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Marylene Pilon

Special thanks to our professors for their work towards producing this volume /
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Welcome / Bienvenue

How wonderful that we are celebrating the publication of volume 6 of *Confetti*! Encore une fois, le journal reflète l'ampleur et la richesse de notre programme de maîtrise en littératures et cultures du monde, ainsi que l'étonnante curiosité et capacité intellectuelle de ses étudiantes et étudiants. The themes of the contributions to the volume–postcolonial searches for identity, and the struggle with historical traumas–demonstrate how important the critical scholarly examination of cultural representations is and remains in our times. Je tiens à féliciter la rédactrice en chef et tous les contributeurs pour cette merveilleuse réalisation.

Joerg Esleben,
Directeur du département / Department Chair

It is my honour and great pleasure as program director to write a few introductory remarks to this exciting sixth volume of *Confetti*. Le journal est le résultat du dévouement des étudiants de la Maîtrise en littératures et cultures du monde (the Master of Arts in World Literatures and Cultures), un programme unique au Canada : bilingue, interdisciplinaire et dynamique. The issue showcases their research and explorations by bringing together works that encompass critical approaches and methodologies to analyze a variety of cultural expressions from around the world.

Ce volume comporte deux sections qui illustrent remarquablement l'étendue des thèmes abordés dans le cadre de nos séminaires de l'année académique 2019-20 : *Intercultural Identity and Literature in the Periphery of World Literature / Identité interculturelle et littérature dans la péripherie de la littérature mondiale* and *Postwar, Postcolonial and Collective Trauma / Traumatisme d'après-guerre, postcolonial et collectif*.

The first section, *Identity and Literature in the Periphery*, consists of three articles. In "World Literature and Periphery: A Distant Reading of Milton Hatoum's *The Brothers*," Erika Jurdi, through an analysis of a Brazilian novel and its limited circulation in central countries, reflects critically on the place of peripheral literatures in academic discussions of world literature. Dans "Identity Metamorphosis in Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*," Elena Rahman étudie la représentation littéraire des défis de l'intégration culturelle des immigrants au Québec. In "The Dichotomy of Puerto Rico: A Comparison of Rosario Ferré's *Maldito amor* and her Self-translation *Sweet Diamond Dust*," Abigail Roche explores an authorial practice in translation, and relates it to issues of cultural identity in Puerto Rico's colonial and neocolonial history.

Dans la deuxième section, *Traumatisme d'après-guerre, postcolonial et collectif*, on trouve également trois articles. Gisèle Nyembwe, in "Esma's and Sara's Resilience in *Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams*," applies the concept of resilience to the study of the cinematic treatment of the traumatic experiences of women and children during the Bosnian war. In "Colonial Trauma in Canada: Ethnostress, Public Stress and Political Stress among Indigenous Peoples," Marylene Pilon applies concepts of social stress in her study of discourse surrounding Indigenous communities in Canada, and its harmful impact on reconciliation prospects. Zixuan Zhao, dans "Individual and Collective Trauma in *Cartouches Gauloises*," étudie la représentation cinématographique de la Guerre d'Algérie et la question du traumatisme historique dans les communautés de Pieds-Noirs (les Français originaires d'Algérie) et les Harkis (les Algériens musulmans qui combattirent aux cotés de l'armée française).

En somme, on trouve ici une collection riche et variée d'articles académiques sur des expressions culturelles de plusieurs coins du monde. In the name of the professors who have taught and supervised these creative and dedicated students, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the editor, Marylene Pilon, and the contributors.

Jorge Carlos Guerrero,
Directeur, Maîtrise en arts en littératures et cultures du monde /
Director, Master of Arts in World Literatures and Cultures

Intercultural Identity and the Periphery of World Literature / Identité interculturelle et la périphérie de la littérature mondiale

World Literature and Periphery:

A Distant Reading of Milton Hatoum's *The Brothers*

Erika Jurdi

Abstract

This essay uses the novel The Brothers*, by Brazilian writer Milton Hatoum, as an example of how literature from periphery countries can be read as world literature by readers of core countries or of cultural centres, based on the theoretical framework of the world system theory, by Wallerstein. which divides the world in a industrialized capitalist core, and dependent periphery and semi-periphery countries. By using the model of Moretti's world literary system to exemplify how some literary production is being left out of the academic conversation on world literature, I propose a distant reading of Hatoum's novel to show that there is nothing intrinsically alien or completely "regional" to the text which would justify its exclusion from the category of world literature. The text does not diminish its cultural and social background to conform to a Eurocentric view of the world, instead it invites us to reflect critically on cultural hegemony, born of imperial colonization, that tends to relegate works from peripheral areas to circulation at the margins of the Western world.*

Introduction

My goal is to study how works of literature that don't focus on the Global North[1] can pass the initial prejudice of readers and scholars, and be read as world literature. I will use as the book *The Brothers* as case study. Penned by Milton Hatoum, it was published for the first time in Brazil in the year 2000, and has since been translated in various languages, adapted to different media (including a play, a graphic novel, and a Televised miniseries), and received several awards. The book takes place in the 20th century and depicts contact between and the blend of cultures, focusing on a Lebanese family in the northern capital of Manaus. By understanding the ways a novel such as this one operates in the wider world, I hope to help refocus scholarly considerations for world literature production. Academic discussion should shift away from historically colonial centres and towards marginalized peripheral urban centers, in a more inclusive and post-colonial perspective.

Theories

[1] The division Global North/Global South is generally used as a way to refer to most developed countries as "the north" (G8 countries, European countries, Australia and New Zealand) and less developed countries as "the south" (Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and southern Asia).

For this study, I will base my argument on theorists of world literature like David Damrosch, Franco Moretti and Ieda Magri. By studying Milton Hatoum in the context of world literary systems, I will criticize the subaltern position of his works and question their categorization as regional literature in the Global North, as well as use the concept of 'distant reading' to examine how the book's themes and messages are global in scope and speak to universal concerns shared by humanity.

Damrosch proposes world literature not as a canon of works, but a way of reading. His proposed 'threefold definition' which focuses on "the world, the text, and the reader" (201) is useful when we attempt to determine what is considered world literature. Damrosch ascribes three characteristics to the concept: "1. World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures; 2. World literature is writing that gains in translation; 3. World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time" (201). His proposed approach to readership is characterized by literature that can be translated to other languages, read by other cultures, and used as a tool of reflection for the reader's own settings. Hiddelston contends that a text can be considered world literature even before it is read, in its conception: "a text is 'enmeshed' in the world not because it circulates after completion but because it comes to life through dialogues it maintains with the place of its creation—with the broader, multiple cultural histories that its language draws on or taps into; and with itself" (1388). Both definitions of world literature can be applied to the *The Brothers*, as a text that dialogues with different cultures and spaces and as a book that has traveled through translation. It is a transnational novel, European in format, depicting

Lebanese and Indigenous Brazilian characters in a colonized Brazilian setting.

Moretti provides two concepts applicable to my analysis of Hatoum's novel: the world literary system and distant reading. The concept of world literary system borrows from economic theory to describe a model of cultural production focused on centres and peripheries, where the centres tend to produce cultural works that will be consumed by the peripheries. In this framework, the centres of production for literature would be the English and French languages in Europe and North America. It is not a coincidence that these are among the most recent imperial colonial powers in history. Anything created in the peripheries would have to be presented in the dominant languages. To prove its value periphery literature must measure itself in relation to the centre. The Warwick Research Collective proposes world literature as "the literature of the modern capitalist system" (8), a system built on inequality and unity—or "one and unequal" (Moretti 46), in an attempt to sell European modernity as a model for hegemony to be achieved. Distant reading is the model of study that is an alternative to close reading. While close reading is widely used in comparative studies, distant reading is better suited to world literature studies, especially literature in translation. This model will be particularly useful in this analysis, as it allows us to show the themes and tropes in the narrative and how they relate to a global culture (Moretti 48-9).

Magri questions distant reading in relation to the global study of literature produced in Latin America. In the current scenario, Latin American is a source of case studies for North America but not a "legitimate place of enunciation" (6). English as a language of cultural and

economic hegemony has excluded or restricted languages of the Global South as objects of study, and not active creators of culture (5). This hegemony has created the white European (or North American) man as the common denominator, or measuring rod, for all literature, which restricts peripheral works to the nations where they were created (6).

Both Moretti and Magri (quoting writings of Schwarz, Cândido and de Campos[2]) touch on the "bastard" character of Brazilian literature (46; 9-11), which was born with the transposition of European models (mostly French, via the Portuguese—a travel from the centre, through the semi-periphery, then to the periphery). Aluísio Azevedo's classic naturalist novel *O Cortiço*, for example, would be the child of Émile Zola's *Assommoir* (Moretti 131): It exemplifies the recourse to a French aesthetic and European values transposed to a Brazilian setting, with Brazilian characters. Although this connection became freer from the European standards through Brazilian modernism in the 20th century, it is still important that the novel (like much of Brazilian poetry, movies, and other forms of art and storytelling) is a European import.

[2] Roberto Schwarz (born in 1938) is a literary critic and professor of Brazilian literature, literary theory and comparative literature, focused on the works of one o Brazil's most important national writers, Machado de Assis. Antônio Cândido (1918-2017) was a sociologist and literary critic, whose works described the origins of Brazilian literature. Haroldo de Campos (1929-2003) was a poet, literary critic and translator, creator of the "transcreation" concept in translation theory, which calls for a recreation of the original work in translation, going beyond translating words between languages. All these Brazilian thinkers shaped Brazilian literary criticism and theories in the 20th century, and their work as professors in foreign universities took Brazilian literature beyond its national borders.

Brazilian Regionalism

Just like the dichotomy between local and universal can be applied to world literature, a similar dynamic can be found in Brazilian literature: the polarization of regionalist and national literatures. According to Reis: "The term *regionalista* (regionalist) denotes a literary work that focuses on a certain region and on its features (geography, nature), as well as on the kind of social and historical background that has that region as a frame" (703). In practice, this means a work that is set in rural or idyllic places, away from the big economic metropolises. The regionalist style is characterized by the local peculiarities, like regional belief systems, traditional practices, and dialects (Chiappini 155).

Before delving further into regionalism, let us examine its alternative, cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan narratives are above all urban novels. They are set in the metropolitan economic and political centers of the country. For Brazil since the end of the 19th century, this primarily means the cities of São Paulo (economic centre and largest city) and Rio de Janeiro (cultural centre and second most populous city), in the southeast region. Cities like Belo Horizonte (also in the southeast region), Brasília (the capital of the country since 1960), and Porto Alegre (in the south) tend to be overrepresented. The rural areas around these cities and most parts of the north, northeast and centre-west regions are peripherical to what is considered the broad national conversation. Countries and regions also have their own micro world-system within them, with places and populations belonging to a local core and a local periphery. Transposing this model to Brazil, we can conceive of the big southern capitals (like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro) as cultural cores, with the north and northeast being pushed to the peripheries.

It is not a coincidence that Dalcastagnè's analysis of books by national authors from three major Brazilian publishing companies between 1990 and 2004 showed that more than 60% of the authors reside in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, while the whole northern region is only represented by 1,2% of authors (32). Dalcastagnè's study also showed that 72.7% of authors are men and 93.9% of all authors are white[3] (31). The characters in the books were similarly analysed and 62.1% were found to be male (35), while 79.8% of all characters were white (45). Noticeably, 15.9% of the novels had no relevant female character (36), while 56.6% of the novels had no major non-white character (44). Dalcastagnè thus revealed that the national cosmopolitan Brazilian novels predominantly represent white, male, and urban south-eastern perspectives.

Chiappini considers regionalism as a universal phenomenon, both as a literary tendency and as a movement of writers who defend setting their works away from the urban values of national capitals and economic metropolises (153-154). In Brazilian literary production and studies, concern for regionalism was considered outmoded until recently, but has had a rebirth in the last couple of decades, as a response to a globalized world (154). Those novels tend to focus on conflicts brought on by modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and the advances of capitalism and to value the local, rural culture, either in a more realistic or a more idealized way. For this reason,

[3] It should be noted that Brazilian racial categories are not considered in the same way as in North American countries. For example, Milton Hatoum, a man of Arab decent is considered to be white in Brazil, and not necessarily so in Canada or the United States—although he would not be considered white in those countries anyway for being born in Brazil, and therefore considered Latino.

modernist thinkers of the 20th century considered regionalist novels to be "backwards" or "reactionary" (156), a thought that oversimplifies and diminishes a rich cultural means of expression. Although the critics of this movement disagree, this does not mean that the regionalist novel cannot show universal themes, after all, the universal manifests itself in the private sphere in most literatures, be it regionalist or cosmopolitan (Chiappini 158), and the local can serve as a mirror for the global.

Milton Hatoum

Milton Hatoum is a Brazilian writer of Lebanese parentage born in Manaus in 1952. His childhood city is featured in his first novels. In his teenage years, his family moved to Brasilia, after which, Hatoum lived in Madrid, Barcelona, Paris and Berkeley. He now lives in São Paulo. As an author from a Brazilian periphery (Manaus, on the north), writing about peripheral characters, Hatoum managed to undermine division and reach the wider Brazilian audience of the south, without pandering to an exotic narrative associated with regionalist literature that sometimes is the only viable way to reach the cultural and economic centres of the country.

Hatoum's first novel, *Relato de um Certo Oriente* (*Tale of a Certain Orient*, in its English translation), was published in 1989. It won the prestigious Brazilian Jabuti prize the following year. His second book, *Dois Irmãos* (here

referred by its English language title, *The Brothers*[4]) was published in the year 2000. It too won the Jabuti prize the next year. By 2019, he has published six novels and two compilations of short stories and essays. Throughout his career he received four Jabuti prizes (1990, 2001, 2006, and 2008), one Prêmio Portugal Telecom de Literatura[5] (2006), and was honoured with the Ordem do Mérito Cultural (given by the Ministry of Culture as recognition for contributions to Brazilian culture) in 2008. The official website for the author lists translations of his works published in 12 languages and 14 countries ("Milton Hatoum Homepage"). His books were twice nominated for the IMPAC-DUBLIN prize. His articles and essays about literature were published in magazines and newspapers in Brazil, Spain, France and Italy. Hatoum's short stories were published in magazines in the United States, Mexico and France, and in anthologies in Germany, Mexico and England.

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[4] The book *The Brothers* is Hatoum's most adapted work. It was made into a play in 2008, and in 2015 it was made into a graphic novel by artists Gabriel Bá and Fábio Moon, published by Dark Horse Comics in the United States. The graphic novel adaptation won the Harvey Award (Best American Edition of Foreign Material) and the Eisner Award (Best Adaptation for Another Medium) in the United States, and a HQ Mix prize (Best Adaptation) in Brazil. In 2017, Rede Globo aired a miniseries based on the novel which received critical and popular acclaim and boosted the book sales (according to Brazilian publisher Companhia das Letras and Nielsen Media Research, the title received a 500% increase in sales) (Gente iG).

[5] The Oceanos Prêmio de Literatura em Língua Portuguesa, formerly known as Prêmio Portugal Telecom de Literatura, is considered to be the equivalent of the Man Booker Prize for literature written by lusophone writers in any country that has Portuguese as an official language. The first prize winner takes a sum of R$100,000, the equivalent of about $25,000 USD in the exchange rate of December 24th, 2019.

Literature and Periphery

The term 'world literature', since its inception by Goethe, was used to refer to books and texts that traveled, through translation or otherwise, to different spaces and between communities. With globalization, the phenomenon of movement of cultural products and merchandise became even more common and widespread. The ideology of capitalist globalization puts forward the idea that it can promote a fair and egalitarian development, namely:

> The premise of 'combined unevenness' developed here repudiates at a stroke the idea–linked, presumably, to the political mantra that 'globalisation' is a tide lifting all boats–that the 'world' of world-literature is a 'level playing field', a more or less free space in which texts from around the globe can circulate, intersect and converse with one another. It is remarkable how pervasive this idea of a 'level playing field' is in contemporary literary critical discourse (WReC 22).

Though the term 'world literature' seems to be democratic and egalitarian, in practice what is considered to be world literature is mostly produced in English or French, and travels outwards from the hegemonic powers of Europe and North America to peripheral countries. Some postcolonial work is valued, but generally in relation to its position to the colonial power. Most literature that is produced in the Global South is considered 'local literature'.

As an example of how literature in translation is viewed in English markets, according to *Publishers Weekly*'s Translation Database, between 2010 and 2019

there were 6,824 books translated (and published) from foreign languages to English. Of those, 1,334 were translated from the French, 879 from the German, and only 168 from the Portuguese. This number includes books from Brazil and Portugal, but also from former Portuguese colonies like Mozambique and Angola, and is not restricted to books that are contemporary or recently published in the original language.

Pardo writes that about half of all books translated worldwide were written originally in English, the language that occupies the 'hyper-central' position (278). French and German are in a central position and represent 10% to 12% of translations; eight semi-peripheral languages, like Spanish and Italian, contribute to 1% to 3% of the international market. Finally, all other languages do not reach 1% of the translation market, and are considered periphery literature (278-279). Central languages export books (and by consequence stories, characters, and thoughts) to the peripheries, but the peripheries rarely export their works to the centre, or even to other peripheries without the mediation of a central language.

Of course, translation by itself is not enough to address the consequences and legacies of colonialism. Both the translator and the foreign reader can be embedded in Eurocentrism and have a role in perpetuating a colonial mindset instead of plurality and understanding. The same goes for literary works about or set in the peripheries, not all are created equal. If the author is not concerned in deconstructing the model of European development, the result can be a mere affirmation of the colonizer's gaze, and not freedom from its constraints. Brune writes that translated Brazilian literary works tend to pander to the exotic, the cosmopolitan, or both at the same time (19). Works that

featured peripheral areas with more sensibility were deemed untranslatable because of the language particularities used (7). Brune suggests that this is the reason why the author Jorge Amado (with highly sexualized characters and interracial romance) and Paulo Lins' *City of God* (which would allow foreign "audiences to absorb representations of violence and poverty from a mediated distance") were widely translated and well received internationally (6-7). Although they are valid literary works, they reaffirm stereotypical views of the country and fail to convey the complexities and nuances of the reality in the nation.

Damrosch notes that the majority of works cited in MLA articles between 2006 and 2015 are from hegemonic countries, written in languages such as English, French and German (Figure 1). The only Brazilian author on the list is Clarice Lispector, who Damrosch calls "the greatest Brazilian woman writer ever" ("What Isn't World Literature?"), on the "Lower Major" tier of cited authors. She shares this tier with Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz (who writes in Arabic), and Georges Perec, a French writer without much canonical expression.

Gonçalves raises concerns about the global reach of works written in languages that are not those of hegemonic countries in his study of "translated literature against the systems of domination" (250). As he puts it, other Brazilian authors highly successful abroad and in translation stripped their text of any criticism or critical reflection of the Brazilian reality, to appeal to an international market: "(T)he commodification of culture, more specifically the use of literature to conform to the materialism and consumerism of Western society, ends up obliterating the revolutionary potential that supposedly accompanies artistic productions" (250). This would therefore diminish the value of Brazilian

novels as agents of reflections relevant to the world, bringing it down to just a product to be consumed and discarded by western audiences.

The power dynamics between the core and the periphery in capitalist societies lead authors like Hatoum to be categorized by critics (even inside Brazil) as 'regionalist writers' (Gonçalves 257). So it is for Hatoum, who does not consider himself a regionalist author. His narrative is focused on peoples of the Amazon but this doesn't make his novel any more regional than those set in Rio de Janeiro, Toronto or Paris. Every work of literature is connected to one space, but his doesn't mean it can't be read and understood by other cultures, or that it can't be considered world literature. In the current world literary hegemony, those who do not conform to standards of capitalist modernity can be interpreted as primitive, and consequently deemed regional.

Regionalism in Latin America was born as a genre in the post-independence period of the 19th century, and acted as a way to build a national identity adaptable to regional differences (Kettner 5). Hatoum, in a postcolonial context, doesn't show the local population as a victim of global capitalism, but as perpetrators of this system (15). He breaks the classical regional depiction by including the issue of immigration in the region (9). His "regionalism" is not only local, it integrates the Amazon to a global context, set in a time of international capitalism, social change and tumultuous challenges of large-scale migration (183). Hatoum reveals the Amazon region not as a pristine isolated place, but as it is, connected to the global network.

If world literature is 'unequal', as Moretti claims, we can't expect all novels to comply with the homogenised standards, even if all colonized territories took away

something (usually the form) from the art of their colonizers. In looking at the similarities we should keep in mind what makes them different—despite being 'worldly. This is what I will argue in the next section.

Analysis

The Brothers tells the story of a Lebanese family living in the city of Manaus between the 1920's and the 1970's. Although the fact that it centers on an Arab family is relevant, one could argue the novel is not a story about immigration or culture clash. This is a story about family dynamics and Nael's search for individual identity.

