dans la construction de l'identité culturelle. Et la langue est un des éléments les plus puissants de la construction identitaire*" (2000:162).

[2] The only exception to this is LeBlanc's latest collection, *Le grand feu*, which features a glossary.

Studying this dynamic from a socio-literary perspective helps shed light on the importance of language and identity not only to Acadian literature, but also to regional literatures in general. That being said, what is perhaps most surprising about Georgette LeBlanc's oeuvre is its lack of many of the social or linguistic themes often exploited in Acadian literature. Her works, albeit historical in setting, focus more broadly on themes like love, friendship, loss, and overcoming hardship, without offering any of the direct discourse on language or identity often seen in Acadian literature. However, once considered within its social and literary context, the question arises whether LeBlanc's making BSMAF the primary narrative vehicle of her works, without explanation or commentary, hints at an *underlying* discourse regarding the literary acceptability of vernacular within the French literary system. Further, how should these subtexts caused by LeBlanc's use of sociolect be approached during the translation process?

As Bourdieu points out, "*les effets de domination, les rapports de force objectifs du marché linguistique, s'exercent dans toutes les situations linguistiques*" (2002:130). Translation is no exception. Incidentally, the power dynamics referred to by Bourdieu seem to have a tendency to manifest themselves most perniciously in the translation of vernacular literature: Beyond the destruction or exotisation of vernacular networks described by Berman (1985: 67-81), the translator must now face the added challenge of having to translate works that are, in and of themselves, examples of the evolving discourse on language and identity, seemingly inextricable from the multiplex sociolinguistic and historical realities that helped facet the unique contexts in which they were written. This is where our analysis begins.

This thesis will serve as a case study on the translation of sociolectal literature, using my translation into English of Acadian author Georgette LeBlanc's second collection of poetry, *Amédé,* as a paradigm. Written in the BSMAF sociolect, this work represents an interesting example of the difficulties that can arise while translating minority language literature, from both a linguistic and discursive perspective. Broadly speaking, the objective of my analysis will be to explore the relationship between the literary representation of sociolect and the creation of underlying networks of meaning, focusing on both the linguistic and discursive aspects of LeBlanc's choices in portraying BSMAF in order to justify my translation of her work into African Nova Scotian English, or Africadian English.

To do so, my thesis will be divided into three distinct parts:

The first section will focus on the formal linguistic aspects of LeBlanc's portrayal of sociolect in hopes of establishing a linguistically and textually oriented framework for analysing the source text. This section will seek to attribute a literary function to LeBlanc's idiosyncratic use of sociolect to better understand how this function could be reconstructed in the context of an English translation. In other words, my objective in this section will be to understand how microtextual analysis of the source text can help us better understand how "the smallest elements of the text […] construct the ideological position of the translation" (Tymoczko 1999:287) and how these formal, micro-textual elements could be exploited in the transfer of the underlying, contextual networks of meaning inherent to minority language literature (and to LeBlanc's *Amédé* more specifically).

Further, this section will discuss the relevance of Maria Tymoczko's theories on metonymic translation in hopes of establishing a methodology to be employed in reconstructing the functional aspects of LeBlanc's literary sociolect in another language. In her much cited article*, Metametonymics,* Tymoczko's posits an interesting way of conceptualizing translation not as a metaphoric process of substitution (hidebound by notions such as equivalence), but rather as a metonymic process of reconstruction, where the translation represents the source text by allowing some of its specific attributes "to dominate and, hence, represent the entirety of the work" (1999:282). This concept of metonymic translation is of particular relevance to the translation of sociolectal literature, where the traditional notion of equivalence is often insufficient in explaining the constellation of historical, geographic, sociolinguistic, cultural and symbolic considerations that come into play during the translation process.

The second section will seek to establish parallels, both linguistic and sociological, between the African and Acadian communities of Nova Scotia, two groups whose geographical isolation and traditional marginalisation by the dominant culture have led them to retain non-standard linguistic features from Early Modern English and 17th century French respectively (See Poplack et al 2002 and King 2013). This section will analyse the properties common to both the Acadian and Africadian language cultures using as a framework aspects of the three indicators for linguistic variation presented in Buzelin (2002:3) – namely diatopic (regional), diastratic (social) and diaphasic (situational) variation. By comparing and contrasting both language cultures in the light of these indicators, the goal is to understand the constellation of properties common to both language cultures and how they can be used to help us renegotiate the translation

process as one interested in the creation of contiguities and contextures rather than one based on the metaphoric process of selection and substitution. The whole will serve as a justification for a translation of LeBlanc's work into Black Nova Scotia Vernacular English, also known as Africadian English.

The third and final section will present my translation of the work.

1 Establishing a theoretical framework

1.1 Introduction

"Seules les langues 'cultivées' peuvent s'entre-traduire."

Antoine Berman

When Georgette LeBlanc first approached me in 2013 to undertake the translation of her second collection of poetry, *Amédé*, into English, I was as excited as I was apprehensive; excited by the opportunity of tackling such an interesting project, but apprehensive of the challenge that translating a work steeped in such a particular sociolinguistic context would represent. Written in the Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French (BSMAF) sociolect (of which I am a native speaker), this work represents an interesting case study on the troubles that can arise while translating minority language literature, from both a linguistic and sociological perspective.

This first section will focus on the formal linguistic aspects of LeBlanc's portrayal of sociolect in hopes of establishing a linguistically oriented framework upon which further analysis could be undertaken in the following sections: As such, this section represents a first attempt at understanding the literary and linguistic functions of LeBlanc's use of sociolect and the ways in which these functions could be reconstructed in the context of an English translation. In other words, my objective is to understand how a microtextual analysis of the source text can help us better understand the ways in which "the smallest elements of the text […] construct the ideological position of the translation" (Tymoczko 1999:287) and how these formal linguistic elements could potentially be exploited in the reconstruction of source text vernacular in its new

language culture.

To do so, the present section will be divided into two parts: The first will present a source text analysis exploring LeBlanc's literary representation of sociolect and its broader relationship with Jakobson's six communicative functions of language; the second will discuss the relevance of Tymoczko's theories on metonymic translation to the elaboration of different strategies to be employed in reconstructing LeBlanc's literary sociolect in another language.

1.2 Source text analysis

It should be noted that although the translation of sociolectal literature could also be studied from narrative or sociological perspectives, this section will first try to address the chief linguistic considerations that arise when dealing with sociolect: By focusing on the textual rather then the sociological or socio-literary functions of LeBlanc's use of sociolect (both of which I will address in section 2), my objective is to glean insight into the source text's and source language's internal logic in hopes of establishing strategies that could be exploited in constructing a poetically viable representation of BSMAF in another language. Furthermore, my adopting a linguistically oriented approach to analysing the source text should not be construed as an attempt to disregard the important narrative or sociological aspects of LeBlanc's use of sociolect, but rather as an initial point of inquiry from which further lines of inquiry will be developed.

1.2.1 Linguistics, poetics, and the functions of language

Proposing to study poetry (much less translation) from a linguistically oriented perspective is by no means revolutionary in itself: The work of thinkers such J.C. Catford and Roman Jakobson illustrate that structural linguistics has played a considerable role in

the development of both translation and literary theory since the late 1950s (see Jakobson 1963; Catford 1965). Although some of the "structuralist presupposition[s]" of these two linguists are in many ways problematic for contemporary translation studies theorists (Tymoczko 1999:279), Jakobson's seminal works relating to the six basic functions of languages and the "twofold character of language" still have much to offer the study of sociolect in relation to translation. Moreover, in order to assign a function to LeBlanc's poetic use of sociolect, it is important to understand its relation to Jakobson's six functions of language, most notably the poetic and metalingual functions.

In his much cited article about poetics and its relation to linguistics, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetic", Jakobson describes the six basic communicative functions of language and their constitutive factors, stating that in order to understand the poetic function, we must first "define its place among the other functions of language" (1960:353). He posits that in analysing a given speech event, six basic dimensions of the communication process can be observed:

> The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to ("referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and the decoder of the message); and finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. (1960:353)

Jakobson continues to explain that each of these six factors governs a different communicative function of language: For example, if a given *message* is oriented towards the *context* of enunciation, speech will serve a primarily *referential* function; if speech is focused on the *code* itself, it will perform a primarily *metalingual* function, etc.

Although it is possible to make distinctions between the six basic functions of language – the *referential, emotive, phatic, conative, metalingual* and *poetic* –, Jakobson

concedes that theses functions are not to be considered as mutually exclusive: In reality, the verbal structure of a message will largely depend on its predominant function's relation to its subordinate or secondary functions. As such, language is not only characterized by the diversity of its functions, but also by the ways in which these functions can be manipulated, combined, or juxtaposed in order to construct creative and nuanced modes of communication.

In analysing the verbal structure of Georgette LeBlanc's *Amédé,* most notably its abundant use of rhetorical devices such as anaphora, simile and metaphor, it is clear that the poetic function – or "focus on the message for its own sake" (Jakobson 1960:356) – occupies a predominant role in the text's structural composition[3]. That being said, beyond these manifest rhetorical indicators, is it possible to distinguish an "empirical linguistic criterion of the poetic function" (Jakobson 1960:358) that could help us in our objective of attributing a greater literary function to LeBlanc's use of sociolect? The answer to this question lies in the two fundamental dimensions of language: selection and combination.

In his article on aphasia, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances", Jakobson argues that all "speech implies a selection of certain linguistic entities and their combination into linguistic units of a higher degree of complexity" (1995:117). Simply put, for language production to occur, the speaker must select words from his or her lexical storehouse and combine them according to the syntactic and grammatical system of the language being used. In the case of poetry, "the selection is produced on the base of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and

[3] Incidentally, the inherent hybridity of LeBlanc's oeuvre, both at the structural and linguistic levels, illustrates the potential functional plurality described above: After all, narrative poetry could not be designated as such if it did not combine both the poetic and referential functions of language to create the textual coherence necessary to maintain narrative continuity.

antonymity, while the combination, the build up of the sequence, is based on contiguity" (1960:358). As a result, "[t]he poetic function projects the principal of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" thus promoting it to the "constitutive device of the sequence" (1960:358). Thus, the poetic function integrates form and content to such a point that every linguistic element of the sequence can only be considered in its relation to the other elements of the message.

With this in mind, the question arises whether the poetic function might be operationalized to help us better understand the relationship between LeBlanc's poetic use of sociolect and the creation of underlying networks of meaning. Can poetics, as a means of analysing verbal structure along the axes of selection and combination, give us a firm linguistic anchoring from which we can elucidate a broader function from LeBlanc's representation of BSMAF? To borrow Jakobson's phrasing, is there an "empirical linguistic criterion" that can help us in this task? Again, the answers to these questions can be found in the two basic modes of arrangement.

1.2.2 Poetics and sociolect

As mentioned above, the essence of the poetic function lies in the projection of the axis of selection into the axis of combination: From this perspective, selection amongst various competing standard and non-standard equivalent forms plays an essential role in the poetic reconstruction of sociolect. As Buzelin points out, "*tout sociolecte […] romanesque résulte de la sélection d'un ensemble fini de marqueurs dont la nature et la distribution forment un système cohérent régi par des facteurs de lisibilité et une logique textuelle interne* […]" (2000:205). That being said, what formal linguistic markers does LeBlanc use in her artistic representation of BSMAF and what are the effects of these

choices from a textual and discursive perspective?

Firstly, it should be noted that Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French differs markedly from Standard French, lexically, morphosyntactically and phonologically. This variety, a sub-variety of the Acadian French "spoken in Canada's four Atlantic Provinces […] and in small pockets in the province of Quebec" (King 2013), is used in everyday life by the minority francophone population that inhabits the Baie Sainte-Marie region of south-western Nova Scotia[4]. It has been noted by linguists such as King that this region "is home to the most conservative of Acadian varieties, preserving a number of features lost in the Acadian French of say, south-eastern New Brunswick" (2013). As such, the Acadian French spoken in Baie Sainte-Marie provides us with a sort of window into the past, having preserved, for various sociohistoric reasons[5], a great number of linguistic features that draw their roots from the French spoken in seventeenth century France (Maillet qtd in Bottos 2011). Several of the conservative traits discussed in King's work can be found throughout LeBlanc's oeuvre.

From a lexical perspective, LeBlanc makes use of typical Acadian terms and expressions that can be divided into four different categories: archaisms (words that were common usage over most of the French territory at the time of colonisation, but have since fallen out of usage in France), regionalisms/acadianisms (words that owe their origins to the different varieties of dialectal French the original Acadian settlers brought with them from their respective home-regions in France), Amerindian loan words (mostly borrowed from the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet nations, both aboriginal peoples with whom

[4] In 2006, 3.6% of Nova Scotians identified as having French as their mother tongue (King 2013).
[5] For more information regarding the sociohistorical context in which Baie Sainte-Marie French evolved, see King (2013).

the Acadians historically held close relations), and English loan words. The following examples of non-standard lexemes found in the first chapter of *Amédé* constitute a representative sample of the vocabulary used throughout LeBlanc's work:

Archaisms

Grouiller (to move), *raccommoder* (to fix, to Jerry-rig), *rinque* (*rien que*; only, just, nothing but), *point* (negation), *logis* (house, home), *échine* (lower back), *mitan* (middle)**;**

Regionalisms/Acadianisms

Bote (boat), *fi fin fond* (the very bottom), *braquer* (to begin), *haler* (to pull), *havrer* (to arrive), *ébaroui* (stunned, dazed), *de-même* (like that), *espérer* (to wait), *virer* (to spin), *bourrique* (belly button), *être après faire quelque chose* (to be doing something), *grogué* (drunk), *une miette* (a little bit), *brailler* (to cry, to complain), *itou* (also, too), *longit* (slowly), *hardes* (clothes);

Amerindian loan words

Picogie (water lilies), *de parenté à parenté à parenté* (calque from the Lakota expression Mitakuye Oyasin, which literally translates to "all are related"), *ouaouaron* (bullfrog), *madouesse* (porcupine);

English loan words

Smile, skirts.

Although the number of non-standard lexemes might at first seem striking to the average francophone reader, it is important to note that when compared to the bulk of the text, the percentage of non-standard lexical units is actually relatively small: Moreover, this is why LeBlanc's exploitation of the morphological and syntactic variations inherent to BSMAF represents, in my opinion, a much more interesting point of reflection.

LeBlanc's poetry is marked by the use of various morphosyntactic particularities typical of Acadian French, most notably the use of "tense/aspect/mood distinctions lost in most other cotemporary French varieties" (King 2014). For instance, throughout LeBlanc's work, it is easy to find examples of the postverbal flexion *–ont* as the stem for the third person plural of the imperfect indicative (rather than the standard *–aient* stem): On the first page of the first chapter alone, there are seven examples of this linguistic trait (ex. *voyages qu'aviont duré des années, des siècles […]; sept ans sur mer ils aviont vogué/aviont raccomodé, aviont bu jusqu'à la cale […],* etc.). As for distinctions regarding non-standard verb tenses, it is interesting to note that unlike other spoken French varieties, BSMAF has retained the use of the simple past in everyday speech. However,

> "As has been noted by numerous commentators, the three conjugations of the simple past (maintained in written Standard French) were replaced by two in vernacular French by the sixteenth century at least: the <a> and <i> conjugations have fallen together, giving an <i> rather than standard French <a> conjugation with *–er* verbs (see Lodge 2004 and Chauveau 2009 for discussion)"(King 2013).[6]

Furthermore, this non-standard conjugation is omnipresent throughout LeBlanc's poetry, which employs the simple past as the primary narrative tense (ex. *et un après l'autre, chaque bote* braquit *[…]; ils* naviguirent *autour de ses dents robustes de cyprès* […], etc.).

