

Université de Montréal

**Code-Switching Between Cultures And Languages: *Creative connectivity***

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	1
Avant propos.....	4
Résumé.....	6
Abstract.....	13
Introduction.....	19
The Selected Works.....	29
Code-Switching.....	46
What has not been done and how I bridge the gap.....	51
Methodology.....	68
Homi Bhabha and the Hybrid.....	70
Heteroglossia and Mikhail Bakhtin.....	76
Doris Sommer: Code-Switching as Jouissance.....	81
James Clifford and Traveling Cultures : An Ethnographic Perspective.....	83
Roland Barthes : Transgressive Explorations of Identity.....	85
Chapter 1: Performative Narratives and <i>Other</i> Desires of the socially and culturally defined female immigrant voice.....	93
Subjectivity and the Female Immigrant Voice.....	97
Hiromi Goto.....	99
Maxine Hong Kingston.....	114
Eva Hoffman.....	130
Gloria Anzaldúa.....	151
Conclusion.....	164
Chapter 2: Performative Narratives and <i>Other</i> Desires of the socially and culturally defined male immigrant voice .....	170
Dany Laferrière.....	180
Richard Rodriguez.....	197
Antonio D’Alfonso.....	215
Conclusion.....	233
Chapter 3: Linguistic Code-switching and Non-translation.....	237
Chantal Zabus.....	243
Catherine Leclerc.....	244
Sherry Simon.....	248
Doris Sommer.....	255
Historical Context.....	259

	Gloria Anzaldúa.....	260
	Hiromi Goto.....	265
	Unilingual Readers.....	268
	Non-Translation and Code-Switching.....	280
	Conclusion: Metaphor of Desire.....	294
Conclusion:	Where do we go from here? .....	302
	Does hybrid identification offer better connectivity between cultures? .....	311
	Barthesian <i>jouissance</i> .....	320
	Multi-lingual Education: Desire for <i>Other</i> Codes.....	325
	Code-Switching: Desire for <i>Others</i> .....	336
	Final Comments.....	343
Appendix A:	Translations by Keith Santorelli .....	347
Appendix B:	Translations by Carlos Jimenez.....	350
Appendix C:	Interviews.....	358
Endnotes.....		370
Works Cited.....		372

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## AVANT-PROPOS

Dire de moi que j'appartiens à une seule culture ou à une seule religion, ou encore à un groupe de gens défini, est presque impossible, étant donné mon chemin de vie. Née en Inde, j'ai passé mon enfance entre ce pays, l'Arabie Saoudite et Dubaï, aux Émirats arabes unis. Quand j'avais dix ans, notre famille a déménagé en Amérique du Nord, plus précisément à Toronto. Mes parents ont choisi de s'installer au Canada pour nous offrir, à mon frère et moi une meilleure qualité de vie, et surtout de meilleures options pour nos études. J'ai donc vécu mon adolescence et une grande partie de ma vie adulte à Toronto. Par la suite, j'ai décidé, il y a une douzaine d'années, de déménager à Québec.

Alors quand les gens me demandent aujourd'hui d'où je viens, il n'y a pas de réponse simple! Je me considère comme une femme ayant l'esprit cosmopolite parsemé de croyances, de valeurs et de traditions très diversifiées. Mon intérêt à faire ce doctorat a été grandement motivé par mon désir de mieux comprendre les espaces brisés, qui sont à la fois enrichissants et déchirants, de ma propre identité hybride. Aujourd'hui lorsque quelqu'un me demande qui je suis et d'où je viens, je réponds : je suis une Torontoise et une Québécoise teintée par des codes culturels provenant de l'Inde et de mes expériences en Arabie Saoudite, avec un zeste de Dubaï.

Dans mon quotidien, je parle l'anglais et le français, mais malheureusement je ne parle plus mes langues d'origine, soit l'urdu et l'arabe. Enfant, à l'âge de 5 ans je maîtrisais très bien l'anglais et mes deux langues

maternelles. Cela dit, j'avais un problème de locution et le pédiatre a demandé à mes parents de concentrer mon apprentissage linguistique sur une seule langue. Ils ont choisi l'anglais en sachant qu'ils projetaient d'immigrer au Canada dans un futur proche. Malgré la perte de ces langues, celles-ci résonnent encore dans mon esprit à travers la musique et dans les façons dont je traduis mes pensées sentimentales.

Côté religion, durant mon enfance j'ai fréquenté des écoles catholiques, alors qu'à la maison mes parents m'ont donné une formation musulmane. Malgré le fait que j'aie été éduquée dans le cadre de ces deux grandes religions, ma perception de moi et ma subjectivité féminine ont évolué loin de ces doctrines religieuses, car elles ne soutiennent plus mes croyances actuelles. Aujourd'hui je me considère comme une personne ayant une spiritualité alimentée par les croyances et les valeurs des Premières Nations et par la pensée bouddhiste.

## RÉSUMÉ

### Problème

Ma thèse porte sur l'identité individuelle comme interrogation sur les enjeux personnels et sur ce qui constitue l'identification hybride à l'intérieur des notions concurrentielles en ce qui a trait à l'authenticité. Plus précisément, j'aborde le concept des identifications hybrides en tant que zones intermédiaires pour ce qui est de l'alternance de codes linguistiques et comme négociation des espaces continuels dans leur mouvement entre les cultures et les langues. Une telle négociation engendre des tensions et/ou apporte le lien créatif. Les tensions sont inhérentes à n'importe quelle construction d'identité où les lignes qui définissent des personnes ne sont pas spécifiques à une culture ou à une langue, où des notions de l'identité pure sont contestées et des codes communs de l'appartenance sont compromis. Le lien créatif se produit dans les exemples où l'alternance de code linguistique ou la négociation des espaces produit le mouvement ouvert et fluide entre les codes de concurrence des références et les différences à travers les discriminations raciales, la sexualité, la culture et la langue.

Les travaux que j'ai sélectionnés représentent une section transversale de quelques auteurs migrants provenant de la minorité en Amérique du Nord qui alternent les codes linguistiques de cette manière. Les travaux détaillent le temps et l'espace dans leur traitement de l'identité et dans la façon dont ils cernent l'hybridité dans les textes suivants : *The Woman Warrior* de Maxine Hong Kingston (1975-76), *Hunger of Memory* de Richard Rodriguez (1982),

*Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* de Dany Laferrière (1985), *Borderlands/La Frontera* de Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), *Lost in Translation* de Eva Hoffman (1989), *Avril ou l'anti-passion* de Antonio D'Alfonso (1990) et *Chorus of Mushrooms* de Hiromi Goto (1994).

### Enjeux/Questions

La notion de l'identification hybride est provocante comme sujet. Elle met en question l'identité pure. C'est un sujet qui a suscité beaucoup de discussions tant en ce qui a trait à la littérature, à la politique, à la société, à la linguistique, aux communications, qu'au sein même des cercles philosophiques. Ce sujet est compliqué parce qu'il secoue la base des espaces fixes et structurés de l'identité dans sa signification culturelle et linguistique. Par exemple, la notion de patrie n'a pas les représentations exclusives du pays d'origine ou du pays d'accueil. De même, les notions de race, d'appartenance ethnique, et d'espaces sexuels sont parfois négativement acceptées si elles proviennent des codes socialement admis et normalisés de l'extérieur. De tels codes de la signification sont souvent définis par l'étiquette d'identification hétérosexuelle et blanche. Dans l'environnement généralisé d'aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, une personne doit négocier qui elle est, au sens de son appartenance à soi, en tant qu'individu et ce, face aux modèles locaux, régionaux, nationaux, voire même globaux de la subjectivité. Nous pouvons interpréter ce mouvement comme une série de couches superposées de la signification. Quand nous rencontrons une personne pour la première fois, nous ne voyons que la couche supérieure. D'ailleurs, son soi intérieur est

caché par de nombreuses couches superposées (voir Joseph D. Straubhaar). Toutefois, sous cette couche supérieure, on retrouve beaucoup d'autres couches et tout comme pour un oignon, on doit les enlever une par une pour que l'individualité complète d'une personne soit révélée et comprise. Le noyau d'une personne représente un point de départ crucial pour opposer qui elle était à la façon dont elle se transforme sans cesse. Sa base, ou son noyau, dépend du moment, et comprend, mais ne s'y limite pas, ses origines, son environnement et ses expériences d'enfance, son éducation, sa notion de famille, et ses amitiés. De plus, les notions d'amour-propre et d'amour pour les autres, d'altruisme, sont aussi des points importants. Il y a une relation réciproque entre le soi et l'autre qui établit notre degré d'estime de soi. En raison de la mondialisation, notre façon de comprendre la culture, en fait, comment on consomme et définit la culture, devient rapidement un phénomène de déplacement. À l'intérieur de cette arène de culture généralisée, la façon dont les personnes sont à l'origine chinoises, mexicaines, italiennes, ou autres, et poursuivent leur évolution culturelle, se définit plus aussi facilement qu'avant.

### Approche

Ainsi, ma thèse explore la subjectivité hybride comme position des tensions et/ou des relations créatrices entre les cultures et les langues. Quoique je ne souhaite aucunement simplifier ni le processus, ni les questions de l'auto-identification, il m'apparaît que la subjectivité hybride est aujourd'hui une réalité croissante dans l'arène généralisée de la culture. Ce processus d'échange est particulièrement complexe chez les populations migrantes en

conflit avec leur désir de s'intégrer dans les nouveaux espaces adoptés, c'est-à-dire leur pays d'accueil. Ce réel désir d'appartenance peut entrer en conflit avec celui de garder les espaces originels de la culture définie par son pays d'origine. Ainsi, les références antérieures de l'identification d'une personne, les fondements de son individualité, son noyau, peuvent toujours ne pas correspondre à, ou bien fonctionner harmonieusement avec, les références extérieures et les couches d'identification changeantes, celles qu'elle s'approprie du pays d'accueil. Puisque nos politiques, nos religions et nos établissements d'enseignement proviennent des représentations nationales de la culture et de la communauté, le processus d'identification et la création de son individualité extérieure sont formées par le contact avec ces établissements. La façon dont une personne va chercher l'identification entre les espaces personnels et les espaces publics détermine ainsi le degré de conflit et/ou de lien créatif éprouvé entre les modes et les codes des espaces culturels et linguistiques.

Par conséquent, l'identification des populations migrantes suggère que la « community and culture will represent both a hybridization of home and host cultures » (Straubhaar 27). Il y a beaucoup d'écrits au sujet de l'hybridité et des questions de l'identité et de la patrie, toutefois cette thèse aborde la valeur créative de l'alternance de codes culturels et linguistiques.

#### Ce que la littérature indiquera

Par conséquent, la plate-forme à partir de laquelle j'explore mon sujet de l'hybridité flotte entre l'interprétation postcoloniale de Homi Bhabha

concernant le troisième espace hybride; le modèle d'hétéroglossie de Mikhail Bakhtine qui englobent plusieurs de mes exemples; la représentation de Roland Barthes sur l'identité comme espace transgressif qui est un modèle de référence et la contribution de Chantal Zabus sur le palimpseste et l'alternance de codes africains. J'utilise aussi le modèle de Sherry Simon portant sur l'espace urbain hybride de Montréal qui établit un lien important avec la valeur des échanges culturels et linguistiques, et les analyses de Janet Paterson. En effet, la façon dont elle traite la figure de l'Autre dans les modèles littéraires au Québec fournisse un aperçu régional et national de l'identification hybride. Enfin, l'exploration du bilinguisme de Doris Sommer comme espace esthétique et même humoristique d'identification situe l'hybridité dans une espace de rencontre créative.

