Dimension lapsisée

Revised Subjectivity in Québécois Women's Narratives

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For my uncle, *Peter*

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Merci.

Aimez les livres […]
car vous ne savez par quel hasard,
au tournant d'une phrase
votre vie s'en trouvera changée.
(*Le désert mauve* 122)

"I was going to vote yes. I really was. I want it to happen if it's going to happen,
but…" […] "But essentially you believe in separatism."
"I believe in sovereignty, Eve. There's a big difference for me."
(*Bottle Rocket Hearts* 72)

Between two onslaughts of words, between two imposing systematic presences,
the pleasure of the text is always possible, not as a respite,
but as the incongruous – dissociated – passage from another language,
like the exercise of a different physiology.
(Barthes 1975: 30)

I think probably everything is text.
Except sex maybe.
(Gail Scott in conversation with Corey Frost, 1999)

NOTE ON TRANSLATION, STYLE, AND TERMINOLOGY

This dissertation features quotes from references in English, French, and German. French citations are inserted into the text in their original versions. Their translations are provided in footnotes and in case they are my own, they are indicated as such. German quotes are inserted into the main text in translation with reference to their source; the originals are given in footnotes.

Any disruptions of the reading flow caused by the insertion of French quotes into the English text are intended. This practice translates content into form and simulates the situation of *dimension lapsisée*. The effects of non-linearity it creates furthermore highlight how I approach my comparative analysis and stage Québécois texts in this thesis.

My own use of an *accent aigu* in the spelling of 'Montréal' (also: 'Québec,' 'Québécois') symbolises the transcultural approach this thesis discusses. Accordingly, toponyms and francophone realities of the city are reiterated in French. In quotes, I stick to naming and spelling of the source; hence the alternations between Montréal and 'Montreal.'

DIMENSION LAPSISÉE

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE: FROM 'THE QUEEN ELIZABETH' TO LE REINE ELIZABETH

<div align="right">

Political in nature.
E.g. québécois fans stampeding luxury Queen Elizabeth Hotel.
Ca. 1950. After hotel being named for foreign queen on dollars.
Instead of local hockey great: Maurice Richard (*My Paris* 67-68).

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The first-person narrator of Gail Scott's *My Paris* refers to the Queen Elizabeth Hotel controversy as well as the Richard Riot.[1] She creates a metonymic connection between two isolated incidents that are linked primarily through the setting of Montréal in the 1950s: on the one hand, the British imperialist choice of eponym for the new and soon to be renowned Montréal hotel and, on the other hand, the allegedly francophobic and racially motivated decision of the NHL to suspend the Montréal *Canadiens*' star hockey player after a fight during a game against the Boston Bruins on March 13, 1955. What also connects these two incidents is that both brought to the surface the rising ethnic tensions between francophone and anglophone communities in Montréal, which had been held down throughout the first half of the twentieth century.[2] Presaging the revolution yet to come, the riots over the suspension of Maurice Richard started on March 17, 1955 during a *Canadiens* match against Detroit at the

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[1] Cf. Scott, Gail: *My Paris*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2003. Both Queen Elizabeth and Maurice Richard can be found on Canadian money: The queen on the front side of the twenty-dollar bill and, until recently, Richard on the reverse side of the five-dollar bill (Canadian Journey Series 2001-2013). The child that plays hockey on a rink that is part of the winter scenery depicted on the bank note wears a sweater with Richard's jersey number nine. The image is subtitled "The winters of my childhood were long, long seasons. We lived in three places — the school, the church and the skating rink — but our life was on the skating rink." This is a quote from Roch Carrier's short story "The Hockey Sweater" (1979) which refers to Maurice Richard and his replica number nine. For details, see Melançon, Benoît. *The Rocket: A Cultural History of Maurice Richard.* Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2009. Print. As well as the short film with the same title on the website of the National Film Board of Canada. Cf. <http://www.nfb.ca/film/sweater/> (13 November 2010).
[2] For a detailed comment on the riots and their political significance, see André Laurendeau. *Le Devoir*. 21 March 1955. Print.

Montréal Forum and with assaults against the anglophone president of the hockey league, Clarence Campbell, who had insisted on watching the game in the arena. In the course of the night, the demonstrations were taken to *Rue Sainte-Catherine* downtown Montréal and, subsequently, could only be ended by Richard's official appeal to the public on the radio the next morning. At the same time, Montréal Mayor Jean Drapeau also reacted to the riots in his city, clearly accusing Campbell's behaviour as provocative and hostile towards the Québécois people. He thereby openly legitimated the act of revenging the Québec national hockey hero.

Drapeau's statement coincided with the petition he had filed in support of a French name for Montréal's new downtown hotel. Already in the course of its planning and construction starting 1952, the questioning about its designation began and soon led to disagreements. While the francophone population demanded the hotel be named after the credited French founder of the city, Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve (and not, as Scott claims, the contemporary Maurice Richard), Canadian National Railway – the company in charge of the project – insisted on naming it in honour of Elizabeth II, the newly crowned Queen of Canada. Despite numerous interventions, amongst which the constant opposition of Drapeau and his above-mentioned 1955 petition that called for a '*Château Maisonneuve*,'[3] the hotel on 900 René Lévesque Boulevard (formerly Dorchester Boulevard)[4] was opened on March 15, 1958 with an English sign on

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[3] For more information, see Levine, Marc V. *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City.* Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990. Print.

[4] The original address was Dorchester Boulevard, which became Boulevard René-Lévesque in 1987 shortly after the death of former Québec Premier and founder of the Parti Québécois, René Lévesque. Only in Westmount and in the very East of Montréal (*rue Dorchester*) has the Boulevard kept its original name.

top pointing towards Mansfield Street – 'The Queen Elizabeth' – written in huge iron letters. Around the corner, on René Lévesque Boulevard, the French name '*Le Reine Elizabeth*' was put up on a smaller sign just above the main entry of the hotel and to foreground a bilingual corporate identity.

Not surprisingly, the decision nevertheless set off indignation within the francophone community. The episode was typical of the situation of Montréal at the time; the English were a minority community that nevertheless had a major influence on the city and its development due to its economic power. Similar to the Richard Affair, the Queen Elizabeth hotel incident further intensified the on-going discontent of Montréal's Francophones, which is summarised in this speech given by the journalist and future Québec Minister of Labour, Pierre Laporte:

> We want a French name because we form the majority of the population in Montreal and in the province of Quebec. Toronto would not accept a French name for one of its great public buildings. Neither would Vancouver. Nor any important city outside of Quebec. We have shown a much greater broad-mindedness – or much greater stupidity – since our cities are plastered with English names. But we are not going to permit this misplaced generosity to continue, to apply to the largest hotel in Canada. We are the majority, and we want this to count, above all in a government service. We have the numbers; We want the name (Fournier in Levine 1990: 37).[5]

French Canadian nationalism in Québec rose quickly to contest English hegemony during the following years. Conflicts as well as economic and social discrepancies were oftentimes played out in public events (e.g. sports) when in

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[5] Cf. Fournier, Pierre. "Projet national et affrontement des bourgeoisies québécoise et canadienne." *La chance au coureur: Bilan de l'action du gouvernement du Parti Québécois*. Ed. Jean Françoin Léonard. Montréal: Les éditions Nouvelle Optique, 1978. 39-59. Print. Qtd. in Levine, Marc V. *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990. Print. While The Queen Elizabeth was to become the largest hotel in Canada at the time, today it is only the second largest of the Fairmont chain after Toronto's Royal York and the fourth largest hotel across Canada altogether.

fact they were "[p]olitical in nature" (*My Paris* 67), as Gail Scott states. Until today political, socio-cultural, and linguistic divergences exist in the city of Montréal, which has traditionally been perceived of as divided.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the majority of Montréal's population spoke French. A generation of mainly farmers from the province's regions had moved to Montréal to try and find jobs in alternative professions. Because of their insufficient education and knowledge of the English language, these workers would come to hold jobs in the poorly paid production sector rather than as supervisors or managers – positions that were, in that era, still predominantly assigned to speakers of English. These class differences between Anglophones and Francophones – not to mention the obvious cultural differences – intensified the dissatisfaction of the mainly French-speaking population that had to struggle with a language-related class system. While French was the one language broadly used by the large working-class community, it was not the language of commerce. The reason for this condition dates back to colonial times, when – after the British had won the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759[6] – the French surrendered their colony of New France to King George III under the Treaty of Paris, 1763.[7] From then on, the francophone settlers were under British rule regardless of the lower number of

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[6] The Battle of the Plains of Abraham (*Bataille des Plaines d'Abraham*, *Première bataille de Québec*) took place in September 1759 between British (General James Wolfe) and French (*Marquis de Montcalm*) armies outside of the city of Québec during the Seven Years' War (The French and Indian War). The British victory eventually finalised the fall of New France as both major French cities, Québec and Montréal, were taken over within a year. For historical details, see Dickinson, John and Brian Young, eds. *A Short History of Québec*. Third Edition. Montréal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003. Print.

[7] The Peace of Paris (*Traité de Paris*) ended the Seven Years' War; its Article IV provided Québec with rights that – further elaborated by the Québec Act in 1774 – are at the foundation of its current position within Canada. For more information, see Dickinson, John and Brian Young 2003.

English speakers in the territory. Especially in Montréal, which would become the colony's largest city, an influential anglophone upper class soon took hold of everything related to business and imposed the English language as a lingua franca on the workings of everyday life.[8]

Two hundred years later, the Quiet Revolution brought about fundamental changes. The year 1960, shortly after the death of Québec Premier Maurice Duplessis (1959), marked the beginning of the Quiet Revolution and the end of a period called 'The Great Darkness'[9] that had attempted to maintain Québec's society in a regime of conservatism and Roman Catholic traditionalism. The inequality and the frustration resulting from it led to the revolution under Lesage's "*Maîtres chez nous*" slogan,[10] the more nationalist discourse of the *Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale* (RIN)[11], and the radicalism of the *Front de libération du Québec*.[12] The revolution was called 'quiet' – the term

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[8] With the Battle of the Plains at its core, the change of regime in Canadian history has been interpreted very differently from anglophone and francophone angles. While, on the one hand, the conquest is read to have been fairly well-accepted by Francophones until the early 20th century, on the other hand, it is marked as the event that ultimately caused the decline of French society in North America.

[9] The Great Darkness (*La grande noirceur*) is a period in Québec history spanning from the Great Depression to the Quiet Revolution (1929-60). It is closely related to the government of the *Union Nationale* and Prime Minister Maurice Duplessis (1890-1959). For more information, see Dickinson, John and Brian Young 2003.

[10] The slogan "Masters of our own house" (my translation) together with "*C'est le temps que ça change*" ("Things have to change," my translation) was used by Jean Lesage (1912-1980) and his Liberal Party during the provincial electoral campaign in 1962. It made Lesage the iconic 'father of Québec nationalism.'

[11] Rally for National Independence, RNI.

[12] The *Front de libération du Québec* (*FLQ*), founded in March 1963, was a left-wing revolutionary liberation movement that propagated Québec independence. One of its best-known members was Pierre Vallières, author of *Nègres Blancs d'Amérique.* (Cf. Vallières, Pierre. *Nègres Blancs d'Amérique.* Montréal: Parti Pris, 1968. Print.) Inspired by the National Liberation Front (NLF) of Algeria, the group was associated with a number of terrorist acts between 1963 and 1970, directed mainly against Montréal anglophone communities like that of Westmount. Symbol of anglophone superiority, The Queen Elizabeth hotel – still the headquarters of Canadian National Railway (CN) in 1962 – was the staging of protests against CN president Donald Gordon. For detailed information on the *FLQ*, see Fournier, Louis. *F.L.Q.: The anatomy of an underground movement*. Toronto: NC Press, 1984. Print. And Bothwell, Robert. *Canada and Québec: One Country, Two Histories*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. Print. As well as Stevenson, Garth.

'Quiet Revolution' originally stems from English Montréal media – because of the extensive changes that took place in an almost imperceptible way.[13] During the periode of Premier Jean Lesage's Liberal government (1960-66), Québec emancipated in no more than six years from the long endured values of the former '*duplessisme*':[14] agriculturalism, anti-statism, and messianism.[15] This modernisation turned society away from the Catholic Church, changed the nature of francophone nationalism, and encouraged new metropolitan life styles. The manifold social transformations strengthened the francophone community that had always held the majority in the province of Québec and that would, from then on, call itself *Québécois* rather than French Canadian.[16]

After Jean Lesage's liberal government was defeated in 1966, Québec actually became less quiet and nationalist terrorism in the province escalated during the October Crisis of 1970, with the kidnappings of the British trade commissioner James Cross and Québec Minister of Labour and Immigration Pierre Laporte, who was found dead on October 17. The *FLQ* had demanded the release of their political prisoners and the dissemination of their manifesto on

Community Besieged: The Anglophone Minority and the Politics of Quebec. Montréal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1999. Print.

[13] The term 'Quiet Revolution,' which stands for the drastic changes in 1960s Québec, was coined by *Montreal Star* journalist Brian Upton in 1961 and incorporated into the Québec-Canadian lexicon by Peter Gzowski (*Maclean's*). Only later on was it translated into French as '*Révolution Tranquille*.' For further information, see <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/quiet-lessons-for-canada/article1792141/> (13 November 2010) and <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP16CH1PA1LE.html> (13 November 2010) as well as Fleming, R.B. *Peter Gzowski: A Biography.* Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010. Print.

[14] The term '*duplessisme*' characterizes the highly conservative political line of *Union Nationale* leader Maurice Duplessis. Supported by the Catholic Church, Duplessis politically propagated a religious rural and family-oriented life-style in Québec between 1936 and 1939 as well as from 1944 to 1959. Cf. Dickinson, John and Brian Young 2003.

[15] Cf. Brunet, Michel. *La Présence anglaise et les québécois*. Montréal: Les Intouchables, 2009. Print.

[16] '*Québécois*' would soon stand in contrast to other francophone communities in Canada which maintain a minority status: Franco-Ontarians, Acadians, Franco-Manitobans, Fransaskois, Franco-Albertans and -Columbians, Franco-Terreneuviens, Franco-Ténois, -Yukonais and Nunavois.

national television. At the peak of the crisis, the Queen Elizabeth hotel became a clandestine venue for informal meetings of the Québec cabinet of Premier Robert Bourassa.[17] More than two decades after the *FLQ* had officially ceased its activities, in 1993, the hotel was again associated with Québec political issues when a group using the name of the *FLQ* vandalized the nearby statue of Sir John A. Macdonald,[18] the first Prime Minister of Canada, located on the *Place du Canada*.[19] Today, the name *FLQ* lives on through graffiti in- and outside of the province, but the last actions to claim their name date back to 2001.[20]

From the opening in 1958 until the summer of 2014, The Queen Elizabeth hotel, which belongs to the Fairmont Hotels & Resorts group since 1999, has kept its English name, even though the latter was translated into '*Le Reine Elizabeth*.'[21] Yet, despite Law 101,[22] the English sign has remained on top of the

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[17] Robert Bourassa (1933-1996) and his Liberal Party governed Québec from 1970 to 1976 and from 1985 to 1994.

[18] This is actually the second time the statue got attacked by *FLQ* members – the first time was Dominion Day (July 1st, Canada Day) 1962. For further information, see Fournier 1984.

[19] Formerly Dominion Square, this space was divided into Dorchester Square and *Place du Canada* in 1967. The statue of Sir John A. Macdonald, designed by George Edward Wade in 1895, stands on the side of *Place du Canada*.

[20] The last attacks were directed at Canadian brand *Second Cup* coffeehouses and *McDonald's* restaurants in Montréal. For detailed information, see Joireman, Sandra F. *Nationalism and Political Identity*. London: Continuum, 2003. Print. More recently, The Queen Elizabeth hotel – an important site of political and cultural action in Montréal until today – was in the news for non-Québec specific political events and related protests as, for example, in October 2009, when former U.S. President George W. Bush gave a speech there which caused extensive demonstrations in the area around.

[21] The masculine article '*le*' in '*Le Reine Elizabeth*' refers to 'l'*hôtel/un hôtel*' (masculine). It is used instead of the feminine article '*la*' here, that would go with '*reine*' (queen). Interestingly the Christian name Elizabeth maintains its English spelling without *accent aigu*.

[22] Following Bill 22 (*Le loi sur la langue officielle*, 1974), Bill 101, *La charte de la langue française*, proclaimed French as the official language of the province of Québec and, in addition to that, demanded French only language commercial signs, advertisements, and trade names. It was slightly loosened by Bill 178 in 1988, which allowed inside-commercial signs etc. in other languages right next to the French signs. For more information, see Dickinson and Young 2003. See also "Tout le monde en parlait" episodes 1 and 2 of season 5, <http://www.tou.tv/tout-le-monde-en-parlait> (15 November 2010). Gail Scott refers to the law in *Main Brides* (1993) as follows: "The sign-shop men, dressed in white, march past again. The problem being how to place their sign, which says ENSEIGNES SIMON, in conformity with the French-only sign law, over the one which says SIMON'S SIGNS in English, Arabic, Hebrew. Given the new one is

hotel until very recently, the same-size as before and complemented by French signs. The originally English main sign on top was now replaced by a French version, spelling 'Hôtel The Queen Elizabeth' in which the English naming has turned into a proper name preceded by the French noun '*hôtel*.' With the two signs side by side, The Queen Elizabeth has for a long time represented an example of the constitutional bilingualism of Canada which was established by the Trudeau government and its 'Official Languages Act' in 1969 – the same year as John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their famous "Bed-in" and composed their song "Give Peace a Chance,"[23] which was written and recorded in the hotel in room 1742. The bed-in performance in Montréal's downtown hotel was part of Ono and Lennon's campaign for World Peace and though it was a reaction to the US Vietnam War, "Give Peace a Chance" has remained its universal message.

In 2006, Canadian conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper asked the Canadian Parliament to recognise Québec as a distinct 'nation' within Canada. This unifying gesture by the House of Commons towards Québec was meant to strengthen Québec-Canadian relations. Although being a symbol of Canada's respect for Québec's distinct culture, this announcement did not legally change the province's situation or its social imaginary and is located on a socio-cultural rather than on a political or economic level. What it suggests is a tolerant, accepting, and, as it were, peaceful cohabitation of the 'two solitudes' of

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inadequate in size to cover the Arabic script, the Hebrew lettering, plus of course the English (writ large) of the old" (151).

[23] Lennon and Ono met Trudeau in Ottawa in December 1969. Before that, in spring 1969, Montréal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel had become internationally known because Lennon and Ono had spent their honeymoon there. For the 2011 (1969) film *Bed Peace*, starring Ono and Lennon, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRjjiOV003Q> (8 January 2014).

Canada[24] within one country and – in the case of Montréal – one city. The new

nameplate of 'L'Hôtel The Queen Elizabeth,' is an example of this cohabitation

and the city in translation.[25]

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[24] This is in reference to the British and French as the founding nations of Canada. Within one country, the two have widely kept apart due to their opposing cultures, distinctive languages, and divergent political projects. For more information on the term 'two solitudes' used in this context and its origins in Hugh MacLennan's 1945 novel with the same title, see chapter 2.

[25] Cf. Simon, Sherry. *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory.* New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

1. INTRODUCTION: THEORIZING NEW SPACES – *DIMENSION LAPSISÉE*

I argue that the long-standing binary divisions of Montréal that are rooted in the double colonisation of its territory have created a discursive space that is reminiscent of what Gloria Anzaldúa terms 'borderlands' in her 1987 publication *Borderlands – La Frontera*.[26] In particular, this study is a critical discussion of the construction and modification of subjectivity emerging from the Montréal borderlands. It is based on the reading of selected first-person narratives in English and French that have been published since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution. These close readings of narratives – and fiction/theories[27] – by Nicole Brossard, Gail Scott, Nathanaël, Heather O'Neill, and Zoe Whittall are at the core of my dissertation. The investigation of the ways in which the literary productions of these writers are critical of cultural norms is characteristic of many encounters that take place in contemporary Montréal. Because of their hyper-awareness of the structures of anglophone and francophone colonialism, these writings intervene to disrupt cultural preconceptions of imperialism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. More generally, they challenge cultural as well as linguistic homogeneity and nationalisms. By and large, I take a historical approach to investigate the following question in this project: How has the crossing of cultural, linguistic, and ideological borders been addressed in narratives by bilingual, anglophone, and francophone Québécois women writers in Montréal for the past three decades?

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[26] I use the second edition of the book. Cf. Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands – La Frontera. The New Mestiza*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. Print.
[27] For a definition of the notion of 'fiction/theory,' see chapter 3.

"*Dimension lapsisée*: Revised subjectivity in Québécois women's narratives" explores Montréal writing, analysing the urban topographies it maps, the social encounters it stages as well as the representations of both, and its many trans-lingual experiences and experiments. In particular, my readings of *French Kiss* (1974), Le désert mauve (1987), *Main Brides* (1993), *My Paris* (1999), *Paper City* (2003), *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* (2007), *Lullabies for Little Criminals* (2006), and *Bottle Rocket Hearts* (2007) focus on the notion of 'subjectivity.' On that account, first-person narrating subjects are at the centre of my study. Relying on theories of performativity,[28] I outline the process of alteration of the subject as well as the deconstruction of its product: Who is considered Québécois and what does it mean to be Québécois (vs. Canadian, Other)? What or who does the category of 'Anglo-Québécois' in- or exclude? What is Montréal-ness (or Québécitude and Canadian-ness in general)? What or who is a woman and what does this category imply/impose? Where are the limits of binaries like that of woman vs. man? What is a female text or 'writing in the feminine'? Where are the boundaries between genders (masculinity vs. femininity) and between *genres* (theory vs. fiction)?

The texts I have assembled here from a corpus of fiction as well as theory are written by individuals that identify – or at least temporarily identified – with the category of 'woman.' They live in Montréal or spent considerable time there (here) or shared (share) ideological principles, writing practices, and theories of subjectivity and translation.[29] My choice of novels, long poems, and essays

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[28] Cf. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.
[29] This description bears in mind the paradox between the questioning of labels and the critique of labelling practices in my project, and the inevitable use of labels in its title to position my

written in English, French, and translated from French into English and vice versa reaches from the 1970s to the beginning of the new millennium and reflects the changing character of the 'subject' and its location between cultures, languages, and genders. I use the concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' to grapple with the multiple matrices of the writings and translations at hand. This concept is informed by fiction and theory taken from Montréal's borderlands and is used as an interpretative device: As much as it describes the zones of cultural and linguistic encounters in the historically bisected city of Montréal, the 'lapsised dimension,' I claim, at the same time illustrates the oscillating state of an in-between generated by these encounters and that blurs the boundaries of nations, linguistic codes, genders and *genres*.[30]

I use Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of 'borderlands' and the notion of 'border consciousness' at the US-Mexican border as a starting point for my research. Anzaldúa's theory informs this project and essentially contributes to the formation of my own theory, as I transfer Anzaldúa's concept to the Québec-Canadian context. Drawing on the feminist aspects of Anzaldúa's work that I also encountered in Québec women's literature,[31] I understand *écriture au féminin*[32] as one writing strategy of Montréal's borderlands. However, the ways in which practices of translation can serve as tactics of modification and alteration are not only considered in the conventional framework of second-wave 'writing in the feminine' here, but also as attempts to redefine the borders

dissertation in the wider context of the fields of North American Literary and Cultural Studies, Canadian Studies, Québec Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Comparative Literature.
[30] Cf. chapter 1.
[31] Anzaldúa and Québec writers and translators like Nicole Brossard and Suzanne Lotbinière-Harwood actually met at several occasions. For more information, see chapter 2.1.
[32] For a definition of '*écriture au féminin*,' see chapter 3.

of sex, gender, and sexuality along with nation, culture, and language. Like at the border between Texas and Mexico, and reminiscent of *Spanglish* and, correspondingly, *Franglais*, 'to translate' in Montréal does not merely refer to an encounter between two languages, in this case English and French. While some instances of translation might "deliver the goods" (Simon 2006: 119), others transgress and pervert meanings or they might follow an altogether different agenda than that of mediating between two parties. Be it the obligatory translations on street signs and corner shops, cinema and theatre programs or deliberate translations in newspapers and literary texts, the notion of 'translation' has a vast meaning in the city of Montréal: while in general translation cannot be reduced to the (word by word) transfer of meaning from one linguistic system to another, in Montréal translations are not only used as a means of non/communication, but also as a linguistic device i.e. a figure of speech applied to all kinds of socio-cultural realities.

Building on Anzaldúa's notion of 'borderlands,' Homi Bhabha's concept of the 'third space,' and Mary Louise Pratt's conceptualisation of the 'contact zone,'[33] I am proposing the French term '*dimension lapsisée*' to refer to the specific cultural space of the Montréal and Québec-Canadian context. My concept has the global ideas of transnationalism, transculturation, and translation at its core while being distinctively geo-politically, culturally, and linguistically positioned within English Canada and French Canada (in particular what is Québec today) and, accordingly, in-between what used to be referred to as the two solitudes.[34] Socio-historically constructed as two antagonizing

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[33] For a detailed discussion of these concepts and their definitions of space, see chapter 2.1.
[34] For a discussion of Canada, Québec, and the notion of the 'nation,' see chapter 2.2.

nations and cultures, with their Eurocentric reference to the British Empire and the French colonial empire, both English and French had first founded settlements on territory that is today part of Canada in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Subsequently, in the alternating roles of colonizer and colonized, the French colonized the indigenous people and the English colonized first the indigenous people and then the French.[35] As a result, the encounters between the two imperial powers have created a specific kind of hybridity, or, at least, have produced a cultural mix, which has been in permanent transition until today in spaces where they meet in territorial proximity. In particular, my project focuses on the topographies of encounter in the city of Montréal. At these meeting points, which I want to term *dimension lapsisée*, a new kind of culture born from nationalist confrontations as well as linguistic discrepancies remains in perpetual translation, transition, and re-definition. This in-between culture, in turn, has given rise to a series of literary texts that are the subject of my thesis. I discuss them in detail regarding language, gender, and *genre* and consider their respective transformative dynamics in the construction of subjectivity.

Let me at this point refer back to the roots of the term that I am using and its original meaning: '*Dimension lapsisée*' is a metaphor coined in the 1970s by Québécois writer and feminist Nicole Brossard.[36] It initially only partially referred to the frontier between the French and English cultures and languages in

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[35] French descendants regained much of their socio-political, economic, and linguistic control over Québec territory during the Quiet Revolution, starting in 1960. Please note that colonialisms were different between the English and the French regarding indigenous peoples. For more information on this issue, see Gatti, Maurizio. *Être écrivain amérindien au Québec: Indianité et création littéraire*. Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise, 2006. Print. In addition, the way Québécois writers have drawn parallels between their situation and that of First Nations' peoples or the situation of African Americans in the U.S. is highly contested (cf. Vallières 1968).
[36] Cf. Parker, Alice. "When Language Lapses." *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard.* Ed. Alice Parker. New York: Peter Lang, 1998. 213-230. Print.

Montréal, Québec, and Canada. Brossard's notion of '*dimension lapsisée*' was predominantly about the creation of a space for women and expression of the female/feminine. From her second-wave feminist perspective informed by French feminists like Hélène Cixous, women had neither a language nor a social space to inhabit. Colonized by a discourse of power enabled by patriarchal language, wo*men* could only ever succeed in appropriating space through their own language, a language particular to the experience of women. This is largely how French feminism argued the experimental practice of '*écriture feminine*' (feminine writing) current in the 1960s and 70s. Feminine writing was supposed to express the realities of women's bodies and lives, but it also seemed to affirm a biologist discourse of difference. Critiquing this essentialism, Québec feminists re-defined the practice as '*écriture au feminin*' (writing *in* the feminine),[37] which implies the notion of gender rather than sex. Writing in the feminine describes the roles of women in society and women's experiences with those roles. Both – *écriture feminine* and *écriture au féminin* – however, stay within the limits of a binary division of the sexes and genders. Before these experiments in language appropriation, women could only make use of male-dominated language. Hence, Brossard concludes, they found themselves in a position of permanent 'lapse' as regards their self-expression, which could never be authentic and

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[37] For a definition and history of the terms, see chapter 3; Sellers, Susan (ed). *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print; Burke, Carolyn, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford, eds. *Engaging with Irigaray: feminist philosophy and modern European thought*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Print; Godard, Barbara. *Gynocritics: feminist approaches to Canadian and Quebec women's writing*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1988. Print; and Gould, Karen. *Writing in the feminine: feminism and experimental writing in Quebec*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1990. Print.

would always figure in translation. It is from this idea that the neologism '*lapsisée*' initially emerged.[38]

As indicated above, I use the term '*dimension lapsisée*' in a related, though slightly altered and, above all, significantly extended meaning in this dissertation. Still carrying an awareness of sex, gender, and questions of sexuality, my widened redefinition of the concept emphasises language and translation aspects and renders parameters such as nation, politics, ethnicity, culture, and religion as well as conceptions of space, place, and time equally significant. It is the interrelations and combinations of all these components that constitute the complexity of what I translate as 'lapsised dimension.'[39]

The second part of my dissertation consists of four complementary chapters. Each focuses on one significant aspect of the lapsised dimension and, when taken together, present the *flâneure* as an example of revised subjectivity. In the metropolitan area of Montréal, the lapsised dimension is a cross spatial realm that covers territories of Québécois French and Canadian English linguistic varieties and cultural expressions. Through the examination of texts that are produced within this dimension, my analysis focuses on how these encounters and exchanges create the potential for the reconsideration and alteration of subjectivities. Hence, *dimension lapsisée* is a dynamic heuristic practice that enters into constant dialogue and negotiation with my corpus, while the corpus at the same time gives shape to the definition and description of the lapsised dimension.

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[38] Brossard, Nicole. Personal Interview. September 2007.
[39] I will alternately use the French '*dimension lapsisée*' and my English translation of it, 'lapsised dimension,' throughout this thesis.

The basic semantics and etymology of the two linguistic units that constitute this concept are the following: 'Dimension,' derived from the Latin noun *dimensio, -onis* (measurement, size), is defined in French as "étendue mesurable d'un corps en tel ou tel sens"; "portion relative de l'espace occupée par un corps"; "grandeur [et] importance de quelque chose"; as well as "aspect significatif de quelque chose."[40] In English, it mainly refers to "a mode of linear extension of which there are three in space and two on a flat surface, which corresponds to one of a set of coordinates specifying the position of a point" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Dimension, hence, is to be understood as a spatial entity. The way Brossard uses it includes a notion of 'alternate' or 'parallel universe.'

The noun 'lapse' generally suggests a momentary failure, a slip, a mistake or an error. According to its etymology, it signifies either a "slip of the memory"; the "fall from rectitude [or] grace"; the "termination of a right"; a "gliding, flow"; or the "passing (of time)" (*OD of English Etymology*). Derived from the Latin *lapsus* – rooted in the verb *labare/labi-lapsus sum* "to glide, slip, fall" (*OD of English Etymology*) – to 'lapse' means to "fall, pass away"; "fall in, become void"; or "glide, sink" (*OD of English Etymology*).[41] In late Middle English, *labi* is "to glide, slip, or fall" and lapsare means "to slip or stumble" (*OED*). In contemporary English, the noun currently carries the following definitions: "a slight error; a slip of memory"; "a weak or careless decline into an inferior state"; "an interval or passage of time"; "the termination of a right or privilege through disuse or failure to follow appropriate procedures" (*OE Reference Dictionary*). Elsewhere, it is

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[40] Cf. <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/dimension/25585> (14 August 2009).
[41] Cf. also <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=lapsed&searchmode=none> (14 August 2009).

similarly defined as "a brief or temporary failure of concentration, memory, or judgement"; "a decline from previously high standards"; "the termination of a right or privilege through disuse or failure to follow appropriate procedures"; and "an interval or passage of time" (OED). Correspondingly, the French noun 'lapsus' expresses "l'emploi involontaire d'un mot pour un autre, en langage parlé ou écrit" (*Le Petit Robert: Dictionnaire de la langue française*) – a definition which is more restricted and associated with psychoanalysis and the notion of the 'Freudian slip' or parapraxis. Both adjectives, the English 'lapsed' and the French 'laps,-e' stand for "ceas[ing] to follow the rules and practices of a religion or doctrine" (*OED*) as in "no longer believing or following the teachings of a religion"[42] and, respectively, "[avoir] quitté (une première fois) la religion catholique" (*Le Petit Robert*).

In my research, the neologism '*lapsisée*' used by Brossard and my translation of it into the English 'lapsised' should be understood as a derivative of either the French or the respective English noun or of the Latin verb directly. While the situation of Montréal and Québec might resonate with some of the basic meanings of 'lapse,' one of the *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions of the word, "an interval or passage of time," seems particularly relevant to *dimension lapsisée* as it is defined in my dissertation. Accordingly, my concept does not only carry the spatial and temporal qualities of the notion of 'dimension' mentioned above, but also those of 'lapse.' It moreover allows us to track the following phenomena within the lapsised dimension: translations by Montréalers – whether on the street or in fiction – that bear language errors because of

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[42] Cf. <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/search/lapsed> (14 August 2009).

'inattention;' playful uses of language and translation that can be labelled as deviant or perverse translations;[43] queer subjectivities that emerge from passage or transit inherent to a *dimension lapsisée* and that have been pathologised as 'deviations' by a patriarchal hetero-normative discourse; North American varieties of French, including *canadianismes* and '*joual*,' that have been marked as deviant linguistic forms and stigmatised as degenerated versions of European French. And, not to forget, the great influence and subsequent rejection of the Roman Catholic church of Québec brought about by the Quiet Revolution in the second half of the 20th century, which could, according to the definition of 'lapsus' as "an abandonment of religious faith," in itself be read as 'lapsised.'

The characteristics of the lapsised dimension might be best described by the antonyms of 'lapse': "continuance [and] continuation,"[44] which point to what the lapsised dimension is not. Indeed, it is the disruption of continuance and the lack of linearity that characterise my corpus, whether it be in the use of languages (borrowings and code switching), (non-)translations or avant-garde writing techniques (*entre-genre*), or the construction of subjectivity and its inconsistent identities in-between sex, gender, and sexualities. Discontinuous with literary traditions and conventional constructions of the 'I,' the defining features of *dimension lapsisée* are non-linear narratives, perverse translations, and fragmented subjects.[45]

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[43] Cf. Simon, Sherry. "Paths of Perversity: Creative Interference." *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City*. Ed. Sherry Simon. Montréal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006. 119-161. Print.

[44] Cf. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lapse?show=0&t=1302137834> (14 August 2009).

[45] Cf. the notion of the 'porous' subject in Scott 1993 and Scott, Gail 1999 as it is discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

Since my re-conceptualization takes up the original's focus on women's relation to language, I am first and foremost interested in the constructions of sex, gender, and sexual identity by the narrating 'I' of each text at hand. How is the subjectivity that emerges from the lapsised dimension different from others? What role does language play in this difference and in the modification of subjectivity? Notably, it is women and, in particular, feminists from Montréal and Québec who have been particularly concerned with the interaction between anglophone and francophone Québécois and Canadian writers and with the collaboration between Québécois and Canadian women writers. Thus, despite my broadened understanding of the concept, Brossard's initial feminist designation of *dimension lapsisée* remains highly relevant. Writing their fictions from a specifically feminist perspective, particularly Montréal women writers from an earlier generation like Brossard and Scott, construct their narrative subjects possessing a multiple border consciousness as the concept was defined by Anzaldúa: as intrinsically aware of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, sexual, sex-, and gender-related differences. My choice of primary texts broadens the variety of feminist writing, adding a second generation of writers that fundamentally contributes to the re-definition or up-dating of Brossard's metaphor of '*dimension lapsisée.*' As argued above, in my dissertation the notion of the lapsised dimension seeks to explore the frontier between cultures and languages in Québec. It is the space from which the condition of a francophone minority in Canada as well as an anglophone minority in Québec can be captured, and it expounds the problems of gender and language in translation.

This thesis, hence, looks at the emergence of a counter discourse in women's writing in Montréal at the end of the 20th century that emerges from *dimension lapsisée* – a space where cultures nuzzle, where languages rub, and where gender categories dissolve. This space has emerged from the city's anglophone and francophone cultures and the territorial, historical, and ideological distances between them over the past centuries. At times distances have been vast while at others they have been shorter,[46] but either way, they are always spaces of transition. To travel these distances means to traverse cultural borders and to translate between languages. Sometimes, though, it means to be stuck in transit, right in the 'in-between' of languages and ideologies, where meaning is not fixed in any one of the two language systems. That, I claim, is the moment of productivity and creativity particular to the location and situation of Montréal. The passage between the two core cultural groups is complicated not only by the different languages, but also by the practices, politics, and (historical) narratives that are inherent to each culture. Each bears the marks of the struggle between colonizer and/or colonized that has troubled Montréal for centuries and peaked in the nationalism of the 1960s and the *Révolution Tranquille* discussed above. Located in the heart of the city, the historical dividing line that has separated and reconnected the French and English imaginaries of Montréal, *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*, could be defined as the city's contact zone in Pratt's sense, or, even more accurately, its border. However, contemporary studies on the topographies of Montréal show that its borderline is not as fixed as

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[46] I am thinking of the October Crisis in 1970 and the recognition of Québec as a nation within the Nation of Canada (for details, see chapter 2.2.).

previously assumed.[47] Robert Schwartzwald, for instance, has challenged the conventional construction of Montréal's dividing line, arguing that there is not only one vertical line of division, but rather a multiplicity of zones of difference. In an article on the Rosemont viaduct,[48] he gives the example of one of Montréal's horizontal boundaries that has hardly been discussed elsewhere.[49] Vertical, horizontal, diagonal or prismatic, I argue with the help of the metaphor of *dimension lapsisée* that Montréal's divisions are composed of shifting places of socio-cultural encounter. To transcend those liminal spaces or to un/settle (in) them means a continuous back and forth between French and English, a de- and reconstruction of meanings, and results in an alteration of subjectivity and its identity parameters.

The five writers I have selected for my corpus all deal with these complexities arising from the specific setting of Montréal's urban ambiguities. Their narratives, I argue, create revised subjectivities. On the one hand, they do so by questioning national(ist) categorisations like 'Canadian' and '*Québécois*' and by creating the new category of 'Anglo-Québécois' and, on the other hand, they construct new identities that, for example, are beyond established gender and sex categories. Thus, while most of the research done in the German

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[47] Cf. Harel, Simon. *Le voleur de parcours*. Montréal: XYZ editions, 1999. Print.
[48] Schwartzwald, Robert. "Can Cities Translate Each Other?" *Cities in Translation*. International workshop. Concordia University, Montréal. April 2013.
[49] Along with Robert Schwartzwald, there are a number of Québec-based scholars, notably Domenic Beneventi, Jason Camlot, Simon Harel, Gillian Lane-Mercier, Martine-Emmanuelle Lapointe, Catherine Leclerc, Lianne Moyes, Gregory J. Reid, and Sherry Simon – to name but a few – who presently explore and analyse the urban spaces, practices, and narratives of Montréal. This list names only the most well known researchers who currently work in the field of Anglo-Québec Studies. Some of them are part of the research group ERILAQ (*Équipe de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature anglo-québécoise*), collaboration between the universities of Sherbrooke, Montréal, McGill, and Concordia. Any listing of scholars interested in Québec-Canadian literary relations would not be complete, however, without a mention of Barbara Godard (1942-2010) – renowned academic, critic, translator, and expert in feminist issues within the context, who held the Chair of Canadian Literature at York University, Toronto, until May 2010.

context[50] so far has focused on either the divisive topographies of the city or feminist practices of translation in the city,[51] I will combine the two and try to move beyond restrictive geographical, linguistic, as well as sex and gender related boundaries. My interdisciplinary approach continues the analysis of social as well as linguistic phenomena by way of close reading and queer reading strategies. As a result, my work not only adds to the corpus of research on women's writing in Montréal, Québec, and Canada or even 'CanLit,' it also contributes to the emerging field of Queer (Canadian) Studies.[52]

1.1. OVERVIEW OF SECTION ONE

The first section of this thesis, 'Histories of the Cultural Divide,' draws upon a selection of contemporary essays as well as theoretical and fictional texts, to help define the intellectual space of where the concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' may be located; it provides information on the politics and linguistic situations of Canada, Québec, and Montréal. This first part should be read as a manual and used as a reference for what comes after. It begins with offering an introductory discussion of anglophone and francophone communities in Canada and Québec within a theoretical framework of space, politics, and language. The term 'histories' is used here as distinguished from its singular form, 'history,' to

[50] Cf. publications of the *GKS*, Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries.
[51] This kind of research can be mainly found in Québec Studies. Cf. publications by Doris Eibl, Klaus-Dieter Ertler, Fritz Peter Kirsch, Caroline Rosenthal, etc.
[52] Cf. Chisholm, Dianne. *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City.* Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2005. Print; *Goldie, Terry. Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction. Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd, 2003. Print*; and Dickinson, Peter. *Here is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities and the Literatures of Canada*. Toronto: U of T Press, 1999. Print.

emphasize that there are competing sides to Canada's past and that, besides the English and French versions of exploration and colonisation, there are stories that date further back than 1610 and John Guy's settlement of Newfoundland or Jacques Cartier's expeditions along the Saint-Lawrence River in 1534/35. The idea of a 'cultural divide' refers to the continual separation of anglophone and francophone cultures in Canada's imaginary, its myths based on the European pasts of the two so-called 'founding nations' as well as its performative construction of difference creating the notion of 'two solitudes.'[53] It also gives a comprehensive presentation of the recently assigned category of 'Anglo-Québécois.' While acknowledging the discursive and political force of such paired categories as 'anglophone' and 'francophone' in the Québec-Canadian context, I thoroughly question in my study dichotomous identity building blocks in general, including the sex and gender binaries of 'male' versus 'female' and 'masculine' versus 'feminine.'[54] By and large, the chapter provides an overview of contemporary discussions about 'identity,' which have periodically turned into crises in Canada,[55] a country that is branded by its wide, open spaces and its constitutional bilingualism.

The first part of my dissertation, then, has eight concise sub-chapters. The first subchapter, 'Defining Spaces: Borderlands, Hybridity, and the Contact

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[53] As this project is situated in studies of post-colonial Canada and its dominant cultures with an interest in the bicultural dynamics of the colonizing communities and, in particular, their contemporary literatures in English and French, the 'other' histories of Inuit Peoples and First Nations are besides the focus of my study and will not be discussed in a comparative way.

[54] This project concentrates on gender and language issues. Despite my awareness of identity-parameters like race, ethnicity, class, socio-economic background, religion, age, ability, etc. these categories will not be taken into detailed consideration in my dissertation. The aspects of interest in my analysis are sex, gender, and sexual orientation or preference as well as nationality, and cultural and linguistic background.

[55] Cf. Hutcheon, Linda. *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary Canadian Fiction*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.

Zone,' reviews major theories (and fictions) on the conceptualization of national, social, and cultural 'space-s' underlying the definition of the lapsised dimension – the new spatial concept I have described above, which forms the theoretical axis of this research project. Adopting central ideas that are shared by the works of Gloria Anzaldúa, Homi Bhabha, and Mary Louise Pratt, the concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' is rooted in Québec-Canadian post-colonialism, notions of the post/modern city, and feminist techniques of translation. The following subchapters, then, concentrate on theories of political spaces like that of the 'nation,' urban spaces and places within the city, and linguistic spaces as socio-historic and cultural imaginaries. Each of the chapters, one after the other, zooms in on first, Canada, then, Québec, the island of Montréal, and, ultimately specific topographies and translations of Montréal.

Subchapter two, entitled 'Québec/Canada: Post-colonialism and the Notion of 'Nation,' critically discusses the position of Québec within Canada. With its colonial origins, a history of nationalism, and a pro-independence Québec government holding two referenda within fifteen years – one in 1980 and one in 1995 – Québec has continuously displayed a strong belief in its difference from English Canada. Rethinking post-colonialism in Canada – a bilingual federation since 1969[56] that nevertheless expected Montréalers to 'Speak White'[57] up until 1974 and even beyond 1988, when the 'Official Languages Act' was adopted in Québec – I also look at recent developments like the symbolic

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[56] Cf. Bill C-120 of the Canadian constitution, a law on the status of official languages in Canada passed by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

[57] "Speak White" (1968) is a poem by the Québécois writer Michèle Lalonde first presented at '*La nuit de la Poésie*' in Montréal on March 27, 1970, and published in 1974. (Cf. Lalonde, Michèle. *Speak White*. Montréal: Editions de l'Hexagone, 1974. Print.) It problematizes the fact that Francophones in Montréal were asked to 'speak white', meaning English, in Montréal public venues. The poem resonates with the disparate conceptions of official Canadian bilingualism and its reality in Canada's largest city at the time.

recognition of Québec as a 'nation' within Canada in 2006, the reactions that followed from Québec, and the re-definition of Québec identity brought about by the provinces' *Partie Québécois* (*PQ*) government since 2012, including the proposition of a Charter of Values (Bill 60) in September 2013.

Subchapter three continues with the exploration of a smaller unit: the city. 'Towards Understanding Montréal as a Post/modern City' looks at theories and essays about modern and post-modern urban spaces relevant to my corpus of narratives. In particular, it reviews writings on the metropolis by Walter Benjamin, Michel de Certeau, and Zygmunt Bauman. In addition, I take up the notion of '*flânerie*' to map the topographies of Montréal and, ultimately, to re-define the nature and role of the *flâneur* today. I argue that the figures of the *flâneuse* and of what I call '*flâneure*' found in the feminist and queer writing performances of the Montréal texts I examine are contemporary witnesses of the double city with its lapsised dimension. Their revised subjectivities are shaped by this realm.

The fourth subchapter, 'Translating Spaces: The Delusions of Montréal,' concentrates on translational practices and eventually brings Montréal's traditionally divided imaginary into focus. Again, I am zooming in, from the city in general to specific parts of the island of Montréal, and drawing upon Sherry Simon's discussion of translations gone astray. Following Simon, as she traverses Montréal from West to East, East to West, and along *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* – the historically major separator of anglophone and francophone cultures in the city – I review the list of perverse translation practices she provides in this book.[58]

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[58] Cf. Simon 2006: 119-161.

The fifth subchapter is entitled 'Queering Spaces: Linguistic Encounters and Performativity.' It takes a look at the formation of subjectivity and at how interlinguistic and transcultural encounters affect and, successively, alter it. Turning to Judith Butler's theories of 'performativity' presented in *Gender Trouble* (1990)[59], *Bodies that Matter* (1993), and *Undoing Gender* (2004), I set up a framework for studying the queer subjectivities of my literary corpus. I have chosen the notion of 'subjectivity' over that of 'identity' in my analysis of first-person narrators because of its politics and, in addition, because its correlation with desire becomes significant in my discussion of narratives as links between body and city.[60]

Subchapter six, ''O Canada': English, a Minority Language in Québec,' and subchapter seven, ''*Prenons une marche*': Québécois, a North American Code,' go further into examining the inter-relatedness of French and English in Montréal, where these two languages unremittingly converge.[61] Beyond the linguistic phenomena that result from the geographical proximity of anglophone and francophone communities in the limited urban space of what is ultimately an island, I am interested in the cognitive effects of this socio-cultural proximity. What happens to the subject, its thinking processes, and construction of the self, when two fundamentally different language systems meet? Other than French-coloured English and a French language drenched with English borrowings, what impact does code switching have in such an environment?

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[59] I use the 10th Anniversary Edition published in 1999, Cf. Butler 1999.

[60] Cf. chapters 3 and 6.

[61] As I concentrate on the historical linguistic rivalry between the English and French settlers, I do not consider other language communities in Montréal, a multilingual city with significant minorities speaking Italian, Arabic, Spanish, Creole, Chinese, Greek, Portuguese, Romanian, Vietnamese, Hebrew, Russian, etc. as well as native languages.

Seeking to find answers to these questions and further explain the linguistic generating of subjectivity in the lapsised dimension, these two subchapters prepare the close readings that follow in section two.

The eighth and last subchapter entitled '*Nouvelles*/Novels from the Border' serves as a transition to the main part of my dissertation, which studies eight contemporary literary texts in the in-between space of *dimension lapsisée*. Preceding these four paired close readings, this sub-chapter considers the category of 'novel' in view of the literary classifications and innovations in the Canadian and, more specifically, Anglo/Québec context.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF SECTION TWO

The set of chapters in the second part of this dissertation consist of close readings of writings by Montréal women – fiction, theory, and fiction/theory – which I juxtapose, compare, and place into dialogue in order to show where the lapsised dimension emerges from, what it is, and how it manifests difference, change, and revised subjectivity, in particular as exemplified by the figure of the '*flâneure*.' Chapter three, 'The Urban Body in *French Kiss* and *Paper City*,' opens my discussion of literary texts in the light of the lapsised dimension with examples from Nicole Brossard and Nathanaël. *French Kiss* is the earliest text of my corpus. *Paper City*, on the other hand, dates from the new millennium and, with its inter-linguistic experimentation and amalgamation, is arguably the most hybrid of all the texts in my corpus. Taking a diachronic approach, I read it as a sequential queer version of *French Kiss*. In my comparative analysis, I focus on

the construction of subjectivity in each according to the constant motion in, through, and across urban space of the first person narrator and other protagonists.[62] Exploring the lapsised dimension, I begin with the defining process of the figure of the '*flâneure*' that emerges from the intertwining of the city and the body. Through my comparison, the texts become interdependent and co-referential; one French and the other English, both *French Kiss* and *Paper City* are riddled with borrowings and code switching that open up passages between their textual spheres. To establish the interrelatedness of the two texts, I place them in a dialogical situation in which one fiction becomes a theoretical reading device for the other.

In chapter four, 'Subjects in Translation: *Le désert mauve* and *Bottle Rocket Hearts*,' my analysis turns to the notion of 'translation' to further exemplify the workings of *dimension lapsisée*. Nicole Brossard's *Le désert mauve* (1987) and Zoe Whittall's *Bottle Rocket Hearts* (2007) are both coming-of-age stories, set twenty years apart. My analysis of Brossard's triptych concentrates on the theoretical middle-section devoted to Maude Laure's practice of translating Laure Angstelle's *Le désert mauve*, leads to an exploration of the very notion of 'coming-of-age,' and re-introduces the question of *genre* categorisations. *Bottle Rocket Hearts* is a non-linear narrative with a staged play inserted into its storyline. Stylistically, it reminds us of the writer's background in poetry. It is a queer story in the most restrictive sense of the term, as all of its main characters identify as GLBTQ2. Set at the time of the second referendum in 1995 and in large part on and around Montréal's Main, the narrative comments

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[62] "Her (Nathanaël's) writing is in constant motion" (McLennan 2004: 49). Cf. McLennan, Rob. "Now You Care/Parlance/Paper City" *The Antigonish Review* 138 (2004): 45-49. Print.

on each and every cliché that has been written about the city's dividedness. In the end, the charade of anglophone versus francophone dissolves into a lie – a 'perverse translation' of subjectivity. My comparative approach to these texts serves to develop my analysis of a revised *flâneur* figure – the *flâneure* as a digressing translation of the *flâneur*.

'*Flâneries* in Borderlands: *Main Brides* and *Lullabies for Little Criminals*' is the title of chapter five, which further develops the relationship between *dimension lapsisée* and the *flâneure* with an analysis of the urban social underworld. My reading of Gail Scott's *Main Brides* (1993) and Heather O'Neill's *Lullabies for Little Criminals* (2006) conceives the latter as potentially being part of the former. *Main Brides* is set against the backdrop of the 1989 massacre and femicide at Montréal's *École Polytechnique* of that claimed the lives of fourteen female students. The text features a narrator who settled in with her wine at *La Cabane*, a Portuguese bar on *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* and observes the passers-by who walk up and down the Main. Similar to Brossard's *French Kiss*, the narrator of *Main Brides* is a *mélange* of manifold layers and voices: her fragmentary subjectivity comes into existence through imagining the other women's life-stories. It is in this sense that I propose to add Baby, the heroine of *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, to the list of Scott's 'brides'. O'Neill's depiction of the city from the perspective of an underground culture[63] resonates with the collection of stories in *Main Brides*. In O'Neill's text, Montréal's bipartite history seems to be but a footnote to the quotidian life of its narrator, whose background is indiscernibly anglophone-francophone. Moving away from the

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[63] Cf. Beneventi, Domenic A. "Montreal Underground." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes.* Vol. 46.3 (2012): 263-286. Print.

hypersensitivity toward the English-French conflict illustrated by Scott, this comparison moves beyond language issues, adding notions of class to the lapsised dimension and the notion of the '*flâneure*.'

The sixth and penultimate chapter of this dissertation, which carries the title 'Performing the City in *My Paris* and *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*,' provides a paired reading of Gail Scott's *My Paris* (1999) and Nathanaël's *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* (2007) that reconsiders theories of urban space and the body, identifying the practice of walking as a performative act and thereby completes my revised definition of the *flâneure*. The narrator of *My Paris* is as porous as the one of *Main Brides*. This time subjectivity is constructed through a collection of diary entries that illustrate the everyday practices of a writer that is sojourning in the French capital. Reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*[64], she repetitively walks the streets of a Paris haunted by the shadows of its past as much as by its contemporary politics. Confronting the de- and reconstruction of her national identities, Scott's first-person narrator is continuously reminded of her Québécitude among the French and her Canadian-ness in the company of other Québécois. To overcome these cultural gaps, she uses what she calls the 'comma of translation' (or 'difference') in her text. The use of this comma, on the one hand, creates fissures in the text and, on the other, it builds bridges between English and French languages. While *My Paris* is set between Paris and Montréal, *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* is composed of building blocks alluding to cities all over the world, reaching from Ljubljana to Barcelona and from Bilbao to New York. Nathanaël's narrator is constructed across this patchwork city and

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[64] Cf. Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press 1999. Print.

remains multiple. She belongs to a Butlerian age, strolling the apocalyptic city in critical awe, linking the revised figure of the *flâneure* with its Benjaminian core.

What all the texts in my corpus have in common are first-person narrators that move through urban spaces, in particular those of Montréal. The narrators all bear a distinctive, at times fragmented, non-monolingual voice that lapses into code switching and makes use of different modes of translation. Their subjectivity is illustrated by hermaphroditism, queerness, and through collages of intertextual associations and trans-topographic references. Paired with the above-mentioned range of (deviant) translational practices, they create a place in the city and in the text for the Other: the woman, the subaltern, and, eventually, the queer subject.

2.   HISTORIES OF THE CULTURAL DIVIDE

> Northwest of Montreal,
> through a valley always in sight of the low mountains of the Laurentian
> Shield, the Ottawa River flows out of Protestant Ontario into Catholic Quebec.
> It comes down broad and ale-coloured and joins the Saint Lawrence,
> the two streams embrace the pan of Montreal Island,
> the Ottawa merges and loses itself,
> and the mainstream moves northeastward a thousand miles to the sea.
> (*Two Solitudes 3*)

This chapter discusses the situation between anglophone and francophone communities in Canada and Québec. In particular, it surveys theoretical conceptualisations of space and the figure of the '*flâneur*,' writing practices and notions of 'translation' as well as the effects of language contact. From there, I question the identity category of 'Anglo-Québécois,' and eventually consider binaries like those of 'sex' (male vs. female), 'gender' (masculine vs. feminine), and 'sexuality' (heterosexual vs. homosexual). This chapter will also reflect on questions such as: What are the definitions for Canadian-ness and Québecitude? What is Montréal-ness and (how) does it differ from Québecitude and Canadian-ess?

To start my account on the histories of English and French, I turn to Hugh MacLennan's classic *Two Solitudes*, published in 1945.[65] MacLennan's novel

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[65] Cf. MacLennan, Hugh. *Two Solitudes.* Toronto: Collins, 1945. Print. For a discussion of the impact MacLennan's work had on the Canadian literary milieu, see Lapointe, Martine-Emmanuelle. "Les lieux de l'écrivain anglo-québécois: institution et filiations littéraires chez Mordecai Richler, Gail Scott et David Homel." *Voix et Images*, 30.3 (2005): 73-96. Print. That article also reflects on Mordechai Richler's positioning in the Canadian canon and has a look at his text *Oh Canada! Oh Quebec* (1992). In addition, it reviews Gail Scott's role in the definition of Anglo-Québécois literature. For a more extensive history of Anglo-Québécois literature and its naming as well as its relations with Québécois literature, see Leclerc, Catherine and Sherry Simon. "Zones de contact: nouveaux regards sur la littérature anglo-québécoise." *Voix et Images*, 30.3 (2005): 15-29. Print.

exposes the bicultural situation in a pre-Quiet Revolution Québec to an English Canada of the time by telling the (hi)stories of an anglophone and a francophone family that become intermingled through a love story that begins between the World Wars. The first part of this "fictionalized history" (Bessner 1992: 13) is set during WWI and recounts the life of Athanese Tallard, a French-Canadian politician and self-proclaimed mediator between the French and English. Yet, the crucial figure in *Two Solitudes* is his younger son Paul Tallard, a bilingual Francophone thanks to his Irish mother, Athanese's second wife. Paul's search for an identity in between the two cultures has become emblematic of the difference between anglophone and francophone communities in Canada. It has been broadly argued that MacLennan employed the two-solitudes metaphor to express his hope for the opposite, namely the possibility for the two cultures to 'touch and greet each other.'[66] But things are not so simple: even though Paul is "at home in both languages [, he is] alienated from both cultures."[67] His situation resonates with Lianne Moyes' account of contemporary Anglo-Québécois writing: "Situated on the highly contested frontier between the literatures of Canada and Quebec, anglophone writing in Quebec questions the internal coherence of both literatures and [...] belongs to neither" (1996: 212). In defining Anglo-Québécois subjectivity, I endeavour to take up the poet Rainer Maria Rilke's proposition and have English and French narratives converse with each other.[68]

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[66] The title of MacLennan's book was inspired by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. Cf. Bessner, Neil. "Two Solitudes, After Survival: Postmodern Fiction in Canada." *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*. Eds. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1992: 12. Print.
[67] Cf. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/two-solitudes/> (26 February 2014).
[68] Cf. chapters 3 to 6.

2.1. DEFINING SPACES: BORDERLANDS, HYBRIDITY, AND THE CONTACT ZONE

This subchapter explores the intricate relationships between the notion of 'space' and the concepts of 'nation' and 'territory' as well as 'history' and 'language' according to the theories of Gloria Anzaldúa, Homi Bhabha, and Mary Louise Pratt. The survey provides a theoretical background to my definition of the spatial concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' and my own theoretical approach to reading Québécois women's narratives. To begin, I refer to the interpretive descriptions of 'space' found in the works on 'borderlands' by Anzaldúa, the 'third space' by Bhabha, and the 'contact zone' by Pratt seeking common threads that can help me in order to give shape to my new concept. *Dimension lapsisée* labels a space and phenomenon distinctive to the Québec and Montréal context. It describes the borderlands-like realm from which emerge the texts that are at the core of this dissertation.

My venture for the lapsised dimension begins with an outline of Anzaldúa's theories as presented in *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza* (1987). Inspired by this text, the situation of Francophones in Canada has already been compared to that of Chicanos/as in the United States Southwest by scholars like Monika Giacoppe and Martín Sánchez Jankowski. While Giacoppe argues that there are a number of similarities between Québécois and Chicano cultures and histories – a comparison that is based on similarities more

than on differences[69] – Jankowski draws parallels between Québec and Chicano nationalisms to analyse current Chicano politics. 'Sex', 'gender', and 'sexuality' are also integral to Anzaldúa's discussion of Chicana/o culture and to the definition of borders between cultures, because they treat this space with specific reference to Chicanas. Therefore, Anzaldúa's work provides a model for me as I make space for, and analyse, the space of Québécoises within Québec and Canada.