Although many non-standard lexical and morphosyntactic features can be found in LeBlanc's writing, absent are any graphic markers (apostrophes, ellipses, agglutinations, accents, etc.) that could have been exploited had the author wished to convey the phonological features of the Acadian French accent in her writing: As such, LeBlanc's

[6] It would be interesting to see if the simplification of this tense's conjugation in vernacular French contributed to its survival in Baie Sainte-Marie Acadian French.

poetry walks a tightrope between art and reality, highlighting certain features of the BSMAF sociolect all while choosing to downplay others, presumably for the sake of readability and access to a broader national and international readership.

Now that we have considered the principal formal markers of LeBlanc's representation of sociolect, what conclusions can be drawn as to their role in the ideological orientation of the text? What are the discursive implications of the author's textual choices regarding her poetic reconstruction of sociolect and what effects do these choices have on the reader's interpretation of the work? To answer these questions, a first point of inquiry would be to see if the selection of a non-standard surface structure rather than its standard equivalent serves any observable grammatical or referential function. On the subject of the referential value of competing syntactic variations in discourse, Sankoff explains that:

> While it is indisputable that some difference in connotation may, *upon reflection*, be postulated among so-called synonyms whether in isolation or in context, and that in the case of each one a number of competing syntactic constructions may be acceptable in somewhat different contexts, there is no reason to expect these differences to be pertinent every time one of the variant forms is used. Indeed the hypothesis underlying the study of syntactic variation within a framework similar to that of phonological variation is that for certain identifiable sets of alternations, these distinctions come into play neither in the intentions of the speaker nor in the interpretation of the interlocutor. Thus we can say that *distinctions in referential value or grammatical function among different surface forms can be neutralized in discourse."* (1988:153)

In the case at hand, Sankoff's comments are of particular importance: Once it has been established that the selection of a non-standard surface form rather than its standard equivalent has no effect on semantic content from a purely referential point of view, the question then becomes whether the exploitation of non-standard morphosyntactic forms serves a higher function. Seeing as the competing standard and non-standard forms can be considered as semantically synonymous, LeBlanc's use of the morphosyntactic and lexical particularities of BSMAF seems to serve no other function than to underscore the

inherent "Acadianness" of her work: By thusly turning our attention towards the code itself, LeBlanc successfully combines both the metalingual and poetic functions of language described by Jakobson in a way that suggests the existence of an underlying discourse on the literary acceptability of non-standard linguistic varieties. In sum, to borrow Jakobson's terminology, just as "similarity superimposed on contiguity imparts to poetry its throughgoing symbolic, multiplex, polysemantic essence", the poetic function superimposed on the metalingual function imparts to LeBlanc's use of sociolect its underlying metadiscursive function. In the words of LeBlanc herself, "*[o]n a beau célébrer la noblesse de l'oralité, le temple de la littérature occidentale demeure la bibliothèque"*.

1.3 Establishing a methodology for translating the metadiscursive function

Having established a linguistic framework allowing us to hypothesize the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's poetic use of sociolect, we are then faced with the challenge of establishing a methodology capable of transposing this function into another language. This is no small task, since "[i]n texts, syntagmatic elements at various levels – the contextures, contiguities, and connections of language, form and culture – present the greatest challenges to translators" (Tymoczko 1999:282) mainly because they cannot be replaced through a simple act of substitution. Furthermore, if the translation of sociolectal literature poses such an interesting problem for Translation Studies, it is because it forces us to re-evaluate the preconception of translation as a linguistic activity based primarily on selection and substitution. That being said, if the traditional paradigm of translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another" (Catford 1965:1)

proves insufficient in the translation of sociolectal literature, what other models exist that could potentially be of more use?

1.3.1 Metametonymics

In her article "Metametonymics", Tymoczko's posits an interesting way of conceptualizing translation not as a metaphoric process of substitution, but rather as a metonymic process of reconstruction. According to Tymoczko, until recently "[t]ranslation has been conceptualized chiefly as a metaphoric process, a process of selection and substitution in which the words of one language are selected so as to substitute for the words of another language" (1999:279). Furthermore, she continues by explaining that this view of translation is intrinsically linked to our historical obsession with the notion of equivalence, a notion that figures heavily in the works of scholars such as Catford and Nida. "Because it is obviously inadequate to suppose that substitutions in translation occur only or even primarily on the level of lexis, the conceptualization of translation as a process of substitution has gradually broadened" throughout the years to include grammatical and literary structures of greater and greater complexity (1999:279). Nonetheless, Tymoczko counters that "word for word, sentence for sentence, metaphor for metaphor, cultural field for cultural field, genre for genre, form for form, translation has been treated primarily as a process of substitution and selection" (1999:279).

For Tymoczko, this dominant conception in TS discourse of translation as a chiefly metaphoric process is inadequate for both theoretical and practical reasons: Firstly, she contends that the broadening of discourse on the selection and substitution process beyond the level of lexis does not expand our theoretical understanding of translation in terms of its scope. From this perspective, translation remains a "linguistic and cultural

activity" that is chiefly metaphoric in nature. Secondly, she claims that "[a] view of translation as selection and substitution also tends to become normative" (1999:280), promoting an abusive conception of translation as a mechanical activity of substitution. Finally, and possibly most importantly, Tymoczko highlights the fact that conceptualizing translation as process governed primarily by selection and substitution neglects to take into account the other fundamental aspect of human communication: combination.

Tymoczko argues that if there is a lack of scholarly discussion on the metonymic aspects of translation, it is no doubt due to an absence of a coherent metalanguage on the subject: Her goal is thus to answer the question of what it "would mean to have a metonymic criticism, a metonymic metalanguage" (1999: 281) focused on establishing contiguities and elaborating contexts rather repeating dated discourses on notions such as equivalence. Tymoczko continues by explaining that although some existing approaches in Translation Studies, namely biographical and historicist critical models, contain relevant aspects of metonymic criticism such as seeking to establish contiguities by connecting a given text to its greater historical, political or ideological context, many of these models are unfortunately passé and overly couched in metaphoric language.

However, the focus on translators as connectors/creators rather than selectors/substitutors since the Cultural Turn marks an important shift in TS discourse towards a more metonymically oriented model of translation criticism, according to Tymoczko. Moreover, with the notion equivalence becoming less and less relevant to the contemporary study of translation, "the importance of textual production by translators is […] increasingly stressed" (1999:282) with both translations and original progressively

coming to be seen as "creations that are recreations" (1999:282). Furthermore, Tymoczko argues that in this new paradigm, "[t]ranslation is seen as less a metaphoric process of substitution than as a metonymic process of connection, a process of creating contiguities and contextures, even when the language of metonymics is not spoken" (1999:282). As such, translation becomes a process of reconstruction rather than replacement, free from the normalizing influence of notions such as equivalence, and thus capable of creating contiguities and contextures by allowing some of the specific attributes of the source text "to dominate and, hence, represent the entirety of the work" (1999:282) through translation.

Although Tymoczko's utilization of the notion of metonymy is mainly geared towards the establishment a new critical model for analysing translations, its potential applications for the translation of sociolectal literature are of particular interest in the case at hand. Furthermore, the flexibility offered by this model allows the translator to build new structures and contiguities by determining for themselves which attributes of the source text merit to be highlighted in their translation: As such, the reconstruction of sociolect can be seen as an imperfect mode of representation where complex choices must be made in the absence of any discernable rule-governed protocols. That being said, Tymoczko's theories shouldn't be interpreted as a call to institute the rule of the jungle, but rather as a call to understanding the constellation of power dynamics operating within a given oeuvre in order to create alternative structures of meaning that can serve as just representations of the source text in the target language culture.

In light of the above, how can Tymoczko's ideas regarding metonymy be applied to the translation of sociolectal literature? More specifically, in the context of an English

translation of Georgette LeBlanc's *Amédé,* what are the different strategies that could be employed in reconstructing LeBlanc's sociolect in another language? Finally, in hopes of creating new contiguities and contextures, what elements of the source text should be allowed "to dominate and, hence, represent the entirety of the work" (1999:282) through translation? In order to answer these questions, we must first examine a few contextual factors that might help bring to light the broader significance of the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's use of sociolect.

1.3.2 A few contextual considerations

As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the use of non-standard linguistic features in Acadian literature has played an important role in helping to demark Acadian authors from their literary contemporaries within the Canadian and international *francophonie,* as evidenced by the growing critical and institutional interest in authors such as LeBlanc. Furthermore, LeBlanc's *Amédé* is a prime example of the liberating effect of this growing interest in the literary use of vernacular: As seen above, LeBlanc ample use of the various lexical and morphosyntactic particularities of BSMAF throughout her oeuvre plays an important role in the creation of metadiscursive content and could be described as one of the text's primary strengths. With all this in mind, it is my view that in order to adequately render the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's use of a literary sociolect, the exploitation of a parallel, analogous sociolect should therefore play a central role in our reconstruction of the source text in its new language culture. In failing to do so, I believe that a central aspect of the source text would simply be lost in translation. Having taken this decision, the question then becomes the following: Which

English sociolect would be best suited a reconstruction of BSMAF in the context of our translation?

1.4 Conclusion

The objective of the above section was to explore the relationship between the creation of underlying networks of meaning and the artistic representation of sociolect in Acadian author Georgette LeBlanc's second poetic novel, *Amédé,* in hopes of establishing different translation strategies that could be employed in rendering the source text's inherent metadiscursive function. Although this reflection should only be seen as a starting point for further analysis, I believe that a few preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the information presented above:

Firstly, I believe that my proposed methodology serves as a solid example of how the inherent metadiscursive features of sociolectal literature can be established from a predominately textual perspective: By concentrating on the primary linguistic aspects of LeBlanc's use of sociolect, my goal was to turn my attention inwards towards the concrete textual elements of the text in order to refrain from engaging in any form of overly context oriented speculation that could detract from the overall tenability of my initial analysis. Furthermore, by dealing with the functional aspects of LeBlanc's artistic representation of sociolect and their broader relationship to Jakobson's six communicative functions of language, I believe that I have shown that it is possible to assign a metadiscursive function to the source text's representation of vernacular through a microtextual analysis of LeBlanc's different choices in portraying BSMAF.

In the second part of the above analysis, I briefly discussed the relevance of Tymoczko's metonymic critical model to the establishment of different strategies that could be employed in reconstructing LeBlanc's sociolect in another language.

2 Choosing a sociolect

2.0 Introduction

> *"I use the term "Africadian", a word I have minted from "Africa" and "Acadia" (the old name for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), to denote the Black populations of the Maritimes and especially of Nova Scotia. Other appellations – "Afro-Nova Scotian, Black Nova Scotian", etc. – are unwieldy. Moreover, if Africadians constitute a state, let it be titled Africadia."*
>
> *George Elliott Clarke*

The central problematic of this thesis is ultimately one of linguistic variation and its influence on the translation process. In sociolinguistics, variation is seen as a *sine qua non* for the production of language and its study helps us understand linguistic diversity not only between different languages, but also between different speech communities within a given language. Moreover, this intralingual variation manifests itself in myriad ways and its effects can be observed not only on the formal level of grammar, syntax and lexis, but also within our social interactions. In *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*, Labov notes that

> "The objective pattern of language behaviour [is] seen to be correlated with the overall social pattern of differential reactions to specific economic or social pressures […]. It was thus demonstrated that social pressures are continually acting upon the structures of language, as it develops through the mechanism of imitation and hypercorrection" (3).

For Labov, "variation is not random or chaotic but rather patterned" (Gordon:18), governed by internal linguistic and social mechanisms propagated, knowingly and unknowingly, in the everyday interactions between members of a given speech community and influenced by external social and economic pressures. That being said, just as social interactions and language mutually influence each other at the code level, so

do they influence the ways in which we perceive ourselves within our language culture; acting as an interface between ourselves and the multiplicity of discourses that surround us regarding language, variation and the social currency of different forms of speech within any given situation.

In Acadian intellectual circles, the question of analysing linguistic representations and the ways in which they shape our opinions, ideals, and consequently our own linguistic practices has long been a field of predilection not only amongst sociolinguists, but also amongst literary and translation scholars (see A. Boudreau, R. Boudreau, and Leclerc). Anchored in a qualitative ethno-sociolinguistic theoretical framework, these scholars have helped shed light on how a confluence of historical, political, and symbolic factors, all inextricable from our experience of language in its social context, act as catalysts for the creation and evolution of our linguistic ideologies, which themselves act as "*la matrice à l'intérieur de laquelle s'inscrivent un ensemble de représentations*" (A. Boudreau 2009: 440). This dynamic creates a kind of linguistic and discursive feedback loop, where the use of a rule governed code in a given speech situation results in the creation or entrenchment of different linguistic ideologies which in turn mould our representations, influence our perception of the code itself, and thus bring us to modify its use, both socially and structurally. Equally interesting is how our representations seem to simultaneously produce and be produced by the discourses of our social milieus, themselves a reaction to specific economic and social pressures relating to class, status and power.

This discursive analysis of linguistic representations and ideologies has increasingly been applied to Acadian literature, in the works scholars such as McLaughlin

and R. Boudreau, amongst others, to describe different trajectories and discursive trends relating to language and identity in Acadian literature: Whether by studying the representations of young Acadian writers from a qualitative perspective through sociolinguistic interviews (see McLaughlin 2001), or by analyzing their works from a socio-literary perspective (see R. Boudreau 2000), these scholars have helped shed light on the interrelated nature of language, identity, and on their relation to linguistic variation as central themes in Acadian literary and intellectual discourse.

For my part, in the first section of this thesis, I presented a microtextual analysis of Georgette LeBlanc's *Amédé* in order to assign a metadiscursive function to the author's use of the BSMAF sociolect in her work from a textual perspective; I also discussed the relevance of Tymoczko's metonymic metalanguage in its practical application to the translation of vernacular; an activity where the terminology of equivalence and substitution is much less useful than one focused on the creation of contextures and contiguities between domestic and translated literatures. However, in taking my analysis beyond the page, I believe that LeBlanc's oeuvre, its conservative poetic, and its idiosyncratic use of vernacular all find echoes in the different linguistic representations and ideologies present in Acadian social and literary discourse: Through her textual choices, LeBlanc firmly places herself in a regionalist literary current where the valorization of local identities and vernaculars through literature can be seen as an effort to combat the literary and even social erasure of traditional Acadian modes of communication.

Having posited the existence of these different linguistic representations and ideologies in LeBlanc's work, the question becomes how strategies gleaned from

Tymoczko's writings could be employed in translating these representations into a different language culture: Can Tymoczko's reimagining of the translation process as one of reconstruction rather than replacement help us in choosing a target sociolect whose sociolinguistic context will permit the transmission of the source text's underlying ideologies in regards to vernacular? Can the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's use of sociolect really find its echo in a different language culture? And if so, what interlingual representations and ideologies will be conveyed by the translation itself?