Manaus is a city situated in the Northern region of Brazil. It is the capital of the state of Amazonas and stands in the meeting of the rivers Negro and Solimões (the Amazon River). Manaus was founded by Portuguese colonizers in 1669, but it flourished in the late 19th century with the economic development that came with rubber extraction in the region. During its economic development, the city created major cultural and infrastructure constructions and features, like the Amazonas Theatre, the Manaus Harbour, bridges, electric energy (only the second city to implement it on Brazil) and public transportation. It was also during this period that it attracted immigrants from countries like Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, Japan and the Ottoman Empire (Arabs and Turks). The economic prosperity started to decline in 1910, when local rubber production began to face competition from Asia. The Amazon river, commerce, and the many cultures and nationalities of its Manaus' inhabitants feature heavily in the novel, as well as the memory of its economic prosperity and more glamorous times, as well as the decline of Manuas and Brazil in the second half of the 20th century.

The narrator is Nael, who tries to piece together the stories of this Lebanese family to ascertain where he might fit in it. Going back and forth in time, mixing scenes he witnessed with tales he was told, Nael depicts the lives of the couple Halim and Zana, their children Yaqub, Omar , Rania, and Domingas, and the family's Indigenous servant, who is also Nael's mother. Nael sets his story to paper in a first person account of his adulthood, after the family has disintegrated, that looks back on his youth and to a time even before he was born—: The narrator's present is bleak: Halim, Zana and Domingas are dead; Yaqub left and does not keep contact; Omar lives a vagabond life in Manaus, with no house to return to; and Rania remains trying to keep the family store alive. As he ages, Nael navigates jobs from domestic work to teaching. He has economic mobility but not physical mobility: he expresses no desire to leave Manaus and constantly evades Yaqub's invitations to come to São Paulo.

The structure of the narrative follows the flux of Nael's memories. They don't necessarily flow in chronological order, instead his narrative jumps between moments in time, exploring the natural shifts of a mind that remembers and tries to make sense of the interactions among the multiple people involved.

Yaqub and Omar are identical twins, the namesakes who give title to the novel, with vastly different personalities. One is calm, intellectual, quiet; the other is passionate, loud and a reveller. From a young age their fights would get physically violent, fuelled by Zana's preference for Omar (who in infancy was sickly and more fragile than Yaqub). Their rivalry mimics the ancient dispute between Cain and Abel. Omar's violence can be associated to Cain's, the murderous brother, but Yaqub also embodies 'wicked'

traits: his extreme jealousy of his brother's position as the favourite and his calculated acts to take vengeance on his brother make him less of a model than the biblical Abel. Both brothers participated in tearing the family apart, and although Nael has a preference to Yaqub, to whom he feels a connection, he is also forced to admit Yaqub was a failed saint.

Rivalry between brothers is a theme as old as the Bible, and has probably existed anywhere siblings can be found, for as long as they have been found. From princes trying to inherit their father's kingdoms to rivals fighting for the attention of a love interest, from Dostoyevsky to Tolkien, in ancient poems and modern soap operas, sibling rivalry is one of the most persistent tropes of narratives in all forms.

The double has also been a source of great fascination throughout time and space. As Nael looks at the twins, sometimes he can't help but imagine they mix into each other, even when they try as hard as they can to distance themselves from one another. Whether twins, doppelgangers, or split personalities, the doubles often appear in the imagination of many different cultures around the world. In Hollywood, this trope is used in genres such as romantic comedies and horror movies. The Brazilian novel inserts itself in this global discussion of duality, in a way to project ideas of morality and conflicts that are common to all cultures.

Anyone familiar with psychoanalytical theories would see how the Oedipus complex figures in Hatoum's story. There is an incestuous sexual act described in the novel between Rania and Nael, but the whole text is full of scenes with implicit sexual desire and overt sexual vernacular between family members. Rania has her fair share of scenes dressing up for her brothers, or sitting in their lap. For

example, Nael describes how Rania was "sensual" [117] in the presence of her brothers, and how they looked like a couple together, told from Zana's perspective, who can't contain her jealousy over the boys (especially Omar). In an inversion of Freud's theories, the parents show an unhealthy projection towards their children. Zana is unreasonably possessive of Omar, and Halim resents his children because he feels that they took his wife away from him. Rania is beautiful but refuses all men's attention, she only touches and cares for her brothers. When Zana's father dies, Halim says she "cried like a widow" (Hatoum 56). Zana's overzealousness of Omar stifled his development, rendering him a perpetual teenager. Her suffocation of Omar drove Yaqub away, virtually tearing apart the family she had envisioned and created.

Finally, the postcolonial criticism present in the novel hindered its success as international literature for its unappealing musings on the Brazilian reality. Postcolonialism is associated with peripheral areas of the world and is a dominant theme still present in 21st century literature. Most nations have some sort of connection with colonialism (as colonizers, colonized, or both), and texts about the issue (fictitious and historical) travel widely and are read internationally. In *The Brothers*, Domingas is the most explicit example of colonization. Her story of being a young native girl, raised in a catholic orphanage and resigned to a life of servitude, is not unfamiliar to North American audiences. Uprooted from her people at an early age, her son is surprised when he hears her sing in *Nheengatu*, a language he assumed she had forgotten (Hatoum, 240). The colonial efforts tried to erase all traces of indigenous cultures, like language and traditions, but there is resistance and not all is lost for Domingas.

The predominantly white, capitalist model of modernity, that values a European 'civility' is embodied in the struggle between the twins, Yaqub and Omar. Yaqub, the educated sophisticated brother, leaves Manaus for the southeast and builds his life in 'civilization,' away from his immigrant family and the place where he was born. Omar, the 'savage', refuses to adapt to change and ends up lost in a home that no longer shelters him. Yaqub is prejudiced against his own origins, eager to accomplish a cosmopolitan ideal (Gonçalves 251). If Yaqub and Omar are shown at least having some sort of choice in this 'civilizatory' endeavour of Manaus, Domingas doesn't have the same privilege. She is the one colonialism and capitalism try to hide or sweep away, as she doesn't fit the standard of European modernity, and never will.

Nael is the most evident character of the narrative that seeks belonging and finds marginality throughout the novel. It is not a coincidence that most of what the narrator knows comes from Domingas and Halim, two characters on opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their native and foreign dichotomy. Domingas is an uprooted Indigenous woman whereas Halim is a Muslim Arab immigrant. Marginality is even present in Nael's living arrangements. He is the "son of the house" (with no apparent father), but doesn't get to live *in* the house with the rest of the family. His mother's employers sometimes treat him with care, and sometimes as a servant. Nael is neither native nor white, not Lebanese but also not fully Brazilian. His in-between identity is more present in this globalized world than in the less-connected past of his youth. Nael's experience reveals that the immigrants reflect the stresses of globalization and modernity due to the growing number of displaced communities.

Nael searches for his identity outside of himself, talking much more about other people than about his own experience. The author waits until the second paragraph to discover the book is narrated in the first person. Nael starts by talking about Zana's final months, and finally admits "I saw her" almost at the end of the first page (Hatoum 11). The truth of his name is only revealed in chapter nine (of a total twelve chapters): The one who named Nael was Halim, choosing the name after his own father. It is in this scene that Domingas reveals to Nael she was raped by Omar, but slept with Yaqub willingly (241). Either of the two brothers could be Nael's father, yet neither admits it. The duality of the brothers (physically identical, but one openly violent, the other cunning and controlling through a civilized façade) can be transposed to a wider extent if we think of Nael as a bastard colonized Amazon, and the brothers as the colonizers. Colonization in invoked in the text by two facets: the violence, often committing genocide against the indigenous peoples, and the "kind" civilizatory white men's burden.[6] By acting how they did, both Yaqub and Omar embody Nael's father, at the same time.

Nael can also be a foil for the author. Hatoum chooses for his epigraph a poem by the Brazilian author Carlos Drummond de Andrade (one of the most important poets of the 20th century). The words describe a house being sold with all the "furniture, the sins and the nightmares" still inside. It is representative of the family in the novel, whose

[6] The term "white man's burden" was first used in a poem by Rudyard Kipling in 1899 and became a recurrent phrase to justify European imperialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It implies that imperialism was motivated by the good intentions of white people to "benefit" people of colour and bring "civilization" to places and cultures considered uncivilized.

home is sold when the family falls apart. It is also an affirmation of Hatoum's place as a Brazilian author, no hyphenation needed (Lebanese-Brazilian, or Northern-Brazilian). Like Nael, the author is torn between nationalities and languages, but he stands firmly in his mixed identity as Brazilian.

Conclusion

Through Moretti's distant reading, what seems foreign and exotic in Brazilian literature at a first glance can reveal familiar themes. It is useful when reading translated works from peripheral cultures. Where applying close reading would not be possible, it allows the reader to focus on the tropes and make sense of the novel without the initial prejudice of "I won't be able to understand this because I don't know the region or the customs well enough". The novel *The Brothers* fits well in Damrosch's and Hiddleston's definitions of world literature: It reads well in translation, it is a type of writing that traveled through multiple spaces and languages, and it is literature that mixes elements from different cultures. In theory, all it needs is readers wiling to read it, and all the pieces fit together. Hatoum's text also proves that peripheral literature does not need to be homogenized or to conform to Western standards to be translatable and relatable. A non-pasteurized literature, with 'local' demands and issues, can be appreciated without falling in the trap of being made to appease the foreign, colonizer gaze, or the demands of a homogeneous and standardized global market. World literature theory, although born with noble, democratic ideals, where literature from all around the world can be read and studied equally, still has a long way to free itself from Eurocentric thoughts

and perspectives to really appreciate and include the world in its considerations.

Appendix

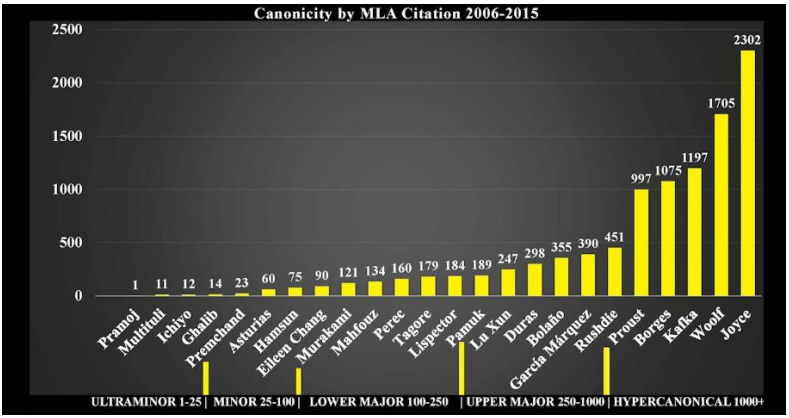

Fig. 1. Canonicity by MLA Citation 2006-2015 from David Damrosch, "2016 IWL: David Damrosch, 'What Isn't World Literature? Problems of Language, Context, and Politics'." *Youtube*, uploaded by Delia Ungureanu, 6 August 2016, 46:00 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfOuOJ6b-qY.

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Identity Metamorphosis in Rawi Hage's Cockroach

Elena Rahman

Abstract

This essay studies Rawi Hage's novel about the struggle against cultural integration. The protagonist embodies a cockroach persona, comparable to that of Franz Kafka's main character in his novella The Metamorphosis*. Through the analysis of the challenges of interculturality in Montreal's mainstream society, this essay traces the protagonist's acceptance of his condition of in-betweenness or liminality, which reveals a socio-cultural tension between his Lebanese cultural identity and Quebec's society.*

Introduction

Rawi Hage's novel *Cockroach* (2008) has generated much critical analysis in the literary realm of academia. His main character, who is also the unnamed male narrator of the

novel, presents issues of dual identity as he navigates Montreal's Middle Eastern diaspora. As an Arab Canadian immigrant, the narrator struggles to find his place in society, which leads to his identification as a cockroach. Hage is not the first to use the insect trope as a representation of identity suffocation; Franz Kafka uses this approach in his novella *Metamorphosis.* Using narrative theory, I will demonstrate how the unnamed Arab Canadian narrator undergoes an identity metamorphosis due to Montreal's intercultural society, paired with its Middle Eastern diaspora, which generates a sense of cultural in-betweenness. This is comparable to the discomfiting experience of Franz Kafka's protagonist, Gregor. Comparing the two characters' transformations will allow me to highlight the issues of interculturalism presented in Hage's novel.

Rawi Hage and Cockroach

Rawi Hage[7] is a world renowned Arab Canadian author and winner of several literary awards including the Dublin IMPAC Literary Award. His 2008 novel *Cockroach* is set in Montreal's Middle Eastern diaspora. The main character, an unnamed narrator, struggles to retain his Arab Canadian identity as he deals with the past trauma of his sister's death in the old country. He is forced into therapy sessions after he is caught attempting suicide in the park. This seems to have been a cry for help due to his distress at his own identity loss. Therapy proves ineffective to the protagonist, yet insightful for the reader's understanding of

[7] Hage is currently preparing to teach a course at the University of Ottawa in the English department titled Advanced Workshop in Fiction, Transforming Worlds for the winter term of 2020. He has indeed made a splash in the Canadian literary world.

his past. The plot introduces his diasporic friends, Shohreh and Faroud who emigrated from Iran as refugees of government imprisonment.

Imprisonment is a reoccurring theme throughout the novel. The protagonist's friends were physically imprisoned in the Middle East, while he is metaphorically imprisoned by his cockroach identity. In relation to other Arab Canadian authors, Hage can be considered an Arab-Quebecois "writer of exile" (Dahab 1), according to Mary Dahab's study on Arab Canadian writing in her book *Voices of Exile in Contemporary Canadian Francophone Literature.* She localizes exilic writing to Quebec because her research has proved that traditional Quebecois poetry incorporates the themes of "exile/madness, alienation, and a sense of loss, as well as the feeling of an absent or incomplete country" (Dahab 4). She draws an important comparison between Arab Canadian/Quebecois writers and Quebecois-born writers; both groups document their feelings of exile and alienation from an incomplete country. Her study demonstrates the commonality between the Arab Canadian and the Quebecois struggles over identity. In Dahab's framework it is possible to place Hage in a larger spectrum of exilic Canadian writers. Her book lists approximately forty Arab-Canadian writers, most of whom have written on similar themes of exile and alienation. Hage is not mentioned, but certainly is part of this group of exilic writers in Canada because thematically, imprisonment lends to the theme of exile. Through Dahab's study, it is possible to bridge the gap between diasporic and non-diasporic cultures in Montreal by tracing thematic parallels between their struggles. Despite this commonality, Hage's novel presents the reality of division between Montreal's diasporic and non-diasporic communities. I analyze how this social division

directly contributes to the protagonist's feelings of in-betweenness.

Framing the Analysis of Cockroach

This essay will use narrative theory, narratology, (Culler 83) to analyse Hage's choice of first-person narration, and his recourse to an unnamed narrator for the novel. According to Culler, stories "are the main way we make sense of things, whether in thinking of our lives as a progression leading somewhere or in telling ourselves what is happening in the world" (82). I will use this definition of storytelling to evaluate the way the narrator views the world around him in relation to his self-identification. I will focus more specifically on the first-person narration aspect of the storytelling, which reveals information about the protagonist's past and his fleeting thoughts as he battles the desire to "seal the sky" and exist in a state of perpetual darkness (Hage 11). I will also use narratology to explore the way Hage overcomes the limitations of first-person narration to allow readers insight into the lives of Shohreh and Faroud, the protagonist's friends.

Since the novel takes place in Montreal's Middle Eastern diaspora, it is necessary to define the term to fully grasp the problematic at hand. According to (First Name) Ben-Rafael, diaspora designates one group of people from the same origin to a specific neighbourhood or community within a host country. Those who dwell within diasporas who have common ancestry are "engaged in a reflexive project of identity-building" (843). In Hage's novel the diaspora is comprised of people from different Middle Eastern countries, which is what Ben-Rafael calls "transnational diaspora" (845). This kind of diasporic community bans together "despite the absence of a shared

'old country'… through supra-national organizations, networks cross-cutting borders, and common cultural or religious markers" (843). Hage presents a Middle Eastern, and therefore transnational, diaspora through a cast of ex-pats with mixed heritages including an Algerian professor, Shohreh the protagonist's Iranian love interest, and their Persian friends Faroud and Reza. The narrator's country of origin is never specified but critics have speculated that he is of Lebanese heritage. Readers do know for certain that he is an Arab, because he refers to himself as such on a few occasions (Hage 15, 67). This transnational Middle Eastern diaspora acts as a form of resistance to the mainstream Montreal society in that they retain their languages and culture of origin, as Hage illustrates through the café scene, which I will analyze below.

An important distinction that informs my analysis is between the concepts of interculturalism and multiculturalism. I argue that the presence of multiculturalism does not exist in Hage's novel. Instead, the author presents an intercultural society. In "Interculturalism or Multiculturalism?", Charles Taylor distinguishes the two by looking at their prefixes. 'Multi'-culturalism gives a greater attention to the acknowledgment of diversity while 'inter'-culturalism focuses more on integration. This difference, Taylor suggests, is visible through the comparison of Quebec immigrants to immigrants in the rest of Canada. Those who settle in Quebec are not only expected to find jobs and in general find their place in society, they are also expected to do so in French, thereby fully integrating themselves into Quebec society and adapting their culture (417). On the other hand, the rest of Canada focuses on the development away from an 'anglo-normative' society and towards a multiculturalist society which acknowledges all

cultures as part of the Canadian identity, without forced immigrant integration into a set cultural identity (Taylor 417). I will demonstrate how the question of interculturalism in the novel *Cockroach* becomes clear through the protagonist's interactions with his therapist, who treats him like an outsider, and his Quebecois French Canadian friends, with whom he speaks in French.

I will also compare the transformations of Kafka's main character Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* and Hage's unnamed narrator, both of whom change into insects. I borrow Kevin Sweeney's interpretation of identity in Kafka's novella, in his article entitled "Competing theories of Identity in Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis'", which shows how the main character's consciousness is trapped in a foreign insect body, thereby compromising his original identity . Taking into consideration the concepts of identity and diaspora, I will compare the narrator's transformation within his transnational Middle Eastern diaspora to Kafka's character, Gregor, whose insect body confines him to his bedroom, which isolates him from society. This will allow me to determine what the cockroach, or the insect in a broader sense, represents in terms of social identity.

Bibliographic Review

Hage's novel has generated much scholarly attention. In line with Wisam Abdul-Jabbar, who argues that the main character's feeling of estrangement stems from his loss of home[8], which leads to his metaphoric vagabond resistance to

[8] Home is to be understood metaphorically throughout this essay. The narrator is never physically homeless throughout the novel. However, his relocation into a new society establishes a metaphoric homelessness due to his loss of cultural identity and an inevitable sense of in-betweenness as a member of Montreal's Middle-Eastern diaspora.

Montreal's intercultural society, I will grapple with the notion of exile throughout the novel to illustrate the protagonist's transforming sense of identity. Moreover, Abdul-Jabbar quotes from Hage himself in relation to Kafka's work in *The Metamorphosis*; the author apparently stating that he never intended to "'emulate Kafka'" (169). However, I believe that there is substantial value in the comparison of the two texts. Their similarities and their differences are important aspects to the evaluation of Hage's protagonist's identity. Consequently, my approach differs from Abdul-Jabbar in the evaluation of the intertextual reference to Kafka, but accedes to its interpretation of the narrator's vagabond state to in relation to his idea of the diasporic identity.

In "From the Dark Territories of Pain and Exclusion to Bright Futures? Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*", Lisa Marchi, argues that the narrator "refuses to concur with the majority that multiculturalism is inherently good and cheerful" (1). While it is true that the narrator does not concur with the mainstream Montreal society, the novel does debate or reflect on multiculturalism. Contrary to Marchi, I will argue that it is in fact Montreal's and Quebec's interculturalism that the narrator battles. This will prove that the narrator, as the protagonist, is in opposition with society and its intercultural aspirations, which are the Hage's antagonist. Moreover, the focus on interculturalism will allow me to further highlight the narrator's transformation in comparison to Kafka's character. It is important not to think of Kafka and Hage's characters as one and the same. Instead, my objective is to show the importance of their difference. While they belong to the same genre of identity metamorphosis, their perspectives are very different. I conclude that Hage's novel proclaims the impossibility of

retaining one's identity in Montreal's Middle Eastern diaspora due to the mainstream intercultural society that surrounds them.

Therapy and the Imposed Interculturality

The novel's main character attempts suicide in the middle of the park. The novel opens with this dramatic scene as a way of explaining how he ended up in therapy sessions. I argue that part of the underlying reason he is pushed into therapy, aside from the obvious mental health benefits, is so society can better integrate him into Montreal's culture. By portraying this process, Hage presents the functional aspect of an intercultural rather than multicultural society. The therapist, Doctor Genevieve, proves to be unsuccessful at helping the protagonist work through his traumatic past. He confesses to her that his suicide attempt was "kind of out of curiosity, or maybe a challenge to nature… [because he] felt oppressed by it all" (Hage 4). The protagonist opens up to readers from the start of the narration, which is partly due to the effect of a first-person account. He admits that he feels oppressed by the society in which he lives. It is already clear that Montreal's mainstream society has been neglecting his cultural identity prior to the start of the novel's narration, and that it has led him to defy "the majority" through a kind of suicidal test (Marchi 1).