Bhabha's concept of the 'third space (of enunciation)' does not treat sexual difference or different sexualities as explicitly as Anzaldúa's theory; yet, it contributes to the development of my theory on the lapsised dimension through its focus on hybridity. Although generally received with ambivalence in post-colonial theory, hybridity is particularly interesting because of its transcultural and translingual implications. Hybridity is the effect of permanent cross-cultural encounters and as such, it is a notion that can also be found in Pratt's work on the contact zone. Pratt defines the space of the 'contact zone' as a space of 'engagement' and 'transculturation.' In Québec, scholars have taken up her term in its translated version as '*zone(s) de contact*.' The use of the plural in French suggests the complexity and diversification of the concept in the Québec-Canadian context. Sherry Simon, for example, makes use of both '*zones de contact*' and '*hybridité*' to describe transcultural phenomena in the in-between spaces of francophone and anglophone cultures within the urban limits of Montréal (I consider Simon's models for the theoretical formation of the *lapsised*

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[69] Cf. Giacoppe, Monika. "'Lucky to be so bilingual': Québécois and Chicano/a literatures in a comparative context." *Comparative American Studies* 3.1 (2005): 47-61. Print. I will come back to the problematic of this comparison later on in this chapter.

dimension later on in this thesis and in the context of translational practices in Montréal and in Montréal literature).

To summarise, this sub-chapter provides basic theoretical terms for defining the realm of '*dimension lapsisée*' while illustrating its location in recent discourses on space. The interrelations between space and the construction of nations, histories, and national languages are a central theme throughout this overview on Anzaldúa's, Bhabha's, and Pratt's models. Although these theoretical accounts of the notion of 'space' are individually linked to specific territories and their historical settings and situations, I claim that they can nevertheless be translated to some distinctly other place. Be it an account of Mexico-U.S. border issues, post/colonial Britain and India or relations between the Spanish and the indigenous peoples of the Americas in colonial times, the core of all these theories can be redeployed in the Québec context. Why, how, and for what purposes these displacements, transitions, and translations are performed, will be discussed in the rest of this sub-chapter.

GLORIA ANZALDÚA'S *BORDERLANDS/LA FRONTERA*

Borderlands/La Frontera is a text that crosses borders and "break[s] down dualistic hegemonic paradigms" (Aigner-Varoz 2000: 47). Formally, it is neither an autobiographical novel nor a collection of essays, but it provides the reader with an alternation of poetry and prose, of fictional and non-fictional texts including myths and legends. According to Sonia Saldívar-Hull[70], it could be best

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[70] Cf. Anzaldúa 1999: 1-15.

described as a book of historical fiction for women. Relocated in a Québec context, it would be labelled a *théorie/fiction*.[71] In her narrative, Anzaldúa rejects the male-dominated tradition of writing history and introduces an alternative to it by breaking down generic boundaries. She thereby creates space for new voices that rewrite his- as *her*story and, as such, allows women to redefine and reinforce their status in Chicano society; she creates a Chican*a* community. Intermingling myths of different origins that inhabit the border region – *la Llorona*, *la Malinche*, *Coatlalopeuh*, the serpent – Anzaldúa inscribes women into her version of a historical account of the Mexico-U.S. border. As the book contains theoretical chapters as well as fictional narratives and poetry, and as it crosses the borders between languages and other conventional categorisations, it creates a new hybrid *genre*. The two main parts of the text, "*Atravesando Fronteras/Crossing Borders*" and "*Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, The Wind*," have seven and six chapters respectively. Their headings are in English, Spanish or both. While the reader might seek to categorise the montage of manuscripts presented in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, the composition of the text as a whole does not allow for doing so. It is consciously and continuously deconstructing literary classifications and, as a result of this refusal of any generic fixity, it becomes, above all, a formal example of the very fluidity of the borderlands its content illustrates.

Notions of 'crossovers' and 'hybridity' are pursued on the level of language by way of code switching, as the chapter headlines suggest. Anzaldúa writes in English and Spanish and instructs the reader on the varieties and

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[71] For elaborations on this categorisation, see chapters 1 and 5.

mixings of these two languages and the dialects that exist side by side in the border region: standard English, working class and slang English, standard Spanish, standard Mexican Spanish, North Mexican Spanish dialect, Chicano Spanish[72], Tex-Mex, and Pachua.[73] Choosing between English and Spanish to address certain subjects, she oscillates between her various identity performances of Chicana, Latina, *Mexicana*, *Texicana*, *Americana*, etc. and tries to find a voice as a *Mestiza*, to create a *Mestiza* subjectivity. She retraces the history of the Chicano language-variety and appropriates this dialect to become *una lesbiana*, a homosexual woman.

As Saldívar-Hull puts it in the introduction to the second edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera:* "The multilingual text does not easily admit those who refuse full engagement with the linguistic demands of Border language" (Anzaldúa 1999: 8). Speaking the language/s of the borderlands requires crossing grammatical and lexical borders when switching between codes. It "involve[s] straddling the borders between two languages, [and] two ways of organizing reality" (Wheeler 2003: 425). The blurring of categories that results from the "straddling" (Wheeler 2003: 425) that Anne-Marie Wheeler describes, gives rise to alternative "ways of organizing reality" (2003: 425). Ultimately, it allows for new subjectivities – in this case Anzaldúa's lesbian of colour subjectivity – that are "defined by [their] very capacity to cross borders" (Butler 2004: 227).

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[72] "Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adapción*, have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un Nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un mondo de vivir*. Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language" (Anzaldúa 1999: 77).
[73] Cf. Anzaldúa 1999: 77.

Set right on the border between the U.S. and Mexico, *Borderlands/La Frontera* elaborates on the linguistic but also the historical and cultural specificities that have resulted from perpetual encounters between the English, the Spanish, and the Native Americans of and in this area over centuries. The term 'borderlands' that Anzaldúa introduces in her writing and that has been used to evoke cultural encounters particularly in the Chicano/a context ever since, stands for "[a] site[] of contest, of flux, and of change" (Fellner 2006: 69). Competing languages, but also competing traditions and cultural concepts that have been imposed on each other over time because of spatial proximity, contribute to a borderlands situation. They challenge the stability of conventional homogenous categories by a single language, tradition, or culture and eventually change or redefine them according to their new hybrid context. The notion of 'borderlands' hence describes "shifting sites of transition [...], where space is contested" (Fellner 2006: 70) and where a third space, infused with an in-between consciousness, comes into existence. As Astrid M. Fellner remarks in her article "Other Places: The Concept of Borderlands as a Paradigm of Transnational Territoriality in Chicana Literature," "[b]order theory [...] emerges from everyday life, from the historical specificity of the boundary region [...], the border between" (2006: 70). Anzaldúa argues that the performative power of border regions gives rise to a new specific culture. Borderlands are hence transnational spheres constituted by a de-constructivist hybrid discourse that subverts hegemonic structures and that re-invents the subject as diverse. They are spaces from which new subjectivities emerge and they are also the places where this appearance of revised subjectivity can be studied best.

Borderlands/La Frontera specifically discusses the construction of the U.S. border with Mexico and gives an extensive account of its symbolism. Referring to historical events as well as to native myths and legends, Anzaldúa explores the complexities of Spanish and English colonialisms, the notion of 'homeland,' and the status of women within this matrix. As Chicano culture is predominantly patriarchal and part of a machismo tradition, the role of 'woman' has widely been defined within the trichotomy of the 'nun', the 'mother', and the 'whore'. Anzaldúa counters this discourse by re-introducing hybrid female figures from ancient times like *Guadalupe*, *Coatlalopeuh* or *Coatlicue*.[74] They all emerge from the borderlands and enter the text by way of a merger of native and Spanish traditions. With the metaphor of the serpent (*coatl*) – a symbol in Christian as well as native belief-systems – Anzaldúa seeks to destabilise and deconstruct cultural doctrines defined by men, like the dichotomies of masculine/feminine, white/black, and good/bad.[75] Anzaldúa's particular sensitivity to and consciousness of binaries seems to emanate from her location at the border region; by definition "borderland spaces question fixities and release the potential for change and revision [...]. This is because these **liminal** spaces act to problematize and so dismantle the binary systems which bring them into being" (Ashcroft 2007: 25, emphasis in original). According to Ashcroft, it is this potential to dismantle power systems that makes borderlands "spaces of energy" (2007: 25), which are at once creative and liberating. However, as Anzaldúa outlines, they are also difficult to inhabit for this very reason.

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[74] For more information, see Anzaldúa 1999: 47-53.

[75] Cf. Aigner-Varoz, Erika. "Metaphors of a Mestiza Consciousness: Anzaldua's Borderlands/La Frontera." *MELUS*, 25.2 (2000): 47-62. Print.

In the preface to the first edition of her book, Anzaldúa reflects on her identity: "Living on borders […], keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity […], is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element" (1999: *Preface*). Although Anzaldúa refers to her own Chicana background here, she believes that

> [t]he psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are *not particular* to the Southwest. In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other (1999: *Preface*, my emphasis).

Cultural encounters and the subsequent transcultural exchanges anywhere in "spaces which have been occupied at various periods by two" (Ashcroft 2007: 25) or more different peoples "remain profoundly **hybridized** in many aspects of their culture" (Ashcroft 2007: 25, emphasis in original). Anzaldúa analyses these "hybridized" (Ashcroft 2007: 25) aspects of her culture and integrates the politics of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in her argument on Chicano traditions. She claims to be

> cultureless because, as a feminist, [she] challenge[s] the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet [she is] cultured, because [she is] participating in the creation of yet another culture" (Anzaldúa 1999: 102-103).

The dynamics of the borderlands allows for such productivity and *Borderlands/La Frontera* indeed creates "another culture" (Anzaldúa 1999: 103) that bears features derived from native, Spanish, and English traditions. At the same time, the resulting trans-culture has new facets that come from the hybridization and redefinition of concepts – including the conception of 'culture' itself. Anzaldúa adds to its national and ethnic connotations the notions of 'sex', 'gender', and 'sexuality'; this newly imagined other culture includes the

categories of 'woman', 'lesbian', and '*Mestiza*,' which Anzaldúa focuses on. This re-imagining also holds true for *Québécois* writing by women of Anzaldúa's generation.

As noted in the introductory paragraph of this chapter, Chicano/a and Québécois cultures and literatures have been compared recently in the emerging field of Hemispheric Studies by Monika Giacoppe and Martín Sánchez Jankowski. Their shared status as minority cultures in North America leads to similarities in the forms taken by their respective contemporary literary productions. Both Chicanos and Québécois find themselves in an oppositional position with regards to English and American culture. Both speak varieties of their European mother tongues, Spanish and French that have often been proven disparaged. Neither literature is accepted in the dominantly English North-American canon. In "Lucky to be so bilingual: Québécois and Chicano/a literatures in a comparative context," Giacoppe elaborates on the similarities and differences between the two major communities of North America for whom English is not the mother tongue. She detects borderlands phenomena, as defined in *La Frontera*, not only in Anzaldúa's Chican*a* milieu, but also in Québec. The main reasons for this, she believes, derive from historical parallels regarding colonialism, religion, and language. However, Giacoppe does concede one major difference between them. While Chicanos and their literature are considered as marginal to the anglophone majority in the U.S., Québécois are the French-speaking majority in their province, where, since the 1970, French is the only official language. Outside of Québec, however, Québécois, Acadians, and other francophone Canadians are often referred to collectively as 'French

Canadians' and remain a minority in what is at least officially a bilingual nation. The situation of Acadians is a particular one, because the principal region they inhabit is in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province and thus an example of a borderlands situation that would need consideration and exploration of its own. Québec, in contrast, recently gained official recognition as a 'nation' within a "united Canada" from the Canadian Parliament.

On a literary level, Québécois cultural production in French is dominant within Québec, while literature in English – together with migrant literatures – have a minority status within the province. This situation is reversed in the wider context of Canada. Québécois writing in French finds itself in a marginal position compared to English Canadian literature, which does and does not include Anglo-Québécois texts. Texts in English from Québec are often considered Canadian, but their difference of origin is ignored. Some of them, however, never circulate beyond Québec. Chicano/a writing, by contrast, never finds itself in a position of power in relation to U.S. literature in English and only recently has become part of the multicultural American canon as a body of ethic writing.[76]

But is Québécois literature considered in the Canadian canon?[77] This question leads to more analogies between the Chicano and Québécois communities. Giacoppe's main comparisons are based on history, religion (especially Roman Catholic), and language varieties. Because the English eventually colonized Spanish and French colonies, "in both cases resistance to this domination emphasized both religious and linguistic differences" (Giacoppe

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[76] Cf. Lauter, Paul et al., eds. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature: Contemporary Period (1945 To The Present), Volume E.* 8th ed. Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2012. Print.
[77] Cf. New, W.H. *A History of Canadian Literature*. 2nd ed. Montréal: McGill Queen's UP, 2003. Print.

2005: 47). Catholicism shaped Hispanic as well as francophone cultures, their social structures, and their conceptions of 'sexuality,' 'sex,' and 'gender.' In both the role of 'woman' got strictly confined to 'nun/virgin,' 'whore,' or 'mother'; the latter was a Catholic patriarchal mother who was authorized to pass the mother tongue on to her children. As a safeguard for the preservation of the minority society and for keeping its language distinct from the oppressing anglophone culture, linguistic purity and authenticity became important factors for both the Spanish and the French. The eventual use of the English language in literary texts, then, became a way to explore the colonial and post-colonial situations in either border region, Texas and Québec. It led not only to the grappling with language, but also to the questioning of Catholic values and, as a result, of heteronormativity and the constricted definitions of sexuality, sex, and gender.

The northern borderlands between Canada and Québec have not received the same attention by scholars as the borderlands in the south between the U.S. and Mexico. The attention paid to Latino/a and, specifically, Chicano/a issues is due to the fact that these borderlands lie within the physical and political boundaries of the United States. In contrast, the northern borderlands and their dynamics seem to be less weighty in the North American context, because of the differential in political importance between the U.S. and Canada. Québec has only received considerable attention during the periods of the two failed referenda on Québec independence in 1980 and 1995.

However, the work of women and feminists like Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa, Métis writer Maria Campbell, and Québécois writer and translator Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, can be analyzed side by side, Giacoppe

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claims, as their writing features notions of 'exile,' '*métissage*,' and 'hybridity' in similar ways, each according to its setting in the Mexico-U.S. or Québec-Canadian borderlands. As Giacoppe concludes:

> [A]lthough women are often held responsible for preserving the 'authentic' language and culture that maintain the lines of demarcation between ethnic groups, writings by authors including Gloria Anzaldúa, Nicole Brossard, Cherríe Moraga, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood and others, frequently (and unapologetically) reject that 'responsibility' by crossing borders both generic (fiction, theory, memoir) and linguistic. These women refuse to 'choose sides' and demonstrate their loyalty by choosing languages (2005: 57).

The texts of Anzaldúa and Brossard resemble each other. For example, when it comes to clearly attributing them to any one *genre*, this is hardly possible in either case. Both switch between languages and cross cultural borders in their writing to come to terms with their post/colonial situations and their position as women and lesbians in a patriarchal anglophone, but also Christian society. Lotbinière-Harwood once declared in an interview that she thought "the question of border crossings, borderlands in Québec – in Canada actually, which is an officially bi-lingual country, and officially bi-cultural – this idea of borders and border crossings and what [is called] the 'two solitudes' is very much ingrained" (De Lotbinière-Harwood 1989: 42) in Québécois society.

Borderlands/*La Frontera* formally and ideologically relates to literary productions by women in Québec that illustrate the problems of nation, language, and gender. Particularly Anzaldúa's emphasis on language, women, and compulsory heterosexuality in Chicano culture as well as her close examination of these topics – and the alternatives she gives as a homosexual woman – can be tracked in Québécois women's writing of the same era in a similar way. Like Anzaldúa at the border of Mexico and Texas, Brossard makes

the border crossings of her everyday life in Montréal an issue in her writing. Her texts combine fiction and theory as much as English and French; they blur the boundaries between Montréal's historically anglophone West and francophone East as much as they seek to subvert the role of women as patriarchal mothers through the lesbian voice.

HOMI K. BHABHA'S NOTION OF 'THIRD SPACE'

The concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' ventures beyond the theoretical similarities between Anzaldúa and her Québécois associates to take into account Bhabha's theory of 'third space' and Pratt's 'contact zone.' Homi K. Bhabha defines the notion of 'third space (of enunciation)' as a spatial and temporal entity set in "the borderline negotiations of cultural translation" (1994: 319). It is "unrepresentable itself" (Bhabha 1994: 55), but manifests through interventions that "mak[e] the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process" (Bhabha 1994: 54).[78] The third space is situated beyond cultural history and local fixity, moving "away from […] primary conceptual and organizational categories" (Bhabha 1994: 2). As it "questions binary divisions" (Bhabha 1994: 19), it places itself in the in-between of cultures and "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Rutherford 1990: 211). It is a site beyond the confines of specific nation-states and thus "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by

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[78] An artefact of the third space as part of my concept of '*dimension lapsisée*' is Brossard's *Le Désert Mauve* (1987). For details, see chapter 4.

the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People" (Bhabha 1994: 54). Bhabha's concepts of 'third space' and 'hybridity' have become central to Postcolonial Studies and Literary as well as Cultural Studies. His transnational approach deconstructs the concept of 'border,' and proposes "a paradigm of transnational territoriality which accepts hybrid cultural formations" (Fellner 2006: 69). This is highly relevant for the Québec-Canadian context and in particular for Montréal, a city caught in a permanent state of cultural translation that deregulates its historically sedimented divisions and gives rise to new subject formations.

Bhabha situates his theory in a "position of liminality" (Rutherford 1990: 209) that is a "productive space of the construction of culture as difference" (Rutherford 1990: 209).[79] Cultural meaning can only be externalised via "a process of alienation" (Rutherford 1990: 210).[80] By acknowledging the other and through an understanding of cultural difference, meaning is subsequently constructed via translation.[81] In this non-essentialist understanding of "original or originary culture" (Rutherford 1990: 211), cultural translation is a process of constant flux. According to Bhabha, "[t]ranslation is the performative nature of cultural communication" (1994: 326) and creates a condition of hybridity that manifests itself in "the 'third space', which enables other positions to emerge" (Rutherford 1990: 211). As a result, in transnational/translational third spaces, new formations of cultural identity can take hold.

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[79] A signifier of this liminality in my theory on the lapsised dimension is Gail Scott's 'comma of difference' in *My Paris*. For a detailed discussion, see chapter 6.

[80] I use these alienating moments that materialise as code switching and other linguistic practices of discontinuity to establish a connection between the texts I pair in chapters 3 to 6.

[81] For further explanations of the concepts of 'cultural difference' and 'translation,' see Rutherford, Jonathan: "The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha." *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence&Wishart, 1990. 207–221. Print.

MARY LOUISE PRATT'S THEORY OF THE 'CONTACT ZONE'

Mary Louise Pratt addresses an adjacent phenomenon. Her theory of the 'contact zone' arises from her analyses of colonial South American writings, such as the Peruvian Guaman Poma's letter to the Spanish crown. Poma was an indigenous Andean and, according to Pratt, "may have worked in the Spanish colonial administration as an interpreter" (1991: 34). His function illustrates "the sociocultural complexities produced by conquest and empire" (Pratt 1991: 32) as he "mirrors back to the Spanish (in their language, which is alien to him) an image of themselves that they often suppress and will therefore surely recognize" (Pratt 1991: 35). In his role as a colonial mediator who has learned the conqueror's language, he addresses Andean interests in Spanish using the idiom of the other for his own ends. The text as a whole, however, is bilingual and includes Poma's mother tongue Quechua: "such are the dynamics of language, writing, and representation in the contact zone" (Pratt 1991: 35). It is the "'contact' with different and differentiating modes of power" (Pérez-Torres 2006: 31) – and Anzaldúa's refusal "to locate herself within any single identity or community" (Pérez-Torres 2006: 32) – that Pratt is interested in.

Pratt defines contact zones as

social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (1991: 34).

Contact zones exceed the binary of oppressor versus oppressed through practices of 'transculturation' that multiply relational conditions.[82] The notion of 'transculturation' is one aspect of the contact zone that Pratt brings into her studies through Fernando Ortiz's model of 'cultural transformation.'[83] Transculturation occurs in the interaction between two or more cultures "that occupy different positions of power" (Pérez-Torres 2006: 30) within a delimited space. The relation of these cultures to each other is determined by the ways in which practices of the colonizing culture are absorbed into the colonized one. In spite of the fact that this process is not a voluntary one in which the subjugated cultures are able to control the extent of their exposure to the dominating culture, there are multiple ways in which elements of the former may be integrated and reappropriated into the latter. Unlike 'acculturation' or 'deculturation,' unequal structures of power persist in Pratt's notion of 'contact zone,' where 'transculturation' "express[es] the long-term contact and intractable, unequal conflict" (1991: 37).[84]

2.2. QUÉBEC/CANADA: POST-COLONIALISM AND THE NOTION OF 'NATION'

In this subchapter, I survey the heterogeneity of the meaning of 'nation' in the Québec-Canadian context. Although both attempts by the *Parti Québécois* (*PQ*) to separate from Canada were defeated (in May 1980 by 59.56% of

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[82] Cf. Pérez-Torres, Rafael. *Mestizaje: Critical Uses of Race in Chicano Literature.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006: 31. Print.

[83] Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*. Harriet de Onís (trans.). Durham: Duke UP, 1995. Print.

[84] The heterogeneity of meaning typical for the contact zone provides, among other aspects, the concept's share in what I call '*dimension lapsisée*.' It is exemplified by the analyses of Nathanaël's writing in chapters 3 and 6.

Québec's population and in October 1995 by the exceedingly tight result of 50.56%), the party has continued to advocate for sovereignty. Its programme is based on the slogan "Il nous reste un pays à faire."[85] 'Un pays' refers to a collective Québécois imaginary with values located in the French roots of Québec society, culture, and linguistic practices.[86] Yet, on what grounds could that "nouveau pays pour le monde"[87] have been or still be established? The key argument in any pro-independence discussion would be that of 'difference.' This subchapter, consequently, reflects on the role that difference plays within the construction of socio-cultural concepts like 'nation,' 'nationality,' and 'nationalism.' For these purposes it is useful to contrast the previously discussed Canadian classic *Two Solitudes* with Michèle Lalonde's 1968 poem manifesto "Speak White." The latter was presented at the first *Nuit de la Poésie*[88] in Montréal, on March 27, 1970 – a landmark of francophone cultural activism. Both texts emerged in historically critical years of change: *Two Solitudes* was published at the end of WWII in 1945 and "Speak White" at the time of labour unrests and struggles over the use of French language. Each has – in its own way – become emblematic for understanding Canadian and Québec societies.

"Speak White" is a manifesto against anglophone supremacy and a declaration of international solidarity. By identifying francophone Québécois with the oppressed around the world, it transcends the limits of the province. The

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[85] "Our country remains to be founded" (my translation).
[86] All of these factors are directly related to the iconic phrase "Je me souviens" ("I remember") that can be found on Québec licence plates. Ironically, it does not seem to be clear what is to be remembered (the French origins, the Battle of the Plains, etc).
[87] "[N]ew country for the world" (my translation).
[88] Poetry Night (my translation).

poem references both the British Crown (Westminster) and US-American (Washington, Wall Street) anglophone domination:

> speak white
> de Westminster à Washington relayez-vous
> speak white comme à Wall Street
> white comme à Watts
> be civilized
> et comprenez notre parler de circonstance
> quand vous nous demandez poliment
> how do you do
> et nous entendez vous répondre
> we're doing all right
> we're doing fine
> we
> are not alone
>
> nous savons
> que nous ne sommes pas seuls (Lalonde 2007: 139)[89]

and adds to them a parody of the typical English idiom of politeness 'How do you do.' Lalonde's code switching mocks English in a double sense. On the one hand, it reflects the discourse of the oppressors by making use of their language, on the other hand, it shows that Lalonde and the francophone Québécois not only know how to speak white and *do* speak white, but she/they also know all the high cultural references and she/they do/es not use English only to obey orders. The phrase 'speak white' was used until the early 1970s in Québec and especially in Montréal, where Francophones were instructed to speak English at work and in public spaces – most famously at Montréal's Eaton Department Store, where customers were also expected to use English or refused service. While the province of Québec was to a large extent French speaking, the English had commercial and financial supremacy. Apart from discrepancies on the levels of education and salary, ethnic discrimination was

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[89] Cf. Lalonde, Michèle. "Speak White." *Les cent plus beau poems québécois.* Ed. Graveline, Pierre. Anjou: Les Éditions Fides, 2007. 136-139. Print.

part of the francophone experience. One of the most famous reactions to this negative English Canadian attitude towards Francophones is Pierre Vallières' autobiographical essay *Les nègres blancs d'Amérique*, which compares the condition (not situation) of French Canadians to that of African Americans. Like "Speak White," it was published in 1968. Vallières developed the idea of white Anglo-Saxon protestant control versus French catholic subordination through a contentious comparison with slavery in the United States.[90]

Lalonde denounces English colonialist and linguistic oppression as well. Like Vallières, she identifies Francophones with the working class[91] and the proletariat of Québec:

> speak white
> tell us that God is a great big shot
> and that we're paid to trust him
> speak white
> parlez-nous production profits et pourcentages
> *speak white*
> *c'est une langue riche*
> pour acheter
> mais pour se vendre
> mais pour se vendre à perte d'âme
> mais pour se vendre
>
> ah !
> *speak white*
> *big deal*
> mais pour vous dire
> l'éternité d'un jour de grève
> pour raconter
> *une vie de peuple-concierge* (Lalonde 2007: 138).[92]

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[90] Vallières was broadly criticised as regards his discourse of victimisation. For an extensive discussion, see Burton, William M. "A Most Weird Dialectic of Inversion": Revolutionary fraternity, sexuality and translation in Pierre Vallières and Eldridge Cleaver." MA thesis. Université de Montréal, 2013. Print.

[91] Francophones were mainly blue-collar workers as opposed to a majority of Anglophones, who had *white*-collar occupations.

[92] Cf. Lalonde 2007: 136-139.

The passage quoted refers to the economic inequality between Anglophones and Francophones as well as the differences in value as regards both spending power and the cultural collective.

As much as MacLennan's *Two Solitudes* has shaped pan-Canadian conceptualisations of the country's division into English and French Canada, *Speak White* has informed Québec national identity since the Quiet Revolution and the construction of a Québécois cultural collective consciousness as different from the rest of Canada, anglophone or francophone. This difference was invoked once more in the fall of 2013, when the *Parti Québécois* government of Prime Minister Pauline Marois presented Bill 60, "the Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests"[93] also abbreviated as "The Québec Charter of Values" (*Charte des valeurs québécoises*). It was an attempt to implement regulations on secularism and interculturalism (as opposed to multiculturalism in Canada).[94] In particular, it aimed to prohibit the wearing of 'conspicuous' religious symbols by public service workers. This is also the issue that provoked most of the reactions in the Québec public sphere and media. According to the Marois government, these measures were necessary to regulate the Québec public discourse and formulate its shared socio-cultural values to prepare the province for a third referendum. The proposed legislation died in spring 2014 following the election

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[93] Cf. <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-60-40-1.html> (17 April 2014).

[94] Most of the information provided in this section is based on my following of the media events in 2013/14 and a lecture given by Robert Schwartzwald at the *IRTG Diversity* Winter School. Cf. Schwartzwald, Robert. *IRTG Diversity* Winter School. Europäische Akademie, Otzenhausen. 2 April 2014. Keynote Speech.

of a Liberal Party government. While the liberals had been critical of the proposed Charter from the start, reactions to Bill 60 were mixed throughout the period it was under scrutiny. It became a highly "polarising debate" and the media ensured its "spectacularisation."[95] What was most interesting about the whole discussion, though, was the question of how the Charter cristalized the ways a nation is constituted.[96]

2.3. TOWARD UNDERSTANDING MONTRÉAL AS A POST/MODERN CITY

My analysis of Anglo-Québécois texts examines the performative aspect of the city's topography, in particular that of Montréal. Arguing that Montréal is produced as a liminal space, I illustrate that the transiting through it presented in the texts, privileges the figure of the *flâneur.* In fact, the practices of traversing the city create narrators/protagonists that range from *flâneur* to *flâneuse* – a version of the *flâneur* in the feminine, that crosses the city not only on foot, but also by bike or in a car[97] – and, ultimately, to the *flâneure*, a revised queer *flâneur* and symbolic incarnation of the lapsised dimension that emerges in my reading of contemporary Québécois narratives.

In this subchapter, I give a brief survey of theory on urban spaces and the performative construction of urban topographies that informs my argument.

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[95] CF. Schwartzwald 2014.

[96] As Gail Scott said in an interview on the eve of the new millennium, long before this latest attempt for an independent Québec: "[T]he whole question of nation-state, complete disaster. And in Québec even more than in the rest of Canada." Cf. the Interview by Corey Frost. <http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v1_4_2000/current/workbook/> (15 August 2009).

[97] Cf. Rosenthal, Caroline. "Transgressing the 'poetics of the anglicized city': The Figure of the Flâneuse in Dionne Brand's What We All Long For." *Space and Gender. Spaces of Difference in Canadian Women's Writing – Espaces de difference dans l'écriture canadienne au féminin.* Eds. Doris G. Eibl and Caroline Rosenthal. Innsbruck: Innsbruck UP, 2009. 231-245. Print.

Turning to Michel de Certeau, Walter Benjamin, and Zygmunt Bauman, I briefly compare structures of the city and practices of mental mapping. According to Bauman, it is coincidental momentary relations between time and space that emphasize the fluidity of the post-modern city.[98] "Walking in the City," a chapter in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984)[99] by De Certeau, provides the definitions of 'space' and 'place' to my understanding of urban structures as narratives that are being read and written as they are being walked. I bring Walter Benjamin and his *Arcades Project* (1927-1940) into the discussion to include a modernist point of view that reflects upon the figure of the '*flâneur*' as central to the formation of modern urban spaces.

The third part of De Certeau's *L'invention du quotidien* (1980)[100] entitled "Pratiques d'espace"[101] explores walking (in) the city as a manner of inhabiting space. In this sense, it is akin to the concept of '*flâneur*' that Benjamin takes up to sketch Paris as the capital of the 19th century in his *Arcades Project*. Both De Certeau and Benjamin describe "city-users" (Buchanan 2000: 112). In De Certeau, however, the figure's social background is modified. It becomes an individual who is walking and observing – but as part of their daily practice and with an emphasis on the practice of walking rather than on that of observing, as described in Benjamin. De Certeau differentiates between "*voyeurs*" (1990:

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[98] Cf. Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. Print.

[99] I use both the English translation of the text and the original here. Interestingly, what is "Marches dans la ville" in French, becomes the more process-oriented "Walking in the City" in English, which serves my argument better than the original, more static noun. Inveresely, the title of the text as a whole in English suggests the notion of 'practice,' which implies the repetitive aspect of everyday life, whereas the French *L'Invention du quotidien* already carries the semantics of 'result' regarding these repetitive quotidian practices.

[100] I quote from the 2nd edition, cf. De Certeau, Michel. *L'invention du quotidien 1. arts de faire*. 2e éd. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1990. Print.

[101] "Spatial Practices" (De Certeau 1984: 91-130). Cf. De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. Print.

139)[102] and *"marcheurs"* (1990: 139).[103] Consequently, the individual reads the city, but the emphasis is on their writing of the city. The walking individual rewrites the city and connects its urban spaces according to their own practices, needs, and pleasures: "De même, le marcheur transforme en autre chose chaque signifiant spatial" (De Certeau 1990: 149).[104] With the practice of walking, the individual creates its own (mental) map of the city through the repetition of its practices. From this, De Certeau concludes that there is a rhetoric of walking[105] that materialises in the city's topography.[106] In his article "Unknotting Place and Space" (2000), Ian Buchanan elaborates on this rhetoric and offers "an account of de Certeau's [pluralist] notion of spatiality" (2000: 108). For De Certeau, the location of the difference between spaces and places is to be found in the narratives that construct them and "constantly transfor[m] places into spaces or spaces into places" (1984: 118).[107] Both are performative and emerge from the narrative of walking. Everyday practices, then, "convert the pure spatiality […] into *place*" (Buchanan 2000: 123, emphasis in original) and passages. As De Certeau concludes: "[U]ne ville […] métaphorique s'insinue ainsi dans le texte clair de la ville planifié et lisible" (1990: 142).[108]

The Benjaminian urban spaces and places in the city I am interesed are those of Paris – not only because of Gail Scott's travelogue that reincarnates the

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[102] "[V]oyeur" (De Certeau 1984: 92).
[103] "[W]alker" (De Certeau 1984: 98).
[104] "In the same way, the walker transforms each spatial signifier into something else" (De Certeau 1984: 98).
[105] For a full discussion of the "rhétorique de la marche" (De Certeau 1990: 149), see De Certeau 1990: 149.
[106] For a review of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, see Buchanan, Ian. *Michel de Certeau. Cultural Theorist*. London: Sage, 2000. Print.
[107] For a critical discussion, see Buchanan 2000: 108-125.
[108] "A […] metaphorical […] city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city" (De Certeau 1984: 93).

capital in a post-modern era, but also because of the concept of 'passages' (the German title of the project being *Passagenwerk*). According to Bauman, Benjamin's figure of the '*flâneur,*' who frequents these passages, has become a concept of "cultural analysis and the central symbolic figure of the modern city" (1996: 26). Bauman conceives of the *flâneur* as a stroller. He bases his definition on the psychic meaning of strolling as "rehearsing human reality as a series of episodes, that is as events without past and with no consequences" (Bauman 1996: 6). Furthermore "the stroller sp[ins] off" (Bauman 1996: 6) and invents "the fleeting fragments of other persons lives into stories at will – it [is] his perceptions that ma[k]e them into actors" (Bauman 1996: 6).[109] This account on the notion of 'strolling' allows for variable interpretations of the *flâneur*, among which the "pseudo-*flaneur*" (Borchard 2003: 210), what Elizabeth Wilson calls "The Invisible *Flâneur*" (1992)[110], and the diachronic continuum of pilgrims, vagabonds, tourists, and players Zygmunt Bauman presents in his article "From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity."[111]

In Bauman's work, the pedestrian comes into existence through a "string of episodes without history and without consequence" (Bauman 1994: 140) whereas the *flâneur* in Benjamin is described as a 19th-century stroller specific to certain city spaces (like the Arcades of Paris). De Certeau, maps the streets of the city along the paths of the walking subject. This understanding allows for the shift from the industrial and modern city to the post-modern city.

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[109] This reading of the stroller is particularly relevant to my discussions of Scott in chapters 5 and 6.

[110] Wilson, Elizabeth. "The Invisible *Flâneur*." *New Left Review* 191 (1992): 90-110. Print.

[111] For the entire article cf. Bauman, Zygmunt. "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity." *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 1996. 18-36. Print.

2.4. TRANSLATING SPACES: THE DELUSIONS OF MONTRÉAL

> But down in the angle at Montreal, on the island about which the two rivers join,
> there is little of this sense of new and endless space.
> Two old races and religions meet here and live their separate legends,
> side by side.
> If this sprawling halfcontinent has a heart, here it is.
> Its pulse throbs out along the rivers and railroads;
> slow, reluctant and rarely simple,
> a double beat, a self-moved reciprocation.
> (*Two Solitudes 2*)

This subchapter takes a close look at the performativity of the city's division and the literatures that have emerged from it, ultimately labelled as the distinctly binary 'Québécois' and 'Anglo-Québécois.' The encounter between the two literatures and the practices of 'translation' that come along with it have been defined as distinctive features of Montréal and operate along what Sherry Simon calls "paths of perversity" (2006: 119) and in "perverse translations" (2006: 119). The paths are created by urban strollers that seek to transit across Montréal, from the East end to the West Island, from French to English, and back again – and all along the South-North axis. Montréal's topographies are more complicated and diverse than they have been depicted in most of stereotypical, polarising cultural mappings. The translations are a result of the strollers' itineraries and a means of negotiating meaning on the way. While this subchapter focuses on Sherry Simon's theories, it also offers a brief account of alternative visions of the divided city, its spaces of encounter, and the lapsised dimension.

Within Montréal's historically perpetuated and politically sustained discursive division an in-between "buffer zone" (Simon 2006: 8) has been created, where its two major cultures and languages meet. Simon symbolically pins down the area where English and French grapple the most with each other and where transculturation takes place most obviously, to the neighbourhood of 'Mile End.' She describes the area north of downtown and surrounding *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* as a hybrid space.[112] In *Translating Montréal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (2006), Simon analyses the "double city" (4) as a "special kind of space" (4) that bears "cultural crossovers of all kinds" (10) where "new kinds of citizenships [can be] developed" (10) and from which transgressing writing practices evolve. Montréal, emerging from its colonial past that once strictly divided it, has turned into "a cosmopolitan city, with French as the matrix of cultural life" (Simon 2006: 3), Simon argues. "Multilingualism, mixed languages, and code switching are preferred modes of communication" (2006: 10), while maintaining the notion of 'cultural difference,' open Montréal's spaces for practices of 'imitation with difference.'[113]

In the Preface to *Translating Montreal*, Simon reflects on her youthful experiences "in a city as segregated as colonial Calcutta" (2006: xi). The trips she made through the divided city were "voyages […] to foreign territory" (Simon 2006: xi) revealing cultural difference. These encounters are similar to the ones portrayed in Mavis Gallant's stories, which are, again, based on childhood memories about moving in-between anglophone and francophone communities. According to Simon, "the sensibility of the divided city is different from that of

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[112] For an extensive discussion of Montréal as a hybrid space, see Simon, Sherry. *Hybridité culturelle*. Montréal: L'île de la Tortue, 1999. Print.
[113] Butler 1999.

the multilingual, cosmopolitan city" (2006: xiii) which has one main language that overrules all others. This becomes evident in their divergent cultural productions: while cities like London or Paris have ostensibly one "single overarching linguistic and cultural identity" (Simon 2006: xiv) and a corresponding literature, Montréal and its literature is linguistically and culturally split. This division, however, has been creative. Simon argues that "the divisions of the city [into an anglophone West and a francophone East] are imaginative beginnings" (2006: xiii) and "give rise to literary projects activated by translingualism" (2006: xiii). In Montréal "French and English are in unremitting contact" (2006: xv). This situation leaves the city's inhabitants aware of language in their everyday lives. The linguistic and cultural divisions described by Montréal writers of the 20th century persist to the present. Although today its urban spaces are (constructed as) more diverse and have turned from bi- to multilingual, they are still places that call attention to their overall and intrinsic dualism. But as Simon argues, "[t]he once-divided city has become a laboratory where new categories of identity are coming into being" (2006: xv). A cross-town experience through the urban spaces of Montréal "stimulate[s] the translingual imagination" (Simon 2006: xvi).

According to Simon, Montréal can be compared to colonial cities like Calcutta, Trieste, and most convincingly Kafka's Prague. Like these cities, Montréal's "linguistic divisions […] are the product of an internal colonialism, reflecting the shifting power relations that shaped the development of the city" (Simon 2006: 21). "Montréal", Simon continues, "is the product of a double colonization, first by the French and then by the British" (2006: 21). But at the

end of the 20th century, the Mile End quarter around *Boulevard St-Laurent* came

to exemplify the contact zone that has emerged to challenge the city's divide. An

immigrant neighbourhood, Mile End became one of the city's principal spaces

where language mixing and code switching are most commonly overheard. It is

representative of Montréal's diversity, Simon notes, in so far as "on the

sidewalks teenagers start their sentences in one language and finish in another"

(2006: 9-10). In situations like these, the practice of 'translation' is at stake. Too

much language contact, Simon adds, can "actually impoverish the range of

expression in both tongues" (2006: xvi). When either language can be used as a

lingua franca and both are spoken equally well to the point where the two can

become interchangeable, translations seem redundant. Translatability is

impaired as cultural imaginaries blur and blend. Yet, French and English

enclaves persist in Montréal, each in its own corner(s), and travelling across

town oftentimes still means continuous confrontations with translation. The

"linguistically divided city" (Simon 2006: 6), continues to rely on translations. As

Simon argues, translation has been of major interest to the past two generations

of Montréal writers as well as critics. Necessary or redundant, obligatory or

unfeasible, translational practices open the structure of one language through

the crossing of linguistic borders and semantically enrich each of the codes

involved in this process. Translations create something new and beyond the

conventional binary of English and French language systems. Montréal's

translations emerge from the city's "cultural geography" (Simon 2006: 4), its

"split grid" (Simon 2006: 3) which is as much a relic of the city's colonial past as

it is "a mirror of the inner divisions that define modern consciousness" (Simon

2006: 6). Montréal's language consciousness materializes in code switching and translations that denote "the persistence of cultural difference" (Simon 2006: 17). Simon then seeks an extended definition of translation in *Translating Montreal*, namely as a practice that is "inspired by the encounter with other tongues [and] include[s] the effects of creative interference" (2006: 17).

The process of 'translation' becomes a means for "analysing cultural contact" (Simon 2006: 17) in *Translating Montreal*. Simon "take[s] the perspective of the walker" (2006: 7) to engage in this transcultural analysis. With a specific attention to the city's double colonization, Simon's study of translational practices focuses on Montréal's Jewish community and the city's feminist writers. Chapter four, "Paths of Perversity: Creative Interference" (Simon 2006: 119) explores the ways in which Montréal women have made 'translation' a central theme of their writing. Their "experimental interlingual practices" (Simon 2006: 15) are part of a broader "feminist reflection on language in Canada" (Simon 2006: 15). Simon takes a closer look at women's writing and claims that especially Nicole Brossard and Gail Scott share an interest in language relationships that seek to "[disturb] the boundaries of each cultural space" (2006: 15). They create a "translingual poetics" (Simon 2006: 15) that questions the "limits of translation" (Simon 2006: 17). Brossard and Scott's "symbolic uses of translation" (Simon 2006: 18) become a "figure of writing" (Simon 2006: 26) and create new literary forms and identities beyond "linguistic nationalism" (Simon 2006: 24). Both writers cross language borders and meditate on the notion of 'translation': Brossard often incorporates English words and phrases into her generally French texts, but in her novel *Le désert*

mauve (1987), translation also becomes a metaphor for '*l'écriture au feminin*' (writing in the feminine). In this text that practices a French to French 'translation,' the translingual function is removed from translation. The structure and composition of the text place an emphasis on translational strategies and a spotlight on the role of the translator – a figure that, like women, has traditionally had a silent role. While Brossard formally erases the interlingual transfer, Scott points it out graphically. The French words and phrases she inserts into *My Paris* (1999) are almost always followed by a translation into English, separating the original and its translation by way of a comma. This so-called 'comma of difference' stresses the additional meanings words might have in other languages and different cultural contexts.

Brossard and Scott are good examples of typical symbolic ab/uses of the practice of translation in Montréal. Simon reads them among other selected Montréal translations as deviant or perverse in the sense that they "do not deliver the goods" (2006: 119). She defines 'perversion' as "a turning away from conventional functions." (Simon 2006: 119) 'Perverse translations' are, consequently, translations that do not literally translate a text from one language to the other. They rather displace, transform, and relocate a text from one cultural background to another. This shift does not necessarily include any interlingual transfer, as exemplified in *Le désert mauve*. Perverse translations are creative rewritings through which the original versions lose their claim to uniqueness and origin(ality). Whereas conservative understandings and techniques of 'translation' are supposedly merely mechanical, this new interpretation of the translational process is creative. Simon defines translation

as "writing that is inspired by the encounter with other tongues [and that] include[s] the effects of creative interference" (2006: 17). Being faced with continuous code switching and translations in the everyday of Montréal, writers question the legitimacy of traditional translational practices.

Simon argues that 'perverse translations' reveal the translator's position to be potentially manipulative. Montréal translators illuminate the "shady zone" (Simon 2006: 120) of translation by "uncoupling translation from its very long association with the nation" (Simon 2006: 18). This "allow[s] us to understand the models of culture operating at a particular moment" (Simon 2006: 18). Translation as a symptom of (post-)colonialism as well as a feature of postcolonial analysis has become a means of understanding the creative productivity of the process of 'transculturation.' As Simon puts it: "Culture is *born* in translation" (2006: 17, emphasis in original).

Following Simon's argument, then, Montréal's culture is born in 'perverse translation.' When Simon labels Brossard's *Le désert mauve* a 'pseudotranslation' and designates Scott's use of commas as 'commas of translation,' these are but two examples of a writing practice of 'perverse translation' that seems to be symptomatic of Montréal's divisions. Etymologically, 'perversion' can be retraced to the Latin verb 'per-vertere,' a composition of the prefix 'per' meaning 'through' or 'by' and 'vertere' meaning 'to turn.'[114] To Simon's listing of "practices of deviant, disrespectful, and excessive translation [that] have become a mark of experimental writing in Montreal" (2006: 120), I want to add Nathanaël's 'self-translations' as well as

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[114] See also Simon 2006: 119.

Heather O'Neill's and Zoe Whittall's 'translations of the street.'[115] Both comply

with Simon's definition of "*per*version [as] a turning away from conventional

functions" (2006: 119, emphasis in original).

2.5. QUEERING SPACES: LINGUISTIC ENCOUNTERS AND PERFORMATIVITY

Turning to Judith Butler's work on subjectivity, in this subchapter, I will

outline why this dissertation studies 'revised subjectivity' rather than 'identity.' In

order to design a structure of analysis for the first-person narrators of the texts in

the corpus of this dissertation, I engage several of Butler's writings. This is

because she critically synthesises a vast number of Western philosophical

references and creates a situation of conflicting discourses, which she resolves

in a way that makes them relevant to her – and by extension – to the interests of

my project. In particular, my discussion relies upon Butler's theories on gender

and performativity.

According to Butler, "[t]he genealogy of the subject as a critical category

[…] suggests that […], rather than be[ing] identified strictly with the individual,

[the subject] ought to be designated as a linguistic category [,] a structure in

formation" (1997: 10). In *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*

(1997), Butler elaborates on the difference between the notions of 'subjectivity'

and 'identity' with the help of 'identification' as a process opposed to agency. As

Butler notes, "[t]he subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve

and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency"

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[115] Cf. Von Flotow, Luise. "Legacies of Quebec women's écriture au féminin: bilingual transformances, translation politized subaltern versions of the text of the street." *Journal of Canadian Studies* (1996): (non. p.) ProQuest. Web. 15 Feb. 2014.

(1997: 11). The linguistic situation in the lapsised dimension challenges this intelligibility. The practices and discourses of power in two different languages and cultures clash and break its respective grids.[116] As a result, "[i]ndividuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the subject simultaneously emerges as a "site") and they enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language" (Butler 1997: 11). When there are two or more concurrent and competing linguistic codes, the site of the subject is in permanent redefinition. Identity is only subsequently being constructed and/or modified.

In *Undoing Gender* (2004), Butler exemplifies two subject positions: On the one hand, Anzaldúa's non "'unitary' subject" (2004: 227) or "multiple subject" (2004: 228) that results from the writing of the latter in different languages and across *genres*. As Miriam Bornstein-Gomez summarises: "[I]n a process of (re)signification, Anzaldua (re)constructs subjectivity rooted in language, culture, and history [– in] a space of political and cultural agency" (2010: 46). On the other hand, Butler discusses Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of a "fractured subject" (2004: 228). My reading of (Anglo-)Québécois subjectivity takes up both constructs. Whereas Nicole Brossard's and Nathanaël's narrators are multiple, Gail Scott's and Heather O'Neill's narrator is fractured. According to Butler's reflections in *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), "[n]arrative is simultaneously the precondition for a subject naming and providing retroactive order to its own subjectivity" (Lundberg 2007: 330). In line

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[116] As Bornstein-Gómez puts it: "Placing subjectivity in a contestatory space affects the knowledge and values that sustain the hegemonic center taking away its legitimization of power and interrupting its constructed dichotomies" (2010: 54) Cf. Bornstein-Gomez, Miriam. "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re) Signification." *Confluencia* 26.1 (2010): 46-55. Print.

with this argument, I illustrate in my study how the subjectivities of first-person narrators and protagonists come into existence through practices of writing, translating, and walking.

2.6. 'O CANADA': ENGLISH, A MINORITY LANGUAGE IN QUÉBEC

> [T]wo traditions, two dictionaries, sometimes more for the sake of passing from one language to another what has been thought and crafted in the "unconscious" of a language.
> We tend to attribute specific meaning to each word, but there is a lot happening at the level of grammar and syntax
> (Mays 2008: 23)

This subchapter – together with the next one – evaluates language status and usage in Québec, particularly in Montréal. As previously outlined, English is considered a minority language in Québec. According to the 2001 census, there are only 8% Anglophones in the province.[117] Since Bill 22 was passed by the liberal government in 1974, Québec has been unilingual and, in 2001, counted 81.2% Francophones.[118] Daily life in Québec and a significant part of its biggest city, Montréal, are in French only. As Shana Poplack et al. summarise: "Over the past 30 years, the unparalleled success of Quebec's language laws and the resulting 'anglophone exodus' have fundamentally altered the relationship of English and French in the province" (2006: 185). As Poplack states elsewhere: "The official status of French has had the unprecedented effect of converting English, elsewhere in the majority, into a minority language" (2008: 189). In this

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[117] Cf. <http://www.slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=english_french_legal> (18 September 2014).
[118] Cf. <http://www.slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=english_french_legal> (18 September 2014). Approximately 10% of the Québec population speaks other languages.

section, I have a brief look at the current situation of the English language in Québec. How has English reacted to its new minority status and its ongoing linguistic contact with French?[119] Is the English of Québec different from that spoken in the rest of Canada, where it is the majority language? Besides the officially bilingual New Brunswick and the three territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) of Canada, all provinces are unilingual English (*de jure* or *de facto*).[120] While French is the official and dominant language in Québec, English dominates outside of it. Therefore, Québec English, for its part, is in a minority position within what is otherwise a majority language.

One of the rare studies on the impact of French on English in Québec was conducted by the Ottawa-based linguist Shana Poplack together with James A. Walker (York University) and Rebecca Malcolmson (University of Ottawa) in the period between 2002 and 2005. In their article "An English 'like no other'?: Language Contact and Change in Quebec" (2006),[121] they discuss the "impact of a majority language on the structure of the minority language in a situation of long-term contact" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186). The study is based on the "Quebec English Corpus" (Poplack et al. 2006: 192), a collection of data assembled from "[t]hree hundred and forty hours of casual speech" (Poplack 2008: 190) by "183 native speakers of English born, raised and still residing in

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[119] Poplack notes that "Quebec English (QcE) has become the subject of a discourse which characterizes it as threatened and distinctive" (2008: 189). Cf. Poplack, Shana. "Quebec English." *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies*. 19.2 (2008): 189-200. Print.

[120] Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta have a bilingual legal system, though. For a detailed list, see <http://www.slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=english_french_legal> (18 September 2014).

[121] I use Poplack's research data in my dissertation to illustrate the current situation of Québec, because it is informed by an extensive number of earlier reports on Québec English that are critically reflected and synthesised in the articles quoted here.

Quebec City, Montreal, or Oshawa/Whitby" (Poplack 2008: 190).[122] It offers an

"analysis of the sociolinguistic situation of the anglophone community in Quebec

at the dawn of the 21st century, and a first empirical measure of the true impact

of French lexicon on Quebec English" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186). What has

French been doing to English for the past half a century? According to Poplack

et al., "French has in fact influenced Quebec English, particularly as regards the

lexicon" (2006: 210). In the following passage, the multiple ways the lexicon of

English can possibly get altered by French through language mixing are

explained:

> [T]here are many different ways of combining languages in discourse,
> among them emblematic or special-purpose uses like *word play*, *cross-
> language punning*, and *learned uses*. These draw attention to the other
> language through a variety of discourse strategies like repetition,
> hesitation, intonational highlighting, and explicit metalinguistic
> commentary. They differ from *true borrowing* or *intra-sentential code-
> switching*, which minimize the salience of the other language by means of
> smooth transitions, morphosyntactic integration, etc. Emblematic
> combinations create maximal distance between the two languages, while
> their true counterparts are integrated seamlessly into the discourse
> (Poplack at al. 2006: 208, my emphasis).

Borrowing refers to the "incorporation of lone French-origin items into otherwise

English discourse" (Poplack et al. 2006: 207). According to Poplack et al. this is

a "surprisingly rare" (2006: 207) phenomenon, usually happening with "full

speaker awareness" (2006: 209), and is mostly accompanied by "metalinguistic

commentary" (2006: 209) in the Québec context of English-speakers. Code

switching is defined by Poplack at al. as "the alternation between multiword

fragments of French and English in discourse" (2006: 207). It is also very rare

and speakers are aware of their code switching practice as they oftentimes

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[122] Oshawa is a city in Ontario. The group of speakers from there is used as a control group to compare Québec English practices in Québec City and Montréal with those of the rest of Canada.

switch only "to render idiomatic expressions" (Poplack et al. 2006: 209) like '*Vive le Québec*.'[123]

What seems to be proper to Québec English are French incorporations that signify context specific realities (of Montréal everyday life) that overrule their English counterparts or that simply have none, for example '*dépanneur*' for cornerstore,[124] '*métro*' for subway or underground, and '*Cégep*' for post-secondary pre-university education in the province of Québec.[125] However, "while the lexicon of Quebec English may have been augmented through contact with French" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186) it is not clear "whether this has affected its grammar" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186). Because of the "absence of long-term ethnographic observation" (Poplack et al. 2006: 196), Poplack et al. note that "contact-induced language change" (2006: 186) cannot be entirely estimated. Their two-year project investigated if "lexical manifestations of contact function as agents of structural change" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186), but they conclude that they do not in Québec English. What is relevant from their data for my discussion of English writing in Québec is that "29% of [Montreal native mother-tongue Anglophones] assess their proficiency [of French] as mid-high to high" (Poplack et al. 2006: 191) and "anglophone Quebecers, especially the post-Bill 101 youth […] qualify themselves as bilingual" (Poplack et al. 2006: 199). In addition, the sometimes "[p]ositive attitudes toward French, coupled with the high degrees of proficiency in that language […] render[s] English more

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[123] "Long live Québec" (my translation). Cf. Poplack, Shana, James A. Walker, and Rebecca Malcolmson. "An English 'like no other'?: Language Contact and Change in Quebec." *Canadian Journal of Linguistics/Revue canadienne de linguistique* 51.2-3 (2006): 209. Print.
[124] Cf. Poplack et al. 2006: 208.
[125] Cf. Poplack et al. 2006: 209. Other examples like '*poutine*' for a typical Québec dish based on fries and the verb 'passing' (based on the French 'passer') can be found in Poplack 2008: 191.

permeable to contact-induced change" (Poplack et al. 2006: 206-207). However, even though "the infiltration of gallicisms is widely considered to be on the rise" (Poplack et al. 2006: 186) as I also show in my discussion of Anglo-Québécois literature, "French is not supplanting English" (Poplack et al. 2006: 202). Nevertheless, similar to the way the

> corpus of spoken Quebec English contains a wealth of narratives, opinions, and observations, as well as some of the linguistic manifestations of the contact situation […] including borrowings from French […], code-switches to French […], and the odd calque [as well as] vernacular and colloquial features of English, such as *be like* quotatives […], null subjects, [and] progressives used with statives" (Poplack et al. 2006: 195, emphasis in original),[126]

the corpus of Anglo-Québécois narratives I analyse in this thesis demonstrates "linguistic convergence[s]" (Poplack et al. 2006: 206), the use of "borrowed tokens" (Poplack et al. 2006: 207), and code switching.

That said, "almost all anglo-Quebecers […] choose English" as the language they are most comfortable in.[127] Interlocutor-oriented situational language choice "in Montreal, in contrast [to Québec City], […] has barely diminished" (Poplack et al. 2006: 198) over the years and reactions to Bill 101 have been mainly negative and challenge the English signage laws imposed by it.[128] Discussions of these issues will surface in the literary corpus of this dissertation, in particular in the writings of Gail Scott and Zoe Whittall. The narratives studied in my research generally echo the summary of findings on "*[t]he fate of the English language and culture in Quebec*" (Poplack et al. 2006: 204, emphasis in original) in Poplack et al. As the latter point out, "Quebec

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[126] For more observations including "singular concord in existentials […], and variable expression of deontic modality" (Poplack 2008: 191), see Poplack 2008.
[127] Cf. Poplack et al. 2006: 197.
[128] Cf. Poplack et al. 2006: 203.

anglophones seem to accept mixing as a fact of life […] [and] [s]ome, especially Montrealers, view it as a positive phenomenon" (2006: 206). This goes along with what Scott recounts in her essay "My Montréal" (1998)[129] in which she claims to enjoy the sound of French in her English.[130]

In a subsequent article, "Quebec English" (2008), Poplack questions whether "Québec English has undergone attrition and/or loss of native features" (189) over the years. As she claims, "a large number of [borrowings] are either international or attested since well before the current contact situation" (Poplack 2008: 192). In this later article, Poplack analyses the grammatical level of linguistic contact in more detail and speaks about linguistic convergence of English with French in Québec and divergence of Québec English developments in Canadian English. In Québec, there is "grammatical independence of the languages in contact" (Poplack 2008: 194), but Québec English "lag[s] in both rate of use of the innovative variant and its gradual spread across the system" (Poplack 2008: 195) compared to the English spoken in the rest of Canada.

Poplack's multi-stage analysis of Quebec English is one of the only ones of its kind in Canada. Its conclusions disprove anglophone popular media discourses, which maintain that English spoken in Québec is creatively influenced by its minority position. Although Poplack acknowledges certain particularities in Québec English – for example on the lexical level – she does not attribute them to the presence and dominant role of French, as is apparent in formulations like "[a]dmittedly, a change […] was detected, but once it is contextualized […], it is clear that it owes nothing to French" (2008: 197, my

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[129] Cf. Scott, Gail. "My Montréal: Notes of an Anglo-Québécois Writer" *Brick 59* (1998): 173-178. Print.
[130] For examples, see chapters 5 and 6.

emphasis) and "[t]he widespread perception of QcE's distinctiveness could *not possibly* stem from them [variant uses]" (2008: 197, my emphasis). What she concedes is that "the presence of French-origin words and phrases in QcE is likely responsible" (Poplack 2008: 197) for the overall impression that English in Québec is French coloured. Again, however, Poplack claims that "these too are very infrequent" (2008: 197) and that "[t]his suggests that there is in fact no 'Quebec English,' as distinct from […] Ontario English, beyond a small stock of proprietary lexical items and acronyms" (2008: 197).

Even though my thesis is neither anchored in the field of linguistics, nor relies upon a socio-linguistic analysis of a corpus of spoken or written language practices of Québec English, based on my primary and secondary readings of Anglo-Québécois narratives, I am sceptical of Poplack's claim that there is no such thing as a Québec variant of English. I tend to agree with Gregory J. Reid, when he claims:

> being an Anglo-Québécoi[s] means, for example, the polyphonous experience of travelling by 'Métro' (subway) going to the 'Complex Sportif' (sports centre) at the Université de Montréal [and] speaking a version of English which accomodates such signifiers as […] 'pure laine' [of origin] [and] 'kétaine' [kitsch] […] as well as a host of standard French expressions and institutional and commercial names (1998: 79, 80, 81).

Furthermore, as Catherine Leclerc argues in her 2010 publication *Des langues an partage?*, which examines the cohabitation of French and English in the literature of Canada's contact zones, there indeed exist "de[s] nouveaux métissages *linguistiques* et culturels" (2010: 60, my emphasis)[131] and they can be found abundantly in Anglo-Québécois literature. In line with this observation, my analysis of Anglo-Québécois writing explores the French colour in the English of

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[131] "[N]ew *linguistic* and cultural mixings" (my translation, my emphasis).