In *Cultural Perspectives on Translation*, Annie Brisset states that

> Starting from the principle that the target literature interacts with the translated literature, the aim is to understand the function of these exchanges in a particular literature and the resulting textual transformations. The study of the role of translation in shaping or restructuring a national literature or a literary genre at a particular moment in its history is based on the description of the writing practices at work in translation strategies. Ultimately the analogy between translation and social practice that characterises this model makes it possible to analyse the literary dynamic engendered or undergone by translation. (2010: 70)

For the practitioner, this is not only useful for the analysis of translated literature, but also for anticipating the social implications of choices made during the translation process and their possible effects on the receiving (and especially the translated) literary system/language culture: From this perspective, translation is seen as a social activity that not only forges ties between literatures, but also helps underscore the explicit and implicit intercultural parallels drawn by the translator during the translation process. As such, in choosing a given target sociolect, the responsible translator has the task of justifying his or her choice amongst a wide range of potential solutions, keeping in mind what they wish to communicate through their choice, how their choice will affect their target audience, and what is collectively deemed as acceptable, or conversely, inacceptable within the receiving language culture (Buzelin 2002: 122).

In choosing an appropriate sociolect from which a potential reconstruction of BSMAF could be realised, a few considerations came into play. A first question I asked myself was whether any English sociolect could be found in close proximity to the Baie Sainte-Marie region of south-western Nova Scotia that could prove useful in my objective of reproducing the inherent orality and metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's use of vernacular in my translation. Although the movement between language cultures supposes a necessary foreignization of the source text vernacular – a phenomenon described by Buzelin as *la problématique du traducteur –,* the question became whether there exists a vernacular form of English to be drawn from the source context that could help minimize this foreignizing effect, from both linguistic and a sociological perspectives (2002:5,125). Incidentally, in the neighbouring town of Weymouth, Nova Scotia lives a small Africadian community whose sociolect represents a promising avenue for the translation of BSMAF vernacular and of LeBlanc's *Amédé* more specifically.

Upon further research, it was interesting to note that many parallels, both linguistic and sociological, can be drawn between the Africadian and Acadian communities of Nova Scotia, two groups whose geographical isolation, tumultuous histories, and traditional marginalisation by the dominant culture have led them to follow similar literary trajectories in their exploration of themes such as exile, cultural identity, and otherness, all while retaining a host of very conservative non-standard linguistic features, many of which feature prominently in their respective literatures. That being said, it is important to stress that the objective of this *mise en rapport* is not to establish an absolute equivalency between Acadian and Africadian language cultures; two groups who, despite

their similar experiences, have evolved in different cultural and racial contexts. However, in analysing both language cultures and their relationships with their respective French and English literary systems, the goal is to establish a structural parallel of the type "A is to X what B is to Y" by underscoring through translation the parallel historical, sociolinguistic and literary elements that make of Africadian English such an interesting avenue for the translation of Acadian French (Buzelin 2002:125).

In this second section of my thesis, I will analyse the properties common to both the Acadian and Africadian language cultures using as a framework aspects of the three indicators for linguistic variation presented in Buzelin (2002:3) – namely diatopic (regional), diastratic (social) and diaphasic (situational) variation. By comparing and contrasting both language cultures in the light of these indicators, the goal is to understand the constellation of historical, geographic, political, sociolinguistic, literary and symbolic properties common between them and how they can be used to help us renegotiate the translation process as one interested in the creation of contiguities and contextures rather than one based on the metaphoric process of selection and substitution.

In other words, this chapter can be seen as a practical application of Tymoczko's metonymic critical model in the context of a literary translation. The operationalization of this model is, in my opinion, quite useful in the case at hand as it helps us understand not only the chief linguistic aspects relating to the translation of vernacular, but also the sociohistoric, sociological, discursive, and even metadiscursive considerations that influence the translation process both directly and indirectly. Furthermore the simultaneous analysis of both microtextual and extratextutal elements possible within this model helps underscore how "the smallest elements of the text […] construct the

ideological position of the translation" (Tymoczko 1999:287) and how these formal linguistic elements could potentially be exploited in in the literary reconstruction of the underlying network of meaning and the linguistic ideologies intrinsic to the literary use of vernacular in minority language contexts.

2.1 Diatopic variation – Historical, political, and cultural trajectories

Invariably tied to the study of variation are a language's ties to the territory on which it is spoken. As such, diatopic (or regional) variation helps us understand a given linguistic variety's place within its spatial context, all while accounting for the historical, cultural, and nationalist considerations that influence its speakers' evolving personal and linguistic identities and practices within their physical and political spaces. It is important to note that the three categories of variation presented above are by no means mutually exclusive: The heterogeneous nature of most modern societies, which often see themselves divided along cultural and class lines, lends to these categories a certain fluidity permitting the simultaneously observation of different types of variation within any given speech situation (for ex. analysing variation within a social subset of a geographically determined and distinct cultural minority group like working-class Acadians from Baie Sainte-Marie). That being said, trying to understand the multifaceted relationship between variation and territory as it applies to both the Acadian and Africadian language cultures and their respective literatures offers an interesting starting point from which to elucidate the shared historical, political and cultural trajectories that characterize their parallel experiences as cultural and linguistic minorities within the province of Nova Scotia.

2.1.1 Historical trajectories

To understand the Acadian and Africadian language cultures in their spatial contexts, it is necessary to understand their complicated historical relationships with the territories they currently occupy. It should be noted that the objective of this section is not so much to offer an exhaustive history of these two groups, both of which have been the subject of much scholarly writing (for further details on Acadian and Africadian history, see Ross and Deveau 1995, and Walker 1992), but rather to provide the necessary historical context for understanding the ways in which both respective language culture's literary traditions have dealt with questions relating to their real and imagined geographies and to situate them in the ongoing debate "surrounding contemporary regionalist literary theory and its relationship to current trends in the field of cultural geography" (MacLeod 2012:227). Further, if the word "vernacular" supposes an necessary allusion to geography, Buzelin notes that "*[f]aire de la « langue domestique » un matériau esthétique est symptomatique d'un contexte où le littéraire devient à la fois produit et vecteur d'identités collectives, des identités dont les fondements ne peuvent toutefois être tenus pour acquis*" (2002:11): That is to say that in minority contexts, where the precariousness of national identities is oftentimes coupled with a lack of control over the means of territorial and political governance, artists are often cast in the role of creators of our cultural geographies. Understanding this role of the "artist as creator" is primordial in the case at hand, as both Acadian and Africadian literary canons have a history of dealing with questions pertaining to linguistic and cultural identity, the echoes of which can be felt in the social and political institutions that contribute to each group's alterity within their province.

2.1.2 A brief history of Nova Scotia Acadians

In tracking the evolution of the French language in Nova Scotia, so as to better understand its literary use, we must consider a few historical and political factors that influenced its geographic distribution across the province[7]:

The Acadian population presently living in Nova Scotia is for the most part directly descended from the original French settlers that started colonizing North America at the beginning of the 17th century. In 1604, European colonization of what would eventually become modern Canada began with the establishment of the French colony of Acadia by Samuel de Champlain and Pierre Dugua de Mons on Saint-Croix Island, in present-day Maine. Due to harsh conditions, and a difficult winter that saw approximately half their colonists perish to scurvy and other ailments, Champlain and Dugua moved the colony the following year to Port Royal, near present-day Annapolis Royal, in Nova Scotia. In the years that followed, the colony came under both French and British rule multiple times, due to its strategic location between Canada (New-France) and New England, as well as its abundant, fertile agricultural land, before falling irrevocably under British control in 1713 with the signing of the Utrecht Treaty.

After the succession of Acadia to the British, and despite the precariousness of their situation as French Catholic British subjects caught between two warring empires, the Acadians lived a thirty-year period of prosperity in the province: However, this period was tragically cut short by the Great Upheaval of 1755 to 1763, which saw the Acadians population decimated by massive expropriation and destruction of their lands and

[7] Unless otherwise specified, the following historical details were drawn from Ross and Deveau's *Les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse : hier et aujourd'hui* (1995). Also, it should be noted that in this section I primarily deal with the history of the Acadians presently living in Nova Scotia: I will mostly ignore the history of New-Brunswick Acadians, a group whose superior numbers and political clout within their province have led them to follow a much different trajectory than Nova Scotia Acadians.

subsequent deportation across the New England colonies, France, and Great Britain. Although there is much debate amongst historians as to the exact number of Acadians displaced or deceased as a result of the Great Upheaval, Faragher posits that of the approximately 18,500 Acadians living in the area at the time, "[i]t is likely that some 10,000 Acadians – the majority of them probably infants and children – lost their lives as a direct result of the campaign of removal from 1755 to 1763" (2005:424-425).

Despite this attempted genocide[8], many Acadians managed to survive by fleeing north along the eastern coast of present-day New Brunswick, seeking refuge amongst the Mi'kmaw and Maliseet First Nations. While some settled there, others ventured further north and west into various regions of Québec, settling mostly in the Gaspésie and Lanaudière regions, as well as on the Magdalen Islands. Of those that were unable to avoid deportation, many faced persecution as French Catholics upon arriving in the predominately Protestant British colonies, and were in many cases forced into a life of exile lasting decades. Some eventually made their way to French-controlled Louisiana, paving the way for what would become the Cajun culture. However, after the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the fall of Montreal, some Acadians were permitted by the British government to return to Acadia (albeit not to their traditional lands, which had since been redistributed amongst the Loyalist Planters migrated from New England). These Acadians were mostly dispersed in small numbers to isolated areas where land was still available, concentrating into seven predominately rural, peripheral regions: Argyle (Yarmouth County); Clare (also known as la Baie Sainte-Marie, Digby County); Minudie, Nappan, Maccan (Cumberland County); Chéticamp (Inverness County, Cape

[8] For further details regarding the Expulsion of the Acadians, see Faragher (2005).

Breton); Isle Madame (Richmond County, Cape Breton); Pomquet, Tracadie, Havre-Boucher (Antigonish County); and Chezzetcook (Halifax County).

It should be noted that the population of these different areas did not all occur in the same way, and owing to various socioeconomic, geographic and demographic factors, the Acadian culture did not evolve uniformly across the province: As a result, use of the French language has all but disappeared in the communities of Maccan, Nappan, Minudie, and Chezzetcook, and is in decline in the regions of Argyle, Isle Madame, Pomquet, Tracadie, and Havre-Boucher. However, in the case of la Baie Sainte-Marie, Ross notes that,

> À certains égards, le sort de Clare fut bien meilleur que celui d'autres régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Cette heureuse fortune est due, jusqu'à un certain point, à l'initiative du lieutenant-gouverneur Francklin qui, en 1768, mit un grand territoire à la disposition exclusive des familles acadiennes. Cette décision entraîna avec le temps le développement d'une série de villages adjacents peuplés en majeure partie par des Acadiens, ce qui a créé une région géographique à majorité francophone. En fin de compte, les répercussions de ce mode de peuplement se manifestent dans presque tous les aspects de la vie en Clare, depuis les pratiques électorales jusqu'à la langue des habitants. […]. Cette population relativement compacte a eu également des effets déterminants sur la préservation de la langue française. Des études récentes montrent d'ailleurs que, de toutes les régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, c'est le territoire de la baie Sainte-Marie qui a conservé le plus grand nombre de traits propres au français du 17^{e} siècle (1995: 148).

This stroke of luck assured for the Acadian population of Baie Sainte-Marie a continuous territory, on which they were able to settle and live in relative isolation, eventually attaining a certain level of economic security through the development of the forestry and fishing industries: This stands in sharp contrast to other Acadian communities within the province who were either allocated smaller, disjointed acreages, and/or reduced to the level of sharecroppers and tenants (as was the case in Maccan, Nappan, and Minudie). In the case of la Baie Sainte-Marie, this isolation, coupled with a confluence of geographic and socioeconomic factors (as well as the establishment of *le Collège Sainte-Anne* in 1890), no doubt had a huge effect on the preservation of the French language and culture

within the community, despite assimilatory government policies and a lack of access to public education in French until the foundation of the *Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial* in 1996.

Today, Acadians who identify French as their mother tongue represent roughly 3.6% of Nova Scotia's population (King 2013). According to the 2011 census[9], the population of the Municipality of Clare stands at 8,160: Of these residents, 62.2% list French as their mother tongue, and 2.9% list both French and English as their mother tongue.

2.1.3 A brief history of the Africadians

Shortly after the end of the Great Upheaval began the first major waves of immigration of African Americans into the province of Nova Scotia.

In *African American English in the Diaspora*, Poplack and Tagliamonte note that of the approximately 60,000 African Americans who left the United States during or just after the period of slavery, the majority made their way north into what would eventually become Canada (2001:38). "The bulk of this immigration took place in three major waves into two different areas: Black Loyalist immigration into the Maritimes after the American Revolutionary War (ca. 1783-5), refugee slave immigration into the Maritimes following the War of 1812, and fugitive slave immigration into southwestern Ontario between 1815 and 1861" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:39). Although the influx into Ontario, the well-known terminus of the Underground Railroad, has perhaps featured more prominently in Canadian historical scholarship, it is interesting to note that in the

[9] Statistics Canada. 2012. *Clare, Nova Scotia (Code 1203001) and Canada (Code 01)* (table). *Census Profile*. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed April 6, 2017).

late 18th century, Nova Scotia was home to the largest free black settlements in the world outside of Africa, as well as the largest population of former African American slaves outside of the United States: Moreover, many Africadians currently living within the province of Nova Scotia are directly descended from these original Black Loyalist settlers who began arriving in the period during and after the American Revolutionary War.

Early in the war, "British generals had begun to promise protection to slaves who would desert their rebel masters", a policy that was codified in 1779 when the British commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Clinton, issued the Philipsburg Proclamation (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:42). This policy, largely aimed at destabilizing the rebel economy, was incredibly successful: Some estimate that approximately one-fifth of the total slave population (roughly 100,000 souls) joined forces with the Loyalists, either as soldiers or support staff during this period. However, when the tides of the war began turning against the British, the Crown started evacuating both Black and White Loyalists from conflict areas, the majority making their way into the Caribbean colonies, East Florida, or escaping to the American hinterlands. Of the Black Loyalists evacuated from South Carolina and Georgia, many went the Bahamas or Jamaica. However, a few thousand made their way to New York via Savannah and Charleston.

Once plans were eventually drawn to "evacuate the last British stronghold of New York, governor Sir Guy Carleton's generous reading of the Philipsburg Proclamation saved many Black Loyalists from a return to slavery" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:42): In 1783, against the wishes of American General George Washington, who demanded the return of all former slaves to their masters, Carleton began sending Black Loyalists into the remaining British colonies. Eno notes that many of these Loyalists,

generally "mistrustful of the southern colonies, where the slave system prevailed, and having had no word of the fate of previous emigrants to the Caribbean, elected Nova Scotia" as their final destination for evacuation (qtd in Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:43).