### Conséquence

Mon approche dans cette thèse ne prétend pas résoudre les problèmes qui peuvent résulter des plates-formes de la subjectivité hybride. Pour cette raison, j'évite d'aborder toute approche politique ou nationaliste de l'identité qui réfute l'identification hybride. De la même façon, je n'amène pas de discussion approfondie sur les questions postcoloniales. Le but de cette thèse est de démontrer à quel point la subjectivité hybride peut être une zone de relation créatrice lorsque l'alternance de codes permet des échanges de communication plus intimes entre les cultures et les langues. C'est un espace qui devient créateur parce qu'il favorise une attitude plus ouverte vis-à-vis les différents champs qui passent par la culture, aussi bien la langue, que la

sexualité, la politique ou la religion. Les zones hybrides de l'identification nous permettent de contester les traditions dépassées, les coutumes, les modes de communication et la non-acceptation, toutes choses dépassées qui emprisonnent le désir et empêchent d'explorer et d'adopter des codes en dehors des normes et des modèles de la culture contenus dans le discours blanc, dominant, de l'appartenance culturelle et linguistique mondialisée.

Ainsi, il appert que ces zones des relations multi-ethniques exigent plus d'attention des cercles scolaires puisque la population des centres urbains à travers l'Amérique du Nord devient de plus en plus nourrie par d'autres types de populations. Donc, il existe un besoin réel d'établir une communication sincère qui permettrait à la population de bien comprendre les populations adoptées. C'est une invitation à stimuler une relation plus intime de l'un avec l'autre. Toutefois, il est évident qu'une communication efficace à travers les frontières des codes linguistiques, culturels, sexuels, religieux et politiques exige une négociation continuelle. Mais une telle négociation peut stimuler la compréhension plus juste des différences (culturelle ou linguistique) si des institutions académiques offrent des programmes d'études intégrant davantage les littératures migrantes. Ma thèse vise à illustrer (par son choix littéraire) l'identification hybride comme une réalité importante dans les cultures généralisées qui croissent toujours aujourd'hui. Les espaces géographiques nous gardent éloignés les uns des autres, mais notre consommation de produits exotiques, qu'ils soient culturels ou non, et même notre consommation de l'autre, s'est rétrécie sensiblement depuis les deux dernières

décennies et les indicateurs suggèrent que ce processus n'est pas une tendance, mais plutôt une nouvelle manière d'éprouver la vie et de connaître les autres. Ainsi les marqueurs qui forment nos frontières externes, aussi bien que ces marqueurs qui nous définissent de l'intérieur, exigent un examen minutieux de ces enjeux inter(trans)culturels, surtout si nous souhaitons nous en tenir avec succès à des langues et des codes culturels présents, tout en favorisant la diversité culturelle et linguistique.

MOTS-CLÉS : identification hybride, mouvement ouvert, alternance de code linguistique, négociation des espaces, tensions, connectivité créative

## ABSTRACT

### Problem

My thesis addresses individual identity as an interrogation of personal stakes and what constitutes hybrid identification inside competitive notions of authenticity. More specifically, I approach the concept of hybridized identification(s) as in-between zones of code-switching and as a negotiation of spaces continual in their movement between cultures and languages. Such a negotiation results in tensions and/or *creative* connectivity. Tensions are inherent in any identity construction where the lines that define individuals are not specific to one culture or one language, where notions of pure identity are challenged and communal codes of belonging are jeopardized. *Creative* connectivity occurs in those instances where code-switching or negotiation of spaces produces open and fluid movement between competing codes of references and differences across color lines, sexuality, culture and language. The following works I have selected represent a cross-section of some minority migrant writers in North America who code-switch in this manner. The works are time and space specific in their treatment of identity and in how the writers I focus on frame hybridity in their writing: Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1975-76), Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory* (1982), Dany Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* (1985), Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989), Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion* (1990) and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* (1994).

Issue(s)

The notion of hybrid identification is a challenging topic, especially for those who defend the notion of pure cultural identities. It has been a subject of much debate inside literary, political, social, linguistic, communications and even philosophical circles. It is complicated because it shakes the foundation of identity structured inside fixed and inclusive space(s) of cultural and linguistic meaning. For instance, notions of home are not exclusive representations of country of origin or host country. Similarly, notions of race, ethnicity, and sexual spaces are sometimes *negatively othered* if they fall outside socially accepted and normalized codes. Such codes of meaning are often defined by white heterosexual labels of identification. In today's globalized environment, more than ever, individuals must negotiate who they are inside a sense of self as a movement between local, regional, national, even global models of subjectivity. We can understand this movement as a series of super-imposed layers of meaning. When we first meet people we are introduced to their top tier, who they are and how they choose to reveal that top exteriorized layer (I borrow the idea of layered selves from Joseph D. Straubhaar). However beneath that top layer there are many other layers, like an onion, they must be unravelled in order for an individual's complete self to be revealed and/or understood. The core of an individual, their nucleus, represents a crucial starting point between who they were versus how they are perpetually *becoming*. One's foundation or core is contingent upon, but not limited to, one's origins, childhood environment and experiences, education,

notion of family, friendships, and perhaps most important, notions of self-love and love for another and how the relation between the two creates/builds self-esteem. Because of globalization, how culture is understood, in fact, how culture is consumed and defined is quickly becoming a traveling phenomenon. Inside this arena of globalized culture how individuals begin and continue as Chinese, Mexican, Italian, etc. is not as easy to define as it once was.

### Approach

Thus my thesis explores hybridized subjectivity as a position of tensions and/or *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages. While I do not wish to simplify the process or issues of self-identification, I believe that hybrid subjectivity is a growing reality in today's globalized arena of cultural bartering. This bartering process is particularly complicated for migrant populations whose desire for belonging in new adopted spaces, their host country, is often in conflict with, or challenged by, desire for past spaces or cultural spaces defined by their country of origin. Thus past references of identification, the base of their core self may not always correspond to, or function harmoniously with, their outer, newer and shifting layers of identification, ones they appropriate from the host country. Because our political, religious, and educational institutions stem from national representations of culture and community, the process of identification and the creation of one's outside self are shaped through an encounter with these institutions. How individuals seek identification between their personal and public spaces thus determines the degree of conflict and or *creative*

connectivity experienced between modes/codes of cultural and linguistic spaces. Therefore identification for migrant populations suggest that “community and culture will represent both a hybridization of home and host cultures” (Straubhaar 27). There is much written on hybridity and issues of identity and nation however this thesis focuses on the creative value of code-switching between cultures and languages.

#### What the Literature Will Say

Therefore the platform from which I explore my topic of hybridity fluctuates between Homi Bhabha’s postcolonial interpretation of hybrid third spaces, Mikhail Bakhtin’s model of heteroglossic dialogues, Roland Barthes representation of identity as a transgressive space and Chantal Zabus’ understanding of the African palimpsest and code-switching. Then Sherry Simon’s model of Montréal’s hybrid urban space and Janet Paterson’s perceptions of how the *Other* has shaped and (re)defined literary models of identity in Québec provide a regional and national glimpse of hybridized identification. Finally, Doris Sommer’s exploration of bilingualism as an aesthetical, even humorous space of identification situates hybridity as a creative space of connection.

#### Consequence

My approach in this thesis does not claim to solve problems that may arise from platforms of hybridized subjectivity. For this reason, I avoid political or nationalistic approaches to identity that refute/discredit, in many instances, hybridized identifications. I also steer away from any in-depth

discussion of post-colonial issues. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how hybridized subjectivity can be a zone of *creative* connectivity when code-switching offers more intimate exchanges of communication between cultures and languages. It is a *creative* connectivity because it promotes a more open-minded attitude towards peoples' cultural, linguistic, sexual, even political and religious differences. Hybridized zones of identification allow us to challenge dated traditions, customs, modes of communication and acceptance that imprison people's desire to explore and adopt codes outside standards and models of culture contained within a dominant white discourse of cultural and linguistic belonging.

Such zones of hybridized connectivity require more attention from academic circles. More specifically, as the population in urban city centers across North America becomes increasingly dotted by *Other* populations, there is a greater need for the host population as well as adopted populations to explore and foster more intimate understandings of each other. Effective communication across borders of linguistic, cultural, sexual, religious and political codes requires continual negotiation. Such negotiation fosters more intimate understandings of difference (cultural or linguistic). If academic institutions offer a more inclusive curriculum of minority literatures to future generations perhaps tolerance will become outdated because acceptance will be the norm. My thesis aims to illustrate (through its literary focus) hybridized identification as an important reality of today's ever-increasing globalized culture(s). Geographic spaces may not be shrinking however how we consume

products, culture, music, and even each other has shrunk substantially in the last two decades and indicators suggest that this process is not a trend but a new way of experiencing life and knowing people. Thus the markers that form our external layers as well as those markers that define us from the inside require closer scrutiny if we wish to successfully hold onto existing languages and cultural codes while promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.

KEY WORDS: hybrid identification, in-between zones, code-switching, negotiation of spaces, tensions, *creative* connectivity

## INTRODUCTION

My thesis focuses on code-switching (both linguistic and cultural) as an important and *creative* reality of today's migrant North American populations. Although my promotion of code-switching is framed inside a literary context, it is also relevant inside a didactic frame. Therefore I address the value of *creative* connectivity in code-switching as an important pedagogical tool. In my conclusion I will summarize this value. My three chapters, the meat of my thesis spotlight different forms of code-switching and *creative* connectivity addressed in the literary works I have selected. Because my selected works represent very different historical, cultural, sexual and linguistic models, it would be impossible to compare and contrast these works in this thesis. Consequently my methodology is equally diverse and multi-disciplinary. For the most part my choices for my theoretical frame mirror the time period in which the literary works were written.

The diverse multidisciplinary theoretical choices I have selected are meant to illustrate the globalized context of how we live, communicate, construct personal relationships and work today. The pedagogical and artistic value of code-switching is, in my opinion, an essential tool in today's globalized cultural and economic world. Our ability to intimately code-switch between languages for instance can foster better relationships, personally and professionally across barriers of race, culture and geographic distances. For this reason, my thesis focuses on individual identity rather than collective forms. I wish to explore identity issues as an artistic form so if my illustrations

of creative connectivity focus more on individual identity over a collective one, it is a conscious choice on my part. Thus the theoretical framework of this thesis draws upon collective issues of identity, hybridity, nation and language to pave the path for connectivity between people and how I emphasize intimate relationships throughout this thesis as *la relation privilégiée*. Moreover the marriage between pedagogy and artistic value I speak of may be understood through Homi Bhabha's reference to *cultural authority* as an ambivalent space where the narrative, what Bhabha refers to as "the performativity of language" is a reproductive force (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* 3). As a teacher and as an aficionado of cultural diversity in the homeroom rather than simply in the playroom, my desire to pursue this topic is personal and passionate. I therefore address hybrid identification in this thesis as a shifting, reproductive wheel of creative connectivity. Those instances where individuals identify themselves as hybrid I translate as desire for creative connectivity between linguistic and *Other(ed)* cultural spaces. Inside such zones of *creative* connectivity, there will be some level of challenge or conflict. For instance, if the framework of a cohesive homogenized cultural identity is rattled by *Other* languages and cultures, tensions will surface. Let us call these tensions inconveniences since they interfere with accepted patterns of pure cultural and linguistic identity.

In the Introduction of *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience", W.S. Merwin refers to Henry David Thoreau as "one of those inconvenient and uncomfortable figures, a seeker" (Thoreau viii). By living in the woods for a

few years, Thoreau wished to illustrate how material comforts trap humans and prevent them from being happy. For this reason, his time in the woods may be understood as an identity quest. Being separated from the normal crowd for such a lengthy period of time allows Thoreau to observe people from an outside position, much like an anthropologist. This outsider position separates him from others however it also allows him a more intimate process of self-reflection. The *creative* connectivity a hybrid seeks may be understood symbolically through Thoreau's outsider position. Those wishing connectivity between different cultural and linguistic codes must in some ways (like Thoreau) become *inconvenient and uncomfortable* seekers by stepping outside familiar cultural codes to define themselves. Their desire to move between cultural codes and linguistic spaces gives them an insider position as well as a hybrid outsider position; thus a broader angle of observation and perspective and perhaps a more complex and profound engagement with *Others*.