He reveals to his therapist about these thoughts, which is a difficult task since it is such a delicate subject and he is in an unstable state. The therapist's "laconic behaviour" simply annoys the protagonist, as it shows a cold and impersonal approach to their whole encounter (Hage 4). She interrupts his stories with generic questions like "and how do you feel about that," which sterilizes their exchange as a routine procedure (Hage 4). Her robotic attitude here

symbolizes society's systematic approach to integrating immigrants into mainstream culture. The protagonist's story in analogous to an integration assembly line. The new immigrant is unsatisfied living in Montreal's Middle Eastern diaspora; this dissatisfaction breeds an overall curiosity to escape existence, as it did for Hage's narrator. Some social power, in this case that of the park police, intervenes and stops the suicidal attempt (Hage 5); the individual is sent to mandatory therapy sessions where the therapist attempts to convert the patient by deeming his old way of life as misguided. This is certainly the case for the protagonist of *Cockroach*. Instead of helping him understand why he partook in criminal activity in his homeland, which for the record, was a means to survive in a war-stricken country, Doctor Genevieve tries to assimilate him into Montreal's mainstream society by using Western methods of therapeutic processes and questioning.

Moreover, the therapy sessions are conducted in English, which speaks to the interculturality of Montreal's society. The novel illustrates a relatively large Middle Eastern diaspora; therefore, there must be Middle Eastern professionals who could conduct the therapy sessions in Arabic. This would create a more welcoming healing environment for the protagonist. However, it is not healing that the mandated therapy sessions aim to achieve, otherwise, he would might have been accommodated. Instead, the English dialect acts as an integration tool to conform to Montreal's intercultural rather than multicultural society. Marchi suggests that the narrator opposes the joyfulness of multiculturalism. She believes that he refuses the "gift of happiness offered by multiculturalism" (7). This is a problematic way to think of his struggles with identity as it negates the pressure of society and ignores the traumatic

past that many immigrants experience. It suggests that he, the victim, is at fault for not conforming to society's expectations and for not being resilient to his migrant circumstance. In a society where people ignore him when he asks to borrow a lighter for his cigarette (Hage 260), in a country where an unsubstantial welfare system does not provide enough assistance for its population to acquire boots (Hage 9), he is somehow supposed to feel "grateful" (Hage 65) for the "multicultural" nation in which he has settled (Marchi 7).

Perhaps if Montreal's society was truly multicultural, he would have more opportunities to be an active participant, which would create a sense of gratitude to the nation-state. On the contrary, the interculturalist society oppresses his cultural identity through mainstream society's general lack of cultural diversity recognition and a fear of losing its own cultural identity (Taylor 419). The society Hage depicts cannot be considered multicultural because the therapist's attitude towards the protagonist represents society's rejection of cultural individuality. When her Western therapy methods fail, Doctor Genevieve blatantly states that the protagonist is using up the "taxpayers'" money (Hage 60). I interpret this is a direct reference to the social 'assembly line' of integration that I referred to earlier. She suggests that the mainstream Montreal population pays for these services to convert outsider cultural behaviours into their own. Out of frustration over the protagonist's lack of cooperation, she accidentally reveals the social fear of losing Montreal's identity to multiculturalism, and shows how the rest of the citizens pay to impose and enforce their intercultural society.

At this beginning stage of his transformation, the protagonist has not morphed into his cockroach persona. He

has instances of cockroach self-identification, for example when he attempts to explain to his therapist that he is half cockroach (Hage 5). These instances are infrequent at the start of the novel, and are associated with the underground. They occur mainly when he breaks into people's homes (80, 90); thus, the metaphoric underground fosters his criminal activity. It does so by paralleling the physicality of the underground, which is dirty, cold, and untamed, to criminal activity, which can be described with the same terms. Thus, criminal activity belongs to the underground where social rules are easily broken and go undiscovered.

When comparing the protagonist to Kafka's character Gregor Samsa at the beginning stage of the plot, there are clear differences. For one, Gregor is completely transformed into an insect from the early on in the story. His is a story of understanding why he has changed, while Hage's protagonist accepts his cockroach identity without question. Unlike the unnamed narrator, Gregor is able to recollect his "psychological past" while he is in insect form "supports[s] the conscious link to the past essential to the dualist theory of personal identity" (Sweeney 24). Hage's first-person narration is essential to the readers understanding that his psychological transformation does not seek to recollect his psychological past or return to his former self. Contrary to Gregor, Hage's character relishes his transformation.

During his cockroach instances, the protagonist narrates his thoughts for the reader's benefit. He takes pride in his ability to transform and "escape" through his cockroach persona (Hage 23). One moment encapsulates his psyche in relation to his experience in an intercultural society. He looks out the window while crying one day and notices his breath and tears have fogged his view. He is in amazement and thinks to himself: "my own breath was

obstructing my view of the world" (Hage 23). From this, readers understand that he has a negative self-perception. His breath symbolizes his identity and he has begun to view it as an obstruction to his worldview. This shows how he has already started to integrate into Montreal's intercultural mainstream society because he views his breath, which I have identified as a symbol for his cultural identity, as a barrier. Mainstream Montreal also views cultural identity as such, which motivates interculturalism rather than multiculturalism. Here, through the scene's symbolism, the narrator exhibits the intercultural attitude that society imposes. As I said, therapy does fail to completely integrate him into society, but it initiates a transformation in him through his experience of constant pressure to assimilate. It succeeds in pushing him to think of his cultural identity as an impediment to his worldview. However, it fails because instead of adopting the mainstream Montreal identity, he adopts that of the cockroach.

Interculturalism and the Character's In-betweenness

The protagonist's cockroach persona is a result of in-betweenness, which the forced interculturalist society inflicts upon him. In-betweenness is the feeling of being part of or belonging to two or more social groups (cite). For the protagonist, this experience of being in between, or inhabiting a liminal space, is obvious through his relation to the diaspora, his home country, and Montreal's mainstream society. Within the diaspora, he spends his time among his Middle Eastern friends, each from varied countries of origin. His two closest friends are Shohreh, who is Iranian, and Faroud, who is Persian. The Middle Eastern diaspora creates an in-betweenness through its cultural diversity. On the one

hand, they are all Middle Eastern and share similar social traditions, like smoking and drinking coffee at their diasporic café. On the other, the three friends speak different languages, which creates a slight divide. Faroud and Shohreh are often represented speaking Farsi, thereby excluding the protagonist from his supposed place of belonging. His place in the diaspora is thus not entirely secure, and he is certainly no longer an active member of the society 'back home' since his immigration to Canada. He is also not accepted by Montreal's mainstream society, as shown through his interactions with his therapist Genevieve.

This results in what Abdul-Jabbar refers to as the protagonist's vagabond state. He explains that "the vagabond state and the divided self are apparent literary codes that define the Arab narrator who internalizes the drifting and aimless peculiarity of a vagabond's life" (170). I argue that interculturalism is largely the cause of the narrator's vagabond state in Hage's *Cockcrach*. He resists the forced integration and does not have a defined place within his diasporic group of friends, so he wanders metaphorically homelessly. His identity is forced to transform in order to conform to his aimless lifestyle. Hence, the cockroach persona. His "cockroach wings" (Hage 23) allow him to easily dwell within the designated vagabond spaces, such as basements, drains, and underground pipes (6, 42, 80, 173). Therefore, his cockroach persona is essential to ease his feeling of estrangement from the world. It designates him a spot in society "at the bottom of the scale. But [he] still exist[s]" (122). His dual identity–half human, half cockroach–is interpreted as a survival mechanism in a society that has rejected him through the imposition of interculturalism.

The Sense of In-betweenness and the Arab Canadian Identity

The novel highlights the way the main character's Arab Canadian identity is challenged by his sense of in-betweenness, or his vagabond state. I have discussed how his cockroach persona gives him agency regardless of the social position it allocates him. The end of the novel illustrates the protagonist's full metamorphosis into his cockroach identity. Thus far his transformation has been mapped as follows: his initial proclamation of his cockroach identity to his therapist, followed by his acceptance of existing at the bottom of society's hierarchal scale through his cockroach identity. In my view, the next step in his transformation is represented through his acquisition of boots. He agrees to help a lady in his building steal a chest from an elderly woman's apartment. As a reward, the lady grants him two items from the chest. He decides to take a pair of old army leather boots and wool socks. He removes his old shoes and socks as a kind of ceremonial event and slips on the new boots and socks. During his first outdoor use of them he feels as though he is walking "above the earth and its cold white crust, [finally] feeling warm and stable" (Hage 253). This scene documents the first time that the protagonist experiences the feeling of comfort which parallels his sense of comfort in his in-between or liminal identity.

The boots symbolize his vagabond state overtaking his Arab Canadian identity. There is much to unravel here. First, he acquires the boots through criminal activity, which indicates that because of the lack of welfare support offered to him, his only means to acquire warmth is through thieving. Warmth here symbolizes the conformity to cold weather attire. Yes, he conforms, but he does so through criminal activity, which is only a partial integration to appear

as more of an active member of Montreal's mainstream society. The underlying truth is that his boots are a synecdoche of his cockroach identity. However, they do eliminate his Arab Canadian identity. The removal of his old shoes symbolizes the dislocation of his previous identity, that is his Arab Canadian identity. This identity belonged within the Middle Eastern diaspora but was never accepted in mainstream Montreal. He has therefore figured out that in order to exist within the mainstream, which imposes interculturality, he must rid himself of his diasporic identity. The boots symbolize this. However, mainstream Montreal rejects him because his cockroach side does not conform to the norm; it represents the broken social system at hand through the protagonist's criminal activity, which pushes him underground. It is the part of society that most people chose to ignore, as in so doing they ignore the protagonist among the aimless on the streets.

At this point he has detached himself from his Arab Canadian self, he is rejected by mainstream society, and the only place left for him is in-between the two, which for him means the underground: the cockroach's natural habitat. The end of the novel illustrates the protagonist's complete transformation into this identity. His love interest, Shohreh, realizes that her rapist from her time in an Iranian prison prior to her fleeing to Canada is a business partner of an Iranian restaurant owner. The protagonist happens to find work at that same restaurant. Shohreh and he then conspire to murder him out of revenge. Coming from the Middle East, where "everyone is used to gunshots", neither of them shows signs of reluctancy or hesitates to commit to the task (Hage 64). This marks the protagonist's final step in his metamorphosis. He shoots and murders Shohreh's rapist, grows his "glittering wings" one final time and crawls

towards the drain to dwell in "the underground" (305). He completely immerses himself in the world of in-betweenness, relinquishing his Arab Canadian identity and rejecting the imposition of Montreal's intercultural society. He is completely transformed into his cockroach persona and embodies the vagabond state.

It is now necessary to compare this transformation to Kafka's character. The overall difference at hand is that Gregor wants out of his insect identity, while Hage's protagonist embraces it because it is the only place he designates as his own in Montreal's society. There is a positive side to his in-betweenness or liminality when considering his sense of agency. He is able to proclaim his existence in the world through his cockroach embodiment, regardless of his place of existence in the social framework, as discussed earlier. To Gregor, his insect identity is only viewed as limiting. He is unable to speak audibly to his family, he is stamped at and is thrust into this role unknowingly (Sweeney 25), whereas Hage's protagonist makes the conscious decision to dive into the underground as a cockroach. However, one similarity arises according to Sweeney's analysis of Kafka's text. There is the "possibility that Gregor's predicament might be imaginary, even though the experience be vivid, [which] challenges the reliability of his narrative point of view" (26). The same speculation can certainly be made of Hage's protagonist's narration. He tells the story from the perspective of a first-person narration, and admits to having drug-induced hallucinations of a giant albino cockroach appearing as a form of his inner consciousness (Hage 201). His hold on reality, like Gregor's, is dislocated and unreliable. Although this challenges the reliability of his narrative, I believe that Hage does so purposely to highlight a larger social issue.

It is true that the protagonist' narration might be unreliable, but his lack of belonging and feelings as an outsider are real. In fact, they are so real that they induce cockroach hallucinations, if we are considering his cockroach moments as imaginary. The intercultural society where he lives has obstructed his sense of self to the point of the fracturing of his own identity through its rejection of his social self.

Conclusion

I have examined Hage's protagonist's metaphoric transformation into a cockroach, which I hope to have shown symbolizes his liminal condition in Montreal's intercultural society. The scenes portraying his interactions with the therapist enables readers to view Montreal's mainstream interculturality, which are the underlying cause for the protagonist's feelings of in-betweenness. This experience renders a multicultural Arab Canadian identity unviable, as it is a form of cultural integration, and thus he transforms into a cockroach. Overall, the novel speaks to the importance of retaining one's cultural identity, but it presents the impossibility of doing so if one's society imposes interculturality, which entails a form of assimilation or the erasure of one's cultural identity. Hage highlights the difficulty of existing in Montreal not only as Arab Canadians and Middle Easterners but any other culture because the cultural identity of outsiders, or deemed outsiders, is constantly opposed by an intercultural society. Therefore, as I have demonstrated, outsider culture is the true antagonist of the novel; this outsider is antagonized by mainstream Montreal culture to the point of a dramatic transformation.

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The Dichotomy of Puerto Rico: A Comparison of Rosario Ferré's *Maldito amor* and her Self-translation *Sweet Diamond Dust*

Abigail Roche

Abstract

In Rosario Ferré's English self-translation of her novel Maldito amor*, published as* Sweet Diamond Dust*, she significantly alters the content of the source text to fit an English-speaking readership. I describe and examine the dichotomous elements of Ferré's Puerto Rican social identity—and, by extension, of the Puerto Rican collective identity—through an analysis of the disparities between the source text and her translation, against the context of the island's cultural and political history as well as its colonial and neocolonial relationship with the United States.*

Introduction

In her memoir, Rosario Ferré (1938-2016), a prolific author from Puerto Rico, writes: "Literature does not have anything to do with life and yet it has everything to do with it" (79). Until 1988, Ferré wrote in Spanish and delegated translation rights to professional, commercial translators. Discontented with the result, she debuted her self-translation career with *Sweet Diamond Dust* (1988), her English rendition of *Maldito amor* (1986). Her unique perspective on her own work is shown through her substantive changes, additions, and omissions through the process. Writing and publishing in Spanish and English, she occupies an intercultural position, making deliberate textual choices that coincide with the political and cultural situation at the time in Puerto Rico and in the diasporic communities on the American mainland. Using her commentaries in the novels' preface, her memoir, and her essays, I examine the source text and the translation from a feminist and postcolonial theoretical perspective in an effort to explore the autobiographical elements that Ferré incorporates into her work, whether intentionally or not. Her self-translation sheds light on her concerns for how identity is conveyed, particularly Puerto Rican identity, and it demonstrates the inherent duality of a people who is geographically, linguistically, and politically divided.

The act of translation has been recognized as a cultural process by theorists such as Friedrich Schleiermacher. Translation is a cultural process that situates the translator as the mediator between the former and the new target audience (Martín 2). Although prominent professionals like Gregory Rabassa have translated Ferré's novels, she has chosen to take it upon herself to translate or re-translate many of her own pieces. In so doing, she intentionally radically alters the new version to fit the target readership

and context.[9] Perhaps she feels that without making her works available in both languages and if not translated properly, those that no longer have a command of Spanish—particularly individuals of Puerto Rican descent—would miss the sense of community found in identifying with the works and expressed culture. Furthermore, self-translating provides a writer with the opportunity to offer a fresh perspective and reinterpretation of the work and to correct what they are unsatisfied with in the original version. In Ferré's case, the updated translations she produces in English or Spanish vary greatly from the source text. Even if she did not make substantive changes when translating, an attempt at identical renditions would result in a profoundly different translated text nonetheless, as it would be received in a different time and by a different readership.

Taking control of translating her own works, Ferré has the liberty to divert from the original published literature, unlike a commercial translator whose job it is to remain true to the source text while considering the syntactical, idiomatic, and cultural differences of the readers, since it is a "generally accepted fact that literal translations cannot be successful with literary works" (*The Craft of Translation* xi). Ferré goes beyond the translator's role as cultural mediator and accommodates the competing versions of the stories to two different targeted reader groups. She admits in her collection of essays, *El coloquio de las perras,* that her intended audiences are Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans or

[9] The books were published approximately two years apart (1986 and 1988); therefore, her changes could not be motivated by an aging readership. Jennifer Beatson posits that "the textual differences between the two works are designed so that their respective audiences take away a [*sic*] altered interpretations from each text" (1). I further this thesis by also examining what the textual differences reveal about Ferré's social identity.

English-speaking Puerto Ricans on the mainland, translating into English to "save them from cultural suicide" (Quoted by Jaffe 73). The result of her translation of *Maldito amor,* however, is a politically diluted and historically focused iteration of *Sweet Diamond Dust*. I postulate that these political and historical changes are not coincidental or ignorant. Instead, they illustrate the influence of the United States' hegemony in the sense that Ferré knowingly caters her literature not only to the English-language privilege in the U.S., but also to American sensitivities and prejudices.

About the author

Rosario Ferré's contributions as a writer and political activist began long before she published *Maldito amor*. She was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, to a politically active father who successfully ran for governor of the island for the Partido Nuevo Progresista [New Progressive Party][10] in 1968. Her mother became ill and passed shortly after in 1971 (Ferré, *Memoir* 2). Ferré first learned English as her second language because she wanted to read comic books that were unavailable in Spanish, which embedded her in the two cultures at a young age (Martín 5). She majored in English and French literature at Manhattanville College and received a Master's of Spanish Literature from the University of Puerto Rico, studying under world-renowned professors and authors such as Mario Vargas Llosa (Ferré, *Memoir* 81). Her career as a writer gained momentum in 1970 when she started a literary journal entitled *Zona*, *Carga y descarga* with a group of writers (81). Through this experience, she deepened her political beliefs, particularly on the matter of

[10] My translations are indicated throughout this article with square brackets.

statehood versus independence for Puerto Rico (83). While living in Mexico, she wrote a book of feminist essays, *Sitio a Eros* [Place for Eros], and she translated two books by Lillian Hellman into Spanish (88). In 1982 she published a book of poetry that considered the female condition as its principal subject. It took her four years and approximately eighteen drafts to write *Maldito Amor* (92).

Brief history of Puerto Rico

The dichotomy between Ferré's English and Spanish productions parallels the division of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has a history of colonialism both from Spain and the U.S. and has been heavily affected by the imperial powers. Spain began colonizing the island in the late 15th century with the arrival of Christopher Columbus followed by Juan Ponce de León. They were particularly interested in the fertile land along the beach, the well-protected bay—now the San Juan port[11]—that could serve to harbour sailing vessels, and the gold found in the rivers that cross the island (Abbad y Lasierra 19-25). The Taíno, who was the principal Indigenous people on the island, revered the Spanish for a time as their protectors until the population began to decline because of European diseases and maltreatment. After the gold industry slowed down, most Europeans migrated elsewhere but several colonizers remained and established sugarcane plantations (Mathews et al.). Other than two short periods of political freedom, Spain maintained absolutist control over the island for centuries. In the mid-19th century, there was a division of the population between those seeking assimilation under the Spanish government, those who

[11] The beach was called "Guadilla," which meant "garden" in the Indigenous language of the Taíno people (Abbad y Lasierra 19).

wanted to continue as a commonwealth, and those who favoured complete independence (Mathews et al.). During the Spanish-Cuban-American war in 1898, however, U.S. troops invaded Puerto Rico and stifled hopes of political nationalism. In 1951, there was an overwhelming approval of the autonomy of commonwealth status, yet dissatisfaction continued (Ayala et al. 168).

There have been large waves of migration leaving Puerto Rico for the U.S., which has created diasporic communities largely in the Northeast of the mainland (Cohn et al.). Emigrations of mass proportions from the island occurred between 1945 and 1965, and again in the 1980s and in the 1990s (Cohn et al.). In 2012, a census revealed that, demographically, the number of people of Puerto Rican origin residing on the U.S. mainland outnumbered the Puerto Ricans on the island (Cohn et al.). Several plebiscites[12] were held on Puerto Rico's political status in 1967, 1993, and 1998 (Mathews et al.). In 1998, as stated in the U.S. congressional report entitled *The Results of the 1998 Puerto Rico Plebiscite,* led by Chairman Don Young, the Government of Puerto Rico "conducted a political status plebiscite under local election laws" (5). The result was inconclusive because 50.2% of Puerto Ricans voted: "None of the above" (41). On a national level, Washington policymakers have highlighted Puerto Rico's "inability to reach consensus on political status" (Mathews et al.).

[12] Plebiscite: "a direct vote by the people of a country or region in which they say whether they agree or disagree with a particular policy, for example whether a region should become an independent state" (Collins English Dictionary). For example, the 1998 plebiscite in Puerto Rico provided five options: statehood, commonwealth, independence, free association or "None of the above" (Young 41).