The majority of these Black Loyalists were from the southern states, a fact that was reflected in their disproportionately southern leadership: For example, amongst early Africadian religious and community leaders, protopentecostalist David George was born in Virginia and lived in Georgia, and preacher Boston King was born and raised in South Carolina. Both men played important roles in the foundation of early Black Nova Scotian settlements. That being said, it is important to note that in addition to the 3,000 Black Loyalists that made up the bulk of this first wave, roughly 1,300 slaves held by White Loyalists were also brought into the province, where slavery was not to be officially abolished until 1834.

In calculating the total number of immigrants, Poplack estimates that, while taking into account a limited number of earlier arrivals, "we arrive at a total first immigration wave of at least 4,850 African Americans" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:43), the majority of which set up communities in Guysborough, North Preston (near Halifax), Brindley Town (near Digby), Shelburne, and Birchtown in Nova Scotia, as well as in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Life was hard for the Black Loyalists upon their arrival in Nova Scotia: In many areas, the government's lack of preparedness for the flood of Loyalists, both Black and White, led to corrupt, and segregationist land allotments. In Shelburne, Blacks were segregated from Whites upon their arrival, and were even forced to perform public labour

to receive land that Whites were given freely. “In 1784, most Shelburne slave owners freed their slaves to avoid the inconvenience of feeding them through the long winter” (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001: 45). These generally deplorable conditions led to high levels of disaffection, which no doubt helps explain why, when given the chance in 1791, some 1,196 original settlers chose to emigrate to Sierra Leone, lead by community leaders David George, Moses Wilkinson, and Boston King. Of those unable to leave, many were slaves, indentured servants and sharecroppers, which in many cases left communities weak and without leadership, leading to the dissipation of some of these early Africadian communities. “In fact, Guysborough and Halifax Counties (which includes North Preston) were to become the only areas of Nova Scotia with large Black populations” during this period (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001: 46).

Although there is no scholarly consensus as to the exact number of African Americans who came to Nova Scotia between 1813 and 1815, historians agree that the second wave of African American immigration brought with it between 2,100 and 4000 Black refugees; the result of the British having used the same tactic of promising freedom to any Black Loyalists ready to desert their masters during the War of 1812. In 1815 and 1816, many refugees began settling in North Preston, Hammonds Plains, and nearby communities, having been granted farms of eight to ten acres each. However, the soil on these small farms was often very poor, unable to support the number of inhabitants. Further, because the grants had not been made in perpetuity, settlers were unable to sell their properties to find more productive acreages: Quoted in Poplack and Tagliamonte, Walker observes that, “from the outset, the refugee settlements were doomed to poverty and economic marginality”, and Poplack herself observes that this lead to “over a century

of almost universal Black poverty and White resentment of what little poverty was meted out" (2001: 49).

That being said, this relative isolation, as well as community coalescence around institutions like the United African Baptist Church, assured that despite their hardship, the Africadian population was able to persist and attain a level of social cohesion necessary for their community's continued existence. Furthermore, much like the Acadian population of Nova Scotia, "[t]he confinement of residents to remote fringe areas, coupled with separation from surrounding populations for reasons of socioeconomic class, education and ethnicity, all explain why despite the geographic proximity of mainstream population groups", separation from the majority and feelings of alterity, both in regards to language and identity, have persevered amongst the Africadian and Acadian populations of the province (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001: 53).

Today, North Preston remains the largest indigenous Black centre in Nova Scotia, with a population of nearly 4000 people. According to the 2011 census[10], Africadians make up approximately 2.3% of the total Nova Scotian population, and represent 43.9% of the province's visible minorities. Of these African Nova Scotians, 77.2% are at least third-generation Canadians.

2.1.4 Shared experiences of cultural geography

In comparing and contrasting the historical and political experiences of both the Acadian and Africadian populations of Nova Scotia in relation to their spatial and linguistic contexts, a few similarities can be observed in their respective trajectories.

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[10] Statistics Canada. 2013. *Nova Scotia (Code 12)* (table). *National Household Survey (NHS) Profile*. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013.
http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed April 12, 2017).

Firstly, it is interesting to observe that despite their long historical presence within the province, both groups' respective collisions with British imperialism and their resulting dispersion into mainly rural and peripheral settlements isolated one from the other rendered both communities incapable of forming large population centres within the province. Further, the effects of this isolation caused by intentionally assimilatory or segregationist land allotment programs can still be felt to this day in the geographic and linguistic realities of both the Acadian and Africadian populations of the province; both of which are intimately tied to each groups' relationships to their respective national and linguistic identities.

In light of the historical data presented above, it is understandable that both diaspora groups exhibit complicated relationships with the territories they occupy: In the absence of an official, geographically delineated territory, Acadian and Africadian writers almost concurrently started shifting the locus of their respective national identities away from traditional models of environmental determinism towards post-nationalist paradigms predicated on cultural, rather than geographic affiliation. In the case of Africadian literature, the work of George Elliott Clarke particularly stands out in its transgression of the boundaries between real and imagined social space: In coining the term Africadia, a mix between Africa and Acadia, Clarke "actively […] claims both the agency and the capacity to first re-imagine his home and then to actually re-construct it, physically, in the real world" (MacLeod 2012: 244). Further, Alexander MacLeod posits that

> Exactly as a re-reading, re-writing and re-interpretation of the events of 1759 by Quebec intellectuals triggered a transformation that saw French Canadians begin to view themselves as les Québécois in the 1960s, and exactly as a re-reading, re-writing and re-interpretation of Le Grand Dérangement of 1755 triggered an Acadian renaissance in the 1970's, Clarke's work demonstrates

> that a collective desire for the home place is infinitely more powerful than the passive defense of a real geographic site (2012: 249).

Although some critics contest Clarke's work as a distorted ethnographic representation of Black Nova Scotia, a diverse society with its own internal division and dissenting cultural representations, what is perhaps most interesting to note, is how the cultural nationalism present in Clarke's work is in many ways reminiscent of the repudiation of environmental determinism which is part and parcel of the modern Acadian national identity.

2.2 Diastratic variation - Sociolinguistic trajectories

That being said, geographic isolation not only had an effect on both group's relationships with their spatial and political contexts, but also on their representations vis-à-vis their respective vernaculars. Furthermore, analysing the diastratic aspects of linguistic variation can help us answer many questions pertaining to the sociolinguistic status of a given vernacular, and its influence on the translation process.

As mentioned above, the traditional and sometimes continued isolation of Nova Scotia Acadians from the greater francophone world has led them to retain a host of conservative linguistic features lost to both Canadian and European Standard French. In many cases, this perceived difference from the standard has led to a double discourse on the acceptability of vernacular French in different contexts: As Annette Boudreau's research shows, French speakers in many parts of the Maritime Provinces – especially in situations of diglossia – hold ambivalent linguistic representations in regards to their linguistic variety (2001: 44). For example, in South-Eastern New Brunswick, a region where Francophones and Anglophones live in close proximity, the Acadian population sees itself doubly minoritized on the official linguistic market; on the one hand by the English language, associated to power and domination, both symbolic and economic, on

the other hand by Standard French, considered as a more prestigious variety whose use grants access to a greater level of symbolic capital within the community. Further, Boudreau specifies that this ambivalence "*s'étend au vernaculaire, qu'ils valorisent dans sa dimension identitaire, mais qui paraît restrictif et peu apte à répondre aux besoins de la communication moderne*" (2001, 44). In other words, although regional varieties are accorded a certain symbolic value in colloquial or artistic contexts, they largely remain stigmatized within the linguistic markets perceived as legitimate (moreover, this is where Bourdieu's concept of the *marché-franc* finds all its meaning). Although the representations of New Brunswick Acadians has featured more prominently in Acadian scholarship, this ideology of the standard observed in Boudreau has led to the entrenchment of various negative stereotypes and preconceptions regarding Acadian French, both in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, resulting in feelings of linguistic insecurity amongst native speakers not always capable of navigating between standard and non-standard varieties.

That being said, many of the same sociolinguistic mechanisms at work in shaping discourses surrounding Acadian French can also be observed in Africadian English. In their landmark study on the origins of African American English, *African American English in the Diaspora,* Poplack and Tagliamonte note that "in the African Nova Scotian context, as in many other situations of asymmetrical status or power, the vernacular, or what members refer to as "slang", is restricted to intimate interaction with fellow community members" (2001: 53). Further, in the sociolinguistic interviews presented, many participants do not hesitate to describe their variety as "Broken English" (2001: 53), insisting on the incomprehensible nature of their vernacular to non-community

members. This keen awareness of the real (and perceived) differences between their vernacular and those of surrounding white communities has forced most Africadians to acquire "a variety of English that is very close, if not identical, to generalized standard Canadian or Nova Scotian English" (2001: 55), in order to navigate or even integrate mainstream Nova Scotia society.

From a literary perspective, the historical presence of these negative representations has had a significant impact on the use of Black English in Africadian literature. In tracing the career of Black English in Nova Scotia, it is important to understand that the early progenitors of Africadian texts were mostly ministers whose literary production naturally centered on genres associated to the practice of their ministry (ex. speeches, sermons, letters, petitions, songs, histories, etc.), genres less often associated with vernacular forms of expression. Moreover, the generally conservative nature of this early Africadian elite, combined with the disparaging use of bastardized African forms in blackface minstrelsy, had the effect of entrenching negative linguistic stereotypes within the Africadian community. Clarke notes, "While [Africadian English] remained the public tongue of most Africadians, it was likely frowned upon by the elite, a group consisting mainly of teachers and ministers of the African Baptist Association […]" (1999:133), forcing "Black English to go underground, in a sense, in Nova Scotia" (1999: 132).

For some Africadians, then, the rejection of Black English in favour of the Standard was seen as a means for assimilating into the mainstream by accessing the official linguistic market; a prerequisite for greater upward social mobility within white-dominated society. However, attitudes amongst Africadian literary circles began

changing in the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in a renaissance of Black English in literature, no doubt a product of broader societal changes of the recent past, such as the civil rights movement. Furthermore, these changes coincided with a growing institutional interest in emerging and marginalized literatures within postcolonial literary studies, the likes of which had similar effects on the Acadian literary renaissance of the same era.

Today, as is the case in Acadian literature, the use of vernacular has become a vital element of self-expression for many contemporary Africadian writers, and is seen as a means for social and linguistic emancipation through the cultural re-appropriation of traditional modes of communication [11]. To once again quote R. Boudreau, *"[l]a littérature occupe de toute évidence une place importante dans la construction de l'identité culturelle. Et la langue est un des éléments les plus puissants de la construction identitaire*" (2000:162). In the case at hand, this is perhaps the most important parallel that can be drawn between Acadian and Africadian literatures in trying to understand how the use of Africadian sociolect could help in the translation of the metadiscursive aspects of LeBlanc's use of vernacular.

2.2.1 Translation and sociolect

As was mentioned in the first chapter of this analysis, "*tout sociolecte* [...] *romanesque résulte de la sélection d'un ensemble fini de marqueurs dont la nature et la distribution forment un système cohérent régi par des facteurs de lisibilité et une logique textuelle interne* [...]" (Buzelin 2000:205). With this in mind, if the source text is to be seen as the product of a selection of a finite number of formal linguistic markers governed by an internal textual logic, it stands to reason that the target text should follow

[11] For more on the parallels between Acadian and Africadian literatures, see Clarke (2002).

a similar internal logic in its use of sociolect. That being said, what formal linguistic markers best characterise Africadian English, as evidenced by textual representations of the sociolect in Africadian literature as well as sociolinguistic research on the variety in question? How can these markers help us in our reconstruction of the source text in its new language culture?

Firstly, it should be noted that Africadian English differs from Standard Canadian English lexically, morphosyntactically and phonologically. This variety, a sub-variety of African American English (AAE), popularly referred to as Black English, is used throughout Nova Scotia in the everyday lives of the descendants of the early Black settlers discussed in the previous section. Although the use of Africadian English has a long history within the province, its specificity as a sub-variety of AAE has not been the subject of much scholarly inquiry: However, in the debates surrounding the origins of AAE, the study of African American communities in Nova Scotia, as well as other diaspora communities in the Samaná peninsula of the Dominican Republic, has played an immense role in helping us understand the English origins of AAE.

In *African American English in the Diaspora*, Poplack and Tagliamonte attack the origins question from a dialectologist perspective, using quantitative methods to highlight the common core elements AAE shares with other English dialects spoken within non-African American communities. In an effort to reconstruct the precursor(s) of Early African American English, Poplack and Tagliamonte compare "the grammatical structure of [different] diaspora varieties, first amongst each other and then with a series of controls: a benchmark of Early AAE, and three British-origin varieties of English" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:3). In comparing a number of non-standard linguistic

features such as the tense/aspect system of Early AAE with that of other peripheral, non-African English dialects, Poplack and Tagliamonte are able to establish that many of the non-standard features typical of AAE "were not *created*, as would be expected in a situation of creolization, but *retained* from an older variety of English" (2001:251). Further, their research "legitimize[s] African American English as a conservative, rather than an incorrect variety of English, one whose core grammatical differences appear to reside only in its resistance to mainstream changes" (2001:251). In this respect, the parallels between BSMAF and Africadian English are particularly illuminating.

Nevertheless, there is still much scholarly debate surrounding the origins of African American English. Although Poplack and Tagliamonte's anglicist/dialectologist view helps shed light on the conservative nature of some of AAE's key structural features, other linguists prefer to stress the influence of West-African or substrate languages – most notably Kikongo, Mande et Kwa – on the sentence and sound structure of AAE, while others see the genesis of AAE as the result of a process of creolisation (Green 2002:8-9). To quote Labov, "The natural tendency is for each person to see in African American Vernacular English a reflection of what they know best. Creolists see creole structure; dialectologists see the common core of English dialects; Africanists see Africa" (qtd in Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001: xiv). However, in the case at hand, what is perhaps most important is to understand the ways in which key features of AAE are used within the Africadian literary canon and how these features could be used to reconstruct the internal logic of LeBlanc's literary vernacular.

As was noted above, due to different sociological and sociolinguistic pressures, "most Africadian literature published between the turn of the century and the mid-1970s

was written in Standard English" (Clarke 1999:134). However, following the Africadian Cultural Renaissance of the 1970s, contemporary Africadian writers such as Frederick Ward (1937-), Walter Borden (1942-), Charles R. Saunders (1946-), Gloria Wesley-Desmond (1948-), Maxine Tynes (1949-), George Boyd (1952-), and David Woods (1959-) all began utilizing traditional Africadian forms in their works (Clarke 1999:135).

Further, many of the key linguistic forms studied in Poplack and Tagliamonte's *African American English in the Diaspora*, as well as Lisa Green's *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction,* feature in contemporary Africadian literature. One particularly useful feature in the context of my translation was the non-standard past-tense morphology of Africadian English, most notably the "alternation of preterit with present (usually zero) morphology", where the present-tense or unmarked variants are used for past temporal reference[12]. For example, in his 1986 poem *Keep it simple,* Walter Borden uses this feature of Africadian English to great effect:

> and Doodle Boy, jes seventeen,
> **he come** to me and **say:**
> *I'm gonna be a lady's man–*
> *a cool dude, like daddy.*
>
> […]
>
> before he **left** his mama's tit,
> and by the time that he **was** twelve years old.
> every girl in this here country
> **knowed** the colour of his drawers. (Clarke 1992:38)

In this excerpt, it is interesting to note how the alternation between present and preterit forms lends a certain immediacy to past temporal references. In this regard, "English grammars show a long, if not particularly harmonious, history of ascribing such

[12] It is interesting to note that this feature has been "attested in English since at least the sixteenth century" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001: 110).

variation in past-tense marking to two factors: the narrative strategy of recounting past punctual events with the "historical" present, and verb class membership[13]" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:111). Thus, the use of non-standard past-tense morphology in the context of my translation plays the dual function of replicating LeBlanc's use of non-standard morphology (most notably the post-verbal flection *-ont* and the non-standard conjugation of the simple past), all while using a key structural characteristic of Africadian English as a form of "historical present".