Moreover I understand hybridized identification as a series of reproductive narratives, what I explore in this thesis as *creative* connectivity. These cycles of rebirth may be understood through Homi Bhabha's thoughts on "nation-space" where "the ambivalent identifications of love and hate occupy the same psychic space; and [where] paranoid projections 'outwards' return to haunt and split the place from which they are made" (*Nation and Narration* 300). This *ambivalent identification* Bhabha speaks of marks the hybrid's life experiences. Being hybrid therefore involves a continual split from fixed notions of sameness. Thus for the hybrid the notion of "firm

boundaries” cannot be maintained because as Bhabha suggests “people are the articulation of a doubling of the national address, an ambivalent *movement* between the discourses of pedagogy and the performative” (300). This thesis then addresses spaces the hybrid occupies as ones shifting between *pedagogy and the performative* Bhabha refers to when he speaks of nation. Bhabha views cultural space as a zone with *transgressive boundaries* therefore I would suggest that those who occupy the spaces on the peripheries are subjected to more transgressed definitions of cultural space(s) than their counterparts who dwell and move inside one language and one more-or-less defined cultural context. The hybrid’s negotiation involves a continually shifting insider and outsider position between dominant and peripheral *other(ed)* cultural spaces. If as Bhabha states “race is confused with nation ... or ... linguistic groups” then such differences exclude those outside a nation’s dominant race (8). For this reason, those who do not wish to be defined through *fixed* cultural codes or one language occupy peripheral spaces that transgress between zones of *pedagogy* and the *performative* in their narratives. Bhabha refers to nation as “a soul, a spiritual principle ... a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future” (19). In the selected works, those aspects of life experience that surface from the past I understand as *pedagogy* and those aspects that focus on a present or future context I understand as *performative*. Bhabha’s understanding and definition of these terms provide an important

and necessary platform from which I interpret and apply them in this thesis.

According to Bhabha,

people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference ... the historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy [where] .... [t]he scraps, patches, and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects (297).

There is therefore a “split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” (297). For Bhabha, this splitting process is at the heart of “*writing the nation*” (297). I employ this splitting process Bhabha speaks of in my exploration of hybrid identity and *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages in the selected works. As Bhabha states, “people are ... the forces that signify the more specific address to contentious, unequal interests and identities within the population” (297). Because of their “*a priori* historical presence” people may be viewed and studied as pedagogical objects while their performative spaces may be understood as “the sovereignty of the nation’s *self-generation*” process (299). For the hybrid, this splitting between *pedagogy* and the *performative* occurs in their negotiation of identity that is a reproductive process between different cultures, languages, even countries.

The split Bhabha speaks of between *pedagogy* and the *performative* is illustrated in each of the selected works. These terms therefore come up repeatedly. However I focus on this split (more-or-less) outside notions of national identity. The literary works I have selected illustrate cultural reproductive cycles (because how we attach cultural codes to ourselves is an

evolving process) under Bhabha's notion of *pedagogy* and the *performative*. In those instances where code-switching occurs there is a split between an individual's attachment to their *historical presence* (their past) and their evolving *self-generation process* which determines how they move forward culturally and linguistically. *Self-generation* is then another form of rebirth and in the selected works it is experienced through the telling of stories and sharing of individual pains and pleasures. From this telling process, the writers engage readers inside their particular spaces of *pedagogy*. However, "the subject is graspable only in the passage between telling/told, between 'here' and 'somewhere else'" (301). Lived experience or *pedagogy* is narrated as a constant movement between past and present. Different writing styles and techniques such as parody, myth, etc. offer a *performative* tool of expression to address pains, joys, tensions and conflicts. This movement between *pedagogy* and the *performative* means that hybrid identification in the selected works falls under Bhabha's view of cultural space as a zone with *transgressed boundaries*. Such zones of transgression and hybrid connectivities may also be understood as transgressed Barthesian desires. I understand the term *transgressed* as a symbolic space, a shifting zone of meaning. Bhabha focuses on cultural identity vis-à-vis a nation's narrative voice as an interrogation of what it means to become a people, ultimately an interrogation of "our intimate relationships with each other and with *others* [my emphasis]" (7). There is a great element of symbolic meaning in how we construct and give meaning to cultural relationships or establish connectivity between cultures. So I am

making a link between Bhabha's in-between cultural spaces as *transgressive* boundaries with Barthes' thoughts on sexuality as transgressed desires. His interrogations about the human heart draw an interesting link between Bhabha's concept of intimate relationships and how I address them in this thesis.

Qu'est-ce que le monde, qu'est-ce que l'autre va faire de mon désir?  
Voilà l'inquiétude où se rassemblent tous les mouvements du cœur,  
tous les « problèmes » du cœur (*Fragments d'un discours amoureux*,  
Barthes 63).

Every relationship is ultimately influenced by emotion and the heart. As a Barthesian concept, transgressed desire implies freedom to explore and exchange with *others* intimately by collapsing barriers of difference. Thus the term *transgressed* may be understood as the same moment where there is a split between *pedagogy* and the *performative* in Bhabha's cultural subject. This is the reproductive stage for the hybrid subject identifying (pedagogy) and negotiating (performative) identity between past points of cultural reference and current, different cultural realities. The works I have selected illustrate connectivity or code-switching as transgressed desires. The movement between cultural markers of identity such as race, religion, sexuality, male and female subjectivity along with linguistic codes by choosing translation and non translation techniques is a key element in how the narratives explore reproductive zones of identification. In this way they are transgressed zones because they challenge accepted visions of identity, cultural belonging and how people connect with each other. Ultimately I assign value to code-switching between cultures and languages as a

transgressed desire, one explored intimately and therefore with a focus on individual relationships. It is a good beginning and approach in collapsing and redefining fixed, singular notions of identity, language, nation, and community. Connectivity is a spiritual site of negotiation as much as it is a social one. Therefore it is an evolving process which begins with the self and it is then projected towards others, usually one person at a time.

D'un côté de mon cœur la misère subsiste  
 De l'autre je vois clair j'espère et je m'irise  
 Je reflète fertile un corps qui se prolonge  
 Je lutte je suis ivre de lutter pour vivre  
 Dans la clarté d'autrui j'érige ma victoire.

~ Paul Eluard

The underlying message in this short poem by Éluard may be understood as a proclamation of the inter-dependence between individuals. This notion of interdependence is necessary if society is to maintain a cohesive sense of community and cultural connection. If there was only one pure culture, one language, or one vision of how life should be lived and how people should love each other then there would be no need to classify or define cultural and linguistic identity. In spite of our desire to remain individual and unique, many parts of our identity are carved out and defined through images of the people around us. « *Soi-même comme un autre* ... implique l'altérité à un degré si intime que l'une ne se laisse pas penser sans l'autre, que l'une passe plutôt dans l'autre ... non pas seulement d'une comparaison – soi-même semblable à un autre - mais bien d'une implication: soi-même en tant que ... autre » (Ricœur 14). This Ricœurian idea of *oneself as another* implies that individual identity is negotiated and created out of patterns and images of

identity taken from, and therefore projected by, other people. Thus self-hood is a mirror(ed) image of many *othered* superimposed selves. The codes (cultural and linguistic) that shape self-hood are entangled inside layered webs of difference(s) and sameness. How we recognize and interpret them in our understanding and visualization of self versus *Other* is a co-dependent process of negotiation. In the selected works, this Ricœurian idea of *oneself as another* is illustrated in those instances when the narrative is *performative* because in such moments the process of self-understanding is measured by how the protagonists or narrators rely on, are even dependent upon, images of others in order to redefine themselves.

Roland Barthes makes a link between photography and self-identification in *La chambre claire* which provides an interesting frame to understand this idea of *oneself as another*. Barthes suggests self-hood is « imprécise, imaginaire même... personne n'est jamais que la copie d'une copie, réelle ou mentale » (157, 159). However it is from re-created forms of *difference* and *sameness* that we can begin to understand and grapple with definitions of cultural identity across borders of race, nationhood, language, and sexuality. Thus hybrid subjectivity in individuals is established through a communicative exchange based on a *because of* differences platform of acceptance rather than the more pejorative *in spite of* differences standpoint of tolerance.

In Antonio D'Alfonso's narrative, his protagonist Fabrizio cannot simply define himself as an Italian immigrant. Each time Dany Laferrière's

protagonist describes one of the women he has sexual relations with the reader understands *an* aspect of the protagonist's personality. In Hiromi Goto's work, grandmother and granddaughter define their cultural desires through an exploration with sexual partners as an interpellation of hidden *othered* aspects of their identity. When Eva Hoffman shares the pain of her parents' trauma, the reader becomes more profoundly acquainted with how Hoffman negotiates an American identity. Maxine Hong Kingston's conflation between her identity and a mythical Chinese figure illustrate her desire to seek connectivity with others by reinventing herself, a fusion between past and future feminine voices. Richard Rodriguez constructs his American identity as a consequence of how others perceive him. Thus his movement of *oneself as another* illustrates a more implicit vision of hybridity whereas Gloria Anzaldúa challenges how others perceive her by promoting, even flaunting her identity as a multi-subjective image of many different *othered* images. The writers I have selected, a cross-sectional sampling of North America's polyglot cultural makeup, address *difference* and hybrid subjectivity as an important process of how identity is shaped within a cosmopolitan frame. My thesis chapters therefore explore the different forms of hybridized identity that surface in their writing. These writers illustrate how hybrid spaces are continually formed through processes of code-switching between culture(s) and language(s). It is a negotiation of in-between spaces of identification with zones of conflict and *creative* connectivity. The central aim of this thesis is to privilege those

instances where *creative* connectivity emerges from code-switching and hybridized identification.

### The Selected Works

The seven writers I focus upon: Antonio D'Alfonso (Italian/Quebecker), Dany Laferrière (Haitian/Quebecker), Hiromi Goto (Japanese/Canadian), Eva Hoffman (Polish/American), Maxine Hong Kingston (Chinese/American), Richard Rodriguez (Mexican/American) and Gloria Anzaldúa (Mexican/American) address individual identity as an interrogation of personal stakes in what constitutes hybrid subjectivity for them inside competitive notions of authenticity. The slashes I employ are meant to illustrate connections and divisions between different cultural codes. Connectivity between different cultures creates hybrid or impure patterns of in-between spaces. However this impurity creates new forms out of old cultural codes, the essence of hybridized identification. This impurity resonates as a new voice positioned inside mainstream dominant codes, continually shifting and recreating its spaces and its voices. This creative process implies originality, therefore change. And all forms of change come with specific tensions. Thus, through their particular styles of communicative exchange and code-switching the writers I have selected illustrate hybrid in-between identity as a varying site of conflict and *creative* connectivity.

It is in their insistence on something new and their desire for a kind of communicative hybrid foreplay that I find value. The particular forms of hybridity that surface in the selective works are therefore the foundation of

how I explore *creative* connectivity. The creative aspects of hybridity offer a more fluid vision of subjectivity and identity negotiation. They also provide an interesting and flexible vantage point from which to understand differences in self while negotiating our differences with *others*. It must ultimately be a reciprocal and therefore respectful path of negotiation because it is reciprocity and respect that pave the way for more powerful forms of *creative* connectivity. Each work evokes hybridized identity differently (through differences in culture, language, race, even sexual orientation) so I do not compare or contrast these works. What I focus on is how code-switching and hybridized identification are necessary, even natural, aspects of negotiation in these works and on a broader scale in how today's globalized cultures meet and greet each other.