Gail Scott, Heather O'Neill, and Zoe Whittall.[132] Ultimately, my findings concur

the examples given by Reid: they include lexical borrowings and examples of

code switching as well as syntactic and idiomatic *calques*.[133]

2.7. 'PRENONS UNE MARCHE': QUÉBÉCOIS, A NORTH-AMERICAN CODE

> [A]u contexte sociopolitique du Québec […] l'idée de la traduction […]
> se plie aux exigences d'une histoire conflictuelle
> où il faut à tout prix défendre une langue menacée
> (Simon 2005: 118).[134]

This subchapter examines if there is linguistic convergence in the inverse

situation, where English finds its way into French in the realm of the lapsised

dimension. As a suite to the preceding chapter, this section looks at the

condition of French in Québec in contrast to European French.[135] I consider how

French, which is a minority language in most of Canada and North America,

responds to the contact with English in Québec, where it is spoken by the

majority of speakers. What are the cognitive effects on French speakers of this

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[132] Cf. chapters 4, 5, and 6.

[133] The term '*calque*' can be defined as "loan translation" (*Concise OED*). A calque is the copy of a lexical or idiomatic phrasal structure in another language. An example is the idiomatic French phrase '*ouvrir/fermer la lumière*' which means 'to switch the lights on/off.' In the English used in Montréal, it becomes the common *calque* "to open/close the lights." For more examples, see Poplack et al. 2006: 195. Both O'Neill and Whittall make use of *calques* as I argue in chapter 4 and 5.

[134] "[I]n the socio-political context of Québec […] the idea of translation […] lives up to the necessities of a conflictual history with the need to defend a threatened language at any cost" (my translation). Cf. Simon, Sherry. "Interférences créatrices: poétiques du transcultural." *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses* 10 (2005): 111-119. Print.

[135] Please note that I am aware of the diversity of allophone communities residing in Montréal and that are part of the totality of Anglo/Québécois society. I am hence aware of the multi-ethnic and -linguistic situation of Montréal and the fact that English as well as French have been influenced by other migrating languages and by native languages, which have been altered in return. This is an inclusive survey, which functions along the axes of the two most prominent languages in Montréal, English and French, as mother tongue and other tongue.

perpetual confrontation and interrelation with English conceptualisations of immediate and daily realities? How do these North American experiences affect the structure of French and contribute to a specifically Québécois variety? Significantly, there are more studies of the state of French in Québec and Canada than on the state of English in Québec. Shana Poplack has worked on both and, in this subchapter, I will refer to the article "Phrase-final prepositions in Quebec French: An empirical study of contact, code-switching and resistance to convergence" that she published together with Lauren Zentz (University of Arizona) and Nathalie Dion (University of Ottawa) in 2012. I will also turn to francophone analyses, in particular Chantal Bouchard's sociolinguistic history of Québec entitled *Obsessed with Language* (2008)[136] and Catherine Leclerc's *Des Langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine* (2010).

Poplack et al. present the findings on 'preposition stranding' as an example of the influence of English on French in Québec. They describe preposition stranding – "[p]hrase-final prepositions [which] are prescriptively unacceptable in French, but […] are the norm in English" (Poplack et al. 2012: 204) – as a "stereotypical non-standard feature of North American French" (Poplack et al. 2012: 203) that seems to be representative of French-English convergences, a result from the unremitting contact between the two language as is the case in Québec. On the surface, this would suggest that English has an impact on the structure of French. Poplack et al. contest this impression, arguing that there are deeper differences in the use of prepositions that do not correlate

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[136] Bouchard's book was published as *La langue et le nombril* in 1998. The version I use here is the translation by Luise von Flotow, cf. Bouchard, Chantal. *Obsessed with Language: A Sociolinguistic History of Québec*. Trans. Luise von Flotow. Toronto: Guernica, 2008. Print.

with language contact. The analysis of Poplack et al. comes in the wake of a variety of studies that have been conducted since the 1970s. Some of their references argue that code switching "weakens language boundaries and makes them more permeable to external influence" (Poplack et al. 2012: 204). Poplack et al., for example, examine "preposition placement in Quebec French" (2012: 205) in the "*Ottawa-Hull French Corpus*" (2012: 203) from 1989. They come to the conclusion that preposition stranding is "a very minor phenomenon in French" (Poplack et al. 2012: 223) and that code switching to English is not responsible for structural change in French. According to their argument, both "copious code switchers" (Poplack et al. 2012: 217) and "sparse code switchers" (Poplack et al. 2012: 217) move from one grammar to the other, but are not agents of "contact-induced change" (Poplack et al. 2012: 220). Instead, they have "different grammars for preposition placement, one for French and another for English" (Poplack et al. 2012: 216). The article shows that "French patterns of preposition placement differ from those of mainstream Canadian English" (Poplack et al. 2012: 217) and the practices of code switchers are "constrained by linguistic conditions that respect the grammaticality requirements of both languages simultaneously" (Poplack et al. 2012: 222). Poplack et al. conclude that surface similarities are hence not reducible to linguistic contact, but show different genealogies that are inherent to each linguistic code.

Just like the assertion that Québec English does not exist as such, the conclusions of Poplack et al. diverge from a consensus on the situation of French in Québec. For example, Chantal Bouchard maintains questions about

French mixing with English and its subsequent deviations from the standard variety in Europe that have been pervasive ever since the beginning of the British regime. Bouchard also claims, that "bilingualism still leads to inevitable interferences" (2008: 13). It is in particular neologisms that describe North American environmental realities and borrowings from native languages as well as English that have defined Québec French. Yet, in the introduction to *Obsessed with Language* (2008), she notes that Québec today is "an environment where French is much more present than it was twenty or thirty years ago" (13) and that "[t]he current language has truly been 'de-anglicized' over the past thirty years" (13).

In fact, Anglicisation was halted largely because of laws that were passed in the 1970s that enshrined French as Québec's sole official language, mainly Bill 22 and Loi 101 (*La charte de la langue française*). Over the centuries, from French Canadian patois to *joual*,[137] the quality of the French language in Canada and Québec has been continuously debated. In 1902, the "Société du parler français au Canada" (Bouchard 2008: 102) was created to protect the French language by openly addressing its specificities, which were published in the "*Glossaire du parler français au Canada*" (Bouchard 2008: 102) in 1930. At the time, Anglicisms in popular discourse were not only detected, but also widely criticised. These interferences from English were identified on lexical, morphological, syntactic, phonetic, orthographic, and typographic levels, but it is mainly semantic borrowings and *calques* that were commented upon most frequently. As Bouchard notes, "[l]ate twentieth century writers have the same

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[137] For a detailed history and definition of the term '*joual*,' see Bouchard 2008: 207-232, in particular 219-223.

reactions to these borrowings as did writers in the nineteenth century" (2008: 163). In 1959, '*joual*' was at the centre of an exchange on the state of the French Canadian language in the newspaper *Le Devoir* and quickly became identified with the francophone working class, especially the unskilled in Montréal's east end. Soon it became "not only a question of the French language degenerating, but also of the culture and the entire nation in decline" (Bouchard 2008: 210). The concept of '*joual*' symbolised:

> [The] colonized condition (anglicized language), the feeling of being culturally backward (archaisms), lack of education (no knowledge of syntax or French vocabulary), lack of refinement (vulgarity), cultural isolation (a language that strangers could not understand), [and] loss of roots and identity (deconstruction, fragmentation, degeneration, decomposition of language). (Bouchard 2008: 219)

In reaction to the *joual* crisis, the "Office de la langue française" (Bouchard 2008: 213-214) was established in 1961, at the onset of the Quiet Revolution. Yet however negatively connotated, *joual* at the same time became "the signifier that had been missing [in Québec] and that designated a state of the language and culture the society perceived as distinct and new" (Bouchard 2008: 219). It was hence taken up particularly in urban writing as a literary language.[138]

On a broader level, "Le français, l'anglais et la surconscience linguistique" (Leclerc 2010: 59),[139] discusses the notion of Québec's 'linguistic hyper-consciousness.' Like Bouchard, Leclerc maintains that "la langue, en contexte québécois, est à la fois un cheval de bataille et une source de tensions (2010: 58).[140] Since the Quiet Revolution, it has become the most important identity

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[138] Cf. Bouchard 2008: 228-232. For an example, see Tremblay, Michel. *Les Belles-soeurs*. Montréal: Leméac Éditeur, 1968. Print.

[139] "French, English, and linguistic hyper-consciousness" (my translation).

[140] "[L]anguage, in the Québec context, is at once a popular topic and a source for tensions" (my translation).

marker in Québec and with the need to protect and promote it being offered as a major argument in favour of Québec independence, it is located in-between, distinct from a "langue nationale sûre de ses droits" (Leclerc 2010: 64)[141] and a "langue minoritaire fragilisée" (Leclerc 2010: 64).[142] In the literary context, Québec's linguistic hyper-consciousness accounts for critical practices that demonstrate a "cohabitation des langues" (Leclerc 2010: 58).[143] On the one hand, it perpetuates a discourse on Québec as a "terrain privilégié pour sonder le plurilinguisme littéraire" (Leclerc 2010: 59).[144] On the other hand, it induces a discourse on the "préservation de la langue" (Leclerc 2010: 59).[145] Yet, for Leclerc, Québécois French is itself "partiellement hybride" (2010: 60)[146]: although it is basically French, it shows "des traces de sa cohabitation avec l'anglais" (2010: 60).[147] Like Bouchard, Leclerc's account of Québécois linguistic practices controverts Pollack's research findings.[148]

2.8. NOUVELLES/NOVELS FROM THE BORDER

This subchapter occupies a transitional space. Like the hyphen in the notion of 'Anglo-Québécois' and Scott's comma of translation, it is located in the

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[141] "[N]ational language that is legitimate" (my translation).
[142] "[W]eakened minority language" (my translation).
[143] "[L]inguistic cohabitation" (my translation).
[144] "[P]rivileged grounds to study literary multilingualism" (my translation).
[145] "[P]reservation of language" (my translation).
[146] "[P]artially hybrid" (my translation).
[147] "[T]races of its cohabitation with English" (my translation).
[148] For an extensive discussion of the topic, see Leclerc, Catherine. *Des langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature* contemporaine. Montréal: Les Éditions XYZ inc, 2010. 94-113. Print. Please note the parallel Leclerc draws between the Québécois and Chicano situations, which connects with chapter 2.1 of this dissertation.

between: the contextualizing, manual-like section of this thesis and the chapters that offer readings of and on the lapsised dimension.

Rarely is English considered a minority language, but the term 'Anglo-Québécois' was coined in the 1990s to describe the literary production of an English-speaking minority in Québec (for the most part in Montréal).[149] According to Lianne Moyes, "Anglo-Quebec literature is a relatively new field of study [and] [t]he category was not widely used in anglophone literary circles until the late 1980s […] or in francophone circles until the late 1990s" (2012: 5).[150] As a literary category it denotes the "deeper integration into, and often greater identification with, the cultural and political life of th[e] francophone milieu" (Coleman 2012: 204) of an English writer or text in Québec in comparison to Canada. In "A Context for Conversation?: Reading Jeffrey Moore's *The Memory Artists* as Anglo-Quebec Literature," Patrick Coleman gives the most recent account of this categorisation of English literary production in Québec. His discussion offers new perspectives on what 'Anglo-Quebec' literature is, instead of dwelling on the question 'Who is an 'Anglo-Quebec' writer?' Coleman proposes a transcultural approach that creates conversations between English and French texts, and, on another occasion, explains how the term functions as a unique territorial marker:

> The relevance of regionalism to the cultural location of Anglo-Quebec literature […] is complicated by the fact that Canadian literature is not the only literature in question. Anglo-Quebec literature is not simply the

literature of a region of Canada; it is also defined by its relationship to Quebec letters. (2012: 9-10)

For her part, Gillian Lane-Mercier maps the literary topography of English in Québec as such:

> Trois grandes lignes frontalières se dessinent d'entrée de jeu: celle qui sépare la littérature anglo-québécoise de la littérature québécoise (Harel, Leclerc, Leith, Everett); celle qui sépare la littérature anglo-québécoise de la littérature canadienne-anglaise (Majzels, Scott, Everett); celle, que l'on pourrait nommer interne, qui sépare les esthétiques anglo-québécoise et canadienne conventionnelles des pratiques expérimentales (Scott, Majzels) (2007/08: 28).[151]

While Coleman finally opts for the designation 'Anglo-Quebec,' arguing that it is "the one least likely to be seen as excluding particular interpretations of the identity it constructs" (2012: 206), alternatives would be 'English Quebec writing' and 'Quebec writing in English,' or 'Anglo-Québécois.' I use the latter to highlight the Francophone majority character of Québec and to align my research with that of feminist anglophone and francophone Québec scholars working in the field.[152] Not only have other researchers like Lianne Moyes and Catherine Leclerc favoured the term 'Anglo-Québécois,' but also writer and translator Gail Scott

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[151] "From the start, there are three major dividing lines: one that separates Anglo-Québécois literature from *Québécois* literature […]; one that separates Anglo-Québécois literature from English-Canadian literature […]; [and] one that is internal and separates Anglo-Québécois and conventional Canadian aesthetics from experimental practices" (my translation). Lane-Mercier's article tracks back the emergence of the *Metropolis Bleu Festival*. It also provides a comprehensive bibliography on the conceptualisations of Anglo-Québécois literature and its descriptions. (Cf. Lane-Mercier, Gillan. "Dislocations affectives de la literature anglo-québécoise." *Québec Studies*, 44 (2007/2008): 21-40. Print.) According to Jane Moss, Anglo-Québécois is a "minor literature in English that displays a disconnect between language, territory, and ethnicity" (Moss 2012: 61). This statement does not imply an affiliation to either Canada or Québec and summarises Lane-Mercier's point.

[152] For a comprehensive discussion of the conceptual choices between 'Anglo-Québécois' and 'Anglo-Montréalais,' see Moyes 2012: 5-27 and Reid, Gregory J. "Constructing English Quebec Ethnicity: Colleen Curran's *Something Drastic* and Josée Legault's *L'invention d'une minorité: Les Anglos-Québécois.*" *Post Identity* 1.2 (1998): 68-83. Print. For further critical discussion of the distinction between English-Canadian and Anglo-Québécois, see Moss 2012: 60-80.

has actually used it to describe her identity and locate the subjectivities she creates in her writing.

Catherine Leclerc and Sherry Simon refer to Mary Louise Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone' to track the lines of demarcation between English-Canadian, Anglo-Québécois, and Québécois within "une institution littéraire qui se définit par la langue française" (2005: 24):[153]

> Imagine [...] a linguistics that decentered community, that placed at its centre the operation of language across linguistic lines of social differentiation, a linguistics that focused on zones of contact between dominant and dominated groups, between persons of different and multiple identities, speakers of different languages, that focused on how such speakers constitute each other relationally and in difference, how they enact differences in language (Pratt in Leclerc and Simon 2005: 24).[154]

This passage explains my choice of the term 'Anglo-Québécois' instead of Coleman's 'Anglo-Quebec.' In the conditions of the contact zone, language boundaries are crossed and Anglophones and *Québécois-es* interact and mutually construct each other:

> [L]e *trait d'union* dans 'anglo-québécois' devient le signe non d'une frontière amovible, mais d'un décentrement, d'une dissonance, d'une continuité-disjonction [et] en rendant les identités glissantes, inachevées, multilatérales, en perpétuel devenir, invit[e] à explorer – plutôt qu'à franchir – l'interstice entre les catégories supposément discrètes qu'il est censé réunir (Lane-Mercier 2012a: 145).[155]

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[153] According to Gilles Marcotte, the mere fact that there does not exist such a thing as a Franco-Québécois literature implies that the notion of 'Anglo-Québécois' is impossible because of the socio-linguistic nature of the category of 'Québécois.' (Cf. Marcotte, Gilles. "Neil Bissoondath disait." *Québec Studies* 26 (1998/1999): 6-12. Print.). This is an unsustainable argument in current discussions on diversity and regarding the multiple accounts on Québécois identity. In her work on Anglo-Québécois literature, "Leclerc takes a risk that Marcotte seems unwilling to take, that of writing a 'plaidoyer' for the inclusion of texts in English within the framework of 'la littérature québécoise'" (Moyes 2007/08: 6; "Québec literature," my translation). For an extensive account on the different perspectives on the issue of scholars in anglophone and francophone academia in Québec and Canada, see Moyes, Lianne. "Conflict in Contiguity: An Update." *Québec Studies* 44 (2007/2008): 1-20. Print.

[154] Cf. Simon and Leclerc 2005: 15-29. Print.

[155] "The hyphen in the compound of 'Anglo-Québécois' does not designate a detachable dividing line, but rather functions as a sign of decentering, dissonance, discontinuity and, as it generates identity as fluid, unfinished, multilateral, and in a state of constant becoming, provokes an

I now want to shift this inquiry to the question of how Anglo-Québécois 'literature' presents itself, moving away from the locality of the writer and towards that of the text. Adopting Juliane Schenk's argument that classifies Gail Scott's *Heroïne* (1987) as a prototypical example of Anglo-Québécois literature, I claim that it is the hyphenated 'Québécois' that signifies – together with the English 'Anglo' for anglophone – the matrix of the term's location between cultures.[156] *Heroïne* exemplifies this performative *entre-deux* position on multiple levels and Scott's "conceptualisation of the [new] narrative elaborates as a whole on the idea of interweaving anglophone and francophone spheres" (Schenk 2007: 77, my translation).[157] As Schenk observes, "any dialogue between anglophone and francophone worlds takes place on the lexical, grammatical, and conceptual levels of the narrative and results in a complex mixing and blending of the two languages" (2007: 77, my translation).[158] This is how "the narrative resists any definite positioning in the anglophone or francophone realm" (Schenk 2007: 77, my translation).[159]

Anglo-Québécois is the other to Canada and Québec; at the same time, it is the other to neither.[160] Anglophone in Québec is and is not Québécois.[161] Even

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exploration – instead of an overcoming – of the in-between of the ostensibly distinct categories that it is supposed to combine" (my translation).

[156] For a similar explanation, see Reid 1998: 68-83.

[157] "Romankonzept führt als Ganzes die Idee der Verzahnung der anglophonen und der frankophonen Sphäre weiter aus" (Schenk 2007: 77). For the entire article, see Schenk, Juliane. "The Forgotten Literature: Die Angloquebecer Literatur." *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 27.2 (2007): 73-87. Print.

[158] "Der Dialog zwischen anglophoner und frankophoner Welt findet im Roman auf lexikalischer, grammatikalischer und konzeptioneller Ebene statt und mündet in einem komplexen Vermischungsprozess der beiden Sprachen" (Schenk 2007: 77).

[159] "[D]er Roman [spricht sich] gegen eine eindeutige Verortung in der anglophonen bzw frankophonen Welt aus" (Schenk 2007: 77).

[160] According to Gilles Marcotte's "Neil Bissoondath disait," Québec texts in French and English must not be compared to each other. For an analysis of Marcotte's statement that leads to the conclusion that it is obsolete, see Moreau, Annabelle. "Histoires de langues: Montréal, a once-

though there are long-established English communities that have lived in Québec for generations – today mainly on Montréal's West Island and in the Eastern Townships – members of these groups are not considered *pure laine*[162] or *de souche*[163] as they would be, were they francophone. Here is where the new identity category of 'Anglo-Québécois' raises the questions of what Canadian-ness, Québécitude or *Montréalité* might be.[164] According to Catherine Leclerc, "plusieurs oeuvres littéraires anglo-québécoises ne sont pas si distantes de la tradition littéraire québécoise que certains voudraient le croire" (2007/08: 73).[165] From this perspective, "le concept de braconnages offre un nouveau paradigme susceptible de repenser les rapports de cette dernière [la tradition littéraire québécoise] avec la littérature anglo-québécoise en termes de conflictualité créatrice" (Lane-Mercier 2012b: 26).[166] Conflictual creativity is one of the markers of cultural mediation in the contact zone and a constituent of Anglo-Québécois writing. Other, more traditional ones mentioned by Coleman are "the presence of a significant amount of Quebec content" (2012: 206) and "affinity with formal or

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divided city. *La logeuse* d'Eric Dupont et *Heroine* de Gail Scott." MA thesis, Université de Montréal, 2011. Print.

[161] This is the "paradoxe auquel donne lieu toute réflexion sur la littérature anglo-québécoise" (Lapointe 2005: 74; "the paradox created by any reflection on Anglo-Québec literature," my translation).

[162] 'Of French-Canadian origin' (my translation).

[163] For the analysis of a fictional approach to the concept of 'de souche' ('of origin') with the help of a literary example (Michel Basilières, *Black Bird*, 2003), see Lane-Mercier, Gillian. "Les (af)filiations contestées de la littérature anglo-québécoise." *Tangence* 98 (2012b): 11- 33. Print.

[164] For an extensive analysis of this question, see Schwartzwald, Robert. "An/other Canada. Another Canada? Other Canadas." *The Massachusetts Review* 31.1-2 (1990): 9-27. Print.

[165] "Anglo-Québécois literary production is not as far from the Québécois literary tradition as it might seem" (my translation).

[166] "[T]he concept of 'braconnages' is a new paradigm that allows a rethinking of the relations of the latter [the Québécois literary tradition] and Anglo-Québécois literature in terms of creative conflictuality" (my translation). For more information on the affiliations of Anglo-Québécois literature, see Lane-Mercier 2012b: 11-33, and Leclerc, Catherine. "Détournements amoureux: lire en anglais au Québec." *Québec Studies*, 44 (2007/2008): 71-82. Print. For a critical account on the same topic in German, see Schenk 2007: 73-87. For a definition of the notion of '*braconnages identitaires*,' see Harel, Simon. *Braconnages identitaires: Un Québec palimpseste*. Montréal: VLB, 2006. Print.

aesthetic preoccupations distinctive to francophone Quebec writing" (206). The latter is particularly relevant to my study of women's narratives.[167] To provide what Coleman calls a "comprehensive account of diversity" (2012: 207) and to show that Québec literature is actually multiple literatures,[168] I put English and French Québec texts, including those by self-proclaimed Anglo-Québécois, into dialogue with each other. The aim is to evaluate the extent to which Anglo-Québécois texts reiterate the patterns of performance on levels of language, content, and form that one finds in French Québec texts.[169] This is where Coleman's and my own reading practices converge, namely in the tracking of "the repetition of a basic structural pattern from the earlier to the later novel [which] invites […] to situate these contrasts within a differentiated cultural and political landscape" (2012: 218). Yet, while Coleman suggests "bringing writers in Montreal's two major literary languages into conversation with each other" (2012: 211), my analysis points to the performativity of Anglo-Québécitude on the textual level and to textual constructions of subjectivity.

I argue that in my corpus, the texts adhere to established patterns of performing Montréal urban identity as well as the revised subjectivity that emerges from this urban space. Contrary to Coleman, however, I refuse to see these texts as engaged solely in a conversation between Montréalers. Such an

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[167] Cf. subchapter 2.8.

[168] A first step to this understanding has been made by the editors of *Histoire de la Littérature Québécoise* when they included Gail Scott in their anthology of Québécois literature (2007: 518, 575). Cf. Biron, Michel, François Dumont et Élisabeth Nardout-Lararge. *Histoire de la Littérature Québécoise.* Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2007. Print. Please note that I am aware of all other Québec literatures including anglophone, francophone and allophone as well as translingual native, migrant, and exile writings etc.

[169] For Lane-Mercier's account on Anglo-Québécois literature as performative based on an analysis of David Homel's work, see Lane-Mercier, Gillian. "Le rôle des écrivains-traducteurs dans la construction d'une littérature anglo-québécoise: Philip Stratford, David Homel, Gail Scott." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*. 46.3 (2012a): 128-157. Print.

approach might only be justified if the modest proposal to make Montréal a city-state, in order to prevent anglophone exodus from the province, had been realized.[170] The notion of Anglo-Montréalais was taken up in a special issue of the Québec literary magazine *Spirale*, published in fall 2006. On the cover page, *Spirale* announces "écritures anglo-montréalaises" in the plural. Leclerc puts forward another argument against this term:

> Quoi qu'il en soit, l'appellation de littérature anglo-montréalaise me paraît insatisfaisante. Elle est ancrée dans une tradition qui fait de Montréal soit une ville anglaise potentiellement dangereuse (du point de vue de la tradition francophone), soit une ville anglaise où le français n'a qu'un rôle accessoire" (2007/08: 73).[171]

Even though polarizing discourses about Montréal have diminished lately, labelling English writing in Québec as Anglo-Montréalais literature would confine it to a predetermined urban enclave.

I argue in this dissertation that Québécitude like Canadian-ness is a performative identity category that is informed by political discourses. The notion of 'Québécois' has been constructed and perpetuated through French Canadian nationalism. As often as "Canadians may imagine Canada as 'open' or endless, [and] just as often *Canadians* also experience it as stubbornly limiting, as a sparsely populated political construction" (Schwartzwald 1990: 10, emphasis in

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[170] The issue was raised in the 1995 referendum campaign and, most recently, during the 2014 provincial elections. It was a reaction to pre-election debates on Bill 60 and disappeared following the election results that showed a liberal majority. For more information on Bill 60, see subchapter 2.2. In much of the Anglo-Québécois imaginary, according to Reid, Montréal already is a city-state: "[W]ith 75% of Quebec Anglophones living in Montreal, it is a common gambit to adopt the subject position of Anglo-Montrealer, and to abandon both the concept of Anglo-Québécois and the 25% of Anglophones who live outside of Montreal" (2012: 108). For an extensive evaluation of the concepts of 'Québécois' and 'Anglo-Québécois,' see Reid, Gregory J. "Performing Anglo Quebec: The Myth of Solitudes and (E)Merging Anglo-Québécois Subject." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 46.3 (2012): 105-127. Print.

[171] "In any case, the designation of 'Anglo-Montréal' literature seems insufficient. It emerges from a tradition that either considers Montréal as a potentially precarious English city (from a francophone perspective) or an English-speaking city where French has only an accessory function" (my translation).

original), Québec may be similarly imagined as overpopulated and limited or as 'open' and receptive to diversity. In this sense, I agree with Moyes that, when it comes to English writing in Québec, "les possibilités pour la recherche à venir sont illimitées" (2002a: 437)[172] since "there is nothing self-evident about Anglo-Quebec literature" (2012: 5).[173] And I agree with Coleman, when he proposes that reading French and English texts together "as Quebec literature – that is, as literature coming from and defining a cultural space that is shared by both yet experienced in singularity – might also lead to a better appreciation of what that space is like" (2012: 219).

We now return to the question of '*genre*' in Anglo/Québécois women's narratives. The contemporary literature I have chosen for my corpus is largely considered avant-garde, experimentalist and formalist, and, hence, difficult to classify within traditional *genre* parameters. Oftentimes its point is to stay out of categories; my project does not seek to categorise it. Rather, as I argue, the post-modern turn to form in this corpus is one of the effects of the encounter of distinct cultures, languages, and literary traditions – the *dimension lapsisée*. As a result, the limits of *genre* categories (novel, long poem, essay, etc.) are blurred similar to the way in which the boundaries of languages and their lexical and grammatical systems are blended due to borrowings, code switching practices, and *calques* in a multi- or bilingual milieu.

In Montréal women's writings, fiction and theory frequently overlap. In literary terms, Teresa de Lauretis' definition of fiction/theory is the following:

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[172] "[T]he possibilities of future research are unlimited" (my translation).
[173] For a discussion of the "non-spécificité de l'écriture anglo-québécoise" ("the non specificity of anglo-Québec writing," my translation), see also Lane-Mercier 2012a: 128-157. And Schenk 2007: 78.

A formally experimental, critical and lyrical, autobiographical and theoretically conscious, *practice of writing-in-the-feminine that crosses genre boundaries* (poetry and prose, verbal and visual modes, narrative and cultural criticism), and instates new correlations between signs and meanings, inciting other discursive mediations between the symbolic and the real, language and flesh. And for all its specific cultural, historical, and linguistic variation – say between francophone and anglophone contemporary Canadian writers, […] the concept of fiction/theory does make the transfer across borderlines and covers a significant range of practices of lesbian (self-)representation (1988: 165, my emphasis).

Théorie/fiction challenges the category of 'woman' through practices of '*écriture au féminin*.' According to Brossard and her generation of feminists, women could only ever communicate by permanently translating from a patriarchal language, lesbians by translating from the heteronormative discourse. Translating as a practice of writing in the feminine explores "new relationship[s] to language" (Wheeler 2003: 426) and "serves as a way for women [and lesbians] to write themselves into subjective agency" (Gentzler 2008: 67). Writing in the feminine hence serves to "decoloniz[e] oneself from patriarchal systems and values" (Mays 2008: 22). With writing in the feminine, "a new language has emerged" (Wheeler 2003: 426) and "[f]rom borderlands similar to those theorized by Gloria Anzaldua, Québec's feminist translators have contributed an emerging awareness of the transformative power of translation" (Wheeler 2003: 450). The extensive changes regarding the role of 'woman' that were accomplished in Québec between the 1960s and 90s have made it possible, since the turn of the century, for a younger generation of third-wave feminist writers to experiment and radically interrogate sex, gender, and sexuality categorisations altogether. Queer writing, in this context, does not only stand for the category 'homosexual'

– in the words of Canadian literary critic Terry Goldie, the homotextual[174] – but is also writing that seeks to transcend any kind of stable regularized categories and subverts norms.

What emerges from the conversations I establish between texts is a space of transcultural negotiation (*dimension lapsisée*) and a refashioning of the contemporary Québécois corpus through a post-modern *flânerie* by you, my reader, and me.

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[174] Cf. Goldie 2003.

3.   THE URBAN BODY IN *FRENCH KISS* AND *PAPER CITY*

Nicole Brossard has spent her entire life in Montréal, where she still lives today. Without a doubt, and also self-proclaimed, Brossard is part of both the Québécois cultural institution and the Québec literary canon – seemingly obviously, as a francophone writer.[175] Most of her writing has been translated into English. She has hence made her work available to anglophone readers in Québec and, more generally, Canada, the rest of North America, and across the world. Brossard explicitly identifies as a Québécoise feminist writer. In contrast, Nathanaël – who formerly published under the names of Nathalie Stephens or nathalie stephens – refuses to deliver such a coherent identity. Nathanaël was born in Montréal, but has spent most of her life in Toronto and Lyon, and now lives in Chicago. She has, however, remained in close contact with the Québécois cultural and, above all, literary milieu. She writes in both languages English and French, and self-translates by rewriting her own work thereby confronting its untranslatability. While her early texts might be associated with the *genre* of radical lesbian writing, following the publication of *Colette m'entends-tu?* (1997),[176] this is no longer the case – if it had ever been at all, as Nathanaël herself claims to write "*entre-genre*."[177] How then can she, whose very project is to undo all types of classification, be assigned to that category called 'Anglo-Québécois' or, for that matter, to any category?[178]

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[175] Cf. Parker, Alice. *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard.* New York: Peter Lang, 1998: 2. Print.
[176] Cf. Stephens, Nathalie. *Colette m'entends-tu?* Montréal: Editions Trois, 1997. Print.
[177] Stephens, Nathalie. Personal Interview. December 2008.
[178] Nathanaël writes in both languages and translates either way, but while she speaks English with a North American accent, her French accent (and hence word choice, syntax, etc.) is not Québécois nor is it Franco-Ontarian. In "*Poésie des transfuges linguistiques*: lecture de Robert

In any case, as mentioned above, to label either Nathanaël or Brossard as (Anglo-) Québécois writers in a traditional sense is insufficient in my analysis. For as with any other aspect of identity, 'Québécois' and 'Anglo-Québécois' are cultural and political categories. As such, they are socially constructed and part of specific – in this case linguistically and historically determined nationalist – discourses, to which the notion of 'power' is inherent. Brossard's narrator in *French Kiss*,[179] I argue, performs rather than represents Québécois identity – informed by the cultural and social specificities of Montréal, she reproduces its features.[180] While she does not "deliberately and playfully assum[e]" (Jagose 1996: 86) her Québécitude, the latter is consolidated through reiteration. This takes on a more explicit form than in *Paper City*[181] also because the narrating subject, Lucy Savage, although coming from an anglophone background, speaks/writes in French, the official language of Québec.[182] The supposed Montréal of *Paper City* remains blurred due to a narrator who performs an English-speaking, and thus minority, subjectivity: *n* inhabits a paper city with an

Dickson, Margaret Michèle Cook et nathalie stephens," François Paré argues that Nathalie Stephens is a Franco-Ontarian writer and referring to her in the feminine, he categorises her as a woman. (Cf. Paré, François. "Poésie des transfuges linguistiques: lecture de Robert Dickson, Margaret Michèle Cook et nathalie stephens." *La Litterature franco-ontarienne: voies nouvelles, nouvelles voix.* Ed. Lucie Hotte. Ottawa: Le Nordir, 2002. 129-151. Print.) However, Nathanaël/Nathalie Stephens (nathalie stephens) never referred to herself as an Ontarian (nor Québécois for that matter) writer and never coherently identified as a woman. Since 2011 Nathalie Stephens has published under the name of Nathanaël. Referring to her, I use her most recent name of publication, Nathanaël, and, at the same time, the feminine pronoun. I am doing this in line with the way the writer wants to stay *entre-genre*.

[179] Cf. Brossard, Nicole. *French Kiss*. Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1974. Print. This edition will be quoted as *FK* in what follows.

[180] As Huffer notes, Brossard's "city contains the multiplicity of the memories of its inhabitants" (1996: 108). For the entire article, see Huffer, Lynne. "From Lesbos to Montreal: Nicole Brossard's Urban Fictions." *Yale French Studies* 90 (1996): 95-114. Print.

[181] Cf. Stephens, Nathalie. *Paper City.* Toronto: Coach House Books, 2003. Print. This edition will be quoted as *PC* in the following.

[182] According to Simon, "Brossard refers […] to the socio-linguistic context of Quebec" (1990: 105). (Cf. Simon, Sherry. "Rites of Passage: Translation and Its Intents." *The Massachusetts Review* 31.1-2 (1990): 96-110. Print.)

urban texture abstracted and stripped of territorial signposts; yet, even if she does so only fragmentarily, she nevertheless repeats (and reiterates) traits of Montréal-specific, Québécois discourses.

Taking a comparative approach, which juxtaposes *Paper City* and *French Kiss*, I identify writing practices that occur in both texts and which create new alliances between English-language literature in Québec and Québécois letters, and that are associated with prevailing characterisations of anglophone writing in Québec. All these inscribe Nathanaël's text in a Québécois rather than a wider, anglophone Canadian literary canon. *French Kiss* but also *Paper City* emerge from what I call *dimension lapsisée*. They show similarities because of the continuous cultural contact and linguistic cohabitation of English and French in Montréal. I substantiate this argument by comparing the paper city to the expressions of Montréal in Brossard's text. Eventually, I read *Paper City* as a deliberate fiction on Montréal, claiming that Nathanaël's city reiterates the Montréal illustrated in *French Kiss*. The paper city is not only reminiscent of, but actually performs Montréal.

Besides their convergences in motive, style, and content, both *French Kiss* and *Paper City* can be classified as fiction/theory and show productive discrepancies that I explore in this section. My aim is not only to follow Brossard's and Nathanaël's narrating *flâneuse* and *flâneure* across the city to compare their topographic revisions, but to work with the narrators' mobility on the levels of language and linguistic practices on the one hand, and identity and desire on the other.[183] I transfer this mobility to the (inter)textual level and

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[183] Nathanaël "enacts her own displacement inside language and identity in *Paper City*" (Zolf 2004: 43). For the entire review, see Zolf, Rachel. "Well versed." *Herizons* 17.3 (2004): 43. Print.

establish a dialogue between the two texts. The discontinuities of each of the texts open them and create a space in-between them. In my analysis, these discontinuities are used as points of entry, where one text can slip into the other. They are openings, where the narratives fit into one another due to their cultural and ideological proximity. Points of convergence are the English words and phrases incorporated into Brossard's French text and the French insertions into the otherwise English *Paper City*. They are not only characteristic of Montréal quotidian language and translation practices, but also create the possibility of passage between the two texts. They constitute arcades for analytic and interpretative *flâneries* between the two texts or function like bridges that connect them. The urban spaces the writers construct – "la ville et sa structure" (*FK* 93)[184] – fit into each other through the channels I create by reading the two texts back to back. It is the fissures described in the following quotation from *French Kiss* that enable my reading practice: "La jungle de béton que l'*écriture* tente vainement de traverser, tout en cherchant les failles et les brêches, les courants d'air révélateurs" (93, my emphasis).[185] Now it is my *reading* that is "hoping for a passage through" (*Trans.* 291)[186] to reveal the topographical maps of Brossard's and Nathanaël's urban spaces. One text becomes the interpretative device for the other: I apply the theoretical aspects of each *théorie/fiction* to analyse the fictional component of the respective other.

Brossard's *French Kiss: étreinte-exploration* was published in its original French version in 1974 and was translated by Patricia Claxton in 1985 with the

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[184] "[T]he city and its structure" (*Trans.* 291).
[185] "A concrete jungle in which a writing looks for cracks and openings, telltale breaths of air, hoping for a passage through" (*Trans.* 291).
[186] The abbreviation *Trans.* is used throughout my dissertation to refer to the translated versions of the texts of my corpus, like *French Kiss, or, A Pang's Progress* and *Mauve Desert*.

title annex *A Pang's Progress*.[187] It is written in a highly experimental style, which formally leaves little space for a conventional storyline. As Claxton puts it in the foreword to the translation: "Nicole Brossard writes without compulsion to conform to the dictates of linearity or conventional rules of language" (*Trans.* 230). Only chapters one, two, and three, that can be found in the last third of the text, graphically framed in text boxes and printed in extra large font size that eventually turns into printed handwriting, are explicit about and descriptive of the fictional personae that inhabit the text. They eventually illustrate relationships and the city:[188]

> A*lex*andre était amoureux très fou de sa soeur Mari*elle*. […] Elle et Lexa ne formaient pas un couple. Nous étions cinq. […] En 1978, au tout début de l'année, des policiers de la Communauté urbaine de l'île de Montréal sont venus sur la rue Coloniale (*FK* 129; 134; 145, my emphasis).[189]

The "fivesome" (*Trans.* 326)[190] mentioned here is composed of Marielle/Elle Deslauniers, Camomille Delphie, Lucy Savage, Lexa, and George. The protagonists of *French Kiss* are a couple of siblings (Marielle and Lexa), roommates, and friends that frequent each other and the city.

Brossard's attempt to create a text *au féminin* shows first of all in her

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[187] Cf. Brossard, Nicole (ed). *The Blue Books: A Book. Turn of Pang. French Kiss, or, A Pang's Progress*. Trans. Patricia Claxton. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2003. Print.

[188] Cf. Huffer: "[I]n French Kiss, the protagonists are both anchored in Montréal and, to a large extent, part of an infinitely layered, virtual Montréal […] 'issued from the method of writing'" (1996: 108).

[189] "A*lex*andre was madly in love with his sister Mari*elle*. […] Elle and Lexa weren't a couple. We were a fivesome. […] In 1978, at the very beginning of the year, some Island of Montréal Community policemen came to Colonial Street" (*Trans.* 322; 326; 336, my emphasis).

[190] According to Marguerite Andersen, they are "five individual[s who] attemp[t] to live outside social constraints" (1987: 16). (Cf. Andersen, Marguerite. "Women of Skin and Thought." *The Women's Review of Books* 4.4 (1987): 16. Print.) Brossard explains in an interview "qu'il y avait presque toujours cinq personnages dans [s]es romans et que cette structure se répétait plus au moins d'un roman à l'autre: il y a un 'véritable moi', un alter ego miroir, un personnage témoin relativement neutre, un alter ego négatif, un alter ego altéré par le conformisme" (Brossard and Saint-Martin 2004: 116). ([T]hat there were almost always five characters in [her] narratives and that this structure more or less repeated itself from one narrative to the other: a 'real I,' a mirroring alter ego, a witnessing relatively neutral character, a negative alter ego, and a conformist alter ego," my translation).

choice of names: Marie*elle* carries the French feminine pronoun '*elle*' for 'she', to which the name is regularly shortened in the text ('*Elle*'). At the same time, the traditional Catholic Christian name 'Marie' is still very current in Québec. Camo*mille* refers to the fragmentation of the feminine narrator's subjectivity. This idea leads back to Aristotle who listed 'female' as 'plurality' ('*mille*') opposed to 'male' as 'one' in his Pythagorean table of opposites.[191] The allusion to Ancient Greece is reinforced, I argue, by Camomille's last name 'Delphie', which is reminiscent of the Delphic oracle. The masculine given name A*lexa*ndre (which is also Greek) is reduced to 'Lexa,' which, on the one hand, is suggestive of feminine given names ending in -a. What is more, it associates with the English 'lexis' (vocabulary) and '*lexique*' in French, as Doris Eibl remarks: "'Lexa' dont le seul nom évoque le *lexique*, la langue" (2004: 117, my emphasis).[192] 'George,' the second part of the dual masculine subject of which neither has a surname,[193] resonates with the female French writer Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin's pen name George Sand. Yet, it is not George, who records the stories in *French Kiss* as one might conclude from this observation, but Lucy Savage. Chapter one claims that

> [e]ntre 1973 et 1978, bien des mots se sont égarés, *perdus dans tous les sens* (à ce moment-là, Lucy s'adonnait à l'écriture comme une folle vive brûlée vive de délire. Elle conquérait petit à petit l'image de l'épiderme, le 'corps certain' de Camomille […])
> *Dans le lieu du livre de Lucy* (*FK* 110-111, my emphasis).[194]

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[191] Cf. Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory*. London and New York: Routledge. 2001: 4. Print.

[192] "'Lexa', whose name associates with lexicon, language" (my translation).

[193] Cf. Eibl, Doris. "À propos de *French Kiss* de Nicole Brossard ou d''(u)ne offensive de chats sauvages dans les plates-formes de la narration.'" *Etudes féminines/gender studies en literature en France et en Allemagne.* Ed. Rotraud Von Kulessa. Fribourg en Br.: Frankreich-Zentrum, 2004. 109-121. Print.

[194] "From 1973 to '78, a lot of words got lost, went astray in every sense (Lucy then had flung herself with wild abandon into writing, burned and burning with creative fire. Little by little she won possession of the image and epidermis, the 'certainty of the body' that was Camomille […]) *In the setting of Lucy's book*" (*Trans.* 306-307, my emphasis).

It is Lucy, who is 'burning with creative fire' and who 'loses words in every sense.'[195] In contrast to the evidently francophone Camomille and Marielle, Lucy Savage (that would be, I suppose, *Lucie Sauvage* in French) is an anglophone name. An allegedly US American ancestry is retraced by the narrator: "Lucy Savage: 30 ans, arrière petite-fille de Lucy Stone, abolitionniste et féministe de la fin du siècle dernier" (*FK* 9).[196] She is the anglophone presence in an otherwise francophone text and the frequent code switching in *French Kiss* confirms that it is her, who writes the story.[197]

Lucy recounts the quotidian urban adventures of the five friends, decoding "ce quotidien, les valeurs et les trames qui s'y jouent" (*FK* 18). For the rest of the text, "[l]e corps est bouillant de la plus banale manière qui soit" (*FK* 18):[198] From "Une fois" ("Once") to "Vingt fois" ("Twenty Times"), "Une seule fois" ("Just Once"), and "Quelque fois encore" ("A Few Times More"), Brossard engages in poetic experimentations, illustrations, and chains of ambiguous phonological and semantic associations.[199] She produces a notion of the (textual) body converging with the city and creates a situation that eventually culminates in the "FRENCH KISS" (*FK* 86, emphasis in original) that lends the

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[195] Cf. *Trans.* 306.

[196] "Lucy Savage, thirty years old, great-granddaughter of Lucy Stone, late nineteenth-century anti-slaver and feminist" (*Trans.* 234).

[197] Cf. "The narrator of the story is a woman who creates a new language, a *nouvelle écriture*, mixing blood and ink, life and writing, [French and English,] and who, above all, fits a filter into the story in order to 'sift out static and clumps of cartilaginous words' – patriarchal syntax, vocabulary, linearity – 'the language-power which controls'" (Andersen 1987: 16, emphasis in original).

[198] "The textual body bubbles (how banal) […] decode[s] this daily life, the values and storylines being played in it" (*Trans.* 240).

[199] The translator of *French Kiss*, Patricia Claxton, talks of "word plays and word associations" (*Trans.* 231) in her foreword to *French Kiss, or, A Pang's Progress* (1986). She distinguishes between "common metaphors, even clichés" (*Trans.* 231) registered by either English or French language, and "Brossard's own […] intensely personal […] prolific imagination" (*Trans.* 231). Cf. Brossard 2003.

text its title:

> Poursuite du *baiser*, de la densité qui étrangle les articulations; le plaisir gémit. […] Lucy amibe ondulante, cellule de parcours pendant la traversée des zones désertiques. Sauvage, séductrice imbibée dans le texte et courbe d'amour, regarde autour d'elle […] Fixe mes lèvres comme ventouses sur les tiennes, un sens à se transmettre. […] Imprimé des lèvres charnues, sur d'autres, dans un esprit de fête, de parcours. La ville (*FK* 87-88, my emphasis).[200]

This kiss between Lucy and Camomille connects the body and the city through tongues/languages. Lips and tongues leave an imprint on each other and the surrounding space. Tongues – as in tongues and languages – travel and "[d]urant ce voyage [l]es langues […] cherchent à se supprimer, s'éliminer l'une/l'autre avec les avantages de la maîtrise sur l'autre qui cède le terrain" (*FK* 86).[201] Their "parcours" (*FK* 87/88) marks the urban territory. Brossard takes the occasion here to comment on the bilingual history of and the constant power struggle for Montréal, which she simulates throughout the text by using *joual*, borrowings from English, and code switching. As Claxton notes: "the physical and psychological opposition of east and west in the city […] should not be overlooked" (*Trans.* 229). However, Brossard does not only insert English words and phrases into her French text. She also uses *joual* expressions, which provide a statement on the social differences inherent to Montréal's urban outline and "Montréal's long-disadvantaged French-speaking majority" (*Trans.* 229). Typical examples of this mostly spoken Québécois register are: "T'exagères […] Change

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[200] "On with the kiss, so dense it strangulates articulations; pleasure moans. […] Lucy undulant amoeba, a fellow traveller cell while crossing arid desert zones. Remote seductress, imbibed in the text and gentle curves of love, she gazes around her […] Fix my lips like leeches onto yours, a sense to be got across you. […] Imprint of fleshy lips on other lips in footloose festive mood. The city" (*Trans.* 286; 287).

[201] "Tongues travel each seeking to suppress, annihilate the other from a vantage point of mastery when one yields, gives ground" (*Trans.* 285).

ça pour *kèkchose* d'autre" (*FK* 60, my emphasis).[202]

The city is a prime focus of this literary embracing and exploration[203] of language and the body which aims at an "inscription du corps féminin […] dans la texture urbaine de Montréal" (Eibl 2004: 109)[204] in the sense of a re-appropriation of space through *écriture au féminin*.[205] Two of the protagonists of the text, Marielle and Camomille, repeatedly travel through Montréal in their Plymouth, "La Mauve" (*FK* 105),[206] all along Sherbrooke Street, "[l]a Sherbrooke anglaise" (*FK* 105),[207] from west to east and back. Documenting their rides, they leave tracks and inscribe themselves in the texture of the city.[208] Their path across the city ultimately reconnects Montréal's east and west ends: Bleury Street – five blocks west of the Main, which historically functioned as the dividing line of the city – re-joins rather than separates the two culturally disparate urban parts of Montréal in *French Kiss*.[209] Also, because this is where the above quoted kiss happens.[210] "English and French are conflated" (Simon 2006: 148) there. This blurring of traditional spatial boundaries – echoed in the designation of 'Bleury' street – is analogous to the blurring of narrative

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[202] "You overdo it […] Try *sump'n* else for a change" (*Trans.* 267, my emphasis). Incidentally, *French Kiss* is Brossard's only text that makes extensive use of *joual*. In translation, Brossard's use of *joual* is transferred into a sociolect of English.

[203] Cf. the subtitle of *French Kiss*: '*étreinte – exploration*.'

[204] "[I]nscription of the female body […] in the urban texture of Montréal" (my translation).

[205] The notion of 'writing in the feminine' will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

[206] "Violet's" (*Trans.* 300).

[207] "[T]he English Sherbrooke Street" (*Trans.* 300).

[208] According to Irène Duranleau, "[l]e parcours fictif (les lieux géographiques que parcourt la Mauve) chevauche le parcours textuel" (1981: 114, "the fictional paths (the geographic places that the Mauve traverses) overlap with the textual lines," my translation). For the entire article, see Duranleau, Irène. "Le texte moderne et Nicole Brossard." *Études littéraires*. 14.1 (1981): 105-121. Print. For additional information cf. Eibl, Doris 2004: 109.

[209] Patricia Claxton specifies the division as "east of Bleury Street and west of it" (*Trans.* 220) in her foreword.

[210] However, it is not clear where the kiss actually takes places as Brossard says in an interview with Marcella Durand that "[t]he french kiss happens at the corner of *St. Denis* and Sherbrooke Street" (<http://www.doublechange.com/issue2/brossard.htm>, my emphasis; 12 August 2011).

perspectives that results in the above-mentioned "sujet au féminin pluriel [qui] transforme la surface de la ville" (Eibl 2004: 117, 109)[211] and "qui permet des lectures plurielles" (Duranleau 1981: 111)[212] of the text and the city.

A similar multiplicity can be found in the 2003 publication *Paper City: A caprice on the subject of disillusionment* by Nathanaël. It is one of her most graphic narratives. Mainly written in English, it has remained untranslated possibly because of its initial hybrid texture that explores translational techniques and slips between languages in a completive rather than a substitutional way.[213] Nathanaël usually develops wordplay exclusively in one language or in the other. In *Paper City*, it transgresses the interlingual boundaries between English and French. The text generally transcends borders, be it those of linguistic systems, *genre* or the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Neither poem or novel, nor fiction or theory, the text places itself not only between languages but also *entre-genre*. Divided into twenty-one chapters that often consist of only a headline plus a few lines or a paragraph, symbol, or illustration, it delivers insights into the artistic explorations and sexual adventures of the two protagonists *n* and *b*.

All of the characters of *Paper City* are unclassifiable. First and foremost

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[211] "[S]ubject in the feminine and plural [that] transforms the surface of the city" (my translation).
[212] "[T]hat allows for multiple reading possibilities" (my translation). See also Wheeler, Anne-Marie. "Issues of Translation in the Works of Nicole Brossard." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16.2 (2003): 425-454. Print.
[213] Generally, Nathanaël translates her own work. These so-called 'self-translations' are alternative versions of the initial texts that explore semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic possibilities in the respectively other tongue. Each single text, however, also shows instances of translation and code switching, that are handled individually and in different ways in translation – they might end up inversely translated or not translated and transferred into italics instead. Most of Nathanaël's texts have been published consecutively in their respective English and French versions. *Paper City* is an exception to this. Its frequent switching between English and French renders a translation not only difficult, but language-politically altogether redundant.

Nathanaël's nihilistic personal narrator: "*n* was néant" (*PC* 9).[214] While the feminine pronoun is used to refer to her throughout the text, her anatomy reveals a penis: "*n* tucked her soft cock into her skirt" (*PC* 11, emphasis in original). *n*'s counterpart is in-between: "*b* was betwixt" (*PC* 9, emphasis in original). The other characters are similarly ambiguous when it comes to their sex and gender. The undefined *?* (*quat*) and the gender-queer *M*: "*M* is Mark. She […]" (*PC* 37, emphasis in original) are beyond traditional expectations of bodies and their concordant normative references. The equally allegorical minor characters, *S* who "was *solicitude*" (*PC* 48, my emphasis) and the linguistically elusive *e* that claims "*[o]nce I was le féminin*" (*PC* 54, emphasis in original)[215], are indeterminate as well. Ranging from hermaphrodite to trans to adjustable, especially *n* and *b* "delighted in the discomfort aroused in their interlocutors" (*PC* 15).

The two protagonists are romantically as well as erotically involved. However, multiple layers of space and time camouflage their encounters and render their relationship distant. As the closing sentence of the text suggests: "[A]nd between them a cushion of air" (*PC* 75). The paper city they regard in this last scene – "[f]rom the bridge *n* watched the city sprawl" (*PC* 75) – is "of […] excessive verbosity (*waste*)" (*PC* 43, emphasis in original) and "mute" (*PC* 47) at the same time. The texts it is composed of are "plot-driven" (*PC* 43). They are of a narrative (as in writing as meaning) rather than a performative (as in writing as doing) quality. Both *n* and *b* despise that aspect of the city. For them, the paper city is "waste" (*PC* 43) as its countless stories reproduce prescribed meaning

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[214] "*n* was a nonentity" (my translation).
[215] "Once I was the feminine" (my translation).

and "mute" (*PC* 47) because they do not challenge form. They have no potential to change structures of meaning and rather fasten them. As is noted halfway through the text:

> This was not just her own [*n*'s] observation but the observation of others as well. With this difference: *the others liked it that way.* It was, after all, or so they maintained, their city (*PC* 43, emphasis in original).

The city and its stories repeat themselves and each other. They are self-regulatory. It is this continuity and stability that the inhabitants appreciate. The conservatism of the city's artistic aristocracy is not to be contested. Neither *n* nor *b* seems to fit into this environment and neither of the two intends to obey its regulations. Due to their difference not only in their creative but also in their sexual preferences and practices, they are eventually banished from the artistic milieu of the paper city.

When a third figure, *?*, enters the textual metropolis, the two- (*n* and *b*) becomes a threesome in a chapter tellingly entitled "*Ménage à Trois*":

> The arrival of *?* had been unexpected. *?* was unnamable and remained such. The elusive quality of *?* caused many disturbances […] *b* did suggest the un-name [kwΛt] – an amalgam of the French quoi and the English what […] *?* who sported every description of genitalia, was unperturbed by the exchange and wished only to sort out sleeping arrangements (*PC* 17, emphasis in original).

The mixing of English and French that Nathanaël plays with in this passage is a recurring practice in the text. Starting on the basic level of the word, it breaks open linguistic systems and, subsequently, their respective discourses. Categories like that of sex, gender, and sexuality are dismantled through this process, which renders the constructedness of categories visible, because it shows their different organisation in different languages. Each of the cultures and societies, English and French,

have coveted the straight line and right angles, and for centuries have busied themselves with the production of boxes into which they have stalwartly insisted on pushing themselves and others too. […] When a thing doesn't fit into a box, what is to be done? Neither *n* nor *b* fit into their prescribed boxes (*PC* 27-28, emphasis in original).

It is, I suppose, the "waste" (*PC* 43) and "mute" (*PC* 47) stories that have generated the boxes this passage refers to and that stand for traditional Western systems of categorisation. The narrator goes on with this allegory:

Three were Tapiopa and three were Buxom and the generally accepted practice was for each Tapiopa to encircle their designated Buxom while among themselves Buxom could circulate quite freely even laughingly as long as they maintained certain understood limits urges notwithstanding (*PC* 48).

All three *n*, *b*, and *?* subvert the heterosexual matrix suggested in this episode. Neither of the three can be contained by one of its binary sex, gender, and sexuality constructions. However, whereas *n* and *b* situate themselves *entre-deux*, *?*, "[kwʌt]" (*PC* 17), has emerged from the in-between.

More precisely, the linguistic hybrid 'quat' is an example of "*what no language holds*" (*PC* 51, emphasis in original). This is in line with the overall project of Nathanaël, who wants "*l'intraduisible*" (*PC* 51, emphasis in original).[216] Both the neologism 'quat' and the figure of '*?*' symbolise the productive moment of socio-linguistic encounter – a characteristic of the lapsised dimension. In Nathanaël's text, [kwʌt] comes into existence through the lexical merger of '*quoi*' in French and 'what' in English. The neologism breaks open the otherwise hermetic grammatical, phonological, and semantic systems of either language. It creates a fusion that renders translation unfeasible, because 'quat' is located between the two languages and carries the cognitive framing of both. Moreover,

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[216] "[T]he untranslatable" (my translation).

according to the storyline of *Paper City*, *?*'s "elusive" (*PC* 17) and "unnameable" (*PC* 17) body and its corresponding omnisexuality opens a whole new world of sensual pleasures to *n* and *b*, which is beyond what they know and what they have experienced within their own linguistic imaginaries and, hence, what they can take hold of with their language(s).

Considering the un/translatability of languages, cultures, and the urban (textual) body in *Paper City* and *French Kiss*, this chapter now moves on to outline how subjectivities are revised in both of the texts. It explores these modifications and their interrelation with (Montréal's) urban topographies and *dimension lapsisée*. Michel de Certeau's model of walking, writing, and reading as well as Judith Butler's theory of performativity shall help to show how the rhetoric of motion creates a city's topography – in this case, to the backdrop of a historically reiterated discourse of difference and division. The notion of 'translatability,' as it is discussed in Benjamin's theory on translation and in the context of Simon's notion of 'perverse translation,' is extended by its opposite, 'untranslatability,' which Nathanaël's translingual writing seeks. The bilingual text renders translation redundant. It can only ever have an afterlife in yet another third language as its translation to and fro – in this case English and French – produces mirror images. In this sense, I add Nathanaël's writing practice to Simon's list of perversions.

3.1 MAPPING CULTURAL TOPOGRAPHIES

From Greek *topos* (place) and *graphos* (write), the compound

'topography' exposes a place that has been written on. Based on the idea that a gendered body is a body (as in the notion of 'territory') that has been culturally inscribed, I argue that the urban 'body' is a regularized cultural construction. To wit, Nathanaël remarks: "The body is the first poem" (*PC* 21). Its "[a]uthorship has been unattributable to date" (*PC* 25), however. The writings of Brossard and Nathanaël remap the body and the city by crossing the boundaries of linguistic codes and, accordingly, traditional constructions of space, gender, and *genre*. In particular, Brossard's and Nathanaël's writing practices deconstruct monolithic imaginaries, introduce homosexual and trans/queer subjectivities, and transgress literary categorisations. Without the urge to unambiguously or definitively classify, I argue through this example of juxtaposing two texts, that English writing in Québec can be considered Anglo-Québécois rather than English Canadian. This becomes evident through its political ideology, linguistic practice, and socio-cultural narrative. The concluding part of this chapter, '*Flâneries* in Translation,' then, explores both diverse practices of 'translation' and the notion of '*flâneries*' in translation. In my reading of *Paper City* and *French Kiss*, I encounter altered versions of *flâneries*. Based on the different ways of traversing the city and crossing its borders demonstrated in the two texts, I show how the original figure of the *flâneur* is translated into a female/feminine character (*flâneuse*[217]) in *French Kiss* and, in *Paper City*, into that of a queer trans/gender bender (*flâneure*).

"[O]n y confond avec les mots le corps et la cité, une géographie" (*FK*

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[217] Cf. Rosenthal, Caroline 2009: 231-245 and Fellner, Astrid M. "'At Last Lost in Paris': A Canadian View on the Avant-Garde Paris of the 1920s." *Rive Gauche – Paris as a site of avant-garde and cultural exchange in the 1920s.* Eds. Elke Mettinger, Margarete Rubik and Jörg Türschmann. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. 311-330. Print.

7)[218] designed by the rhetoric of writing and walking as motions that inscribe the body in the city and the city on the body. As the two become physically and symbolically interrelated, I claim – based on Butler's theories on gender and identity – that not only is the body performative, but so is the city. With *French Kiss* and *Paper City*, Brossard and Nathanaël claim urban spaces by writing them according to their desire and by creating a topography of desire paths. Travelling the city in both texts means crossing conventions and discloses that the boundaries met on these journeys are but an imposition of (English and French imperialist and patriarchal) power discourses. In both texts, spaces of division are subverted and become places of encounter where bodies mingle, languages mix, and cultures link. The narrating subjectivities of *Paper City* and *French Kiss* emerge from the act of moving through urban spaces. In return, their bodies in motion construct the city, ultimately altering its conventional grid according to their desires. Dianne Chisholm argues that through those revisions, the city is redesigned and "designates a more fluid conceptualization of the [feminist and] queer occupation of urban space [and] demarcates a practice, production, and *performance* of space beyond just the mere habitation of built and fixed structures" (2005: 10, my emphasis). In short, the possibility to alter urban spaces through practices and narratives points to their performative character: the city is a discursive construction and, hence, allows for transformation and emancipation.