A second characteristic of Africadian English that can be observed in the works of Black Nova Scotian writers is the "variable inflection with *–s* of verbs in Standard English (simple) present contexts, regardless of grammatical person and number of the subject" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:160). The following excerpts, pulled from George Elliott Clarke's anthology of Africadian literature, *Fire on the Water, An Anthology of Black Nova Scotian Writing, Volume Two,* offer interesting examples of this variation across grammatical persons and numbers:

1st person singular

> one day i'm sittin' on this porch
> and **hears** the racket over yonder
> i **says** Suzie girl git off this chair (1992:37)

2nd person singular

> …cause she talked in them parable kind of visions to show her
> meanings: 'Fuss is round all beatifull-ness. When you's in trouble
> boy, you just **seeks** that inner place you got it! we all's got it' (1992:24)

3rd person singular

> […] her mama
> **make** her wear long skirts and dresses all th time […] (1992:25)

[13] For more information on the alternation of preterit with present morphology across different verb classes, see Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001.

3rd person plural

> 'Yes, you bet! many is the swift tongue of elegance to put words so to touch you inness and **makes** you to thinking on vision pictures of lovers that fill-heart the heart […] (1992:26)

Further, the non-standard past-tense morphology of Africadian English and the variable inflection with *–s* of verbs in present contexts were both particularly useful structural features that I tried to exploit as judiciously as possible throughout my translation. Moreover, the structural nature of these features made it so that they continued reoccurring throughout the entire translation process. Other examples of structural elements typical of AAE found in my translation include the use of zero and contracted copulas, unmarked possessives, negative concords, the use of *ain't* for negation, the use of *they* rather than *their* to indicate possession, the use of the personal pronoun *them* instead of definite articles *those* and *these,* the use of traditional Africadian expressions, amongst other features (see Appendix for concrete examples of Africadian English in my translation of *Amédé*).

The goal of this section is not to draw an exhaustive list of the different features of Africadian English used throughout the translation process, but rather to shed light on how a rigorous analysis of both Africadian literary works as well as scientific texts on the variety can help us not only better understand certain core grammatical elements of the target language (and their use in literary contexts), but also establish grammatical parallels between the source and target languages. Further, by highlighting a certain number of structural markers, while downplaying others, the goal is to recreate the internal logic of the source text in a new language culture, all while taking into account the literary sensibilities of the target literary system.

2.3 Diaphasic variation – On the question of acceptability

Finally, the question of diaphasic or situational variation is one that invariably brings into question the position of the translator, as well as his or her intentions and their possible interpretation by the receiving literary culture. In dealing with the translation of minority language literatures, where the use of vernacular often plays an important role in determining a work's ideological orientation, it is important to remember the extent to which language is intimately tied to a given group's cultural and historical identity: As such, in uprooting a specific linguistic variety, the product of a complex sociolinguistic and historical context, in order to transplant it into another equally nuanced and multifaceted language culture, much thought should be given as to what is collectively deemed acceptable, or conversely inacceptable, in a given linguistic situation, both within the translated and receiving literary cultures.

Firstly, I would like to note that this entire project is the product of one relatively simple, but very specific question: In the context of a literary translation of Georgette LeBlanc's *Amédé,* what is the literary function of the author's use of the BSMAF sociolect, and how can this function be reconstructed in another language culture? Posing this question automatically assumes the difficult task of having to select a target language culture into which a translation could be realized and of subsequently justifying this choice in a methodologically responsible manner. On that front, I believe that in the preceding sections, I have presented a compelling justification for my choosing the Africadian language culture as an appropriate vehicle for the translation of LeBlanc's work, having highlighted the historical, sociolinguistic, sociological and literary properties shared between both language cultures, and the ways in which they can

contribute to rendering the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's oeuvre by replicating, to the greatest extent possible, the constellation of underlying contextual factors that help impart to the author's use of sociolect its literary function.

That said, as a Nova Scotian Acadian of European descent who grew up speaking Acadian French and Standard Canadian English, I think it is important for me to acknowledge that in undertaking this translation, it is in no way my intention to portray myself as a spokesperson for the Africadian people or as a native speaker of their linguistic variety, a complex rule governed code with a rich oral and literary history. Further, I would be remiss in failing to recognize that despite my best efforts to learn the code, my written knowledge of Africadian remains without a doubt imperfect: This is why before undertaking any publication of my translation, I would insist on first having it proofread and revised by a member of the community in order to rectify any mistakes made in my representation of the Africadian sociolect (moreover, it would have been interesting in the context of a broader undertaking to have conceived this project as a collaborative translation integrating members from both linguistic communities to a greater extent during the actual translation process). However, after having analyzed the use of vernacular in the Africadian literary canon, most notably in both tomes of George Elliott Clarke's anthology of Africadian poetry, *Fire on the Water* (1991,1992), and after having studied various sociolinguistic texts on the specificity of Black Nova Scotia English, most notably the work of Shana Poplack and Sali Tagliamonte, I hope that my acquiring, at the very least, a working knowledge of Africadian English will serve as a solid foundation on which a potential revised version of my translation could be elaborated. To quote Clarke, "All faults are mine. However, they are the innocent *faux*

pas of an explorer – stumbling, straying, yet, striving to clear and map a path for future seekers to follow" (1991: 9).

4 English Translation of *Amédé*

AMÉDÉ

all our relations

Alma talk

the Story begun in the night
a night dark, a parlour's depth
we was sitting
fudge made
socks and mittens mended
cotton stitched and restitched
through cliffs and horizons
into the four masts of a quilt

and a thirst struck us
something strong that night
a thirst for the moon shining
the tides rising
and we drunk to sink ships

and from the bottom of the hold, it come
a sound like rain
fine
like dust from far away
our ears deep in the sea shell
a beginning
a warmth
a weight
like damp sand 'tween our toes
and we was no longer under a roof
we was behind the curtains

in the veins of the night
we was the eyes of the storm
that was coming on fast
that rose

that wanted
that rolled
and in rolling, rolled harder
into a gallop
a field of beasts running free
to make and remake the earth circle
to pound its heart in four
from iron into fire

and the horses and the rain and all of the earth
as if at the end of time
as if outside time
and the men's cries and the rise of blood
and the roundness and the herd and the mountain
and all the earth's misery

and the door open

in they come
the whale mouthed wide like a port
a presence
the tread of two-legged beasts
the voices of cross-eyed men
a fight
and a cry

a cry

and as fast as it had rose
the wind and the rain and the horses
and all the earth's misery

in a cry
were silenced

the Story begun in the night
in the deepest of nights
in the sweat of our waiting
round like a drop
unseen and unnamed
cause you's too caught up in it
too caught up in its warmth
in its time that don't stop

the Story begun in the night
in the cry of a man without body or name
in his cry like the measure of four walls
windows open wide
to billow curtains like sails
like summer and salt
and all that bring peace
torn

the Story begun in the night
in the sweat of my listening
in the moon shining, strong
in my bare-footed stagger
caught in the cry
caught in its sound
gone
as we leave to find
all that left

Before the Storm

I

in the beginning
the cry was everywhere
in the sea that'd carried it
in the voyages, the long voyages
what lasted years, centuries
till losing the desire to move
and the order of the seasons
till no longer knowing who or what
was needed to be found

seven years they'd sailed
drinking to the very bottom of the hold
all the rum, the ash and the dust of they misery
seven years, drinking and eating the ship to its bones
till clinging, starving
ears pressed against the ship belly
to hear the whales sing
and the seaweed talk

and it's from the depths of that seventh year
from the depths of the deepest sea
they finally caught
bottles dredged up by the sea
never ending in its horizon
that they heard songs sung
from the soft lips of the great Atchafalaya
from her skin, rich and woven
with corn, pine and pecans
and the great American orange tree

the bottles come with the promise of fruit
of a new land
and one by one, each ship set sail
reaching from the four corners of the earth
for the long, soft legs of the Atchafalaya
to leave forever the sea's horizon
to navigate round her cypress teeth
'cross her clay tongue, from each they side
the ships mounted the river
drawn by the same fire
'gainst the current
to her long salt plains

and one by one, the ships anchored
on plains like sandy shores
and too tired to move
young and old lay theyselves down, spent

after many nights
many nights spent waiting, hurting
the cypress start
whispering
with its long arms made the bow play
with all the roundness of patience and misery
and the fleeting paleness of the lilies
it play to calm the thirst
they'd harvested at sea

at the sound of the bow
the exiles start to rise up

straight and gentle as cane
start to move
that how the cypress bow
built the Village
how the cypress bow manage
to drown to the very bottom of the voice
to the very bottom of the fiddle
all the pain of the cry
all the hurt of finding land, they anchor in time
and all they relations

the new land was like sugar
potatoes come out golden sweet
even the tired mosquitoes fly stuck together
when it hot
so hot that you no longer know
if you's walking or swimming
everything start to love

but in each smile hide a golden tooth, an unseen eye
tree trunk can fast turn into beast
into venom, alligator or moccasin
it hard dancing on a ground that can make you bleed
under the skirts of a sky so wide that a single step
can make everything fall

everything wanted to love

well anchored in the new time
the Village find new ways of moving
learn where it could and could not step

the limits of Vigilance
that wanted to dominate dancers and tops spinning
that wanted to stop the new words from coming
but the Village learn
well anchored in the new time
that it ain't got to sing to make folks dance
that without words, they won more time for the waltz

and it's by living, by building
that we come to forget
after a hundred years
of suns, seasons and winds
we no longer see the ship's bones
the voyages was turned to dust
the hunger that'd made roots grow until the Village
was firmly anchored to the belly of the world
to all that the sea leave you
the sea so long gone that we'd stopped singing
the Village found itself in the fiddle
it forgot the voyage, the never ending voyages
to even they salt
to even they cry

that night
after a childhood filling its belly with trills and stops
slides, reels and quadrilles
a whole childhood listening to they fathers
to the roundness of the strings ringing
of playing, catching bullfrogs, picking berries and lilacs
of galloping to the edge of the levees
the Village was celebrating

the fiancés
Lejeune and Jolie Brune
the fiddle and the bow
as if it by fate
that a man find his heart
when he start a family

that Saturday night
the night of the engagement
Grosse Tête, the Notary, made Vigilance swim
made her drink the full moon in a one big gulp
thanks to Grosse Tête
Vigilance was so deep in the liquor
even her dogs walking sideways
and the dancers spun a bit faster
the skirts of the sky fly up a bit higher
in the grand house of the ball
in the trunk of the tree
the Village danced, rooted

meanwhile
in that same night's depth
Amédé cross the wood's clearing, a madouesse[14] of the pines
sac of flour on his back, seen the house celebrating
seen all that he'd dreamt
heard the fiddle, the tit-fer ringing
and Amédé felt in him a cry rising, an urge to weep
he almost couldn't believe his eyes
finally, he'd arrived

[14] *Madouesse* is the Mi'kmaq/Acadian word for porcupine.

the Village had called to Amédé since childhood
his grand-mère had said that in the Village lay the Book
the great Book that she seen with her own Black eyes
that she'd touched and felt like an animal for slaughter
still warm
grand-mère used to talk like that
she seen enough death to know
grand-mère said that the Book
was the cypress of the Atchafalaya
that seen storms and stiff winds pass
that made its skin of moss and pillows
that learn to sing and swim still rooted
that learn the meaning of family

Amédé swore that one day he find it
one day he'd touch the Book
felt that his voice relied on it
and that night, without family, a Stranger
standing 'fore all he'd dreamt
Amédé felt the strength of a man who'd found

they say that the doors of the house opened by theyselves
that Amédé make his way through the bustling Village
through the long, proud pirouettes of dancers
that he walk straight and slow
climb up to the fiddler's chairs
as if to part the seas
and that even though the Village could see the dust on his boots
even though they know he come from away
that he have new words in his heart
no one stop him

no one stop him
cause in the wind what was rising
in the breath of the Stranger
in the voice that rise up from his body, tall and proud
from the roundness of his lips
the brightness of his eyes
Amédé undid the pearl buttons of the tune
in the heart of the Village
front of the dogs of Vigilance
in the soft mineral of his new skin, his new voice
of all that should be kept away
Amédé striped dancers of they clothes and sweat
to they salt
to the thirst everyone in the Village know

Amédé cry rose in the night
like a voyage
like their never ending voyage
starting again

II

since the fiancé ball, Amédé had looked
for pages, roots, answers to his questions
had wandered house to house
asking for just a word from the great Book
but they all just gawked
ain't nobody could help him

the Village had felt the warmth of his voice
and couldn't help loving him
despite the skirts they'd felt him raise
despite the cry he'd brought

Amédé was too fine to stay a Stanger
his chiselled body too calm and kind to be lonesome
there was too much old in his young man's bones
to worry mothers or family
too many stars in his eyes
too many shadows by his side
to keep them in fear of his dusty boots

and little by little, Amédé walked accompanied
children chasing after him
asking him to make pictures
with his voice so round
that was Amédé's biggest strength
he'd learned to listen, calm like
easing into each sound
in all its thickness that surround him
and each time he told one of his patchwork stories

Amédé made family of all who was listening

his first weeks at the Village
after bending his back to the earth's sky
after pushing and pulling them long fields
of naked roses and rooted clouds
after working his share and showing Vigilance
the sweat of his brow
Amédé was left alone to walk the inky black of his memory
some even try tying his roots to the Village
finding family where there weren't none
but Amédé ain't find nothing
not a dream, not a memory
nothing of the Book or his *grand-mère*
nothing of the cry he'd felt rising

Amédé decided to leave
to leave the Village alone
but the Saturday night of his leaving
Lejeune call him to the ball
and from the head of the fiddler's table
invite him up to play

Lejeune had spent weeks watching Amédé toiling
he was drawn, admired him like a child
the thick branches of his arms
Amédé's cry still rang in him
rung since the night of the engagement
a cry all bent and broke despite its strength

when Lejeune felt Amédé leaning in beside him

to better hear the fiddle strings ring
Lejeune felt a bit taller
felt the full weight of the Village anchor
the perfect circle within the square
and it make him play loud, proud
like a child
as if his own pa was sitting there listening
as if they shared a name

the warmth of Lejeune and his fiddle did Amédé good
so Amédé stayed

with the harvest in
the season of life was coming to an end
and with it
the day of the dead had arrived