Similar to the independence movement of Quebec in Canada as a form of decolonization, the fear of assimilation is a key motivator propelling those striving for independence as a separate nation (Jedwab 40). Senator Rubén Berríos Martínez, current president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, stated in 1995 before the Subcommittee on Native American and Insular Affairs, "as long as Puerto Ricans are Puerto Ricans, with their distinct identity and language, Congress as a body cannot seriously consider statehood" (Young 33). As a Puerto Rican, he recognizes that language is a crucial topic in Puerto Rico's political debate, and he believes that integration as a state could result in a "conflict of nationalities" (29). Puerto Rico was and remains sharply divided between those who believe they require independence to preserve their cultural identity and language, and those who dismiss the idea of "the nation" as a totalitarian and homogenizing fiction (Duany 13). Neither perspective in this debate considers the Puerto Rican diaspora in its concept of Puerto Rico as a nation. Diasporic communities "often depart from the dominant nationalist canon by stressing their cultural and affective ties to an ancestral homeland, rather than their linguistic and territorial borders" (284). Through her novels, Ferré creates a dialogue engaging the controversies surrounding Puerto Rico's independence, statehood, or continued commonwealth status, which speak to the question of national identity.

Differences in the self-translation

Maldito amor tells the story of three generations of the De la Valle family, who own a sugar plantation in Puerto Rico. The novel, comprised of four short stories, is recognized for its wit and treatment of prevalent issues of independence, religion, and race. It raises issues of

oppression of women, people of colour, and biracial people, showing how these characters increasingly defy social codes in a patriarchal society of injustice and inequality (Jaffe 75). In *El coloquio de las perras,* in reference to *Maldito amor,* Ferré emphasizes the relationship between colonialism and the island as well as colonialism and women, who live a broken life dependent on the patriarchal order (quoted by Jaffe 67). The stories told in *Maldito amor* do not paint a positive future for the island outside of colonialism, nor do they represent the U.S. from a favourable perspective.

In *Sweet Diamond Dust*, Ferré diminishes her accusatory tone regarding U.S. occupation of the island. Although she does not alter the plot, certain passages go from critical to nuanced or neutral regarding the American legacy and influence in Puerto Rico (Jaffe 77).[13] The tone concerning U.S. imperialism and the vision of the island's future is therefore more positive than in the source text. The first and most notable change occurs in the title, which is reimagined absent the notion of doom for the country or damned love between a man and a woman implied by the word *maldito* in Spanish (Ferré, Memoir 94). The lexical difference of the two titles immediately demonstrates the author's careful consideration of the alterity of the two languages. The title in Spanish, *Maldito amor*, not only evokes a form of swearing but is also the title of a famous *danza* written by a Puerto Rican named

[13] In *Maldito amor,* Ferré describes the town's citizens feeling more comfortable surrounded by screams and beggars, far away from the parts of town that have gotten cleaner and more orderly since the arrival of the foreigners (80). By contrast, in *Sweet Diamond Dust,* she writes that the noise, heat, and dirt make them feel at home, away from the cleanliness and orderliness that "had come lately over most of the town," removing the critical reference to the influence of foreigners, presumably Americans (57).

Juan Morell Campos. In the preface of *Sweet Diamond Dust*, Ferré references the *danza* and writes that it "exemplifies better than any work I know the seigniorial paradise of the sugarcane planters, without ever mentioning that the greater part of the islanders lived in Hell" (viii). Since the title in Spanish holds cultural significance and she considers it "untranslatable", she opts for a different title altogether in English (Ferré, Memoir 95-96). Similarly, she does not translate the name of the sugar mill *Central Justicia* literally as "Justice Mill" because it would not exactly convey the idea nuanced in Spanish of keeping the mill "justly" out of American control. Instead, she names it "Diamond Dust Sugar Mill," which ends up being prophetic in nature because Puerto Rico has become one of the major ports of drug entry into the U.S., as Ferré herself notes in the English preface (ix).

In the first chapter of *Maldito amor*, which is set in the town of Guamaní, there is evidence of negative sentiment toward American capitalism. Ferré writes: "Lejos de ser un paraíso, nuestro pueblo se ha convertido en un enorme embudo por el cual se vierte noche y día hacia Norteamérica el aterrador remolino de azúcar que vomita la Central Ejemplo" [Far from being a paradise, our town has become an enormous funnel through which the terrifying swirl of sugar vomited up by the 'Central Ejemplo' is poured night and day into North America] (26). Her choice of words in this sentence negatively evokes American capitalism (la Central Ejemplo, the U.S. sugar mill), associating it with the distinct imagery of vomiting. In contrast, Ferré translates the passage as follows: "Far from being a paradise, Guamaní has become a hell, a monstrous whirlpool from which the terrifying funnel of Snow White Sugar Mills spews out sugar night and day toward the north" (7). The English version

transmits a less accusatory tone and is therefore less critical of American legacy on the island than the Spanish original. Word choice in the passage is deliberate, considering she could have used equivalent terms for the words, "vomit" and "North America," but opted for more conciliatory terms. Moreover, as Angela F. Martín notes, Ferré's translation of the word *embudo* to "funnel" does not quite capture the underlying meaning, which is to lure or to trap someone (34).

Ferré incorporates more of Puerto Rico's history in *Sweet Diamond Dust* than in the Spanish source text. In her essay, "On Destiny, Language, and Translation; or Ophelia Adrift in the C. & O. Canal," she writes that "translation is not only a literary but also a historical task; it includes an interpretation of internal history, of the changing proceedings of consciousness in a civilization" (90). By amplifying the history in her translated editions, the author is aiding in the preservation of the collective memory of Puerto Rico's regional history. In Jonathan Culler's book on literary theory, he corroborates that post-colonial theory can function as an attempt to intervene in the construction of knowledge and, "for intellectuals who come from post-colonial societies, [an attempt] to write their way back into a history others have written" (131). When publishing for an English-speaking audience, Ferré uses her voice to tell the stories of Puerto Rico, a post-colonial nation-state. She may also consider that the readership living on the mainland could be less familiar with the island's colonial past. Furthermore, as Janice Jaffe notes in her critical essay, Ferré takes advantage of her freedom as the translator of her own work to "correct chronological inconsistencies, as she renders paradoxes and intricacies of Puerto Rican history more vividly for readers" (76). For instance, in the first

chapter of *Sweet Diamond Dust* entitled "Guamaní," Ferré adds an extensive section detailing the history of the town and the Taíno people (4). In the fifth chapter, she also introduces a section where Arístides explains the history of his paternal and maternal grandfathers' involvement in the U.S. invasion (39). This section signals the division of the island that exists even within families (Martín 46), and it infuses a layer of history into the fiction for the benefit of the non-local English-speaking readers.

The four lengthy additions present only in the English version reveal how Ferré occasionally modifies her "anti-Yankee tone." For instance, in the chapter entitled in Spanish *El desengaño* [The disappointment], Don Robaldo Ramírez comments, "Aquí, aunque los puertorriqueños gobiernen, los norteamericanos mandan, y yo ya estoy demasiado viejo para dejarme hacer gringo a la fuerza" [Here, even though Puerto Ricans govern, North Americans rule, and I am already too old to be forced to become gringo] (51). By contrast in English, Ferré omits the word "gringo", presumably because it is commonly used as an insult toward foreigners, particularly toward Americans (Martín 24). Another prominent example of the softening of her sentiments toward the U.S. is in the section entitled *El Rescate*, "The Rescue," where Don Hermenegildo talks about the sugar plantation being saved from North American investors. In Spanish he describes "el día en que rescató la Central Justicia de las garras de la Central Ejemplo" [the day when he rescued the 'Central Justicia' from the claws of the 'Central Ejemplo'] (77). However, in English he says that the plantation is saved "from being blown away by the wind" (52). This change clearly illustrates her use of self-censure for a targeted audience and how she omits the original's accusatory tone. Jaffe posits that Ferré's translation

succumbs to the colonizing power of the States, since she frequently adapts and softens her tone to appeal to an American capitalist market (73).

The character Gloria is significant in both versions of the novel, though in slightly different roles. On the one hand, *Maldito amor* casts a negative light on prostitution. The idea of Gloria being a prostitute is insinuated by men in the town and is used in attempts to deny her legitimacy or her rights to the plantation by discrediting the profession (41).[14] The plot surrounding Gloria in *Maldito amor* centres on her identity as a biracial woman. On the other hand, Ferré emphasizes Gloria's identity as a prostitute in *Sweet Diamond Dust* as the central reason for why Doña Laura gives her control of the sugar plantation. In a passage added in English, Doña Laura explains that she is aware that Gloria has become a "legendary prostitute" and sees her and Nicolás as the port between South and North America (76). Gloria is associated instead in the English version with the idea of a future of change for the island given that her prostitution is portrayed positively in the eyes of Doña Laura. Gloria is "figured as the literal port or 'puerto' through which cross-cultural intimacy and communication are achieved" (Esplin 25). Ferré gives her female characters prominent roles in the story despite demonstrating the realistic problems of hierarchy.

Gloria's character is a symbol for language, which is a significant element of Ferré's concern for Puerto Rican

[14] In *Maldito amor,* Ferré writes: "Las malas lenguas la tienen pelada, y dicen que hasta que está loca, y que es y que correntona con los hombres...Pero en este pueblo perder la reputación quiere decir perder el crédito" [The malicious gossip has her bare, and they say that she is crazy and runs with men… But in this town, losing your reputation means losing your credit] (41). Such exact passages are absent in the English version.

identity and its duality. In the passage discussing Gloria's prostitution in *Sweet Diamond Dust*, Doña Laura says, "In her body, or if you prefer in her cunt, both races, both languages, English and Spanish, grew into one soul, one wordweed of love" (76). Gloria's body is positioned as the meeting place for a blend of race and language, an example of hybridity,[15] dissolving "cultural and linguistic boundaries" between Puerto Ricans, North and South Americans (Jaffe 68). Through candid imagery of prostitution, Ferré alludes to her own role as a translator passing back and forth linguistically and culturally between English and Spanish. Doña Laura goes on to explain that through this connection or port, the divided North and South will "finally understand each other" (76). Her words further the relationship established between Gloria and the author, who is serving as a cultural mediator between the island and the mainland through the act of self-translation.

Puerto Rican identity

Ferré's own hybrid identity surfaces in the act of writing and translating. She has admitted that she feels like a different person when writing in English. In an address to Florida State University in 1997, she said, "to be a bilingual writer is really to be two different writers, to write in two different styles and, most important of all, to be able to look at the world through two different sets of glasses" (Quoted

[15] Hybrid: "a person whose background is a blend of two diverse cultures or traditions" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The heterogeneity of Puerto Ricans is an example of hybridity, since the background of an individual of Puerto Rican origin from an island that was colonized and settled by the descendants of diverse cultures from Spain and America as well as the legacy of Indigenous peoples who also have distinct cultures and traditions.

by Martín 6). This passage illustrates the dichotomy of her bilingual identity. Like Gloria's body, the author's mind is the meeting place of two distinct languages and cultures. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, first advanced by Edward Sapir in 1929, suggests that language influences thought to the extent that people speaking different languages perceive the world differently (Skerrett 331). This theory is evidenced in Ferré's experience, admitting in the aforementioned university address to seeing the world differently when writing in either language.

Ferré has said that she feels a psychological distance when writing in English, since she must consider her words more carefully than she would do in her native Spanish tongue, and this allows her to concentrate more efficiently on the plot (Navarro, 1998). Her bilingualism gives her insight into both cultures and adds a new dimension to the reader's understanding of the author and her relationship with her neighborhood. Ferré admits that there is a risk of madness in translating her own work or of fatal loss of personal identity, yet she chooses to do so regardless (Jaffe 72). In both *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust,* she denounces the colonial efforts to impose English on the island (77). The imposition or adoption of a colonial language constitutes assimilation; the U.S. has gained the reputation of the "graveyard" of foreign languages, and the fear of assimilation is a common motivation among Puerto Ricans seeking independence (Tran, "Language and Culture"). Nevertheless, it seems that Ferré's fear of losing her personal identity does not stand to reason because, as I have elaborated, her social identity includes the dichotomy of the two languages and cultures. Emboldened, she undertook to publish her next novel, *The House on the Lagoon*, in English first instead of in Spanish. A comparison

of her translated works reveals that her authorial identity shifted according to her target readership. By juxtaposing her source text in Spanish to her translation in English, we can trace Ferré's personal transformation relative to Puerto Rican identity.

The self-translation of *Maldito amor* could be considered a concession to U.S. hegemony or, more positively, a representation of Ferré's identity and the collective Puerto Rican hybrid identity. Ferré has argued that adaptation was necessary to reach the Puerto Ricans on the mainland "to save them from cultural suicide" (Jaffe 73). The less dichotomous "us" versus "them" representation of Puerto Rican identity "may be seen more constructively as transcending binarism in the passage toward a new understanding of what Puerto Rican identity means at the close of the twentieth century" (76). As mentioned, Ferré can be compared to Gloria since she serves as the meeting place of the North and the South by writing in Spanish and English, and she conforms her own identity in accordance with the target readership. When writing for Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans, she sympathizes with the survivors of imperial atrocities and comments on the discrimination diaspora Puerto Ricans experience in the U.S., which contributes to the interpretation of English as constituting a threat to their identity. In contrast, when writing for the English-speaking Puerto Ricans, "she seems to become an assimilationist, silencing both her native language and the non-technological vision of the world that Spanish represents for her" (Jaffe 74). In an op-ed article in the *New York Times* in 1998, Ferré states, "As a Puerto Rican and an American, I believe our future as a community is inseparable from our culture and language, but I'm also passionately committed to the modern world. That's why I'm going to

support statehood in the next plebiscite." This statement surprised and angered intellectuals and some among her admirers because, until then, she was an avid supporter of independence. Prominent figures, like Puerto Rican author Lydia Vega, publicly accused her of being an assimilationist (Navarro, 1998). Ferré states in an interview that language "is like your skin" (Navarro, 1998). Just as people shed old skin to make room for new growth, people will also unavoidably make room for personal growth by changing their principles, characteristics, and beliefs as their experiences and encounters affect them. Ferré's hybrid identity does not only allow her to write in both Spanish and English with insight into both cultures, but she has also thereby grown into new authorial "skin" and further unravelled her hybrid identity.

The distance Ferré feels when writing in English and her expression of a hybrid identity echoes the sentiments of many Puerto Ricans who spend their lives divided between their homeland and the U.S. and between English and Spanish. In post-colonial studies, identity is a primary focus because of issues posed by colonialism and its aftermath (Culler 130). For instance, colonialism has been demonstrated to cause a mutual feeling of inferiority or of being subordinate among the colonized peoples (118). Culler explains that there is a growing corpus that debates the idea of post-colonial subjects as hybrid, "emerging from the superimposition of conflicting languages and cultures" (130). The dichotomy that is a result of a history of division between the U.S. and Puerto Rico contributes to the construction of Puerto Rican self-consciousness relative to its colonial heritage.

The word "identity" comes from the Latin word *identidem*, an adverb that means "repeatedly", again and

again (Craft 149). Therefore, the essence of the word in English implies the idea that repetition forms identity (149). For centuries, Puerto Rico has experienced strong influence from Spanish colonialism, and later from U.S. occupation on the island, in addition to the hybridization of these cultures and languages. The repetition in the Puerto Rican context lies in this duality. In the op-ed published in the *New York Times* in 1998, Ferré articulates, "To be Puerto Rican is to be a hybrid. Our two halves are inseparable; we cannot give up either without feeling maimed. For many years, my concern was to keep my Hispanic self from being stifled. Now I discover it's my American self that's being threatened." She expresses that this sentiment of heterogeneity is inherent to being Puerto Rican, and her use of "we" indicates that she sees it as a shared sentiment. Furthermore, she evokes the diasporic communities and the power in the Spanish language to "threaten" American culture and society. Ilan Stavans, a Mexican-American essayist, contends that it is the transformation of the U.S., "the Hispanization" and the "Anglocization of Hispanics," that has produced the Latino hybrid (Quoted by Martín 7). Ferré's expression of her hybrid identity and the bilingual versions she produces establish her work in a manner relatable for Puerto Ricans on the island and in the diaspora alike.

The construction of identity often pertains to the concept of home or the place of origin. Consequently, the construction of Puerto Rican national identity is largely centred on the notion of the island—that is to say, it is territorially grounded—especially within diasporic communities (Lamba-Nieves 309). Nevertheless, Ferré considers the dream of the paradisiacal "homeland" an idealization. Ferré states in the preface of *Maldito amor* that

those "que sufren en el insilio sueñan muchas veces con una isla que no existe más que en su imaginación…" [who suffer in insularity often dream of an island that exists only in their imagination] (13). This illustrates a romanticizing of the absent place, through which everything is compared to an idyllic homeland that exists in the imagination. Ferré goes on to say that it is "una idealización de la vida romántica de la hacienda y sus dueños que permanece como paradigma o ejemplo en la mente de las capas populares por mucho tiempo" [an idealization of the romantic life of the *hacienda*[16] and its owners that remains a paradigm or example in the minds of the popular classes for a long time] (14). In the English preface, she writes, "The myth of paradise confounds but consoles us" (x). She emphasizes the concept in both novels of a longing for the island or *hacienda* lifestyle when, in reality, "the mythical place in the country [they] always dream about never existed except for a privileged few" (*Sweet Diamond Dust* viii).

Ferré explains in the preface of *Sweet Diamond Dust* that immigration strengthens the Puerto Rican personality trait of a "splintered national conscience" (ix). She notes that the island has welcomed numerous legal and illegal immigrants from the neighbouring countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba (ix). Furthermore, Ferré believes that Puerto Rican identity is "intimately related to escape and to change, where survival is dangerously precarious", and she compares it metaphorically to the significance of the San Juan port (viii). As illustrated with this image of a port, it is common for Puerto Ricans to spend a great deal of time throughout their life going between the island and mainland. For this reason,

[16] Hacienda: "in Spanish America, a large landed estate, one of the traditional institutions of rural life" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Gloria's aforesaid role as the "port" between cultures holds significance in the formation of Puerto Rico's national identity and I argue that immigration has therefore played a large role in the construction of Puerto Rican identity.

Consistencies between novels

It is worth noting the elements that Ferré chooses to keep in both versions, as it further reveals who she is and what is shared between the two target audiences. An element of the story that Ferré does not dilute or change is her description of the feminist condition and struggle. She creates opportunities to question gender politics between the versions of her novel and questions women's marginal position in society. Culler posits that feminist theory is concerned with "the impact of socially constructed gender roles on making the subject what he or she is" (109). He also references Judith Butler's *Gender Politics,* which presents the idea that gender is performative (Culler 103). Butler's theory holds that feminine identity is not contingent on female features but that it is a cultural and social fabrication based on habituation. As noted above, the etymology of the word "identity" supports its inherent link to repetition.

Although Ferré develops female characters who fit the typical role society has constructed for them, she also gives them agency and an empowered voice. According to Martín, the female characters' narratives in the novels subvert the male discourse and denounce the island's issues of identity, race, and women's marginality (13). In the chapter entitled *Las bodas de doña Elvira*, "The Marriage of Doña Elvira," Doña Elvira De la Valle is physically abused by her husband after interceding on behalf of a worker, and he then commands her not to speak. Ferré thereby confronts the reader with the conventional, marginal position of women in

the household. In the first chapter of *Sweet Diamond Dust*, Ferré outlines some of the activities each gender performs in the town, such as the men going to a casino and the women doing charity work (6). This is not present in the source text, but it blatantly divides the activities of men from those of the women and develops the image of the patriarchal society. More than most female characters, Gloria is given a significant role and voice. She manifests the violence of alterity—the frustration of feeling different—when she burns the De la Valle family home with people still inside (85). When Gloria sings her version of the *danza* "Maldito amor" as she burns down the house, she expresses that she is no longer "songless" and has found her voice (85). Despite the violence of the action, it is an empowering moment for Gloria and for women reading the book because she becomes an agent, moving into action, as opposed to the conventionally accepted passive female character.

The concept of hybridity has often been perceived in a negative light, dating back centuries to the European obsession with *pureza de sangre*, 'purity of blood'. This racial preoccupation is represented in the novels through the character of Gloria, a woman of mixed race, and through Titina, a person of colour who works as a servant for the family. Titina is a silent observer throughout the story. She represents African slaves in Puerto Rico who have been consistently silenced and abused throughout the island's history (Martín 15). Furthermore, Martín considers the climax of the story to be the shock that the founder of the De la Valle family was a biracial person (15). Ferré is thus representing deep-rooted racial prejudices of the inhabitants of the island, which are "ignored or silenced" (Martín 15). I posit that she reveals the irrational nature of the racism of the characters by demonstrating that the racial background of the

founder did not have any impact while they remained ignorant. Moreover, Ferré preserves the word, *criollo* (a person of pure Spanish descent) in *Sweet Diamond Dust* without translating it or including a footnote. These examples make clear that her decisions are deliberate, and they carefully cater to the target readership.