Division has been a stable factor in representations of Montréal. At least according to a tradition of Québécois and Canadian writings and political as well

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[218] "The words *body* and *city* get confused and mingled with a geography" (*Trans.* 233).

as popular discourses, there seem(ed) to be two cities on one island: an anglophone and a francophone. Given that for more than a century *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* was considered the ultimate dividing line between the East and the West Island with their different religious, historical, and linguistic traditions, the area around it is also a passageway that has become the subject of manifold literary explorations.[219] In *French Kiss* transits of *Saint-Denis*, *Saint-Laurent*, and Bleury Street are characteristic landmarks on the protagonists' drive along Sherbrooke Street. According to Simon, "[t]he voyage across the dual city is […] a familiar feature of Montreal literature" (2006: 4) and closely related to its practices of translation. As she argues in *Translating Montréal*, translation is one of the effects of the horizontal trip back and forth between the French-speaking Hochelaga and the English-speaking Westmount and has a significant impact on the mind mapping of Montréal's topography. It is an ambivalent factor in the bilingual city's struggle to keep its languages separate while promoting cultural hybridity according to provincial and federal political agendas.

Taking into account that, as a discursive mode, translation has a "shaping power" (Simon 2006: 7) and a performative potential to install "ontological effects" (Osborne and Segal, 1994: 23), I propose that translation, together with code switching, can function in the realm of subversive resignification:[220] The

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[219] Notably, it is also subject of a number of texts that recount immigration stories. They are not part of my research and, hence, not further discussed in this dissertation.

[220] The notion of 'resignification' – the foundation for Butler's theory on 'performativity' – is based on an alteration and redirection of the meaning of a linguistic term caused by the instability of language. To differentiate between conservative and subversive resignification, Alison Stone summarises the following in her 2005 article "Towards a Genealogical Feminism: A Reading of Judith Butler's Political Thought": the earlier (conservative resignification) stands for the repetition of meaning within a normative framework and results in the reproduction of not only a regulated meaning, but also of the authority of the regulative system; subversive resignification discloses the instability of the norm and its authority. The latter destabilizes normative meaning as it explicitly displays its status as a re-enactment of a norm and thereby breaks the regulatory

hermetic grammatical system of a language substantiates the meaning of signifiers through repetition within its normative framework. When it is merged with another, profoundly different linguistic structure (that functions the same within its own limits), meaning as well as grammatical norms (rules) and their authority are destabilised. To this merely linguistic component, Barbara Godard adds the notion of

> [t]ranslation […] in its *figurative* meanings of transcoding and transformation [as] a topos in feminist discourse. […] Although framed as a transfer from one language to another, feminist discourse involves the transfer of a cultural reality into a new context as an operation in which literary traditions are variously challenged in the encounter of differing modes of textualization (1989: 45, my emphasis).

Godard differentiates between translations as interlinguistic 'transfers' on the one hand, and, on the other, as interdiscursive 'transcoding' and 'transformation.' The latter are modes of resignification used in *écriture au féminin* (writing in the feminine), which contributes to feminist discourse. The mobility of meaning on various levels, including reflections on its very phenomenon (when it becomes a topos), is inherent to the lapsised dimension. "The transformation of language, or 'resignification' (to use Judith Butler's term), is a process" (Holbrook 2001: 81) of it.

Translation, hence, reconceptualises meaning not only between linguistic codes or cultures, but also between linguistic registers and discourses. With its performative potential, "the capacity to produce what it names" (Butler 1993: 225), it interferes with the politics of the otherwise separate hermetic, patriarchal, and colonial discourses of the bisected city. This is where "[t]he double city [becomes] a special kind of space" (Simon 2006: 4) – at its borders, where reality

cycle of repetition. (Cf. Stone, Alison. "Towards a Genealogical Feminism: A Reading of Judith Butler's Political Thought." *Contemporary Political Theory* 4. (2005): 4-24. Print.)

and conventional (textual) constructions are continuously challenged and space for subversion and re/definition is generated. One such expression of subversion is that of *écriture au féminin*. I consider *théorie/fiction* as another example here – one that contests literary conventions in particular. Emerging from collaborations between Québec and Canadian women writers starting in the 1970s and 80s,[221] it is best described by the following two excerpts. The first one is taken from the feminist periodical *Tessera*:

> [A] narrative, usually self-mirroring, which exposes, defamiliarizes and/or *subverts* the fictional and gender codes determining the re-presentation of women in literature and in this way contributes to feminist theory. This narrative works upon the codes of language (syntax, grammar, gender-coded diction, etc.), of the self (construction of the subject, self! Other, drives, etc.), of fiction (characterization, subject, matter, plots, closure, etc.), of social discourse (male/female relations, historical formations, hierarchies, hegemonies) in such a way as to provide a critique and/or *subvert* the dominant traditions that within a patriarchal society have resulted in a de-formed representation of women. All the while it focuses on what language is saying and interweaves a story. It defies categories and explodes genres (Godard et al. 1986: 10, my emphasis).

The second is from Scott's collection of essays, *Spaces Like Stairs* (1989):

> *One shouldn't have to change one's way of writing, no matter what one's writing […] criticism, journalism, fiction. […] [I]t's precisely where the poetic and the personal enter the essay form that thought steps over its former boundaries* (106, emphasis in original).

As Godard et al. point out in the first quotation, fiction/theory writings deconstruct established notions of 'gender' by pulling at language and, consequently, the construction of the self, the subject, and their histories and stories. Patterns of conservative resignification are interrupted through the subversion of dominant traditions and, as Scott likewise emphasizes, not only gender but also *genre* categories are obliterated.

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[221] The vivid exchange between anglophone and francophone communities in Canada since the 1970s has led to joint-publications, such as the bilingual journal *Tessera* (1984-2005).

This is the case for both texts discussed in this chapter, *French Kiss* and *Paper City.* In general, neither Nathanaël's nor Brossard's writings can be classified either as prose or poetry. Oftentimes, they oscillate between several categories. The "[t]heoretical awareness" (Scott et al. 1986: 7) in these fictional texts is directly linked to the concept of *écriture au féminin*. Particularly in Québec – under the influence of French feminism, Hélène Cixous, and the notion of '*écriture féminine*'[222] – women writers turned to a *prise de parole* to express their dissatisfaction with the dominant discourses of masculinity ("de-formed representation[s] of women" Godard et al. 1986: 10) and heteronormativity. While the French *écriture féminine* (women's writing) stands for writing that seeks to articulate femininity and experiences considered specific to the female body and mind, thereby building a bridge between essentialist conceptions of sex and gender, the Québec model of '*écriture au féminin*' puts an emphasis on the constructed-ness of the feminine in regard to the female and male/masculine. Stressed by the '*au*' – that is translated into English with 'writing *in the* feminine' – this writing mode deals with the role given to 'woman' in a patriarchal society and challenges as well as redefines it. As Godard confirms, "[f]eminist discourse works upon language, upon the dominant discourse, in a radical interrogation of meaning" (Godard 1989: 46), and "[t]ranslation, in this theory of feminist discourse, is production, not reproduction" (Godard 1989: 47). Emerging from the space in-between languages, it has the potential to discontinue iteration and object to the compulsorily coherent identity of the subject.

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[222] For a detailed explanation, see Parker, Alice. *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard.* New York: Peter Lang, 1998: 134. Print.

3.2 PERFORMING THE BODY AND THE CITY

According to Annamarie Jagose's summary of Judith Butler's theory on gender, "performativity is the precondition of the subject" (1996: 86). This is how I perceive the Montréal-ness of Brossard's and Nathanaël's narrators. On the level of the urban body, I conceive of the (written) paper city as prior to the material city in terms of being a performative entity and social text. Based on Butler's theory on the performativity of identity, there is no original to the urban spaces described in these literary texts just as there is no origin to the gendered body. In this sense, both *French Kiss* and *Paper City* are examples of performing the urban: doing the city rather than being in it or representing it. Brossard's and Nathanaël's narrators performatively constitute Montréal.[223] They do so through the repetition of Québécitude, a nationalist notion, which is the result of its own expressions.[224] *Paper City* performs Montréal by reiterating discursive parameters of the city that are coded in *French Kiss*.[225]

In *French Kiss* and *Paper City* fiction and theory as well as body and city converge. *French Kiss* conflates the body and the city through repeated syntactic juxtapositions like in "les textures singulières et stratégiques *d'un lieu,*

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[223] According to Huffer, Brosssard "nam[es] and creat[es] a fictional reality called Montréal" (1996: 110).

[224] In *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler defines gender as "'always a doing" (33), in the sense that "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; […] identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (33). I apply this idea to the notion of 'city' here.

[225] This does not mean, however, that Nathanaël's city is informed by Brossard's Montréal in *French Kiss*. The paper city is rather a copy without an original, a cultural construction that relies on linguistic expressions and social context.

d'un corps" (*FK* 24, my emphasis).[226] In *Paper City* body and city become inseparable as *n* states: "The body in its city […] inevitable" (*PC* 53). In both texts, the topography of the city is in constant transformation and an urban subjectivity/geography *au féminin* is produced. Both texts create a city in translation. *French Kiss* illustrates Montréal's urban landscape by addressing actual street-names: "sur la *rue Sherbrooke*" (*FK* 10, my emphasis)[227] and "sur la *rue St-Denis*" (*FK* 78, my emphasis).[228] Sherbrooke Street is Montréal's longest east-west connection. It is cut in two by *Saint-Denis*, which is parallel to *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* and considered one of the city's vertical dividing lines. Brossard references the history of the metropolis, particularly the patriarchal and colonial power discourses that founded it. Her narrator continuously comments on the twofold character of Montréal.[229] This antagonism is imitated through the choice of an English title for her French text. However, the title as such does not only carry "French' in it, but also the idea of 'French kissing': it subverts notions of dividedness by associating connection and fusion. Brossard resignifies Montréal's borders: places of separation become places of encounter. As she points out in the introduction to *The Blue Books* (2002): "Writing was a way to appropriate the world [,] […] to reveal the thousand facets of desire, the varieties of meanings and emotions" (9). Correspondingly, Simon summarises that *French Kiss* is "undoing the boundaries of everything – of language, of the body, of the city" (2006: 47).

Nathanaël's assignment is comparable and complementary to Brossard's.

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[226] "[T]he singular and strategic textures of a body and a place." (*Trans.* 243)
[227] "[A]long Sherbrooke Street" (*Trans.* 235).
[228] "[A]t St-Denis Street" (*Trans.* 279).
[229] As Andersen confirms, Brossard makes "frequent allusions to Quebec history and literature" (1987: 16).

Like in *French Kiss*, in *Paper City* "[t]he city becomes a sensory experiment, a blur of fragment and impulse […] undoing its rigid geometry" (Simon 2006: 47-48). This is why I argue that the grid of Montréal can be found emblematically in *Paper City* and that the paper city is a model-city stripped off its definite geographical location. Allusions and generalizations like the following hint at a Montréal the way it is illustrated by Brossard:

> [H]ad they expressed an exclusive affiliation with one language or another (and its attendant culture), their efforts would have been lauded. […] Regardless of location, they all conspire to keep one group of people apart from another group of people (*PC* 18; 31).

The situation here, "regardless of location" (*PC* 31), resembles the bilingual city and its divisions described in *French Kiss* as "fondue jusqu'aux oreilles en *angla* et en *frança*" (*FK* 46, my emphasis).[230] While Brossard and her translator Patricia Claxton mock francophone pronunciations of "angla/Inglish" (*FK* 46, *Trans.* 258) and anglophone pronunciations of "frança/Franch" (*FK* 46, *Trans.* 258), Nathanaël is preoccupied with the obligatory "affiliation" (*PC* 18) to "one language" (*PC* 18) and its totalitarian practices, power structures, and dominant discourse. "[L]anguage astonishes the writer" (*PC* 19) as to its possibilities, but also as to its restrictions. By refusing an "exclusive affiliation with one language or another" (*PC* 18), however, "the writer, too astonishes language" (*PC* 19). Translation and code switching both cross linguistic borders and have the capacity to enunciate modifications. "Language is assuredly the author's tool" (*PC* 19) to inscribe themselves in the city and perform it. Brossard and Nathanaël use their "tool" (*PC* 19) in similar ways to explore the performative capacity of language. They do so one generation apart from each other with matching

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[230] "[F]rom ear to ear in Inglish or in Franch" (*Trans.* 258).

agendas:[231] to change the topography of the city working with and overcoming its long-standing divisions by creating a subjectivity *au féminin* or a queer subject. Both practices subvert dominant discourses and create novel passages between the city and the body as "Montréal [becomes] a city-body, its geography that of an anatomical system" (Simon 2006: 148). Brossard and Nathanaël, hence, rewrite (Montréal's) urban topographies by symbolically intertwining the arteries of the city and the body through translation and code switching. Tracking the innovative topographies produced by the writers' respective politics reveals an emancipation of the urban spaces of Montréal from heteronormative to heterogeneous places.

"[T]he body's fictions are deliberate" (*PC* 7) and so are the city's. This is what I argue in this chapter, which shows that Nathanaël's *Paper City* is an urban text unfolding (in) the lapsised dimension. For the most part, metropolitan spaces of the Western world are rooted in a patriarchal tradition. Their maps have been conceptualized by men, for men, and according to their needs. These predefined, widely homogenous spaces[232] have rendered the presence of the Other, women, marginal and largely phantasmal, while denying access to city spaces to coexisting subcultures of hetero-normative society – homo, bi, and trans communities – (during daylight) altogether. As Lianne Moyes points out in *Tessera* (1994), "traditionally mapped by men's desire, by men's economic privilege [...] the city is a space in which women do not circulate freely" (7).[233]

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[231] McLennan calls Nathanaël "the Brossard of her generation" (2004: 48).

[232] Established by a white middle-class abled discourse; my interest here is in sex, gender, and sexuality and I will not further comment on race, class, age, abled-ness etc.

[233] Moyes' reference to the predominance of men's desire in urban planning primarily refers to a heterosexual/-sexist context and its related urban structures. It can, however, be generalised to a discourse of masculinity including male homosexuality and considering gay economic

For centuries, women could not inscribe themselves on urban maps as subjects with desire/s,[234] in particular, if their longing was for other women.[235] In the two texts at hand, a re-appropriation of space takes place. The urban is being modified according to a revis(it)ed narrating subjectivity that originates in the in-between and "change[s] the laws and the mores of the city (the polis)" (Mays 2008: 22). Its identity is constructed through gender/queer performativity and (linguistic) *flâneries*.

This is crucial to my hypothesis, which proposes that *Paper City* is a piece of Anglo-Québécois writing. This proposition is based on the idea that the text is circumstantially and ideologically close to a dominantly French-Québécois discourse (socio-political, cultural, and literary) or, at least, aware of and commenting on the twofold history and dual linguistic reality of the city of Montréal. Notably, my argument is solely based on con- and inter/textual observations. It considers writing as performance, and does not consider the biographical background or circumstances of the author. Compared to *Paper City*, *French Kiss* seems obviously Québécois or, to be more precise, Montréalais, because of its many references to Montréal's geography, its remarks on urban landscapes and the overall political and social situation of the city, and because of its demonstrative use of the Montréal-specific Québécois-

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privilege. Gail Scott in conversation with Corey Frost also discusses this issue, in the context of *My Paris*. Cf. <http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v1_4_2000/current/workbook/> (28 April 2014).

[234] They were rather being inscribed as objects through discourses of masculinity in a traditional virgin-mother-whore triangle that would allow them into accordingly provided spaces like the church, home, and urban sectors designated by men for sex-work (red-light districts).

[235] Cf. Moyes, Lianne. "Introduction: Cities built from the dreams of women." *Tessera* 16 (1994): 8. Print.

French language variant *joual*.[236] Its *Québécitude*, rather than resulting from Brossard's origins in Montréal,[237] is a result of the literary reiteration of Montréal urban spaces. Even though *French Kiss* challenges the long-standing power discourse around difference that has linguistically and ideologically determined the potential perspectives from which the city can be fictionally and theoretically re/constructed, it still repeats it. *Paper City*, on the other hand, cannot be located accordingly. Its references are mere allusions, labels have been eluded, and neither street names nor other place names are cited; even a timeline is refused to the reader (whilst Brossard provides cues, for instance, about the Quiet Revolution). However, Nathanaël significantly and throughout the text switches between English and French – the two languages that divide Montréal.

3.3 REMAPPING THE BODY AND THE CITY

Gail Scott observes a generational change in the use of fiction/theory. She states – in a *Tessera* issue on the topic – that recently "theory has been assimilated into the form" (Scott et al. 1986: 7) to the point that it is no longer directly addressed the way it used to be in Brossard's or her own writing. In Nathanaël's text, I notice a reprise of theory. This is due to a transfer of the speaking subject from feminine (as in *écriture au féminin*) to trans or queer, similar to the earlier one from a masculine to a feminine voice. The Otherness of this revised queer voice, however, has not yet been affirmed to the extent that the feminine and, in particular, the feminist voices of the 80s and 90s have been

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[236] For a definition of the term, see subchapter 2.7.
[237] The francophone writer and feminist Nicole Brossard was born and raised in Montréal, to be more accurate, in Westmount, a traditionally mainly English-speaking neighbourhood.

by now. The *théorie/fictions* of Brossard and Nathanaël are comparable for that matter, since they are first-generation examples of their kind. They explore similar content with similar writing strategies that render aspects of the respective other writer's agenda visible. City, body, and the sex-gender-sexuality trinity are the subject of both texts and equally closely discussed in their relation to language in each. While Brossard's storyline tells the polyamorous adventures of her five protagonists, Nathanaël's plot narrates the story of a city. Her paper city and its urban body can be analysed with the help of the Montréal that Brossard's protagonists construe in *French Kiss*. In return, Nathanaël's reflections on sex, gender, and sexuality serve as a theoretical backdrop to the subversions staged in *French Kiss*.[238] The maps of the two cities can be superimposed: seen through the eyes of *n*, the urban text/ure of Montréal in *French Kiss* reminds us of *Paper City*; it is a formalist performative text without "*restraint*" (*PC* 43, emphasis in original). If Lucy "watched the city sprawl" standing on the Jacques-Cartier Bridge,[239] Montréal would look like *n*'s paper city with its "excessive verbosity" (*PC* 74). Montréal has a history of repetitive constructions of the same plot of a divided city after all. This is the very reason why Lucy remaps the city. In the same way as *n* rewrites her city.

Traversing the city of Montréal in *French Kiss* results in "depicting the bodies that give life to the city" (*Trans.* 274) and creating "a text of daily life" (*Trans.* 275):

> Texte du quotidien […] Marielle traversera ce livre comme elle le fera de la

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[238] Cf. Duranleau: "French Kiss n'est pas un texte à génération de fiction, ni un jeu de la fiction, mais un jeu de la subversion du sens" (1981: 115, "French Kiss does not generate fiction, nor does it play with fiction. It plays on the possibilities to subvert sense," my translation).
[239] *Pont Jacques-Cartier* is further discussed in subchapter 2.4 and chapter 6 in the context of Gail Scott's writing and her concept of the 'comma of difference' or 'comma of translation.'

rue Sherbrooke. À l'horizontale, sur une carte grande ouverte de la ville […] Fragmenté, scrupule à vaincre la représentation des corps alimentant la cité, la différence des corps épiderme/texture (*FK* 70-71).[240]

Through her movement across the city, Marielle inscribes herself on the "map" (*Trans.* 274) spread out in front of her and into the urban con/text. Her feminine voice (*elle*) is "fragmented" (*Trans.* 275) into multiple (*mille*) voices (*elles*): Camo*mille*, Mari*elle,* and Lucy. Their motorized *flâneries* on Montréal's Sherbrooke Street blend body and city. From the East to the West End of the island, the protagonists

> roule habituellement entre l'appartement de la rue Coloniale et les edifices de la rue Stanley. Mais aujourd'hui: *croisière urbaine*. Suivre la rue Sherbrooke d'un bout à l'autre, de l'est à l'ouest. Manège historique et géographique. […] Far east, down town going far west. […] Les néons cheap et flashy (*FK* 9, my emphasis).[241]

Their "cruise" (*Trans.* 234) irreversibly alters the text, history, and geography of the city: "La Main, c'était une époque. […] Capter, reconnaître, les surfaces *différentes*" (*FK* 24, emphasis in original).[242] "The Main" (*Trans.* 243), *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*, described as a strategic dividing line between Montréal's eastern and western neighbourhoods ("far east […] far west" *Trans.* 234) since the 18th century,[243] has from then on imposed the notion of 'difference' between francophone and anglophone communities on its opposite sides of the street. When Marielle and her friends traverse *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* on their

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[240] "A text of daily life […] Marielle will move through this book as she will along Sherbrooke Street. Horizontally on an open map of the city […] Fragmented, a scruple to subdue over depicting the bodies that give life to the city, the dissimilarity of bodies, *epidermis/texture*" (*Trans.* 274; 275).

[241] "The customary route's between a third floor walkup on Colonial Street and the highrises of Stanley Street. Today it's different, a cruise across the city. The whole length of Sherbrooke Street from one end to the other, east to west. A carousel of history and geography. […] FAR EAST, GOING DOWNTOWN FAR AWAY WEST. […] Cheap and flashy neon signs" (*Trans.* 234, emphasis in original).

[242] "The Main was an era. […] *Different* surfaces to be captured and recognized" (*Trans.* 243, emphasis in original).

[243] Cf. Simon 2006: 5.

boundless voyages across the city, they counter the conventional phallogocentric[244] urban center spaces ("[t]he main was an era" *Trans.* 243) with their "double memory" (*Trans.* 299): "La cité [est] *écartée* à tout fendre. […] Dorénavant en son *double fond de mémoire, son centre double de ville double*" (*FK* 103, my emphasis).[245] Now, there is "[e]n son centre, gémir" (*FK* 103).[246] With their "moans" (*Trans.* 299) from "its middle" (*Trans.* 299) – the in-between – Marielle, Camomille, and Lucy inscribe their bodies and desire on the map of the city, creating their path across it.

Taking possession of agency alters the subject and enables its desire while "turning into language all the urges" (*Trans.* 266):

> Camomille remue en elle-même, dans son corps écrit, les mots et les facettes de l'angoisse. […] Ne plus pouvoir contrôler ses mains et ses bras, ses gestes, une façon de préparer ses phrases, de prononcer les mots, d'épeler chaque syllabe, de rendre à la parole tous les désirs qui la suscitent et qui invitent à prendre part (*FK* 57).[247]

This coming-of-age passage illustrates the modifications in Brossard's subject and how she finds her voice. Captured in "her written body" (*Trans.* 266) defined by a constitutive masculine language and male-controlled discourse, she finds herself 'anxious'[248] in what Brossard calls a linguistic situation of '*dimension lapsisée.*'[249] Crossing the limits of this condition, while it implies a temporary loss of control ("not being able to control […] hands and arms" *Trans.* 266), means to

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[244] Cf. Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980. Print.
[245] "The city's soul [is] divided, clove in two. […] Henceforth in its double depths of memory, the double centre of a double city" (*Trans.* 299).
[246] "In its middle moans" (*Trans.* 299).
[247] "Camomille stirs in herself, in her written body, the words and facets of anxiety. […] Not being able to control her hands and arms, her gestures anymore helps her in a way prepare her sentences, pronounce her words, spell each syllable, turning into language all the urges that beckon and invite her partake" (*Trans.* 266).
[248] Cf. *Trans.* 266.
[249] The term is to be understood according to Brossard's initial definition here, not my own reappropriation of it as lapsised dimension.

find "*her* sentences, pronounce *her* words" (*Trans.* 266). In short, the body, which positions itself beyond pre-defined binaries of imperative colonial, patriarchal, and heterosexist discourses, has to revise its "gestures' (*Trans.* 266), "sentences" (*Trans.* 266), and "urges" (*Trans.* 266). Nathanaël's subject confirms this decentered position from a dominant discourse and its established categories: "*'le, corps, remémoré, est, d'une, fragilité'*" (*PC* 59, emphasis in original)[250].

Both *Paper City* and *French Kiss* use the metaphor of 'skin' to compare body and text: In Nathanaël, "*n*'s books were skin. Paper and bone" (*PC* 59, emphasis in original). In Brossard, "la représentation des corps aliment[e] la cité, la différence des corps *épiderme/texture*" (*FK* 71, my emphasis).[251] *n*'s books are skin and bone made of paper and reflect the "wanting for the body the same freedom that language might have held" (*PC* 56). Similar to *French Kiss*, they explore the possibilities of revision and underline the power of enunciation and performative acts as well as the possibility of subversion inherent to both. "[T]he body's fictions" (*PC* 7) and the "dissimilarity of bodies, epidermis/texture" (*Trans.* 275) modify conventional conceptualisations by crossing the borders of prescribed patriarchal structures and of the linguistic, cultural, and social constraints produced by them.

> Les bouches […] de bêtes savantes occupant à elles seules, en douceur toutes les surfaces de désir. La langue tranche le discours, fouet mouvant, Camomille, fouet mouvant, arque ta langue […]
> On y confond les mots
> il fait si chaud
> les phonèmes

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[250] "[T]he, body, recalled, is, fragile" (my translation).
[251] "[D]epicting the bodies […] give[s] life to the city, the dissimilarity of bodies, *epidermis/texture*" (*Trans.* 275, my emphasis).

la célébration (*FK* 80-81).[252]

The mixing of their languages confuses words and their meanings. It "cut[s]" (*Trans.* 281) dominant discourse. In Nathanaël the "flicking whip" (*Trans.* 281) is visualised by a phrase that is cut up into its elements with the help of commas ("the, body, recalled, is, fragile" *PC* 59, my translation). The modified subject "occup[ies] […] all the surfaces of desire" and, according to *Paper City*, it is "desire [that] brings language into being" (*PC* 19).

The notion of 'desire' is also central to both texts. It is used in a subversive way and challenges taboos like incest, polyamorous as well as multiple sexual encounters (*ménages à trois*), and establishes fluid perceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality. In Brossard, this desire is predominantly lesbian. In Nathanaël its reciprocity with language and the body/the body with the city is stressed: "Here we are then, back at the beginning, touching upon the body, repository and source of every unavowable desire, and subject of (and to) indescribable repression" (*PC* 27). In the same way as the body emerges from the city, the prescribed urban spaces of the latter and its passageways, impose limits on the body: "[l]anguage admonishes the body. It fictionalizes desire. It lives inside the body where it takes the place of *breath*" (*PC* 21, my emphasis). As much as breath regulates the vitality of the body, language regulates the fictions of the body. Marielle, Camomille, and *n*'s motion through the city – similar to physical expressions of desire – changes their rhythm of breathing and speech. It creates new (textual/desire) paths and, eventually, alters urban topographies. "La ville," accordingly, "reprend dans leur souffle, leur discours"

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[252] "Each mouth […] two educated animals alone occupying sweetly all the surfaces of desire. The tongue's like a cutting word, a flicking whip, Camomille, arch your tongue […] Words get confused – so hotly used – phonemes – celebration" (*Trans.* 281).

(*FK* 83),[253] as is noted in *French Kiss*.

The metaphor of 'breathing' opens another passage between the two texts. It is re-connected to desire as

> tes désirs […] [t]a bouche ouverte sur la mienne. Une hérésie. Les *haleines* comprimées. *Aspirées*. […] La langue de Lucy tourne, hélice folle dans la bouche de George, découpe dans le bleu des yeux des autres pleins de références, des clins d'oeil électriques. Comme des signaux. […] Imprimer les dents dans le sens d'un désir vertical. Car nu. Charnu et qui se décompose en *mot à mot sens perdu*. […] L'impression que tes dents soufflent sur les carreaux […] molécules et désir ainsi qu'ardent risible narrateur ricaneur, affolé dans son rire. Ment infiniment à la lettre
> à la ligne
> secouant le *sens suspendu*. Qui retombent fictifs/réels _____ la bouche de l'autre (*FK* 93-94, 99, my emphasis).[254]

"The breath of both compressed" (*Trans.* 291), Lucy and George's tongues turn around each other, cross-reference, "decompos[e] word for word" (*Trans.* 291), and "suspend[ ] meanings" (*Trans.* 296). The meaning of language is stirred in this episode. Similar to when two mouths meet and two tongues mingle, the two languages turn around each other and turn words around. The words lose their sense; they are modified and return into "the other's mouth" (*Trans.* 283). This kind of encounter of tongues in the sense of *langues*/languages that get "twisted" (*PC* 29) along "tortuous paths" (*PC* 29) is a feature of the lapsised dimension. It is also described in *Paper City* and the urban spaces *n* and *b* inhabit:

> language was all twisted up in their vision, a great mess of tortuous *voies* which converged against the grey sky pressing down on the city,

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[253] "The city revives in their breath, their speech" (*Trans.* 283).

[254] "[Y]our desires […] Your mouth open to mine. Heresy. *Breath* of both compressed. *Breathed* in. […] Lucy's tongue turns like a wild propeller in Georges's mouth, clips electric snips from the blue of other's eyes, crammed with cross-references. For signals. […] Put teeth in the sense of a vertical desire. Bared. Bare flesh and decomposing word for word in the sense that's lost. […] Impression that your teeth are blowing on the window panes […] molecules and desire and also eager laughable snickering narrator, off the rocker in mirth. Literally infinitely – flip-flops – brandishing suspended meanings. Which fall into place as fictional/real _____ the other's mouth" (*Trans.* 291; 296, my emphasis).

fastidiously wrought and similarly tormented. For *b* it was simple. He […] said *Kiss me* (*PC* 29, emphasis in original).

Setting *Paper City* and *French Kiss* into an intertextual dialogue, choosing "two ends" (*Trans.* 284) and "mak[ing them] meet" (*Trans.* 284), I propose that *n* "introdui[t] sa langue dans la bouche de l'autre. Son désir dans la ville et la géographie" (*FK* 83),[255] in her response to *b*. There were "many things to do with one's mouth besides speaking" (*PC* 44) that are elaborated on in the following passage of Brossard's text:

> Sa langue dans la bouche de l'autre, passage souterrain ou/pendant que l'on glisse une information par le langage du corps vers l'autre, narrateur encombré de décisions, lettres optiques de couleur: *choisir et joindre les deux bouts du texte*, narratrice (*FK* 84-85, my emphasis).[256]

"A narrator burdened with decisions" (*Trans.* 284) has the bodies of Marielle, Camomille, and *n* traverse the city and create underground passages (desire paths), a "network of tunnels" (*PC* 33) that alters the city. In my comparative reading, the two texts penetrate each other through these networks established between them. As *n* would sum up: "Everywhere artists were fucking" (*PC* 11).

The narrator of *Paper City* gives the following piece of advice: "[i]n a paper city write nothing down" (*PC* 23). Brossard's narrator does not accept this. The polyphonic *elle* (*elles*) counters:[257]

> L'écriture mangeuse de zigzags, de détours. Avaleuse/serpent. Ne court pas les rues mais y circule et trace son cours, ainsi que maintenant alors que les mots se dressent et s'agitent pour gonfler/dégonfler des formes, des histoires (*FK* 54).[258]

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[255] "Now put her tongue in the other's mouth. Her desire in the city and geography" (*Trans.* 283).

[256] "His/her tongue in the other's mouth, a subterranean passage where/during which he/she slips some information by body language to the other, a narrator burdened with decisions, optical letters in colour; *two ends to choose and make meet in the text* […] narrator (fem.)" (*Trans.* 284, my emphasis).

[257] According to Rachel Zolf, the narrator of *Paper City* is also "polyphonic" (2004: 43).

[258] "Writing that feeds on zig and zags and detours. Swallower/serpent. Isn't on every streetcorner but roams the streets, traces its course though them, as now when words bob up and clamour to inflate/deflate shapes and anecdotes" (*Trans.* 263).

Brossard engages in an excessive writing-style "that feeds on zig and zags and detours" (*Trans.* 263) and that exhausts the lexical fields of words as they are being followed up with strings of associative explorations on each meaning. This practice is exponentiates with her switching to English, which occurs in different forms: either independently as in "French kiss, bye, bye, drag somewhere else your matter: [...] Ment infiniment à la lettre à la ligne secouant les sens suspendus" (*FK* 99),[259] or when using '*joual*': "*J'suis* snob" (*FK* 13, my emphasis),[260] or when she "[c]hevauche la syntaxe" (*FK* 13)[261] altogether. The latter is announced in the first paragraph of the text already: "Chevauche la grammaire. Je m'étale, ardent, dérisoire et désir" (*FK* 7).[262] According to the narrator/s (*elles*), "[e]ntre Camomille et Lucy et... Marielle, la ville et sa structure. [...] Or l'écriture se meurt avec la ville et les filles de joie" (*FK* 93).[263] Similarly, *n* in *Paper City* insists that

> When the artist ceases to be an impostor, when the artist agrees to a *formula*, when the artist sacrifices Art to comfort, to *expectation*, then Art ceases to exist. Beauty is seconded. The paper city burns (*PC* 24, emphasis in original).

Brossard is a "writer who cannot let go of the idea that literature is subversion, transgression, and vision" (Huffer and Dean 1995: 115). According to *French Kiss*, "if writing dies, so will the city" (*Trans.* 291) as the city is a text and, hence, construed through language. If Brossard and Nathanaël "agreed to a formula" (*PC* 24), *French Kiss* and *Paper City* could not be drawn together. If they

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[259] "BYE-BYE FRENCH KISS, GO DRAG YOUR STUFF SOMEPLACE ELSE: [...] Literally infinitely fibs – flip-flops – brandishing suspended meanings" (*Trans.* 296, emphasis in original).
[260] "'I'm all shook up...'" (*Trans.* 237).
[261] "Ride astride syntax" (*Trans.* 237).
[262] "Ride astride grammar. I spread myself, eager, inconsequential and desire" (*Trans.* 233).
[263] "Between Camomille and Lucy and ... Marielle, the city and its structure. [...] If writing dies, so will the city and its harlots" (*Trans.* 291).

followed "the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (Halperin 1995: 62) and if they did not subvert expectations and take position against discourses of power on the same grounds, there would be no possibility of mobility between their texts, any comparative attempt would be a dead end, and "the paper city [would] bur[n]" (*PC* 24).[264]

3.4 *FLÂNERIES* IN TRANSLATION

With an analysis of Brossard and Nathanaël's interventions in both the poetics and politics of space and the realities (places) of the city, I have illustrated how, consequently, their writing redefines the urban as feminist and trans/queer. Brossard's *écriture au feminin* subverts masculine writing practices. It strategically deconstructs the dominant male voice and inserts 'woman' and 'lesbian' into the *his*tory of the city. Likewise, Nathanaël's in-between subject re-appropriates city spaces as queer and trans. Thereby, it blurs urban boundaries and dislocates places that were pre-fabricated by a dominant homogenizing and heterosexist discourse. Rather than invisibly inhabiting the city, Brossard's and Nathanaël's narrators – feminine, queer, or trans – indulge in wandering it. They inscribe themselves in its geography and create new practices and narratives of the city. They alter the urban topography and superimpose a novel relation between the body and the city. Due to the significant (signifying) role of 'motion' in this re-conceptualization of urban space and places, I ultimately read

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[264] An intertextual comparison with Butlers essay "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion" could extend this discussion in a prospective version of my analysis. Cf. Butler, Judith. "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion." Ed. Judith Butler. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993. 121-141. Print.

Brossard and Nathanaël's narrators as revised versions of the *flâneur*. The figure

of the '*flâneur*' originates in French romanticism and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du*

Mal;[265] it has also been taken up in other contemporary (Anglo-)Québécois

writings, such as Gail Scott's *My Paris* (1999), which emulates the

Passagenwerk[266] and Walter Benjamin's revisiting of this character in its broader

context of industrialization.[267] In Brossard and Nathanaël, the *flâneur* is no longer

a male/masculine stroller like the one walking the Paris Arcades in Benjamin,

evocative of Charles Baudelaire's poem "À Une Passante."[268] It becomes a

female-identified *flâneuse* and a hermaphrodite or queer *flâneure*. This change of

perspective has a significant impact on the perception and construction of the

city insofar as the *flâneur* in drag[269] "offer[s] an alternative map of the city, an

alternative cartography of desire" (Moyes 1994: 6).

It was during an interview on the specificities of the *Québécitude* of

radical urbanity[270] in *La lettre aérienne* (1985), that a misunderstanding between

the interviewer and Nicole Brossard created the image of "*fair[ies]* in combat in

the city of men" (Huffer 1996: 101, my emphasis). Although Brossard actually

called herself "a *girl* in combat in the city of men" (Huffer 1996: 101, my

emphasis), I am not reluctant to take up Lynne Huffer's version even though

"[t]his translation of Brossard's metaphor was a mistake on [her] part" (1996:

101). Brossard "had said '*fille* en combat,' not '*fée* en combat' […] with

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[265] Cf. Baudelaire, Charles. "À une passante." in Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Trans. Richard Howard. New Hampshire: David R. Godine, 1982. Print.
[266] Cf. Benjamin 1999.
[267] For a discussion, see chapter 6.
[268] Baudelaire 1982.
[269] Drag performances are self-presentations by the subject as their "[p]erformativity [is] that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names" (Osborne and Segal, 1994: 33) thereby "contest[ing] the very notion of the subject" (Osborne and Segal, 1994: 33).
[270] Cf. Huffer 1996: 101.

diaphanous wings and combat boots: 'an urban radical'" (Huffer 1996: 101, emphasis in original). In her article, Huffer continues to explain that she would like to imagine those fairies to be living in the city of *French Kiss*.[271] I want to stick to this interpretation. Like Huffer, I "still want them to be fairies: urban fairies, in combat, in the city of men" (1996: 101), as the concept of the 'fairy' is more efficiently applied to both Brossard's and Nathanaël's texts. *French Kiss* is a project *au féminin* and Brossard's '*fille*' announces an otherness to the masculine that still implies the gender binary. Meanwhile, *Paper City* seeks to stay out of categories altogether and explicitly denounces them: "They have coveted the straight line and right angles, and for centuries have busied themselves with the production of boxes into which they have stalwartly insisted on pushing themselves and others too" (*PC* 28). Nathanaël's project is to think beyond the binary of "boxes" (*PC* 28) that have been "produced" (*PC* 28) by the dominant discourses on sex, gender, and sexuality that the notion of '*fille*' is part of.

The concept of 'fairy' is not. It is borrowed from folklore, mythology, and Victorian literature. According to those traditions, fairies have an androgynous appearance. They can take on any form and, in the more recent version of gender or queer fairies, can assign or switch the gender of others. In addition, to call someone a fairy is pejorative for a gay male and the combination 'fairy queen' refers to trans and/or drag identities. Queer fairies and fairy queens disclose the constructedness of gender in Butler's sense: the first by demonstrating the arbitrariness of the concepts of 'woman' and 'man' that are

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[271] Cf. Huffer 1996: 101.

de-essentialized as they become spontaneously changeable; the second by drag performances that destabilize social sex and gender expectations through cross-dressing. Walking the city in "combat boots" (Huffer 1996: 101), Brossard's *fille* (girl), that I read as a *flâneuse*, or Huffer's interpretation of it as 'fairy,' that I read as a *flâneure* – as opposed to the *flâneur*, "[l]'homme de la rue [qui] est un spécimen historique" (*FK* 138),[272] of Benjamin – is "an urban radical" (1996: 101), that translates the city *au feminin* or transforms its urban spaces into queer places.[273]

Brossard's "'écriture de combat' […] transforme la fiction dominante en […] laboratoire où l'inattendu du sens évoque l'inavouable, l'indicible" (Eibl 2004: 111).[274] Appropriating Benjamin's montage-technique, his "optics and peripatetics" (Chisholm 2005: 9), to enter the city, Brossard and Nathanaël moreover insert woman, lesbian, and queer in its discourse and, consequently, the urban body. Their subversive resignifications instigate topographies other than the (*flâneur*'s) historically reiterated patriarchal map of the city. The concept of the *flâneur* in its transformed versions of *flâneuse* or *flâneure* travels urban spaces "seeing, sensing, and staging" (Chisholm 2005: 9) the city anew:

> Montréal à tâtons, à reculons, à genou plié, fracture sur sa surface orientale de junk culturel. Fissure dans. Les balcons craquent et pourrissent. Une promenade sur la rue Ontario. L'anatomie du corps soudain se résorbe dans *l'autre*: corps urbain tout en forme de traces, de corridors (*FK* 95, my emphasis).[275]

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[272] "Pedestrian. The man in the street is a specimen of history" (*Trans.* 329).

[273] Andersen talks about "[r]esistance fighters in the urban labyrinth of Montréal" (1987: 16).

[274] "'[C]ombat writing' […] transforms dominant fiction in [a] laboratory where unexpected meaning evokes the scandalous, the unspeakable" (my translation).

[275] "Montréal by feel, forward, back, upright or crouched, Montréal fractured on its east-end surface of cultural crap. A crack across. The balconies crack and rot. The body's anatomy suddenly resolves into another, the urban anatomy of layouts and corridors" (*Trans.* 292). The phrase "Une promenade sur la rue Ontario" ("A walk on Ontario street' my translation) is left out in Claxton's translation.

The narrator of *French Kiss* "se multiplie dans un déplacement incessant" (Eibl 2004: 111),[276] in this passage staged "sur la rue Ontario" (*Trans.* 292). Her moving through the city and language constitutes a textual urban itinerary that alters the texture of the city as "the body's anatomy suddenly resolves into another, the urban anatomy" (*Trans.* 292). Space is physically and linguistically constructed and, as Eibl explains further, "le voyage intérieur de chacune des protagonistes s'inscrit dans la géographie de Montréal" (2004: 119)[277] and "ses reliefs, ses violences, rues et ruelles partageant les difficultés de circulation avec les artères, du coeur de la ville au centre de soi, cible et moteur" (*FK* 54).[278]

Similarly to *French Kiss*, the urban spaces of *Paper City* are revised by the journeys of its characters, in particular *n*'s and *b*'s: "While the city had come into *n*, *b* came into the city" (*PC* 53). The Montréal of Marielle, Camomille, and Lucy has "harsh angles, sidestreets and lanes sharing […] circulatory problems" (*Trans.* 263). As outlined before, their city stretches horizontally across the island along Sherbrooke Street with a focus on the area around *Saint-Denis*, Colonial, Bleury, and Stanley Streets as well as *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*: "[a]ller retour va et vient de l'ouest à la rue Coloniale. Montréal se *disloque*, s'avale, pilule grise et climat d'incertitude. Les rues et les boulevards pompent la suie, la boue, la slutch jusqu'à la centrale" (*FK* 127, my emphasis).[279] Its topography is revised as "Montréal comes apart" (*Trans.* 320). It "dislocates" (my translation) according to

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[276] "[M]ultiplies in continuous movement" (my translation).

[277] "[T]he inner voyage of each of the protagonists inscribes itself in the geography of Montréal" (my translation).

[278] "[I]t's contours and harsh angles, sidestreets and lanes sharing the circulatory problems with the major arteries, from the heart of the city to the epicentre of oneself, the target and motive source" (*Trans.* 263).

[279] "Return trip back and forth between the west end and Colonial Street. Montréal comes apart, is swallowed, a gray pill and climate of uncertainty. The streets and boulevards pump soot, mud, slush, all the way to Central Station" (*Trans.* 320).

the desire of women and for women, which is illustrated by the French kiss Camomille and Lucy share, "le 30 Octobre, 1973" (*FK* 87).[280]

The "'aventure dans la langue' vécue au présent" (Eibl 2004: 115)[281] of *French Kiss* is an adventure in language that blends English words and phrases into the French text (*FK* 46)[282]:

> Une fissure dans la mémoire. […] Entailler, entamer le réel/le fictif. […] Rien à avoir avec le langage. Ça n'est arrivé ni en français, ni en anglais. Pas avec des mots. Avec quoi? […] Un trou de mémoire démolisseur du temps sous la tempête du narrateur (*FK* 51-52).[283]

It thereby produces "a break in the recollection" (*Trans.* 261) and "memory blackout" (*Trans.* 261). "Not with words" (*Trans.* 261) and, as claimed in *Paper City*, "tongue-tied […] History, […] want[s] another script" (*PC* 63). This revised history is "neither in English nor in French" (*Trans.* 261), as much as *n* "was neither of one *rive* nor of the other" (*PC* 29, emphasis in original). She and *b* are *flâneures* that inscribe their stories in the streets and on the on the sheets of the paper city. They perform its (hi)story and create a city that one of them (*b*) leaves[284] early on and, eventually, both of them "cross[] themselves out of […]: rayé,e,s" (*PC* 12).[285] But they left their marks on the city. Years later, these marks are retraced and documented by the photographer *M*(ark) "for her filmic documentary, *Sodomy Ro(gu)e*" (*PC* 37, emphasis in original). Interestingly, one of the meanings of 'rogue' is that of a loner or maverick, which ties in with the *flâneur* in its initial definition as a solitary urban wanderer.

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[280] "October 30, 1973" (*Trans.* 286).
[281] "'[A]dventure in language' lived in the present" (my translation).
[282] "[I]n Inglish or in Franch" (*Trans.* 258).
[283] "But there's a break in the recollection. […] Not to pry out, expose the reality/the fiction. […] Nothing to do with language. Happened neither in English nor in French. Not with words. With what? […] Memory blackout, wrecker of time between the narrator's ears" (*Trans.* 261).
[284] Cf. *PC* 11.
[285] "[R]uled" (my translation).

Paper City unfolding into Montréal, a *French Kiss* between *n* and *b*, Lexa and *?* – these are just a few examples of my reading of Brossard and Nathanaël. As I have argued, their writings correspond on multiple levels. What both share is a "language fetish" (*PC* 29), an interest in linguistic playfulness and provocation. Both of them dismantle categorisations – in a feminist or queer sense and according to their respective generation. They cross not only linguistic and gender boundaries, but also the limits of urban space (and Montréal's divisions) as well as *genre*. The switching from French to *joual* or English in *French Kiss* and from English to French in *Paper City* are moments of discontinuity and as such occasionally stressed visually by the use of italics. Both Brossard and Nathanaël also make use of other effects in the illustration of their writing: change of font, the insertion of drawings or images, blank lines and pages, and indented paragraphs. These visual openings are another point of entry between the texts. My comparative reading, then, creates passages between the texts, connects them, and has them speak to each other. Similar to what Nathanaël herself calls her other writings, *French Kiss* and *Paper City* are best labeled *entre-genre* as they are neither (long-) poems nor novels.[286] They bear traits of both '*flâneries*' in translation and *flâneries* in 'translation': the notion of '*flânerie*' is translated *au féminin* and the practice of 'translation' is exploited to serve as a means of subversive resignification.

Ultimately, "[w]hat does it matter if the sum of one and one is two and divisible, when one disappears inside the other" (*PC* 7)? As I have outlined in this

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[286] Like many others, literary critic Rob McLennan nevertheless tries to classify the unruly text: "Paper City […] fractures the usual narrative, weaving a series of pieces into a *long poem* or a short, surrealist novel" (2004: 48, my emphasis). Zolf, for that matter, calls *Paper City* an "experimental narrative prose poem" (2004: 43).

chapter, a paired relative and completive reading of the English *Paper City* and the Québécois *French Kiss* inscribes the former in the ensemble of Anglo-Québécois literature. I have given examples of the analogies that exist on multiple levels between the texts to illustrate how Nathanaël's text belongs to (Anglo-)Québécois literature: writing and translation practices like *écriture au féminin* and *théorie/fiction*, sex, gender, and sexuality politics and, more specifically, the construction of subjectivity and urban space. As a result, I claim that the paper city takes on the form of Montréal as it emerges from a Québécois discourse: "What then of *n*'s untranslatability? [–] It didn't really matter where *n* went, her city would follow her there" (*PC* 53, emphasis in original). This is to say that even though Nathanaël as a writer resists classification, her text nevertheless performs Anglo-Québécois as it emerges from the imaginary of the lapsised dimension.

4. SUBJECTS IN TRANSLATION: *LE DÉSERT MAUVE* AND *BOTTLE ROCKET HEARTS*

Nicole Brossard's *Le désert mauve*[287] was first published in 1987. It was then translated into English and published under the title *Mauve Desert*[288] by Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood. The book cover labels the original text as "le premier roman postmoderne"[289] written in Québec.[290] Among the many scholars who have discussed Brossard's work, Sherry Simon claims that the "novel is experimental in form" (1990: 104) and Susan Holbrook states that it "represents Brossard's most explicit demonstration of the metonymic, rather than metaphoric, relations among translation, reading, and writing" (2001: 73). Brossard's text is exclusively in French and includes a "fictional translation – the fiction of a translation that is in fact a rewriting within the same language" (Simon 2006: 145) – what Simon calls a "pseudotranslation" (Simon 2006: 144) in *Translating Montréal*. It is located in the in-between "where language and reality diverge" (Wheeler 2003: 440) and reveals this space "by the process of translation" (Wheeler 2003: 440). The practice of translating from French into French

> points clearly to translation not so much as an exploration of the physical frontiers of languages and cultures – although these are still present as fictions, as metaphors, as incitations – but rather as the drive to reach the internal horizons of meaning and the consciousness or construction of reality (Knutson 1995: 12).

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[287] Cf. Brossard, Nicole. *Le désert mauve*. Montréal: Éditions de l'Hexagone 1987. Print. The edition will be quoted as *DM* in this chapter.
[288] Cf. Brossard, Nicole. *Mauve Desert*. Trans. Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood. Toronto: Coach House Books 1990. Print.
[289] "The first postmodern novel" (my translation).
[290] Cf. Parker, Alice. *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard.* New York: Peter Lang, 1998: 127. Print. For definitions of the notion of 'postmodern writing' in Québec and Canada, see subchapter 2.8.

My chapter is interested in how the constructedness of meaning and reality is dismantled during the translation process and through the interchangeability of the notions of 'writing,' 'reading,' and 'translating.'[291] For my analysis, I introduce the concept of 'coming-of-age' through translation: of the text, the subject, and the city. According to Walter Benjamin, the practice of 'translation' is "a maturing process" (Gentzler 2008: 68) and, in that sense, bears the notion of 'coming-of-age.' Both *Le désert mauve* and *Bottle Rocket Hearts* demonstrate rites of passage that parallel the coming-of-age of the individual and the text. Inherent to both coming-of-age and translation, the notion of 'transition' is, at the same time, a signifier of the lapsised dimension. Comparing Brossard's text with Zoe Whittall's *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, I create a dialogical situation similar to the practice my last chapter illustrated.

Bottle Rocket Hearts[292] was published as a 'novel' in 2007. Its French translation, which was done by Sylvie Nicolas and is entitled *Coeurs Molotov*, followed in 2009.[293] During an interview a year after the original version had come out, Whittall talked about her writing, which oscillates between *genres* of poetry and prose, and explained that for her, "one fuel[ed] the other" and that she "wr[ote] poetic prose."[294] A close look at *Bottle Rocket Hearts* confirms this: a nonlinear collage situated in-between prose, poetry, and drama, the text is

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[291] As Brossard notes in an interview: "Traduction, passage, processus de transformation sont du même ordre conceptuel. Passage de la réalité à la fiction, quand on écrit, de la fiction à la réalité, quand on lit, passage d'une langue à l'autre" (Brossard and Saint-Martin 2004: 118). ("Translation, passage, and the process of transformation are of the same conceptual order. The passage from reality to fiction in writing and from fiction to reality in reading is a passage from one language to another," my translation.)

[292] Cf. Whittall, Zoe. *Bottle Rocket Hearts.* Toronto: Cormorant Books Inc, 2007. Print. This edition will be quoted as *BRH* throughout the rest of the chapter.

[293] Cf. Whittall, Zoe. *Coeurs Molotov*. Trans. Sylvie Nicolas. Montréal: QuébecAmérique, 2009. Print.

[294] Cf. <http://12or20questions.blogspot.ca/2008/02/12-or-20-questions-with-zoe-whittall.html> (2 April 2013).

composed of the first-person narrator's non-chronological diary entries and a short play. I read the latter as a form of translation, reminiscent of the way "Brossard […] uses translation idiosyncratically" (Simon 2002a: 19). The play is a rewriting of what happens earlier in the text. The narrator becomes a reader-spectator. Whittall also investigates the in-between "where language and reality diverge" (Wheeler 2003: 440) through one of her characters, Della, who turns into "a story" (*BRH* 189) and "a fiction" (*BRH* 289) by the end of the book. While *Le désert mauve* constitutes "the fiction of a translation" (Simon 2002a: 19), *Bottle Rocket Hearts* is the fiction of a relation. It maps anglophone-francophone contact zones in Montréal as for Whitall, writing is "intrically connected [to] geography,"[295] and tracks their "internal horizons of meaning" (Knutson 1995: 12) through the relationship between the narrator/protagonist, Eve, and her partner (Della).

In this chapter, *Le désert mauve* serves as the point of reference for writing that emerges from the 'in-between,' and, in particular, as the title of my dissertation suggests, from a *dimension lapsisée*. It is an example of how, in a situation of "[t]ranslation [a]s […] relentless transaction" (Simon 2002a: 15), subjectivity is in a state of permanent revision. Besides, Brossard's text, the literary criticism dealing with it, and theoretical analyses of Brossard's writing practices in general provide a space to discuss *Bottle Rocket Hearts*. Whittall's text, though well reviewed across Canada and awarded by the *Globe and Mail* as well as *CBC* in the year of its publication and after, has not been the focus of much literary criticism yet – that is, except in interviews with Whittall that

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[295] Cf. Whitall, Zoe. *Toronto → Montréal/Montréal → Toronto: What changes when a writer changes cities?* Drawn and Quaterly, Montréal. November 2014. Reading.

oftentimes discuss her transitioning from poetry to prose and her literary production in a wider sense. To inform my critical account of *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, I hence create a transtextual connection with *Le désert mauve*, in which the fictional traits of one text become the theoretical device of analysis for the other. This reading practice is reminiscent of 'fiction/theory,' a writing practice at the border of fictional poetic and theoretical academic writing.[296] Fiction/theory crosses *genre* boundaries. To show how this practice crosses the limits of different types of writings and how it thereby reveals the limitations of categories is another aim of my dialogical reading practice. In my comparison of the two texts – one written before and the other after the turn of the millennium, and both located in the realm of the lapsised dimension – Brossard's text is used as an interpretative scheme for Whittall's writing and vice versa.

The starting point of my study is the comparability of the two texts on the levels of form, language use, and content: both Brossard and Whittall illustrate the coming-of-age of their lesbian/queer teenage first-person narrators in linguistic and cultural border zones that challenge the construction of identity and subjectivity. In both texts, code switching and translation are used to push the limits of monolithic perceptions and perceptibility. In addition, both writings redefine the boundaries of gender and *genre* as they emerge from a space of convergent cultures and competing linguistic codes – much like the one that can be found in the city of Montréal. Simon calls Brossard's translation a "pseudo-traductio[n]" (2005: 117)[297] and elaborates on this interpretation in a following publication in English that lists *Le désert mauve* as a form of "perverse

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[296] For a definition, see chapter 3.
[297] "Pseudotranslation" (Simon 2006: 144).

translation" (2006: 4). According to Simon's definition, perverse translations "take advantage of the situation" (2006: 119) of permanent cultural and linguistic encounters and "become [themselves] act[s] of creation" (Simon 2006: 120). As a translingual and transcultural practice, a perverse translation "turns away from conventional functions" (Simon 2006: 119) and "reveals an unsuspected capacity for playful creativity" (Simon 2006: 119). Apart from *Le Desert Mauve*, Simon's original list of perverse translations given in *Translating Montréal* includes the previously discussed *French Kiss* and Gail Scott's *My Paris*.[298] I am adding the Anglo-Québécois text *Bottle Rocket Hearts* to it for two reasons: first, because similar to the structure of *Le Desert Mauve*, the formal construction of Eve's coming-of-age through a circular storyline calls attention to her development and second, because I read the antagonist, Eve's girlfriend Della, as a figure of 'perverse translation.' Della modifies her own reality according to the cultural and social expectations of her interlocutors. She playfully and creatively revises the story of her life according to context and takes advantage of the in-between of languages to reposition her subjectivity. Maude Laure, the translator in *Le désert mauve*, similarly alters the subjectivity of the narrator/protagonist Mélanie and the other characters of Laure Angstelle's novella by exploring the space between languages.

Both *Le désert mauve* and *Bottle Rocket Hearts* are products of the realm of the lapsised dimension. Whittall's text illustrates Montréal at the time of the second referendum in 1995. As Simon notes, it presents "une géographie davantage reconnaissable, reprenant les vieilles histoires de division est-ouest"

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[298] For discussions of these texts, see chapters 3 and 6.

(Simon 2010: 138)[299]. On the night of the poll, the protagonist Eve "se rend à bicyclette dans un bar situé du côté est de la ville et est très consciente d'être la seule anglophone présente" (Simon 2010: 138)[300]. This setting, however, is presented as no more than the background to a storyline about love and lies. Meanwhile, a historic and a recent Montréal overlap in Whittall's book. While the narrator and most of the other personae of the text are Anglophones, one character – XXX, who is referred to as Katherine[301] at the very end of the book – "flows between French and English seamlessly, like it's all one language" (*BRH* 23). At the same time, Eve crosses the city in her role "d'un[e] protagoniste traversant[e]" (Simon 2010: 139)[302] and experiences continuous linguistic and cultural contact as she remains highly conscious of the power of the dividing line.[303] Similarly, Brossard is hyper aware of that line of difference and the de- and reconstruction of meaning, which results from the internalisation of a situation of permanent language contact and interlinguistic practices. Her narrator Mélanie switches between French and English and her meta-protagonist, the translator Maude Laures, explores the space of the in-between as a trope for Montréal's cultural topographies. Both narratives illustrate developments that are induced by their location in the borderlands of Montréal.

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[299] "[A] rather familiar geography taking up old histories of an East-West division" (my translation).
[300] "[T]akes her bike to go to a bar on the east side of the city and is very conscious of being the only anglophone there" (my translation).
[301] Cf. *BRH* 187. Katherine is an ambiguous name as it can be both English and French.
[302] "[A] traversing protagonist" (my translation).
[303] Cf. Simon, Sherry. "Montréal en marge: Le boulevard Saint-Laurent revisité." *Cultures à la dérive – cultures entre les rives. Grenzgänge zwischen Kulturen, Medien und Gattungen.* Festschrift für Ursula Moser-Mathis zum 60. Geburtstag – Festschrift offert à Ursula Moser. Eds. Doris Eibl, G. Fuchs and Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner. Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann GmbH, 2010: 133-141. Print.