How each writer approaches *creative* connectivity is therefore the converging point between these works. The creative aspect is distinctly baroque in each work. Looking outside religious aspects of baroque forms in literature that surfaced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, I am interested in how characteristics of the baroque form surface in different degrees in the selected works. In her paper "Global Baroque: Antonio D'Alfonso's Fabrizio's Passion" (the English translation of *Avril ou l'anti-passion*), Lianne Moyes extrapolates on the many definitions of *baroque*. Her reference to *baroque* as an art-historic form, more precisely its association "with ambiguity, uncertainty, incongruity, contradiction, transformation, multiple perspective, illusion, surface play, hybrid form, ornament, passion, and excess" come up

again and again (in varying degrees) in the works I focus on (Moyes 1). I italicize these terms in the following paragraphs to illustrate these baroque form(s) present in each work.

Of the seven writers I have selected, Hiromi Goto, Antonio D'Alfonso and Dany Laferrière code-switch between cultures and languages inside English and French Canadian spaces. In Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* and in D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion*, these writers negotiate and create hybrid subjectivity between their protagonists' female Japanese/English Canadian voices and Italian/French Canadian voice (respectively) by intertwining past cultural and linguistic codes (Bhabha's notion of *pedagogy*) with present cultural realities (as *performative*). Dany Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* does not take the same linguistic approach as Goto and D'Alfonso. He plays with language rather than moving between linguistic codes, however his movement between cultural codes and re-scripting of racial lines interpellates Bhabha's notions of *pedagogy* and the *performative*. In different ways, these writers illustrate connectivity between cultural codes as a defining aspect of being Canadian. As previously suggested the hyphens I employ are meant to draw attention to how the protagonists in these works are simultaneously connected to, and divided by, their negotiation between different markers of language and culture (see Smith and Watson). Consequently, each writer's focus of hybrid space is determined by the degree of movement assigned between linguistic and cultural codes. In many instances, code-switching, a play between languages and cultural codes

parallels sexual play in these works. This form of play shifts between distinctly baroque spaces of *ambiguity, uncertainty, incongruity, transformation, multiple perspective* and *passion*. These writers offer diverse glimpses of hybridized identification, of different minority groups negotiating hybridity inside Canada's two official languages. Goto's writing as an English Canadian/Japanese writer sits alongside D'Alfonso's work as a French Canadian/Italian writer while Laferrière's vision of identity may be understood as a *creative* Pan-American writer weaving a larger circle of connectivity between cultural codes.

Although Goto and D'Alfonso narrate their stories as works of fiction, some aspects of their narrative style are autobiographical in form; personal truths surface from fictional details. Goto re-invents personal truth by re-telling her grandmother's story through her protagonist Naoe. The old woman in Goto's work is the symbolic carrier of oral tradition. Therefore as storyteller Naoe is also the transmitter of cultural and linguistic codes. Her granddaughter Murasaki, the recipient of Naoe's stories is the symbolic trope of Japanese culture for future generations. Goto's code-switching between English and Japanese illustrates Murasaki's education in both languages. This movement is also a marker of Murasaki's growing bicultural and bilingual identity. Goto was born in Japan however she came to Canada when she was three years old. Like her protagonist Murasaki, she was raised in Nanton, Alberta where her father had a mushroom farm. While Goto labels *Chorus of Mushrooms* a work of fiction, threads of her personal story are woven into the characters she

creates. As such, some of her illustrations about identity may be understood as the *performative* Bhabha speaks of, a re-imagination of Goto's future Canadian space inside a past Japanese cultural context.

Similarly D'Alfonso's protagonist Fabrizio is modeled after the writer. As a second generation Italian immigrant, D'Alfonso (like his protagonist) was born and raised in Montreal. Fabrizio's vision of language(s) and culture(s) mirror D'Alfonso's. Code-switching in this work is an expression of desire to move between different cultural and linguistic expressions and codes. Thus protagonist (like writer), identifies as Italian and Quebecker, traveling between Italian, French, and English codes to assert his particular hybrid identity. Like Goto, D'Alfonso's work is fiction. It is D'Alfonso's public education in English and French schools, his publications in three languages, along with his communication in Italian at home that illustrate similarities between writer and protagonist and their philosophy about culture(s) and language(s). The splitting process between *pedagogy* and the *performative* Bhabha offers in his discussion about nation spaces is quite palpable in D'Alfonso's narrative where past Italian markers converge with present Québec cultural codes. Moreover his writing promotes the type of code-switching and hybridized identification I value, one that is (performative) playful and (pedagogical) meaningful. It is a connective model of identity and community belonging for future immigrants and their host citizens.

In this regard, Montreal's cultural space has a unique voice in Canada. It motivates immigrants to live as trilingual citizens for two reasons. First, they

must juggle between French and English zones to establish a sense of community belonging. Montreal is perhaps the only city in Canada where French and English co-exist (depending on the neighborhoods) as dominant languages. You cannot always anticipate when someone will switch between these languages on the streets, in stores, restaurants, bars, etc. This movement between French and English is part of Montreal's daily routine. It may exist in other parts of Canada (Ottawa for instance and other Franco-Canadian areas like New Brunswick and even places in Alberta) however French in such parts remains hidden under the guise of a minority second language. Montreal seems to stand alone as a city where Canada's two official languages occupy dominant spaces. As a consequence, immigrants living in Montreal must create stronger nuclear inner communities with family and friends from their cultural origins differently than their immigrant neighbors in cities like Toronto and Vancouver because they are negotiating identity between *two* dominant languages. Citizens from other cosmopolitan cities in Canada do not struggle between two official languages in the same way as Montrealers since these cities are not bound by provincial language laws. While any clustering of cultural groups can promote some form of ghettos, such grouping also has value. It creates solidarity and it allows people to protect and promote specific cultural and linguistic codes (especially second generation immigrants who otherwise risk losing ties with their codes of origin). In Montreal, immigrant neighborhoods would have a more difficult time functioning (for the most part) by isolating themselves from either their English *or* French Canadian

neighborhoods. So they are faced with the challenge of traveling between two dominant languages while holding on to their language of origin.

D'Alfonso's vision of Montreal as a trilingual space is therefore an interesting and unique model of code-switching and hybridized identification. His work promotes linguistic and cultural hybridization as a successful and artistic model for immigrants who travel and negotiate their identities between Canada's two official languages. Consequently such Canadian immigrants who are trilingual are, in my opinion, equipped to communicate more creatively than those who are bilingual or unilingual. For this reason, D'Alfonso's protagonist Fabrizio is a source of fascination and contradiction because he cannot identify with just *two* cultural and linguistic spaces. Hybrid spaces in D'Alfonso's work focus more on *creative* connectivity rather than zones of conflict. D'Alfonso's illustration of Fabrizio is provocatively close to the writer's feelings of dislocation which lead him to promote hybridized identification. These issues surface in his writing, essays and poetry.

Like D'Alfonso, Dany Laferrière's male protagonist in *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatigué* translates identity inside Montreal's cultural spaces. Laferrière comes to Montreal in his early twenties and he spends a few years as a single black immigrant in the city before returning to Haiti and marrying. Although the reader cannot and should not make parallels between the writer and his protagonist Vieux's sexual experiences in Montreal, it is possible to read Vieux's parody of black and white sexuality as an indicator of Laferrière's desire to collapse stereotypes. He does not negotiate

hybrid subjectivity by traveling between linguistic codes. His code-switching is more implicitly seen through relationships in his story which focus on experiences between a French-speaking immigrant and white young women from Westmount (an English neighborhood in Montreal). His exploration of hybridized subjectivity is also recognizable in the particular ways he toys with black and white cultural stereotypes to shift racially based power plays (what I understand as Bhabha's *pedagogy*) between black men and white women. Moreover his musical and literary references provide a baroque *transformation* as he juggles between sexual and artistic spaces to tell his story. As parody, Laferrière's narrative of sexuality between white women and one black man may be interpreted as a movement or splitting process between Bhabha's *pedagogy* and the *performative*. This movement empowers the black man's voice and his cultural space. Literature, music and writing set the creative backdrop for seductive and pedagogical play. A *transformation* occurs in those instances where seductive ploys and plays reverse black and white stereotypes. Laferrière's writing style enters zones of Baroque *contradiction* and *passion* promoting sexual *excess* as a means of subverting dominant white voice(s). The underlying satirical messages are *performative* spaces. Laferrière extrapolates meaning across racial and sexual borders by negotiating identity in Pan-American terms rather than national terms based on *one* country.

Racial and sexual borders as well as issues of code-switching and hybridized identification differ in style and in geographic spaces in the American works I have selected. First, Anzaldúa, Hong Kingston, Hoffman

and Rodriguez narrate personal life stories. Female empowerment is a dominant theme in Anzaldúa's *autohistoria Borderlands/La Frontera*. She brings together geographic, sexual, historical, religious, cultural and linguistic spaces to illustrate a baroque *multi perspective* vision of identity and a baroque desire for *transformation*. Anzaldúa's discourse is wrapped inside U.S.-Mexican border theory issues. Thus hybrid negotiation and code-switching are individually and collectively addressed (either implicitly or explicitly in the selected works) as a contestation against hegemonic politics, language and culture. The shift between *pedagogy* and the *performative* in Anzaldúa's work is particularly dominant. Her literary style (a mixture of autobiography, history, spirituality, sexuality, poetry and prose) mirrors her mosaic vision of subjectivity. She rejects the fixity of racial, sexual, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and spatial borders thus claiming a multi-subjective voice. I therefore understand Anzaldúa's mix of literary and linguistic codes as baroque and surrealist. Reminiscent of René Magritte, Anzaldúa illustrates how identity construction mimics a surrealist shift between *fickleness of image versus reality*. The fickleness of image is tied to past collective historical cultural codes while her desire to claim multiple subjectivities is an individual exploration, shaping her narrative as *performative*. Her negotiation between cultural and linguistic codes illustrates her *pedagogical* process as well as desire for connectivity which frames non translation in her work as acts of knowing versus realities of *not* knowing. Language expressions, like cultural codes, have symbolic interpretations as well as literal meanings. Non

translation is a powerful tool of contestation in this work because it keeps the reader guessing about the layered more symbolic interpretations possible in the meaning-making process. Through her linguistic hybrid writing style, Anzaldúa claims her hybrid multiple subjectivities. However she does not always reveal intimate meaning to all readers. By privileging some readers and excluding others, she toys with the readers' ability to *know* and to understand her intimately. Moreover by refusing identification inside one linguistic or cultural zone, Anzaldúa mocks fixed labels. She simultaneously destabilizes her process of self-identity as she continually reincarnates herself inside historical, cultural, religious, sexual and linguistic spaces – hybrid, baroque and surrealist.

Not as radical in its address of feminine empowerment, Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* re-spins traditional Chinese legends and narrates them as Baroque, *multi-perspective* and *transforming*. She modernizes the female Chinese experience inside an American scope of feminine subjectivity. She mediates her desire to be translated as a modern, empowered Americanized/Chinese immigrant by re-scripting herself as Fa MuLan, a mythical Chinese woman warrior. As a second generation Chinese immigrant woman born and raised in the United States, Hong Kingston must negotiate identity inside traditional Chinese cultural codes which do not empower women. Moreover, as a visibly different immigrant woman her challenges shift between being Chinese, female, and immigrant. If she defines herself through *one* space, she feels negatively *othered* in other spaces. Therefore her

conflation of myth and personal story may be interpreted as a prescriptive form of splitting between Bhabha's *pedagogy* and the *performative*, as desire for empowerment outside walls that negatively confine her inside one cultural space. Hong Kingston also reframes her Americanized Chinese identity by re-scripting the identity of her ancestral female ghosts. By retelling their stories, she gives them a voice they did not have while they were living. At the same time, she empowers her voice through such a retelling and a re-scripting of the feminine Chinese voice. What emerges from this re-scripting is a Chinese/American feminine voice, hybridized because of how she re-negotiates the identity of these other women in her family. Underlying this retelling process, chords of discrimination echo within her Chinese spaces. Thus Hong Kingston's restructuring of the Chinese/American feminine narrative voice and her conflation of myth and reality are important tools of negotiation to empower her Chinese/American voice.