Amédé had started playing the fiddle
and it done him good, like some fate
to spin around the Village song with Lejeune
to make they hunger dance each Saturday night at the ball
front of the knives of Vigilance
and despite they reservations
folk come from all around to hear ‘em play

but even at that
there weren’t no place for Amédé by the graves
on All Saints Day
Amédé kept hisself hidden in the wood
at the edge of the gravestones
to see the Village memory in the making

even though Amédé wanted to kneel like the others
wanted a bed for hisself to pray to the stones and the bones
like all the others
and even though Amédé could make the circle dance within the square
Amédé kept to the shadows of the Saints
an oak amongst the pines

under the pines
the only real family he had
Amédé felt the loneliness in each voice
felt rise his need to find the Book
the Book that would make sense of his sorrow
of his emptiness
under them pines
Amédé sat listening
tuned his fiddle to the sound of his hunger
to the sound of the Village gathered

and it's there, nestled under the trees that Amédé seen a woman rise
with all her body, with all her skirt's cotton
from the soft shadowy curves of her thighs
Amédé seen a head of hair rise
like the honeyed grain of knotted pine, sweet
flowing over the soft fruit of her skin
to the gentle hollow of her throat
in the moment he seen her
in all her being
in all her strength, like a night sky shining
seen her strong hand fall gently over the head of her child
seen her parents huddled close

as if around some flame
Amédé felt a gentle warmth fall over him

Rose

but finding Rose wasn't easy
cause finding Rose
meant finding Grosse Tête
cause Rose were a married woman, well kept away
like a man who hide all that precious in this world
ain't no question sharing

it was complicated cause a man
a man who make the moon shine in his barn
who distil water strong enough to make you fall
a cypress amongst men
has the sharpest of senses
could smell from a thousand mile
the smallest trickle of blood to a drop
could see the smallest of his Rose's thorns
bleeding Amédé heart

the Village was too caught up in death
in the harvest come in
in the smoke of the snakes
to hear the winds that was coming on
to feel the current that seeing Rose
had sent through Amédé

at the season end
despite the thick winds

despite the new voice that'd started at the ball
the heat that rose each time Amédé rode
through the great woodland waltz
the Village stayed anchored to the measure of time
and ain't nobody worry
cause Amédé and Lejeune was ready to swear
to harvest till death
the Village song from beginning to end

the night of the contracts had arrived
that night in the kitchen, they was gonna sign
the litany of the Village Elders
all that keep this world whole
all that hold flesh to bone
so we know where we is
time had forgot the salt of they voyage, the sea and its winds
dust had buried the strength of they words
and even though all in his heart cried truth
Lejeune was ready to write, to shed on paper
on trunk and branches
all the blood that it take to get married
and Lejeune was ready, was already tied
to Jolie Brune
to her skin sweet as oranges
to her arms, to her belly, to the coffee of her eyes

Lejeune knew how to calm a storm of dancers
had learned from the Elders how to make a song dance straight
learned to make 'em dance without moving they hips or silhouettes
learned to hold the strings soft
like you's riding a young colt

Lejeune body was a field
like his broad shoulders, his torso
his arms, his rippled thighs
had already been battered by the herd
his lips and his brown eyes creased by the setting suns
after seeing the ins and outs
of each cove, each Village song
he played what they fathers took so long to sow
what the Elders had traced with they own hands
haunches of pecan, cane, cotton
what the Elders had reaped
fiddle in hand, song after song
from father to son

the Elders was sitting each they side of the table
bottles and contracts as they workload
waiting on the Notary arrival
looking all polished in they chairs

and with one strike of the bow, they was off
playing the song of family
as if to hem in the herd
the harmony of family, the complicated work
Lejeune and Jolie Brune sitting, anchored on the porch
thigh against thigh, hands furrowed, listening

that same night
in that same night's depth
far from family, alone with his thoughts
Amédé sat in his cabin
lonesome, trying to learn

how to love a married woman
how to make due without papers, under the eyes of Vigilance
how to find a way of loving

Rose

III

Grosse Tête were tall and slim
like a wolf that learned to walk upright
and it were true
his clan was great, he had children everywhere
but you couldn't of told so just by looking
he was made long and smooth like paper
tall and proud, with hands for signing contracts

he like to say that he'd ate the lamb's memory
the memory of his grand-pa, General Mouton
and all his feathers and medals
he like to say that a lamb was made for grazing
that war was for playing dress-up
and that he'd been made for singing

others would of said howling
the young and old that come to his barn, in the night
to hear him talk to the moon
hear the foam rising from his great boiler
in the smoke and the heat
that seen the still's embers crack

he done it all
read it all
took it all
from the four corners of his world
was the only one that could work in writing
and that's why if he
if Grosse Tête wanted to pound fire into iron

and make water from the full moon
and make Rose bleed child after child
that were his prerogative

but it weren't no Justice or no Library
that made Grosse Tête walk with his clan in his footsteps
it weren't no Justice or no Library, no Rose or no Village
that made 'em listen, that made 'em call him Notary
that gave him the right
it was that Grosse Tête could read a book
like the Elders read the levees
knew all the words
like Lejeune knew Jolie Brune's nape, the teeth of desire
Grosse Tête knew the Village
to even its binding
to the spine they shared

Grosse Tête come up to the fiancé's house, the fog on his back
and says:
ah! y'all still playing
Grosse Tête spoke without wanting an answer
folk listened when Grosse Tête cut his eyes
shiny and black

as if to set him off
the Elders dug harder into they fiddles

but Grosse Tête's words was full of wind
each breath fixing to blow the house down
to set pigs and cattle running
Grosse Tête had felt the skirts of the night rising, high

felt the petals closing
seen the levee waters rising
knew that there weren't enough cotton
to keep they gold from sinking
to the bottom of the sea

les Vieux, we gotta change our tune!

and as if to make his point
cause Grosse Tête was Grosse Tête and like making pictures
he start telling the story of Bébé Anderson
who, after digging and scraping throughout his week
all the sweat and misery of this earth
had found all the sun's gold at the bottom of a big black hole

"you know, it was like finding a world
like finding something to make a man
what his shovel dug up
but Bébé were an honest man and run fetch the boss
and the boss, he run fetch Vigilance
cause ain't nobody know what to do
with all the sun's gold

"but peace cost a pretty penny
and Vigilance wanted to keep it all for herownself
order can't be shared, she says
the boss, he was of another mind
thought that if it were Bébé hand that dug it up
it were up to Bébé to claim his due

"with that sunlight in his pocket

the nouveau-riche weeks weren't so sweaty
Bébé could wear his hats and saunter 'round
and just like that, he disappear like the setting sun
gone off to make other Bébés work
to make a country of men!
he said, leaving in the smoke of the train"

Grosse Tête bust out laughing just listening to hisself
but the Elders wasn't impressed
over they fiddles, without dropping a beat
says he been cooped in his barn too long
that he was dreaming in colour with all his ideas of Justice

"ah! you bunch of coonasses
I ain't talking about Justice
I ain't know what just anymore than y'all
all I'm telling you is that money don't die
it just change pockets
and that all your cotton and all your cattle
all the foundations you've built
along with all you think is solid like the anchor of your tune
is blowing away
the water rising
but go on now, play!
I'll keep my nose
in my papers"

the Elders kept playing
not cause they wasn't without fear, or worry
not cause they wanted to hide
but cause they knew better than to believe in liberty

and had not a stitch of desire to leave
not a care for gold
no need to strip they week of its heat or struggle
Grosse Tête was no doubt right
but why worry or stop dancing
when the Village wanted for nothing
well anchored as it was

from the front porch
Lejeune listen to Grosse Tête, the Elders
and as Grosse Tête trailed off
heard the dogs starting to howl
heard a procession of boots and top hats
pierce through the hum of the crickets
Vigilance was making her long circle around the house
despite the strength of the light
shining off the skin of those gathered, clear in the night

when Grosse Tête hear them dogs
he shoot out his chair
thunder through the kitchen onto the porch
and stop the tune cold
he was wary
says he best get home
and with that, left
anxious
fiancés' papers shouldered like a gun
eyes already adjusted to the night's black

morning was coming on fast
and with morning come the Wedding

the key to Jolie Brune's lips
the whole of her body, her belly
their buggy to be filled, the Village hunger to die
all they warmth, they shoulders for to carry
all it take to make the circle dance within the square

IV

that same night
the night the contracts was signed
Amédé heard them dogs howling
felt the winds start to veer
but Rose was only starting to show him
only starting to whisper him the secret path of her garden
the soft hollow of her neck
Rose knew how to play after all
but like a married woman

Amédé felt the weight of his words, the light that they shone
in each story she let him tell
felt a warmth that he'd never known
and it done him good to be there, in the perfume of they dream
he couldn't break away from her
couldn't break away from her body, from her words
from each of her petals
cause in each soft syllable she spoke
Amédé found roots, memories

lying by her side
by all that precious in this world
by all you got to leave
Amédé wanted to stay, wanted to keep dreaming
even though he knew better, knew that Rose couldn't be kept
knew that one night she'd end up leaving
knew that Grosse Tête was lurking, was on his way
even though he knew that Vigilance dogs be hungry

Amédé wanted to stay
felt hisself sinking deeper into the covers
felt in his stomach filling
the hollow of his misery softening

the next morning, the day of the Wedding
Lejeune woke in the barn, alone in the hay
he'd fallen asleep trying to make his horse shine
wanting to make sure that everything was ready to carry
insisting that despite Grosse Tête's winds
money wasn't gonna take his family away

and it's tall and proud that he come up at the Butcher's
at the frolic that'd give the Village something to eat
give it something to dance
the fiancé show up shoulders wide
with all the bronze of his skin
a man like a horse
ready to be made father

but at the Butcher
surrounded by his fathers, facing the beast
children spying through holes in the fence
something touch Lejeune
and he stand right straight
right in the middle of the women and the chicken's prattle
and the men like big fish
he stand right there, froze
in the midst of everything ready to die
as if hissownself was gonna fall into the great washtub
ready for the blood that gonna piss out the pig

as if hissownself was gonna fall into the smoke of the water
ain't it the wolf that supposed to get boiled?

and it all start spinning in Lejeune
it all start spinning so fast that for the first time
Lejeune ain't even know

one cut
the sharp end through the pig's throat
the blade in Lejeune's hand
the beast like a flag run up the tree
its great body cut, north-south
with all its earth to bleed, to fill up the basin
no time to cry
no time to mourn the poor beast
nothing at all of wasted death

the Village left Lejeune alone
standing there, knife in hand
left him alone in his rebirth
under the grey sky thick like ash
hamhocks brought up to the big wooden table
the same table filled with gallops, tunes and quadrilles
and the voices grew thicker and thicker
like bees bumbling higher, in bursts, in the warmth
the fire glowing before the rain
the fire quick and crackin' to wake Lejeune
the husband soon-to-be
dizzied by the circle within the square

the smell of pig skin sizzling woke Lejeune from his spell

as if the whole world was crackling midair
Lejeune awoke, and took hold of the anchor
the Butcher
Lejeune's first death
as if to take his place in the cemetery

Lejeune fell back into the Butcher dance
fell into step with everyone else
Lejeune had learned the pig's cry
a cry no bow could ever sound
he'd felt in his wrists the time of death
the roots of the Village
he couldn't wait to grab his fiddle
to play with his new hands

and the winds rise up
all four at once, from each they side
weaving together like a veil
a song from the dawn of time
the weather vane atop the house
ain't know which way to turn
the men and the women was slicing quick, quick
passing from hand to hand
innards, liver, heart, skin, like water
to kill the Village hunger before the rain

and in the same day's thickness
the slow Butcher's waltz
Amédé was wandering the great wood clearing
cause Rose had left him a gift
that morning

at the edge of the door of his tiny cabin
he found a little black box
a box he'd seen in a shop window
and told Rose about one night
an Accordion
an Accordion all his own

when he come out of his dream
Amédé run straight to the Wedding, winded
trying to cross from one side of the coulee to the other
but he been had
water rising, coulee broke
legs soaked up to they knees
arms wrapped tight around his Accordion
to keep his new lungs dry
Amédé felt the need rise, heard the cry growing louder
the cry of crossing from dry land to water

V

Jolie Brune was coming down the stairs
taking her time
foot by foot
step by step

outside, night had fallen before its time

but ain't nobody notice
cause Jolie Brune was coming down them stairs
elbow by elbow
hips swaying step to step
its Jolie Brune that took the sun
climbed up and picked it like an apple
to cover herself with silver and gold

Lejeune's first life
from the lilacs of his childhood to his promise
everything
from his chest to his beaten heart
everything was waiting in her walking down them stairs
and when Jolie Brune come up to Lejeune
hand in hand, the Village gathered 'round
it was done

they brought Lejeune his fiddle
cause they knew he was ready
ready to play for his wife, Village bow in hand
in his new father's voice
the full measure of time

they say in the moment Lejeune struck his bow
the sky come undone
and the Village ear
in one fell swoop
was filled by the sea
as if the winds was coming from all four sides at once
as if all the strength it take to turn straight
to stay firm in the saddle
was coming on stronger still

the sound had started much earlier
the sky had simmered slow like a kettle
but ain't nobody notice
cause death and hunger don't hear nothing
got they own time, hold they own ears in they hands
the Village was too weighed down by the tune's anchor
by the blood of the Wedding
to notice
but once they was struck by Lejeune's bow
the force of the wind was so strong
it seem like the levees been bleeding they hearts
for years and years

everywhere was the river
everywhere the voice of the sweet, sweet Atchafalaya
the flood of the storm, the full voice of the sea
coming on so loud even Grosse Tête
who'd long felt the water rising
who'd already barricaded the levee
even Grosse Tête knew there ain't nothing to do but to wait
the anchor was drawn

all they could do was wait
for the new time to make itself

Amédé could of told you in that moment
could of sung that he seen a great tear
that he heard the skirts of the sky come undone
piece by piece, stitch by stitch
as if its body had grown too full
too full of life, too full of all that's waiting
as if there weren't no room left in the sky

Amédé could of said
he could of sung
he could of told
but he just stay there in his cabin
stand there feeling Rose's velvet leaving
knowing the dogs was already at his back

and outside, the herd was drowning
four century of hoofs spilling
into the stench of death rising into the haze of a dream
into the water rolling
carrying with it the weight of milk and leather
and all that it take to be fed and clothed

Jolie Brune was running
running with all the strength of a woman, of a mother
with all the warmth of her muscled legs
her thighs, the blood of her white dress, her longing to be gone
Jolie Brune was running to the river like she'd been called
by all the light she got in her to jump and drown

buried in the milk and the leather
and all that it take to be fed and clothed

and in the Elder's cry
in Lejeune's wail
in the eyes of the groom shackled
to watch all that he love in this world jump
and drown in the full current of death
Amédé could of said
could of drawn a word
could of raised a cry of his own
a breath to make they misery dance
but he ain't say nothing
Amédé stand in the middle of the storm listening
both lungs calm and regular
skin and each fibre of his body
listening to the Village heart tearing

the tune's tempo
Lejeune's bow, both was gone
set adrift
bust out of the square that could no longer be circled
that be opened wide
taking on water, emptied of blood, emptied of time
of the measure that had made the Village
dance tall and proud and straight
Amédé felt the Village lose its anchor and fall

and Lejeune
in all his warmth
in all the pride of his full heart, the leather of his skin

standing full in the eye of the storm, of the rain
felt all the weight of time spent
all the dust of they tracks and they furrowed fields
whipping his shoulders
his new hands empty
his fiddle silenced

they says it take the full force of a Village
to lose the tune's bow
but that all that's lost just waits to be found
the Village would come up again
cause even the Atchafalaya
the long and lazy river that had spread
her long legs, her belly soft and warm
even the full force of the Atchafalaya
ain't able to drown the tune

and in all them years of keeping, of growing roots
of losing the voyage
of planting
of seeing what's coming before the others
of waiting its arrival and trying
trying to keep all that can't be kept
to make straight all the roundness of time
even in all of that
ain't nothing to be done about the tide and the salt
ain't nothing to say or to sing 'tween the thighs of the storm
ain't no knives or no dogs
with no teeth strong enough
to tame the skirts of the sky once they been raised
what's best is to let yourself go

midst the worry and the hardship
to let yourself be took
by the full force of the storm
till you loves it