Brossard's book is a tripartite text. Upon opening it, the reader enters an imaginary world of publications. As the epigraph taken from Italo Calvino notes: "*Lire, c'est aller à la rencontre d'une chose qui va exister mais dont personne ne sait encore ce qu'elle sera…*" (*DM* 7, emphasis in original).[304] This quotation, that precedes Brossard's text, directs the reader's attention to the power of language to construct reality, its performative aspect. After the first few pages of the book, which show the bibliographical and copyright notes about this '*Collection Fictions*' publication by *L'Hexagone*, there is a second front page inside the cover of the book. It announces the title "*Le désert mauve*" again, but instead of Brossard, it gives the name of a different, fictional author, Laure Angstelle. At the bottom of the page, there is the icon of an alleged publishing house called '*Éditions de l'Arroyo*'[305] rather than the hexagon of the Montréal-based publisher of Brossard's book. What follows is a 41-page-long novella in French language, which comprises nine episodes without headings and each "no longer than three pages" (Brautman 1990: 741). They tell the story of the first-person narrator and protagonist: Mélanie is a passionate and independent fifteen-year-old adolescent that loves to roam the desert of Arizona alongside the Mexican border (where the novel is set) in her mother's car, "la Meteor" (*DM* 11).[306] She is highly aware of the dangers of nature and humanity, and their hierarchies. As she points out in the very beginning of the novella: "Très jeune, je pleurais déjà

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[304] "Reading is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be…." (Calvino 1981: 72). This quote also resonates with Whittall's non-linear narration that reveals the identity of Della only at the very end. Cf. Calvino 1981.
[305] Cf. *DM* 9.
[306] Cf. "Meteor" (Trans. 11).

sur l'humanité" (*DM* 11).[307] At the bottom of the same page, she also comments on the role of men according to the way she was socialized: "Ma mère parlait toujours des hommes comme s'ils avaient vu le jour dans un livre" (*DM* 11).[308]

The only significant male character of the story actually "see[s] the day in a book" (Trans. 11). Eight numbered chapters, which legitimate his role and alternate with the non-headed (and therefore non-legitimising) sections on Mélanie, sketch him: "l'homme long" (*DM* 17),[309] a character inspired by the U.S. American physicist Robert Oppenheimer.[310] However, rather than in the chapters dedicated to him, he is mainly illustrated by a file of photographs in a dossier labeled in handwriting, "L'homme long" (*DM* 103)[311], and placed halfway through Brossard's book. The photographs show the figure of a man, his shadow, but not his face. Staying in one of the rooms of the *"Red Arrow Motel"* (*DM* 15, emphasis in original)[312], which is run by Mélanie's mother, Kathy, and her partner Lorna, longman remains an obscure menace throughout the story. Another guest of the motel is the scientist Angela Parkins. She and Mélanie meet in the on-site pool bar, which becomes a crime scene when the two women are dancing with each other one night. Their beginning love affair is violently interrupted as Angela is murdered in Mélanie's arms at the end of the novella – supposedly by longman:

> Au fond de la salle, il y a le regard impassible de l'homme long. Le désert est grand. Angela Parkins est allongée, là, exposée à tous les regards.

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[307] "Very young, I was already crying over humanity" (Trans. 11).

[308] "My mother always talked about men as if they had seen the day in a book" (Trans. 11).

[309] "Longman" (Trans. 17).

[310] In the English translation of the text, *Mauve Desert, "l'homme long"* is referred to as "longman." This name is symbolic and a reference to Oppenheimer, who was very tall. Longman shares further characteristics with Oppenheimer, for example his fascination with Sanskrit. Parker 1998: 131, 161.

[311] Cf. "Longman" (Trans. 97).

[312] Cf. Trans. 15.

Angela se dissipe dans le noir et le blanc de la réalité. Que s'est-il passé? C'était pourtant un homme de génie. *Of course Mélanie is* night teen (*DM* 50, emphasis in original).[313]

"Que s'est-il passé?" (*DM* 50) – "[w]hat happened" (Trans. 46) here, if not a patriarchal act of homophobia to maintain a "black and white reality" (Trans. 46)? The only man on the scene – "[h]e was after all a man of genius" (Trans. 46), as is cynically noted in reference to Oppenheimer and his invention of the atomic bomb – has an "impassive stare" (Trans. 46), while the woman and the lesbian (couple) are "exposed to all eyes" (Trans. 46).

"Que s'est-il passé?" (*DM* 50) – the reader of Brossard's *Le désert mauve* reencounters this question at the very end of the book, though slightly altered:

L'hom'oblong regarde devant lui, complètement détaché de la scène. Angela Parkins est allongée sur le bois blond de la piste, le corps à tout jamais inflexible, exhibé, point de mire. Mélanie, *fille de la nuit*, que s'est-il *donc* passé (*DM* 220, my emphasis)?[314]

This passage is from the third part of the text; "*Mauve, l'Horizon*" starts on page 179 of Brossard's book with yet another cover page. It announces the alleged translation of the novella presented in part one and denotes '*Éditions de l'Angle*' as its publishing house. It is the assumedly original translation of Angstelle's novella by a Montréal translator called Maude Laures. The 40-page manuscript that follows, however, is "a rewriting within the same language" (Simon 2006: 145) – French. So, "[w]hat happened" (Trans. 202) with the translation? According to Simon's reading of *Le désert mauve*, "[t]he two texts [that are presented side by side] are largely identical except for changes in nuance,

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[313] "At the far end of the room, there is longman's impassive stare. The desert is big. Angela Parkins is lying, there, exposed to all eyes. Angela is dissolving in the black and white of reality. What happened? He was after all a man of genius. Of course Mélanie is night teen" (Trans. 46).
[314] "O'blongman stares straight ahead, completely detached from the scene. Angela Parkins is stretched out on the blond wood of the dancefloor, her body forever inflexible, displayed, point of viewing. Mélanie, daughter of the night, what happened" (Trans. 202)?

intensity, [and] phrasing" (1990: 104). An example of a change in intensity in the passage quoted above is "le regard impassible" (*DM* 50)[315] of longman that becomes "complètement detaché" (*DM* 220)[316] in Maude Laures' version of the novella. The second example shows a change in phrasing: "exposée à tout les regards" (*DM* 50)[317] turns into "point de mire" (*DM* 220)[318] in "*Mauve, l'horizon*." For the rest, as Edwin Gentzler observes, "the translation is remarkably 'faithful' to the original" (2008: 62-63). For example Mélanie's conclusion, "[j]e ne peux tutoyer personne" (*DM* 51)[319], which is identically taken over by Maude Laures.[320] Wheeler provides a detailed account on the relation between the novella and its translation:

> [T]ogether these two versions offer different, but complementary angles on the story. Rather than repeat or compete with one another, each 'language' reveals itself to be adept at translating different elements of reality, an advantage that far outweighs the cost of losing certain details" (2003: 447).

Even though "the versions are strikingly similar" (Wheeler 2003: 447), as illustrated by the short passages quoted above,[321] Maude Laures' translation nevertheless shows modifications to Angstelle's novella (source text). It indicates a process of interlingual transfer, which is rendered visible by Brossard's intralingual practice.[322] The telling name of the supposed publishing house *Éditions de l'Angle* insinuates that the two novellas are two versions of the same story seen from "different […] complementary angles" (Wheeler 2003: 447).

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[315] "[I]mpassive stare" (Trans. 46).
[316] "[C]completely detached" (Trans. 202).
[317] "[E]xposed to all eyes" (Trans. 46).
[318] "[P]oint of viewing" (Trans. 202).
[319] "I cannot get close to any you" (Trans. 46).
[320] Cf. *DM* 220, Trans. 202.
[321] In both versions of the novella "sentences are terse. Some lack punctuation, having several adjectives follow each other in free association. Almost all are written in the present tense" (Brautman 1990: 741).
[322] Cf. Wilson 2007: 392.

Brossard hence creates an "instance of self-translation, *en abyme*" (Wilson 2007: 391-392, emphasis in original) in *Le désert mauve,* where "the translation exists alongside the original" (Giacoppe 2004: 132). By isolating the moment of linguistic transfer from the translation process, she points to the performative aspect of each individual language and "celebrates language's inherent heterogeneity" (Gentzler 2008: 63) as she shows different versions of the same story. The act of translation becomes a metaphor and, according to Myriam Suchet, reveals a "potentiel d'étrangement interne à la langue."[323] It renders visible the semantic layers that exist within one linguistic code. As regards the interlingual transfer associated with the notion of 'translation' in general and the role of translation in the particular situation of linguistic conflict between French and English in Québec, "[l]a dichotomie anglais/français est ainsi déjouée par la scission interne au français".[324] Brossard shifts the focus from an intercultural to a transcultural translation practice. The limits of language are questioned. English is not the target language in this experiment of and about translation. It enters both French novellas – the said original and its translation – on another level, namely through code switching "from French to English" (Brautman 1990: 741). English is an integral part of the original French (source) text[325] and the repetition of the novella in the same language questions its authenticity. The copy shows "investigations of textuality and subjectivity"

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[323] "[I]ntra-lingual potential for estrangement" (my translation). Cf. <http://nt2.uqam.ca/en/cahiers-virtuels/article/traduire-du-francais-au-francais-proposition-pour-un-comparatisme#note22 > (20 August 2013).

[324] "[T]he English/French dichotomy is hence foiled by the internal disruption of French" (my translation). Cf. <http://nt2.uqam.ca/en/cahiers-virtuels/article/traduire-du-francais-au-francais-proposition-pour-un-comparatisme#note22> (20 August 2013).

[325] In the quotes above an English phrase is integrated in French 'in translation': "*Of course Mélanie is* night teen" (*DM* 50, emphasis in original) becomes "Mélanie, *fille de la nuit*, que s'est-il donc passé (*DM* 220, my emphasis).

(Simon 1990: 103) that repeat the original in a modified way. As Monica Giacoppe observes, "translator and text are both changed in the process" (2004: 137) of this transfer. *Le désert mauve* is a coming-of-age text on multiple levels: within each of the two novellas Mélanie evolves from teenager to young adult; "*Le désert mauve*" progresses to "*Mauve, l'horizon*"; and the character of Laure Angstelle, the "meta-author" (Wheeler 2003: 441) of the novella "*Le désert mauve*," is shifted to the fictional translator, Maude Laures. The latter modification shows in the movement of the first name 'Laure' towards the surname 'Laures.' The two titles – of the novella and its translation – demonstrate a similar development: the adjective '*mauve*' qualifies first the colour of the desert and then that of the horizon. This shift from 'desert' to 'horizon' illustrates that "[t]he translated text is […] displacement" (Simon, 1990: 104).

Part two of Brossard's book[326] elaborates more closely on this displacement and outlines "the process of […] meta-translation by Maude Laures" (Wheeler 2003: 443). "*Un livre à traduire*"[327] is a fiction theory. It is a fiction about the quotidian life of a translator and it theorises her practice of translation. Set in Montréal, the story presents a young woman who discovers Laure Angstelle's book, "*Le désert mauve*," in a Montréal bookstore, reads it, and decides to translate it – "[e]lle ne saura jamais pourquoi" (*DM* 55).[328] As she gets obsessed with the multiple possibilities of reading, interpreting, and rewriting the novella, she closely examines each of its "[l]ieux et objets,"

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[326] The division of the sections of Brossard's text are interpreted differently in Hotte, Lucie. "La partie et le tout: fragmentation et union dans *Le Désert mauve* de Nicole Brossard," *Littératures* 11 (1993): 53-66. Print.
[327] "A book to translate" (Trans. 49).
[328] "She will never know why" (Trans. 51).

"[p]ersonnages," and "[d]imensions" (*DM* 221).[329] Facing the difficulties of translating the story, Maude Laures even simulates an interview with Laure Angstelle in one of the imaginary "[s]cènes" (*DM* 221)[330] she stages to better understand the characters and their relationships to each other. Her translated versions of the personae are based on what she read about them in Angstelle's text. They are the copy of an original that is fiction. What they perform in the staged scenes is the reading and interpretation of this fiction by Maude Laures. "*Un livre à traduire (suite)*,"[331] then, describes the process of finalizing the translation work. Apart from going through practical notes like "au bas de la page **éliminer tous les** *comme* **si possible**" (*DM* 169, emphasis in original),[332] Maude Laures also comments on the revision of the text as a whole. When she had first found Angstelle's novella, it was "en somme […] *innocent*" (*DM* 55, emphasis in original).[333] Now, she speaks of a displacement "du livre *innocent* au livre traduit" (*DM* 178, emphasis in original)[334] and implies that the translation is a revised version of the original.

With 124 pages overall, the dual translational and transitional middle part of Brossard's *Le désert mauve* is substantially longer than both the novella and its translation together. It illuminates the layers of complexity that are inherent to the hermetic system of one individual language and – on a symbolic level – explores the in-between of disparate linguistic structures, socio-cultural meanings, and their patterns of construction. The double section on Maude

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[329] "Places and Things," "Characters," "Dimensions" (Trans. 7).
[330] "Scenes" (Trans. 7).
[331] "A Book to Translate (continued)" (Trans. 151).
[332] "[A]t the bottom of the page ELIMINATE ALL the *like(s) IF POSSIBLE*" (Trans. 153, emphasis in original).
[333] "All […] was *innocent*" (Trans. 51, emphasis in original).
[334] "[I]n moving from the *innocent* book to the translated book" (Trans. 162, emphasis in original).

Laures also highlights the meticulous labour of "the translato[r] who bridge[s] the gaps" (Wheeler 2003: 449) between systems of understanding and organising meaning. As Gentzler points out:

> Rather than focus the novel on the source text and target texts […], Brossard attempts to expand [the] middle space […] the in-between space when one is thinking not in one language or the other [and which] represents the space of the translator" (2008: 64).

Brossard accentuates the fact that there really is no transfer of an original text into another language. What she illustrates is the "process of constructing meaning in the activity of transformation, a mode of performance" (Godard 1989: 46), which exposes the cultural coding inherent to linguistic expression. Holbrook argues that "Maude Laures's unstable citation, or 'repetition with change, of Angstelle's novella […] agitates signification'" (2001: 82). The way Laures comes to terms with the fact that a signifier most often signifies a variety of meanings, is described in the following passage of "*Un livre à traduire (suite)*":

> Dans la marge, il n'y avait plus d'espace et Maude Laures se mit à cocher d'autres mots qui pourraient dans sa langue relancer le sens et lui éviter d'affronter la fin brutale d'Angela Parkins (*Le DM* 175).[335]

This quotation also exemplifies the authority of the translator: translators can control, alter, and redirect ("restar[t]" Trans. 159) meaning. In the process of becoming the copy of an assumed original, translation exploits resignification. It thereby "becomes an integral part in the creation, embodiment, and voicing of power and meaning" (Wheeler 2003: 443). Eventually, translating and writing are considered the same. Brossard's experiment is "a doubled, transformational activity, calling for translation which is also 'transformance'" (Homel and Simon

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[335] "There was no more space in the margin so Maude Laure started ticking off other words that could in her language get meaning restarted and spare her from facing Angela Parkins' brutal end" (Trans. 159).

1988: 44) – performance within the act of translation.[336] *Le désert mauve* presents writing as translation and translation as writing. Translation creates alternative discourses and is a means not only of interlingual mediation but also of intracultural expression. Following Godard, "transcoding and transformatio[n] is a topos in feminist discourse" (Godard 1989: 45). This is why I read the interdiscursive translation in *Le désert mauve* not only as an instance of *théorie/fiction*, but also as a manifestation of *écriture au féminin*. Its translation is "a proprietorship for women's writing" (Wheeler 2003: 426) and according to Parker, who takes this thought a step further, it "can be read as allegorizing lesbian subjectivity" (Parker in Giacoppe 2004: 136).

Moreover, Brossard's *Le désert mauve* engages in the notion of 'translatability,' which is at the core of Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator;"[337] from one con-text to the other "transfer can never be total" (1969: 75), Benjamin claims. Maude Laures seems highly aware of her task. When she starts with her translation in the beginning of December, she is looking for "l'envers des mots, avec un peu d'affolement" (*DM* 63)[338]. She knows that there is an "element that does not lend itself to translation" (Benjamin 1969: 75) and tries to conquer it. Her aim is to "[i]ndirectement *faire valoir le passage* dans sa langue" (*DM* 63, emphasis in original)[339] and make use of the "glissement" (*DM* 63)[340] that happens in the translation process. The alleged translated version of "*Le désert mauve*," which is entitled "*Mauve, l'horizon*," shows this slippage – in

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[336] "This writing process might be calles 'transformance,' to emphasize the work of translationand the focus on constructing meaning, which is a mode of performance" (Homel and Simon 1988: 50).

[337] Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hanna Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. 69-82. Print.

[338] "[T]he wrong side of words, with a hint of panic" (Trans. 59).

[339] "Indirectly *highlight the passage* into her language" (Trans. 59, emphasis in original).

[340] "[T]he slippage" (Trans. 59)

the title and through other deviations, including the retouching of the final scene which "lui [Laures] paraissait trop cruelle" (*DM* 63).[341] It moreover demonstrates that "while content and language form a certain unity in the original, the language of the translation envelops its content" (Benjamin 1969: 75). In *Le désert mauve*, this discrepancy between source and target texts shows, for instance, in the transformation of longman's name in the translation from French to French (and – in Claxton's translation – from English to English): Laures turns what is '*l'homme long*' in Angstelle's text into '*l'hom'oblong*' in her (pseudo)translation.[342] The name of '*l'homme long*' is thereby wrapped in a layer of the extra vowel 'o' and consonant 'b'. '*L'hom'oblong*' remains phonetically similar the original, but an effect of 'enveloping' is attained through the additional syllable that results from this modification. In '*homme long*' the relation between signifier and signified is direct: the name describes a long, or rather, tall man (in reference to Oppenheimer). Its translation as '*oblong*,' however, means 'longish' and the interruption that happens during the linguistic transfer is indicated by the apostrophe that divides the word as a whole and truncates the part '*homme*.'

Benjamin classifies translations as the original's afterlife rather than as a faithful copy into another linguistic code and context. According to his essay on literary translation, there is an "intended effect" (Benjamin 1969: 76) in writing that is to be transferred from the original to the target language. This intention "produces in [the latter] the echo of the original" (Benjamin 1969: 76). In the case of the example of the name 'longman,' the intended effect is the description of a man who has a tall longish body. Its translation, '*l'hom'oblong*,' echoes

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[341] "[S]eemed too cruel […] to her" (Trans. 59).
[342] Sherry Simon (2006) calls Brossard's *Le Désert Mauve* a pseudotranslation, when she adds it to her list of perverse translations.

'*l'homme long*.' (This effect is reproduced in Lotbinière-Harwood's English translation of what she first translated as 'longman' into 'o'blongman.') The middle part of Brossard's book largely describes the quest of the imaginary translator, Maude Laures, to find Laure Angstelle's intentions in writing the novella "*Le désert mauve*." The notebook-like double section reveals the central ideas of the source text as well as her strategies of derivation for the translation. In this section, Angstelle's novel is being studied from Laures' perspective and a number of extracted symbolic features and ideas are further analysed. It is these symbols that, ultimately, resonate in "*Mauve, l'horizon*." At the beginning of the translational process, for example, Laures asks herself if she could translate the text "sans confondre l'horizon et le désert" (*DM* 58).[343] The interpretational aspect of her translation shows in the comparison of the following passages. The colour mauve plays a crucial role in the development of the link between desert and horizon as both settings and symbols:

> Puis ce fut *le mauve de l'aube*, *le désert* et la route comme un profil sanglant. Il y a des mémoires pour creuser les mots sans souiller les tombes. Je ne peux tutoyer personne (*DM* 51, my emphasis)[344].

Eventually the notion of the colour mauve shifts from the original, where it suggested daybreak in the desert, to the broader spectrum of the horizon:

> Puis ce fut le profil menaçant de toute chose. Puis l'aube, le désert et *mauve, l'horizon*. Il y a des mémoires pour creuser les mots sans soullier les tombes. Je ne peux tutoyer personne (*DM* 220, my emphasis)[345].

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[343] "[W]ithout confusing the horizon and the desert" (Trans. 54).
[344] "Then came *the mauve of dawn, the desert* and the road like a bloody profile. There are memories for digging into words without defiling graves. I cannot get close to any you" (Trans. 46, my emphasis).
[345] "Then came the threatening profile of every thing. Then dawn, the desert and *mauve, the horizon*. There are memories for digging into words without defiling graves. I cannot get close to any you" (Trans. 202, my emphasis).

As the horizon becomes the vanishing point of the desert, Maude Laures'
translation of Laure Angstelle's original text becomes its afterlife.

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, Brossard's writing strategy in *Le
désert mauve* aims "to reach the internal *horizons* of meaning" (Knutson 1995:
12, my emphasis). On a mundane level, the horizon embodies the space in-
between Earth and sky. '*L'horizon*' is that ever shifting contour of land toward
which Mélanie races in her mother's car at dusk and dawn. As Susan Holbrook
claims, "[s]uggestively in flux, shifting with vantage point and atmosphere, [...]
the figure of the horizon takes on the rhetorical significance [...] of a permeable
line between reality and fiction" (2001: 81-82). In an interview with Beverly Daurio
in 1998, Brossard states: "The horizon has always been important for me. I like
open spaces, and the horizon is always open. It can be frightening, because we
don't know where it ends, but you can project on it whatever you want" (46). The
notion of 'horizons of meaning,' hence, is that of an open space – an *entre-deux*
that allows for endless semantic possibilities through projections and revisions.
On a metaphoric level, '*l'horizon*' emerges as a highly invested term in
Brossard's text: from a simple, though prominent concept in Angstelle, it
undergoes a resignification through the fictional translator Laures' reading and
interpretations. In the end, it is even incorporated into the title of the
(pseudo)translation, "*Mauve, l'horizon*."[346] According to Holbrook, the
development of the term horizon emphasises its role in the text: it becomes a
space of translation or, rather, for perverse translation. Brossard's mauve-
coloured horizon is an in-between zone comparable to that of Anzaldúa's

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[346] Cf. Holbrook, Susan: "Delirium and Desire in Nicole Brossard's *Le Désert Mauve/Mauve
Desert*." *Differences: A journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 12.2 (2001): 70-85. Print.

borderlands. It stands for the lapsised dimension and provides the space for reconnotation and re-invention. This is what is appealing for Mélanie and why she wants to reach it and repeatedly takes the *Meteor* to drive toward it.

In *Le désert mauve*, subjectivity is constructed along various levels of border consciousness. The construction of a third space makes the desertscape of Arizona in general, and the mauve horizon in particular, a site of lesbian imag(in)ing, as Alice Parker claims.[347] Brossard construes Mélanie and Laures' subjectivity within this imagined space and its productive (in)-between. She chooses to, "as Butler would say 'enact' [...] a *lesbian* emotion and utopian vision" (Parker 1998: 12, emphasis in original) and creates the notion of "other places" (Fellner 2006: 75). As Parker concludes: "If the project for a [radical] lesbian-feminist writer is to 'reinvent the world,' Nicole Brossard's mauve horizon may be the ideal polysemic space from which to work" (1998: 150).

As the writer states in an interview:

For me, it meant translating myself from French to French. It's the same story, written with different words […]. This book is all about my fascination for translation [...]. In *Mauve Desert*, the fictional translator (me, the author) makes mistakes so that I can allow myself to make slight changes. […] [I]n the *fictional translation*, I had to take a different posture" (Brossard quoted in Wilson 2007: 392, my emphasis).

The middle part of the book describes the taking of this posture and "presents itself as a work enacting the process of translation" (Simon 2006: 144). As a whole, *Le désert mauve* "reproduces the effects of translation" (Simon 2006: 145), notably by way of the "subtle differences in rhythm and vocabulary" (Simon 2006: 145) that can be found when moving between parts one and three. For example, Laure Angstelle's introductory phrase "[t]rès jeune, je *pleurais* déjà sur

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[347] Cf. Parker, Alice. *Liminal Visions of Nicole Brossard.* New York: Peter Lang, 1998: 131. Print.

l'humanité" (*DM* 11, my emphasis)[348] is reproduced as follows in Maude Laures'

publication: "Très jeune, je *désespérais* déjà de l'humanité" (*DM* 181, my

emphasis).[349] It reiterates the notion of crying as desperation and changes the

wording according to a conceptual shift. The notion of desperation precedes

that of crying; it is more generic. As such, it illustrates Laures' technique of

tempering Angstelle's text. As David Homel puts it, "*Mauve, l'horizon*" is a "kind

of re-writing which at the same time creates difference" (Homel and Simon in

Giacoppe 2004: 137). The "continual *dérive* of meaning which occurs with the

passage across languages" (Simon 2006: 145, emphasis in original) is

juxtaposed with "Brossard's reluctance to actually include English" (Simon 2006:

145) words and phrases in her text. The novella "*Le désert mauve*" is set in the

American Southwest. This suggests that it is already in translation – French, from

an original in English – as topographically, the setting is anglophone: Arizona at

the border to Mexico (hence the few Spanish insertions in the text). The part in

which the translational process of Brossard's novel takes place is set in

Montréal. This choice of location underlines the text's hybridity: the two

protagonists of *Le désert mauve*, Mélanie and Maude Laures, stage a

transnational encounter between anglophone North America and francophone

Québec. This contact is emphasised by Brossard's use of linguistic loans and

code switching that is reminiscent of quotidian language use in Montréal.[350] As

Simon argues, translation is oftentimes rendered redundant in the multilingual

French and English context of the city and "functions as a complement to the

original, rather than as its duplicate or substitution" (Wilson 2007: 392).

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[348] "Very young, I was already *crying* over humanity" (Trans. 11, my emphasis).
[349] "Very young, I was already *despairing* over humanity" (Trans. 167, my emphasis).
[350] For an interpretation of language practices in Montréal, see Simon 2006.

Giacoppe seconds this observation: "Brossard sees the translation in this novel as existing in a complementary relationship with the original" (2004: 132). Together, both versions, *Le désert mauve* and *Mauve, l'horizon* are tangential to a supposed core meaning or essence, which is dismantled to come into existence only through these writings.[351]

ZOE WHITALL'S *BOTTLE ROCKET HEARTS*

Whittall's *Bottle Rocket Hearts* tells the story of a fictional relationship. It recounts the time span of roughly two years in the life of the anglophone young adult first-person narrator Eve at the time she is dating the older bilingual francophone *mythomane* tomboy Della. The story starts at the waiting room of the Montréal General Hospital in December 1996. Eve and her gay roommate Seven are waiting to get news on what happened to Della the night before. They are sitting in the psych ward like "kids scared of what [they] don't know" (*BRH* 1). Eve "hasn't kept a diary since grade seven" (*BRH* 2) and claims that she only started to do so again after her other roommate, Rachel,[352] got fatally attacked in the street because she was lesbian. Now, Eve notes down in her journal: "I'm about to turn twenty-one" (*BRH* 3). What follows in the next chapters of the book are nineteen diary entries that actually start in February 1995, before Rachel's death, and that document events up to the situation at the hospital. Some of

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[351] Cf. The notion of 'pure language' in Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" (1969). I thereby challenge Giacoppe's claim that "Benjamin's theory of 'pure language' and Brossard's (idealized) vision of translation are controversial" (2004: 135). Cf. Giacoppe, Monika. "'The Task of the Translator' in Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Brossard's *Mauve Desert*." *Bucknell Review: Translation and Culture.* 47.1 (2004): 124-138. Print.

[352] Cf. "Since her death, I've been journaling like mad" (*BRH* 2).

them have headlines ("Cold, Cold Hearts" 1, "This is an Orange" 9, "Run Into Summer Like" 43, "My Canada Includes You" 46, "Bunch of Fucking Feminists" 79, "T-Cell Giant" 100, "Montreal Gazette" 123, "My Body is a Battlefield and It Wants Cracker Jacks" 137, "Little Spleens of Truth" 149) or are divided into sections that have their own titles ("Blue Black Slugs" 33, "Fifty Point Six Percent No/n" 70, "High Score – 1995" 87, "Don't Cha Think?" 88, "Kick Them in the Knees and They'll Go Down Faster" 111, "Everybody is HIV+" 125, "Bash Back" 162, "Vegan Soup of the Day" 177, "The Size of the Province" 184). The chapter entitled "Seven's Play" (*BRH* 168) towards the end of the book describes the events around Rachel's death from the perspective of her roommates. Seven performs on stage, accompanied by photographic and filmic scenes he has collected of Rachel, himself, Eve, and Della. There are brief speeches by actors he assigned the roles of family members and friends of Rachel's. The piece is a collage in homage to Rachel. Eve is both part of it (Seven announces: "Eve is my roommate" *BRH* 171) and its spectator at the same time: "I am nervous for Seven's premier. Worried that it will be horrible and I'll have to lie. I don't know what to expect" (*BRH* 169). At the end of the performance, however, she can only be proud of her friend.

Bottle Rocket Hearts is a text composed of other texts. On the surface level, it is a collection of diary entries, including the episode on Seven's play, that are arranged in circular order. They reach from February, May, October, and December 1995 to March and September 1996 – a period in which Eve moves from her parents' place in Dorval in the West Island to the shared apartment on "Ave de Esplanade" (*BRH* 47, sic) in Montréal's Mile End, studies at the Arts

Department of Concordia University, and meets Della. Set at the time of the 1995 referendum for Québec's sovereignty, the plot not only covers the coming-out and coming-of-age stories of Eve and her friends as well as the story of Eve's experimental mainly non-exclusive and, ultimately, failing relationship, but also addresses issues like the HIV/AIDS epidemic and homophobia. The possible splitting of Québec from Canada is omnipresent, but not the central topic of the text. Montréal's urban topography appears connected to the separatist movement: "It seems no one in the west is worried about bombs, only the impending fear that if Quebec separates, we'll [the anglophone community Eve comes from] be forced to move to Cornwall or Kingston" (*BRH* 39). This kind of discourse on an impending exodus of Anglophones from an independent Québec nation to Canada is compatible with the chronological setting of the narrative. On an intertextual level, *Bottle Rocket Hearts* evokes contemporary Anglo-Québécois literature and Montréal popular culture. It also refers to Feminist and Queer Studies, as Eve notes:

> When my textbooks are open on my lap, trudging through *Foucault* or *Butler*, reading the same sentence over and over again, wondering if I'm secretly mentally retarded and no one ever bothered to tell me, I pick up a pen (*BRH* 14, my emphasis).

In another passage, Eve directly refers to her reading of Gail Scott's book *Heroine*, published in 1987: "I'm halfway through *Heroine* by Gail Scott. It's changed the way I read" (*BRH* 111, my emphasis). Similar to *Heroine*, *Bottle Rocket Hearts* is a reflection on the concept of 'relationship' and discusses monogamy, jealousy, and insecurity. Whereas Scott's narrator is getting over her ex lover and exploring her sexuality in the midst of the preparations for the 1980 referendum, Whittall's protagonist is in an "ultra postmodern relationship" (*BRH*

14) with "[n]o definitions" (*BRH* 13). Chapters five and six of the book explicitly deal with the second referendum in reference to this bicultural relationship and Eve's relation to her province: "I have always lived in Quebec. Still, Quebec feels like my estranged cousin" (*BRH* 4).

On the one hand, Whittall relies and plays on Montréal's collective narrative of a divided city and, by repeating its patterns of opposition, inscribes *Bottle Rocket Hearts* in it. Eve grew up in the West Island, a traditionally homogenously anglophone Montréal community. After leaving home, she stops helping out at her father's music store in the West End and starts working in an organic food store called "Santé" (*BRH* 177), which is located right on the city's historical line of separation, *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*. From the time Eve begins living on Esplanade, she mainly roams the neighbourhoods of the Mile End, the McGill Ghetto, and the area around "St-Laurent Metro" (*BRH* 15). The only reason why she would go east is to party in the Village or to see Della, who lives on "Cartier Avenue" (*BRH* 16) which is "in the east end of the city, where Papineau and Ontario Street intersect" (*BRH* 12). Before dating Della, she had been in this neighbourhood only "once, to get [her] tongue pierced while playing hooky during a grade nine field trip" (*BRH* 13). From Della's apartment, "[h]ome is about three bus rides west to [her] parents' house" (*BRH* 12). Eve's mother and father come from an English speaking Mennonite community: "the Mennos almost ruined her [the mother's] life path" (*BRH* 132). She is federalist and against Québec's wish to separate from Canada: "'Fucking Bill 101!' she yelled at the radio while I [Eve] was in my car seat" (*BRH* 55). Eve's father adds to this: "English people have no rights anymore […] [and] defiantly put[s] English signs in

the window of his store with sloppy paint" (*BRH* 55). Eve's anglophone friend Jenny tells Eve "to vote No unless [she is] 'totally retarded or brainwashed by the girlfriend'" (*BRH* 55). Della, of course, is in favour of a Québec nation:

> She was raised in a small town near Quebec City by a French father and an English mother. […] Only after her mother's death did her father take up separatism like a religious zealot. Della went along for the ride, despite her eventual Concordia arts degree, her fluency in English, her place in both communities" (*BRH* 55-56).

Eve's aunt Bev refers to Della as ""the separatist'" (*BRH* 58). Della's longing for an independent Québec follows her all the time: "She dreamt every night this week that she gave birth to Québec, a tiny baby. Healthy and smiling" (*BRH* 59). Bev, in contrast, is against a separation: "We're [Canada] going to win! We have to" (*BRH* 60). What is more, she "refuses to speak French when she buys cigarettes at my [Eve's] corner store" (*BRH* 57) and does not understand "how [Eve] live[d] in the east end" (*BRH* 57) as she believes that "[p]eople are so goddamn fucking rude" (*BRH* 57) there.

On the other hand, *Bottle Rocket Hearts* historicises the events around the referendum from a personal perspective. Materialised by the vote, Montréal's past divisions become fixed to a moment in the city's recent history. They cease to self-perpetuate and are blurred by the multilingual English and French speaking characters in Whittall's text. Della's ex-girlfriend XXXX (Katherine), for example, "has a French mother and an English father, only her mother was more assimilated into English culture, because her father was old money from Westmount" (*BRH* 23). When she speaks with Della, most of the time she does so in French: "XXXX began to swear in French" (*BRH* 23). Yet, she switches

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between languages with apparent ease.[353] She challenges Eve's politics and protects Della: "'She's [Della] so passionate about Quebec, it's like everyone English is an enemy.' […] 'Why haven't you learned to speak French any better than you do?'" (*BRH* 67). The fact that Della is "English, too" (*BRH* 67) demonstrates that things are more complex than the traditional polarising anglophone-francophone discourses of Montréal media, popular culture, and literature suggest. Eve takes position between her family and her partner. As for the referendum, she is "not sure exactly what [she] hope[s] will happen" and "feel[s] panic" (*BRH* 61). The only English-speaking individual at "SKY, a queer bar on Ste-Catherine's" (*BRH* 63),[354] Eve spends the night of the referendum with Della and her sovereignist francophone friends: "The room is warm and inviting and I don't feel unwelcome at all even though I definitely feel a little like an imposter, like I have a neon sign across my chest that says SPY" (*BRH* 64, emphasis in original). At the end of the night and with the very close but definite *No* to the separation of Québec from Canada as well as "les remarques explosives et autodestructrices de Jacques Parizeau" (Simon 2010: 138),[355] things between Eve and Della get tense. Della's brother, however, mediates:

> 'We're Quebecers!' Eric whispers to me, 'You don't have to look scared, Eve. We disagree, and we talk about things, we drink!' He clinks his glass against mine and smiles wide. I take a breathless sip of beer and think, *fuck the two solitudes bullshit* (*BRH* 65, emphasis in original).

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[353] Cf. *BRH* 23.

[354] Cf. "People start to stare. I'm definitely the only anglo in the bar. I switch to French" (*BRH* 66).

[355] "Jacques Parizeau's explosive and autodestructive comments" (my translation).

Although *Bottle Rocket Hearts* is not what Schwartzwald would call a post-linguistic text,[356] it does mark a shift in literary practices that emerge from the in-between of Montréal's lapsised dimension.

In *Translating Montréal,* Simon pinpoints one of Montréal's contact zones to the neighbourhood where Eve's apartment is located on *Avenue de l'Esplanade*:

> Mile End and other hybrid communities are zones where […] new kinds of citizenship are being developed. Multilingualism, *mixed languages, and code-switching* are preferred modes of communication, forms of translation specific to its polyglot sensibility (2006: 10, my emphasis).

According to Simon, the Quiet Revolution and the socio-political and economic developments subsequent to the referenda gave rise to "*cultural crossovers* of all kinds" (2006: 10, my emphasis) including "[i]nformal language practices" (2006: 10). An example of this can be found in the following quotation:

> "I voted no." [Seven] says quickly, with an unapologetic shrug before downing the shot of dark green herbal sludge. "Why?" "It's not my revolution. It's not going to change anything for queers. It might even make everything worse." […] "Seven, have you ever been in love?" "Sure. *Tonnes* of times. Every Friday night at the bathhouse." "No, like real love, like The One. Like the person you'd take a bullet for." "Eve, you're so dramatic! That kind of love is fiction" (*BRH* 78, my emphasis).

Whereas in standard English, 'many times' would be denoted as 'tons of times,' here, the French spelling, or even noun – '*tonnes*' – has been adopted. This is just one example of the existing collaborative and dynamic language realities in Montréal. Another error on the level of orthography can be found in the toponym of "Ave de Esplanade" (*BRH* 47, sic), which is actually '*Ave de l'Esplanade*' – a street running north-south, between *Rue Jeanne-Mance* and *Rue St-Urbain* in the Mile End, two blocks east of *Avenue du Parc*. The omission of the 'l' actually

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[356] Cf. chapter 4 and Schwartzwald 2013.

renders the name unpronounceable and is grammatically incorrect as it truncates the partitive article.

Whittall's first-person narrator and other personae repeatedly speak in translation, use borrowings or do code switching, and produce translinguistic errors. For instance, at referendum night, as Eve observes her former teacher: "Isabelle says, *in French*, 'Easy Della, you've had a lot to drink" (*BRH* 66, my emphasis), she notices that "Isabelle has no discernable accent in French *or* English" (*BRH* 66, my emphasis). Eve narrates the situation in English, however, and makes a meta-comment on the fact that Isabelle is actually speaking in French. This means that Eve has offered a translation. Yet, just before Isabelle's remark, Della "[i]n French […] snaps at her [Eve] for not being committed to the cause [the vote]" (*BRH* 66). To this, Eve notes that "[s]he hardly ever speaks in French to [her] since she knows [she's] not totally fluent" (*BRH* 66). A moment later in the same episode, "Mado is yelling something funny, everyone laughs except me [Eve] because I don't catch the meaning" (*BRH* 66). This confirms Eve's troubles with understanding[357] – and, for that matter, speaking[358] – French, even though she later on takes "second-level French" (*BRH* 83) classes. The fact that Eve comes from an anglophone background is underlined by her comments on the differences between the English of Montréal and its suburbs: "Why did I use party as a verb? God. The vernacular of Dorval was going to give me away as very uncool" (*BRH* 50). Besides Eve, whom Della sometimes calls "Evie" (*BRH 27*) but whose name is never spelt with an accent, most of the characters of the text have English names: Seven, whose actual name is "Stephen" (*BRH*

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[357] Cf. also "Strangers speculate, talking in fast French that I don't catch all of" (*BRH* 34).
[358] "'I get shy. I sound stupid'" (*BRH* 67).

122), Rachel, Jenny, and Dave, who "speaks French with a horrible Toronto private school accent" (*BRH* 57), to name but a few. At the same time, code switching and the incorporation of signifiers for typically Montréal or Québécois realities are a current, though unstable practice in Whittall's text.

Street names are usually referred to in English ("Papineau and Ontario Street" *BRH* 12, "Bagg Street" *BRH* 49, "Pine Avenue" *BRH* 63, "St. Catherines street" *BRH* 80, "St-Dominique Street" *BRH* 123, etc) with the ambiguous exception of *St-Laurent*.[359] Eve also uses "Rive Sud" (*BRH* 18) rather than 'South Shore.' While she refers to the subway as "Metro" (*BRH* 4) and eats "tofu-*tortière*" (*BRH* 10, my emphasis, sic)[360] in the beginning of the story, she sometimes uses "corner store" (*BRH* 66, 73) and at other times the French '*dépanneur*': "Slipping on my sneakers, tuque and hoody over my sleepy shirt and pj bottoms, I scuffle down the stairs counting change in my open palm, enough to get cream at the *dep*" (*BRH* 142, my emphasis).[361] 'Dep' is the anglicised version of *dépanneur* used in Montréal. Generally, anglophone and francophone imaginaries and references are mixed in *Bottle Rocket Hearts*. Della oftentimes switches from English to French within a phrase, like in: "*Hostie collis* […] [a]re you okay'" (*BRH* 33, my emphasis)[362] and "'I'm going to try, bébé'" (*BRH* 81, my emphasis)[363]; or jumping from one sentence to another: "Della

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[359] Cf. *BRH* 41. *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* is referred to in English as either St-Laurent Boulevard or St. Lawrence Blvd.

[360] "Pseudo-tortière" (*BRH* 28, sic). '*Tourtière*' is a traditional Québec meat pie, usually made with porc and served during the holidays.

[361] While 'Rive-sud' would take a hyphen in its French version, both 'métro' as well as 'dép' would take an *accent aigu*. The French noun 'dépanneur' is rooted in the verb 'dépanner,' to help out.

[362] '*Hostie*' and '*collis*' are Québécois swearwords. The habit of using religious terms as swearwords – '*hostie*' means 'host' and '*collis*' is a variation of '*câlice*' (chalice) – dates back to the Quiet Revolution.

[363] "[B]aby" (my translation).

explained to XXXX, in French, that we'd left our keys in the apartment, we were freezing our asses off, *est-ce qu'on peût fumer a l'interieur*" (*BRH* 20, emphasis in original, sic).[364] But also other characters switch between languages or speak in French-coloured English, like Seven: "'Eve *hostie*!!'" (*BRH* 182, my emphasis) or Eve herself: "[M]y interest *has piqued* and descended" (*BRH* 34, my emphasis)[365]. While Eve's interest rather 'peaked' before it declined, it had also been 'piqued' before. The English and French homographs 'to pique' and '*pique(-r)*' as in 'to arouse someone's interest' are confused here with their English homonym 'to peak' in the sense of 'to culminate.'

The linguistic errors that surface in the French phrases of *Bottle Rocket Hearts* are made by both Anglophones and (bilingual) Francophones. They reflect the "in-between culture" (Simon 2006: 8) and hybridisation Simon discusses in her chapter on the Mile End in *Translating Montreal*. When Della calls Eve to ask her to come to Sky Bar on the night of the referendum, for example, she says: "Vien ici, *je te manques*" (*BRH* 62, my emphasis, sic)[366]. Whereas in the first part of the phrase the verb '*venir*' is missing an -s in its imperative form '*viens*' ('come here'), the second part designating 'I miss you,' should be '*tu me manques*' in French. Apart from the wrong verb form ('*manquer*' belongs to the first group of French verbs ending, in -er, and should be '*je manque*' without an -s in the first person), the confusion of personal pronouns is a flagrant error, as Sherry Simon remarks in her article "Montréal en

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[364] "[A]re we allowed to smoke inside" (my translation)?
[365] The verbs 'to pique' and 'to peak' are confused here because of the French '*piquer*' (to pique). While, in English, 'to pique someone's interest' and 'something piques somenone's interest' are both grammatical, the auxiliary 'was' used in the quote indicates confusion with the French verb.
[366] "Come here, I miss you" (my translation).

marge: Le boulevard Saint-Laurent revisité."[367] It is not the only one. In another episode, Eve is walking on the Main and sees a group of girls dancing like the Spice Girls. One of them reacts to her staring at them: "'Eh, *Que-est ce* que tu veux *la*?'" (*BRH* 110, my emphasis, sic).[368] This phrase contains several spelling mistakes ('*Qu'est-ce que*' for the English 'what') and the French word for 'here/there' ('*là*') is missing its accent mark. This causes confusion, because spelt without *accent grave* it is the feminine article '*la.*' Whittall's spelling in French generally disregards accents as the following examples show: "Bien sur!" (*BRH* 60, sic)[369], "[c]herie" (*BRH* 65, sic).[370] In the phrase "*est-ce qu'on peût fumer a l'interieur*" (*BRH* 20, emphasis in original, sic), the noun '*interieur*' is missing its *accent aigu*. At the same time, the verb '*pouvoir*' ('can') in its third person form '*peut*' displays an overuse of the *accent circonflexe*. Other spelling mistakes include: "*[T]his rendezvous* (*BRH* 46, emphasis in original)[371], "Toulouse L'Autrec" (*BRH* 125),[372] "[t]attouage Iris" (*BRH* 172, sic),[373] and "[j]e vous pardonne, nous pardonne, nos ceours son lourds" (*BRH* 83, sic).[374] While the spelling error in '*coeurs*' might be a typo, '*son*' is a possessive pronoun in the third person and corresponds to the English 'his,' 'her,' and 'its.' In translation, this phrase means 'our hearts *are* heavy' and, therefore, the correct spelling of

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[367] Cf. Simon 2010. An alternative interpretation of this mistake would be related to Della's macho attitude and the possibility that she might say something like 'You miss me.' This does not, however, explain the wrongly conjugated verb.

[368] "Hey, what do you want" (my translation)?

[369] "Sure" (my translation).

[370] "Darling" (my translation).

[371] The noun 'rendezvous' is actually spelt in English here. Its French spelling would be '*rendez-vous.*'

[372] This refers to the French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

[373] The word '*tattouage*' is an amalgamation of the French '*tatouage*' and the English 'tattoo.'

[374] "I forgive you, forgive us, our hearts are heavy" (my translation). While the verb '*pardonner*' (to forgive') is conjugated correctly in the first instance ('*je pardonne*'), it is not clear if the second time the '*je*' is simply left out (in that case the verb form would be correct again) or the verb form should be '*nous pardonnons*' in the sense of 'we forgive.'

the word should be that of the homonymic verb '*sont*.' Also, more than once, characters in the text use "[c]'est *correcte*" (*BRH* 113, my emphasis, sic)[375] to confirm that things are okay. Even though not standard French, the phrase is common in Québec; Whittall's spelling, however, is unusual and should rather be '*c'est correct*,' without the feminising '-e' at the end.

Linguistic errors and discontinuous code swiching are one way the lapsised dimension manifests in *Bottle Rocket Hearts.* Furthermore, these transgressions are personified in Della, who has a transcultural identity. As Simon notes: "Della 'lives in the extreme present': elle est Canadienne française, incroyablement *cool* et extrêmement politisée" (Simon 2010: 138, emphasis in original).[376] She combines in her character elements of the franco-Canadian minority culture and French Québécois majority culture as well as from English-Canada. Cultural boundaries are thus blurred in her subjectivity. Yet, she creates a myth about her identity that underscores her francophone and denies her anglophone origins. Politically, she takes a separatist position and performs *Québécois*. Whereas the relation with her father is "honest" (*BRH* 48) and she and he are "like mirror images" (*BRH* 48), Della claims that her mother is dead. According to her story, "[n]ot one woman from her mother's family has lived passed the age of thirty" (*BRH* 15) and that it was "a Johnson curse" (*BRH* 15), that she might die soon. As a matter of fact, "[s]he [was] hoping that her father's tough *Tremblay* genes [would] win" (*BRH* 15, my emphasis).[377] On the one hand,

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[375] "It's okay" (my translation). See also "Non, c'est correcte." (*BRH* 76) ("No, that's alright," my translation).

[376] "[S]he is French-Canadian, incredibly cool and extremely politicised" (my translation).

[377] Interestingly, both Zoe Whittall and Heather O'Neill (whose book *Lullabies for Little Criminals* will be discussed in the following chapter) choose the typically Québécois surname 'Tremblay' for the French or half-French characters of their stories. For further information, see chapter 5

Della has a hybrid identity, speaks both languages English and French, and knows their disparate discourses and cultural coding that got merged in her socialisation. On the other hand, her entire person can be read as a metaphor for the situation of Québec: She is worried about her survival and future. Her father is a stereotypical Québécois man who "was never one to fight" (*BRH* 56).[378] Her mother who had "insisted on putting [Della] on a two hour bus ride every day to get to an English school" (*BRH* 56) represents a threat. Della ignores her existence and is preoccupied by it at the same time: "I keep thinking of my mother dying. I see her on her death bed. I wake up with that image every day" (*BRH* 166, sic). Only at the end of the narrative do the reader – and Eve – find out that "Mrs. Johnson" (*BRH* 187) is not dead:

> There's a woman in a black dress, fur coat draped over one arm, standing at the desk yelling at the nurse 'I want to see my daughter! Where is my fucking daughter? Her name is Della Tremblay,' she speaks to the nurse like she's a total idiot. […] This is Della's 'dead' mother (*BRH* 187).

This is also the moment when Eve realises Della's psychological condition, which possibly is a borderline personality disorder. As for Eve, "[t]he reality and scope of betrayal, the layers and layers of lies, felt almost too thick to even comprehend" (*BRH* 187). She finally abandons Della and moves on: "Della is a

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and <http://www.nosorigines.qc.ca/genealogiehistoirefamilles.aspx?fid=1093&lng=fr> (26 February 2014).

[378] In Québec popular discourse, especially after the Quiet Revolution and the waves of feminisms that resulted in a quick emancipation of women after the Catholic Church and its dogma ruled the province, men are constructed as slack – oftentimes macho, but at the same time soft, powerless, and docile. For details on Masculinity Studies in Québec, see Saint-Martin, Lori. "Analyse critique de la presse masculine." *Journal L'UQAM*, XXXVIII.7 (2001): non. p. Web. 20 April 2013. And Vacante, Jefferey. "Liberal Nationalsim and the Challenge of Masculinity Studies in Quebec." *Left History* 11.2 (2006): 96-117. Print.

story I will tell to reference my last stretch of adolescence. Those years I dated a *fiction*" (*BRH* 189, my emphasis).[379]

The character of Della does not only embody the fictions of Québec in *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, it also functions as a perverse translation to point to the transition of Eve. The story's circular construction around Della, which starts with Della's hospitalisation and then gives a long flashback that leads to the situation presented in the beginning only to resolve the line of action with a last episode in the hospital, points to the transition of Eve from teenager to young adult: "We [Eve and Seven] walk down the paved incline and with each icy step I'm decidedly changed" (*BRH* 188), Eve notes upon leaving the hospital in the closing scene of the book. At the moment she is seeing Della, however, she traverses the city over and over again and gets an altogether new impression of the city, when English allows French to enter its imaginary and the characters claim Montréal's space as a whole.[380] Like Scott's *Heroine*, Simon argues, Whittall's text demonstrates real cultural and linguistic hybridity.[381] It illustrates that "translation can take place across multiple borders, not just between languages" (Gentzler 2008: 63). What Gentzler notes about Brossard's fiction in general and the identity of Maude Laures in particular also applies for *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, especially the character of Della. Both writings "metaphorically revea[l] the displaced nature of an individual caught between two languages and cultures, such as the entire population of Quebec" (Gentzler 2008: 63). In *Le*

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[379] At the beginning of the story, Eve says that Della "is a real woman and [she is] a child" (BRH 19). Their relationship is based on a 'the one who cares less wins' power dynamics. Throughout her diary entries, Eve fights with jealousy and monitors herself by keeping score: "I'm consumed with imagining another woman curved around Della in embrace. I'm restless in my jealousy, but I can beat it. The score will be: Jealousy: 0 Me: 1" (BRH 9).

[380] Cf. Simon 2010.

[381] Cf. Simon 2010.

désert mauve, "[t]he geographics of the novel set at the border of the desert in Arizona metaphorically resonate for the citizens of Quebec and their cultural condition between French and English Canada" (Gentzler 2008: 64). *Bottle Rocket Hearts* is set directly in the contact zone of Montréal, the Mile End. Both texts "articulate a new theory of culture" (Gentzler 2008: 60) by evoking "pertinent aspects of the sociolinguistic situation at the same time as they suggest new conceptions of literary and cultural space" (Simon 1990: 101). Both explore Québécois identity and my comparative analysis takes as diachronic approach to see how the fact that "culture is always changing, in process, or 'in transit'" (Gentzler 2008: 68) is illustrated by them.

Brossard points to the modification of subjectivity as she reproduces the shift of titles in *Le désert mauve* with the names of her fictional novelist and the fictional translator: 'Laure' is Angstelle's first name and echoes with Maude's last name, 'Laures'. As Wilson argues, the "fictional translato[r] inhabit[s the] postmodern tex[t]: […] the author 'dies', and finds her 'Fortleben' in the translator" (2007: 393).[382] She adds in a footnote: "Laure Angstelle portrays a character caught between cultures, at a place Brossard alludes to as the *Angststelle* or 'place of anxiety'" (Wilson 2007: 394, emphasis in original).[383] As exemplified above, Maude Laures tries to eliminate in her translation the notion of 'angst' that is omnipresent in "*Le désert mauve*"; it vanishes altogether from the name of the writer/translator (Laure Angstelle vs. Maude Laures). Her

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[382] Cf. also Benjamin and his notion of translation as 'afterlife,' Benjamin 1969.

[383] This refers to the motel and the desert. While Mélanie's mother warns her daughter of the dangers of the desert, longman represents a concrete threat within the space of the motel. As Wilson translates, '*Angst*' is German for fear or anxiety and '*Stelle*' means area or place. The meaning of the German loan 'angst' in English is that of panic or fear of life. Cf. Wilson 2007: 393.

subjectivity emerges from the *entre-deux* of cultures and languages. She "is a being in-between" (Jouve 1991: 47, Bassnett 1992: 65, Gentzler 2008: 64) and "[l]ike words in translation, s/he endlessly drifts between meanings" (Jouve 1991: 47, Bassnett 1992: 65, Gentzler 64). Gentzler points out that

> [t]herein lies the analogy to the story within the story: as a coming-of-age Mélanie is attracted to those vague outlines before they take shape, so too is Maude Laures attracted to thoughts, images, words, and paradoxes between two languages, before they take shape" (2008: 62).

To track Angstelle's intentions, Brossard creates the situation of "a dialogue of subjectivities" (Simon 1990: 104) to render a "crossing over to another's worldview" (Gentzler 2008: 63) possible for Laures. As Godard notes, thereby "*Le Désert Mauve* […] explores the subjectivity of the translator" (1995: 76). Writer and translator are brought together to "discuss the ownership of the 'original,' which at this point becomes harder and harder to identify" (Wheeler 2003: 444). Laures' dialogue might actually be with an early version of herself, and hence a monologue (Angstelle is dead). Maude Laures is "a textual being, entirely immersed in […] the process of translation" (Simon 1990: 103). She comes into existence through her act of translating and is a "[s]ubjec[t] in process" (Godard 1995: 81). As soon as she is done with translating "*Le désert mauve*," the translation "Mauve, l'horizon" takes her place. It is the notion of transition, which she personifies, that is central to Brossard's text however. This is why Simon labels *Le désert mauve* a 'perverse translation': "*Le Désert Mauve* nous présente un simulacre de traduction – la 'fiction' d'une oeuvre transposée

du français à l'anglais. Comment expliquer cette perversion" (Simon 2005: 118, my emphasis)?[384]

Brossard's reflections on translational practices and Whittall's writing in translation deal with spaces of social, cultural, and linguistic encounter. They are both artefacts of the lapsised dimension, because they "suggest a conception of cultural space which is always in itself heterogeneous and informed by translation" (Simon 1990: 105), the latter "increasingly being seen as a discursive practice that reveals multiple signs of the polyvalence with which cultures are constructed" (Bassnett 2008: ix). This why both texts feature aspects of perverse translation. As I argue throughout this dissertation, the notion of 'translation' is to be understood on a number of levels on which meaning and realities are being negotiated.[385] What is more, in *Le désert mauve* it also "enters the novel […] by the juxtaposition of culture and sexuality" (Gentzler 2008: 63). This holds true for Whittall's text. In both narratives, sexuality is a vector of the plot. Mélanie's mother is lesbian and so is Mélanie. The world of Kathy, Lorna, and their motel introduces a milieu of and for women. It represents the translation of reality according to practices of '*écriture au féminin*.' The only male/masculine figure is an intruder and turns out to threaten the peace of this place in the feminine. Longman, by killing Mélanie's date Angela Parkins, commits a homophobic crime. The scenario uncannily repeats itself in *Bottle Rocket Hearts*. Rachel gets killed in an act of violence because of her lesbian sexual orientation. Again, it is during a first date that the attack happens. In this case two men, "neo-NAZI

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[384] "*Mauve Desert* presents a simulacrum of a translation – the 'fiction' of an oeuvre transferred from French into English. How can this perversion be explained" (my translation)?

[385] As Gentzler puts it, Brossard's "*intra*lingual translation, […] expand[s] the boundaries of what is normally defined as translation" (2008: 63, emphasis in original).

skinheads" (*BRH* 123, emphasis in original) from the suburbs are charged for the hate crime. The incident leaves "[e]veryone […] very fearful about being next" (*BRH* 134). Eve's community is queer: her roommate Rachel was lesbian, her other roommate Seven is gay, and most of the rest of the characters are from bi- to pansexual, performing butch, femme, and trans. While Eve is only halfway out of the closet with her own sexuality – she is dating Della, but sometimes makes out with Dave[386] – she is confronted with random homophobic comments in the street and once even has to flee from sexual harassment on her way home from a bar at night: "'Yeah, You're a *fucking dyke*, I bet. You're a *fucking lezzie* with your big black *lezzie* boots'" (*BRH* 117, my emphasis).

Whittall's text is queer on multiple levels – its queerness is to be understood in such a broad sense as the concept of 'translation.' According to David Halperin, queer is "an identity without an essence" (1995: 62) and performatively constituted. Both the characters and the form of *Bottle Rocket Hearts* are queer. I associate this text with Montréal and Anglo-Québécois writing not because there is an essential connection between the text and the city, but because the texture of the narrative and that of the city correlate. Similar to *French Kiss* and *Paper City* in the previous chapter, *Bottle Rocket Hearts* reiterates Montréal's socio-political past and subverts dominant discourses by "exploring the poetics of no-man's land, and celebrating in-betweenness that cannot be categorised according to traditional methods (Bassnett 2008: xi). Eve's ramblings are practices of translation. Both her *flâneries* in the borderlands of Montréal and her continuous reflections on Dell

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[386] "Sometimes I kiss Dave when I'm drunk. I'm not sure why. […] Della only gets jealous when I kiss guys. Girls can come trailing out of my room like daisies on a chain" (*BRH* 57).

construct Eve as a translator similar to Maude Laures. Like Brossard's meta-protagonist, she explores the multiple layers of meaning and her subjectivity emerges from their in-between.[387]

Contextualized in Montréal's shifting urban borderlands, practices of negotiating foreignness, translatability, and intention are quotidian strategies that show in the city's cultural production. Because of its position in the borderlands that stimulates the challenging of linguistic, social, and cultural codes, Montréal is in a continuous coming-of-age process that allows for a revision of the subjectivities that emerge from it. Both *Le désert mauve* and *Bottle Rocket Hearts* are situated in the borderlands of Montréal urban realities: they switch between French and English languages and, subsequently, transgress not only the limits of those linguistic codes, but tackle the hegemonic discourses of power and violence imposed by them, including the institutionalized binaries of the notions of sex, gender, and sexuality. This contestation of the boundaries of traditional *genre* categorisations results in diverse possibilities for new hybrid identity constructions, revised subjectivities (feminist and queer voices), and *trans-* or *entre-genre* textual productions.[388] Angstelle's novel tells the coming-of-age story of its protagonist, Mélanie. *Le désert mauve* as a whole tells the coming-of-age of the novel through its translation, as well as that of its translator, Maude Laures, through the process of translation. This matrix represents the modifications and transformations that take place in the lapsised dimension on the levels of form (fiction and theory), narration, and the narrative.

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[387] While "Laures compares the as yet unformed image of the translation to the image of an animal seen from afar – veiled, colored mauve, whose shape, outline, is not yet distinct" (Gentzler 2008: 62), Eve's perception of Della remains blurred throughout their two-year relation.
[388] Cf. Nathanaël's oeuvre.

Bottle Rocket Hearts similarly challenges *genre* and textuality: the narrative constructs a time lapse. In addition, it generates characters that find themselves, each individually, in a permanent situation of lapse, be it Della as discussed earlier or Seven, who continuously reinvents himself and hence discloses the performativity of his identity.[389]

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[389] See chapter 10 of *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, "T-Cell Giant," in particulatr pages 100-104.

5. FLÂNERIES IN BORDERLANDS: *MAIN BRIDES* AND *LULLABIES FOR LITTLE CRIMINALS*

Heather O'Neill's *Lullabies for Little Criminals*[390] was initially published in English in 2006 and translated into the French *La Ballade de Baby*[391] by Michèle Valencia in 2008. It tells the story of twelve-year-old Baby, a half-orphan girl on the verge of turning thirteen. Baby is very conscious of this passage between child- and adulthood as a point of no return and repeatedly states, that "childhood is the most valuable thing that's taken away from you in life" (*LLC* 77). Her coming-of-age is the topic of this *Bildungsroman*, as her subjectivity is being altered in stages that are described in episodic chapters: in "Napoleon Street" (*LLC* 45) she takes drugs for the first time. She tries out magic mushrooms that she and Felix, the son of her foster-mother,[392] add to their spaghetti sauce.[393] The chapter "Devil in a tracksuit" (*LLC* 141) describes how her first kiss with the pimp Alphonse comes about.[394] For Baby, Alphonse's voice has a calming rather than seductive effect: "When Alphonse spoke to me, his voice always had the same tempo as a *lullaby*" (*LLC* 186, my emphasis).[395] She compares him to a mother figure, but is also aware that necessarily, "[e]very good pimp is a mother" (*LLC* 186). Dating him soon means for Baby to meet

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[390] Cf. O'Neill, Heather. *Lullabies for Little Criminals.* Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2006a. Print. The title will be referred to as *LLC*.