The notion of hybrid identity in Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* and Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* life narratives are overshadowed by traumatic zones of conflict and experience. Therefore *creative* connectivity and hybridized identification in these works are more complex. Like Anzaldúa, their personal stories are narrated as surreal and baroque lived experiences. Surreal because of the way these writers move between the image of their public American worlds and the realities of their childhood private (Polish and Mexican respectively) spaces. Baroque because of how *incongruity* and *contradiction* affect their process of *transformation*. I interpret some of their

difficulties as trappings of the *American Dream*. Their American cultural reality dominates, even dictates, how they must leave behind certain aspects of their cultural origins in order to embrace adopted American space(s). However an American education affords these writers a more successful entry as American citizens. For these writers, academic success equals American integration. Their American education is a tool of empowerment to diminish tensions they experience juggling between the spaces of their cultural origins and their adopted American one. Both writers illustrate difficulties they experience suppressing or shifting ties with their cultural and linguistic origins.

For Rodriguez, moving between Spanish and English and being bilingual signal confusion. Hoffman struggles with her desire to learn English as intimately as she speaks Polish. Their respective longing(s) to seek connectivity between the different cultures and languages they inhabit creep into their narrative voices suggesting they cannot avoid hybridized identification. Hoffman and Rodriguez converge on one point in their process of identity negotiation. Their vision of being American means sacrificing or leaving behind aspects of their Polish and Mexican cultural codes. Mastering English and embracing an American vision of cultural identity is a consequence of their upbringing and childhood experiences. The trauma narrative of Hoffman's parents and Rodriguez's repressed homosexuality play a crucial role in how these writers negotiate self-hood in less hybrid terms than the other writers. Thus their desire for American connectivity masks the hybrid

aspects of their identity inside baroque spaces of *incongruity* and *contradiction*.

Tensions surface when Hoffman's Polish vision of life, love and culture clash with her Canadian and American experiences. Her adaptation process in North America is further complicated because of her parents' traumatic life experiences in war torn Poland. What surfaces from their trauma narrative overlaps and becomes intertwined with Hoffman's narrative. Their story represents Hoffman's past and it is therefore part of her process of *pedagogy*. Her North American experiences collide with her poetic nostalgia for a Polish life she can never recapture. Such instances in her narrative illustrate her splitting process and the *performative* aspects of her experiences. Moreover a heightened awareness of her parents' suffering means she experiences their suffering as a belated pain. The result is a splintering of images in how she views herself and how she narrates her experiences. As she moves towards a more American/Polish version of herself, she grapples between baroque feelings of *ambiguity*, *uncertainty*, *incongruity*, and *contradiction*. Hoffman's personal story, a *meta-narrative* of sorts, is further complicated and complex because her experiences are forever welded inside the trauma narrative of her parents. Her story is divided into three parts: Paradise, Exile, and The New World. In Paradise, she describes how she experiences and therefore understands her childhood in Poland. In Exile, she describes her first impressions as an immigrant in Canada. Finally, in The New World she speaks of her symbolic entry as an American. Hoffman's story

shifts in a nonlinear narrative between her childhood and adult experiences. Her nonlinear narrative style illustrates the impact her past Polish spaces and experiences have on how she negotiates her present North American identity. Hoffman's first immigrant experience in Canada is not a positive one. Her subsequent American experiences suggest that this period of her adult life is less conflicted. Hoffman's academic accomplishments provide her with a stronger image of herself as an immigrant; however, her struggle to define and negotiate her identity between different cultural and linguistic codes continues to haunt her. I was quickly seduced by Hoffman's poetic writing style. Moving between melancholic threads of her Polish memories, she describes her Canadian and American experiences as a period of questions, of conflicted negotiations between cultural codes. In the end, she seems to accept that she cannot avoid a hybridized identification. Lines of division between her Polish and American identities become bridges as she comes to terms with the knowledge that many aspects of her Polish culture frame her American voice, ultimately a hybridized space.

An acceptance of hybrid spaces is less visible in how Rodriguez negotiates between his Mexican and American cultural worlds. As a second generation immigrant, Rodriguez's first goal is seeking identification as an American. Born and raised in California, he quickly learns that speaking English fluently is a key element of success and entry as an American. His views against bilingual education point to his scepticism about successfully learning, preserving, and living between different languages. Moreover his

dark skin, a constant *negative* reminder of his otherness, suggests that academic success is a tool of empowerment against feelings of marginality. I understand his desire for an Americanized identity (especially as he narrates it in *Hunger of Memory*) as a product of how he negatively understands bilingual education which differs from my views of multilingual language education, a point-of-view I address in my conclusion. Rodriguez's experiences and narrative are contained inside the social and cultural climate of American life in the 1960s, an era of great counter-cultural revolution. As a result, how he chooses to publicly share his personal and public journey surface as fragmented threads of a latent hybrid voice he cannot escape. Losing his intimate ties to Spanish at a very young age means that Rodriguez's position and even point of view differ from the perspective of American Mexicans still speaking Spanish and therefore fighting for bilingual education. Moreover containing and concealing his homosexual identity during his youth and early adulthood means that Rodriguez's personal voice is masked before his public. He does not write publicly about this alienation from self, rather he speaks of his alienation from family as a prescriptive tool to deal with some of his inner conflicts and suffering. However this sharing process creates a great rift between Rodriguez and his parents, particularly his mother who views his sharing of family experience as a betrayal. Thus I understand Rodriguez's private pain (language, closeness with his family, even his closeted homosexuality) as latent longings of a hybrid existence he cannot completely claim. Rodriguez writes with passion however his tone remains professional.

He frames his experiences as formal essays, offering arguments and concluding comments that rationally convince readers of his choices. Rodriguez therefore stands alone in my selection of writers as the voice who *reluctantly* embraces hybridized identification. Readers witness aspects of Rodriguez's hybrid voice in his works after *Hunger of Memory* (the focus in this thesis). His narrative style and personalized essays are, I believe, a symbolic illustration of the structure Rodriguez seeks in his personal life. I understand his closeted homosexuality in the same way I read his professional writing style, as a tool to mask his inner emotions, ones he is not open to, perhaps uncomfortable, sharing with readers. What is clear is how his journey of identity negotiation and therefore his process of code-switching between cultures and languages are much more conflicted in his work than in the other selected works.

While this thesis focuses on the value of code-switching and the *creative* connectivity that comes from hybridized identification in the selected works, there is some degree of tension and conflict arising from code-switching between cultural and linguistic codes in all the works. D'Alfonso's vision may be traced to the Italian model of small space and a long history. However his model of hybridized identification may be the most positive example in my selection of works. The structure of family love, exoticism of romantic love, language and dialect, and religion are dominant factors in tensions his protagonist experiences as an Italian immigrant in Montreal. Similar structures surface in Goto's narrative. However in her story, the focus

is on reclaiming lost cultural and linguistic codes. Laferrière's Pan-American view of identity focuses less on local points of connectivity such as traditions, religion, language and dialect. However by conflating sexual and geographic spaces he Haitianizes his local Montreal spaces on his terms. Such a conflation of spaces allows him a distinctly baroque identification and connection, *multi perspective* in meaning. Anzaldúa's resistance to hegemonic language and culture places her vision of identity alongside similar globalized lines of reference as Laferrière. However her desire for identification goes beyond conflation of sexual and geographic borders. She contests accepted codes of belonging/identification along historical, political, cultural, sexual, religious, and linguistic borders, wishing to re-script hybridized identification as an artistic form, grandiose, baroque and *multi-perspective*.

Hoffman also juggles between borders. Not as multi-perspective as Anzaldúa, her struggles shift between her Polish homeland and her adopted North American spaces. Hong Kingston seeks identification between the cultural Chinese spaces her family imposes upon her and the American colors she was born, raised and educated inside, in California. Contrarily, Rodriguez leaves behind local spaces of identification. Also born and raised in California, he moves away from his Mexican culture at a very young age to embrace national markers of an Americanized identity. Rodriguez also distances himself from the language of his cultural origins, what he refers to as private space. However all the writers I have selected illustrate public space as *pedagogy* and personal space as *performative*. In those moments where there

are tensions or connectivities between these spaces we witness hybridized identity as zones of creative intimacy or tension.

### Code-Switching

Creative intimacy or tensions that surfaces because of linguistic code-switching are an important aspect of how three of the writers I have selected negotiate hybrid subjectivity: Anzaldúa, Goto and to a lesser degree D'Alfonso. Anzaldúa punctuates her English with many words, sentences, passages and poems in Spanish, often un-translated. Her tone is polemical in as much as her writing is surrealist in its narrative form. By refusing to translate, her words become privileged expressions, inviting some readers and excluding others. Less polemical in tone, Goto's writing style resembles Anzaldúa's because she also chooses when and how she privileges her readers' meaning-making process by inserting Japanese words and sentences that cannot be intimately understood by readers who do not understand Japanese. Anzaldúa and Goto are deliberate in how they include and exclude readers. Language and how we understand intimate meaning is sometimes misleading in these works. Their particular form of un-translated code-switching is a critical aspect of how these women wish to define their narrative voices outside white mainstream subjectivity.

D'Alfonso also employs linguistic code-switching however his style is more playful, suggesting that this movement between languages and cultural codes is a natural consequence of growing up in Montreal, a city where Canada's two official languages move between political and cultural codes

differently than in any other Canadian city. Thus a hybrid communication and bilingual, even trilingual meaning-making process is explored in D'Alfonso's work as a welcome(d) process of splitting between Bhabha's *discourses of pedagogy and the performative*. Unlike Anzaldúa and Goto, his narrative illustrates linguistic code-switching as a necessary, even natural aspect of cosmopolitan life more than a polemical tool to contest dominant mainstream voices.

In her autobiography, Hoffman grapples with issues of language, dealing with the challenges of moving away from Polish towards a more American skin. She does not employ linguistic code-switching to contest mainstream culture or its English language. However she does pepper some of her American experiences with Polish words. I read her negotiation for an American identity and her particular model of linguistic hybridity as a poetic process. Her language style is seductive, emotional and always nostalgic. Unlike D'Alfonso's more open easy-going representation of Italian/French Canadian hybridity, she demonstrates her Polish/American hybrid subjectivity as one dominated by American spaces. For Hoffman, speaking and knowing English intimately are akin to being American in an authentic way. Polish becomes an encoded *a priori historical* referential base, defining her adoption of English as *performative* space, a necessary construction of an Americanized Polish identity. Like Rodriguez she views her mastery of the English language as a vital tool of recognition and entry as an American citizen.

Rodriguez and Hoffman privilege code-switching implicitly. These writers illustrate hybrid subjectivity as a Proustian dance – an evocation of past experience in a present context. The dance becomes hybridized as the music shifts between different codes of identification. Past experience for Hoffman is layered inside the trauma narrative of her parents. Rodriguez's negotiation of identity is marred by choices that erase his intimate ties to the Spanish language. Moreover I understand his delayed coming out as a homosexual as a traumatic event. Both writers strive to occupy spaces inside mainstream American academia. Their stories may be read as *how-to* guides of becoming successful American academics. Their desire for Americanized success pushes them to privilege English and academic study. They view these elements as key aspects of their American adoption process and their desire to live the American dream. I view this desire for inclusion inside mainstream American culture as a clash with their desire for a bilingual identity.