It is worth noting that in Ferré's Spanish self-translation of her next novel, *The House on the Lagoon*, she alters the text to fit a Spanish-speaking audience, shedding light on "her divided national and linguistic loyalties" (Esplin 23). For instance, in the original English version, the character Quintin emphasizes the advantages of the protagonist writing her manuscript in English and says, "Would she have written her manuscript in English if she didn't think English was important? If she had written her novel in Spanish and published in Puerto Rico, why, only a handful of people would read it! But if she published in the United States, thousands would read it" (150-151). This passage exposes one of Ferré's motives for writing *The House on the Lagoon* in English first. However, this passage is omitted from the Spanish translation. Esplin corroborates that through "the dissonances between the English and Spanish versions of her text on this point, she reveals a tendency to tiptoe around the perceived sensitivities of her different audiences when writing" (34). This demonstrates that Ferré does not only cater to an English-speaking audience when self-translating, she also mitigates her content for a Spanish-speaking audience.

Conclusion

As a result of Ferré's having created functionally varied versions of *Maldito amor* adapted to its readers, a study of its translation elucidates the multilayered

dichotomy of Puerto Rican identity, which affects individual and collective experiences. Puerto Rico's future is undecided on the political issue of statehood, autonomy or independence, and the island remains divided between English and Spanish. However, this dichotomy has become an inherent part of the identity of the nation, since identity is a fluid concept shaped by adaptation and repetition. Ferré is a leader in self-translation because of her boldness as a cultural mediator who embraces hybridity. Her multilingualism enables her to make deliberate changes when translating in order to reach and inform different audiences. She is a model for multilingual authors working in periphery post-colonial nations, showing that linguistic hybridity is an advantage to producing world literature. Her novels highlight important issues of race, gender politics, and oppression, and demonstrate that individuals have liberty to change their beliefs and perspectives. Both *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust* illustrate in their own way Puerto Rico's rich history as a unique people whose culture and language are worth cherishing.

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Postwar, Postcolonial and Collective Trauma / Traumatisme d'après-guerre, postcolonial et collectif

Esma's and Sara's Resilience in Grbavica*:* The Land of My Dreams

Gisèle Nyembwe

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse resilience in Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams*, a film inspired by the Bosnian war, and which has succeeded to show through the daily lives of its characters, the effects of rape during wartime. The film depicts the resilience that countless of rape survivors and families show as they are left to fend for themselves. In particular, the film brings to the forefront the issues of trauma suffered by victims of rape and that of the discrimination faced by children born as a result. Although said to not be political, the film is a subtle appeal for change on behalf of these women and children.*

Introduction

In this paper, I analyse the film *Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams* by Director Jasmila Žbanić from the perspective of transgenerational trauma. The film offers multiple levels of trauma representation. Both Esma and her daughter are victims of the Bosnian war, and I argue that they have succeeded to work through their trauma. Ordinary events in their daily lives reveal that they are therefore models in resilience. To analyse Esma's and Sara's attitudes and their respective responses to their surrounding and to trauma, I use trauma concepts such as Sabine Lee's theory on Children Born of War (CBOW), Dominick La Capra's definitions of 'acting out' and 'working through' to analyze the characters in the film. In addition, I apply E. Ann Kaplan's theories on vicarious trauma to demonstrate the secondary trauma—the indirect exposure to trauma through a firsthand account or narrative of a traumatic event—experienced by viewers. I also analyse specific segments in the film as well as the characters' attitudes and behaviours to demonstrate the above. *Grbavica* is a film that has given a voice to countless women who have survived war rape in Bosnia and in other conflict zones. *Grbavica* raises awareness about the mental, social and economic problems that rape survivors and their families continue to face—issues that are often not easily talked about but that need to be addressed in order to help personal and collective healing.

Filmmaker's Background and Plot Context

Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams is a 2006 film by director Jasmila Žbanić. It is influenced by the legacy of the war in her home country, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Žbanić was born in 1974 in Sarajevo, the city in which the film takes

place. She went to local schools in Sarajevo, before attending the Academy of Performing Arts. Žbanić was seventeen years old when the war broke out in Bosnia. In interviews, Žbanić revealed that she lived a hundred meters from the front line. Her interest in the lives of women who survived rape began when she learnt in 1992 about mass rapes in her home country. From that point on, she read and followed everything that was related to the topic. She worked for a while in the United States filling various roles. In 1997, she founded the artist's association "Deblokada" (translated as “breaking the siege”) and started making documentaries and short films. Her determination to write *Grbavica* came during her pregnancy and days of new motherhood as she wondered about the emotional impact that giving birth to a child conceived in rape might have on a mother. She claims she wrote *Grbavica* between breast feeds.

Grbavica explores the life experiences of women who survived rape and that of their children born as a result. In particular, the film addresses how the war affects their private and public relations, and how the local and global communities will cope with atrocities and the post-war scenario (De Pascalis 365). *Grbavica* is known internationally as *Esma’s Secret*, and has won numerous awards under this title, including the Golden Bear for Best Film at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival and a Special Ecumenical Jury Award for being the Best Peace Film. The film is spoken in Serbo-Croatian with English subtitles, and was the first feature-length film by director Jasmila Zbanić, who had already made a name for herself with her documentaries *Autobiography, Later, Later*, and *It’s Night and We Burn It*. In 2013, Žbanić received the inaugural Femme du Cinema award at the Les Arcs

European Film Festival for *Grbavica* and *For Those Who Can Tell No Tales* which also focuses on the haunting legacy of wartime rape.

Summary: *Grbavica*

The story takes place in Grbavica,[17] a neighbourhood of Sarajevo.[18] Grbavica is known by war crime researchers as the site of one of the Serb 'rape camps', although its existence has often been denied by the authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina or concealed in public discourse about the Bosnian War (De Pascalis 369). Aida Vidan notes that the word 'Grbavica' means a woman with a hunchback, or, in this case, a woman who is marked (130). The film's main character Esma (Mirjana Karanović) has been hiding from her teenage daughter Sara (Luna Mijović) a horrible truth about her father's absence. Things erupt when the school organizes an excursion for which Sara needs a certificate attesting that her father died during the war, in order to attend and receive a discounted fee. Esma is unable to produce the certificate. She keeps finding excuses to delay and Sara grows suspicious. Out of desperation, Sara will force her mother to tell her the truth by pointing a borrowed gun at

[17] Grbavica is a district in Sarajevo, which during the two-year long siege by the JNA and Serb paramilitary forces in the 1990s was transformed into a de-facto prison camp for Grbavica's residents. The film alludes to some of the atrocities that took place there, including that 12 years after the war mass graves are still being exhumed in the district's vicinity (Todorova 12).

[18] Sarajevo became the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995. It used to also be the capital of Bosnia under the former Yugoslavia; but now it is the capital city of the independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

her. The truth that Sara is a "Chetnik[19] bastard" and that Esma was raped is painful for both of them but offers a departure from the haunting past. Esma decides to take advantage of the group therapy sessions and begins to share her account to work through her trauma. At the end of the film, Sara makes peace with her new identity and joins the other students on the trip. Her gradual recovery is shown by her joining the chorus of singing on the bus.

Analysis: The Neglect of Women in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina

Grbavica has been praised for its simplicity and for some of the decisions made by its director. Firstly, unlike most films dealing with wartime crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and produced during the post-war period, *Grbavica* spares the viewers from scenes of atrocities which, as described by Pavičić, can over-saturate the viewer with bloodbaths, pillage and ruthlessness. Secondly, the director does not adopt an accusatory perspective towards perpetrators. The script does not call for revenge or cry for justice. The director restricts the focus to observing the victims and showing their resilience (Pavičić 49).

Survivors are by no means idealized. As portrayed by Serbian actress Mirjana Karanović, Esma is an unremarkable and tacit woman who could have otherwise been easily disliked by the viewer, if we had not sympathized with her painful past. Sara is a typical adolescent, a stubborn and often ungrateful brat who projects her anger and generational

[19] "While historically 'Chetniks' were Serb Royalist forces during WWII and since the war in the1990's the concept has been associated with the Serb nationalists, 'Chetnik' remains an ideological and political category of identification and differentiation rather than an ethnic one" (Todorova 13).

conflict onto a tired, overworked mother. Neither of them is arbitrarily ill-intentioned or benign. Despite such a terrible secret between them, both are relatable, vivid characters, the kind of people we might find in any working-class neighbourhood of the West or the East. (Pavičić 48-49)

The neglect of women survivors of mass rape in Post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina plays a central role in *Grbavica*, but also represents the actual context in which the film was created. Due to the mass rape and widespread acts of sexual violence perpetrated against women, official estimates place the number of raped women between 20,000[20] and 50,000[21], some observers have labelled the war in Bosnia "a war against women" (Todorova 4), although there were tens of thousands of men killed and some were raped, too.

Pierre Bayard points out, "it is important to distinguish what happened in Bosnia from what happened in other war-torn countries, where the rape of women is frequent among victorious armies. In Bosnia the rapes not only accompanied the advance of the Serbian armies, they were also the result of a concerted policy of cultural eradication and, as such, were often committed systematically, in camps created specifically for this purpose, …" (117). With this in mind, we can safely conclude that the act of rape during the Bosnian war was a strategy by the Serb army to decimate Bosniaks[22] and create a new generation by making Bosniak women and girls pregnant with their babies.

[20] In December 1992, a European Union fact finding mission determined that the Bosnian Serb Army had raped 20,000 women (Strupinskiene 59).

[21] The Bosnian Government estimated the number of raped women close to 50,000 (Strupinskiene 59).

[22] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosniaks

Elissa Helms points out in *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* that there were many forms of gender-based violence, including against men and women of other ethnic groups, and that not all rapes can be considered as ethnic violence. According to Simic, the experiences of the women who were raped have been deliberately silenced in the national and local context in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "only invoked in the abstract as a symbol of the Bosniak nation's collective hurt and suffering" (83). As such, it is not surprising to see that rape victims continue to suffer, given the deliberate efforts by officials to conceal the occurrence of mass rape and to repress the memories of these women. The communal response in the immediate aftermath of the war was characterised by "a conflicting paradox between international legal institutions such as the ICTY[23] which have sought to prosecute perpetrators, and a societal response characterised by silence, the marginalisation of victims, and the pronounced desire to 'forget' about certain aspects of wartime victimisation" (Todorova 13). The silence and desire to forget is well illustrated in *Grbavica* with all the secrecy and lies surrounding Sara's origins. She ultimately resorts to threatening Esma with a borrowed gun in order to find out the truth.

Despite efforts to bring perpetrators to court, the Bosnia-Herzegovina transitional justice process, as described by Simic, has been "slow and arduous, and constantly hampered by the ethnonationalist centrifugal powers with little agreement on the past, present or future" (81). It is not uncommon to see the perpetrators of rape or members of their families to fight by discrediting their accusers or challenging the veracity of the accounts in order

[23] International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

to clear their names and avoid prosecution. In most Bosnia-Herzegovinian cases, as Bayard explains, the perpetrators of rape have not been punished and the victims are denied the symbolic support of the law in their efforts to heal internally (117). Additionally, in Bosnian society, wartime rape is still perceived as a private matter, even though it is formally recognised as a public problem and a human rights issue. The survivors of rape are still not sufficiently physically protected to prevent threats of retaliation, and their rights not fully respected by the institutions such as the police or even the justice system (Simic 82). Subsequently, the silence around the issue gave rise to legacy questions that relate to children born of mass rape:

> Are these children Bosniak, like their mothers, or Serbian, like their fathers? Are they "the enemy within", as the men who conceived them intended them to be, or are these children Bosnian? And if so, what does it mean to be a Bosnian in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina? What cultural legacy should Bosnian children inherit in order to ensure that the violent past does not revisit the future? (Todorova 4)

While *Grbavica* has been acclaimed for succeeding to challenge the status quo, much remains to be done in terms of reparation for raped women and their children. The release of *Grbavica* led, that very same year, to the passing of a law by the Bosnian authorities to award survivors of wartime rape the status of civilian victims, allowing them to receive a small pension (Bayard 118). As Simic notes, *Grbavica* "offers women a reparative sense of recognition as victims as well as the possibility of being active participants in political and social transformation" (81). Simic expands

even further by saying that "the arts and popular culture have developed into alternative realms for raising the concerns that formal institutions have failed to raise" (84). In other words, *Grbavica* has exposed publicly an issue that the Bosnian government, including the police and the judicial system, has not had the courage to address.

Sara: A Child Born of War

In addition to depicting how Esma is coping with her trauma and how the war has affected her private and public life, *Grbavica* also tells of the love between a mother and her daughter. A mother-daughter relationship made complex by the fact that Sara will always be a reminder of painful and unwanted circumstances of her conception. Sabine Lee's study on the impact of trauma suffered by CBOW[24] during and after the Second World War, reveals that the majority of those who participated in her research had strained relations with their mothers and described the family atmosphere as lacking warmth or affection and at times even bordering on abusive (87). In *Grbavica* however, the mother-daughter relationship is completely different. Esma and her daughter seemingly have a normal mother-child loving relationship, and Esma attends to her daughter's emotional and physical needs. For example, she is seen in the film going to the fishery to buy the kind of fish Sara likes. Sara on the other hand, behaves like any normal 12-year old child. She loves her mother, but at times resists her orders. Sara and Esma are seen together at the dinner table talking about what happened at school, and they walk about together in the mall. This shows that they share an emotional bond, which is further

[24] CBOW stands for 'children born of war' in Sabine Lee's book *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*.

solidified when Sara expresses her fear of being abandoned should her mother marry one day, and makes Esma promise never to leave.

Like most CBOW who participated in Lee's research, Sara is haunted by the silence surrounding the truth about her biological father, and feels the need to find out more about him. Lee describes this as "the one characteristic" that unites almost all CBOW, irrespective of the quality of their relationship with their mothers, families and local communities (87). It is, as Lee describes it further, an "irrepressible need and a purely subjective and intimate expectation" (87). Esma concealed the truth about Sara's origin for twelve years, avoiding questions and telling lies about Sarah's father. She let Sara believe that her father was a 'Shaheed'[25], a war hero whose throat was cut by Chetniks (Serbian nationalists) when he refused to run away from the camp. Esma's secret clearly implies, as Todorova explains, silence and even shame in relation to the past (12). Todorova continues by saying that "secrecy implies that forgetting or even conjuring up a fictional past is preferable to speaking out or about social suffering" (12). These words ring true in most families in the world. The shame felt by victims of rape and their families is such that talking about rape or revealing that a child is born of rape is considered taboo.

The film reaches its climax when Sara's irrepressible need to prove that her father is a war hero grows and becomes an obsession. The fact that her boyfriend Samir, an orphan like her, can provide the proof that his father was killed during the war, and even carries his deceased father's gun, further complicates things for Sara. This development in the film's plot is consistent with what Lee says:

[25] Bosniak Muslim loyalists who fought to the death and are considered martyrs or war heroes.

> Unlike other groups who lost their fathers during the war, who were able to keep their fathers' memories alive with objects, photos or in conversations, the fathers of CBOW were entirely non-existent. More often than not, they did not even exist as a name. If anything, they only had meaning as a cause for the children's experiences of loneliness, rejection and discrimination, or as a reason for the supposed immoral behaviour of their mothers and the resulting stigmatisation of the post-conflict communities (87).

Also evident in Sara's attitude is what Lee calls, "the outright positive feeling" towards the absent father, where CBOW idealize the father about whom they know so little (87). Sara was thought to believe that her father was a war hero. She believed her father died in the line of duty to protect her community. Her immediate reaction once she learned that her father was not a war hero but the enemy, was denial—a normal coping mechanism to deal with painful issues. However, in the last scene, Sara becomes a symbol of courage and resilience. She decides to go to the excursion, knowing fairly well that the school likely knew her family secret and that she could be mocked by the three girls who used to quarrel with her.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to predict whether Sara would have given her mother the same consideration many CBOW showed their mothers later in life. Lee notes that adult CBOW became sensitive to the challenges faced by their mothers. "Awareness grew that mothers often had been traumatised by their own wartime experiences and further harmed by post conflict discrimination and stigmatisation" (87). Lee goes on to explain that as a result, CBOW put their own needs of finding out about their roots second to the

perceived greater needs of their mothers to privacy (87). The scene at the end of the film when Sara raises timidly her hand to wave goodbye to her mother is a good indication of the future of their relationship.

Esma: Between Traumatic Acting out and Resilience

It is difficult to imagine how Esma succeeded to conceal her secret for twelve years, despite constant reminders about her traumatic past. She lies for twelve years in order to protect Sara, the daughter she initially did not want, and provide her a semblance of normalcy. At the end, after her long silence, she describes at the group therapy how she tried to get rid of the fetus when she found out that she was pregnant; then how she rejected her when she was born; and how she finally accepted Sara after holding her in her arms to breastfeed her for the first time.

> I wanted to kill her. I pounded my stomach with fists to make her fall out. I pounded hard. I pounded with all my strength, it was no use. My belly grew with her inside. Even then, they came. In twos, threes every day. In the hospital after I gave birth, I said: I don't want her! Take her away. I heard her crying. I heard her through the walls. The next day my milk started flowing. I said, ok, I will feed her, but only once. Only once. And when they brought her… When I took her in my arms, she was so tiny and she was so beautiful. And I had already forgotten there was anything beautiful in this world. (*Grbavica*)

There is no doubt for the viewers that Esma is haunted by her trauma which keeps her imprisoned in a painful and

shameful past. We see her trying to escape every time she has a traumatic flashback. For example, we see Esma playing with her daughter who comes to wake her up in the morning. They are playing on the carpet on the floor, but as soon as Sara goes on top of her mother trying to spin her, Esma violently stops the play. On the bus, a man with an open shirt exposing his hairy chest stands too close to her. She gets off the bus running. Sara's long fingernails disturb her. She obliges Sara to stop eating her favourite meal and cut them short immediately. In the bar, Esma is disturbed by how clients in uniform treat Jakolba, the dancer. She runs to take her medications. She is out with her new boyfriend in a café and says she can still smell the freshness of the past. These scenes are indications that Esma's body and mind still carry the wounds of her sexual abuse.

Pascalis reminds us that "what is at stake in the film is the evanescent difference between 'before'–dominated by horror, and violence against the helpless–and 'after'–pervaded by weak relationships, scarred by the legacies of war, where anything can trigger traumatic memories" (369). It is in fact evident that Esma is haunted by her trauma and that despite all years that have passed, she remains imprisoned by flashbacks of her difficult past. Pascalis says that "such a trajectory from one situation to the other is neither linear nor fixed, but always renegotiated by each character, from one sequence to the next. The film is based on a few visual and verbal dialectics, which are never stated as binary oppositions but still impose a new choice every time" (369). This quote is illustrated in *Grbavica* by all the instances mentioned earlier, where Esma felt the need to escape at once.

Bayard explains that the sudden reminders of the traumatic past as seen in Esma illustrate Freud's theory of

trauma. “The traumatic eruption is so violent that it can find no place in the psyche and thus cannot be worked through” (78). As such, we can conclude that Esma had no time to think or try to compose herself when traumatic eruptions occurred. Her survival instinct compelled her only to find a way out. Lovatt puts it differently by saying:

> Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. The survivor […] is not truly in touch with either the core of his [sic] traumatic reality or with the fatedness of its reenactments, and thereby remains entrapped in both (180).

Furthermore, historian Dominick La Capra recognizes these traumatic eruptions as ‘acting out’ which he says is related to repetition and even the tendency to repeat something compulsively (142). La Capra explains that acting out is very clear in people who suffer from trauma. He notes:

> They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the present as if one were still fully in the past, with no distance from it. Victims of trauma tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence, for example, in flashbacks or in nightmares or in words that are compulsively repeated and that don’t seem to have their ordinary meaning, because they’re taking on

> different connotations from another situation, another place (142-43).

In the film, when traumatic eruptions do not interfere with her day or activities, Esma is reminded of her past ordeal by people making references to it. For example, Esma and Sara are in the mall and meet Esma's aunt. She does not acknowledge Sara, but rather reminds Esma of what her deceased mother would have wished to see her become. Esma ignores her aunt's comments and talks about Sara going on a school trip, but the aunt refuses to help her out. Sabina, Esma's best friend who occasionally babysits Sara when Esma works night shifts, asks Esma to get Sara checked by a 'professional' as Sara is not just any child.

However, in a surprising turn of events, Esma chooses consciously or unconsciously to take a step forward. She falls in love with Pelda, hence accepting to make herself vulnerable again, but also in a wish to heal the past. The real turning point occurs when she is forced to reveal her secret to her daughter. The violent incident helps her break a wall of silence around her, and she decides to take full advantage of the group therapy sessions by finally opening up and speaking about her wartime experience. Initially, she went there only on the days when subsidy grants were given, and she did not speak.

Resilience as defined by Renee Linklater is "the ability to withstand trauma and turmoil and be able to proceed with living and engaging in a productive life" (25). Linklater explains that "resilience is well known to be enhanced by strong relationships with competent and caring adults in family and community, strong cognitive abilities, good self-regulation skills, positive view of self and motivation to be effective" (25). In practical terms, as seen in both Esma's and Sara's situations, resilience requires a combination of

personal desire to move on with the support from family members and community in order to allow the healing to take place and have a productive life. But Linklater also reminds us that resiliency "only operates in response to the presence of risk conditions and the possession of appropriate personal and social assets is not sufficient in and of itself to guarantee a positive outcome" (25). Notwithstanding the violence of the past, the societal rejection and humiliation Esma has overcome, the risk condition that Linklater is referring to in this case, is that Esma might lose her daughter or the relationship with her daughter by telling her the truth after having lied to her all her life. One could thus summarise Esma's experience as manifestations of resilience. Slowly, we see her adapting to life-changing situations and trying to own her life back by taking steps to work through her trauma.