After the storm

I

the storm had lasted
long after the thick winds
and the heavy rains
long after the drowning of Jolie Brune
where each drop like a hammer fell
to make and remake flesh, all the earth's softness
to spread bags of sand like a newfound beach
and lay bare all that was left
shingles, walls, foundations, shards of the tune
all of they house's dirt
naked to the light of day

so they start rebuilding
as if time ain't shift
as if staying anchored when the ship already sunk
mean you can keep on living like nothing change
like the wind just the price you pay
for living by the sea

but the sea and the salt had dredged up the voyage, they need to move
and everywhere they was leaving, arriving, everywhere rebuilding
the wind had wrecked and scattered yet drawn everything closer
everything wanted to come together
words to songs
songs to words
and ain't nothing left to stop 'em
the wind had shred the circle to tatters
ain't no frolics at the house no more
to find warmth now you got to listen

ear pressed tight against the electric black grill cloth

all's left to do is find your feet, your hands and start crawling
the tune's anchor had been drawn
the Village square broke
Vigilance come out of the dark
and start prowling in broad daylight
to put what was lost back in its place
to make sure they freedom was well aligned

cause everywhere there was new roads
ain't no use standing still
only thing left in the Village was one long road
a road leading off to fortune, to black gold
to oil horses tall and proud, raising light
to new wells, to they new family
an iron road running to carry a family of men
to the great Texas Triangle

Lejeune had long stood there watching the new time make itself
he tried scrubbing, scrapping
tried finding his fiddle's bow
but he was too caught up in wishing
wishing Jolie Brune would come back
in muscles, legs, thighs
wishing for the anchor, to find the tune
wishing for the Village that was

and its by wishing that the bronze of his skin slowly start to fade
his skin drain like a parched field
his heart like a knot

Lejeune couldn't even cry
couldn't shed no tear
cause crying might unravel all his misery
the knot he held in his heart
the only thing he got left
the knot was the only thing he'd been able to keep
in all that was scattered and lost
it was the only thing he could touch, feel, tie
since the Village song had lost its anchor

what Amédé made rise that first night had started
the winds of the sea woke his Accordion lungs
and now Amédé undid and redid the tune without fear
let his voice rise up and howl all the misery of his cry
let himself get drunk on Rose's perfume
and each time she come up to the Hall to dance
Amédé play loud and louder still just looking at her
he play the pearls off them buttons
following her shoulders, the cove of her feet
the furrows she trace with the fiddle of her hips swaying
with his Accordion lungs full
Amédé was moving now
patient, with all the strength of his body like an oak
he whipped bare feet to beat out a new rhythm, a new time
making sure he hike up the skirts of the sky real high

but its by howling
by making the sea and the winds sing
that Amédé and his Accordion took the Hall
as if the water wasn't finished rising

Lejeune almost couldn't hear himself play no more
Amédé could well try spurring him on
Lejeune couldn't make his fiddle play
Lejeune ain't know how to steer the waters of misery

at the Hall
cause it's at the Hall now that folks come to dance
Amédé made his Accordion howl
over all the sweat of those that'd stayed
of those passing through
of those there to help find the dead, they treasures
to make them dance again
Amédé made his Accordion howl
with each chamber of his beloved lung
it was Amédé's turn now to call Lejeune up to play

Grosse Tête had stayed
had even gone as far as to buy his seat at the Hall
just so he could watch
so he could keep his darling
his Rose
but watching ain't stop him from preaching
and in all that, one night
Lejeune hear Grosse Tête's voice rise up
it is through exodus that a country is born!
and he was surely right
Lejeune tell himself maybe there ain't nothing left but to leave with the others
the others that slept in new sheets
the others that was leaving for the great Texas Triangle
to find sugar and warmth

folks left in the night
and Lejeune went off with the sun setting
trying to be brave

but he'd never left nothing in his life
never thought that all the warmth
all the leather of his skin, of his shoulders
all the tune of his fiddle would go
that he'd leave alone
no Village, no Jolie Brune
a poor hobo in the night

this time the Stranger
Lejeune hop into the belly of the train
and in the cattle stench of the wagon
recognize the motor's slow tempo
thumping iron on iron, again and again
and Lejeune sat there listening, wondering if it'd ever stop
the race for Jolie Brune
the end

and it was all moving in him, galloping
but there weren't no seasons in the train's belly
weren't no dew on his shirt
on the cotton of his skin, weren't no trees or no rivers

everything was galloping, galloping
like the train's coal got some gold in it
and as the train went on
Lejeune felt his fiddle slowly find his hands
the thin glimmer of light coming through the cracked door

the wind from a new land, made the lines outside jump
as if the voyage ain't have enough endings
or maybe too many

the warmth in his hands woke Lejeune from his spell
felt for the first time since the storm
his eyes open
his senses sharpen
in his awakening, in his body that was reclaiming its place
felt he wasn't alone in that wagon
surprised and heartened to see another body there with him
another body well hid in the opposite corner

it was Amédé

big arms wrapped around his Accordion
body of oak proud
moulded to the wagon floor
as if there was some warmth in they leaving

II

Amédé had gone
had hopped into the belly of the train
cause the night before
Grosse Tête had started smelling blood
had started hearing Amédé
in his wife's voice
and in Amédé's voice
Grosse Tête felt Rose's needles
and Grosse Tête ain't like it
ain't like it one bit

and even if Grosse Tête ain't say a word
ain't even pull out his knife
Amédé knew better than to stay
knew if he stay it was Rose what gonna get strangled
and that in the hands of a cross-eyed man
needles, blood and vanes
just get things hotter

I'm gone to Texas
he says at the end of the night
gone to see a girl about some sugar
and Grosse Tête fingers find a bit of they colour
around his bottle, cast off they moorings
and find they calm
but Amédé had seen the clan of his eyes
the wolf of his teeth
and knew that Grosse Tête ain't done prowling

in Texas
galloping the triangle, the industry of paved roads
in all that was rolling and wanted to roll
in the dust that shone, that crackled electric
Amédé and Lejeune was far away
as far away as the memory of a woman can take you
far as if the thick winds had carried them
to another time
to Texas
as if being American ain't enough

for weeks, months, maybe even a year
they lost track
lost track of the days of the week by playing
each night a dance, each night a ball
each night a new Hall, the fiddle and the accordion
Lejeune and Amédé made they way around the great Texas Triangle
playing what was left of the tune's square

but in the triangle
the furrows and the Village coves ain't make 'em dance no more
in Texas, the Village square had been traded
the music no longer come out of the ground
out of the sweat of they week's work
the music come out of electricity
out of everywhere all at once
switched on night and day

as if the four corners of the earth
as if the whole world had been bought and packaged
they job now was to make 'em dance

no more field to work
no more cattle to calm
Lejeune and Amédé played for the Hall now
in the smoke and the electric current
the Hall like the belly of the train

and in the Hall like in the belly of the train
weeks, even years passed
Amédé and Lejeune played through all that
without picking sides
a stitch of the square
a stitch of the triangle
and after all them years together
it was more than friendship
it was playing without saying a word
it was leaving girl after girl without having to explain
it was only agreeing to never forget
all that they couldn't love no more
they was like family now
Lejeune and Amédé

but it was stronger than both of 'em
already they was coming apart

Lejeune was fascinated
the new sound that they played, that they sold at the Hall
made the fiddle shine, made the fiddle play loud
louder than all the guitars, drums
the voices that could accompany him
louder that an Accordion and an Amédé
in a microphone, the bow could jump and fly like hummingbird

none of his playing was lost
the sound of the fiddle fill up the Hall like honey

Amédé felt Lejeune drifting
felt his bow working up, wanting to leave
felt Lejeune looking, wanting to ramble like the others
in flashy suits, polished cars
and Amédé knew that his thick arms weren't no shelter

but Amédé ain't want to tune himself either
couldn't change what'd started in the Village
couldn't force the pearls of his buttons
to dress up and play straight
Amédé felt roots and branched growing
couldn't imagine leaving Rose's thorns
to roll in they shiny chromed beasts

one night in Orange
in the great Texas triangle
in the depths of the night
Jolie Blonde walk into the Hall like it's Christmas
her body long, her legs like gold
Jolie Blonde walk in like a starry sky
and sit down
straight and true
the flesh of her long legs crossed
her neck and her nape like a sweet cup of tea
but Jolie Blonde wanted to ramble
she ain't want to dance to Amédé's Accordion
Jolie Blonde wanted that sugar
wanted all of the fiddle's honey

she come back
one night, two nights, three nights
but she always stay in her seat
Lejeune wanted to see her dance
Lejeune wanted to see her light shimmer
wanted to see her so bad it make him hurt just playing

she come back
one week, two weeks, three weeks
till one night Lejeune's bow pick up
let his bow run, adrift
his bronze body took on a little more of her light
the worn leather of his skin start shining
took back its musk and Lejeune were cut loose

and Amédé knew there weren't nothing to be done
let him run and jump to the tune of his fantasy
in all the light Lejeune thought he was seeing
in all his urge to see Jolie Blonde dance
Amédé could well try giving him more room in the tune
try and make him stay
but one fine evening in Orange, Texas
Lejeune got up
full in the middle of a tune
and leave Amédé
with all that light in his arms

and that same night, in a dark room of the Hall
Lejeune made Jolie Blonde's skin crack
made all the warmth of her body drip

he climb all the way up her legs
up to Jolie Blonde's porcelain

in the tunnel of that night
they two bodies was to roll and shine
to leave once and for all the winds and salt
and Lejeune was too starved to hear the storm
too drunk on light to see in the broken bottles
the dirty water rising at his feet

III

Lejeune was off
his bow a fountain
a whirlpool of black gold
and by pushing and pulling his fiddle's sugar
and whipping Texas with its swing
his bow start slipping
start spilling one voice into the other
till he made a new one
a new syrup, a sweet syrup
his bow like a sugar cane, tall
under the star of Jolie Blonde
and 'tween Texas thighs, Lejeune was satisfied
Lejeune wanted to stay
cause it sounded
sounded loud and from all around
bells of metal, of gold, fresh cattle
rambling everywhere
in new paved fields with radios spinning
the sunny sound of good times, yee-haw!

Lejeune was so well married to the bronze of his skin
saw so clearly all that playing with Amédé had muddied
that when a rancher from Cow Town come up and ask him
to brand the tunes the rancher wanted to sing, fiddle in hand
Lejeune said yes
he'd seen the thickness of the notes
the rancher had stock to move
and with that
Lejeune hopped once and for all

into the saddle of swing

the sweet electric currant
had made his Accordion the lung of another time
but even after a whole year spent alone
Amédé ain't stop playing

the radio was like an accordion
a small black box that talk, that tell the tune of time
but the time of industry was full of oil
and wanted to make everything roll
wanted to make everything move in chorus
in the full light of electricity
tunes were caught, named
the new ranchers with they branding irons mark each one
with numbers and pieces to buy and sell the bodies dancing

Amédé knew that to make the triangle dance
he got to change
got to hop on like Lejeune
hop into the current, into the light of the new time
but Amédé had started to feel the earth
in each city of the golden triangle, wandered satisfied
played alone now, outside, till dawn
felt his voice fall, and at the same time
new songs rise
in hips, bodies of sweat
the eyes of his memory praying in the dark
in the full earth of the night

and by drilling and pushing into the words

into the sand of time
Amédé felt the gaping hole in his life fill

a night like any other, Amédé was playing
great body by his lonesome, head in the clouds
in Rose's petals
Amédé was playing when a long silhouette
listening close by, come up to him

imagining Grosse Tête had finally understood
Amédé stop

in his heart, in his head
Amédé was ready to be done moving
done trying to find a place big enough for loving Rose
he stop, almost glad
but he ain't know the face in front of him
the hand of the Stranger, shy
despite his size and his beautiful baritone, his polished shoes
his words ain't stop shaking

the Stranger was called Savoie
said he been pulled from the North by winds saying
that in the South, people was still playing with four-chambered lungs
lungs filled with water, lungs from another time
Savoie had travelled all that way just to find him, Amédé
cause Savoie wanted to etch the great book into wax
the book he said Amédé was singing
Savoie had come to tell Amédé he could write
write down the full lung of the cry

it was odd for Amédé, hearing him talk
hearing him say what he'd only thought
in Savoie's journey, a Stranger, Amédé understand
that what he been looking for his whole life
that what he been feeling his whole life
like some emptiness
maybe all of it was in him
the Village, the Book, the cypress, body and family
all of it was in him

Amédé stand

and that same night
Grosse Tête come up to the Hall
no warning, no surprise
like he belong everywhere
Grosse Tête was raving that night
lit smoke after smoke
falling into an avalanche of words
talking like he drunk the barrel

he'd lost Rose
lost her in plain sight

Grosse Tête was shook
was there to find a scent, a thought of his wife
his wife

"Elders say that little box steal your soul
but memory don't die, do it, Amédé?
photos don't die, don't they, Amédé?"

but Amédé knew better than to talk to Grosse Tête
when he got a girl on his lap

Grosse Tête's news come to him like a sign
and with Savoie sitting at his sides saying
swearing the wind's rumours had led him to find Amédé
that ain't nobody could sound Amédé's cry no more
that his cry made memories of the voyage rise
Amédé knew he ain't got no choice
understood that if Rose had dared leave Grosse Tête
dared set sail
ain't nothing left but to follow her

not that he thought he'd find her
Amédé knew better than that
no, Amédé went up North to write
to trace, to furrow what he'd found in the Village
what he'd dredged up from the tune
all the misery that come from loving a woman
from finding family

Amédé ask to be alone to record
wanted to be alone to write
alone with his soul
Savoie and the others couldn't see it
but Amédé already felt accompanied
in each note, in each beat
there was other accordions
other lungs blowing, pushing, pulling
he hear 'em far off, like they was rising from another time

a new round, new dances starting

Amédé played and cried the full lung
and the needle was writing
in furrows, in the wax
in the ear of another time

and after many weeks at Savoie's
Amédé was farther still
by recording song after song
he'd covered deserts, burning sands
his mouth full of needles to make the sea bleed
or to drown the whale
till he no longer knew if he coming or going
by travelling over crossed iron roads, playing in four four
Amédé wasn't playing to make 'em dance
Amédé was playing the way we move to find ourselves
Amédé was playing the heart of time

IV

there was something heavy in the air
they was coming back from all four directions at once
coming back despite the years that'd passed
despite the grass that'd grown
even if everything had changed
they was coming back
pulled by forces they couldn't name