[391] Cf. O'Neill, Heather. *La ballade de Baby*. Trans. Michèle Valencia. Paris: 10/18, 2008. Print. I do not further comment on the translation by Valencia in this discussion. However, I want to mention that it would be a point open for comparison as not only *La Ballade de Baby* was received with extensive critique, but so was *Les fiancées de la Main* (see below).

[392] Mary was a nurse and single mother and "Jules claimed that he had known [her] for years" (*LLC* 58).

[393] Cf. *LLC* 86.

[394] Cf. *LLC* 181.

[395] This passage refers to the title of the book. In his role of the mother substitute, Alphonse 'sings' lullabies to Baby. Through him and because of his stories, Baby has become a criminal and is not a 'baby' any longer.

clients, the first of which she encounters in the chapter called "Playing grown up" (*LLC* 200). The title underscores that Baby is but a child who – either forcibly (when she prostitutes herself like Alphonse's former girlfriend Leelee) or deliberately (by taking drugs like her father Jules)[396] – imitates the adult world and the behaviour of the adults that surround her (plays grown-up). As songwriter and Jazz guitarist Mike Rud puts it in a recently launched song "Baby" delivered by Sienna Dahlen and which is part of an album entitled *Notes on Montréal*: "The girl grows up so quickly but the child lives on."[397]

Altogether eight chapters construct the storyline of the narrative, which is mainly set in the streets of Montréal's *Ville-Marie* borough, in particular in the neighbourhoods of *Centre Sud* and *Quartier Latin*, "in the early 1980s" (Waters 2006a: non. p.).[398] At the time, the area around the corner of *Sainte-Catherine* and *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* was known as the city's red-light district.[399] At the beginning of the text, Baby describes it as "the most beautiful section of town" (*LLC* 5) and is envious of the prostitutes' "beautiful high-heeled boots" (*LLC* 6). The experiences she subsequently makes in the narrated time of about a year nevertheless confirm, that "becoming a child again is what is impossible" (*LLC*

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[396] Baby's single-father Jules is a drug-dependent. Due to the poor health resulting from that, in the hospital "[t]hey said he had tuberculosis and couldn't go home" (*LLC* 24).

[397] For the complete lyrics of the song by Mike Rud, see <http://notesonmontreal.com/lyrics-booklet/> (30 March 2014).

[398] As Jules does not have a regular income, Baby and himself live at the fringes of society, generally residing in cheap hotels and renting filthy apartments in Montreal's red-light district: "The wallpaper […] had peeled off in spots near the ceiling. […] The carpet had been worn down so much that you couldn't see what pattern it used to have" (*LLC* 2). Cf. the interview by Waters, Juliet <http://www.quillandquire.com/authors/profile.cfm?article_id=7521> (22 Noember. 2009).

[399] As Domenic Beneventi notes in his article "Montréal Underground" (2012): "The Quartier des spectacles has completely transformed the traditional red-light district of Montreal into a space of government-mandated spectacle and cultural consumption, thereby displacing the 'marginal' aspects of the neighbourhood. A long period of protest and urban activism has been unsuccessful in preserving its original character and its transformation into a corporatist 'city of spectacle' (Debord 1992), as revealed in the quarter's official website, Quartier des spectacles Montreal" (281). Cf. <http://www.quartierdesspectacles.com/en/> (12 July 2013).

77).[400] This shows especially in the relationship between Baby and Xavier, her schoolmate. When the two run into each other after Xavier's parents forbid him any further contact with her, the last chapter of the book reveals that for Baby

> [t]ouching him [Xavier, who is not aware of his girlfriend's double life as a prostitute and drug addict] felt like picking up a baby animal that you weren't supposed to handle. Because once you touched the animal it was spoiled and its mother wouldn't want to have anything to do with it (*LLC* 303).

The narrator is highly aware of the differences between her life in the streets, poverty, and subaltern position on the one hand, and, on the other, the middle-class background of her friend who inhabits a house on the *Plateau Mont-Royal* with his family.[401] Her *flâneries* in the "abject spaces" (Beneventi 2012: 280) of the city "reconfigure the traditional literary mapping of Montreal as a space of fractured surfaces (English west and French east divided by a polyglot middle), to one of hidden depths of above and below, seen and unseen" (Beneventi 2012: 263). They end abruptly when Baby reunites with her father at "[t]he Mission [that was] on St. Laurent Street, at the bottom of two hills, between Chinatown and Old Montréal" (*LLC* 311) and leaves town with him to join Jules's cousin, Janine, in the countryside "just north of Val des Loups" (*LLC* 328) at the closing of the story, which promises a better life away from Montréal.[402]

A more traditional map of Montréal and its "fractured surfaces" (Beneventi 2012: 263) can be found in *Main Brides: Against Ochre Pediment and Aztec*

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[400] As soon as Baby starts consuming hard drugs, she realizes that "[i]t was amazing how [she] became a bum so quickly" (*LLC* 287).

[401] For a detailed discussion of Baby's social situation as a subaltern subject, see Beneventi 2012.

[402] Singer and songwriter Mike Rud seconds the positive note on which the text finishes by suggesting that Baby "will see the world is bigger than just Carré St-Louis" (<http://notesonmontreal.com/lyrics-booklet/>, 30 March 2014).

Sky[403] by Gail Scott, published in 1993. Its French translation *Les fiancées de la Main – sur fronton ocre et ciel aztèque* by Paule Noyart was issued in 1999.[404] The book is composed of two threads of chapters: on the one hand, there are seven sections entitled with the "parenthetical statement" (Wunker 2004: 57) "(the sky is what I want)," that sketch a woman. "[H]er name is Lydia" (*MB* 31) and she sits in a bar on *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*. On the other hand, there is a series of episodes on the lives of women Lydia invents – "Nanette" (*MB* 12), "Main Bride Remembers Halifax" (*MB* 37), "Dis-May" (*MB* 68), "Canadian Girls" (*MB* 105), "Z. Who Lives Over the Sign Shop" (*MB* 138), "Donkey Riding" (*MB* 169), and "Night Music (3 Scenes in 4 Acts)" (*MB* 201). Each of these sections describes a 'bride.' As Lydia observes the passers-by on *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*, she projects them on the picture she sees on the opposite side of the street in

> the Portuguese photo store with the *bride* standing in the window. Her soldier's X'd out. But even if he weren't, she'd be standing there in her white lace with everybody looking: the *Main* thing in the picture for a single minute of her life (*MB* 10, my emphasis).

This passage suggests that, theoretically, women should be the main characters in Lydia's portraits.[405] Each of the stories turns around misogyny, violence,[406] and abuse, and all deal with patriarchal, heterosexist, and homophobic socio-cultural structures. Their main characters end up in the shadow of prevalent systems of

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[403] Cf. Scott, Gail. *Main Brides: Against Ochre Pediment and Aztec Sky*. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1993. Print. This edition will be quoted as *MB* in what follows.
[404] Cf. Scott, Gail. *Les fiancées de la Main: sur fronton ocre et ciel aztèque. Trans.* Paule Noyart. Montréal: Leméac. 1999a. Print. I do not further discuss this translation in my dissertation.
[405] For a discussion of "the bridal portrait" (Henderson 2002: 87), see Henderson, Jennifer. "Femme(s) Focale(s): Main Brides and the Post-identity Narrative." *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works.* Ed. Lianne Moyes. Toronto: Guernica Editions Inc., 2002b. 72-100. Print.
[406] Cf. Henderson 2002: 96.

power. Lydia's women, rather than protagonists, are 'Main brides' as in brides of or women on the Main.

Lydia herself is a figure that does not "pre-exist the text, but [that comes] into being in the process of writing it" (Scott 1998: 176). She is the narrator of the story, but, when creating her voice, Scott sought to "circumvent logos" (Scott 2002: 14). She induces what Julia Kristeva refers to in an interview as the "notion of the subject-in-process" (Guberman 1996: 26) which "assumes [...] the law of communication [...] always in a state of contesting [it]" (Guberman 1996: 26). There is no essence to her subjectivity; Lydia is "multiple, linguistically and discursively constructed" (Sojka 1998: 157). She is in the process of becoming – hence the parentheses in the recurring chapter title that indicates sections on her, much like a red thread throughout the book.[407] According to Beverley Daurio, "[w]riting is about constructing a subject" (1998: 19) and it is by her portraits of and the chapters on other women in-between those sections that Lydia's own subjectivity is formed. According to her belief, "'a person, to be what she wants, just has to absorb selectively from context.' Like a collector," (*MB* 101) Lydia assembles "the voices around her" (Scott 1998: 177). Even though she physically does not go any further than to the washroom, her mind is strolling. She observes people passing by on the sidewalk (city strollers) and in the bar and imagines them elsewhere, at a different point of their life and in different contexts. This is her attempt to take sides as a writer, collector, and

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[407] The hesitation to put a title to chapters about the narrator (*la narratrice*) can also be found in Nicole Brossard's *Le Désert Mauve*, as discussed in chapter 4.

flâneur or, rather, *flâneuse*.[408] Ellen Servinis calls the passages about Lydia sitting alone at a table, dreaming up stories and alternately drinking wine and coffee "Barstool *flânerie[s]*" (1998: 250, my emphasis). This allusion to Benjamin's and Baudelaire's writings holds true as Lydia takes a veritable "bain de multitude" (Baudelaire 1869: 291)[409] in the bar. Keeping to herself in the crowd, she fades into it and only makes comments on other clients without actually interacting with them.[410] The picture that is drawn of Lydia echoes the multiplicity of voices she evokes. It conveys a fragmented and porous notion of her narrating subjectivity.

Lydia does not seem to have much in common with O'Neill's narrator Baby in *Lullabies for Little Criminals*. The two narratives are very different on a textual level, too: as Erin Wunker puts it, "Scott scorns linearity and order" (2004: 60). Her writing is experimental and discontinuous. In contrast, O'Neill states that she does not "have any interest in book length projects that don't have linear constructions" (Wiehardt non. p.). Her narrative, although "there is something very poetic about [her] prose" (Wiehardt non. p.), bears typical features of a 'novel.'[411] It is a fictional narration that has an evolving plot, which comes to a climax (when Xavier meets Alphonse[412]) and finishes with a resolution

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[408] For more information on the *flâneur* as a collector, see Acquisto, Joseph. "The Decadent Writer as Collector and Flâneur: On Intertextual Networks and Literary Spaces in Huysmans." *French Forum* 32.3 (2007): 66. Print.

[409] "[A] bath of multitude" (Baudelaire 1970: 20). Cf. Baudelaire, Charles. *Œuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire IV: Petits Poèmes en prose, Les Paradis artificiels*. Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1869. Print. And Baudelaire, Charles. *Paris Spleen.* Trans. Frederick Morgan and David Paul. New York: New Directons Publishing Corporation, 1970. Print.

[410] According to Scott, "[l]istening ultimately permits a letting go of the strict boundaries of identity; self can drift into context" (Scott 1998: 7). In *Main Brides*, only towards the end of the night Lydia mentions that "she *did* speak to someone today" (*MB* 136, emphasis in original).

[411] During the same interview, O'Neill also states, that "there was always something very prose like about [her] poetry" (Wiehardt non. p.). Cf. also the interview with Freeman, Gemma <http://lumiere.net.nz/reader//item/1692> (20 July 2013).

[412] Cf. *LLC* 305.

(when Baby reunites with Jules and his cousin Janine[413]). Although the book cover of *Main Brides* announces it as a novel, the avant-gardist *Main Brides* is more like an antinovel[414] or anti-narrative.[415] Its episodic portraits are not in chronological order and the text does not feature a unified subject. As Wunker notes, "Lydia's position, both as character and narrator, is not defined" (2004: 63). This writing strategy is in line with Scott's association with the San Francisco-based movement of "New Narrative" (Scott 1998: 176)[416] that experiments with fragmentation, metatextuality, and popular culture, creating "narratives reminiscent of storytelling's relationship to audience" (Scott 2004: 11).[417] It explores what Jacques Derrida calls the "borderline."[418] In *Main Brides*, Scott "push[es] the reader to become involved in the process of searching out self" (Wunker 2004: 5) and, then, "pushes the boundaries even further, collapsing the space between reader and writer" (Wunker 2004: 7). Her narrating subject "functions as a signifier of the borderline" (Wunker 2004: 62) and, as I

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[413] Cf. *LLC* 313, 330.

[414] The concept of 'antinovel' was coined by Jean Paul Sartre in his introduction to Nathalie Sarraute's *Portrait d'un inconnu* (1948). According to its definition as a self-analysing and unclassifiable form of novel, I associate Scott's text with that of 'antinovel.' Cf. Sarraute, Nathalie. *Portrait d'un inconnu*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948. Print.

[415] Cf. Scott, Gail 1999b. <http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v1_4_2000/current/workbook/> (15 August 2009).

[416] For more information on the New Narrative, see Glück, Robert. "Long Note on New Narrative." *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative.* Eds. Burger, Mary et al. Toronto: Coach House Press, 2004. 25-34. Print.

[417] Cf. Scott, Gail. "Introduction." *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative.* Eds. Burger, Mary et al. Toronto: Coach House Press, 2004. Print.

[418] In *The Ear of the Other* (1985), Jacques Derrida elaborates on the notion of the 'borderline' as the space between "the system and the subject of the system" (5). The borderline has a "virtual and mobile potency […] [and] traverses […] the corpus and the body" (Derrida 1985: 6). In Scott's writing, it is the line between the reader and the writer and concerns their collaboration in constructing text and subjectivity. For a detailed discussion, see Wunker, Erin. *Borders of Becoming: An Examination into Absence and Desire for Self and Subjectivity in Anne Carson' s Men in the Off Hours and Gail Scott' s Main Brides*. MA thesis. McGill University, 2004: 55. Print. And Derrida, Jacques. *The Ear of the Other*. Ed. Christie MacDonald. New York: Shocken Books Inc., 1985. Print.

argue in this chapter, as a signifier of the borderlands, as she "oscillates between languages" (Wunker 2004: 62) and cultures.[419]

The post-modern "disembodied voice" (Wunker 2004: 57) of Lydia, "whose name the reader only learns in the third section, desires *boundlessness*, which implies both *infinitude* and undefinability, or an absence of the finite" (Wunker 2004: 60, my emphasis).[420] The idea of 'boundlessness' does not only refer to the boundaries of languages and cultures Lydia transcends, but manifests in the title that precedes all chapters about her: "(the sky is what I want)." The 'sky' is a symbol of infinity. It is also referred to in the subtitle of the text, *Against Ochre Pediment and Aztec Sky.*[421] Boundlessness is also pursued in Heather O'Neill's text. The narrator Baby crosses multiple boundaries, physically and symbolically. As she wanders through the city, Montréal's historically, politically, and literarily established borders are obliterated.

Besides, in *Lullabies for Little Criminals,* the notion of 'infinity' is evoked by the narrator's name 'Baby,' which suggests perpetual youth. She explains that if she had "had parents who were adults, [she] probably would never have been called Baby" and that she "loved how people got confused when Jules and [her] had to explain how it wasn't just a nickname. It was an *ironic* name" (*LLC* 4, my emphasis). Her name seems ironic because, as Beneventi puts it, she actually is "mature beyond her years" (2012: 268). While in this passage Baby is "looking forward to being a lady with that name" (*LLC* 5), generally she clings to her childhood and reluctantly observes how adults have started judging her

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[419] Cf. also Godard, Barbara. "Writing from the Border: Gail Scott on 'The Main'." *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works.* Ed. Lianne Moyes. Toronto: Guernica Editions Inc., 2002b. 117-141. Print.
[420] Cf. also Godard, Barbara 2002: 118.
[421] The 'ochre pediment' refers to the top of a building Lydia sees on the other side of *St-Laurent* from her spot in the bar just north of the corner of Roy Street. For a full description, see *MB* 138.

differently ever since she turned twelve.[422] O'Neill "tr[ies] to write in the voice of a child" (Wiehardt non. p.), as she believes that children "can stay innocent and keep *reinventing* themselves despite a lot of appalling stuff" (Wiehardt non. p., my emphasis). The notion of 'reinvention' connects Baby and Lydia. The latter continuously invents herself with each story and bride, and thereby remains indefinable. Baby also perpetually reinvents herself: with each move, at the foster home and later at detention, with Alphonse and with Xavier. She identifies with the girls and women around her (the former neighbour Marika,[423] Leelee, and Zoë from the community centre[424]) and absorbs from the context of the street. However, in her case, this does not happen selectively like in Lydia's – she rather becomes the product of the social discourses Scott problematizes in *Main Brides*. As she is "traversing the boundaries between abject and privileged spaces, disrupting the linguistic and cultural orthodoxies" (Beneventi 2012: 266) of the city, Baby, as much as Lydia, emerges from the borderlands. *Lullabies for Little Criminals* collapses Montréal's traditional literary spaces of anglophone and francophone separation and Baby functions as a signifier for the city's linguistic hybridity, as I illustrate in this chapter.

In a comparative analysis of the construction of subjectivity, the two texts speak to each other. First, both narrators are female and – on the content level – closely associated with abuse, prostitution, and drugs. In that sense, Baby could be added to the line-up of brides "on the pediment Lydia sees from the bar window" (Wunker 2004: 64). According to Wunker, "[t]he brides function not only as something to fill the skyline, but also as versions of subjectivities" (2004: 64). I

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[422] Cf. *LLC* 167.
[423] Cf. *LLC* 14.
[424] Cf. *LLC* 106, 265.

read Baby as one of Scott's "[w]omen on the roof" (*MB* 35), implying that her character resonates with the girl found dead, that Lydia keeps having flash backs about. The scene takes place at *Parc Jeanne-Mance*: "A body lying on its back, legs up, in the green green grass. […] Then […] the damn lumpy shadow, with the blanket thrown over it; […] [T]he "girl" [was] just a small-time hooker with some lousy pimp" (*MB* 10, 61, 200). This passage evokes O'Neill's protagonist, who works as a prostitute in the streets for her pimp-boyfriend Alphonse and, later on, to provide the money to buy drugs for both of them. Second, Lydia and Baby both live in Montréal and, more specifically, hang out in neighbourhoods along *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* – Baby lower down close to *Ste-Catherine* in the red-light district, Lydia further up on the *Plateau* in the Portuguese restaurant and bar *La Cabane*. At the end of the book, Scott's narrator "steps (a zigzag to the air of a tango) into the night" (*MB* 230) walking up or rather drunkenly dancing on the Main. Baby similarly "moves through the threat of the streets as if she's been choreographed in a dance"[425]: "[M]y feet started doing a side step that we'd learned in the folk-dancing section of my gym class. Then I started boogying" (*LLC* 168), she notes on her way home after an encounter with Alphonse and high on dope. Third and most importantly, they both speak English with a French rhythm. Lydia is aware of and sensitive to francophone-anglophone relations in the multi-ethnic setting of the bar and, more generally, the city. She ponders over language regulations, commenting, for example, the "French *on-ly* law" (*MB* 152, emphases in original) that refers to the "signage laws requiring that French be prominent on bilingual signs"

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[425] Cf.<http://www.booksandthecity.com/view_library_book.htm?id=15> (8 November 2012).

(Poplack et al. 2006: 203) following Bill 101. Scott creates her narrator in English and occasionally has her switch to French, "parce que la plupart de ses personnages parlent français" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 102).[426] Baby speaks the "language [she is] speaking in [her] head […], like whatever […] thoughts […], whether they start being in English or French" (McHale 2007: non. p.). Linguistic frontiers are thereby blurred.[427] While Baby nevertheless articulates herself in English only, many of the cultural references she makes point to the francophone environment of Montréal.

This is why I read *Lullabies for Little Criminals* together with *Main Brides* and study the notion of 'border-consciousness' that emerges from between the converging English and French languages and cultures in Montréal. In particular, I am interested in the linguistic situations of Scott's and O'Neill's narrators and their cultural imaginaries. Which borders are they aware of and which have been integrated in their subjectivities through transculturation?[428] Lydia's and Baby's Montréal are both divided cities; however the location of their borders is different. The topographies illustrated in the two texts are at the same time disparate and related. While Scott problematizes Montréal's vertical historical and politically reinforced linguistic and nationalist divisions in postcolonial terms, O'Neill illustrates Montréal's horizontal dividing line and what Beneventi calls "underworld" (2012: 263) in a socio-critical manner, emphasising economic disparities and class differences beyond linguistic control. By superimposing the two texts (as mentioned above, I add Baby to Lydia's list of brides), I demonstrate how *Main Brides* serves to analyse the map of Montréal drawn in

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[426] "Because most of her characters speak French" (my translation).
[427] Cf. Schwartzwald 2008.
[428] Cf. Ortiz 1995: 97.

Lullabies for Little Criminals. Respectively, Baby's descriptions of an urban underworld assist my study of Scott's Main brides (in the sense of 'brides of the Main'). Again, one text becomes the fiction/theory reading device for the other.[429]

Arguing that both texts emerge from *dimension lapsisée*, I particularly consider language demographics in this chapter. The modifications of Montréal's borderlands and its revisions from the subaltern position are as much at the centre of my discussion as the explicit and implicit translations performed by Lydia and Baby as well as the notion of '*flânerie*' that reincarnates through both in an altered, post-modern version. According to Beneventi, "in her imaginative remappings of the city, Baby transforms the neighbourhood blight into her own personal *playground*" (2012: 268, my emphasis) and creates a sense of "*dwelling* in unexpected or undesired locations, be it on the street, underground, or in the interstitial spaces that escape the gaze of history and the authority of the state" (Beneventi 2012: 280, emphasis in original). In her role of a subaltern city dweller, she performs the urban memory of Montréal in a dialectical manner[430] and the resulting *flâneries* creatively reconstruct the city through abject spaces. As Lydia's mind wanders off, "like Baudelaire's poet/*flâneur*, she is the 'secret spectator of the spectacle of the spaces and places of the city'" (Tester in Servinis 1998: 261). She "searches for meaning in the fleeting encounters and crowds of the city" (Servinis 1998: 261), possibly to grasp the 1989 massacre at Montréal's *École Polytechnique* which the text responds to. [431]

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[429] For a definition, see chapter 4 and Scott 1989: 47.
[430] Cf. Benjamin 1969 and 1999.
[431] Cf. <http://archives.radio-canada.ca/societe/criminalite_justice/dossiers/382/> (15 September 2009).

5.1 PERFORMING TRANSLATION

In her 1998 essay "My Montréal: Notes of an Anglo-Québécois Writer," Gail Scott illustrates Montréal's language demographics trying to "explain the unexplainable" (173) – her Québecitude in contrast to the notion of 'Canadian-ness' associated with her mother tongue, English. Montréal's cultural double consciousness serves as her example. Language choice and practices in the bilingual city are at the centre of her synopsis. Scott describes the historically grown urban divisions by way of a fictive walk with an American friend. The two start from the neighbourhood of Outremont and she leads him to the Main (*Boulevard Saint-Laurent*), and then continues from *Saint-Denis* to the gay village, thereby creating an exemplary trajectory of the passage from West to East, accompanied by notes on the literary and feminist histories of Montréal. Scott's objective is to explain to her friend from the U.S. that the city's divisions have their "roots […] in economics [and] in the politics of colonization" (Scott 1998: 173). By taking her visitor to "Montréal's multi-ethnic Main," (Scott 1998: 173) she wants to show him that "[a] French-speaking Montréal simply means multi-cultural with French as the common language" (Scott 1998: 173) – supposedly so, because at that point the unexplainable occurs. When she orders her beer in French, the Portuguese waiter notices her anglophone accent and "uncooperatively replies in English" (Scott 1998: 173). This situation illustrates how in French-speaking Montréal, as soon as it an English accent is detected in one of the speakers, English becomes the common language. This is

true for allophones and "[c]uriously, even young francophones, wishing to practice their second language" (Scott 1998: 173). "[I]n [*her*] Montréal," Scott continues, "it is [hence] impossible to treat language quite simply as a vehicle of communication" (Scott 1998: 174); it is always political.

The linguistic and cultural in-between of English-Québecitude manifests in her writing, which is "seeking to locate, semiotically, the unique sounds of a French-dominant multi-linguistic city" (Scott 2004: 22) and in which "French erupts into the English text, punctuating it, subverting the authority of both languages" (Scott 1998: 174).[432] As Scott juxtaposes different linguistic codes, she also compares and contrasts systems of thinking,[433] exploring the way in which "languages meet as syntax, sound, rhythm, as well as meaning, and how this meeting affects the narrative process" (Scott 1998: 175). In her essay "The Virgin Denotes Or the Unreliability of Adverbs To Do with Time," she states that she "wanted to create meanings at multiple sorts of intersections" (2002: 15) and, elsewhere, that she wants to construct "une voix qui reflète, dans la texture même du texte, dans la sonorité des phrases et de la langue, le lieu où les cultures se croisent" (Scott in Lane-Mercier 2005: 102).[434] Scott's writing self-consciously performs the lapsised dimension. It is grammatically, idiomatically, and semantically formed through the convergence of linguistic and cultural codes. Scott's narrations are discontinuous, her narrators porous.[435] Her English

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[432] Simon explains that Scott "wants her English to be 'punctured' by French, so that it becomes a local, minor language, demoted from its world status" (Scott in Simon 2002a: 18). I want to cross reference to chapter 3 and the notion of 'subversive resignifcation' at this point.
[433] Cf. Scott 1998.
[434] "[A] voice that reflects the space where cultures converge through the texture of the text itself and the sound of its phrases and language" (my translation).
[435] As Lane-Mercier puts it: The "sujet parlant, sujet écrivant et sujet lisant deviennent poreux […] où, du coup, les différences culturelles se négocient à partir de bases nouvelles" (Lane-Mercier

is continuously being "interrupt[ed], subvert[ed], [and] challenge[d]"; its position as "dominatrix" (Scott 1998: 178) is dislocated. It becomes a minority language within the marginal position of French in North America, which – in Québec – has local majority status.[436] For Scott to "grasp in writing the 'total' linguistic, social, geographical moment […] [, she] need[s] French to be dominant" (Scott 1998: 177) so it can "pénétrer [s]es pensées" (Scott 1997: 123).[437] According to Simon, "Scott uses French to defamiliarize English" (2006: 128). Scott claims in an interview with Amelia Schonbek in October 2010 that "[t]here's also a lot of translation that goes on in [her] work, from French especially."[438] In the essay "My Montréal," Scott performs a translation of the city. It should raise her interlocutor's awareness of the differences between cultures – not French and English, but Anglo-Québécois and Canadian – and the respective literary productions. As she notes, "[w]e are who we frequent" (1998: 175). This points to the fact that the French-speaking majority and the cultural and political discourses in Québec have an impact on the province's English-speaking minority. On an individual level, it refers to Scott's orientation toward the francophone community, her immersion with French cultural production, and to her own collaborations with predominantly Québécois contemporaries like Nicole Brossard.

Even though O'Neill's biography does not display affinities like these with francophone writers and their artistic circles, O'Neill still is part of the English-

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2005: 100). (The speaking/writing/reading subject becomes porous […] each time when, all of a sudden, the differences between cultures are redefined," my translation.)

[436] As Scott notes, "*in this town* [referring to Montréal] *everyone's a minority*" (1998: 5, emphasis in original).

[437] "Infiltrate her thoughts" (my translation).

[438] Cf. <http://maisonneuve.org/post/2010/10/28/conversationalist-interview-gail-scott/> (10 February 2014).

speaking minority of Québec and immersed in Montréal's quotidian life in French. Born in Montréal, she grew up in the state of Virginia, USA, and only returned to Québec "in the middle of childhood" (*LLC* "Meet Heather O'Neill" 3). In an interview with Kristin McHale for *Canadian Literature* in April 2007, O'Neill summarizes language use in Montréal as follows:

> [G]rowing up in Montreal a lot of people kind of waver back and forth – especially because a lot of people have one parent who's English and one who's French, and so some people start their life being francophone, but then they start moving more into English. […] [T]here's more of a fine line between the two – because I find there are a lot of high schools around where I live right now [on *Saint-Urbain* in the Mile End], and a lot of the kids, if you listen to them speak, it's like half in English and half in French. (2007: non. p.)

O'Neill's description is in line with what Sherry Simon reports about the Mile End in her introductory chapter to *Translating Montréal*: "[O]n the sidewalks teenagers start their sentences in one language and finish in another" (2006: 9-10). *Lullabies for Little Criminals* reiterates this observation – uncannily so, as O'Neill claims she actually "describe[s] Montreal the way that [she] saw it when [she] was twelve, not the actual physical place" of the present day; actually, she "had to close [her] eyes to see Montreal as it is in the book" (*LLC* "Putting together a Robot Without an Instruction Manual." 9). When O'Neill was a young teenager in the 1980s, Montréal had just enacted Bill 101 and was overcoming the aftermath of the first referendum. A hyper-consciousness about language prevailed. In contrast, *Lullabies for Little Criminals* presents a post-linguistic city that is not defined against the backdrop of languages. Montréal, here, does not constantly get historicised like in the majority of literary productions at the time the novel is set. What is more, the text transcends cultural translation. According to Beneventi, it actually "restag[es] […] contemporary Montreal in a strikingly

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new and audacious way" (2012: 265). It articulates the city "from the vantage point of the dispossessed, the poor, the excluded, [and] the exploited" (Beneventi 2012: 265). Notions of 'Canadian-ness' and 'Québecitude' are not significant to Baby, who cannot be culturally located as Canadian or Québécois. Her mother tongues are Jules's junkie jargon ("Jules and his friends had been calling heroin chocolate milk for years" *LLC* 10) and Alphonse's lullabies. Ideologically motivated language wars are non-existent in Baby's world and marginalisation refers to the underprivileged populations of the city, regardless of their linguistic code. As Beneventi continues, there actually is a "linguistic and spatial indeterminacy in the novel" (2012: 282) which "underline[s] the inbetween space of the city where language separations have melted into shapelessness" (Simon in Beneventi 2012: 282). Sherry Simon illustrates this shapelessness elsewhere with en example taken from architecture in the Mile End, which is "a compelling image of cultural hybridity" (2003: 107) and "a crossroads of cultures" (2003: 107). The cosmopolitan neighbourhoods of Montréal, she goes on, with their "multilingualism and mixed identities" (Simon 2006: 10) give rise to "new kinds of citizenship" (Simon 2006: 10) and "hybrid forms of communication" (Simon 2006: 17) beyond translation practices. O'Neill's text demonstrates these aspects of 'hybridity' as inherent to the realm of *dimension lapsisée*.

Traditionally, the part of the city east of *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* has been French-speaking. This is where most of *Lullabies for Little Criminals* is set, but in fact, "all the characters in the book [speak] English" (McHale 2007: non. p.). At the same time, O'Neill points out in an interview, "a lot of people have French

names" (McHale 2007: non. p.). McHale wonders if "Baby's father's name [is] Jules, or *Jules* maybe" (2007: non. p., my emphasis). Sherry Simon is similarly unsure about the pronunciation of his name: "Mais, dit-on Jules, à l'anglaise ou Jules à la française?" (Simon 2010: 137),[439] she asks in her article entitled "Montréal en marge: Le boulevard Saint-Laurent revisité" (2013). At the end of the book, Jules switches to French seemingly naturally and without translation – after having spoken English throughout the whole story. At a closer look, Jules's English is not idiomatic, though. In the first chapter, for example, he happily exclaims: "We're *localized* here!" (*LLC* 5, my emphasis)[440] This is a *calque* from French – '*être localisé-e*' in the sense of 'being situated' or 'settled.'[441] The Saxon genitive used in the phrase "Jules's friend Lester" (*LLC* 5) a bit earlier in the same chapter does not determine if the name is to be understood in its English or French variant either. The ambiguity of the name's articulation rather supports what Simon calls the linguistic interferences[442] of the narrative. According to the Canadian Press Stylebook, "Jules's" can be used for pronunciation purposes – /JULEZIZ/ – and does not necessarily confirm that the -s is added because of a French phonetic realization of the name 'Jules.' Born and raised in the imaginary "Val de Loups, about an hour outside of Montréal" (*LLC* 19), Jules moved to Montréal after the death of Baby's mother. At the end of the book, when he takes her to his cousin, he tells Baby what really happened

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[439] "But is 'Jules' pronounced English or French" (my translation)?
[440] Cf. Simon 2010: 137-138.
[441] For more information on *calques*, code switching, and borrowings in Québec English, see Poplack et al. 2006: 195 and chapter 2.6. of this dissertation.
[442] Cf. Simon, Sherry. "Montreal Marginalities." *Contested Spaces*. Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke. 2008. Speech.

to her mother. The fact that she was francophone is revealed at this point.[443]

Manon Tremblay – according to Jules "a crazy *Frenchman* through and through"

(*LLC* 328, my emphasis)[444] – had died in a car accident at the age of sixteen,

when she was "seulement *une* bébé" (*LLC* 328, my emphasis)[445] herself. The

gender inversion here ('baby' is masculine in French, '*un bébé*') is only one lapse

amongst many others that Jules produces when he speaks French. He even

comments on the quality of his French himself: "If anyone from the French

embassy came and heard what *we*'re doing to the French language out here, I

don't know what they'd say" (*LLC*, 327, my emphasis). The 'we' might indicate

that he belongs to the francophone community.

Now that he lives in Montréal, Jules seems to predominantly use the

English language though, and "Baby [is] speaking about learning French as a

second language at school" (McHale 2007: non. p.). However, she also mentions

"son roman préféré, *L'Avalée des avalées* de Réjean Ducharme" (Simon 2010:

137).[446] Jules, when he picks her up from the foster home "in a little town just

outside of Val des Loups" (*LLC* 25), reminds Baby that when she was younger,

they would sing the song "*Dialogue des Amoureux*" (*LLC* 49)[447] together. The

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[443] Cf. <http://canlit.ca/interviews/3> (10 February 2014).
[444] Both of the names Manon and Tremblay are typically francophone Québécois. The Christian name 'Manon' (diminutive of Marie) is decidedly French and has no equivalent in English. 'Tremblay' is the most common surname in the province of Québec. According to its genealogy and history, there was only one Frenchman who brought this name to the New World. Pierre Tremblay and his wife Ozanne Achon founded with their twelve children the biggest '*famille-souche*' in North America. For further information, see <http://www.nosorigines.qc.ca/genealogiehistoirefamilles.aspx?fid=1093&lng=fr> (10 February 2014).
[445] "[O]nly a baby" (my translation).
[446] "[H]er favourite narrative *The Swallower Swallowed* by Rejéan Ducharme" (my translation). Ducharme's text is a Québécois classic. Its role in *Lullabies for Little Criminals* will be discussed in this chapter's part on intertextuality.
[447] "*Lovers' Dialogue*" (my translation).

linguistic porosity[448] or "*porosité de la différence*" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 104, emphasis in original)[449] of Jules and Baby's idiom is emphasized by the on and off of translations given (or not) when Jules speaks – or sings – in French. The song *Dialogue des Amoureux* by the Québécois singer and songwriter Félix Leclerc is actually mentioned twice in the text: the first time, Jules translates its lyrics for his daughter. This seems redundant, however, as at the same time he says to Baby that "when you were seven years old, you used to sing this song" (*LLC* 49); the second time, Baby recognizes the song on the radio: "It was an old Félix Leclerc song. 'When I don't love you anymore, so as to let you know, I'll be wearing my hat'" (*LLC* 312). At this point, she quotes it in English and, hence, in translation as the song originally is in French. While O'Neill's text is in English and only shows rare linguistic digressions into French, similar to Scott's writing, it shows features of an implicit preceding translating process performed by the translating-writing subject. French works itself into the rhythm, tone, and construction of its prose, creating interlinguistic contact zones.[450] An example for such an infiltration that illustrates these linguistic interferences[451] is Jules's calqued '*on est localisé*' that I explained above. Together with the reference to Leclerc's lyrics in English, this is an aspect that gives away what O'Neill states in one of her interviews, namely that most of the characters of her text are "probably French and speaking in French but it's done in translation" (McHale 2007: non. p.).

Lullabies for Little Criminals and *Main Brides* hence represent what Gillian

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[448] Cf. Simon 2008.
[449] "[P]orosity of difference" (my translation).
[450] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 100.
[451] Cf. Simon 2008.

Lane-Mercier calls "une nouvelle tendance au sein des lettres canadiennes [et québécoises]: le roman bilingue anglais-français" (2005: 98).[452] They emerge from the multilingual English and French milieu of Montréal's borderlands, which is "un espace sémantique dissensuel où rien n'est encore gagné" (Lane-Mercier 2007/08: 31).[453] The cultural imaginary of this realm is in continual translation and transformation, as I outline in this chapter. The earlier *Main Brides* critically exposes "l'existence de frontières (esthétiques, économiques, institutionnelles, géographiques, linguistiques, identitaires) censées assurer une habitabilité et des processus de subjectivation normés" (Lane-Mercier 2007/08 35).[454] Jennifer Henderson labels the book as a "post-identity narrative" (2002: 72). The more recent *Lullabies for Little Criminals* uncovers "des lignes de démarcation qui ne sont pas toujours là où on les attendait" (Leclerc 2007/08: 78).[455] Robert Schwartzwald speaks of a post-linguistic and post-bicultural Montréal in this context.[456] Together, both texts are part of an "emergent postmodernist canon of Canadian literature" (Sojka 1998: 151), which has been stimulated by feminist Canadian and Québécois collaborations since the late 1970s. Lane-Mercier claims that

> la présence du français dans [c]es romans permet d'exposer le caractère idéaliste et élitiste du bilinguisme officiel qui continue à servir les institutions politiques et culturelles canadiennes en reconduisant, grâce à la traduction […], le monolinguisme et le monoculturalisme qu'il est censé

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[452] "[A] new tendency in Canadian [and Québécois] literature: the bilingual English and French narrative" (my translation).

[453] "[A] dissensual semantic space where nothing is gained yet" (my translation).

[454] "[T]he existence of borders (aesthetical, economical, institutional, geographical, linguistic, and of identity) that are supposed to reassure habitability and normalising processes of sujectivation" (my translation).

[455] "[D]ividing lines that are not always where they are expected to be" (my translation).

[456] Cf. Schwartzwald 2008. Simon confirms that "[t]he social geography of Montreal has loosened up considerably, and the city today is diverse and cosmopolitan" (2002a: 16).

combattre. (2005: 100-101).[457]

While the translation of writing rehabilitates monolingualism, the writing in translation and the awareness of untranslatability transcend it.[458] The dynamics seen in bilingual/multilingual English and French texts like those of Scott and O'Neill highlight the space of difference between borders and what makes this in-between space special compared to others.[459] It embodies "translation as a permanent condition – where languages are always unsettled and precarious" (Simon 2002a: 22). It also deconstructs Canada's official bilingualism, and has animated recent debates about labels like 'Anglo-Québécois,' 'Anglo-Quebec' and 'English Québec writing'[460] in contrast to both Canadian and Québécois literary production. Ultimately, these discussions shift the centre of interest to the notion of canon making and, in particular, to the framing conditions and factors.[461]

The category 'Anglo-Québécois'[462] mediates the differences between English language and culture in Canada and Québec. In regard to Québec, Scott's 'minorised' English makes visible to anglophone readers to which extent their language is multiple and instable in the province, how its sound is different

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[457] "[T]he presence of French in these narratives allows for a demonstration of the idealist and elitist character of the official bilingualism that continues to serve Canadian political and cultural institutions by maintaining, thanks to the practice of translation, the monolingualism and monoculturalism that it is supposed to counter" (my translation).

[458] According to Jenny S. Spencer, "[w]ithout translation, a transformative encounter with otherness cannot occur" (2007: 391). For a full discussion, see Spencer, Jenny S. "Performing Translation in Contemporary Anglo-American Drama." *Theatre Journal* 59.3 (2007): 389-410. Print.

[459] According to Simon, Montréal is a "space of multiple, proliferating differences. As such, the translational texture of Montreal life encourages forms of expression that suspend resolution" (Simon 2002a: 19).

[460] Cf. Coleman, Patrick. "A Context for Conversation?: Reading Jeffrey Moore's The Memory Artists as Anglo-Quebec Literature." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 46.3 (2012): 204-224. Print. And Simon 2002a: 22. As well as Lane-Mercier 2005: 104.

[461] For a discussion of the possible parameters of an Anglo-Québec canon, see Coleman, Patrick 2012.

[462] As outlined in chapter 2., I opt for the term "Anglo-Québécois."

and how it has lost its majority status.[463] A 21st-century example of this specific

tone of Québec English is O'Neill's language practice in *Lullabies for Little

Criminals*. *Calques* and non-idiomatic speech have the English Canadian reader

come across moments of otherness that destabilize the construction of a

coherent pan-Canadian sameness of English. What Lane-Mercier states on

Scott and her narrators is applicable to Baby as well:

> [L]a présence implicite de rythmes et constructions propres au français
> engendre des effets de traduction et de bilinguisme plus ou moins
> perceptibles, tel un léger accent qui trouble la langue de la narratrice […].
> Non seulement cette présence sonore sous l'anglais atteste de l'influence
> de la langue et de la culture québécoises […], mais elle dénote le
> contexte essentiellement francophone dans lequel la narratrice vit"
> (2010/11: 137).[464]

In *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, rhythms and accents are not only implicit but

actually fully integrated (hence Schwartzwald's categorisation of the book as

post-linguistic). Jules's code switching is not always metalinguistically

commented on (by Baby) and there is no comment on his accent which

suggests that he speaks both English and French without any remarkable

patterns of pronunciation. Scott, on the other hand, makes metalinguistic

awareness to one of the subjects of her text. The French passages in *Main

Brides* are like palimpsests or traces of interlingual processes, sometimes

constituting an incomplete or pending, intercultural exchange.[465] Language use

and its function in the construction of subjectivity as a process and in layers of

performativity are rendered highly self-reflexive in the text.

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[463] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 101.

[464] "[T]he implicit presence of idiosyncratic French rhythms and constructions engenders more or less perceptible effects of translation and bilingualism, like a subtle accent that troubles the language of the narrator […]. Not only does this sonorous presence beneath the English attest the influence Québécois language and culture has […], but it indicates the essentially francophone context in which the narrator lives" (my translation).

[465] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 111, and also Servinis, Ellen. "Urban Space and Barstool *flânerie* in Gail Scott's *Main Brides*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 23.1 (1998): 250-263. Print.

In "My Montréal," Scott claims that in her city "accents are detected before you open your mouth: a haircut, an item of clothing, a gesture can give you away" (1998: 174).[466] Her voyeuristic narrator Lydia uses these cultural markers to put labels onto passers-by on *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*. According to their appearances – and her own personal and cultural experience and framing – Lydia classifies them ethnically as either Canadian, Québécois ("You've always noticed, in Québec, the better posture of the French" *MB* 77) or of European, for example Portuguese, descent. As noted above, she does not only spot and categorise them, but actually re-invents herself through the stories she projects on them. The seven brides she imagines have all experienced violence imposed by men. With each story, Lydia elaborates on the portraits of her characters in more detail. In the first episode, Lydia's immediate reality and the fiction she creates are particularly blurred. "Nanette" (*MB* 12) is a girl in the bar. Lydia observes her: "Soon she'll be imagining the girl is one of those runaways you read about in *La Presse*" (*MB* 16, emphasis in original). The "Main Bride" that "remembers Halifax" (*MB* 37) in the second episode is a girl spending her time in a Kingston motel room "working up the memory" (*MB* 57) of her affair with an officer. The third section is about a woman named May and her sister on a trip to Cuba to forget an attack: "*Ici, c'est automatiquement 10 ans de prison si on touche à une fille comme ça*" (*MB* 75).[467] The "Canadian Girls" (*MB* 105) is a section about a lesbian couple, L. and M., who are "as different as Canada and Québec" (*MB* 121). The next passage – again in a blur between Lydia's reality,

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[466] Scott notes elsewhere: "[T]he (bilingual) body knows both dress codes intimately and is aware of how each culture reads them" (1989: 46).
[467] "In this country, you would get 10 years of prison for touching a girl like that" (my translation). For an extensive discussion, see Henderson 2002: 91-94.

memories, and fictions – constructs the story of "Z. (who lives over the sign shop)" (*MB* 138). She "was never intimate with anyone, at least in English" (*MB* 157) and had "[t]he same eyes in all the faces of her various incarnations. Female junkie. *Vogue* model. Pisces woman. Aging punk" (*MB* 139, emphasis in original).[468] The "Donkey riding" (*MB* 169) Norma jean in the following passage unmistakably resembles Marilyn Monroe:[469] "An almost sly smile played on Lydia's pale lips […]. She should have known this woman was fake. She could almost be a drag queen" (*MB* 173). The seventh and last episode "Night Music (3 Scenes in 4 Acts)" (*MB* 201) elaborates a story on a radio DJ.[470] Her name is Cello and she commemorates the *École Polytechnique* massacre: "Ce tango est dédié aux filles du 6 décembre" (*MB* 205).[471]

Lydia "proves to be an interesting character" (Wunker 2004: 66), as Wunker puts it. She is egocentric and narcissistic: "[O]n the wall, a MOLSON sign half-blinking, so all you see is 'MOI'" (*MB* 162). She is hyper-aware of her looks and her gestures: "She lights a cigarette, raising downy neck from crisp, white blouse in a gesture of composure. So her hair, auburn, pulled back a little, her red lips on creamy skin, provide a handsome profile" (*MB* 10).[472] And she is highly conscious of her writing practice: "Lydia […] returns to her portrait: anecdotal fragments organized – but not too rigorously – with a little space

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[468] For an account on Z.'s identity through Judith Butler's theory of performativity, see Henderson 2002: 97-98.
[469] Cf. *MB* 173.
[470] Cf. also Servinis 1998: 256-260.
[471] "This tango is dedicated to the girls of December 6" (my translation). Cf. Servinis 1998: 255-256 and the last section of this chapter.
[472] For a discussion of Lydia as a "stereotypically seductive, fashion conscious Montrealer" (Servinis 1998: 252), see Servinis 1998: 251-253.

around them to open possibilities" (*MB* 167).[473] Due to Scott's narrative strategy that combines "[i]ncompletion, gaps, digressions, parentheses, versions […] [,] holes[,] and patches" (Godard 2002: 139), Lydia's "actions are sometimes blurred with the other wom[e]n" (Wunker 2004: 62) she describes – in the bar, on the sidewalk, and of the portraits. The first paragraph of the second section entitled "(the sky is what I want)" exemplifies that "[o]occasional clients […] confuse[d] her with a Portuguese woman. […] Dressed in crisp white blouse, slim skirt, like Lydia" (*MB* 31). In the chapter called "Donkey Riding," Lydia's portrait and her immediate setting converge into a scene of encounter: "Perhaps she didn't really see Norma jean walking towards her. Norma jean standing at her table. Looking at her through green eyes set in white white skin, a tiny unpretentious mole above her pretty lips" (*MB* 196). Perhaps she saw herself, I suggest, as the first section on Lydia discloses "[e]yes (*green*, a woman's)" (*MB* 10). Lydia absorbs traits and habits from passers-by to an extent that is "confusing not only the reader, but also Lydia herself" (Wunker 2004: 62). Who is the original and who the copy? I claim that Lydia performs a translation of her surroundings and that she comes into being through what Godard calls "transformance" (2002: 46).[474] She seems to be "fluently bilingual" (Wunker 2004: 62) and, as she absorbs the "cacophony of the bar" (*MB* 100), she "oscillates between languages" (Wunker 2004: 62). She engages in a "processus d'écoute de la ville qu'elle habite et des langues qui s'y déploient, avec leurs sonorités,

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[473] For an account on narcissism, narrative, and identity, see Hutcheon, Linda 1980 (in particular chapters one, three, and nine).
[474] Cf. also Homel and Simon 1988.

rythmes, densités, inflexions, tensions" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 101).[475] From this borderlands location, where "the interface between languages becomes a creative space" (Simon 2002a: 17), Wunker claims, "Lydia, the purported creator of the text, fabricates the other characters in the work" (2004: 64). Yet, boundaries are unclear as Lydia herself at the same time comes into existence through these characters; she, hence, "operates as though between bodies" (Wunker 2004: 62).[476]

As the title of Scott's text and its chapter titles suggest, supposedly the Main brides are the main subjects of the story; Lydia's subjectivity, though it is decisive, exists in brackets only: "(the sky is what I want)." According to Godard, Lydia functions as a "parenthetical remark" and "multiply articulated as the narrative centre, [she], dissolves into her seven 'brides'" (2002: 139). She "is a subject-effect produced through reading" (Godard 2002: 124) as the following excerpt from the text exemplifies: "[S]he could be here for hours. Sitting quietly in the heat. Smoking cigarettes and watching other people. *As if imagining their stories*. Possibly, to counter some vague sense of emptiness. Or else – to forget." (*MB* 10, my emphasis) Scott's narrating protagonist who, according to Henderson, does not have a "proper identity" (2002: 73), or to be more precise, whose "identity is a permanently unsettling question" (2002: 74), comes in layers of performativity. 'She' – be it the narrator or (her) identity in general – "is a text and not an originary consciousness" (Henderson 2002: 75). Any notion of an

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[475] "[I]n a process of listening to the city she lives in and its languages, the way they diffuse, their sonorities, rhythms, densities, inflections, [and] tensions" (my translation). Simon also points out the fact that Scott seeks "to write English 'with the sound of French' in her ear" (Scott in Simon 2002a: 18).
[476] Godard refers to the in-between of bodies and the linguistic construction of subjectivity as "boundary play" (2002: 138) meaning the "the relation between language and the human body" (2002: 138). As mentioned above, Wunker explores the boundary not between Lydia and her brides, but the narrator and the reader in a similar way as "borderline oscillation" (2004: 55).

essential self is neglected and substituted by "possibilities for self-invention" (Henderson 2002: 72). Scott confirms in "My Montréal" that her "writing is performance" (175) and thereby insists on "a politics that brings together a re-thinking of identity in terms of performative production" (Henderson 2002: 96). As Moyes concludes, Scott's "[w]riting is not the expression or representation of something within the writing subject (which one?) but rather 'staged words'" (2007/08: 14). These words construct Lydia's subjectivity. Towards the end of *Main Brides*, Lydia then counts herself among her brides: She "lights a cigarette (trembling a little). Looking out towards the roofs, gaily trimmed in readiness for a party of her 'brides.' *Including Lydia (the portrait)*" (*MB* 197, my emphasis).

5.2 REVISING BORDERLANDS

The concept of 'borderlands' that Chicana feminist writer and poet Gloria Anzaldúa explores in her text *Borderlands/La Frontera*,[477] stands for a "vague and undetermined place" that "is in a constant state of transition" (25). As outlined earlier, Anzaldúa discusses *la frontera* between Mexico and the United States in particular as a crossroads of North American Spanish and English languages and cultures. Yet, borderlands are "physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other" (Anzaldúa 1999: 19). They incite translation. Sherry Simon underlines:

> A map of [border] crossings would show not only the directions but also the degrees of translation. At the extremities, translation is cool. Closer to zones of contact, it is more volatile and tends to overstep its bounds – to

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[477] For an extensive discussion, see subchapter 2.1.

operate above or below the norm, as *appropriation* or *hybridity* (Simon 2002a: 17, my emphasis).

In the case of Montréal, the "two languages [that] intermingle" (Simon 2002a: 15) are English and French. The two cultures Canadian and Québécois. As the title of *Main Brides* indicates, the borderlands space of Scott's Montréal is 'the Main', *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*.[478] More specifically – and closest to the contact zone or, rather, right in it – it is the bar *La Cabane*, where the text is set and which "functions as a linguistically desegregated space where cultures intermingle and the borders between become blurred" (Wunker 2004: 61). Scott is "an anglophone writer who wishes to write with the sound of French in [her] ear" (1998: 174). Her "English is infiltrated by French" (Simon 2002a: 15) and becomes "a stylized idiom, reflecting the influence on Scott of her francophone" (Simon 2002a: 18) environment. Her narrator Lydia switches to French mainly during speech acts – imaginative ("A voice saying '*à chaque fois que je passe par là j'ai une lueur d'espoir*'" MB 130)[479] or real ("'Un carafon,' Lydia calls" *MB* 63)[480]; she performs anglophone and francophone at the same time thereby creating a notion of 'hybridity.' Its components remain transparent and traceable: "slightly English accent when speaking French" (*MB* 138).

In *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, hybridity manifests slightly differently. For example, Baby appropriates French syntax and morphology as in "Johnny started referring to Felix and me as nerd and nerd*ette*" (*LLC* 63). She integrates the French suffix -*ette* to feminise – which would be a regular practice in English,

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[478] As Godard puts it: "The Main, Montreal's *movable* site of the in-between, between French and English, […] space of phantasmatic figurations of identity" (2002: 129, my emphasis). For a discussion of the Main as a gendered space, see Servinis 1998: 251-253.

[479] "[E]ach time that I pass by there I have a glimmer of hope" (my translation).

[480] "A carafe" (my translation).

were the word 'nerd' a French loan in the first place. Here, however, it is added

to an English noun and marks an overgeneralisation of rules due to perpetual

language contact in the borderlands. What is English and what is French gets

confused except when direct references to French grammar are given (for

example, a "white pigeon [is] flawlessly conjugating French verbs" (*LLC* 286)

when Baby is high on heroin) and a specific pronunciation is pointed out (when

Jules reads to her from *Tintin* with "a Parisian accent" (*LLC* 168) as opposed to a

Québécois one). These meta-linguistic remarks remain rare in O'Neill's text,

however, and operate on the content level. In Scott,

> l'identité bilingue des narratrices et de certains personnages relève de
> cette esthétique de la suture déjà évoquée où se donnent à écouter des
> dérapages parfois infimes […], souvent ironisés […], toujours
> symptomatiques d'une performance imparfaite, d'une jointure mal
> ajustée, d'une blessure mal cicatrisée, ou encore d'un bruit souterrain
> (sous-cutané) sur le point de faire irruption (Lane-Mercier 2010/11: 136).[481]

As such, Lydia's comments are political. The translational elements in the

borderlands of *Main Brides* and *Lullabies for Little Criminals* are hence phase-

delayed. While they are both the result of transnational spheres (anglophone –

francophone) that sustain hybrid discourses (Anglo-Québécois) in which

hegemonic structures are subverted (gender, class) and subjectivity gets re-

invented (Lydia, Baby), they are different in their expression. O'Neill's post-

linguistic borderlands emerge from a different border. Her "shifting sites of

transition [...], where space is contested" (Fellner 2006: 70) refer to borderlands

as primarily socially dynamic zones of "contest, […] flux, and […] change"

(Fellner 2006: 69).

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[481] "[T]he bilingual identity of the narrator and certain characters comes from this aforementioned aesthetic of linguistic stitching, where language slips can be heard: sometimes slight, often ironized, but always a symptom of an imperfect performance, a badly aligned joint, a poorly healed scar, or a subterranean (subcutaneous) noise about to erupt" (my translation).

Baby's descriptions of the city are based on her own mental map, which reconstructs Montréal's topography according to a twelve-year-old. On the one hand, her father takes her to various places and, on the other hand, she wanders the streets on her own.[482] The trajectory of apartments she passage-like lives in starts at "L'Hôtel Austriche" (*LLC* 2, sic), which is supposedly on the corner of *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* and *Sainte-Catherine*.[483] This place is significant to the linguistic imaginary of Baby's Montréal as, right away in the beginning, it locates the setting of the story in a space of language lapse. As Simon observes:

> [U]ne étrange erreur langagière [se manifeste] au début du roman, quand Baby et son père émménagent pour une énième fois dans un hôtel délabré du centre-ville, hôtel qu'elle appelle 'Austriche'. Ni Autriche, ni *ostrich*, le mot constitue un étrange amalgame – Austriche (2010: 137, emphasis in original).[484]

Baby translates the supposedly French name as "the Austrian Hotel" (*LLC* 2), correcting her father's reading of it as 'ostrich,' the English pronunciation of what the sign of the hotel says, 'Austriche.' However, Austria in French is *Autriche*. Is this linguistic amalgamation an error of Jules, Baby or O'Neill? Or is it even on the sign? According to Simon, it might denote "une certaine negligence qui aurait échappé aux correcteurs d'épreuve du roman, mais peut-être aussi une manière de souligner cet entre-deux de la ville où les barrières linguistiques se sont dissoutes dans une sorte d'informité" (O'Neill 2008: 2 in 2010: 137)[485].

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[482] Beneventi confirms that "[i]n O'Neill's novel, specific sites in Montreal's urban topography are seen from the point of view of a child; the spaces of poverty that Baby occupies signal moments of social and psychological constriction, as the indeterminacy of the streetscape" (2012: 269).
[483] Cf. *LLC* 5.
[484] "[A] bizarre linguistic error shows in the beginning of the narrative, when Baby and her father move for the umpteenth time, this time to a run-down hotel downtown that she [Baby] calls Austriche. Neither Austria nor ostrich, the word represents a strange amalgamation – Austriche" (my translation).
[485] "[A] certain negligence regarding the proof-readers of the novel, or a way to underline this in-between of the city where linguistic barriers have disappeared into some sort of absence of form" (my translation).

Referring to another of Simon's theories, I propose that this is a case of "perverse translation" (Simon 2006: 119). Located in the 'in-between,' where "languages are crossed and mixed" (Simon 2006: 120), the "Austriche" hotel is an example for "interlinguistic creation" (Simon 2006: 120) and "playful creativity" (Simon 2006: 119). The wordplay establishes a linguistically uncertain space that is reiterated by the dissonance of English-speaking characters, which predominantly have French names (Alphonse, Xavier, Zoë, etc). I consider this as another indicator of the lapsised dimension.

In the chapter with the same title, Jules moves to "Napoleon Street" with Baby, who claims, that "[y]ou could walk to the river from where we lived" (*LLC* 52). Distances are hardly accurate in Baby's fictional Montréal as either end of Napoléon Street, which crosses the Plateau from east to west starting at Parc Lafontaine, is not within walking distance from the shore of the Saint-Lawrence River. In the following chapter, "Going to war," the distances Baby describes are not reliable, either. Simon notes that "les lieux subséquents perdent de leur sens puisqu'une certaine fusion est opérée entre des sites de l'est de la ville et d'autres pouvant se situer autour du canal Lachine ou de NDG" (2010: 137).[486] *Notre-Dame-de-Grâce* fits the imaginary of the text because, first, it is historically a more anglophone and immigrant community and, second, "[b]ack in the 1980s, [it] was an inner-city zone more often called by its unofficial name, No Damn Good" (Waters 2006a: non. p.). Baby's other descriptions of Montréal convey a typical image and "[c]e flou géographique installe alors un aspect

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[486] "[T]he following places lose their meaning as a certain fusion takes place between sites in the east of the city and others that could be located around the Lachine canal or NDG" (my translation).

nébuleux dans la narration qui, par ailleur, s'avère […] lucide" (Simon 2010: 137)[487] as illustrated in the following passage:

> Christophe Colomb, which was about seven or eight blocks east of St. Laurent […] was a much more residential street. We moved into the only apartment building on the block. The rest of the houses had colourful turrets and wooden eaves on them. It was the first street that I lived on that had a lot of trees (*LLC* 94).