It goes without saying that Sara also displays incredible resilience. After she learns the truth about her origins, Sara shaves off her hair in a fit of anger to cleanse herself of any resemblance or any trait she may have inherited from her alleged 'evil' father. This is where La Capra talks about 'working through' which he describes as an instance where a person "tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present, and future" (143). In every day life, this can be compared to the mental capacity to be able to stop for a moment when a disturbing event occurs, breathe, recognize what is happening, why it is happening and decide on the best possible solution. La Capra explains this further by saying, "for the victim, this means the ability to say to oneself: 'Yes, that happened to me back then. It was distressing, overwhelming, perhaps I can't entirely disengage myself from it, but I'm existing here and now, and this is different

from back then'" (143). In other words, working through means coming to terms with one's trauma. La Capra recognizes that there may be other possibilities, but that "it's via the working through that one acquires the possibility of being an ethical and political agent" (143). Both Esma and Sara made the personal decision to distance themselves from their painful pasts and move forward with their lives.

Viewers and Vicarious Trauma

It is a well-known fact that the release of *Grbavica* provoked some emotions, positive or negative, and caused a stir in the literary and film community, as well as in public opinion. The film was internationally recognized, which led to numerous nominations and awards for the film itself and its director, as mentioned above, the Golden Bear for Best Film at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival and a Special Ecumenical Jury Award for being the Best Peace Film. As mentioned above, its release caused the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, although only in the Bosnian Federation, which is one half of the country, to pass a law awarding survivors of wartime rape, the status of civilian victims with a right to a small pension (Bayard 118). But the film also raised a controversy since it was considered by some as a tool of political propaganda. "The controversy that surrounded the making of the film grew after its completion into a paradox of appropriating and then distorting some of its tenets for the sake of a nationalist argument, and could thus be perceived as a further violation of victims and the director's intentions to restore their voice and dignity" (Vidan 130). The fact that *Grbavica* publicly uncovered hidden truths about the mass rape that took place during the Bosnian war, and the resulting circumstance of

children born of war, was not something that everybody accepted readily.

I am interested in demonstrating whether viewers who had very little knowledge or absolutely none about the war in Bosnia and the related atrocities including the widespread rape, may have experienced vicarious trauma when watching the film. Although vicarious or secondary trauma has not been talked about much in the humanities, Ann Kaplan relies on Pearlman & Saakvitne who define vicarious traumatization as the deleterious effects of trauma therapy on the therapist. It is a process of change in the therapist's inner experiences–the normal understandable by-product of personal engagement with clients' trauma memories and narrative descriptions. Pearlman and Saakvitne's questionnaire survey which asked 188 therapists about their exposure to clients' trauma material as well as their own psychological well-being indicated that trauma therapists are negatively affected by their work with patients (cite). They often reported intrusive thoughts, efforts to avoid thinking about their patients' traumas, somatic symptoms such as headaches, nausea, sleeplessness, intrusive imagery triggered by something innocent like a child sobbing; also increased feelings of personal vulnerability, difficulty trusting others, emotional numbing and flooding, sexual difficulties, irritability, alienation, changes in their beliefs about themselves and others, progressive loss of energy and idealism (cite page(s)). Pearlman and Saakvitne's summary of the signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma include: social withdrawal, increased sensitivity to violence, cynicism, generalized despair and hopelessness, and nightmares; also changes in identity, world view, or spirituality; intrusive imagery, dissociation, and depersonalization (qtd. in Kaplan 41).

While it is certainly difficult to argue the degree of sensitivity of each viewer, one known fact is that *Grbavica* did not include explicit and graphic images in its portrayal. Unlike most films dealing with wartime crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and produced during the post-war period, *Grbavica* spares its viewers scenes of atrocities, bloodbaths, pillage and ruthlessness. Outside the secret Esma carries, *Grbavica* is a story about regular people going about their daily business. However, the film indicates that they carry their traumatization.

It is therefore doubtful whether viewers may experience symptoms as severe as those described in Kaplan's suggested definition. There are however poignant scenes in the film, some extremely sad, that may have led the viewers to shift worldviews, and may have invoked in the viewer the need to advocate for change. For example, both scenes of the women's group therapy speak to the extent of the impact of the war, with different women reacting differently to their trauma. In the second scene of group therapy, the choice of song that is used in the film as well as Esma's testimony quoted above, are events that plunge the viewer into extreme sadness.

When Esma describes her past ordeal and her ambivalent feelings toward her daughter born of rape, it is a situation which incites in the viewers much empathy for Esma. Contrary to pregnant women who generally feel much love for and are able to develop a prenatal bond with their unborn child, because of the violence, Esma did not love her unborn baby. However, when Sara was born, despite Esma's wish to be separated, maternal instinct eventually caught up with her. Once she held Sara in her arms, she felt the need to care for her and protect her, and made the extremely difficult decision to keep and raise her.

Another disturbing scene in the film is when Esma is playing (wrestling) with her daughter on the floor. Sara climbs on top of her mother throwing Esma's arms over her head, which leads to Esma experiencing a flashback of the rapes. Esma, who suffocates and whose face shows visible signs of distress, stops the game violently without providing an explanation. This scene takes the viewer by surprise as no one expects this special mother-daughter bonding time to fizzle out. The viewer feels pity for Sara who is confused by her mother's sudden reaction and at the same time, also has sympathy for Esma who remains locked in her secret. Esma is obviously not yet ready to explain her acting out to her daughter who for the time being, is still kept in the dark regarding her conception.

The last scene with Esma's escorting her daughter to the school bus for the excursion, is another example that would certainly not leave any viewer immune to strong emotions and afterward reflections. Both Esma and Sara are walking but not talking to each other. When they get closer to the bus, after a moment of silence, Esma grabs her daughter and hugs her. Emotions run high when Sara waves timidly at her mother while on the bus. Esma shows tears of joy to mark a new beginning for both Sara and her.

Conclusion

My analysis of *Grbavica* shows how war affects women through gendered forms of violence. Be it in Bosnia, Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Syria or during the Second World War, women and their children born of war, regardless of their origin and circumstances have suffered tremendously. However, the film also offers a glimmer of hope in showing how resilient rape survivors and their children born of sexual violence can be. The analysis of

Sara's attitudes and her mother's response to trauma demonstrate that when there is a will, love and acceptance, people can, at their own pace, overcome adversity to rebuild a new life.

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Colonial Trauma in Canada: Ethnostress, Public Stress and Political Stress among Indigenous Peoples

Marylene Pilon

Abstract

In this paper, through the application of the concepts of ethnostress, public stress and political stress to Indigenous communities in Canada, I demonstrate how modern pressures have repercussions where there remains lasting transgenerational colonization-trauma. From the background of the context and social significance of French and British colonization in Canada, this paper examines how the current political circumstances and popular discourse perpetuate an unhealthy environment for Indigenous communities that is harmful to reconciliation prospects and to ending the long shadow of a traumatic past, sometimes despite the best intentions.

Introduction

After briefly considering the context and social significance of French and British colonization, this paper will examine how the political circumstances and popular discourse in Canada perpetuate an unhealthy environment for indigenous communities that is harmful to reconciliation prospects, sometimes despite the best intentions. By drawing from trauma theories, I demonstrate how there remains unresolved transgenerational colonization-trauma among Indigenous[26] communities, which is perpetuated by lack of acknowledgment among the non-Indigenous public and discrimination in Canadian politics. This analysis employs concepts from cultural studies and psychology to examine how trauma is reproduced in various forms among Canadian Indigenous communities. Applying models from these disciplines to Indigenous communities in Canada can explain how modern pressures have repercussions where there remains lasting transgenerational colonization-trauma.

[26] 'Indigenous' means peoples original to the land, locals of a region but in a global context. For the purpose of this essay, Indigenous peoples are those whose ancestral land is modern-day Canada, those whose traditional and cultural heritage pre-dates the arrival of French and British colonials (Dickason and Newbigging xi). Unless otherwise specified, the term encapsulates First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples living in Canada.

Medical Definitions of Trauma in Western Medicine

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is the standard for the definition of a medical disorder from the types of illnesses that were formerly labeled 'shellshock', 'combat stress', 'delayed stress syndrome', and 'traumatic neurosis', under the designation *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* (PTSD).[27] This functional and practicable definition holds that trauma results from a physical experience that causes psychological and physiological symptoms, commonly recurring invasive memories, often temporarily repressed, of a violent or physically degrading event (Hamburger 66-70).[28] The definition of PTSD-trauma was conceived in response to symptoms found in witnesses and victims of Western combat or catastrophe, and over time it was adapted and applied to cases of rape and incest.

[27] PTSD is a response to a stimulus, which is a traumatic event. Response to overwhelming events is commonly delayed and takes the form of repeated intrusive memories, dreams, hallucinations, and sleep-disruptions that can elicit self-effacing thoughts and violent or addictive behaviours, as well as emotional numbing, and possibly also increased sensitivity to (and avoidance of) trigger-objects that stimulate the intrusive thoughts about the events (Caruth 4).

[28] A traumatic event is a powerful stimulus that overwhelms the brain, flooding the amygdala with electrical and chemical signals that are linked synaptically to the sights, sounds, smells and other sensory impressions that reach it. Overcome, the amygdala's cognitive processes are recessed, directly affecting where in the brain memory of emotional events is stored (Ledoux 165, 285). At the same time, the sensory images have such urgent potency that they bypass the cortex and reach the thalamus (Ledoux 165). This region of the brain records the sensory inundation as emotions; fear, shock and terror, feelings too powerful for the cortex to register cognitive faculties (298-99).

The vocabulary of Western medicine does not factor Indigenous philosophies and worldviews into its diagnosis (Linklater 23-25).[29] Before the colonial period, Indigenous healers were elders, members of the community who interpreted their client's social concerns as part of their wholistic[30] concept of personal wellbeing (27). With the advent of modern medicine and science as distinct fields of study, such an approach to the treatment of social anxiety became impractical. Renée Linklater has been a program evaluator, curriculum developer, educator, trainer and researcher among First Nations in northwestern Ontario for over twenty years, and she advocates that professionals in the medical field who are working with Indigenous communities should separate the general symptoms of PTSD-trauma from colonial trauma, which she views as a specific and separate instance of traumatization (18). In her doctoral dissertation, she outlines how Western theories of psychiatry and psychology can further pathologize traumatized individuals by failing to recognize their condition for what it is: colonial trauma (15). The difference is that colonial trauma is cumulative, historical and transmittable[31] (34-36; Struthers and Lowe 259-64).

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[29] An Indigenous worldview maintains a relationship with Aboriginal ancestors, ceremonies, community, culture, food, land, language, lore, medicine, spirit guides, stories, and totem animals (Linklater 23; Chansonneuve 23-24, 53,72; Mussell 26, 96-97).

[30] *Wholistic* wellbeing considers the wellbeing of a person as a *whole* entity composed of four elements, the spirit, mind, body and community (Linklater 27-28). What is absent in dominant Western health paradigms is an understanding of the wholistic concept of wellness within the Aboriginal framework that includes social connectivity.

[31] For more on the transmissibility of trauma, see Marianne Hirsch on *postmemory*, which is the consequence of familial transference of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience (3-6).

Marianne Hirsch is the former Director of Columbia University's Center for the study of Social Difference and in her experience, memory is communicative and transferable (103-08). Trauma initiated outside the community, for example or in the past, can create a cumulative wound to the community that can be transmitted from parent-to-child, from patient-to-elder, or from confidant-to-confidant (Mussell 39).[32] Intergenerational trauma can result from unresolved ancestral, historical, or communal experiences, and can be transmitted to individuals in the present (Linklater 19-20). Problems of interpersonal relationships and violent social deviation are common symptoms of trauma (NNADAP Review Steering Committee 42, 63). These symptoms are general to trauma caused by an injury, threat, or natural catastrophe, however in cases of social traumatization like colonial trauma, more specifically in cases that affect a large population, severe symptoms can be observed in the public sphere (Hamburger 69-70).[33] For example, political censure causes social distress, widespread anxiety, mistrust for the prospects of the community, and a sense of instability that can trigger the reactivation of past fears in those who have suffered from social violence, humiliation or rejection (Restoule).

[32] Trauma with external origins can cause dysfunction in the community three to five generations removed from the event, resulting in hurtful behaviors like physical and sexual abuse within the community (Lane et al. 9).

[33] The involvement of an entire social environment as victims and the participation of a significant hostile group, for example in cases of religious war, genocide, and in totalitarian regimes that practice ethnic, political or racial persecution, deprives the survivors and their oppressed descendants of the security and resilience that a community can provide (Hamburger 69).

Psychotherapy largely ignores how psychological symptoms and interpersonal functioning are impacted by public stress and political stress. However, for individuals and groups suffering from social trauma, nonviolent events can generate trauma responses like high anxiety and panic. Betty Teng, a trauma therapist who practices at the *Office of Victims Services* in New York, outlines the phenomenon whereby nonviolent events, like lack of acknowledgment, a barrage of public derision, or daily reports that challenge a policy of denial, can exacerbate traumatic symptoms in traumatized, latent-traumatized or recovering individuals (220-21). Teng discusses how seeing one's collective experience discussed for the benefit of political agendas despite the government's continued inaction on their behalf is enough to cause distress, hypervigilance, insomnia, irritability, lack of focus, spontaneous tears, and volatility (220-21). This renders individuals susceptible to "feel more anxious or even to fall out of their 'window of tolerance' [cognitive space for calm, linear thinking] into panic attacks, flashbacks, and dissociation" (222). Clinicians working with Indigenous clients advocate a wholistic concept of wellbeing that considers the effects of the political environment on

personal health and the syncretic role of individual wellbeing on public health.[34]

Key terms

Ethnostress is a concept drawn from cultural studies, coined to describe the result of colonial trauma. In their 1992 report on the effects of ethnostress and the conditions created within Aboriginal[35] communities, Bob Antone and Diane Hill coined the term 'ethnostress' as the label for the confusion and disruption, the cause underlying the dysfunctional social behaviour within communities of various social groups, North American Indians among them (1). It is the response within a community that has been injured, oppressed and dehumanized by colonization. Ethnostress is the communal disharmony that comes from the loss of cultural identity and pre-colonial traditions, like

[34] According to UN guidelines, the health of Canadian Indigenous individuals must consider a wholistic focus on determinants of well-being external to the individual, including political involvement as its underpinning, agency in self-governing, stable fiscal relationships, and residential and infrastructure development feature in the rehabilitation of victims of a dilapidated lifestyle (167). The health of the individual needs to be placed in the context of the community, and lifestyle diagrams should incorporate the Medicine Wheel, with its four directions, signifying both the inward and outward forces acting upon the individual: inwardly the spiritual represents the external social realm, so the physical is the cultural, emotional translates to environmental, and mental represents economic (Assembly of First Nations Canada 6).

[35] 'Aboriginal' is a legal term in Canada defined by the 1982 *Canadian Constitution of Canada* to designate the group that is autochthonous to the land (*i.e.* First Nations and Inuit peoples) but over time it has come to more broadly include Métis as well. This essay favours the term 'aboriginal' over 'native', to which it is analogous.

ceremonies (Antone and Hill).[36] Alcohol and drug abuse are the most pervasive symptoms of ethnostress, however addictive behaviors of other types are also symptomatic including gambling, overeating, and wasteful spending (48-50).[37]

Public stress and *political stress* are psychological concepts. William Dougherty, professor at the University of Minnesota and practicing therapist at the Citizen Professional Center, proposed these two conceptual categories to address a lacuna within the medical field for identifying collective episodes of trauma. Dougherty employs these terms to refer to challenges to personal and relational well-being as a result of political, economic, cultural, and historical pressures (211-12). Political stress is a type of public stress. Although related, the two are distinct. Public stress describes challenges to personal well-being and social relationships due to cultural inhibitions in the community, in education, and in judicial institutions, as well as being constrained or frustrated by societal structures in the broader political, economic, and historical environment. Political stress refers more specifically to the language of politics and its impact on the societal network. Dougherty's

[36] The prohibition against Aboriginal celebrations prevented the transmission of ideology, rituals, and a sense of belonging, while banning gift-giving undermined communal reciprocity and healing (Linklater 26). The extreme injustice of imposing colonizer holidays while banning traditional ceremonies ruptured the security that comes of socializing with the local community.

[37] The Canadian federal government commission the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) which produced a final report in 1998 that concluded that a) various forms of addiction including alcohol, bingo and gambling, illegal drugs, and prescription drugs, are a serious problem in Indigenous communities, and b) legally-obtained and illegally-produced alcohol in particular is a pervasive issue that affects Aboriginal communities (sec.3.2.1).

terms encapsulate the fact that "the words, actions and policies of government bodies, elected officials, and candidates for public office create challenges for personal and relational wellbeing" (211-12). Events in their community, national forces, and worldly concerns can stress individuals, resulting in anxieties and relationship strains.[38] Symptoms are a result of an inability to unpack how the public sphere affects their personal journey, so that they become ungrounded, out of touch with their feelings, unresponsive, or rashly reactive to difficult circumstances (215).

Cathy Caruth explores the unreliable nature of traumatic memory, which she calls the 'collapse of witnessing', that is the result of events that are unbearable in horror and overwhelming in intensity, a phenomenon that compounds the effects of collective suspicion and reluctance to believe the accounts of survivors (4-7).[39] Elizabeth Ann Kaplan examines trauma in the public realm, elaborating that trauma is not uniform but varies by proximity, it can be witnessed through digital media, and be vicariously transmitted from group to group or translated from one generation to another (1-2). Hirsch uses the term 'transgenerational' to describe memory transmission between an individual and collective remembrance (106, 109, 111), and 'postmemory' to describe received remembrances of experiences that did not happen to the individual but that were nevertheless transmitted to them

[38] According to Dougherty when faced with political stress, symptoms can take two forms in individuals: numb-reactive or agitated-reactive (214).

[39] Retrieval of traumatic memories are often doubted by the public, which is critical of 'false recovered memories' (Caruth viii, 138, 142). For example, traumatic childhood memories are often doubted by the adult victims themselves (6).

(103-08). Crucially, Linklater demonstrates how as a direct result of colonisation, the majority of Indigenous communities are suffering from ongoing multigenerational colonization-trauma (13). In what follows I examine the current situation in Aboriginal communities in light of these concepts, and interpret the Canadian government's recent efforts to reconcile the circumstance with attention to the response elicited among Indigenous peoples.

Historical Background

During the century preceding transatlantic contact, the region that would become Canada was occupied by a population of 500,000 to 2.5 million Indigenous people with diverse cultures that spoke an estimated 300 to 450 languages (Fraser 3; Historica Canada). Before the arrival of colonizers, Indigenous populations were not entirely trauma-free. There were predictable causes of trauma such as death, tribal warfare, and starvation. Colonial traumatization is different because it involves mass death and unpredictability. Since the colonial era, foreign diseases, conquest, capitalism, and national hegemony have killed and displaced entire communities. Foreign laws, schools, and churches were not part of the cultural context with which Indigenous communities were prepared to cope (Linklater 30). Under English control, Indigenous people were subjected to a social philosophy of assimilation that saw the enforcement of practices intended to assimilate Indigenous peoples to the culture of their colonizers.[40] The imposition of British and French educational principles and the

[40] The policy of assimilation aimed at absorbing all the Indigenous people and customs in Canada until they are subsumed by hegemony (United Nations 138).

implementation of colonial settlement patterns had a particularly negative impact.[41] Treaties were issued to restrict traditional Indigenous territory, promote white settlement, designate land for the construction of a national railway, and open a new front in the North-West Territories for agricultural settlement (Historica Canada). After Confederation in 1867, the government created a system of treaty-lands called 'reserves' to which Indigenous communities are relegated to this day.

Indian Act

Since its passing in 1876, the lives of Indigenous peoples have been defined by Canadian law, based on patrilineal descent which excludes maternal lines.[42] The Indian Act[43] was conceived to regulate Indigenous affairs, including land, education, and political rights, under the state after Canadian independence. As a result of willful government oversight and neglect, issues of addiction, criminality, homelessness, homicide, physical abuse, sexual abuse, suicide, and violence are higher in Indigenous communities than among the majority-population of Canadian nationals (United Nations 24, 170, 206). Members

[41] The advent of colonialism disrupted the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge in political forums, in residential schools and in the workplaces. The damage done interrupted the process of knowledge creation, *i.e.* the use of cultural experience to transmit knowledge, which has hindered intergenerational relations (Castellano 24-25).

[42] J. P. Restoule discusses how the *Indian Act* harms the identity of the Aboriginal people it represents, it has imposed regulations on personal mobility, has restricted language use to English and French, and has actively suppressed cultural activities and celebrations (Restoule 106).