However Hoffman does not assimilate into American culture in the same way as Rodriguez. Her process of Americanization remains interwoven inside Polish codes. Both writers' particular process of code-switching between languages and cultures result in tensions they struggle to eliminate. Thus their adoption of English as their primary language and their desire for success in their academic careers may be read as prescriptive processes that soothe their otherwise fractured Polish and Mexican (respectively) identities. Their autobiographical truth and their subsequent recording of lived experiences are influenced by the ways they are taught to act inside their social

and political environments. They cannot ignore or forget about their cultural origins. Thus they must ultimately face and embrace their hybridized identification, albeit in more implicit terms than Anzaldúa, Goto or D'Alfonso. Hong Kingston's autobiography is also implicit in its illustration of code-switching. She negotiates her Chinese/American feminine subjectivity by code-switching between myth and reality to negotiate her identity. Laferrière's parody of racial stereotypes is another implicit form of code-switching. His protagonist code-switches between racial stereotypes and defines masculine subjectivity on his terms. The common thread between all the writers I focus on (in varying forms) is in their layered and superimposed patterns of hybrid subjectivity. Hybrid identification in the works is a large patchwork quilt. Every patch tells a different culturally coded story and sewn together these patches form a hybrid cover of creative connectivity.

In the works I have selected this notion of culturally coded patches surfaces through each writer's storytelling approach. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson point out in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide For Interpreting Life Narratives*, "we [need to] approach self-referential writing as an intersubjective process that occurs within the writer/reader pact, rather than as a true-or-false story...[where] the emphasis of reading shifts from assessing and verifying knowledge to observing processes of communicative exchange and understanding" (13). Thus I focus on how the protagonists in the selected works, real or invented, propel their identities as hybrid *baroque* art forms, repainting their movements between different cultural and linguistic canvases

with newer, more inventive strokes. Creativity plays a critical role in how these writers renegotiate patterns of identity. In keeping with the heterogeneous and heteroglossic North American populations of today, the works I have selected represent a small but significant sampling of immigrant processes of communicative exchange, varied and complex in their literary forms. These works showcase how a mutually beneficial relationship between different linguistic and cultural worlds is possible. However as Wilson Harris notes in his interview with Fred D'Aguiar, such relationships are "very fragile" like a "rain forest ... [they can] be devastated overnight" (qtd. in Nasta 39). It begins, by refusing to live, in Harris's words "in a world which compartmentalizes cultures and people" (38). Like Harris, the voices on the peripheries or *the border zones* do not identify with one culture. Rather, they move between the spaces of a dominant linguistic and cultural center and its peripheral spaces. Over time, this movement increases in frequency as they learn, adapt to, and adopt, new cultural and linguistic codes. However such in-between movement also impacts the center and how it re-creates its cultural and linguistic spaces because as Wilson states "there exists a profound relationship between all societies" (37-38). This movement may be understood as Bhabha's *pedagogy* and the *performative*, as (re)imaginings of subjectivity, as another aspect of *creative* connectivity between different cultural codes. Such movement encourages, in my opinion, a greater focus on multilingual communication and an escape from marginalization, when it is framed as a Ricœurian mapping of *soi-même comme un autre*. In psychiatrist Frank

Johnson's words, it may be understood as a kind of "social construction which is symbolically and signally created between and among social beings" (qtd. in Eakin 76-77). I understand this relationship or *social construction* between *social beings* as a creative space of discovery.

### What Has Not Been Done and How I Bridge the Gap

Albert Einstein said: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." To facilitate newer patterns of thinking about how immigrants and host citizens integrate more effectively into each other's lives, I view hybrid identification as a necessary process of *creative* connectivity and code-switching between cultures and languages. To promote this idea, this thesis picks up from Catherine Leclerc's Ph.D. topic: *Des langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine*. Like Leclerc, my thesis addresses bilingualism or plurilingualism inside a literary context. However my perspective is *immigrant focused*. Therefore how language(s) come into contact with each other is an important aspect of how I address immigration issues. « Parlant, à l'échelle communautaire, une langue qui n'est pas la langue nationale, ces groups [d'immigrants] doivent passer par une langue véhiculaire pour participer à la vie de leur société » (Leclerc 2). Entry in society's majority cultural and linguistic arena requires effective communication by host and immigrant. As Leclerc points out « [d]ans le nouvel ordre économique international, la connaissance de plusieurs langues ouvre des portes, même pour les locuteurs dont la première langue est une langue dominante » (2) Like Leclerc, I speak

in favor of the usage of more than one language inside literary, community and professional circles. As she points out, switching between languages in literary works is a challenge and a risk. I share her view that literature offers researchers an interesting frame of reference about multilingual narration. Such a narrative tool is « une esthétique de la contestation (Leclerc 6) ... il s'affirmerait comme principe dialogique ... contre la dictature de l'Un » (Sherry Simon qtd. in Leclerc (6). Where my focus differs from Leclerc is in the way I address code-switching as *creative connectivity and* as an active and intimate engagement between self and other, more specifically in relation to immigrants who travel between languages and cultural codes to reconstruct their identities. Moreover Leclerc's term *co-habitation* of languages addresses the degree of movement between languages as an indicator of « une stricte hiérarchisation » (Leclerc 6). While I acknowledge that the amount of movement between languages is an important indicator of the degree of contestation of language hegemony, it is also a tool of communication to illustrate the natural movement between languages immigrants adopt/adapt in host countries as they renegotiate their identity. As Leclerc points out, literary works that code-switch between languages illustrates a desire by such writers to write for « un public qui est lui-même plurilingue » (12).

As an English teacher in Québec City, I am aware of how important it is that today's youth master (intimately learn) English. Within an economic world context English remains the dominant language of communication. Leclerc illustrates, as I wish to, how *co-habitation*, what I term code-switching

between language(s) in literature has positive value. « Le pari soutenu dans cette thèse est que la littérature pourrait s'avérer riche d'enseignement quant aux types de rapport entre les langues susceptibles de se développer à la faveur de ce climat doublement favorable au plurilinguisme » (3). The *rapport entre les langues* Leclerc speaks of is where my thesis picks up. I also focus more on the creative value of such an exchange. Moreover my thesis explores code-switching, *creative* connectivity and negotiation of identity in immigrant populations. Immigrants who wish to successfully integrate into their adopted countries cannot simply identify with one culture or one language. Such people continually travel inside hybridized spaces of identification.

In any dynamic where people speak more than one language, live inside more than one cultural code, code-switching is present. Thus literature affords us the opportunity to understand the value of such code-switching. It also provides us with different examples of the tensions and conflicts code-switching produces which remain for the most part creative. For instance, Leclerc mentions how easily people are seduced by exotic elements of difference. « Comprendre la langue de l'autre et s'en servir pour dialoguer s'avérait moins important que de succomber à son exotisme » (5). I would therefore argue that code-switching (or as Leclerc labels it *co-habitation*) needs to move beyond this label of exotic appeal. What is required is “an active engagement with the horizons of the culture in which those terms have meaning” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin qtd. in Leclerc 6). More importantly, my thesis also grounds its illustrations of code-switching by validating non-

translation, to destabilize, or as Leclerc labels it « fait éclater toute notion d'une langue unique » (Leclerc 15). In Chapter Three I therefore concentrate on how “the absence of translation has a particular kind of interpretative [and creative] function” because “the absence of explanation is the first sign of distinctiveness ... it is an endorsement ... a recognition that the message event ... has full authority in the process of cultural and linguistic intersection” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 64). In the literary works of Anzaldúa, Goto, and D'Alfonso I understand *creative* connectivity and their particular non-translation techniques of code-switching as an illustration of how “alien world views might come closer if their linguistic structures were somehow meshed” (67). While most post-colonial literature focuses on code-switching in Caribbean or in African literature, the *originality* of this thesis is in its illustration of migrant literatures in North America that focus on code-switching in their works. Therefore in my exploration of code-switching I move in a different direction from Leclerc's study of language *co-habitation* in literary works. Leclerc focuses on Quebec, Franco-Canadian and European works to explore language *co-habitation*. The value of this thesis is in its focus on code-switching in immigrant literature. I therefore do not translate French quotations into English throughout my thesis. This is a deliberate choice I make to illustrate my desire to code-switch between the languages I speak.

My thesis is also heavily indebted to Chantal Zabus' work in *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African*

*Europhone Novel* published in 1991. The “process of fundamental social and cultural change” in African society Zabus speaks of is also a process of change that affects immigrants and immigrant writers here in North America. In the words of Vladimir Nabokov: “Not only style but subject undergoes a horrible bleeding and distortion when translated into another tongue” (qtd. in Zabus i). Zabus’ work is a comparative study of the hybridization of the English and French languages in African literatures. I am interested in focusing on varying forms of “palimpsests beneath whose scriptural surface can be traced imperfectly erased remnants of the source language, the author’s mother tongue” because they are a useful point of reference in examining code-switching in the works I have selected (v). Her use of code-switching refers to a switch “between the European and African language and the languages in contact” as “acts of identity” (6). The works I have selected explore this bridge between languages in a similar way. The desire to make meaning “without resorting to translation” is for instance a key aspect of how some of the writers I focus upon play with contact between languages in their works (7). I understand this hybridization as a shifting of spaces between who we are becoming versus who we were.

This shifting space I speak of between cultural and linguistic worlds illustrates (in similar terms as Zabus’ reference of the post-colonial writer) the immigrant writer’s “desire to be both truly local and universal, to reclaim and rehabilitate the indigenous languages, while seeking viability” (vii). Even if a process of assimilation (Richard Rodriguez for instance) closes this gap or the

“relationship between dominant and dominated language” it does not erase the voice of “authorial, imaginative consciousness” (14) In Rodriguez’s writing, this is witnessed as “the result of a transformation; the transmutation of literary language by its social objectives” (15). Rodriguez’s autobiographical narrative focuses on the merits of monolingual living “in a situation of [cultural more than linguistic] diglossia” (15). Contrarily, Gloria Anzaldúa steps inside “a situation of acute diglossia in a multilingual [and culturally hybrid] state” of mind (16). These two writers offer a polarized view of hybridization and code-switching. Rodriguez’s desire for *full* American citizenship is also an illustration of his desire to “make the foreign language” his own thus “subverting its foreignness” (3-4). Contrarily, Anzaldúa’s desire to code-switch between Spanish and English bridges the gap between *mother tongue* and *other tongue* as it illustrates her contestation of any authorial cultural or linguistic codes which prevent her from embracing the many voices and spaces she occupies. As a sixth generation descendant of Basque and Spanish explorers, Anzaldúa is not in the same class of immigrants as the other writers. However the collective past histories she speaks of in her narrative provide her an immigrant perspective that is important in how I explore hybrid subjectivity and the immigrant experience. Moreover her use of code-switching and hybridization dominates all aspects of how she translates identity. She is therefore an important example in my exploration of connectivity between cultures and languages.

The other writers I focus on fall somewhere between these two points of identification. Each writer embodies (to some degree) Zabus' vision of *The African Palimpsest* in their narrative. Today's "university-trained intelligentsia" has grown even more than it had when Zabus published this work on code-switching (ii). What remains true is the significance of "social change" Zabus speaks of and its many "ethical, psychological" problems (ii). Moreover, the challenge lies in how a dominant society can accept the reality that "culture change always involves language change ... that culture contact, even in the form of the notorious culture clash, always leads to the mode of linguistic hybridization" (ii). While Zabus's work refers to hybridization as the process of *creolization*, this thesis grounds its exploration of code-switching as a distinctly creative movement *between* linguistic *and* cultural codes. Moreover I explore *creative* connectivity outside any literary forms that favor "popular forms of speech whose peculiar lexicon, unorthodox syntax and outlandish pronunciation make them liable to fierce criticism" (iii). This is not to suggest that I discredit or even wish to disregard the importance and place of vernacular speech forms. However these forms do not factor into my approach of code-switching and how I address hybridized identification. My exploration of code-switching is explored as an *aesthetical* education (see Doris Sommer). I also understand the pedagogical, linguistic and cultural value of hybridization and code-switching as an artistic journey. Thus my thesis focuses on the artistic impressions we trace as we aim to define ourselves. These drawings of ourselves may be understood as Zabus's

palimpsests, layered in meaning(s), shifting creatively, uniquely each time we openly encounter and adopt another culture or language as our own. This openness I speak of is embedded deeply inside our willingness to redefine ourselves continually. It is in many respects an infidelity born out of an exploration of authentic desire(s). In the selected works, the writers in question explore this notion of authentic desires as an integral element of who they are and how they seek belonging between cultures and languages. As a way to summarize and validate my illustrations and observations about *creative* connectivity in code-switching, hybrid identification and the negotiation of, and the navigation between, its in-between spaces, I place great value in multilingual education. Thus in my conclusion I will address this point, referring to Montréal as a viable model of multilingual education.