However, the city appears spatially reduced and even if Baby keeps walking, she always seems to stay in the same sector: "right on busy St. Laurent and St. Catherine" (*LLC* 5), close to "St. Louis Square, a lowlife park off St. Denis Street" (*LLC* 53)[488] and "on St. Hubert Street, a little street off St. Catherine" (*LLC* 287). While at the beginning and at the end of the story Baby clearly circulates around the areas of *Sainte-Catherine* and *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* as well as *Carré Saint-Louis*, her map of Montréal across the text creates an amalgamation with places similar to that of languages given in the example of the Austriche hotel. Baby mixes Montréal neighbourhoods and has them appear smaller and closer to each other in her retrospective. The vision of Montréal's geography and urban spaces is, hence, fragmented beyond the conventional vertical division of the city and obliterates the dichotomizing topography constructed elsewhere.

Even if at the beginning of the first chapter entitled "Life with Jules" Baby acknowledges that "St. Laurent Street […] ran right through Montreal, dividing its east and west section,"[489] she does not link the division to Montréal's history in and of two languages and cultures. She rather makes an observation and

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[487] "[T]his geographical indeterminateness creates a confusion in the storyline that contrasts with the otherwise very lucid conscious of the narrator" (my translation).
[488] In the lyrics of a song and tribute to O'Neill's novel and Anglo-Montréal literature, singer-songwriter Mike Rud names Saint-Louis Square "that needle park," (<http://notesonmontreal.com/lyrics-booklet/>, 30 March 2014) referring to the place's reputation as one of the city's points of drug traffic and (ab)use.
[489] For an image, see Simon 2006: 5.

thereby "puise dans la mythologie de la ville – exploitant la résonance symbolique de Saint-Laurent" (Simon 2010: 138).[490] She mentions the "French newspapers of the district" (*LLC* 6) which do not offer international news, because "if you never thought about Paris, you'd never think about how you were so far away from there" (*LLC* 6). *Lullabies for Little Criminals* thereby places itself in a typical Montréal literary context at the same time as it subverts the topography of a polarizing linguistic axis perpetuated by this discourse. The text repeats and reiterates the imaginary of *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* in a subversive, performative, and stylized form. It mainly focuses on the character of Boulevard Saint-Laurent and its association with sexuality.[491] The struggle in O'Neill's text is about quotidian survival in a world of prostitution, Montréal's underworld, and an unbalanced hierarchical social class system beyond the economic divide based on linguistic terms: French – English and poor – rich. In the Montréal of Baby, two realities take turns, but they are not anglophone and francophone. Alternately, Baby is a high school student dating her classmate Xavier and a child prostitute working for and seeing Alphonse. These parallel worlds and the itineraries of Baby's night strolls cover up the traditional binary of Montréal.

Lullabies for Little Criminals hence exposes the margins of society and gives voice to the subaltern.[492] In turning to Luise Flotow's article "Legacies of Quebec women's écriture au feminin: bilingual transformances, translation, politicized subaltern versions of the text of the street," (1996) I suggest to read

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[490] "[U]sing the mythology of the city – exploiting the symbolic resonance of St-Laurent" (my translation).
[491] Cf. Simon 2008.
[492] This term was taken up by Gayatri Spivak from Marxist theory. For details on the concept in the field of Post-Colonial Studies, see Spivak, Gayatri. C. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1998. 271-313. Print.

O'Neill's text together with a corpus of francophone writing in Québec set in the same period and with what Von Flotow coins "texts of the street" (1996). My aim is to engage in "a reading of the languages of the street, where they meet and don't produce immediate sense, are over-charged or under-rated" (Scott in Lane-Mercier 2010/11: 138) to illustrate how Baby construes – or translates – Montréal from the point of view of the subaltern, a perspective that supplants the city's linguistic division and, thereby, revises its borderlands. Under-privileged by her social background (in the end of the novel she states that "[f]or the past year, [she]'d known that [she] was from an unstable home" *LLC* 301), Baby struggles through a labyrinth of situations from which there seems to be no escape. As Mike Rud comments Jules's role as a father in his song inspired by Baby: "Clearly that's no way to raise a girl." Her initial poverty[493] is aggravated by alcohol and drug abuse,[494] violence,[495] and prostitution as the text unfolds.[496] Similar to the francophone characters analysed by Von Flotow, "movement, if any, is circular" (1996 non. p.). *Lullabies for Little Criminals* associates with a movement of francophone women writers of the 1990s that "concern themselves with the urban underside of Montreal" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). O'Neill's narrator Baby can be read along with Anne Dandurand's and Claire De's protagonists as well as those of Hélène Monette, Danielle Roger, and Flora Balzano, that Von Flotow discusses in her article; all of these subjects exist "on the margins of bourgeois society" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.).[497] The francophone

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[493] For an example cf. *LLC* 2.
[494] For an example cf. *LLC* 181.
[495] For an example cf. *LLC* 124.
[496] For an example cf. *LLC* 219.
[497] When Baby takes her boyfriend Xavier to the place she shares with Alphonse, she exclaims to him "Don't be so *bourgeois* [!] […] It's all we can afford right now" (*LLC* 302, my emphasis).

authors listed here develop personae that, as Von Flotow summarises, "move through grubby alleys, dingy bars and tacky living quarters […] [,] rarely able to leave the vicious circles in which they are enmeshed" (non. p.). This description resonates with Baby and her chthonian flâneries.[498]

Lullabies for Little Criminals pursues its francophone contemporaries in so far as it is a "feminist translation of [a] young [girl's] experiences in contemporary Quebec" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). Although differently from *écriture au feminin* in its 1970s form,[499] this later generation of Québec women writing – including the text by O'Neill – contributes to a feminist project by way of an "exploration of the gendered subaltern consciousness underlying [its] practice" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). As Von Flotow emphasises, "[s]ince neither language nor writing is ever neutral, the focus on [a girl] 'on the margins' […] represents an ideological choice" (non. p.). Like her francophone contemporaries, the anglophone O'Neill deliberately decides to translate a specific text of the street[500] and she is highly conscious of its location in the borderlands. Whereas the generation of *écriture au féminin*[501] authors like Nicole Brossard, France Théoret, and Gail Scott expressed their emancipated position on a formal level and through experimental writing featuring extensive intra- and interlinguistic language play, this later generation of women – francophone and anglophone – tells stories in a narrative mode and "[t]he 'communicative' or more easily accessible aspect of [their] prose stands in direct contrast to the opaque stylistics of [their] 'écriture au féminin' precursors" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). This applies for *Lullabies for*

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[498] This also reminds of Beneventi, Domenic A. 2012.
[499] Cf. chapter 3.
[500] Cf. Von Flotow 1996 non p.
[501] For a definition, see chapter 3 and Scott 1989: 116.

Little Criminals in comparison with Scott's *Main Brides*. The latter, considered as an avant-garde text, creates "des zones textuelles potentiellement opaques [et] incompréhensibles" (2010/11: 137)[502] through its oftentimes shifting translation and writing strategies. Yet, the readability of O'Neill's novel does not necessarily mean simple surface messages.[503] On the contrary, the implicit feminism of current Québécois as well as Anglo-Québécois women's literature demonstrates the location from which intrinsically revised subjectivities are constructed.

Brossard, Théoret, and Scott are feminists and activists of the Quiet Revolution that experiment with various modernist and post-modern discourses of emancipation.[504] The younger generation Von Flotow discusses "seem[s] to be taking feminist achievements for granted, producing work that is only implicitly feminist" (1996 non. p.). Writers like Dandurand, Monette, and O'Neill "have seized hold of the language [their predecessors] questioned, criticized and then sought to develop, and are using it to translate a gendered subaltern 'text of the street'" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). Again, translation here is both a metaphor for writing and a practice of appropriation of language by women to create their own realities. Their "feminist translations of moments of daily life" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.) recount stories of marginal characters with strong socio-critical messages.[505] Baby, after all, "ain't nobody's victim" (Mike Rud). She frequents the abject spaces of the city and thereby appropriates them. Giving voice to Baby, O'Neill revises the notion of subjectivity. Baby subverts her status as a

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[502] "[T]extual zones that are potentially opaque and incomprehensible" (my translation).
[503] Cf. Von Flotow 1996 non. p.
[504] As Godard notes, "Scott has aligned herself with French-speaking Québec writers" (2002b: 120). See also Moyes, Lianne. "Conflict in Contiguity: An Update." *Québec Studies*, 44 (2007/2008): 1. Print.
[505] Cf. Von Flotow 1996 non. p.

social victim by reinventing her own reality. She gains agency and actively interferes with prescribed (urban) structures. Thereby she alters the literary topographies of the city. Lydia is conscious of an underworld similar to the one described in *Lullabies for Little Criminals*:

> She recalls (incongrusously) the runaway girls lined up in the Berry Métro station. […] It says in the paper that on the street there's real anti-parental solidarity among the kids. The pimps providing *un encadrement, toutefois sans le côté moralisant, hypocrite de leurs parents souvent abusifs* (*MB* 22, emphasis in original).[506]

Her brides, to which I count Baby ("the one coming out of the washroom, rolling down her sleeve cheekily, ostentatiously, so everyone can tell she's had her fix" *MB* 22)[507] exemplify "women's victim position in patriarchy" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.) and illustrate "various forms of [their] marginality" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). Lydia is looking at it from the outside; or rather from the inside (the bar) looking out (on *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*).[508] Whereas in *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, there is nothing stipulated in the characterisation of Saint-Laurent, no voyeurism,[509] *Main Brides* is just that.

Scott's writing agenda has emerged from her alliances with the Québécois feminist movement and its artistic expressions, *écriture au féminin* and *théorie/fiction*: Women, colonized by prescriptive patriarchal idioms and

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[506] "[A] frame, but without the moralising and hypocritical part of their oftentimes abusive parents" (my translation).
[507] This passage echoes with the last chapter of *Lullabies for Little Criminals* when Baby shoots up in the washroom of a place called "the Electric BumBum" (*LLC* 298, probably what is the club *Les Foufounes Électriques* on *Sainte-Catherine*), see *LLC* 299.
[508] This plays on Gail Scott's essay title "Virginia and Colette: On the Outside Looking In" in her collection *Spaces Like Stairs* (1989). Cf. Scott, Gail. *Spaces Like Stairs*. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1989: 29-42. Print.
[509] Cf. Simon 2008.

structures, can only succeed in a discourse of appropriation[510] of space through their own narrative practices and language, a language particular to the experience of their role as women in society. Trying to find a voice as an anglophone Québécois subject, Scott's Lydia traces the stories of women – English and French – and appropriates the language of the border by manifold lexical borrowings and code switching crossovers to French. As Simon argues in *Translating Montreal*, "where language difference is a test of the boundaries of the self" (2006: 6), revised subjectivities can take hold. Scott also seeks to resist the categorisation of her writing practices into narrow definitions of *genre*. In *Spaces like Stairs* she develops "a meditation on the 'end of genre' [and] contemporary strategies of writing which are at the 'crossroads' of several discourses" (Godard 2002: 133) and argues for fiction/theory – a practice Brossard also engages in. Spaces of encounter generate difference and encourage a consciousness of the 'in-between.' Their context with its mixing of and switching between languages and its awareness of cultural diversity gives rise to trans-categorical thinking and opens new perspectives on concepts like 'nation', 'gender', and '*genre*.' Fiction/theory is an example of a literary product of the borderlands. As Anzaldúa puts it, "[T]o survive the Borderlands you must live sin fronteras be a crossroads" (1999: 216-217). To come full circle, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* can be considered as an instance of fiction/theory writing: it consists of fictional elements like native myths and storytelling as well as theoretical essays on the Chicano and Chicana condition.

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[510] Cf. also Harryman, Carla. "The Nadja and Nanette of Gail Scott's *Main Brides (Against Ochre Pediment and Aztec Sky).*" *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works.* Ed. Lianne Moyes. Toronto: Guernica Editions Inc., 2002b. 101-116. Print.

Scott's narrator Lydia is a crossroads, as she is constructed *à travers* the portraits of her seven Main brides. She speaks the language/s of the borderlands, in this case *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* – at the same time dividing line and contact zone[511] as well as an interactive space of mediating cultural difference. Lydia's patchwork identity is a result of permanent encounters with the other. An Anglo-Québécois woman with Portuguese features, Scott's narrator is highly aware of Montréal's diversity. Choosing between the brides with whom Lydia identifies, she oscillates between various identity performances, thereby countering the notion of a coherent subject position and creating a new kind of subjectivity emerging from Montréal's urban discursive rupture and the city's "paranoia about boundaries" (Halberstam 1995: 36). Her narrative is multiply border conscious in the sense the concept of "border consciousness" was defined by Anzaldúa: as intrinsically aware of cultural, linguistic, sex, and gender differences as well as power inequalities. Potentially a commemoration of the victims of the *Polytechnique* massacre, Scott's novel constructs 'woman' as manifold and creates female voices altered and strengthened by and consolidated in Montréal's multilingual majority French and minority English contact-zones.

5.3 INTERTEXTUAL FLÂNERIES

The backside of Coach House's first edition book cover of *Main Brides* shows fourteen ghost-like faces. The number fourteen uncannily reminds us of

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[511] Cf. Simon 2008.

the femicide Marc Lépine committed at the *École Polytechnique* of *Université de Montréal* on December 6, 1989. When Cello, Lydia's last 'bride,' announces that "ce tango est dédié aux filles du 6 décembre [,]" (*MB* 205)[512] the café on Montréal's Main turns quiet: "Silence. (In the bar, three female clients get an image of 14 silver coffins on icy white snow)" (*MB* 205). Fourteen women had died at the school for engineering because of Lépine's misogynous act based on gender profiling. Subsequently, as media discourses on the event dispersed its interpretation from an anti-feminist action to a mere killing spree, Québec acknowledged that gender equality had not been fully established in the collective imaginary of the province yet. As Mary Bryson, professor of education at the University of British Columbia, stated during the *Polytechnique* commemoration in Vancouver on November 27 2008, "we must insist that there is no post to feminist".[513] In her speech, Bryson wants to raise the Canadians' awareness of the fact that inequalities between genders, which emerge from the perpetuation of the idea of gender difference, persist and feminism's agendas are still and will always be relevant. *Main Brides* illustrates one reaction to the misogynist drama by reconsidering the status of women and the perception of 'feminism'. In each of Lydia's fictions, notions of feminism are present: In section one, Nanette is wondering if there were not "more after all this feminism?" (*MB* 18) In the fifth episode, Lydia advises Z. that "[f]eminism would help [her] ground [her]self" (*MB* 140).[514] In "Canadian Girls," Lydia remembers a conversation with

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[512] "[T]his tango is dedicated to the girls of December 6" (my translation).
[513] Cf. Minutes 5:27 to 5:30, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-0uppQ3RXM> (6 December 2011).
[514] For a brief analysis of this passage, see Lane-Mercier, Gillian. "La traduction comme 'performance de la cicatrice.' Vers de nouveaux paradigmes traductologiques? Des

her lover: "And she, though *not feminist* …" (*MB* 122, my emphasis). The novel can be read as an intertextual reprocessing of the events at *Polytechnique*. Scott's seven female characters are reminiscent of the attacked female students – or those ones Lépine did not get, the ones that have "[f]ailli disparaître aujourd'hui. Le manque de temps (car je m'y suis mis trop tard) à permis que ces féministes radicales survivent. Alea Jacta Est " (sic.)[515]

As Nicole Brossard responded in an article published three years after the massacre:

> This permanent hostility men have toward women, this is what we forget when the sky is blue [like Scott's Aztec Sky], that is what those survivors – who were so quick to declare they weren't feminists – had forgotten… But what can a woman be thinking of when she says '*I'm not a feminist*'? What hasn't she thought of? Whom hasn't she thought of? (Brossard 1992: 115, my emphasis)[516]

Brossard's critique is a reaction to the statement of one of the survivors of the rampage, who countered Lépine by telling him she was not a feminist – an attempt to reason with the gunman in order to safe her live. In the context of Brossard's writing agenda and that of other feminist writers of her generation, pan-Canadian anglophone and francophone, including Scott, this statement is not only disappointing, but also betraying. In their writing, Brossard and her collaborators sought to create subjectivities that are conscious of the structures of patriarchal power discourses. Their heroines were supposed to advance emancipation. How could these creative attempts of feminsim pass unnoticed?

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synecdoques et des métonymies: de l'ornement à la 'pulsion traduisante'." *Québec Studies* 50 (2010/2011): 132. Print.

[515] "[A]lmost disappeared today. Only because I didn't have enough time (I started too late) did these radical feminists survive. The die is cast" (my translation). I took this quote from Melissa Blais' article "Polytechnique - En souvenir de la féministe inconnue" cf. <http://sisyphe.org/spip.php?article3208> (18 September 2014).

[516] For the entire article, see Brossard, Nicole. "December 6, 1989 Among the Centuries." Trans. Marlene Wildeman. *Boundaries of Identity: A Quebec Reader*. Ed. William Dodge. Toronto: Lester, 1992. 114-145. Print.

Or else, how could the space that was created by them be taken for granted? The *Polytechnique* incident, accordingly, re-opened the feminist discourse on the "(material) capacity for existence" (Henderson 2002: 96) of women in Québec and Canada, which had considered themselves in a position of sex and gender equality. One of Scott's writing projects in *Main Brides* is thus to reveal the performativity of gender and map women's location in contemporary society and culture. While drinking in the bar, Lydia reinvents the lives of women to forget, most evidently, what happened in 1989. Scott literarily gives back to women what Marc Lépine literally had taken away from them: gendered bodies. The performative aspect of these bodies are described by Lydia's continuous references to posture and clothing – be it her own or that of others passing by on the Main or entering the bar: "blouse as crisp as ever to anyone observing" (*MB* 102), "the more obvious one [dyke] (very mannish shoes)" (*MB* 201).[517]

The images of women Lydia draws do not function within the logic of essentialism, but rather along with Simone de Beauvoir's "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*" (2012: xviii).[518] A reaction to violence against women in general, *Main Brides* takes a close look at the notion of 'feminism,' moving from an essentialist to a constructivist understanding of the category of 'woman.' It is not for their biologically female bodies that Lépine had killed the women at *École Polytechnique*, but for the fact that they would not adhere to their socially prescribed gender roles. They studied within a male-dominated and masculinity-stereotyped space to become engineers. According to Lépine, this is not where

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[517] For a discussion of "Lydia's narrativization of corporeal surfaces" (Henderson 2002: 81), see Henderson 2002: 79-82.

[518] "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (De Beauvoir 2012: xviii). Cf. De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex.* Trans. Constance Borde and Sheile Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage, 2011. Print.

they belong. Scott's text offers a revision of the social role of women. Numerous portraits like "fantasies of who the other women might be" (Henderson 2002: 73)[519] combine and compose the new and unstable subjectivity of the narrator Lydia that does not adhere to any category. The portraits are used for both as a creative means to re-construct gender and identity in the form of gender performativity and on the level of melancholy, concerning the victims of the Montréal Massacre and, eventually, violence against women in general. Melancholy also plays a role as to the other aspects of intertextuality in *Main Brides*, for example as regards "self-implication" (Harryman 2002: 110) of the author in their various subjectivities. While Nanette reflects André Breton's *Nadja*, Norma jean mirrors Lydia, and Lydia "is and is not Scott" (Wunker 2004: 67).[520] Referring to a largely French (from France) modern and post-modern literary canon, *Main Brides* is inscribed in a translingual canon, in-between not only English and French in Canada, but French and North American (feminist) traditions.

O'Neill's references mainly come from an anglophone and francophone North American context. Her writing features extensive intertextuality as well as a number of urban, cultural, and pop culture references – as the mention of Leclerc's song illustrates. They situate *Lullabies for Little Criminals* in an imaginary of '*américanité*'[521] and, paradoxically, '*franco-americanité*' even though "[e]veryone in [Baby's] school hated French music with a terrible

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[519] Cf. also Harryman 2002: 102.

[520] For a comparative discussion of Nanette with André Breton's *Nadja* (1964), see Harryman 2002: 101-116. Harryman also discusses the notion of melancholy as in "Scott's melancholic double, Lydia" (2002: 110).

[521] In the Québec Canadian context, the notion of '*américanité*' (americanness) is particularly useful in the reading of Nicole Brossard's work. For further information on the subject, see Green, Mary Jean et al., eds. *Postcolonial Subjects: Francophone Women Writers*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis UP. 1996. Print.

passion" (*LLC* 140). Baby "kissed Arthur H – or rather his poster – on the lips" (*LLC* 140). The text blurs the limits of exiguity between the French minority in North America and the minority of Anglophones in Québec. At the same time it establishes a dialogue between the two based on their spatial proximity and because of their shared orientation towards notions of 'américanité' and U.S. American culture. Intertextuality and the songs and films integrated in *Lullabies for Little Criminals* add to the construction and development of its storyline: The films Baby and Alphonse watch together at the cinema *L'Étoile* are thematically closely related to the lives of the two and their story. They characterise and comment their relationship: for their first date in the chapter entitled "The devil in a track suit," Alphonse and Baby watch the movie *Repo Man* (USA 1984). Its plot foreshadows the role Alphonse will have in Baby's life. According to one of the other clients that sits close to them in the cinema hall, it illustrates "how […] people have no souls in a consumeristic world" (*LLC* 176, *sic*.). The child prostitution traffic Alphonse engages in is an example of that. At the beginning of the chapter "The milky way," Baby and Alphonse's relationship situation is mirrored through the movie *Last Tango in Paris* (Italy/France 1972). The story recounts the unequal relationship between a young Parisian woman and an older American man. Simultaneously, the situation of Baby and the content of the films she watches with Alphonse intensify: now working as a prostitute, she articulates that she hates *Blue Velvet* (USA 1986). As she sums up: "A naked nightclub singer kept prisoner in a terrible little suburban apartment" (*LLC* 237). The parallel between her life and that of the protagonist is emphasised when Baby's story and that of the film blur during a kiss with Alphonse: "Kissing him

while *Blue Velvet* was playing made me feel as if I were kissing the people who were in the movie" (*LLC* 238, my emphasis). After the last movie the two watch together, *Drugstore Cowboy* (USA 1989), Baby enters a fictional world "pretending to be the main character's tough sexpot wife" (*LLC* 238). While the movies support, as I have shown, the storyline of *Lullabies for Little Criminals* and the development of Baby, their dates of production also reconfirm that the story is set in the 1980s.

In contrast, all the references to English texts are about books that were published before 1962 and the political change that the Quiet Revolution brought about in Québec. Baby refers to the English children's book *The Railway Children* (1906). She wants white boots similar to those illustrated in the book: "I wanted to have a pair of fancy white boots like the kids in the illustrations in a book I had read called The Rail*road* Children" (*LLC* 13, sic., my emphasis). In another example, similar to the films in *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (U.S. 1961) by Robert A. Heinlein is used as a metaphor for Baby's situation. During her father's stay in the hospital, she lives in a foster home in Val des Loups. All of the kids are strangers there and according to Jules, even the place itself – Val des Loups – is a strange place: "Everyone was mean in Val des Loups. It's in the water" (*LLC* 19). For Jules, Val des Loups "was the antithesis of all that was good and civilized in the world" (*LLC* 20) like Montréal. In the chapter "Playing grown up," Xavier gives a presentation on the book *Animal Farm* (UK, 1945). Again, the book supports the description of Baby's overall situation as it illustrates the difference between Baby and Xavier's social classes. To sum up, Baby's cultural and literary references largely allude to an anglophone imaginary.

The only exception is *L'avalée des avalés*, a Québécois text published in 1966 – *The Swallower Swallowed* (1968)[522] – by Réjean Ducharme. Baby reads *L'avalée des avalés* when she is in detention:[523] "I felt so lucky that I happened to have had it […] a girl in the park had given it to me. […] It was the story of a young girl who was at once enraptured and furious with the world" (*LLC* 195). Once more a parallel is created between Baby's life and the plot of another text. Both narrators are children at the edge of turning into teenagers. Like Baby, Ducharme's Bérénice suffers from the immediate situation with her family. Through this parallel, O'Neill strengthens the connection between her writing and francophone culture in Québec without falling into a polarising pattern about Montréal's division; her citation from the French text is not translated: "Tout m'avale… Je suis avalée par le fleuve trop grand, par le ciel trop haut, par les fleurs trop fragiles, par les papillons trop craintifs, par le visage trop beau de ma mère…" (*LLC* 195).[524] The image of the mother described here is echoed in *Lullabies for Little Criminals*. When Jules talks about Baby's mother, he himself seems to have been absorbed by her presence. He remembers that he "was always staring at her, [he] couldn't help it. […] Manon was so sweet" (*LLC* 324-325). O'Neill uses Ducharme's text to create a hybrid imaginary that is anglophone and francophone all at once.

To conclude, Scott's *Main Brides* could be labeled a book of historical fiction for women. Fictionalizing the potential lifelines of possibly the victims of the Montréal Massacre, the novel deals with the matrices of identity in a critical

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[522] Cf. Ducharme, Réjean. *The Swallower Swallowed.* Trans. Barbara Bray. *London:* Hamilton, 1968. Print.
[523] When Jules finds out that his daughter is in contact with the pimp Alphonse, he has her arrested and sent to a detention center outside of the city (see *LLC* 187).
[524] Cf. Ducharme, Réjean. *L'Avalée des avalés.* Paris: Gallimard, 1966. Print.

way. While there is a focus on gender performativity, Scott critiques the post feminist mourning following the incident and consciously reinvents the female feminine subject.[525] She explores the possibilities created by the translational moments of encounter staged in Montréal. This practice allows for a revision of female/feminine subjectivity. Understanding the self as a multiple layered discursive production,[526] Scott's narrating subject in *Main Brides*, Lydia, who is sitting in *La Cabane* right on the Main, is a native of the borderlands she inhabits. O'Neill's approach to writing is similarly autofictional. While she claims that *Lullabies for Little Criminals* "isn't autobiographical" (Wiehardt non.p.), she confirms that "it […] takes place in sort of the same world that [she] grew up in" (Waters 2006a: non. p.). Her narrator Baby maintains a complex relation with the notion of Québec identity. The text performs a stereotypically Montréal text that reiterates linguistic, cultural, and topographic clichés. The subversion inherent to this repetition, which at the same time features several converging images of the city – a traditional Montréal with its vertical division that controls the urban topography and an underworld that does not correspond to that division and which can also be found in other recent Montréal writing (for example, that of Rawi Hage) – creates an imaginary of blurred borders.[527]

Through the conversation I establish with Scott's *Main Brides*, I want to

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[525] For an alternative discussion of the performativity of Lydia's identity, see Henderson 2002: 84-85.
[526] Cf. Henderson 2002: 81.
[527] According to Beneventi, "*Lullabies for Little Criminals* and [Rawi Hage's] *Cockroach* represent the various strata of Montreal's physical and symbolic landscapes, but in many ways these novels invert the usual values given to privileged and abject spaces, to the seen and the unseen in the city. […] The protagonists in these novels experience place disjunctively—that is to say—they experience place as a form of socially sanctioned public discourse shaped by collectively accepted uses of space and their meanings, but they also experience space as embodied, marginalized others who challenge those very meanings and uses of space" (2012: 280).

add *Lullabies for Little Criminals* to the Québec literary imaginary as an Anglo-Québécois text and a manifestation of *écriture au féminin* and "feminist translations of various forms of marginality [and] the urban underside of Montréal" (Von Flotow 1996 non. p.). O'Neill does not only subvert and revise the mythologies of Montréal's division around *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*, but Baby's *flâneries* and writing from the street cross the linguistic borders of the city and reorganise its topographies. The linguistic porosity of O'Neill's protagonist, though it manifests itself differently than in Scott, is – as much as in Scott's writing – the result of the unremitting linguistic and cultural contact in Montréal. Anglophone and francophone minorities find themselves each in a situation of linguistic marginalisation – the English in Québec and the French-speaking in the larger context of Canada. But they converge in yet another minority condition here that, this time, unites them: poverty. It is from this aspect of the lapsised dimension – the underground of the city and the multiple mappings of its marginalisation – that Baby's subjectivity emerges. Both Baby and Lydia revise the classic character of the *flâneur* and create that of a *flâneuse* of the twentieth and twenty-first century respectively. Scott in conversation with Corey Frost discusses the notion of '*flâneur*' as follows: "[W]ho are the real *flâneurs* today? In Paris they're the homeless people looking for cobblestones that aren't too bumpy to sleep on. Or the *sans papiers*, refugees. Those are the *flâneurs* today."[528] Baby and Scott's characters fit this image as they wander alleys and parks as *flâneuses*, revised in the feminine by their passages through *dimension lapsisée*.

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[528] Cf. Scott 1999b.

6. PERFORMING THE CITY IN *MY PARIS* AND *THE SORROW AND THE FAST OF IT*

Gail Scott's *My Paris*,[529] first published in 1999 by Dalkey Archive Press, presents a travelogue noted down by an anglophone writer from Montréal during her six-month sojourn in Paris. According to Corey Frost (1999b), the book is also "a city guide, and a collection of 'ends of sentences.'"[530] The translation of it by Julie Mazzieri was published in 2010 under the same title[531] and followed several attempts of single chapter-translations among which, for example, one by Nathanaël. *My Paris* consists of one hundred twenty diary-like entries, irregularly but continuously recounting the narrator's daily life in the French capital, updated every day and sometimes more than once per day. Three recurring themes stand out in these captions: her clear-cut reports of the weather conditions, her repetitive gossip on the concierge, and the descriptions of the ever-changing window display of the men's garment shop opposite of her writer's studio:

> 74. *Weather. Icy blue. Then grey*. Waiting. *Concierge not bringing up mail.* Meaning 1. There is none. 2. *She not feeling like it.* Across street – head on side of steamer trunk. Shining. Green. Orange. Yellow. As if tinted with some fluorescent product. *Gazing towards display window on right. Where two exquisite suits flat on stomachs. Square shoulders facing their bald squished rubber heads of rubies. Decadently eyeballing each other*. (*MP* 82, my emphasis).

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[529] Cf. Scott, Gail: *My Paris*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2003. Print. This edition will be referred to as *MP*.

[530] Scott 1999b. The idea of 'ends of sentences' comes form Carla Harryman in conversation with Gail Scott, who quotes it in her conversation with Corey Frost. See also Furci, Guido. "Her Own Private Paris: Gail Scott, Archaeologist of the Present." *A Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory.* 14th ser. 9 (2012): 59. Print. And Moyes, Lianne. "Sex of a Clown: Gail Scott's My Paris." *Un certain genre malgré tout*. Eds. Catherine Mavrikakis et Patrick Poirier. Montréal: Éditions Nota Bene. 2006: 158. Print.

[531] Scott, Gail. *My Paris*. Trans. Julie Mazzieri. Montréal: Héliotrope, 2010. Print.

An annexed section of only a few pages at the end of the book with the French title "Le sexe de l'art" (*MP* 131)[532] continues in the manner of the earlier entries, but this time without numbering and with highly intimate notes: "Woman's bar. […] Deep kissing. […] How many ~~orgasms~~ hours later" (*MP* 133-134, emphasis in original). It recounts the narrator's return to Paris for a trip on "New Year's: 199_" (*MP* 133) after her first rather solitary sojourn, which had been funded by a grant to inspire the writing of her new novel. This time, she finally roams Paris together with a lover.

The first-person narrator of *My Paris* positions herself at the intersections of Paris's plurality. According to Lianne Moyes, her "montage of voices, languages, institutions, codes, cultural narratives, [and] media practices […] constitute the city" (2003: 87). Her subjectivity is dual and reiterates the divisions of Montréal. While Paris – like Montréal – is a multicultural city, it is different from the Québécois-Canadian metropolis in so far as its linguistic reference is unambiguously French. Scott's narrator is bilingual: anglophone, but she also speaks French. This is how, on the one hand, the linguistic asymmetry between standard French and Québécois French places her in the in-between of continents (mid-Atlantic) during her stay in Paris: "So we nasalizing *pain*, bread" (*MP* 62, my emphasis). The 'we' refers to Québec and people who speak Québécois French. In standard French, the pronunciation of the word '*pain*' ('bread') significantly differs from the more nasal Québécois accent. On the other hand, in addition to the status of her French, the narrator's position of an Anglophone from Montréal marginalises her. As Scott confirms in an interview:

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[532] "The sex of the arts" (my translation).

"In Paris people just laugh their heads off at my accent. At first they think I'm Québecoise and they adopt this really sympathetic posture, then English comes out invariably and they don't know what to do" (sic).[533] Like Scott, the narrator of *My Paris* is not *Québécoise*, but *Anglo-Québécoise*.[534] This is how she simultaneously does and does not belong to the French-speaking community she frequents and why she experiences a double bind of (non-)belonging. According to Moyes, this is also the reason for her continuous self-questioning about "her own positions and preconceptions" (2003: 89).

As a result, by "plac[ing] French words besides English words in ways which destabilize the notion of the linguistically 'foreign' [,] she calls attention to the continuities as well as the discontinuities between her 'home' culture (Québec) and that of the 'other' (France)" (Moyes 2003: 87). As Scott reveals in another interview, in *My Paris*, subjectivity is construed on the grounds of a heteroglossia, "reveal[ing] the negative aspects of the cultural baggage [and] a huge gap in the writing subject" (Moyes 2002b: 220-221). The first-person narrator positions herself right in this gap – "somewhere between the privileged and the dispossessed, somewhere between the French-speaking and the English-speaking" (Moyes 2003: 90). She is "variously *montréalaise*, *québécoise*, *anglo-québécoise*, Canadian and (North) American" (Moyes 2003: 88, emphasis in original) and finds herself in a situation of permanent linguistic and cultural translation (as well as lapse). This links her to the narrator of Nathanaël's *The*

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[533] Cf. Scott 1999b.
[534] Actually, Gail Scott was not born in Québec but in Cornwall, Ontario, a small town at the border to Québec with a half anglophone and half francophone population. Scott has lived in Montréal for the most part of her life, however, and considers herself *Anglo-Québécoise*.

Sorrow and the Fast of It. [535] As I argue in this chapter, Scott's and Nathanaël's texts resonate on multiple levels and operate with cognate writing techniques to produce the effects of a restlessness that defines the *flâneur* figure of the 21st century. The cities of both narratives develop from the unwary motion of their protagonists. Apart from them both featuring a narrator with a split or double subjectivity, *My Paris* and *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* draw pluralistic transgeographical and transhistorical urban topographies. What is more, the two texts are drawn together through their formal configuration and the effects that result from choices Scott and Nathanaël make on the syntactic level. In both texts, the narrators' physical and symbolic (im)mobility is created through the strategic use of noun- or verb-phrase constructions and patterns of punctuation. Also, on the content level, both stories end on a note that intertwines death and desire: The last word of *My Paris* is "Bosnia" (*MP* 130) and refers to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990. The annexe "Le Sexe de l'art," for its part, ends on the description of a woman from Bosnia "[s]aying I come from war" (*MP* 138). *The Sorrow and the Fast of it* ends with the following note: "I speak to the lover and the lover is dead […] *Montréal… Chicago (2003-2005)*" (*SFI* 100, emphasis in original).

Nathanaël's *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*, launched in 2007, is narrated by the twofold protagonist Nathalie/Nathanaël,[536] who emerges from an *entre-deux* of places and languages and relentlessly wanders the multiple city.

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[535] Cf. Stephens, Nathalie. *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*. New York: Nightboat Books, 2007a. Print. This edition will be referenced as *SFI*.

[536] This choice of name was inspired by her writing of *Je Nathanaël* (2003), a response to André Gide's *Les Nourritures terrestres* (1897), which addresses Nathanaël – an imaginary or true follower of Gide. Nathalie Stephens started to publish under the name of Nathanaël in 2010.

Nathanaël's translation of the text into the French *… s'arrête? Je*[537] was

published in the same year and received the *Prix Alain-Grandbois* in the category

of poetry. While for institutional reasons the classification of writing into prose

and poetry categories is required, such labelling is not always meaningful

(except for funding competitions) and more often than not arbitrary and in line

with organizational structures the writings in question are outside of or actually

seek to subvert.[538] Nathanaël and her narrator refuse categorisations: "I had

wanted a notion of movement. *A way around naming.* Or the justification for my

inability (unwillingness?) to name" (*SFI* 12, my emphasis). As Nathanaël claims in

an interview, she writes from an *entre-genre* position.[539] Neither prose nor

poetry,[540] she considers the French edition *… s'arrête? Je* a rewriting rather than

a translation of *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*. Nathanaël writes in both English

and French and between the years 2000 and 2010 most of the time published

two versions of the same narrative, recounted in each language one after the

other. These 'self-translations' are Nathanaël's practice to rewrite her texts by

crossing the linguistic and cultural spaces of difference between languages. As

Nathanaël disclosed in a conversation with Nathaniel G. Moore in fall 2006, to

her "languages present themselves as they need to" (non. p.).[541]

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[537] Stephens, Nathalie. *s'arrête… Je?* Montréal: L'Hexagone, 2007b.

[538] The same applies to language politics for that matter, and the categories of 'Anglo-Québécois' and 'Franco-Ontarian' as regards the access to funding for minority writing in Québec and Ontario.

[539] Stephens, Nathalie. Personal Interview. December 2008.

[540] In conversation with Elisabeth Tutschek, Nathanaël says that she "distrust[s] what calls itself poetry – any *genre* delineation" because they "reinscribe […] nationalist discourses." Cf. Stephens 2008.

[541] Cf. Moore, Nathaniel G. <http://www.chbooks.com/news/nathalie_stephens_interviewed_danforth_review> (30 March 2014).

The Sorrow and the Fast of It presented itself in English first. It has five equally long sections without titles and separated by blank pages. I read the text as a narrative rather than as a collection of poetry or a long poem. I want to stay out of categorisations in this discussion like Nathanaël wants to stay out of (or in-between) categories. Her text blends form and content as much as it does English and French languages, geographical places, a diversity of intertexts, and ultimately, the practices of walking and writing. The rhythm of the latter is conducted by repetition, wordplay, and code switching as well as typographic marks and blanks that interrupt linearity and create echo. Words like 'city,' 'body,' 'letter/s,' and 'walking' are recurrent as the beginning paragraph of the text illustrates:

> It is possible to write one's day through *letters*, a *letter*.
>
> Here in the *city*, the *letters* are many and the days are many. The *city* was to be every possible thing that came before. (*SFI* 1, my emphasis)

This passage also points to the performative aspect of the city, which emerges through history. *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* bears the geographies of various locations all over the world: Guelph (Ontario), Norwich (United Kingdom), Lyon and Paris (France), Barcelona (Spain), Ljubljana (Slovenia), New York and Chicago (U.S.) – to name just a few building blocks of Nathanaël's blended metropolis. Concurrently, the city is a text made of other texts, which shows in the high frequency of intertextual references the narrator makes. They are taken from a variety of contexts, but mainly from philosophy, literature, and popular culture: Buber (*SFI* 6), Duras (*SFI* 3), Kossakovsky (*SFI* 4) or Mickey Duck (*SFI* 62). Likewise the book is a collection of letters and diary entries that include monologues and imaginative dialogues:

> Say to me anyway: *Natahanël walk to where the river empties into the sea. Say: Pick the stars from the sky. Touch the stone wall that rises above you. Let the seabed pull sobs from your feet.*
>
> Say: *Go to the water. Go willingly* (*SFI* 63, emphasis in original).[542]

My comparison of the *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* with *My Paris* is based on the fact that both of the texts work with effects of montage. The discontinuities this technique causes in the texts open them for a dialogue about the various manifestations of 'in-between' consciousness and the hybrid discourse they maintain on the levels of language, space, and gender.

My last chapter examines the narrators' revised subject position as a post-modern queer *flâneure* in urban spaces that are construed in-between Montréal, Chicago, and Paris, French and English speaking North America, and, ultimately, the Old and the New World. In doing so, it maps what I call *dimension lapsisée* and reiterates *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* as an Anglo-Québécois narrative when set in conversation with *My Paris*. Both texts show a displacement of their protagonists from Montréal, while both narrators simultaneously maintain a referential connection to this city. Both Nathanaël and Scott introduce the notion of 'translation' into their writing practices to describe the mechanisms of cultural difference. Yet, neither Nathanaël nor Scott makes use of translation according to its traditional definition. Their practices are rather divergent from the interlinguistic transfer of meaning and content between two linguistic codes. In their texts, they create strategies that stress the process of translation, not its product. Nathanaël's 'self-translation' and Scott's 'comma of translation' are both examples of perverse translation practices and articulate

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[542] I indicate an emphasis in italics here that is in colour contrast (black vs. shade of grey) in the original.

the in-between space of English and French-speaking cultures in Canada and Québec.[543]

6.1 CREATING DIFFERENCE, REIVENTING COMMAS

Scott's practices as an Anglo-Québécois writer (seek to) linguistically and literarily correspond to the minority status of the English language in Québec. Her English has a French rhythm to it and shows "stratégie[s] de minorisation de l'anglais (Lane-Mercier 2005: 108).[544] Her narratives show "des modalités d'inscription du français extrêmement variées, où la traduction intratextuelle occupe une place prépondérante" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 104).[545] Her narrators use a variety of modalities to integrate the French language into English, thereby deconstructing the linguistic limits and limitations of both languages and breaking open each language system to challenge the preconceived organising structures that are inherent to its homogeneity. In *My Paris*, Scott

> multiplie les points de rencontre et de résistance dans une tentative de 'trouer' la langue anglaise, mais aussi la langue française, de même que cet espace mitoyen où s'articulent les différences culturelles (Lane-Mercier 2005: 104).[546]

Cultural difference is thereby multiply tackled: on the national and international level, because Scott's narrator is located between Canada and Québec on the one hand, and on the other, between North America and Europe. In Montréal

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[543] For more information on the concepts, see Simon 2006. See also subchapter 2.4. and chapter 4.

[544] "[S]trategies of minorisation of English" (my translation).

[545] "[M]odalities of French inscription that are extremely varied and in which intratextual translation occupies a significant role " (my translation).

[546] "[M]ultiplies the meeting points and oppositions with the aim to 'riddle' the English language, but also the French language, as well as this collaborative space, where cultural difference is articulated" (my translation).

she is inevitably the English other to a national(ist), French Québécois collective identity. In Paris, she is perceived of as *Québécoise* when she speaks French and as Canadian (or even U.S.-American) when she speaks English. When she switches codes from French to English, her French friends mostly fail to comprehend the Anglo-Québécois aspect of her identity and perceive her as mainly anglophone. This is why she usually only speaks English with her Canadian and American friends, who, as we know from Scott's essay "My Montréal," are not any more sensitive the Anglo-Québécois difference either. To overcome the dichotomy of English versus French in the construction of her narrator's subject position, Scott introduces the comma of difference/translation that serves to bridge the different cultural locations of the anglophone and francophone aspects of her identity.

In her essay "My Montréal," moreover, Scott compares the city's landmark bridge *Pont Jacques Cartier*, which connects the Island of Montréal with the South Shore and the Greater Montréal Area suburbs Longueuil and Saint-Lambert as well as with several highways leading to the U.S. a comma. Both function to separate and join communities. Reminiscent of Gertrude Stein, who is, along with Walter Benjamin, an omnipresent intertextual reference throughout *My Paris*, Scott banishes the comma in its conventional usage in standard English from her text[547] only to reintroduce it with the very specific functions of highlighting the presence of French in her English and of underlining her Anglo-Québecitude. She is not only hyper-conscious of language use and

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[547] For detailed information on the intertextuality with Gertrud Stein's writing, see Simon, Sherry. "The Paris Arcades, the Ponte Veccio and the Comma of Translation." *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works*. Ed. Lianne Moyes. Toronto: 2002b, 142–143. Print. And Frost, Corey. "Punc'd: Towards a Poetics of Punctuation in the Novels of Gail Scott." *A Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory.* 14th ser. 9 (2012): 40-56. Print.

cultural difference, but also of punctuation as she claims in an interview with

Lianne Moyes in 2012.[548] The translation practices of the narrator demonstrate

her awareness of this difference. When placing her translations, she considers a

multiplicity of audiences, as Lane-Mercier observes:

> [U]n lecteur non français […] un lecteur québécois dont le français […] n'est pas exactement le même que celui des Français, un lecteur français et un lecteur canadien-anglais bilingue à qui il faut signaler (ou rappeler) la spécificité du franco-québécois, ainsi qu'un lecteur anglophone monolingue pour qui il faut tout traduire et un lecteur anglophone (ou francophone) bilingue n'ayant pas besoin de traduction (Lane-Mercier 2005: 110).[549]

The critical inclusiveness of this practice adds to the hybridity of the text as a

whole. Additionally, the translations themselves show

> une éthique traductive précise, allant du littéralisme le plus strict […] à l'adaptation la plus radicale […] en passant par divers processus plus ou moins annexionnistes, dont la traduction-résumé […] la paronomase […] l'erreur volontaire […] et l'effacement de l'original [et] une explication-explicitation (Lane-Mercier 2005: 109).[550]

This technique adds a notion of 'mobile hybridity' that illustrates how translation

is not reducible to the dualisms and dichotomies it traditionally implies and that

"la frontière entre monolinguisme et bilinguisme se révèle être aussi éphémère

que non localisable (Lane-Mercier 2005: 110).[551] In *My Paris* "la 'virgule de la

traduction' assume le statut, autoréflexif, de trope" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 106)[552]

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[548] Scott, Gail. An interview by Lianne Moyes. "Architectures of the Unsaid." *A Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory.* 14th ser. 9 (2012): 132. Print.

[549] "[A] non-French reader […], a Québécois reader whose French is not exactly the same as that from France, a French reader and a bilingual English Canadian reader for whom Québec-French specificities have to be indicated (or who has to be reminded of them) as well as a monolingual English reader for whom everything needs to be translated and a bilingual anglophone (or francophone) reader that does not need any translation" (my translation).

[550] "[A] precise translation ethics, from very strict literalism […] to the most radical forms of adaptation […] via a diversity of more or less annexing processes like summarising translations […] paronomasias […] wilful errors […] and obliterations of the original [or] explanations-explicitness" (my translation).

[551] "[T]he border between monolingualism and bilingualism reveals to be at the same time ephemeral and not placeable" (my translation).

[552] "[T]he 'comma of translation' performs the role, autoreflexively, of a trope" (my translation).

and its symbolism is formally exploited in various ways to fulfill its "travail d'accommodement interlingual et interculturel s'accomplissant sans cesse à même la surface narrative (Lane-Mercier 2005: 107).[553]

Generally, Scott uses the scheme of inserting a French word or expression into her English text, followed by a comma and an English translation of the French insertion to reintroduce the comma.[554] According to Lane-Mercier, "ce schéma admet un certain *bougé*, d'abord sur le plan de la ponctuation où la virgule est loin d'être le marqueur unique de l'activité traduisante et de la différence culturelle" (2005: 107, emphasis in original).[555] Besides the comma, Scott uses other indicators to highlight difference in her text, like slashes, quotation marks, fullstops and semicolons as well as the conjunction 'or.' [556] In addition, some passages do not emphasise borrowings or code switching, others are doubly marked by the comma and an additional marker like italics, bold characters, or capital letters.[557] At other moments, Scott's writing plays on translingual homographs and creates confusions because of subtle referential overlaps like that with "'*store/'blind'* et *magasin/'store'*" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 108, my emphasis).[558] The example that Lane-Mercier gives here shows that Scott plays with the ambiguities of bilingualism and uses them to create a space of linguistic negotiation. After all, she does not translate all the French borrowings she inserts: "nombreux fragments en anglais – noms de boutiques,

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[553] "[F]unction of interlingual and intercultural understanding that is perpetually accomplished on the narrative surface" (my translation).
[554] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 107.
[555] "[T]his scheme allows for a certain blur, primarily on the level of punctuation where the comma is not the only marker of translational activities and cultural difference" (my translation).
[556] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 107-108, For an analysis of whether punctuation is language in the context of Gail Scott's work, see Frost 2012: 40-56.
[557] Cf. Lane-Mercier 2005: 108.
[558] "[S]ubtle referential overlaps, like for example in the following example which provokes a momentary confusion between blind/'store' and store/'magasin'" (my translation).

slogans, extraits de poèmes, dialogues – relèvent d'un travail de traduction préalable qui occulte l'original" (Lane-Mercier 2005: 108).[559]

A number of French tokens find their entry into the English language without further ado. One of the expressions Scott regularly uses but never translates is the phrase '*chez nous*' (at home) as in "Authors from *chez nous*" (*MP* 91, my emphasis). One might ask: 'Are these authors that the narrator meets at an artsy event in the 16th district of Paris Francophones or Anglophones?' 'Does the English-speaking narrator refer to Québec or Canada when she uses the idiom '*chez nous*'?' Whereas the second question seems to be rather simple to answer because '*chez nous*' is an idiomatic Québécois expression that belongs to a specifically Québec context and discourse and would as such not be used by English Canadians, the first one is more ambiguous. Only the mention of "Poet Gauvreau" (*MP* 91) reveals that at least one of the participants of the event is francophone. The habit of referring to her homeland as '*chez nous*' indicates the narrator's affiliation to a collective Québec identity that contrasts with the French reality she experiences at the moment of her sojourn in Paris.[560] She is reminded of her otherness to this Québec identity, however, each time she meets another *Québécois-e* in Paris or a Parisian realises that she is not francophone because of the differences "entre intonations parisiennes, québécoises et anglo-québécoises" (Laner-Mercier 2005: 110).[561] It is this Anglo-Québécois position – that of the subjectivity of her

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[559] "[N]umerous fragments in English – names of shops, slogans, passages from poems, dialogues – reveal a prior translation practice in the original" (my translation).
[560] The reasons why she does not translate this phrase – apart from the fact that it unambiguously refers to her Anglo-Québécitude – is that it is untranslatable. My translation as 'at home' here only approximates the meaning of '*chez nous*.'
[561] "[B]etween Parisian, Québécois, and Anglo-Québécois intonations" (my translation).

narrator and of Scott herself – from which "[…] writer/translators are increasingly involved in creating hybrid literary texts which are informed by a double culture" (Simon 2002b: 143). As Lane-Mercier observes:

> [L]e caractère ambigu, insaisissable et indécidable non seulement des identités et des langues, mais de l'altérité elle-même [se manifeste], dans la mesure où la cohabitation implique moins un phénomène statique de juxtaposition qu'un processus kaléidoscopique de chevauchements, de déterritorialisations-reterritorialisations sans cesse amorcés, jamais tout à fait achevés (2005: 110).[562]

By making the notions of 'deterriorialisation,' 'reterritorialisation' as well as 'expatriation' and 'exile' to key topics in *My Paris*, Scott shows the in-between aspect of her narrator's identity and its modified subject position.

The 'comma of difference/translation' renders the transcultural aspect of her subjectivity in- (the) process (of translation) visible. When the narrator at some point in the text asks "But if comma of translation disappearing. What of French-speaking America remaining?" (*MP* 40),[563] Simon concludes that:

> Scott's comma of translation draws […] a rich web of thinking about language and translation, which leads […] from Paris to Montréal […] [and] from the modernist experience of expatriation to the postmodern reality of cultural hybridity (2002b: 142-143).[564]

The reference to "the modernist experience of expatriation" (Simon 2002b: 143) points to Stein. Scott does not use any commas in the phrase itself, but separates the conditional sentence into two parts by placing a period in the middle. Her actual use of the comma can be found elsewhere, like in the example: "*Comme si de rien n'était,* as if nothing happening" (*MP* 12, my

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[562] "[T]he ambiguous, elusive, undecidable apsects not only of identity and language, but of alterity itself becomes apparent in so far as cohabitation is less of a static phenomenon of juxtaposition than a kaleidoscopic process of overlapping and deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation – always started, but never quite finished" (my translation).
[563] Cf. Simon 2002b.
[564] The reference to the modernist experience of expatriation refers to Gertrud Stein and her contemporaries that are part of the rich intertextuality found in *My Paris*.

emphasis). However, Scott – "as if nothing happen[ed]" (*MP* 12) – deliberately replaces the comma with a full stop in the passage above not only to continue the fragmented style of the novel with its short phrases, but also to support the idea brought forth in the argument she makes. The comma has disappeared from this passage as much as the French words have. She thus offers an answer to her own question: If the comma of translation/difference disappears, nothing remains of French-speaking America. Without the comma of translation, the very process of translation is eliminated; without the comma of difference, the space created by its transitional function does not come into existence. The site of cultural difference, which the comma embodies, would disappear. And English would remain as the norm.[565] Following Bhabha's argument on multiculturalism about which he claims in an interview that "[a] transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society [...], which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our grid'" (Rutherford 1990: 208), the omission of (the comma of) translation creates cultural diversity rather than cultural difference.[566] Accordingly, Scott's passage on the situation of the French-speaking population on a predominantly English speaking North-American continent reflects on the notions of translation and, as Simon concludes, cultural hybridity.[567]

Simon differentiates between translation as a process and hybridity as a product. This idea is based on the theories on translation of Walter Benjamin,

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[565] See also Frost 2012: 46.
[566] For a detailed discussion of the terms 'cultural diversity' and 'cultural difference,' see Rutherford 1990.
[567] Cf. Simon 2002b: 142–143.

whose *Arcades Project*[568] is another ubiquitous intertextual component of *My Paris*. In his essay "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin "suggests that translation is less about transmitting a message than it is about revealing *differences*" (Simon 2002b: 145, my emphasis). Accordingly, "the task of the translator […] is […] to display the complementarity of languages and texts" (Simon 2002b: 145-146). As Simon summarises: "The space between one language and another opens up a 'third space' between original and translation, a utopian space that no longer means or expresses anything" (2002b: 145-146). This is how the process of translation with its signifying comma "can be seen as […] drawing the languages together and separating them at the same time, gesturing toward [the] space between the 'original' and its 'afterlife' in a second language" (Simon 2002b: 147). As Rutherford summarises, Benjamin sees the challenge of translating and for translators in "imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced" (1990: 210) and, at the same time, in keeping the notion that "the 'original' is never finished or complete itself" (1990: 210). Scott emphasises this point by her strategic use of the comma, which – in contrast to the short sentences limited by periods that dominate *My Paris* – leaves space for creativity and creation as well as revision. The narrator is "[w]anting to stay afloat. To stay out of categories. Moving back and forth. Across comma of difference. A gerund. A gesture" (*MP* 107). This excerpt demonstrates how, for Scott, "the comma is […] a space in-between, a space of

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[568] According to Dianne Chisholm, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is a work of "theory-fiction" (2002a: 154). Its incorporation into the novel *My Paris* once more locates Scott's work in the Québécois tradition of 'fiction/théorie.' For further information, see Chisholm, Dianne: "Paris, *Mon Amour*, My Catastrophe, or *Flâneries* through Benjaminian Space." *Gail Scott. Essays on Her Works*. Ed. Lianne Moyes. Toronto: Guernica Editions Inc. 2002a: 153–207. Print. For further details on Benjamin's theories on translation, see Benjamin 1969.

blurred categories and undecidability" (Simon 2002b: 147-48).[569] In this *entre-deux* "alternatives are suspended, multiple realities come together, [and] differences coexist" (Simon 2002b: 147-48). It is "the space of the *act* of translation" (Simon 2002b: 147-48, emphasis in original). The idea of 'act' is highlighted by Scott's use of the gerund instead of the active verb throughout the narrative. On the one hand, English verb forms ending in -ing represent the gerund – a verb used as a noun. Scott uses this function to avoid subjectivity. Generally a verb in predicate position needs a subject within a grammatical phrase. Scott, however, circumvents the subject position and, for that matter, the gendering of it. She comments on this avoidance of (gender) categories in the text-passage cited above. On the other hand, verbs in the -ing form are present participles. They head participle phrases, which express a continuous aspect like that of the restlessness of Scott's narrator in her constant reading of Benjamin (when she is in her studio) or her relentless walking in the streets and parks of Paris.[570] Again, this sort of verbal construction does not require a grammatical subject and hence fulfills the narrator's wish "to stay out of categories" (*MP* 91).[571] While the narrator omits her own subject position, she refers to her French companions by their initials only instead of giving their full names. The reduction of names to initials is a practice that can also be found in *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*. Like Scott, Nathanaël indicates characters or intertextual references by initials only.

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[569] For an additional interpretation, see Frost 2012: 46.

[570] For comments on her practice, see Scott, 2012: 132.

[571] This practice illustrates that while "[l]anguage may be a starting point for the assertion of self" (Frost 2012: 40), it "can [also] complicate that assertion by demonstrating the self's inability" (Frost 2012: 40).

Nathanaël's first-person narrator is a restless wanderer in search of an identity beyond traditionally conceptionalised and prescribed binary categorisations. The textual urban spaces in *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* are dark, divided by rivers, and re-connected by bridges. Boundaries between sex and gender, male/female and masculine/feminine, are blurred and this effect of deconstructing taxonomies is maintained on all of the narrative levels – the notions of author and narrator, prose and poetry become indistinct. The subject that emerges from the urban borderlands of *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* is dual, has multiple gender, sex, and sexual identities, and is named both: Nathalie and Nathanaël. Along with her *entre-genre* writing practice and the text's urban settings in-between, the identity of the Nathalie/Nathanaël is trans/queer. It emerges from walking through the borderlands of the nameless city and tells the story from a point of view outside of conventional categorisations that leads the reader beyond a framework of binaries. A new city arises from the explorations of this subject in the plural that, in turn, is shaped by the manifold city. In my analysis, I conceive of the city as a discursive space and of walking as a discursive practice, while I consider the city and the subject as mutual constituents of a constructive discursive situation. With the help of models of the 'city,' its strollers, and the theories by Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau, I now want to explore how the subject becomes a signifier for the in-between by its practice of walking.

6.2 TRANS-FLÂNERIES

At the beginning of *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*, Nathanaël's narrator asks: "Am I wrong to contest" (*SFI* 3)?[572] This is how she introduces her struggle with conventional sex and gender categorisations and her uneasiness with the rigid binaries of male/female and masculine/feminine. With the statement "I would want to be manifold" (*SFI* 6), she then stresses her desire for less unified categories and expresses her feeling of fragmentation as well as her sensitivity for the non-belonging to only one fixed category. Nathalie/Nathanaël would like to "strip [her]self of this name" (*SFI* 50), although she has been reminded of the impossibility of crossing the boundaries of gender before: "Nathanaël you were not born into this" (*SFI* 32). This warning contrasts an essentialist perspective with the perception of the body as performative. The narrator is longing "[t]o dislodge the body from performance, gesture from posture" (*SFI* 27). This statement can be read in the context of Butler's theory on performativity, which defines gender as a performative act, a "repeated stylization of the body" (1999: 43). As Butler argues, gender identity "is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 1999: 33). 'Identity' is an "effect [rather than a cause] of discursive practices" (Butler 1999: 24, emphasis in original) and the unity of its subject is utopian in so far as it is based on a naturalised notion of gender that is defined by patriarchal power mechanisms and heterosexual hegemony. Nathanaël's narrator discontinues and challenges both sex and gender dichotomies:

> This is the *literal construction of the body*. The body in its built geography. This is how it is taken apart. And reassembled. The body which was to

[572] An earlier version of parts of this section has been published as Tutschek, Elisabeth. "'Nathalie et Nathanaël:' Queering Urban Space in Nathalie Stephens' *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*." Apropos *Canada/À propos du Canada: Fünf Jahre Graduiertentagungen der Kanada-Studien.* Eds. Eugen Banauch et al., Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010a. 183-200. Print.

have been *a body of ideas*. A corporeal thought fleshed out on the rustiest nail. We scraped away what was animal. We scraped away what was felt. We scraped away what was forgotten. We scraped away what was unexpected. To make the best of what could be made. We saw that it was glistening. We saw that it was smooth. We didn't see that it was tumid. And by the twenty-first century we didn't recognize it as rank (*SFI* 69, my emphasis).

In this passage, Nathalie/Nathanaël explains her understanding of the body as a product of discursive practices. The body is constructed according to artificial norms, it is "a body of ideas" (*SFI* 69).