[43] 'Indian' remains a legal term in the Federal Statutes of Canada, although it has widely fallen out of favour.

of Indigenous communities still subject to the Indian Act continue to feel exposed, helpless and vulnerable to the Canadian state apparatus.

Residential schools

Residential schools in Canada were instituted by the 1867 Indian Act, which was an effort to assimilate Indigenous people to British or French customs and values (United Nations 138). Over 150,000 First Nations,[44] Inuit, and Métis children were taken away from their parents and communities and forced to attend (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 9).[45] Maggie Hodgson bluntly reminds us that the purpose of residential schools was forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their families, keeping them separated from their parents, preventing their access to ceremonies, limiting their exposure to cultural beliefs, inculcating them with the colonial language, and indoctrinating them to believe their parents' traditions are wicked (363). The children were physically and verbally abused by zealot church representatives whose initiative was to convert and reform the Indigenous youth (Chansonneuve 41, AI16). Notably, they were beaten for speaking their mother tongue, the only language they knew. The sexual abuse of children by priests in the Catholic Church was a stark and long-standing episode of institutional denial and fabrication of popular truth that distorted reality (Kelly 24; Teng 231; Chansonneuve 5, 17, 37, 40). Only in recent

[44] 'First Nations' is a Canadian term emerged in the 1970s when Indigenous leaders spoke up in defence of their rights to Canada as the First Nations here. The term was adopted to represent the original rights and titles to the land of Indigenous people as a collectivity.

[45] Then Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper acknowledged this figure in his public apology on June 11 2008 (para.2).

decades has the rampant sexual abuse that took place in these boarding schools come to light (Mussell 74, 109, 121; Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs 30-31).[46]

Current Situation

Cycle of Abuse

The pervasiveness of substance abuse and suicide among Aboriginal communities is notorious in Canada (Chanteloup). These issues are largely due to the cycle of trauma that imposes unresolved trauma on subsequent generations by traumatized individuals who perpetrate acts of violence (Lane et al. 9-10). The connection between childhood sexual abuse and pathological behaviours is significant.[47] Traumatic acting out includes addiction, gambling, hoarding, overconsumption, and violence (Linklater 48). Hostile behaviours among members within the community include verbal abuse, humiliating, and shaming, which are aspects of lateral violence that are common among victims of long-term oppression (Middelton-Moz 116). Being a victim of lateral violence has many indirect effects besides addiction, like depression, poor parenting, and difficulty having a healthy sex life

[46] The last residential school in Canada closed in 1996. Two years after its closure, the term 'reconciliation' was coined for the Canadian political context in Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan of 1998, when the Indian Affairs Minister issued a Statement of Reconciliation that included a commitment to support healing for the abuse in residential schools and proffered a one-time $350 million reparation fund, and established the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to manage funds (Archibald et al. 65; Kelly 27).

[47] Ronald Niezen notes that there is a marked increase in pathological behaviours in displaced or marginal communities (sec.Historical Etiology).

(Mussell 26). Individuals in such environments adapt to the violence and internalize the injustice of their oppressors towards them as self-negation (Linklater 51-52). Behaviours include child neglect, domestic violence, juvenile crime, substance abuse, and suicide. The traumatized acting out evidenced by lateral violence on reserves reveals that the Indigenous state of mind suffers from culture shock.

Indigenous communities have higher-than-average suicide rates among youths and adults.[48] Deaths resulting from suicide or overdose are common and often come in clusters, evidence that lack of closure from unresolved grief creates a vicious cycle.[49] New generations of Canadian Aboriginal communities are being traumatized by lateral violence and by exposure to the intergenerational trauma of their family members and neighbours (Linklater 53). In this cycle of unaddressed transgenerational trauma and lateral violence, youths are susceptible to the anger, fear, hurt, and

[48] Youth suicide rates are five to seven times the Canadian rate: per 100,000 capita, there are on average 126 suicides among First Nations male aged 15-24, compared to 24 for Canadian males in this group; for women the respective figures are 35 for First Nations compared to 5 for Canadian nationals (United Nations 170). Mussell found that more males than females commit suicide, boys will commit suicide four times more often than girls, and adult men commit suicide at least three and up to eight times as often as women (36, 39). The relationship of youth-suicides and cluster-suicides to the historical injustice and the lack of national redress for the violent colonization has been proposed (Niezen).

[49] 90% of the men coming for treatment at a First Nations treatment centre disclosed they had been sexually abused early in their lives (Mussell 74). Most adults seeking treatment for addiction receive counsel from addiction counselors in the form of self-help, a philosophy based in the Western 12-step model that is not equipped to address the root issues for the addiction which are childhood violence, sexual abuse, and ongoing transgenerational trauma (NNADAP Review Steering Committee 5, 12).

shame of parents who neglect or abuse them, typically under the influence of alcohol (Mussell 35). These youths have limited access to counselors, and those who do might not know how to access the help or struggle to recognize that they need help (52). Federal and provincial funding lacks counselling services, programs for drug-addicted expectant mothers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, harm reduction services, a reliable methadone supply, treatment for affected family members, or youth prevention programming (50).

Inadequate Housing

The deliberate poor management of security, health and welfare policies continue to threaten and intimidate Indigenous social environments in Canada.[50] The slum housing conditions on many reserves are an exploitive form of imposed poverty.[51] Lack of access to secure housing is directly caused by government policies, not only on reserves but also in urban neighborhoods (Statistics Canada, *The*

[50] The inferior conditions and healthcare available to Indigenous communities is evidenced by a) as recently as in 2006 tuberculosis rates were approximately 35 times higher in indigenous communities than among the non-aboriginal Canadians b) diabetes prevalence among aboriginal peoples reaches three to five times higher than among Canadian nationals in the same age group c) Indigenous peoples are particularly susceptible to contracting HIV (United Nations 158, 164, 174).

[51] Andreas Hamburger holds that poor management of social issues is a modern democratic form of political persecution that sustains and perpetuates the social traumatization of communities that suffer from colonial trauma (80).

Housing Conditions of Aboriginal People 1-2).[52] Discriminate municipal land-grabs and the prejudices of racist landlords that result in forced evictions are among the systemic challenges Indigenous residents face (UN Special Rapporteur 8-9). Housing shortages in the northern territories are so severe that fifteen can cohabit living quarters the size of a trailer, without enough beds for all the occupants (Statistics Canada, *The Housing Conditions of Aboriginal People* 3-4). The result is that native communities have disproportionately high rates of homelessness and natives are overrepresented among the urban homeless (UN Special Rapporteur 10). The concentration of homelessness is higher among Indigenous communities both on reserves and in cities.[53] According to the UN, a key part of reconciliation for Canadians and First Nations peoples will be for Canada to demonstrate unambiguous respect for the humanity of Indigenous peoples, of which financial compensation is at best a small token, so long as reserves remain critically underfunded and

[52] Nearly 20% of Aboriginal people live in homes that require major repairs and 18% live in overcrowded conditions (UN Special Rapporteur 8).

[53] In Canadian cities, Indigenous vagrants can constitute as much as two-thirds of the homeless population, as is the case for Winnipeg (UN Special Rapporteur 11). Indigenous homelessness is exacerbated by other contributors like a lack of housing support services, unaffordable housing, home foreclosures, displacement precipitated by family breakdown, and eviction due to violence (6-7).

mismanaged (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 339).[54]

Systemic Racism

The legacy of systemic racism in Canada remains (Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs 22, 47-48, 57-58; Kelly 16; Jacobs and Williams 129-30). Even if the overt transgressions of genocide, the forced assimilation, religious dogmatism, and violent discrimination are over, fiscal dependency, limited democratic engagement, lackluster law-enforcement, and discriminatory incarceration are tools of oppression that remain operant.[55] When purposeful violence is accepted by the perpetrator's own social group, it causes damage beyond the individual victim; it damages the

[54] In 2019, the UN General Assembly published a report on adequate housing as a component of the human right to an adequate standard of living and on the form of discrimination that constitutes inadequate housing. One of most outrageous findings in the report was that Indigenous communities in Canada have drastically limited access to clean running water (8): three-quarters of reserves are relegated to contaminated bodies of water, over 10,000 homes on reserves are without indoor plumbing, and a quarter of reserves have substandard water or sewage systems (25)—in a developed country with the world's largest quantity of fresh-water bodies (Statistics Canada, *Freshwater in Canada* 6). At an average annual water yield of 3,478 billion cubic kilometres, Canada has one of the largest renewable water supplies in the world, with the most renewable freshwater per person each year at 104,000 cubic metres (*Freshwater in Canada* 10). The report outlines a correlation between the "abhorrent" housing conditions and adverse health effects (UN Special Rapporteur 4).

[55] In 2008, Indigenous offenders represented 16.6% of the federal prison population, despite the Indigenous population being only 3.38% of the Canadian population, meaning that Indigenous Canadians are five times more likely to be incarcerated than non-indigenous Canadian nationals (United Nations 206).

individual's family, community, and society, and the perpetrator's too (Hamburger 68). The annihilation of a reparative social network makes it difficult for Indigenous communities to address and rework their experiences into social narratives[56] necessary for a successful coping process (70).[57] Working through traumatization involves coming to terms with history, including recognizing the details of the haunting memories and critically engaging with them.[58]

Veil of Silence

There permeates a thinning veil of silence as regards to the genocide of Indigenous peoples. There have been minimal repercussions among church members and government officials who perpetuated or contributed to the

[56] Sharing and repeating everyday narratives grants coherence within a social group; the story of the hero and his enemy conveys meaning to experiences that are relatable for individuals of the community. Narratives of trauma provide relatable frameworks and structure to unsupportable, horrifying or overwhelming experiences such as war, persecution and oppression (Hamburger 134).

[57] Modeled after the "talking cure," a Freudian concept, the premise in psychology is that expressing one's thoughts and emotions, to a therapist or to a non-skilled confidant, provides an act of healing, cleansing, or redemption. In this model an empathetic listener is required for recuperation (Laub 70-71).

[58] After having worked through the traumatic experience the individual gains critical distance to the episode, which allows for a reintegration of the events and enables the individual to distinguish the past from the present and future (LaCapra 66, 142-44). It is a process that is never completed, one does not achieve permanent healing from trauma. A good measure for recovery from trauma is the individual's ability to reintegrate into their community, find a new partner, sustain healthy familial relationships, and to overcome the past's invasive recursions into the present so that a positive future outlook becomes possible once again (151).

continuation of the sexual, physical and emotional abuse that took place in residential schools.[59] A conspiracy of silence and a generalized unwillingness to be informed on the topic has kept the genocide of Aboriginal Canadians out of mainstream media and education curriculums until the last decade (McCullough). For many Canadians, myself included, the public apology by then Prime Minister Harper in 2008 was the first instance when we were confronted with the ongoing repercussions of the violence of colonization.

The sustained long-term denial of colonial genocide and its consequences re-traumatizes its victims (Hamburger 82). The generations of Indigenous children who were raised under a veil of silence internalized injustice, causing them to develop an inferiority complex that devalues their self-esteem (Linklater 51-52).[60] Aboriginal communities are expressing distress over the lack of redress for egregious historical grievances (Morse 248). Indigenous members are living with current anxiety, apprehensions for the future, and the reactivation of past fears due to current events. Without recognition and reparation for unredressed crimes, and in cases where perpetrators evade responsibility, reconciliation is nearly impossible (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 210).

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[59] It is difficult to prosecute individual actors of the crimes involved in the genocide against Indigenous peoples in Canada, which is why truth-seeking forums, reparations, and institutional reforms are especially critical (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 209).

[60] For many, the stigma around being Aboriginal remains, and in some cases, it has been internalized by those stigmatized (Restoule 102). Generations were raised by parents who hid or tried to conceal their Aboriginal identity. For them, identifying as 'Indian' was not a choice but an imposed designation and there was nothing desirable or even acceptable about the Aboriginal identity (102).

Public Discourse and Apology

Over the past decade the Canadian state began to claim responsibility for its role in the genocide of Indigenous peoples and for the residential school system, which, for better or worse, has triggered shifts in the healing opportunities for Aboriginal individuals (Linklater 55; Joffe 152). Leading up to Harper's 2008 apology, churches that were involved in administering residential schools periodically punctuated Canadian discourse with their apologies.[61] The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, began in 2007, stirring public attention and political discourse regarding the token of reparation (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada [IRSRC] et al.). Harper's 2008 statement's blunt recognition that the policies of assimilation of residential schools aimed "to kill the Indian in the child" (para.2) was an overt reversal of a long veil of silence surrounding the topic.[62] Although lauded as historical, Harper's apology omitted the term 'human rights' while addressing what is clearly a gross case of human rights violations (*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* 156). Aboriginal members of communities that suffer from generalized lateral violence

[61] Several church apologies preceded the Canadian government's apology: (1986) United Church of Canada (1991) Roman Catholic Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1993) Anglican Church (1994) Presbyterian Church (1997) Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (2000) (Chansonneuve 41).

[62] For example, a public apology was not issued in 1998 when the Canadian government established a 350 million dollar Healing Fund to address the healing needs of all those impacted by residential abuse, including its intergenerational impacts (Chansonneuve 4).

and transgenerational trauma may be hyper-reactive to political discourse of this nature.

Harper's apology to Canada's First Nations peoples for the residential school system, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's repetition of the gesture in 2017 to acknowledge the Innu, Inuit and NunatuKavut people, have had little impact beyond symbolism.[63] Despite political rhetoric, federal actions towards reconciliation fell short of First Nations expectations (Chansonneuve 41). In 2019, after the publication of the MMIWG report, when Trudeau omitted the term "genocide" from his public address[64] and failed to propose satisfactory compensation for the 150,000 Indigenous children who had endured residential schools for over a century, political discourse was momentarily drowned

[63] These apologies are being received as symbols of regret but fall short of being a step toward reconciliation (Morse 247). The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples warns against issuing governmental apologies that prove insincere, and notes that Prime Minister Harper's policies after the statement were inconsistent with the apology (153-54).

[64] When the MMIWG report was published on June 3rd, 2019, Trudeau's public acceptance of the report's twofold controversial conclusions, a) that the residential schools were actively genocidal institutions intended to kill Indigenous children, and b) that Canada's treatment of Indigenous women and girls amounts to genocide, avoided the term explicitly used repeatedly in the report (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *MMIWG 1a* 5, 6, 10, 25, 47, 50-54, 87, 94, 162, 191; *MMIWG 1b* 101, 167-69, 174, 189, 191, 193, 195). While Trudeau acknowledged "the terrible violence that continues in Canada" he avoided using the term 'genocide' to describe the ongoing and systemic violence facing Indigenous women and girls (Tunney).

in outrage at the lack of recognition amid claims of reconciliation.[65]

Recently, on December 5th, 2019, the 43rd Throne Speech delivered by Governor General Julie Payette included a section discussing the road to reconciliation (9-10). In it, she credits Canada with "real progress" over the past four years, since 2015 when the Trudeau government promised a new relationship with Indigenous peoples (9).[66] Closure comes not when the culprit has acknowledged his wrong and made reparations (Hodgson 368-69), but when the survivor has had a chance to revalidate their sense of self and been satisfied that those who perpetrated or benefited from the colonial episode accept the humanity of those whom they oppressed (Rice and Snyder 45-47). Canada cannot arbitrarily set the terms for reconciliation, limiting its own role to Western parameters such as financial settlements and public apologies (Llewellyn 199). Canada's role is to educate its citizens and create an environment where reconciliation is possible, where the humanity of Indigenous peoples is respected, and Aboriginal communities have the public space and the empathetic audience they need to recount their narratives.

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[65] Stewart Phillip, the Grand Chief of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, denounced the government's denial of the Indigenous genocide, "In order to reconcile for the future, let us truly honour the truth: the State of Canada and the Church committed acts of genocide as defined by the United Nations' Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (25).

[66] Payette cites four concrete forms of "real progress" that the Canadian government has achieved: a) the elimination of 87 long-term drinking water advisories, b) funding for First Nations kindergarten through grade-12 education, c) legislation to protect Indigenous languages, and d) the report published by the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Where do we go from here?

With rhetoric of truth-telling and magnanimity, most Canadians seek reconciliation and forgiveness, occasionally including offering reparation, as means towards achieving a democratic process in keeping with our vision of a Canadian space. If the government recognizes the Indigenous need to be heard, for strong public representation, for recognition of the genocide, and for an education campaign that transmits non-national memory to Canadian youth, then it will do more than offer an apology. As a post-conflict society, we must address the conflicting narratives of two groups on opposite sides of a traumatic experience. Recovery requires recognizing the traumatic events and the legacy of damage done to the social spaces we share.[67]

Survivors struggle to organize their recollection in the form of a narrative, yet their recovery from colonial-trauma depends on overcoming this inability to voice their experiences.[68] The solution is not only to acknowledge the period of genocide, to redress the ongoing discrimination, racism and segregation, or to offer compensations; it is to recognize the deep societal need within those who experience colonial trauma to be heard and respected, and to respond by becoming empathetic listeners. Dougherty labels

[67] Healing from trauma does not include forgetting, minimizing or ignoring the searing events of the past, which could feel like a betrayal to the memory of lost ones who suffered (LaCapra 22, 70). In a sense, victims, survivors, and the next generation can valorize trauma as remembering and mourning the persecuted and oppressed (21-23). Moving away from the past and working through the trauma may be experienced as a betrayal of those who suffered or died (145).

[68] Trauma therapy, what was formerly called the 'talking cure', only works if the victims retrieve their voice and there are listeners who can enable their story to be shared (Laub 70-72).

this empathetic audience "citizen-therapists" who provide traumatized individuals with a sense of reassurance, comfort and shelter from judgment (215-16). The storyteller must trust that his interlocutors have the patience and compassion to witness their account of fear, guilt, humiliation, pain, and shame.

Conclusion

Without a reversal of the Indian Act or a full accommodation of their rights and cultural privileges in Canada, Indigenous communities do not have the empathetic audience they need to share their story. So long as systemic racism permeates and the Indigenous perspective is marginal to the dominant discourse, Aboriginal voices are muted and cannot reclaim the agency over their communal narrative needed to resolve the disruptive effects of trauma. Indigenous voices require an empathetic Canadian audience so they can bring forth their identity and shape their future among us. The task of those who seek reconciliation is to fulfil a role as societal healers. Participation will involve educating the Canadian public and elevating political discourse.

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Individual and Collective Trauma in Cartouches Gauloises

Zixuan Zhao

Abstract

In this paper, I examine the representation of trauma in Cartouches gauloises *in light of recent scholarship about trauma and memory. Without a preference for French-Algarian or Arab-Algerian, director Mehdi Charef explores trauma of forced displacement and witnessing the massacres mainly through children's perspectives. Charef also depicts the process of 'acting out' and 'working through' of individual and collective trauma among the characters, and the nation they represent, by use of camera language. Meanwhile, placing the film in its historical context highlights the collective trauma of two important groups in Algerian society after the war: the Pieds-Noirs (the French-Algerian) and Harkis (the pro-France Algerian warriors). They experience social trauma due to the exile and their lacking sense of belonging absent a national identity as they are not recognized as citizens of either government. A final section discusses the measures which the Algerian and French governments respectively took after the war. Unlike to the commemorative monuments and museums the Algerian built, the French government denied the existence of the war for a long time thereby aggravating the socially embedded trauma.*

Thesis and Objectives

In this paper, I examine the representation of trauma in *Cartouches gauloises* in light of recent scholarship about trauma and memory. By watching the film, viewers are not merely exposed to scenes recreating historical episodes of massacre and separation, viewers passively witness the process of traumatization. Although viewership is passive, the audience actively engages in remembering and re-memorializing the traumatic experience. My aim is to examine to what extent *Cartouches gauloises* illustrates the process of 'acting out' and 'working through' of individual and collective trauma among the characters and the nation they represent. Meanwhile, placing the film in its complex historical context, I also analyze the social trauma which the French government exerted on two important groups in Algerian society after the war: the *pieds-noirs* (the French-Algerian) and *harkis* (the pro-France Algerian warriors). Finally, I will discuss what the Algerian and French governments, respectively, have done in order to memorialize or to erase this period of collective trauma, as well as how both governments construct collective identities for these war descendants.

The first objective of my essay is to find out how individual trauma is presented in the film, as well as how the process of 'acting-out' and 'working-through' is shown for the main characters such as Ali, Aïcha and Nico. In the

second part, my focus will shift to a broader scale, by applying the theory of collective trauma to diaspora, I will examine how *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* warriors were traumatized after the Algerian War, and how their post-war identities were distorted by repercussion from trauma. The final section explores what the two governments have done either to memorialize or to obscure the warfare, and whether and how the governments helped the victims to overcome the trauma.