For this reason, Sherry Simon's work on hybridization in *Hybridité culturelle* and her more recent article "Hybridity Revisited: St. Michael's of Mile End." frame my approach to code-switching and how I move forward with this topic in new forms. In this essay, Simon refers to the Mile End neighborhood in Montreal as a site "of makeovers ... [as] each new wave of immigration washes over the plateau, it refashions the features of the neighbourhood in its own image" (12). This essay published by Simon in 2003 illustrates the evolutionary path of Simon's ideas on hybridity. However Simon's earlier views of hybridity are just as relevant in how I explore the urban city's hybrid identification as a site of privilege.

La ville est depuis toujours le lieu privilégié de l'hybridité. Par ses marchés et ses places publiques, elle offre des occasions de rencontre;

par la multiplication des circuits et des trajets, elle permet de maintenir des différences (*Hybridité culturelle* 24).

As she notes, what “the concept of métissage gains in philosophical depth, it loses in analytical precision” (“Hybridity Revisited: St. Michael’s of Mile End.” 3). It is an “exploratory device” a building block of sorts to redesign an existing pattern or cultural code (3). Thus hybrid is not simply an exercise in recognizing or maintaining differences. It is about creating new spaces, new ways of interpreting old social, cultural even linguistic sites of meaning.

« L’hybride déstabilise les certitudes et crée des effets de nouveauté et de dissonance » (*Hybridité culturelle* 27). Just as “[t]he recycling of architectural styles continually reactivates new meanings” hybridity reactivates cultures in new ways (“Hybridity Revisited: St. Michael’s of Mile End.” 7). Host cultures therefore become part of a regenerative process. However such processes which shift existing meaning through architectural changes or other cultural codes such as language, food, social values, etc. are not necessarily comfortable zones. Yet regenerative processes can also be a form of *reconciliation*. Simon describes “the coupling of Christian and Islamic references” as *provocative* (7). This fits my vision of creative connectivities between cultures and languages because the transcultural architectural images Simon evokes express identity in new forms, as transgressed desires. Transgressed because as Simon points out, « dans les espaces mixtes règne souvent un climat d’anxiété » (*Hybridité culturelle* 27). This state of *anxiété*, a result of change, is not always welcome(d), in how we define cultural and linguistic identity inside national, local and therefore communal notions of belonging and

citizenship. Its value come from the creative way old sites are renamed culturally. By looking at cultures in the same context as personal relationships we can more easily understand and accept the importance of evolution in how we define cultural particularities. As Simon points out we need to move away from an *intercultural* perspective and embrace a *transcultural* one, where « interpénétration ... [et] contamination » are not viewed as pejorative terms (30). There is a perceived or real threat in any form of difference that results in « la défiguration de la beauté indigène » (30). As immigrants enter city spaces, the way the city's cultural and linguistic identity has been shaped will begin to shift and change. Notions of beauty, cuisine, even social and religious codes shaping *la beauté indigène* will be affected or infected through such encounters. Such change to institutionalized codes means that both host and immigrant(s) are drawn into « une nouvelle norme collective ... un ensemble de pratiques toujours en mouvement » (30). It is therefore understandable that such change brings about *un climat d'anxiété*. However I would argue that such anxiety should also be welcome(d). Someone once said, “Instead of thinking outside the box, just get rid of the box” and this idea fits here. The face of hybridized identification demands a re-shifting of old paradigms, old cultural codes, and more fluid movements rather than a compartmentalized understanding or recognition of spaces. Simon's description of Mile-End as “a place of passage, a stopover on the way to better things” resembles my understanding of code-switching and how I address it

through the selected works (“Hybridity Revisited: St. Michael’s of Mile End.” 12).

Today, we cannot promote immigration by closing our eyes to differences (cultural or linguistic) these populations bring with them. Globalization has changed our understanding of borders and therefore cultural codes. As a result we can neither isolate ourselves from the rest of the world nor can we negotiate cultural differences and linguistic rights as compartmentalized issues. Host and peripheral cultures have, in my opinion, an ethical responsibility in how they negotiate a platform of connectivity. This process of connectivity begins with individuals. That is why my selection of works is so diverse. It allows me to illustrate how immigrants across different cultural and linguistic codes converge on the importance of creatively connecting with others.

The vocabulary which has been available to describe cultural contact has, until recently, been limited. *Acculturation* and *assimilation* are mirror images (negative and positive) of the same process: the loss of distinctive cultural traits to a host culture which is assumed to remain intact and stable. *Hybridity*, *créolité*, *métissage* refer to forms of mixing, each recalling a vexed history, where cultural mixing has been associated with a legacy of violence and racism ... these terms are also unsatisfactory for the way in which they conflate process and result. We need to distinguish the ways in which identities come together, the values that these fusions represent, [as well as] the different forms they take (16).

We cannot, as Simon points out, ignore *other* realities. « Il n’existe pas de vie culturelle qui n’est pas adultérée par le contact, par le mélange, qui n’est pas influencé par l’étranger » (*Hybridité culturelle* 35). When I speak of *creative* connectivity, I think of how « l’hybride, qui définit de plus en plus les univers

que nous habitons, est traversé de forces antagoniques » (51). However much conflict or tension surfaces from these zones, I believe we need to remain open to promoting connectivity and code-switching between words and worlds.

The negotiation of in-between spaces the hybrid occupies and how it is addressed in this thesis bears resemblance to Wilson Harris's work in *Palace of the Peacock*. In this work, Harris breaks down barriers of meaning imposed on readers. For instance, in this work we are never certain if we are reading about dead or living characters. Moreover, Harris breaks away from linear ideas of time and space (something that comes up in some of the works I focus on). Such narrative techniques compel the reader to focus on imagination rather than rationale, to view reality outside fixed linear terms. Thus engaging the imagination to negotiate and define personal spaces as Harris does is another important aspect of how I approach hybridized identification. Simon's understanding of hybridized identification corresponds to Harris' vision of time and space as a continuously shifting frame without linear reference. The challenge, as Bhabha reminds us "is to deal not with them/us but with the historically and temporally disjunct positions that minorities occupy ambivalently within the nation's space" ("Culture's In-Between" 57). In my mind a linear reference of culture implies containment in how we assign value to cultural codes. My understanding of culture outside a linear reference is present in all the selected works. There is no linear narrative across time and space in any of the selected works. Moreover I would suggest that urban cosmopolitan cities such as Montreal, New York, San Francisco (cities in

question in some of the selected works) should also be framed outside *fixed* time and space specific codes.

Cosmopolitan cities offer models of interaction which are different from those imposed by national frames. To choose the neighbourhood as a frame for analysis is to propose a different map, a crisscrossing of motives and desires, a continual flow of crosscultural traffic (“Hybridity Revisited: St. Michael’s of Mile End.” 17).

Similarly the movement between cultural and linguistic codes that comes from hybridized life experiences is another example of how time and space specific codes are continually shifting between past and present contexts. While this thesis does not contest the ease of bringing together people who share the same cultural and linguistic codes, this thesis celebrates those instances where *creative* connectivity and code-switching brings together difference(s). The creative connectivity I explore in each of the selected works paves our understanding of identity construction as an artistic and pedagogical map. This symbolic map is hybridized. That means that it continually retraces its insider and outsider lines between cultural and linguistic spaces, outside assigned or fixed codes of meaning.

Il est certain que l’être hybride pose de sérieux défis aux nationalismes. Dans le pays politique et culturel actuel, les cultures nationales ont à se définir. C’est la culture n’est plus une bulle sécuritaire qui sépare un groupe d’individus d’un autre. Le régime de l’hybride nous oblige à redéfinir le rapport entre culture, identité et citoyenneté (*Hybridité culturelle* 56-57).

This thesis does not address the broader issues of citizenship and nationhood that Simon mentions. However, in this era of globalization, there is no question that individuals, especially immigrants, move more-or-less inside in-between spaces of hybridized identification. Immigrant voices and nations

who adopt immigrants are confronted more than ever by such hybrid spaces. Therefore how immigrant voices define themselves inside their cultural spaces of origin and how they connect with their dominant adopted cultural codes will also have an impact on the dominant culture's collective voice. Globalization has meant that we are challenged to meet, greet and engage with *Other* cultures and languages in more inclusive and respectful ways. This opens up possibilities in how we understand identity and choose to define nation.

Thus Janet Paterson's exploration of the role of the *Other* in Québec literature in *Figure de l'Autre dans le roman québécois* forms another important part of the platform from which I approach and continue the discussion on hybridized identification and *creative* connectivity. First, Paterson defines the *Other* or *l'Autre* as a status open to anyone. « N'importe quel personnage peut se voir attribuer un statut d'altérité dans un contexte particulier » (12). Paterson explores the notion of *Other* inside the French Canadian novel and how the *Other* appears inside French Canadian literature. Her work in this area is an important resource in my thesis. While Paterson illustrates how the *Other* appears in works of fiction, my thesis goes further by addressing different spaces of *Other* in works of fiction and in autobiography. Moreover Paterson focuses exclusively on French Canadian works. Her research concentrates on one area and therefore it is more extensively developed. My thesis opens the door wider by selecting writers inside a North American context. Because my choice of writers is so diverse, it would be very difficult to develop my research in this thesis as thoroughly as Paterson does in

her study. However Paterson's insights on the *Other* in literary works provide an important frame of reference in how I assign value to different forms of *Other* that emerge in the works I have selected. As Paterson notes, « l'altérité des personnages est entièrement déterminée par la définition du groupe de référence » (23). The identifying factors of how the *Other* is represented in fiction also offer an important understanding of the *Other* in autobiography. These factors are therefore listed here for reference.

- 1) L'Autre est une notion relationnelle qui se définit par opposition à un autre terme.
- 2) Pour que la différence inhérente à l'altérité soit significative, elle implique la présence d'un groupe de référence dont se démarque l'Autre.
- 3) Il importe de distinguer entre différence et altérité. L'enjeu ne réside pas dans la différence, mais dans l'altérité. Le groupe de référence dresse l'inventaire des traits pertinents qui constituent l'altérité d'un personnage.
- 4) Tributaire d'un processus de construction idéologique, toute altérité est variable, mouvante et susceptible de renversements. Elle n'est marquée d'aucune immanence et peut être dotée de traits positifs ou négatifs, euphoriques ou disphoriques dans un même espace social ou discursif.
- 5) Si dans la vie réelle, l'altérité d'un individu est déterminée par la société qui l'entoure, le personnage de l'Autre est, de même, tout entier gouverné par les dispositifs du texte. (27)

These points are descriptive in their identification of the *Other* however they are also prescriptive in how they define the voice of the *Other* in this thesis.

The notion of *Other* as relational, understanding difference by looking at representations of *Other* inside group dynamics are important in how I understand connectivity in the selected works. Moreover, how difference and otherness are translated becomes a question of each writer's choice of the written word (as noted in point 5 above). How these works aim to validate the position of *Other* and hybridized identification is a key element. This is why

Paterson's model of the *Other* as « positif ou negatif ... souvent les deux à la fois ... ni stable, ni fixe, mais mouvante » is a valuable reference (26).