Moreover, the first-person narrator of *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* states that either "[t]he body bricks itself into a shape" (*SFI* 60) to fit the sex/gender binaries, or the system "[n]ails [it] to this unnameable" (*SFI* 54). What is in-between male and female, masculine and feminine, he and she, cannot be named. As a result, it cannot exist. To circumvent binaries and create space for the in-between, Nathalie/Nathanaël attempts "[t]o touch what doesn't want touching" (*SFI* 34) and to name the unnameable: "Our bodies grew thin and our mouths kissed what was *unnameable*. We touched with our hands every place we had been" (*SFI* 43, my emphasis). Emerging from this multiplicity, the subject-body of the narrative is "[a] beginning from a midway. […] With this knack for repositioning" (*SFI* 61). Nathalie/Nathanaël seems never to have been Nathalie in the sense that this name presupposes a body's femaleness and femininity. The narrator finds herself in need of relocation, as her position in-between cannot be defined within the heterosexual matrix. As she points out: "This is as we discover the structure and the structure chokes us into tight squares of paralysis. What I mean to say is the significance of gravity is lost to the body in among this many constructions" (*SFI* 72). Yet, Nathanaël's subject

releases itself from the paralytic sex and gender dichotomies through perpetual movement and walking. She "wander[s] without aim" (*SFI* 78) and experiences that "to walk is to walk in darkness" (*SFI* 95). This is how Nathanaël's character emerges, from the movement through the city, as *flâneure* – revisited and sarcastically searching for "[a] body a body. For the sake then of linearity" (*SFI* 78). Since "the body begins bodiless" (*SFI* 95), it is her practice of walking that constitutes Nathalie/Nathanaël, who does not fit and feels "[t]his thing most uneven inside of us" (*SFI* 65), which could be defined in terms of queer.

According to Annemarie Jagose, "queer opts for denaturalisation as its primary strategy" (1996: 98) to "get beyond [a limited] 'unitary' subject" (Butler 2004: 227). The notion of 'queer' per se has no "consistent set of characteristics" (Jagose 1996: 96) other than that of its inconsistency. As Jagose explains, "queer is widely perceived as calling into question conventional understandings of sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, oppositions and equations that sustain them" (1996: 97). The indeterminacy of 'queer,' consequently, leaves space for self-identification. As "identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness," Homi Bhabha says in an interview, "the agency of identification – the subject – is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of that otherness" (Rutherford 1990: 211). Such identifications through cultural hybridity and the 'in-between' are related to the notion of 'queer,' as they are "giv[ing] rise to something different, […] a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Rutherford 1990: 211). Nathanaël's narrating subject is constructed through the other as multiple, fractured, and fragmented: "I doubt the familiarity of it. Which

is to say I cannot possibly. I take note of the unlikelihood. The heart turned out of its heart place. The boyhood the girlhood the commonplace" (*SFI* 94). She concludes: "What good to me is the shape of a body that cannot find comfort in the tenderest of places" (*SFI* 99)? Nathanaël explains this idea of her conception of belonging elsewhere as

> I am not looking for a comfortable place; I am not looking for somewhere to settle. I do not wish for language to function as a dwelling. I want to be crossing over always into these spaces that are extremely combative or disarming, disorienting or displacing. That is where I find them particularly productive (Tutschek 2010b: 143).

As the narrator of *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* puts it: "I had wanted a notion for movement. A way around naming. Or the justification of my inability (unwillingness?) to name" (*SFI* 12). Nathanaël is ultimately left with "a hyperconsciousness of what [s]he cannot lose" as Andrew Zawacki remarks in his review of the book entitled "Une Vie en Vrac" (2008).[573] While Nathalie/Nathanaël is aware of the fact that she cannot rid herself of the categorisations and structures language and society impose on her, she tries to escape them through movement: *flâneries* in the city and between languages. Nathanaël's narrating subject excessively walks urban spaces and emphasizes her function of inventing the city through this process by telling the reader: "[e]very distance is a walkable distance" (*SFI* 28), meaning that her trajectories compose the city's topography. 'Walking' is a recurrent and constitutive theme in the text and the narrator invites the reader to join her in her walking, which is identified as a parallel action to reading: "So walk with me" (*SFI* 29).

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[573] Cf. <http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/vol_3_no_2/alerts/zawacki.html> (18 December 2008).

At one point the Nathalie/Nathanaël states: "I wear the mark of the city's architecture" (*SFI* 46), which suggests that the city shapes the body. This reminds us of Benjamin's *Arcades Project* and the *flâneur*. The city incorporates the notion of 'walking' through the figure of the *flâneur*, which is characterised by its *art de vivre* – a strolling spectator, an urban wanderer, a detached observer. The *flâneur* – conventionally heterosexual male and masculine – is defined by motion whereas Benjamin focuses on the process of 'walking': it is less important where the subject is going, the fact that 'he' walks and, specifically, that 'he' walks for no particular reason and with no explicit aim are constitutive to the *flâneur* in Benjamin and can be found in Nathanaël's text: "The footsteps retrace before being begun" (*SFI* 50). The rhythms of the city shape the *flâneries* of the urban wanderer. The "*flâneur* is the city's most devoted reader" (Chisholm 2002a: 163, my emphasis). Walking and reading are crucial to both the construction of subjectivity and of the city. But *flâneries* do not make Nathanaël's narrator an inhabitant of the city although, like Benjamin's *flâneur*, she might eye the city with a longing to belong.[574] Nathalie/Nathanaël is neither *flâneur* nor *flâneuse* – as one might believe – because "the *flâneur*'s classical masculinity is altered" (Chisholm 2002a: 162, emphasis in original) as sex/gender categories are perpetually blurred. In *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*, the figure of the *flâneur* is queered.

Nathalie/Nathanaël wanders 'De Certeauian space,' as is evident in the following text passage, which recalls a pedestrian in everyday life: "I walked all those days with my head against the ground. I walked a fine pencil line

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[574] Cf. Chisholm 2002a: 166.

scattering the mysteries of my forked palms and my cut-out tongue" (*SFI* 49). De Certeau's theory "Walking in the city" extends Benjamin's work on the '*flâneur*' and alters it. In De Certeau, it is urban pedestrians who "read the city as a text, but, crucially they also write it" (Harris non. p.).[575] Early on in the book this idea is described as follows: "I am retracing steps to the beginning. The artifice of *motioning*" (*SFI* 6, my emphasis). In "Walking in the city," De Certeau suggests a *flâneur*-like figure which maps the city in the sense that "[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language" (1984: 97). De Certeau's essay has been compared to Benjamin's work on the *flâneur*, although there are fundamental differences between the two and their conception of moving through the city. Whereas Benjamin's *flâneur* walks through the arcades and "into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not private, not his own" (Benjamin 1999: 416), De Certeau's "walking in the city has its own set of practices regardless of the rules or impositions put upon it by infrastructure" (Hamilton and Southern 2008: non. p.)[576]. Benjamin's *flâneur* seems to be nostalgically watching his urban surroundings; De Certeau's pedestrian, in contrast, is in conversation with the city. "De Certeau privileges the physicality of walking" (Sheringham 2006: 224) because "through the motions of bodies […] the city is appropriated" (Sheringham 2006: 224). The "appropriation of space through motion" (Sheringham 2006: 224), ultimately, produces a creative "walking rhetorics" (Sheringham 2006: 224). Thus, "the users of the city, in their daily circulation, create a second, metaphorical city within the first" (Sheringham 2006: 224). Even though from another era, basically Nathanaël's narrator shares

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[575] Cf. <http://www.arasite.org/decwalk.htm> (10 August 2013).
[576] For more information cf. <http://www.theportable.tv/satellitebureau/t6.php> (16 December 2008).

characteristics of both: the *flâneur*, because of the nostalgia that settles in the novel through the narrative voice ("[a]ll the ways are lost ways" (*SFI* 59)) as well as the pedestrian, because of the metaphorical city Nathalie/Nathanaël creates through motion.

Furthermore, Nathanaël addresses the interrelation of writing, reading, and walking as follows: "The movement that does not want completing. The book that does not want writing" (*SFI* 9). S/he emphasizes the relation between the body and the text: "Truss the unruly legs of speech for the sanctity of the bindery" (*SFI* 31) and, ultimately, becomes one with the city: "The liquid of the city running from [her] veins" (*SFI* 3) and "[s]et[s] fire to the cities welling out of [her]" (*SFI* 29). According to Ben Highmore, "the actuality of the city is its lived metaphoricity" (2005: 5) and the "experience of an urban social imaginary" (2005: 5) is that created by the city's histories, cultures, and languages. Consistent with De Certeau, "walking is a mode of reading the spatial environment; reading is a mode of journeying; speaking involves narrativization that links spaces together as in walking, and so on" (Sheringham 2006: 222-223). De Certeau's interest is in the physical activity of walking, as he believes that the city and the subject enter into mutual dependence as the subject moves through the city. Nathanaël describes this mutuality in the following two quotes: "I tire of the city and myself in it. The city that made a desire of me" (*SFI* 90); and "[i]t was the voices of the many countries tangled into one. It was the spat-up city block" (*SFI* 49).

But the process of walking also becomes operative in its process/progress, in the subject's deliberate movement in different directions:

"The street map pointed east so I wandered west" (*SFI* 30). In fact, "[De] Certeau's everyday practices all involve being displaced […], and finding one's place in a reaction with and to the other" (Sheringham 2006: 232). Eventually, it is the realm of the city, which provides space for the subject that comes into being through walking and, more generally, its everyday practices. Michel Foucault's "'aesthetics of existence'" (Sheringham 366) describes the everyday subject in a similar way. "'Subjectivation'" (Sheringham 2006: 368) is achieved through a "conscious self-fashioning" (Sheringham 2006: 368) that "involves interaction with others" (Sheringham 2006: 368) and, ultimately, interaction with the city itself. Benjamin's and De Certeau's walkers arise from the discourse between the subject and the city; Nathanaël's novel is a demonstration of this discourse and of what it means to be shaped by a divided city as well as an 'in-between' of identities and languages. The city of the narrator's *flâneries* is as hybrid as the subject itself. This becomes clear when Nathalie/Nathanaël talks about the cities' multiplicity: "The cities fold over and over" (*SFI* 21) and their histories: "The city that does not want remembering" (*SFI* 9) as well as their continuity: "It was the same city all over again" (*SFI* 45).

As I have shown, Nathanaël's *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* is an experiment in *entre-genre* writing and an exemplary construction of the subject and the city as interconnected in their fragmentation and, as a result, in their queerness.[577] The text follows Nathanaël's earlier narrative *Je Nathanaël* (2003). However, the fact that Nathanaël uses two names to refer to the narrator shows challenges the essentialist unitary subject. Although this device does not elude

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[577] Cf. Chisholm 2002a: 154.

heteronormative categorisations altogether, as the quotation from the text "[y]ou are the daughter and the son" (*SFI* 9) demonstrates, it nevertheless questions their dualism. As Nathanaël claims in an interview:

> I hope that it does not stay in the binary, because this work is among other works and the way I think of Nathalie and Nathanaël is that they are not opposite of one another the way a binary is. One is not the sort of negation of the other or the antithesis of the other. Nathanaël [phonemically] folds out of Nathalie. They share five letters, so there is this doubling that occurs, there is [an] overlap or layering. I do not see them as distinct, separate, and different, but really as unfolding. Nathanaël folds out of Nathalie. In that respect, I do not think either of them actually occupy fixed points on a line, because their relationship to one another is always shifting. (Tutschek 2010b: 144)

Neither Nathalie nor Nathanaël find comfort in their bodies or the hybrid city: "You reproach me the cities. Fair enough. But they have a way of being inhabited" (*SFI* 59) – that is, by either women or men. Walking the city, the narrator describes itineraries and borders and remarks that "[t]he border is such that either way I cannot cross it. And here, on either side, does not exist. (So I run headlong into it, partitioning.)" (*SFI* 87). This corroborates Nathanaël's hypothesis about fixity and shifting of identities in the excerpt above as well as the interpretation of her/his work as queer. 'Here' does not exist for the narrator, who positions herself beyond the sex and gender binaries; neither does it exist beyond geographical and national boundaries, as the patchwork-city – or "border town" (*SFI* 93) – of the narrative shows. Consequently, "[t]he city designed a body of conjecture" (*SFI* 28) while "[t]he body foretold the city" (*SFI* 29). Nathanaël's fragmented writing style deconstructs identity and its supposedly stable parameters, and creates a fragmented notion of urban spaces; discursive practices and urban practices are set side by side: "For now

it is good to have belief in the landscape. It too is fragmentary" (*SFI* 82) as there is

> [n]o evidence of its having ever existed, this very room, nor the landscape. Nor for that matter I. Believe me. I go to great lengths to rephrase it. It is the violence in the body transmitted to language overturned by the cities that exhort" (*SFI* 98).

Like the body and the city, language plays a major role in Nathanaël's narrative. The construction of the body's sex and gender as well as the city as a manifold lieu is accomplished on both levels: *genre* and language. Nathanaël's switching between English and French remains uncommented by the narrator, who inserts French words and phrases predominantly into the first part of her story and some twenty times altogether. The inclusion of French is only rarely made formally noticeable (through the use of grey instead of black ink, indicated by italics in the quotes) and there are no translations given, as shown in the following examples: "Eugène said une *ville en vrac*" (*SFI* 2), "[i]n an hour I am leaving: *Je m'en vais*" (*SFI* 4), "[t]o touch what is missing. Ce qui manque" (*SFI* 7), "I needed to go outre-mer" (*SFI* 13), "[i]n the hill that would be la colline" (*SFI* 57). The first two incorporations of French into the English text coincide with Nathanaël's habit of marking text passages giving in/direct speech or citations in lighter print. This might mislead the reader into believing that code switching is in fact emphasized throughout the text, but it is not, as the rest of the examples show. Neither are borrowings of other languages tagged in any way. As Zawacki remarks, Nathanaël does not stay in the English-French binary but she inserts Slovenian and Spanish words and phrases in her text as well. Passages like "[i]n the mouth that says awkwardly prosim" (*SFI* 57) and "[w]ith my mouth wrapped around a sound, carbon, I am incapable of making" (*SFI* 10), Nathanaël adds

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other language systems to her the bilingual text. As she writes across language borders – or opens up the space of structural difference between language systems – she "[furthers] the sense of a single, continuous language of discontinuities" (Zawacki 2008: non. p.) without notice. Nathalie/Nathanaël seems to favour "[a] failed language in the place of a language that fails" (*SFI* 55). The language of *The Sorrow and the Fast* of It might be a lapsed language, fragmented and torn between differing linguistic systems as it seeks to disrupt patterns of categorisation. However, Nathalie/Nathanaël prefers it to a language that fails to speak the unspeakable, or rather constructs the unspeakable, because of its pre-established categories embedded in the power discourses of monolingualism and heterosexism. "At this border crossing […] We speak the language denied the many. We take the clothes from the body" (*SFI* 86-87), the narrator declares, referring to the body as "[a] body overful of wanting to forget" (*SFI* 18), "[u]n corps trop plein de vouloir oublier" (Trans. 23).

Nathanaël's border-consciousness is further elaborated in her practice of self-translation, which offers a re-writing of her novels in the corresponding language – be it French or English. *… s'arrête? Je* complements *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* more than it is a substitution of the text in another language. This is why I consider it, in contrast to the other translations of the texts of my corpus. It is not a translation in the sense that it seeks to be a reproduction of the original. In fact, as regards Nathanaël's writing, it would be difficult to speak of either of her texts as originals; rather, one text comes first and the other follows. Nathanaël creates in the language convenient at the moment of writing and fitting the topos and message, as she claims in an interview. Thinking in and

between two language systems offers her multiple possibilities of expression

and this component surfaces even more in her self-translations:

> In a sense there is a multiplication of myself that occurs when I am self-translating. I enter into other folds of language. There are more and more and more layers wrapped around me. It is kind of suffocating as well, like I just go deeper in. (Stephens 2008)

Nathanaël is aware of the constraints of separate language systems and the

differences as well as the distances between them. For her, the in-between is a

productive space on many levels: the process of self-translating exposes the in-

between of languages and gives her texts and translations aspects they would

not have in only one version. The translation of gendered texts particularly

emphasizes the structural differences and limitations of language systems, as

Nathanaël outlines in an interview:

> Some of the difficulty that I have with my own thinking about gender and language is around the emphasis on the substantive and the pronoun. Especially in English when we think of ungendering language or making language gender neutral, we go immediately to the pronoun. I want for it to be more diffuse than that. I think that gender functions at different levels of the sentence and syntactical relationships actually serve also to entrench and reinforce gender binaries. The way I would put it maybe a little provocatively would be that syntax is totalitarian. It imposes a particular structure of thought and the reflexes generated by language then also generate language in a particular fashion. This gets complicated when I am working with two languages, because the way in which gender functions in French e.g. is very different to the way it functions in English. The strategies that need to be deployed in each instance are not always the same. (Tutschek 2010b: 144)

However, it is not only on the gender level that Nathanaël's self-translations

reveal what is happening during the translation and writing process between

English and French language and categorisation systems. In *The Sorrow and the*

Fast of It and … s'arrête? Je, Nathanaël does not use code switching practices

in a consistent way. This means, she does not translate her French insertions in

the English text into English when translating from English to French, but deliberately changes code switching patterns as in: "[t]o touch what is missing. Ce qui manque" (*SFI* 7) and "[t]oucher what is missing. Ce qui manque" (Trans.). This is why I add Nathanaël's self-translations to the list of "perverse translations" (Simon 2006: 119) along with Scott's comma of translation.

Simon exemplifies her notion of perverse translation by referring to Italo Calvino's novel *If On a Winter's Night, a Traveler* (1979),[578] in which "the Translator is the villain" (2006: 119). Calvino's text confirms "that one can never control the dealings that go on in the shady zones where the translator operates" (Simon 2006: 120) and Nathanaël confirms this in her work: "I have been accused of wistfulness. Of variation. Inside Calvino's book I encountered W.'s pilfering hands stealing lines into her. Is this how one encounters oneself?" (*SFI* 4). I have used the idea of 'stealing lines' to establish the encounter between not only the two texts analysed in this chapter, but throughout this second section of my dissertation. Stealing lines from one text into the other allowed me to study one with the help of the other. This is how I translate the *flâneries* between *My Paris* and *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* that my comparative approach creates. As Parker claims, "[r]eading, writing and translation share a common ground in the passages they construct" (1998: 213). I have explored these passages between *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* and *My Paris* is, on the one hand, based on the practices of perverse translation they have in common. On the other hand, these two texts share *flâneure* figures that describe their itineraries in a Benjaminian-montage method. As Dianne Chisholm notes, "[i]n montage, the

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[578] I consulted the following edition as reference in my dissertation: Calvino, Italo. *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler.* Trans. William Weaver. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1981. Print.

object appears as an image: a primary dream image of the city's collective dreaming" (2002a: 160). Considered as "[a] form of dream analysis, montage represents a dream […] by deconstructing the image into unassimilable fragments" (Chisholm 2002a: 160). Both in *My Paris* and in *The Sorrow and the Fast of It,* "[t]he flâneur sketches the city of his flâneries." (Ferguson in Chisholm 2002a: 165, emphasis in original) – but in a different way than Benjamin had in mind. Both narrators are neither *flâneur* nor *flâneuse*, really, and Nathanaël's *flâneure* (Nathalie/Nathanaël) is "transgender[ed] and transsexual[l]" (2002a: 162, emphasis in original).

7.   CONCLUSION: FROM *LE REINE ELIZABETH* TO 'LA QUEEN ÉLISABETH'

> The origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability,
> so that wherever translation in this sense has failed,
> it is nothing less than philosophy that finds itself defeated.
> (Derrida 1985: 120)

I opened my discussion of Montréal writings with a reference to the Montréal Fairmont hotel *Le Reine Elizabeth* and its history. I was lead to do so because Gail Scott specifically refers to it in *My Paris* and, more generally, because the masculine article attached to the feminine proper noun is disturbing for everyone who is not francophone and aware that the definite article '*le*' is actually consistent with its reference, the absent noun '*hôtel*,' which is masculine in French. The confusion about why it is not '*la*' *Reine Elizabeth* but '*le*' points to the deeper grammatical structure of the phrase (*le+hôtel+reine+Elizabeth*) and reminds us of the implicit linguistic structures that are invisible on the surface. In situations of contact, languages trespass the borders of the other and mingle. Even though recent Québec and Canadian linguistic studies predominantly state that mixing mainly happens on the lexical level in the form of isolated borrowings, without grammar or syntax being significantly affected (see subchapters 2.6 and 2.7), Anglo/Québécois literary practices display more substantial linguistic convergences. Montréal texts, both English and French, bear witness to the crossing of linguistic boundaries on many levels, including the lexical, morphological, and syntactic.

As I have shown, the French sound of Gail Scott's English in *Main Brides*, the linguistic errors found in Zoe Whittall's *Bottle Rocket Hearts*, and the post-

linguistic practices of Heather O'Neill in *Lullabies for Little Criminals* reach beyond isolated examples of code switching. Like the insertions of English words and phrases into French in *French Kiss* that redirect Nicole Brossard's associative language play and alter the perception of the city and the body, the unremitting contact with French changes the English spoken in Québec and creates a specific situational (Montréal) idiom. Brossard's *Le désert mauve,* Scott's *My Paris,* and Nathanaël's *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* direct our attention to yet another effect of the territorial proximity of languages and cultures: translation. Each features its own inter- or intralingual practice, but together they raise awareness of the perpetual language encounters the city of Montréal stages and show how the notion of 'translation' itself is revised in this contact zone. This concluding chapter illustrates this mobility, and the hybrid 'La Queen Élisabeth' seems like a fitting title for these final reflections on Montréal and the back and forth between English and French. The title symbolises the mechanics of *dimension lapsisée*, which are probably best exemplified in Nathanaël's *Paper City* with its linguistic amalgamations that claim untranslatability.

I have used *dimension lapsisée* in my dissertation both as a reading device and as a concept that defines the particular linguistic, cultural, and socio-historical situation of Montréal. The various facets of the lapsised dimension are best illustrated by the subjectivity that emerges from *flâneries* through it: the subjectivity of the '*flâneure*.' Like Régine Robin, all of the first-person narrators of my corpus conceive of Montréal as a "*tiers-lieu*, un hors-lieu, un espace pour pouvoir respirer sans se sentir totalement concerné, comme un dedans-dehors"

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(Robin in Marcotte qtd. in Lapointe 2005: 74, my emphasis). The lapsised dimension is a realm that combines the transnational and translational theoretical underpinnings of Anzaldúa's 'borderlands,' Bhabha's 'third space,' and Pratt's 'contact zone.' I have also used *dimension lapsisée* as a heuristic device to answer the question asked at the beginning of this thesis: How has the crossing of cultural, linguistic, and ideological borders been addressed in narratives by bilingual, anglophone, and francophone Québécois women writers in Montréal for the past three decades?

In the process of writing my dissertation, the lapsised dimension developed from an initially descriptive, theoretical concept into a reading strategy. Placing English and French language narratives side by side and establishing a dialogue between them has brought the textual border crossings of Anglo/Québécois women's writing to the surface and has highlighted the role of translation over the past three decades. The aim of my project was to expose the performativity of the literary texts, create a paradigm for Anglo/Québécois women's narratives, and to present an example of a revised subjectivity: the *flâneure* – the classical figure of the *flâneur* revisited and a queer icon of the post/modern metropolis.

To illustrate the character of the *flâneure* in my dissertation, I have followed the footprints of Benjamin's *flâneur* and of a feminist version, the *flâneuse*, through the texts of my corpus. In the first section, the reader was encouraged to participate in these *flâneries* through time and space. The histories of the cultural divide of Canada and Québec; the vying definitions of the notion of 'nation;' Montréal as a post/modern city; the role of translation there

and the queering of its spaces – all were visited on our *flâneries*. These, in turn, lead to the borders of languages and cultures, sex, gender, and sexuality as well as *genre*. The texts at these borders question every single element of the title of this dissertation and challenge national(ist) categories like 'Québécois,' heteronormative categories like 'woman,' and literary categories like 'narrative.' They thereby deconstruct fixed perceptions of categorisations, create a space for reconsideration, and accentuate performativity.

The second section invited the reader into a world of *théorie/fiction*, *écriture au féminin* and *entre-genre*. Following the 'paths of perversity' of Brossard's 'pseudotranslation,' Scott's 'comma of translation,' and Nathanaël's 'self-translation' as well as the 'translations of the street' of Whittall and O'Neill, each of my comparative chapters sketched an aspect of (the revised figure of) the *flâneur(e)*. My reading of *Paper City* together with *French Kiss*, for example, discussed the notion of 'Anglo-Québécois' – a subject that is at the same time Québécois and English-speaking. Body and city co-construct themselves in texts that both push the limits of sexual conventions, attack sex and gender binaries, and strip away the traditional *flâneur* figure's masculinity. The chapter on *Le désert mauve* and *Bottle Rocket Hearts* staged the coming-of-age of the *flâneur*. Mélanie and Eve are both *flâneuses* on wheels as they roam desert and city respectively. Progressing from adolescence to adulthood, their subjectivities are in the process of translation as body and text parallel each other. My analysis of *Main Brides* and *Lullabies for Little Criminals* further elaborated on translation as a constitutive factor of the subject. Lydia's fragmented voice emerges from her location in Montréal's borderlands, at the same time signifier

and site for linguistic and cultural encounter. By adding Baby to the set of brides Lydia imagines, I have included the perspective of the subaltern in the realm of '*dimension lapsisée*.' Both *flâneuse* and *flâneure* are precarious figures. The last chapter, which juxtaposes *My Paris* and *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*, has set its focus on the street to study the interrelatedness of walking and writing, senses of separation, and the instability of the urban spaces that co-construct the lapsised dimension, the borderlands on the 45th parallel north.

The figure of the '*flâneure*,' which my study contributes to the field, destabilises the heterosexual matrix and post/colonial discourses of power. Reminscent of Monique Wittig's provocative claim that "lesbians are no women" (Wittig 1992: VIII), I propose that Anglo-Québécois is neither (English) Canadian nor Québécois. Analogous to Wittig, who argues that the notion of 'woman' is defined against 'man' and that of 'lesbian' is not, and in line with Butler, who explains the interdependent construction of masculinity and femininity through the workings of heteronomativity, I claim that Canadian and Québécois co-define each other and that Anglo-Québécois does not stand in opposition to Canadian. This is why it cannot be 'Québécois' in the way 'lesbian' cannot be 'woman.' It is not defined by the traditional two solitudes dynamic, but located in-between (English) Canada and Québec. In the city of Montréal and its in-between of two languages, an amalgamation of *flâneur* and *flâneuse* takes place. The *flâneure* does not fit into the double matrix of masculine/feminine and Canadian/Québécois. It is a subjectivity that emerges from the lapsised dimension, "a space that ruptures the social contract" (Parker 1998: 225). The *flâneure* is not the other to *flâneur* as is the *flâneuse*, but stands (walks) for itself.

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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

***Dimension lapsisée*:**

Neukonstruktion von Subjektivität in Quebecscher Frauenliteratur

1. Einleitung: Die Geschichte des *Queen Elizabeth* Hotels, Teil 1

> Political in nature.
> E.g. québécois fans stampeding luxury Queen Elizabeth Hotel.
> Ca. 1950. After hotel being named for foreign queen on dollars.
> Instead of local hockey great: Maurice Richard.
> (*My Paris* 67-68)

In diesem Zitat aus dem Text *My Paris* von Gail Scott, erschienen 1999, geht es um Montreals *Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel* und die Montreal *Canadiens* Eishockeylegende Maurice Richard. Ich habe es als Einführung in meine Arbeit gewählt, da es zugleich thematisch als auch formal für die Forschungsproblematik dieser Dissertation steht. Auf thematischer Ebene leitet es mein Interesse an Quebec in der Zeitspanne während bis nach der Stillen Revolution ein. Insbesondere interessiert mich der Zwist zwischen den beiden ehemaligen Kolonialmächten, deren kulturelle Unterschiede und unterschiedlicher Sprachgebrauch auf gemeinsamem Territorium. Auf formaler Ebene ist die Textstelle ein Beispiel für den hybriden Diskurs in den Grenzgebieten von Montreal, wo englisch- und französischsprachige Gemeinschaften aufeinandertreffen.

Die Benennung des *Queen Elizabeth Hotels* gab Ausschlag für weitläufige Tumulte im Montreal der späten fünfziger Jahre. Das größte Hotel des Commonwealth Staates Kanada sollte nach der britischen Krone benannt werden, obwohl es in Montreal stand – einer zum Großteil französischsprachigen Stadt. Die Namenswahl stieß somit auf erheblichen Widerstand, da sie ein Zeichen anglophoner Dominanz in Quebec darstellte. Dieses Machtspiel reproduzierte sich nahezu zur selben Zeit auch auf andere Weise: Als Montreals

französischsprachiger Hockey-Held Maurice Richard aufgrund einer Schlägerei am Eis von der *NHL* ausgeschlossen wurde, galt dies als Machtbeweis der anglophonen Liga. Die Entscheidung schien nicht nur gegen die französischsprachigen Spieler und deren Fangemeinde zu fallen, sondern gegen die gesamte französischsprachige Gemeinschaft der Stadt. Man sprach von Erniedrigung und im Weiteren kam es zu Ausschreitungen. In ihrem Text bringt Scott die zwei Ereignisse aufgrund ihrer thematischen Verbindung in Zusammenhang. Fakt ist, dass das *Queen Elizabeth Hotel* aus frankophoner Sicht nach dem Stadtgründer Montreals, Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, benannt werden hätte sollen und nicht, wie Scott schreibt, nach Maurice Richard. Dies konnte jedoch nicht durchgesetzt werden und so prangerte bis zum Sommer 2014 – und trotz mehrerer Gesetze zur einsprachigen französischen Beschilderung in der frankophonen Provinz Quebec – ein großes Namensschild das ‚*Queen Elizabeth Hotel*' besagte am Dach des Gebäudes; daneben die Übersetzung ins Französische: ‚*Le Reine Elizabeth*.'[579]

Diese Dissertation beschäftigt sich mit den Fronten zwischen dem englischsprachigen Teil Kanadas und der frankophonen Provinz Quebec. Im Mittelpunkt der Analyse steht dabei die Metropole Montreal, in der englisch- und französischsprachige Gemeinschaften nebeneinander und miteinander leben. Lange Zeit wurde die Stadt in Kunst und Kultur aber auch vor allem politisch als geteilt konstruiert: typischerweise wird Montreals Westen als anglophon, der Osten als frankophon dargestellt. Als historische Demarkationslinie zwischen den beiden gilt dabei der *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*. Er teilt die Stadt mittig und

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[579] Nach Auskunft der Pressesprechin des Hotels per Telefon Ende Oktober 2014 wurde nun ein neues Schild angebracht: der englischen Bezeichnung ‚The Queen Elizabeth' wurde im Sommer 2014 das französische Wort ‚*hôtel*' vorangestellt.

geradlinig von Süd nach Nord.[580] Das Hauptargument meiner Arbeit liegt darin, dass das dabei entstandene urbane Grenzgebiet – das allerdings viel komplexer ist, als es die zweispaltige topographische Darstellung vermittelt – ein diskursiver Raum ist, der mit dem Konzept des ‚borderlands,' das die Chicana Schriftstellerin und Theoretikerin Gloria Anzaldúa in ihrem Werk *Borderlands/La Frontera* beschreibt, vergleichbar ist.[581]

Im Detail diskutiert diese Dissertation die Konstruktion und Modifizierung von Subjektivität, wie sie in den *borderlands* Zonen Montreals stattfindet. Die Studie basiert auf Ich-Erzählungen, die seit der Stillen Revolution sowohl auf Englisch als auch auf Französisch geschrieben wurden. Der Korpus der Arbeit umfasst folgende Texte: *French Kiss* und *Le désert mauve* von der frankophonen feministischen Autorin Nicole Brossard, *Main Brides* und *My Paris* von der anglophonen Quebec-nahen feministischen Schriftstellerin Gail Scott, *Paper City* und *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* von Nathanaël (Nathalie Stephens), einer gebürtigen Montrealer Schriftstellerin, die nun in Chicago und zwischen den Geschlechtern lebt, sowie *Lullabies for Little Criminals* von der englischsprachigen Montrealer Autorin Heather O'Neill und *Bottle Rocket Hearts* von der anglophonen *queeren* Schrifstellerin Zoe Whittall. All diese Texte stellen sowohl sprachliche Homogenität als auch kulturellen Nationalismus in Frage. Aber auf welche Weise nimmt das Überschreiten von linguistischen, kulturellen und ideologischen Grenzen Form an in diesen Erzählungen zweisprachiger

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[580] Cf. Simon, Sherry. *Translating Montreal. Episodes in the Life of a Divided City*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006: 5. Print.

[581] Cf. Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands – La Frontera. The New Mestiza*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. Print.

anglophoner und frankophoner Schriftstellerinnen aus einem Montréal der siebziger Jahre bis heute?

,*Dimension lapsisée*: Neukonstruktion von Subjektivität in Quebecscher Frauenliteratur' arbeitet Montreals Literatur gemäß folgender Richtlinien ab: urbanen Topographien, kulturellen Begegnungen und deren Darstellungen, sowie translingualen Erfahrungen und Experimenten und deren Materialisierung im Schreiben. Ein Fokus liegt dabei auf den Ich-ErzählerInnen der Texte. Eine genaue Analyse ihrer Identität anhand des Konzepts der Performativität gemäß Judith Butler stellt Kategorien und deren Formulierung in Frage: Wer ist *Québécois* und was impliziert dies? Wen schließt die Kategorie *Anglo-Québécois* ein beziehungsweise aus? Was ist *Montréalité*, *Québécitude*, *Canadian-ness* und wodurch zeichnet es sich aus*?* Was beinhaltet die Kategorie ,Frau'? Was ist demnach Frauenliteratur und ,*écriture au féminin*'? Wo liegen die Grenzen von Dichotomien (Frau – Mann, anglophon – frankophon, Fiktion – Theorie)? Wie und wo definieren sich die Abgrenzungen literarischer Gattungen?

Der oben aufgelistete Korpus besteht aus Werken von Frauen, die sich zumindest zeitweise mit dieser Kategorie identifiziert haben und entweder in Montreal leben oder zeitweise dort gelebt haben. Alle teilen oder haben bereits ideologische Prinzipien und Schreibmethoden mit selbsternannten Montrealer SchriftstellerInnen geteilt. Sie hegen oder haben vormals ein Interesse an kulturellen und sprachlichen Übersetzungsstrategien und der davon abhängenden Subjektkonstruktion gehegt. Meine Auswahl von *entre-genre* Werken reflektiert die Veränderung von Subjektivität und deren Verortung zwischen Kulturen, Sprachen und Geschlechtern. Das Konzept der ,*dimension*

lapsisée' wende ich an, um mit der Vielfalt von Texten und deren Übersetzungsinhalten umzugehen. Der Begriff selbst setzt sich aus theoretischen und literarischen Aspekten zusammen. Er beschreibt Montreals *borderlands* und dient als Leseanleitung und Interpretationshilfe für die Texte dieses Forschungsprojekts.

1.1. Ein neues Raumkonzept: *Dimension lapsisée*

Wie bereits erwähnt orientiert sich die lapsisierte Dimension an Anzaldúas *borderlands* Theorie. Jedoch auch Homi Bhabhas Konzept des ‚*third space*' und Mary Louise Pratts ‚*contact zone*' liegen ihr zugrunde. Der Begriff ‚*dimension lapsisée*' ist ein Neologismus und von Nicole Brossard entlehnt. Er stand in ihren Werken der siebziger Jahre für die Fehlerhaftigkeit von Sprache, in der Ausdruck und Äußerungen von Frauen durch einen patriarchal strukturierten Diskurs eingeschränkt waren. Meine Theorie erweitert diese ursprüngliche Begrifflichkeit und vereint darin globale Konzepte wie Transnationalismus, Transkulturalität und (kulturelle) Übersetzung. Gleichzeitig ist sie auf geopolitischer, kultureller und sprachlicher Eben in Kanada und Quebec verortet – genau zwischen den sogenannten ‚*two solitudes*.' Dort wo sich die territorialen Ansprüche der ehemaligen Kolonialmächte Englands und Frankreichs überschneiden ist eine Kontaktzone entstanden. Aus ihr geht eine Mischkultur hervor, die sowohl Vielfalt als auch Hybridität zeigt. Mein Projekt beschäftigt sich mit den Begegnungstopographien anglophoner und frankophoner Kulturen in Montreal – es sind die Orte dieser Begegnungen, die ich ‚*dimension lapsisée*' nenne. Aus

ihrem *entre-deux* gehen Übersetzungsstrategien und transformierte Subjektivität hervor, die sich an Konstruktionen wie Nationalität und Geschlecht, aber auch *genre* abarbeiten.

Typische Phänomene der lapsisierten Dimension in der vorliegenden Literatur sind *code switching*, Sprachvermischungen, Übersetzungsvariationen, postmoderne nicht lineare Erzählweisen, nicht einordbare Gattungen sowie Mischgattungen und poröse Charaktere oder postmoderne fragmentarisch umrissene ErzählerInnen. Einige der Primärtexte im Korpus dieser Dissertation sind Avant-Garde Werke, wobei insbesondere Brossards, Scotts und Nathanaëls experimentelle Schreibpraktiken als solches gelten. In einigen werden insbesondere Sex- und Geschlechteridentitäten dekonstruiert und sie stellen das in Frage, was Butler die heterosexuelle Matrix nennt. Gleichzeitig wird dabei die heteronormative Auffassung von sexueller Orientierung hinterfragt.

2. Zwiespältige Geschichte-n

> speak white
> c'est une langue universelle
> nous sommes nés pour la comprendre
> avec ses mots lacrymogènes
> avec ses mots matraques
>
> speak white
> tell us again about Freedom and Democracy
> (Michèle Lalonde, 1968)

Der erste Teil meiner Dissertation besteht aus mehreren Sektionen. Mit seinen acht Unterkapiteln ist dieses Kapitel als Enzyklopädie oder Handbuch für

den zweiten Teil der Arbeit zu verstehen. Es gibt einen Überblick über historische Fakten und zeitgenössische Theorien zu Kanada und Quebec, die im Weiteren aufgegriffen und anhand von literarischen Beispielen bearbeitet werden. Einleitend wird die zweitgeteilte sozio-politische Geschichte Kanadas und Quebecs aus heutiger Sicht und gemäß post-kolonialer Methoden angerissen. Außerdem wird die Identitätskategorie *Anglo-Québécois* vorgestellt, die seit den neunziger Jahren ein umstrittener Begriff in der englischsprachigen Quebecer Literaturszene ist. Im Großen und Ganzen dreht sich das gesamte Kapitel in erster Linie um den Identitätsbegriff auf seinen verschiedenen Ebenen.

Das erste Unterkapitel stellt zeitgenössische Theorien für den Raumbegriff vor und definiert diesen mit Hilfe der Begrifflichkeiten von Anzaldúas ‚borderlands,' Bhabhas ‚Hybridität' und Pratts ‚Kontaktzone.' Es liefert damit den theoretischen Hintergrund zu dem in der Einleitung vorgestellten Konzept der ‚*dimension lapsisée*.' Das darauffolgende Unterkapitel beschäftigt sich näher mit dem Nationsbegriff, seiner Definition im politischen und kulturellen Sinne und seiner aktuellen Interpretation in Kanada und Quebec. Premierminister Stephen Harper hatte Quebec 2006 offiziell als ‚*nation*' in der ‚Nation' (Kanada) bezeichnet. Zur Festlegung einer nationalen quebecschen Identität sollte zuletzt der Gesetzesvorschlag *Bill 60*, der im Herbst 2013 von der separatistischen Partei *Parti Québécois* vorgelegt wurde, beitragen.

Das nächste Unterkapitel ist auf die Stadt Montreal fokussiert und diskutiert ihre Stellung als moderne beziehungsweise postmoderne Metropole. In enger Verbindung zum Verständnis urbanen Raums wird hier die Figur des *flâneurs* im Sinne von Walter Benjamin erläutert, wobei auch die Theorien zu

urbanem Leben von Michel De Certeau und Zygmunt Bauman herangezogen werden. Das Unterkapitel danach setzt sich näher mit dem Flanieren durch die zweisprachige Stadt auseinander und greift auf Sherry Simons Abhandlung über Montreal und seine alltäglichen und literarischen Übersetzungen zurück, um eine linguistische Landkarte des urbanen Raums zu skizzieren. Simon spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von ‚pervertierten Übersetzungen' – einem Konzept, das ich in späteren Kapiteln auf meine Analyse von Nathanaëls, O'Neills und Whittalls Texten ausweite. Der Schwerpunkt des nächsten Unterkapitels liegt auf *queeren* Theorien zur Performativität von Geschlecht und Raum. Es unterstreicht damit den konstruktivistischen Aspekt der lapsisierten Dimension. Außerdem diskutiert es die Konzepte von ‚Identität' und ‚Subjektivität' und erklärt somit die Wortwahl im Titel dieser Arbeit.

Die darauf folgenden zwei Unterkapitel sind miteinander verwoben. Sie behandeln den Sprachgebrauch von Französisch und Englisch in Quebec und beantworten folgende Fragen: Auf welche Weise unterscheiden sich Montrealer Ausdrucksweisen vom englischen Sprachgebrauch im restlichen Kanada? Ist *Québécois* eine eigenständige Sprache? Und wie manifestiert sich der ständige Sprachkontakt mit dem Englischen im Französisch von Montreal heute? Das letzte Unterkapitel des ersten Kapitels überführt diese linguistische Diskussion dann in eine literarische. Sie gibt einen kritischen Überblick zu literarischen Kategorisierungen und deren Neuerungen im spezifisch kanadischen und quebecschen Kontext und befasst sich insbesondere mit der Kategorie '*Anglo-Québécois*.' Überdies leitet sie die Sequenz der vier komparativen Kapitel im zweiten Teil dieser Dissertation ein. Mit Hilfe von paarweisen Vergleichen der

insgesamt acht Texte des literarischen Korpus wird im Folgenden das *êntre-deux* Montreals erforscht. Jedes einzelne Kapitel veranschaulicht dabei einen oder mehrere Facetten der ‚*dimension lapsisée*.'

3. Stadt und Körper in *French Kiss* und *Paper City*

> Texte du quotidien […]
> Marielle traversera ce livre comme elle le fera de la rue Sherbrooke.
> À l'horizontale, sur une carte grande ouverte de la ville […]
> Fragmenté, scrupule à vaincre la representation des corps alimentant la cité,
> la différence des corps épiderme/texture.
> (*French Kiss* 70-71)

Dieses Kapitel stellt meine Herangehensweise an den Vergleich von Texten in dieser Arbeit dar. Dazu bringe ich Nicole Brossard's *French Kiss* (1974) und Nathanaël's *Paper City* (2003) in eine dialogähnliche Situation, in der ein Text zur Interpretation des anderen herangezogen wird. *French Kiss* ist eine *théorie/fiction* Erzählung und handelt von einer Gruppe junger Erwachsener, die kommunenartig zusammen in einer Wohnung im Montreal der siebziger Jahre lebt. Die Erzählerin setzt sich aus mehreren Stimmen und Perspektiven zusammen: Marielle, Camomille und Lucie. Die drei Frauen durchqueren mit ihrem Auto die Stadt auf der verkehrsreichen Sherbrooke Street – von Ost nach West und von West nach Ost, immer wieder. Diese transurbane *flânerie* beschreibt die unterschiedlichen anglophonen und frankophonen Stadtseiten, während in der Überfahrt von der einen zur anderen Körper und Stadtraum miteinander verschmelzen. Der Kuss, der dem Buch seinen Titel gibt, findet bezeichnenderweise genau in der Mitte des Weges statt, nämlich an der Ecke

von Sheerbrooke und Bleury[582] und somit inmitten von Montreals historischer Grenzzone. Englisch und Französisch verschmelzen oftmals in diesem Text, der im Kontext von Brossards Gesamtwerk am meisten Gebrauch macht vom sogenannten *joual*,' einem Montrealer Soziolekt aus der Zeit der Stillen Revolution, der in der Vergangenheit oftmals als minderwertiges Französisch bezeichnet wurde.

Paper City zeigt ebenfalls häufiges *code switching* und Mischen von Englisch und Französisch auf. Die Ich-Erzählerin, *n*, und ihr Partner, *b*, sind beide zweisprachig. Als die beiden auf die Figur *?* treffen, kristallisiert sich die Art ihrer Beziehung als polyamourös heraus. [kwʌt] ist nicht kategorisierbar oder benennbar. Deswegen geben ihm die beiden einen Namen *entre-deux*, der aus einem Teil französisch (,*quoi*') und dem anderen Teil englisch (,*what*') besteht. Ich argumentiere, dass das sprachliche Hin und Her des Textes diesen öffnet und eine Verwischung der Grenzen zwischen ihm und Brossards Text ermöglicht, der ebenfalls experimentell mit der linguistischen Situation Montreals umgeht. Mein Hauptargument in diesem Kapitel ist, dass *Paper City* aufgrund seiner thematischen und ideologischen Nähe zu Brossards Text – der auch seiner Vergleichbarkeit mit *French Kiss* zu Grunde liegt – eine *Anglo-Québécois* Erzählung ist. Dies heißt nicht, dass ich Nathanaël auf diese Kategorie festlegen will, sondern, dass ihr Text Eigenschaften von selbstproklamierter Montrealer Literatur wie der von Brossard repetiert. Im Sinne von Butler ist es die Performativität von *Montrealité*, die Nathanaëls Papierstadt zu Montreal macht.

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[582] Hier herrscht eine Unklarheit zwischen dem Text und einem Interview, in dem Nicole Brossard den Kuss an der Ecke von Sherbrooke und St-Denis verortet.

4. Übersetze Subjektiviät: *Le désert mauve* und *Bottle Rocket Hearts*

> "I voted no."
> [Seven] says quickly, with an unapologetic shrug before downing the shot of dark greenherbal sludge. "Why?"
> "It's not my revolution. It's not going to change anything for queers. It might even make everything worse." […]
> "Seven, have you ever been in love?"
> "Sure. Tonnes of times. Every Friday night at the bathhouse."
> "No, like real love, like The One. Like the person you'd take a bullet for."
> "Eve, you're so dramatic! That kind of love is fiction."
> (*Bottle Rocket Hearts* 78)

In diesem Kapitel geht es um (Weiter)Entwicklung als Komponente von beidem, Bildungsroman und Übersetzung. Bei Nicole Brossards *Le désert mauve* (1987) handelt es sich um einen Roman im Roman, der im Zuge der Erzählung übersetzt wird. Erster und letzter Teil der Erzählung präsentieren also dieselbe Geschichte, die in beiden Fällen auf Französisch erzählt wird. Der Übersetzungsvorgang wird durch diese intralinguistische anstatt interlinguistische Praktik hervorgehoben und stellt als Mittelteil des Buches dessen längste Sektion dar. Der Roman im Roman handelt über Mélanie, ein jugendliches Mädchen mit viel Freiheitssinn, das mit ihrer Mutter und dessen Freundin, die gemeinsam ein Motel betreiben, in der Wüste von Arizona lebt. Die einzige männliche Figur in der Geschichte stellt Gefahr dar – ‚*l'homme long*,' der am amerikanischen Physiker Robert Oppenheimer orientiert ist. Er ermordet am Ende der Geschichte die neue Bekanntschaft Mélanies, Angela Parkins. Die beiden Frauen hatten sich erst vor Kurzem in der Poolbar des Motels kennengelernt und Angela stirbt dann auf der Tanzfläche in Mélanies Armen. Im Mittelteil des Textes findet die junge Lehrerin Maude Laures den Roman in einer

Buchhandlung und beschließt, ihn zu übersetzen. Sherry Simon bezeichnet *Le désert mauve* als eine Pseudoübersetzung und ordnet sie ihrer Liste von pervertierten Übersetzungen zu. Ich lese den Text gemeinsam mit *Bottle Rocket Hearts* (2007), den ich im Weiteren auch zu Simons Auflistung hinzufüge.

Es handelt sich dabei ebenfalls um die Geschichte einer jungen Frau, Eve, und die Beschreibung ihrer Entwicklung vom Teenager- zur jungen Erwachsenen. Auch hier muss eine Frau aufgrund von patriarchaler, homophober Aggression sterben: Rachel ist Eves Mitbewohnerin in einer Wohngemeinschaft in Montreals *Mile End*. Der Haupterzählstrang des Textes beschreibt allerdings die Beziehung zwischen der englischsprachigen Eve und ihrer bilingual französischsprachigen Freundin Della in Form von Tagebucheinträgen. Die Geschichte beginnt am Ende, zieht dann eine Schleife mit einem Rückblick über die Geschehnisse die dahin zurückführen und das anfängliche und sich über die Zeitspanne von zwei Jahren entwickelnde Geheimnis über Della löst. Die Erzählung problematisiert die Zweiteilung Montreals zur Zeit des zweiten Referendums von 1995 und arbeitet mit *code switching* sowie Übersetzung als sprachliche Strategien zur Konstruktion von Hybridität.

5. *Flâneries* entlang der Grenze: *Main Brides* und *Lullabies for Little Criminals*

She recalls (incongrusously) the runaway girls lined up in the Berry Métro station. […] It says in the paper that on the street there's real anti-parental solidarity among the kids. The pimps providing un encadrement, toutefois sans le côté moralisant, hypocrite de leurs parents souvent abusifs.
(*Main Brides* 22)

Dieses Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit einem weiteren Aspekt der Großstadt –
der urbanen Unterwelt. Heather O'Neills *Lullabies for Little Criminals* (2006)
erzählt die Geschichte einer zwölfjährigen namens Baby, die als Halbwaise von
ihrem drogenabhängigen Vater aufgezogen wird. Die beiden wohnen zumeist in
der Gegend um *Sainte-Catherine* und *Boulevard Saint-Laurent*, also im
Rotlichtviertel von Montreal, und auch kurzfristig im Stadtviertel *Plateau*. Als
Baby von Alphonse, einem Zuhälter, der vorgibt eine Beziehung mit ihr eingehen
zu wollen, verführt wird, rutscht sie in die Prostitution ab. Später beginnt auch
sie, zusammen mit Alphonse, Heroin zu nehmen. Die Welt in der Erzählung aus
Babys Sicht dreht sich ums Überleben und spielt zumeist auf der Straße und im
Osten der Stadt. Während dort eigentlich Französisch gesprochen wird, ist der
Text aber in Englisch. Gleichzeitig tragen die meisten Charaktere hingegen
französische Namen und sowohl Baby als auch ihr Vater Jules mischen ab und
an französische Phrasen unter ihr Englisch. Dies lässt darauf schließen, was
O'Neill auch in einem Interview behauptet, nämlich dass die Erzählung eigentlich
eine Übersetzung ist. Ich verstehe sie hier als eine pervertierte Übersetzung in
Simons Sinn beziehungsweise eine Übersetzung des Lebens auf der Straße, wie
sie von Luise von Flotow in zeitgenössischer frankophoner Literatur analysiert
wird.

Ich lese *Lullabies for Little Criminals* als Teil des episodischen Textes *Main
Brides* von Gail Scott (1993). Darin sitzt eine Frau namens Lydia in einem Lokal
auf dem *Boulevard Saint-Laurent* – Montreals sogenannter *Main* – und trinkt
Wein (und Kaffee), während sie die vorbeigehenden Leute mustert und sich zu

manchen von ihnen Geschichten ausdenkt. Auf diese Art und Weise porträtiert sie gedanklich verschiedene Frauen, durch deren Geschichten sie sich selbst als Erzählerin konstruiert. Alle diese Geschichten beinhalten psychische und/oder körperliche Gewalt an Frauen – Scotts Text gilt als Reaktion auf das Polytechnik Massaker an der Universität von Montreal im Dezember 1989 – und mehrere Episoden gleichen dem Schicksal Babys. O'Neills Protagonistin könnte zur Liste Lydias Frauenporträts hinzugefügt werden. Dies festigt die Basis meines Vergleiches und ermöglicht es auch in diesem Kapitel die Texte so gegenüber zu stellen, dass sie sich gegenseitig analysieren lassen. Während Scotts Erzählerin die sprachlichen und kulturellen Unterschiede Montreals und dessen Zweiteilung, das *êntre-deux* und die Begegnungen darin, übermäßig bewusst sind und Scott selbst auf ihr Englisch mit französischem Unterton wert legt, so ist Babys Unterwelt kaum von historischen Topographien geprägt. O'Neills Text erscheint klassenorientiert und post-linguistisch; *code switching* wie Übersetzungen ergeben darin ein hybridisiertes Gesamtes.

6. Stadt und Performativität in *My Paris* und *The Sorrow and the Fast of It*

> Here in this city the letters are many and the days are many.
> (*The Sorrow and the Fast of It* 1)

In diesem Kapitel wird die Figur des ,*flâneur*' als ,*flâneure*' wiederaufgegriffen und ausformuliert. Dazu lese ich die Texte *My Paris* (1999) von Gail Scott und *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* (2007) von Nathanaël in einer dialektischen Auseinandersetzung miteinander. In beiden Texten geht es

eigentlich um andere Städte als Montreal: *My Paris* präsentiert das Reisetagebuch einer *Anglo-Québécois* Schriftstellerin, der von ihrem Verlag ein Aufenthalt in einem schicken Pariser Apartment gewährt wird, um sich für einen neuen Roman inspirieren zu lassen. Die Ich-Erzählerin verbringt ihre Zeit damit, vom Fenster ihrer Wohnung aus den Trubel auf ihrer Straße zu beobachten oder durch die Stadt und deren Cafés zu flanieren. Scotts Text zeigt intertextuelle Referenzen mit Walter Benjamins Passagenwerk sowie Gertrud Steins Leben und Schreiben auf. Genau wie Stein verzichtet Scott auf Beistrichsetzung im herkömmlichen Sinn. Allerdings führt sie den Beistrich in anderer Funktion wieder ein, nämlich als ‚Übersetzungsbeistrich' oder ‚Unterschiedsbeistrich.' Dieser wird nach französischen Einschüben in den englischen Text gesetzt, um Übersetzung(en) hervorzuheben. Er kann in diesem Sinne als ein Phänomen des *entre-deux* bezeichnet werden und steht in meiner Analyse als Signifikant für die lapsisierte Dimension.

The Sorrow and the Fast of It ist eine Kollage verschiedenster Städte (Laibach, Barcelona, New York, etc.) deren Topographien ineinander verschmelzen und dabei eine hybride Metropole ergeben. Die Ich-Erzählerin Nathalie entfaltet sich im Laufe des Textes als Nathanaël. Sie/Er durchwandert unermüdlich die Stadt, die durch ihre/seine Wege eigentlich erst konstruiert wird. Zur Textanalyse ziehe ich in diesem Kapitel Michel de Certeaus Theorie vom Spazieren in der Stadt aus *Die Kunst des Handelns* heran. Der Aspekt eines modifizierten Flanierens, aber auch das kontinuierliche *code switching* zwischen Englisch und Französisch in Nathanaëls Erzählung nähert letztere Scotts *My Paris* an. Mit dem ‚Übersetzungsbeistrich,' den Scott anderswo auch mit dem

Montrealer *Pont Jacques Cartier* assoziiert, werden Brücken zwischen den zwei Texten gebaut.[583] Die beiden Texte interagieren auf diese Weise miteinander und stellen die jeweilige *théorie/fiction* des anderen dar. Mit Hilfe der Passagen zu Benjamin und seiner *flâneur* Figur in *My Paris* definiere ich das neue Konzept ‚*flâneure*,' das in *The Sorrow and the Fast of It* entsteht: eine Figur in Transition inbegriffen, *gender queer* und das Produkt einer Sozialisierung (in) der *dimension lapsisée*.

7. Schluss: Die Geschichte des *Queen Elizabeth* Hotels, Teil 2

Was alle Texte im Korpus dieser Doktorarbeit gemein haben ist, dass ihre Ich-ErzählerInnen aus der Bewegung in und durch urbane Räume – insbesondere denen von Montreal – hervorgehen. Außerdem weisen alle Werke transkulturelle Intertextualität auf, in der englischsprachige Texte und Identitäten oftmals auf frankophone sozio-politische, populäre und literarische Diskurse zurückgreifen und französischsprachige Text- und Identitätskonstruktionen mehrfach auf den anglophonen Kontext Nordamerikas Bezug nehmen. Die so konstruierte Subjektivität jeder und jedes Einzelnen hat demnach folgende zum Großteil post-moderne Merkmale: Zwei- oder Mehrsprachigkeit sowie Vielstimmigkeit, die oftmals fragmentiert ist und sich sowohl des *code switching* als auch verschiedenster Formen von Übersetzung bedient. Daraus resultieren pluri- beziehungsweise transsexuelle und *queere* Identitätsform(ulier)ungen.

Subjektivität, wie sie in den Texten von Brossard, Scott, Nathanaël,

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[583] Sherry Simon zählt die Schreibstrategie um den 'Übersetzungsbeistrich' auch zu ihrer Liste pervertierter Übersetzungstechniken.

O'Neill und Whittall konstruiert wird, ist durch den urbanen sozialen Raum geformt und befindet sich in einer ständigen Situation von Übersetzung und Redefinition. Dies stelle ich in meiner Analyse zum Beispiel mit Hilfe der Metapher des Bildungsromans oder Simons pervertierten Übersetzungen dar. Das Schreiben in diesem Kontext schafft gleichzeitig Platz für die AutorInnen, neue Identitäten und Perspektiven zu kreieren. Zu deren Erforschung habe ich in meiner Dissertation das Konzept der ‚*dimension lapsisée*' eingeführt. Diese situative Begrifflichkeit dient zugleich als räumliche Vorstellung und als Hilfsmittel zur Interpretation literarischer Werke, die im *entre-deux* transkultureller Räume entstehen. Mein Argument funktioniert auf inhaltlicher, formaler und analytischer Ebene und ist in den transitiven sich ständig neu-definierenden Topographien zwischen multikulturellen frankophonen und anglophonen Kulturen und Vorstellungsachsen Montreals verortet. Die lapsisierte Dimension ist ein performativer Ort interkultureller Begegnungen und transkultureller Inszenierung für Subjektivität – zum Beispiel der von ‚*flâneure*.'

Saarbücken, den 14. November 2014

Gemäß **§ 5 Absatz 4b** der Promotionsordnung vom 11. Juli 2011 erkläre ich – Elisabeth Tutschek, geboren am 13.10.1980 in Waidhofen/Ybbs, Österreich – hiermit, dass ich diese Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die von mir angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Des Weiteren versichere ich, dass ich alle den benutzten Werken wörtlich und inhaltlich entnommene Stellen kenntlich gemacht habe.

Gemäß **§ 5 Absatz 4c** erkläre ich darüber hinaus, dass ich bei der Anfertigung der Arbeit nicht die entgeltliche Hilfe von Vermittlungs- und Beratungsdiensten in Anspruch genommen habe.

Mag.ᵃ Elisabeth A. Tutschek

Für zwei starke Frauen:

Theresia Mayerhofer (*1909 †2003)

Theresia Tutschek (*1917 †2005)

Dies diem docet.

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Titel: "Cognitive Frames, Prototype Theory, and the Construction of Gendered Selves in Discourse. Incl. A Discussion of Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*."

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Matura: Deutsch, Englisch, Französisch, Mathematik (schriftlich); Englisch, Französisch, Psychologie und Philosophie (mündlich); mit 'gutem Erfolg.'

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Juli 2010 – September 2011: Mitglied im *Équipe de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature anglo- québécoise (ÉRILAQ)* geleitet von Prof.[in] Lianne Moyes, *Université de Montréal*.

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Stipendien und Preise

Juni 2009: Forschungsstipendium *Jean-Cléo-Godin, CRILCQ, Université de Montréal*.

Februar 2008: Promotionsstipendium/Förderpreis der Stiftung für Kanadastudien, Deutscher Stiftungsverband.

September 2007: Forschungsstipendium des Siegfried Ludwig-Fonds, Niederösterreichische Landesregierung.

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