Lejeune had realized
that in all them years spent branding tune after tune
spent playing and playing the open roads
cruising from one ride to the next
Lejeune ain't find a sense of direction
ain't find a way to quench the thirst that'd started with Amédé
the thirst that'd started that first night
that rose with the cry, that'd hiked up skirts
the long skirts of the sky

without the tune's anchor to hold him
Lejeune had wandered, and by rambling
had learned how to make a Hall dance
his fiddle sang steady, was sought from all over
but he ain't know where to go
he'd spun around the triangle so many times
he felt like he ain't even move
that's how it was in the Hall
time don't exist, Lejeune played and played
but he ain't see nothing grow

and after all them years
his arm, his bow couldn't give no more
his arm and his heart was out of tune
and even if the dancers wouldn't let him go
even if electricity had woke him up
Lejeune felt all that Texas gold
Jolie Blonde
starting to disappear

in the weeks before Mardi Gras
they was rummaging through the sugar and cream
to find the kingdom of cake
all over Ville Platte
gold was passing from one mouth to the next
rotting the teeth of crackpots and thinkers alike
in one long road, in one straight line
was making the poor man king
and making they week dance

the Elders ain't leave
they'd talked and talked themselves into staying
telling, listening to everything that'd gone
everything trying to make itself
the Elders was mostly barbers now
kings on they black leather thrones
on they checkered floors
singing a new version of the tune
playing the story of the Village reformed
what was left of its insides laid bare
at they shops
every client that passed under the Elder's blades

spilled treasures from they throats
like they lives was in danger

the Elders had traded they bows for straight razors
had learnt that ‘tween the melody and the words
‘tween the Hall and the church
in the middle of Ville Platte’s long road
the long road that promise from North to South
they learn that in the middle of the compass
it’s the throat that holds back the wind

and it take a skilled hand
to shave a storm’s skin

in the weeks before Mardi Gras
things was getting hotter and hotter
they heard tell that Amédé was gonna show
that after all them years
Amédé and Lejeune was gonna show and pick up
everything they’d left behind

at the shop
of all the stories the Elders told
they richest tune
was the story of the two lost brothers
that find each other like two opposites that ain’t even know
they share the same mother
and that that’s family
a great mystery
and that maybe it weren’t no luck
that maybe it weren’t no chance but rather destiny itself

that made Lejeune and Amédé
arrive at Ville Platte on the very same day
as if the strength of the heat they shared
couldn't help but draw the wind from the sea
and hike up the skirts of the sky for Mardi Gras

and the Elders was laying it on thick
dancing in they chairs

cause anything possible during Mardi Gras
everything start to move
as if to make the woodland dance
the graveyard of the winds

Amédé come up to the shop
he been told to turn up at the crack of dawn
ready to play
and he were ready, full
full of all life made of

Amédé come up
gently open the heavy door
make the little bell ring against the glass
and he seen each head turn and look at him in slow motion

Lejeune was already there with Jolie Blonde, sitting
he'd arrived earlier that morning, eager
feeling that with Amédé, he could surely find hisself
feeling that Amédé know where to go

but when he seen great, big Amédé arrive

seen the trunk of his body
of his legs even trunkier, heavier
as if nothing separate him from the ground
Lejeune ain't even stand, ain't even think about moving
he was froze
Lejeune tell himself that in all them years spent in Texas
he ain't ever seen or felt nothing richer
that there ain't ever been a richer sound
that no song he'd even branded was as golden
or as soft as the warmth of Amédé's baritone

and as if nothing change since he left
as if the shop was a long field of cotton
as if the other men's heads was floating
like white clouds, rooted dreams
as if they sacks was still to be filled
Lejeune felt a weight fall through to his stomach
felt the early, early morning rising
Lejeune felt that he'd found something
that the Blonde beside him weren't Brune
weren't Brune like the voice that was rising
like the knot in his throat that he'd kept
that pushed
that he felt
that wanted to come undone
that wanted to sing

the Elders knew better than to talk
than to try to cut and put words to the magic
they pulled from drawers flask after flask
filled with water from the fullest moon

took out they fiddles and accordions
shut the blinds
and locked the door

they was setting sail

and then the two brothers start playing

playing the full strength of the sea, the sand and the dust
playing the story of the currents
the wave like the belly of the sea
like the death of the sea, the body took by the sea
the shell, the rocks, the memory
like the ship, like the wreck that remakes the shore
all the sea's misery
all its strength
till you can't leave her
till you can't go
till feeling its ebb and flow
like it ain't ever been broke
ain't no levee for the sea
ain't no wall or no stake
ain't no blade or no paper that can silence the wind
or the sea's cry

and Amédé couldn't help it
was so happy to find hisself there, full in the middle
to navigate the open sea
in the full sail of his Accordion lung
Amédé close his eyes and let hisself go
front of the Vigilance he knew was watching

front of Jolie Blonde getting ready to report, late in the night
to prepare her vengeance in Grosse Tête's still
front of all that
Amédé drew the tune's anchor, his heart full

Rose!

V

and that's how
that night
the Village in the City
City in the heart of man
the race come to an end
the chickens was caught and plucked, boiled and ate
and the whole world arrive

in the night, in the Hall
another Saturday night
'tween the doors of the week
'tween locked doors, rusted padlocks
there was a force like the tides, like the beginning
when it all begun
before even knowing the Village
like the first time Lejeune had lain
in his fiddle's sail
like the first time Amédé had heard
in his grand-mère voice, a heart beating
that night, it sounded louder
louder

Amédé stayed seated for the first set
listening to the sound of Lejeune and the ramblers make its way to him
across to the furthest table in the furthest corner, to his Accordion
without whipping the floor, without even breaking a pinkie's sweat
Amédé listen to Lejeune making his fiddle sing
without moving
Amédé was so taken by the show

that he'd emptied the bottle
was perfectly cut by the end of the set

Amédé were so drunk
when he finally start his slow march
his march toward the stage to play
each one of his steps feel like they was charged with electricity
like the fog that was clearing
he'd of sworn
sworn on his grand-mère life
sworn on Rose's petals
that the deadwood of the floor was green and long
that spring had sprung
that the musk of the dance surrounding his starry body
was buzzing
that somewhere in the cloud of men and women
there was some honey coming on

and that's how he opened the mouth
slow at first, a little gummed up
Lejeune knew better than to start
Amédé set himself up right in the middle
'tween the two fiddles

and as if to announce the horizon
Amédé let out a cry
a cry warm, thick
a gentle cry
the full voice of misery like the ring of a tree
the voice of the mighty cypress
the mighty cypress of the Atchafalaya

after so many years spent swimming, rooted
after so many years spent dancing
moving, hiking
the skirts of the sky
Amédé had arrived

and in his cry
a warmth rise up
all the Hall's sugar burning
the flesh of the skin of the dancers uncovered
Amédé's voice like ants in they legs, knees
the bones of waiting, everything
to the last crescent moon of his mouth
everything was crying to move

Amédé had arrived
Amédé had found the Book

the tune of family!

and Amédé knew it this time
the first tune he'd learnt at the Village
Lejeune was there
with all that it take to wait
with all the patience that it take to listen
when you wants to leave

Lejeune join in with Amédé
fiddle at his heart
the mast of his bow raised

full sail
to leave
to cast off
to play the last voyage together

a port can be a long
long, long night
and the tune
a last life

walking home that night
Amédé couldn't see straight
couldn't see the different 'tween light and day
Amédé was so full, so full of everything life made of
felt so strongly the thickness of his body
each furrow he'd traced spinning inside him
that he knew he had nothing left to want
nothing left to search or find
that he'd written what his grand-mère had told
that all those years, he'd searched
with the Book in his belly

he knew his time had come
seen from the stage Jolie Blonde and Grosse Tête put they heads together
seen in they eyes and in they leaving before the others
that they'd be waiting for him
but that weren't important no more
all that had been settled
all that's left is to go home
and that's why
on his way back

when he feel the car rattle behind him
feel the burning lights of the car hit him
he close his eyes

that's why
when he feel the car's warm metal
Amédé let his great body fall
in all its strength
in all the earth of his cry
Amédé fall
under the weight of the wheels
once, twice, three times, four times
the wheel through his body
as if to mark the winds

Amédé was home

Lejeune had stayed at the Hall till morning
Amédé's last cry had stuck
had held so fast to each fibre of Lejeune
that he lost any need for Jolie Blonde
Lejeune ain't even notice
that she'd left with Grosse Tête
Amédé's last cry was still too loud in his heart
for him to even notice

Lejeune felt alive
as if he'd been replanted into the earth
as if every piece of the radio, every piece of the swing
had been passed on to other hands
Lejeune's hands was free now

free to touch the bottom of the river
to touch the water of Jolie Brune's lips
the shoulder of her heart, the hip of her smile
Lejeune felt the knot inside sliding
the Village he'd kept so perfectly tied
he felt alive

nearing the crossroads, on his way back
Lejeune seen him like a tree, like time fallen
Lejeune stop
everything in him spinning
everything in him saying it wasn't true
his friend's body, dead, before him

and the knot come undone

on his knees front of Amédé
on the way back
Lejeune start to cry

Lejeune couldn't tell no more
when he start or stop crying
the time, the place, the details of how Amédé
had left, had opened the front door
and whole years passed without saying a word

but one fine day at Ville Platte
a giant, a thick bodied man
a body gentle as a tree
walked, wandered
trying to understand his path

and that fine day
the man, the musician
find himself walking front of Lejeune's place
Lejeune who always kept his door and his windows open now

and from Lejeune's house, the man hear
a cry, a cry like his tears, a cry like his hurt
a cry that filled the belly he'd sobbed dry
the cry call to him like family lost
from the house, from the record Lejeune was playing
the Book Amédé had traced

he come in and find Lejeune
and they passed the day, the night, weeks playing, writing
till they felt well planted, rooted
till they heard the great cypress sing
till they felt the circled furrows, the sea of the long salt plain

nothing had been lost

the Village was whole once again

4 Conclusion

This thesis served as a case study on the translation of sociolectal literature, using my translation into English of Acadian author Georgette LeBlanc's second collection of poetry, *Amédé,* as a paradigm. Broadly speaking, the objective of my analysis was to explore the relationship between the literary representation of sociolect and the creation of underlying networks of meaning, focusing on both the linguistic and discursive aspects of the author's choices in her portrayal of BSMAF in order to justify my translation of her work into Africadian English.

By focusing on the formal linguistic aspects of LeBlanc's portrayal of vernacular in the first section, my goal was to attribute a literary function to her idiosyncratic use of sociolect in hopes of better understanding how this function could be reconstructed in the context of an English translation. A further goal was to show, through a microtextual analysis of the source text, how the author's choices in her representation of vernacular helped determine the ideological orientation of the source text; a work that I argue can be interpreted as a metadiscursive comment on the literary acceptability of non-standard forms of speech within the francophone literary canon. Further, after having properly analysed the author's textual choices and considered their discursive weight, my goal was to pinpoint strategies that could be exploited in transferring the underlying, contextual networks of meaning inherent to minority language literature, and LeBlanc's *Amédé* more specifically.

Further in this first section, I discussed the relevance of Tymoczko's theories on metonymic translation in hopes of establishing a methodology to be employed in reconstructing the functional aspects of LeBlanc's literary sociolect in another language.

In her much cited article*, Metametonymics,* Tymoczko's conceptualizes translation not as a metaphoric process of substitution (hidebound by notions such as equivalence), but rather as a metonymic process of reconstruction. This concept of metonymic translation was particularly useful in the case at hand, seeing as methodologies predicated on the traditional notion of equivalence are often insufficient in explaining the constellation of historical, geographic, sociolinguistic, cultural and symbolic considerations that come into play during the translation of sociolectal literature.

In the second section, I established historical, linguistic, and sociological parallels between the Acadian and Africadian communities of Nova Scotia, two groups whose geographical isolation and traditional marginalisation by the dominant culture have led them to retain a great deal of non-standard linguistic features. In this section, I further expounded on the properties common to both the Acadian and Africadian language cultures using as a framework aspects of the three indicators for linguistic variation presented in Buzelin – diatopic (regional), diastratic (social) and diaphasic (situational) variation –, the whole serving as a justification for my translation of LeBlanc's work from Acadian into Africadian. By comparing and contrasting both language cultures in the light of these indicators, the goal was to understand the constellation of properties shared between both language cultures, and the ways in which they can contribute to rendering the metadiscursive function of LeBlanc's oeuvre by replicating, to the greatest extent possible, the myriad underlying contextual factors that help impart to the author's use of sociolect its literary function. Further, I believe that reproducing this methodology in the context of other literary translations could be incredibly interesting not only for Acadian literature, but for regional and minority language literatures in general.

I hope this thesis has played a small role in continuing the discussion around the translation of sociolectal literature and its place within international literary system.

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Appendix

Examples of Africadian English in my translation of *Amédé*

Unmarked preterit

and from the bottom of the hold, **it come**
a sound like rain
fine
like dust from far away
our ears deep in the sea shell
a beginning
a warmth
a weight
like damp sand 'tween our toes
and **we was** no longer under a roof
we was behind the curtains (p. 56)

Zero copula / Contracted copula

the new land was like sugar
potatoes come out golden sweet
even the tired mosquitoes fly stuck together **when it hot**
so hot that you no longer know
if **you's** walking or swimming
everything start to love (p. 62)

Negative concord

Amédé was left alone to walk the inky black of his memory some even try tying his roots to the Village
finding family **where there weren't none**
but Amédé **ain't find nothing**
not a dream, not a memory (p.68)

Use of ain't

but the Village learn
well anchored in the new time
that it **ain't** got to sing to make folks dance
that without words, they won more time for the waltz
(p. 63)

Uninflected verbs for number and person (in this cas, 3rd person singular)

the Village was celebrating

the fiancés
Lejeune and Jolie Brune the fiddle and the bow as if it by fate
that a man **find** his heart
when he **start** a family (p.64)

Unmarked possessive

to better hear the fiddle strings ring
Lejeune felt a bit taller
felt the full weight of the **Village anchor**
the perfect circle within the square (p. 69)

They vs. Their / Theyselves vs. Themselves:

the Elders had traded **they** bows for straight razors had learnt that 'tween the
melody and the words 'tween the Hall and the church (p. 113)

and one by one, the ships anchored
on plains like sandy shores
and too tired to move
young and old lay **theyselves** down, spent (p. 61)

Use of personal pronoun "them" instead of definite article "those" or "these"

under **them** pines
Amédé sat listening
tuned his fiddle to the sound of his hunger
to the sound of the Village gathered (p. 70)

Africadian lexicon

Grosse Tête spoke without wanting an answer
folk listened when Grosse Tête **cut his eyes**[15]
shiny and black (p. 76)

and as if to make his point
cause Grosse Tête was Grosse Tête and **like making pictures**[16]
he start telling the story of Bébé Anderson (p. 77)

a presence
the tread of two-legged beasts
the voices of **cross-eyed**[17] men (p. 57)

[15] To cut one's eyes: To cast a quick, mean look (Clarke 1999:140).
[16] Making pictures: Telling stories; making someone believe something that isn't true (Clarke 1999:141).
[17] Cross-eyed: Angry. (Clarke 1999:140).