Brief Introduction to the Film and Director

Mehdi Charef is an Algerian-French director. When Charef was born in 1952, Algeria was under French colonial dominion. Charef and his family leftt Algeria for France after the Algerian War. This duality complicates Charef's national identity: he thinks of himself as both French and Algerian in heritage. His evolving self-awareness relative to his own heritage gives him a unique perspective empathetic to both Algerian and French characters. Although Charef spent his childhood in Algeria, his films and novels are produced for a French population, in France. His most prestigious film is his first film *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* (1985), based on his book published in 1983. As Michel Frodon describes, the film made Charef "le fondateur de la culture beurre (Wallenbrock 226)." *Beur* is a French slang standing for the second-generation immigrants from Maghreb in France. In Venturini's perspective, Chref's films not only reflect the Algerian nation, but also move beyond the issue of national identity: "Cependant, son œuvre est faite de bien d'autres choses que la simple retranscription d'un questionnement identitaire propre à ce que l'on a appelé, plus ou moins complaisamment, la génération beur (16)." His other filmographies include *Au Pays des Juliets*

(1992), *Aime-moi toujours* (1995), *All the indivisible children* (2005), *Graziella* (2015). As a reflection of his bi-national background, his films all show his connection with his motherland and France, which provide a unique perspective perceiving the war.

Released in 2007, *Cartouches gauloises* is a film that presents an unusual depiction of the Algerian War of 1954 to 1962 which mainly concentrates on the last period of the war. During its concluding phase, the two sides were desperate gain control over one another and caused numerous massacres and slaughters. The plot of the film can be summarized as follows: Ali, a native Algerian boy, is experiencing the last year of the war with his French-Algerian friends in X region of Algeria. At the start of the film, Aïcha and Hassan, Ali's parents, separate as a result of Hassan's decision to join the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale; The National Liberation Front). Through Ali's eyes, the viewer witnesses bombing attacks from both sides aimed at innocent civilians; the French troops' killing of innocent citizens out of sheer suspicion; the separation of families as French-Algerian individuals were forced to choose between moving to France and remaining in Algeria; friendships between native Arabs and French descendants collapse as youngsters flee with their parents. The film ends after Algeria has gained its independence from France. In the film's dramatic closing scene, Ali hears a sound of shooting which might be the execution of his father. The audience sees him through the perspective of an extended long shot as he runs wildly through a vast landscape, until he reaches a hill towards a hamlet at the top. The image of death among both the *Pieds-Noirs* and the Arab Algerian reveals Charef's ambiguity towards Algeria's independence.

The film reflects Charef's ambivalence towards both countries through its incorporation of scenes familiarizing the viewer to both Algerian and French life. Although set in an Algerian community, equal screen time is devoted to French characters among the Algerian locals, such as the train station manager, the owner of a local cinema, the senior *pieds-noirs* couple who confess their sorrow. This portrait of how the war escalates in its final stage to destabilize the region's demographics and the seemingly inevitable decolonization of Africa from Imperial France underscores how interethnic bonds are deconstructed by episodes of trauma.

Individual Trauma During the War

In the title *Cartouches gauloises*, the word "cartouches", originally meaning 'bullets' in French, refers to the children in the film. The film focuses on the perspective of a ten-year-old boy, Ali, through whose eyes we witness the atrocities of the war. Not coincidently, Charef was also ten years old in 1962. Furthermore, Charef sets *Cartouches gauloises* in his hometown of Oran, and concludes the film on the day of July 5, the Algerian Independence Day. It is reasonable to deduce that, to some extent, the film is a fictional autobiographical reconstruction of what happened in Charef's childhood in Algeria. As Charef spent his significant childhood years in Algeria and he gained his popularity in France, his sympathy for the *Pieds-Noirs* is the reflection of his bi-national identity and his childhood in his mother land.

In the film, there are four other boys who are Ali's friends from school: Paul, David, Gino and Nico. They are all white French born in Algeria, so they are all *pieds-noirs*. Among them, Nico is Ali's best friend and they spend the

most time together. However, their games are often interrupted by the war, such as when they hear shooting while they are cutting bamboos for their hut, or when Yashi the camp football team's goalkeeper's body is thrown from a helicopter in the middle of the boys' football match. According to Susan Suleiman, they can be called children of the "1.5 generation" of child survivors (277) because although they are too young to have a general understanding of the situation, which is the characteristic of first-generation. However, they do have witnessed and experienced the bloody massacre by which they will remain traumatized and this trauma will continue haunting them as they grow up, rather than inheriting the trauma from their parents. As a result, they do confirm what is called "1.5 generation."

As the narrator of the film, Ali witnesses many traumatic scenes which he shouldn't have to bear at his young age. He experiences a bombing attack in the swimming pool that causes the death of almost thirty *pieds-noirs* civilians. After hearing the sound of bombing, counter-intuitively, he runs towards the sound of violence, in order to discover what has happened. When he sees the broken statues and the mess in the square fountain, unlike others who stand back, he jumps over the bricks and stumbles in the pool (see Figure 1). The swimming pool represents upper-class life, as it is an honorific of white people, which is something alien to Ali. At that moment, he is traumatized by his inability to change his reality and the boy feels overwhelmed. The film later depicts how the French army and *harkis*, who have served as auxiliaries with the French army, casually slaughter civilians without reasonable suspicion. As a witness, Ali is so terrified that each time he hides helplessly and manages to run away.

In the film, Charef depicts the process of 'acting-out' and 'working-through' of different characters. By observing Ali's behaviour in traumatic scenes, his avoidance reveals his acting-out of his fear and sorrow. What's worse, he still has to go on with his life, pretending nothing happened. Although his situation is insufferable for anyone who relives their traumatizing memories in extremely emotional ways after the experience, the avoidance itself is one of the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a newspaper and grocery boy, it is through Ali's work and play life that the quotidian of the war setting is presented. He witnesses countless similar situations, thus becoming emotionally numbed to his circumstance and uncharacteristically reticent in such situations. It is this continuous confrontation with violence that causes his trauma. Exposure to violence triggers symptoms of PTSD in trauma victims suffering from lack of acknowledgement (Hamburger 68), which explains Ali's inability to show his feelings. Therefore, Ali's unusual attitude towards horrific scenes can be explained by trauma theory.

Another way Ali acts out is by seeking comfort from his mother. He asks her to tell him stories, as happens after his meeting with his father, who has been tortured by the French. Although Nico, his best *pied-noir* friend, frequently condemns Ali's father as a terrorist, Ali firmly denies it. Ali believes that his father is earning a living for the family in France. Ali is shocked when he learns the truth, that his father is being tortured in a French camp among other *fellagha*. The foundation supporting his inner world collapses and he is unable to process the news. He needs to be consoled and reassured by his mother, despite the fact that the only thing she says is, "He is still alive" and otherwise remains silent again.

For Aïcha, Ali's mother, acting-out is more emotional. Because her husband Hassan participates in the FLN, it is impossible for them to meet during daytime, for the sake of their safety. There is one scene in the film when Hassan visits her unexpectedly. After a short hug and kissing, Aïcha resigns herself to compel Hassan to leave. After his departure she bursts into tears and yells heartbrokenly to the sky "Why?" (see Figure 2) This image constitutes the most powerful acting-out throughout the film. At the same time, Aïcha is the only character who shows any sign of working-through. After Ali tells her that Hassan is being tortured but still alive, feeling relieved, she smiles and says, "I am happy." She even plays music and sings with her neighbours on the second day following the news. However, I would like to regard this working-through as incomplete and temporary. After her sudden exposure to the war and the eventual loss of her loved ones, her trauma is a "trauma without agency" (Webb 533). Although she proudly shows the Algerian national flag to her son as Algeria has finally gained independence, temporarily "ignoring" the mystery of her husband's whereabouts, the trauma has been engraved inside her. Any future circumstance that evokes the wartime experiences by its similarity can trigger dormant symptoms (ibid.), making her revisit the trauma of her loss again.

Nico also shows this avoidance of trauma-evoking circumstances. When Ali asks him "Tu ne partiras jamais, n'est-ce pas?" and he replies "Non," both boys are ignorant of the extremity with the war which will tear their friendship apart. Nico's family will be forced to flee Algeria for their safety. His avoidance is a typical characteristic of trauma: denial. He denies the upcoming independence in Algeria but holds the firm belief that this land will always be French-Algerian. At the end of the film, when Algeria gains its

independence, Nico and Ali come to the hut where they live. However, as Nico notices the national flag hanging on the hut, he insists that Ali dump the flag and reiterates the supremacy of his nation. He shouts at Ali, "Maintenant, sois obéissant!" Realizing that his persistence is in vain, Nico finally acts out long-hidden trauma. As he feels betrayed by his nation, and by his faith as superior over the Arabs, he can never work through his trauma until his departure for France. After the quarrel with Ali, he runs past the farmland where he and Ali used to cut bamboo for their hut. Charef uses these familiar but related scenes to imply that Nico is still traumatized. Nico's sorrow and running away can imply that he is still preoccupied about the old days, when he was privileged by his French identity. The feeling of trust betrayed, or fidelity broken (however unjustified the feeling may in fact be) is one of the greatest impediments to the working through of his trauma (LaCapra 144). However, at the end of the film, before he leaves for France with his family, he gives his football, which they used for years, to Ali. Since he feels betrayed by both Ali and by France, it is hard to determine his ability to work through the trauma. But the football he left behind can be regarded as a symbol of his reconciliation with the past, showing that he is ready to transition to a new life in a new place.

Being part of generation 1.5, Ali, Nico and their friends are all traumatized to some extent by the war. As a native Algerian, Ali is traumatized by witnessing the massacres of both of *pieds-noirs* and his compatriots, the *harkis*, by the French. His expression of trauma is that of premature bewilderment and helplessness. This helplessness directly holds him back from working-through his trauma towards recovery, while in fact, his taciturnity also restricts his chances to act out his trauma. He is still traumatized by

the distant gunshot which might have been the execution of his father until the very end of the film. As for Nico, what prevents him from working-through his trauma is denial. He is reluctant to admit that he is abandoning his friends, he loses his sense of entitlement over class privilege, and his memory of childhood the Algerian lands is supplanted. After his departure, the football he leaves can be interpreted as a symbol of his discarded memory. For Ali's mother, Aïcha, it is impossible to say whether the forthcoming independence of Algeria is able to heal completely her scar over losing family members. As one of the main characteristics of trauma, belatedness is bound to show in her future life (Caruth 9). These three characters clearly exhibit individual trauma brought on by the war, demonstrating that it is an important concern of *Cartouches gauloise*.

Collective Trauma: Pieds-Noirs and Harkis

National trauma differs from personal trauma in that it is shared collectively, and frequently has a cohesive effect as individuals gather in groups to reflect on the tragedy and its consequences (Neal 4). After the outbreak of the war, the Algerian nation is divided into two parts: those who are pro-France, which includes *harkis* and *pieds-noirs*, and those pro-independence, including supporters of the FLN. During the war, both sides used different means of torture as forms of terror. Just like the bombing attack in the public swimming pool, the FLN targeted only Algerian officials and public figures under the French regime. As the war degenerated, they later coerced, maimed, or killed village elders, government employees, and even peasants who refused to support them, using inhumanely violent means such as throat slitting and decapitation (Horne 134-5). The French army, similarly, adopted cruel methods to suppress

rebellion. This persecution exerted on the whole nation from both sides created pervasive social trauma (Hamburger 80).

The tragedy of the Algerian War continued for eight years, ending in the undignified retreat of France from the African territory. Although the Algerian people gained their independence, the war imprinted an immeasurable and unforgettable historical trauma on the nation. The chief consequence was that it created lasting ethnic divisions within the society. While some of the Algerians were enjoying the fruits of their victory, those who fought for France were suppressed by the victors. *Pieds-noirs* and *harkis* are survivors of the historical trauma during and after the Algerian War.

Pieds-noirs, whose presence dated back to the late 1830s, considered themselves and the land both French and Algerian for more than a century. By the 1950s, over one million *pieds-noirs* lived in Algeria, comprising approximately ten percent of the population, many of whom had never set foot in France since their birth. For all those *pieds-noirs*, the nature of daily life in Algeria meant that their identities as French-Algerian never took root (Wise 123). After the outbreak of the war, most of these *pieds-noirs* held the firm belief that they stood on the victorious side. However, with the surrender of France they deemed that their lives would be untenable under the rule of the FLN and almost one million *pieds-noirs* (and *harkis*?) left Algeria over the course of the summer of 1962 (Eldridge 124). Gone et al. propose that one of the main characteristics of the historical trauma is the *collective experience* of those whose identities, ideals and interactions were thoroughly altered (301). The *pieds-noirs'* arriving in France were going through trauma, as they were exiled from their homeland, displaced, and living in diaspora. Even after their arrival in

metropolitan France, they were unwelcome and categorized as outsiders. The lack of belonging also gave rise to questions about their identities, which became the social trauma of lost collective identity in the end.

Cartouches gauloises depicts the postwar trauma and conflict among French-Algerian survivors. The French are continuously characterized as "colonizers" and the people who "made the natives sweat" (Eldridge 124) in the film. When Mrs. Rachel, member of one of the typical families of French origin who were born and raised in Algeria, is asked by her son to leave for France altogether, she rejects and insists to stay. Mrs. Rachel would rather stay and be killed by Arabs than be humiliated in France. In France, Algerian-born-French were categorized as inferior second-class citizens; they were both legally and socially not treated as "full citizens", so they belonged nowhere.

Although there were approximately one million *pieds-noirs* who chose to stay in Algeria, the residual hostility towards them and the Oran massacre that happened in 1962 accelerated the *pieds-noirs*' departure and the exile for the French-Algerian. In the film, Mrs. Rachel's husband Norbert is killed ruthlessly in their home before Independence Day. In Algeria, she and he husband were not considered Algerians but intruders. This remains the case after the war, even though victory belonged to the Algerians.

Unlike the FLN's clear purpose of liberating Algeria from colonial France, the motivation that drove *harkis* to fight for France was more complicated. The most significant motivation for *harkis* recruitment was revenge against violence committed against them by the FLN (Evans 124). By joining the French side, those people could not only obtain food and secure regular income to feed their impoverished families, they could also sample a small

measure of power, which they had never previously been accorded under the colonialist regime (125). As shown in *Cartouches gauloises*, while working under the privilege of the French army, *Harkis* could casually kill civilians. Ali's uncle was killed for being a member of the FLN, and the watermelon merchant is killed for a suspicion of hiding bombs beneath his clothes. In the summer of 1962 when the climate of hatred and violence reigned, countless *harkis*, even their children, were tortured. After independence, tens of thousands of *harkis* were massacred by their compatriots, with the intention of humiliating them and asserting their separation from the new Algerian nation. As depicted in the film, before the retreat of the French military, the captain of *harkis*, Djelloul, begged them to take him and his wife, but this request was mercilessly rejected. The captain is reduced to hiding in Ali's hut to save his life, but he is ultimately killed by vengeful villagers. The effects of trauma and loss are often experienced more intensely under conditions of isolation, loss, and displacement (Wise 2004).

Menaced by revenge violence that claimed the lives of tens of thousands, an estimated 25,000 *harkis* and their dependents went into diasporic life, officially immigrating to France between 1962 and 1967, while a further 68,000 entered the country by unofficial means (Cohen 169). Those who managed to escape to France were incarcerated in camps, forced to live in miserable conditions, subjected to abuse and humiliation and offered the lowliest of jobs (Crapanzano 60). Their descendants, nevertheless, lived under a veil of silence regarding their parents' experience with the violent regime. This second generation neither understood why they were ostracized and discriminated against as they were, nor were they told what their fathers had done in Algeria, and why. Even nowadays, though they

enjoy the rights of French citizenship, they are still not, just like the *pieds-noirs*, classified as "full-citizens" in France. They are deemed untrustworthy, marginalized and subjected to often virulent racism (61), thus the trauma continues.

Thus, when we place the film on the larger scale of the nation, apart from the suffering of Algerian Muslims among the *harkis*, the woes of those French-Algerian are also implied in the film. While the Algerian Arabs experienced an enormous loss, what should not be ignored when interpreting the film is the consequence for those who would end up living in France. Both the *pieds-noirs* and the *harkis* will experience exile, which in itself is very traumatic, and the experience of ostracism for their beliefs and positions during the war.

Aftermath—Algerian Commemoration and French Denial

The film finishes on the last day of the Algerian War. Trauma theory recognizes that an "after effect" is symptomatic of trauma (Linklater 22). The Algerian war has created deep fissures both in Algerian and French societies and the need to create collective understanding of the past is crucial to the building of a coherent community and national identity (McCormack 167), thus helping the victims of the war recover from trauma. The Algerian government has set Independence Day as a national holiday on July 5th annually. The Maqam Echahid monument (Martyrs' Memorial), a monument for veterans of the war, was erected in 1982 in the capital Algiers to mark the 20th anniversary of independence (see Figure 3). It is built in the shape of three palm leaves that shelter the "Eternal Flame" underneath and at the edge of each palm leaf there are statues of soldiers. With more than 6,000 testimonies, Le musée national du

moudjahid à El Madania was also built in 1997 in order to collect, preserve and display objects and memories during the period of struggling against colonialism (see Figure 4).

The commemorative national monument omits women's contribution to the war, and they played important roles in it. They were active participants in the war on either side, both among the FLN and the French. , They operated as combatants and in non-combatant missions, including as spies, fundraisers, nurses, and cooks (Turshen 890). It is estimated that during the war, more than 11,000 women took an active role in it (De Groot 247). However, they are nearly forgotten in its commemoration. In the Martyrs' Memorial, none of the statues portrays a female figure. As Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry indicate, regardless of their involvement and contributions to the conflict, women in Algeriaremained in their pre-war subservient position afterward as a result of the prevailing societal, religious, and cultural conditions (42). Although during the war women did to some extent emancipate themselves from the male sovereignty to enter the public sphere (Vince 97), their contribution became "invisible" after the war.

Unlike Algeria, which created festivals and established monuments in order to remember their uneasy independence, in France, participants of the war have been struggling for years through a long period of occlusion and repression of the painful and divisive memories (McCormack 2). As Hamburger notes, an aggravating factor in a socially embedded trauma is the fact that the public regularly fails to acknowledge or even actively denies its existence (82-3). At the same time, to work through trauma and to critically engage with the past, the various subject-positions such as victims and perpetrators must be distinguished and acknowledged among the society

(LaCapra 12). France, unfortunately, denied the war for a long time, creating a barricade for *pieds-nois* and *harkis* to work through their trauma over the Algerian war. For decades, the perpetrator nation was unwilling to address the war. The French government refused to call the Algerian War a "war", instead it was referred to as "peacekeeping operation", "a police action" or "les événements d'Algérie", which was a lasting impediment to recovery from collective trauma. The French soldiers who servedin the war (approximately 25,000 causalties and 60,000 wounded) were not recognized as veterans or honoured, since officially they didn't fight in a "war" (Cohen 225). Enmeshed in such semantics of denial, the French unease over acknowledging the Algerians national identity stemmed from refusal to acknowledge their role as colonizers and perpetrators (Lazreg 112). Although Algeria was occupied by the French for more than a century and despite the fact that *pieds-noirs* think of themselves as French descendants, the French considered the French-Algerians among them as not quite French, yet again calling into question their identities.

In 1977, fifteen years after the war, a national monument was erected in France to honour the French soldiers who served in the Algerian War. However, the war remained a "taboo" for the French government (cite). "Afrique du nord" served as a trope to mask this reluctance to address a disappearing memory. It was not until October 18th, 1999, thirty-seven years after the war's end, that the French government finally officially acknowledged the term "*la guerre d'Algérie*" (cite). In 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron finally admitted that France instigated a "system" that led to torture during the war (cite).

Historian Robert Aldrich indicates, "The Algerian war, and colonial history in general, has never before

galvanised public attention as in recent years" (14). In the past decade, a great number of films and works have been released in memory of the Algerian War. Also, with more previously classified archives being made available to the public, more in-depth historical research has emerged. Meanwhile, in order to seek to end their status as "les oubliés de l'histoire", the descendants of the *harkis* and *pieds-noirs* have begun to seek recognition for their parents' past, particularly the sacrifices they had made for France and the suffering endured as a consequence (Eldridge 88).

Conclusion

Through *Cartouches gauloises*, director Mehdi Charef tries to create a memorial to the Algerian War from children's perspective. If we connect the film to that historical period, we can see that it depicts individual and historical collective trauma. The film particularly stresses the trauma of separation for the *pieds-noirs*, which is compounded in the case of the *harkis* with diverse forms of rejection as they become newcomers of Muslim background in France. If we look beyond the film, we will find that social trauma continues decades after the war has ended. Both groups and their descendants continue to experience discrimination and were compelled to be silent for decades in order to suppress their narrative of the event, forcing them to "forget" that period of trauma. The long reluctance of the French government to acknowledge the war also aggravated the socially embedded trauma. However, what is fortunate for the survivors is that as victims decide to share this haunting memory and are creating testimonies such as this film, their narrative is combatting this forced forgetting. This is part of Charef's aim in filming *Cartouches gauloises*—to engrave this history forever so that the war and trauma will

not be forgotten. Also, by confronting this difficult history, the victims and the perpetrators can finally have the courage to work through the trauma, and this is the lasting social importance of this cinematographic narrative.

Appendix

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

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