Because the notion of *Other* continually moves between linguistic and cultural spaces tensions and conflicts will arise. Paterson explains why the confrontation process is a difficult one.

[L]e lien entre l'altérité, l'étrangeté et la folie est évidemment lourd de significations et de conséquences. Ce qu'il met en pleine lumière, c'est évidemment la peur de l'Autre : peur de ce qui dépasse les limites acceptables de l'altérité; peur aussi de se détacher à tout jamais, par le truchement de l'Autre, du groupe de référence, du nous-mêmes qui confère au sujet son identité et son appartenance (35-36).

This thesis wishes to illustrate the importance of moving beyond such fear and therefore enter open(ed) zones of acceptance. I believe that code-switching and a deeper knowledge of different cultural codes provide a more open understanding of difference(s). Throughout her references, Paterson identifies the *Other* by capitalizing *Autre*. The capital distinguishes and privileges the voice of the *Other* by assigning it the status of a proper name. This distinction is an important marker of how Paterson validates the voice of the *Other*. This thesis therefore follows in her footsteps and capitalizes *Other* to continue this validation process.

In summary, the contributions of Sherry Simon and Janet Paterson offer an invaluable platform from which I take up my exploration of hybrid identity, what I have labeled *creative* connectivity and code-switching between cultures and languages. This exploration looks at different forms of hybridized identification. The writers I have selected speak from different cultural, racial, heterosexual and homosexual backgrounds. Just as my selection of literary

works is multi-disciplinary so is the theoretical frame. My desire to explore code-switching and hybrid identification in this manner is a deliberate choice. It frames the groundwork of my argument in favor of code-switching between languages and therefore a multi-perspective vision, creative connectivity between people and cultural codes, and finally multilingual education that I address in my conclusion.

Outside my desire for a curriculum in multilingual education and my wish for a greater focus on migrant writing and migrant populations in university curricula, there are other questions I respond to in my chapters: Why should we promote a hybrid subjectivity of self-hood? The responses are built from Paul Ricoeur's platform of ethical self-hood. Do tensions created by hybrid identification pave the way for better connectivity between people? The ideas are developed through Roland Barthes' vision of relationships as transgressed sites of desire. How do literary spaces allow us to better explore/understand issues inside real spaces? Should it be based on James Clifford's understanding of how we travel between cultures? Just as all language is a product of culture, culture is translated through a study of and focus on our sociological spaces. I also rely on Cathy Caruth's thoughts on trauma narrative to understand how past pain continually impacts present realities. My exploration of the selected works within such a broad theoretical framework is a necessary approach. By addressing the preceding questions, I hope to illustrate how a multi-disciplinary focus is useful, even necessary, when we examine how cultures and languages, ultimately people come

together. Individual identity is a complex labyrinth, layered within different codes. How it evolves, how it is understood and how it is shaped are therefore interdependent, complex processes. The multi-disciplinary theoretical frame I apply in this thesis and the diverse choice of writers parallel the complexity and co-dependent nature of identity negotiations. This is another form of code-switching, of *creative* connectivity between spaces. In my conclusion I will re-address and try to answer the questions I have raised here. I intend to illustrate the (inter)multidisciplinary aspects of code-switching between languages and cultures as a necessary tool of communication in our increasingly globalized cultural and economic exchanges. I also wish to point out the importance and growing reality of code-switching or hybrid identification in immigrant stories.

### Methodology

Just as my literary selection of works draws upon a variety of different cultural bases, my theoretical frame is equally diverse. I address the topic of *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages from a post-colonial reference through Homi Bhabha's work on hybridity (1994). In addition to my debt to Chantal Zabus' (1991) work on code-switching inside an African context, I approach perspectives of heteroglossia in some of my works through Mikhail Bakhtin's contributions in this area (1981, 1984). Then I apply James Clifford's ethnographic illustrations about traveling culture to illustrate how migrants and hosts occupy the role of ethnographer (1992, 1999). Finally, Doris Sommer's more recent vision of bilingual education (2004) is an

invaluable reference and particularly pertinent in how I wish to bridge the gap between literary code-switching and narrated lived experiences. In my conclusion, I will refer to code-switching, primarily through Daniel Redinger's Ph.D. "Language Attitudes and Code-Switching Behaviour in a Multilingual Educational Context: The Case of Luxembourg"). I am interested in his thesis because it is a case-study and because it offers statistical data. Redinger offers a study of triglossic education rather than the bilingual models looked at in Canadian and American research.

The most passionate frame of hybridized identification as *creative* connection in this thesis develops from Roland Barthes's ideas of *la relation privilégiée*. His model of identity illustrates a fluid, transgressive process of negotiation between how we find and create meaning (inside culture and language) one relationship at a time. Such zones of intimate engagement allow people to define identity in more creative terms. Roland Barthes' landscaping of identity, his (sk)etching of personal relationships anchor my particular vision of hybrid code-switching as *creative* connectivity (1977, 1995). As noted in the following quotation by Ayn Rand, we paint our meaning of life through art, however sometimes art allows us to re-paint our vision of life.

In art, and in literature, the end and the means, or the subject and the style, must be worthy of each other. That which is not worth contemplating in life, is not worth re-creating in art.

~Ayn Rand

### Homi Bhabha and the Hybrid

Many a doctrine is like a window pane.  
We see truth through it but it divides us  
from truth.

~Kahlil Gibran

Gibran's link between doctrines and truth is an interesting way to understand Bhabha's hybrid. Like a transparent window pane, the hybrid sits between the native and *Other*. While we can see both sides clearly we do not easily recognize or accept the hybrid that lurks between opposing cultures and languages. The many faces of *hybrids* in literature remind us of how they "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2). The importance of one's sense of difference is an exploration of the "relationship between self and place" (8) and this idea emerges in all the works I focus on in this thesis because place and displacement are "major concerns of all ... people" as is the "appropriateness of an imported language to describe the experience of place" (24). Because "marginality became an unprecedented source of creative energy" I explore code-switching and *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages under this premise of *creative energy* (12). I am interested in how images of hybridized identification began to emerge during the late 1980s and early 1990s (the publication dates of the selected works) in North America and how they implicitly speak in favor of multilingual education as an important tool to keep cultures intimately connected with each other. As immigrant period

works they illustrate a more subversive and newer vision of cultural and linguistic hybrid identity than past models of the hybrid. These works offer a valuable argument in favor of code-switching and multi-lingual education. Such migrant writers demonstrate a wish to bring their language to an “alien environment” by introducing themselves and the *alien environment* to “a fresh set of experiences” (25). This idea of a *fresh set of experiences* is a critical element of how I understand hybridity because “alterity implies alteration” (33). Bhabha understands the hybrid as someone who struggles to be freed “from a past which stressed ancestry, and which valued the ‘pure’ over its threatening opposite, the ‘composite’” (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 34). Moving between cultures creates new spaces, hybrid in nature therefore these spaces shift “around an ambivalent axis of desire and aversion” (Young 19). Inside this *composite* and *ambivalent* space, the hybrid must frame culture and language as a continually shifting movement between *desire and aversion*. It is this shifting movement that generates creative energy. In the works I have selected, such shifting operates as a tool of recovery, retrieval, and reconstruction.

Outside this theoretical framework, the hybrid in the selected works may also be understood through the film *Ground Hog Day*. In the same way that Bill Murray plays the role of a man in exile with himself, the hybrid in these works is an exile continually seeking belonging outside fixed cultural and linguistic codes. Like the character Murray plays, the hybrid must navigate between a past that remains fixed in meaning with a present that is being

continually redefined because of that past. In this film, Murray relives the same day over and over again, reacting differently to the same events. In a similar vein, the hybrid relives and recreates the same past, Bhabha's *a priori historical* past, one that is continually being split with present cultural codes. This implies a complete letting go of rigid behaviours and old patterns of communication. The hybrid, like Murray, experiences a cultural and spiritual reawakening each time he relives a past cultural moment (in Murray's case the same day) differently. This reawakening is the hybrid's process of code-switching between different contexts.

The hybrid I speak of experiences a reawakening through a shifting movement between different cultural or linguistic codes. Thus *creative* connectivity occurs in those instances where the hybrid moves between such spaces. By continually traveling between different codes, the hybrid learns how to reinterpret old visions. However, the hybrid's continual displacement within, and movement between, cultures can sometimes be exhausting, creating friction. However it is this friction that gives the hybrid its value and its strength. I believe this is because the hybrid's outsider position provides a deeper understanding and grasp of different cultural, racial and linguistic perspectives. So this thesis grounds its frame of hybridized identification inside the value it assigns to different/differing perspectives. As such Homi Bhabha's postcolonial vision of third spaces and nation provide an important frame of reference for the hybrid. In Bhabha's model of third spaces,

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production

of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious (*The Location of Culture* 53).

The *performative and institutional* aspects of this Third Space imply a shifting of cultural meaning. This in turn contests the vision of pure identity or pure culture that stands in opposition to the hybrid. Bhabha asks us to view cultural meaning as an "ambivalent space of enunciation" where "the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable ... [where] the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity ... [where] even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (54-55).

The works I have selected illustrate hybridized identification along this axis of Third Space Bhabha identifies.

In addition, the hybrid spaces created through code-switching carry a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation ... an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the 'origins' of nation as a sign of the 'modernity' of society, the *cultural temporality* (my emphasis) of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality (*Nation and Narration* 1).

The *cultural temporality* Bhabha mentions is a reality of the hybrid experience, a reality of code-switching between languages and cultures, of moving between spaces of *transitional social reality*. I understand Bhabha's view of *cultural temporality* outside fixed terms or compartmentalized notions of time. Bhabha's vision of nation is *liminal* therefore nation cannot be contained inside fixed meanings. This is because the population that makes up a nation is not static. How a nation draws its lines between insider and outsider

are as ambivalent and shifting as how a nation ascribes itself with a national culture. Bhabha speaks of how the “boundary” with its “problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new ‘people’ in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning” (4). Today, this is a growing reality in urban North American cities that favor immigration. Hybrid identification in this thesis is therefore framed inside Bhabha’s *process of hybridity*.

Through their exploration of different modes of in-between passages of cultural and linguistic codes, the works I have selected illustrate conflicts and *creative* connectivity as continually shifting spaces, renamed patterns of identification between a community’s center and its margins. Connectivity occurs in those moments when new roads pave old ones differently, when existing modes of cultural meaning and communication are shifted by new, foreign materials such as linguistic code-switching. This process of re-pavement is bound inside a system of “new meaning and different directions ... for nation (community and cultural meaning) is an agency of *ambivalent* narration ... a force for subordination, fracturing, diffusing, reproducing, as much as producing, creating, forcing, guiding” (3-4). When we speak of authority, perhaps the most potent forms of authority in identity negotiations emerge from political and religious codes.

This thesis does not explicitly address the impact or formulation of such authorities (in any substantive manner) on identity negotiation. Rather, my focus and interest are on varied forms of code-switching and in how the

hybrid *Other* emerges when people on the margins of a society seek identification, connection, and understanding between a dominant centre and peripheral *Other* cultures. We must remember that the site of hybrid cultural space(s) or zones of “the ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between’ ourselves” (4). Moreover from a Ricœurian perspective of *soi-même comme un autre*, this idea of self-hood as an aspect of otherness, is at the root of how individuals name themselves. It is difficult, almost impossible, to speak about oneself in absence of another. This idea of speaking *intimately and indigenously* implies connectivity between Self and *Other*, between sameness and difference.

Hybridity then may be understood as an impetus for *new meaning* where individual stories, just as individual experiences are like music or dance compositions, varied and different each time they are reinterpreted. The migrant writers that are the subject of my research illustrate hybrid identification as a series of different dances, as a coming together and separation of diverse cultures, languages and traditions. This thesis addresses this movement and its in-between spaces of negotiation as an interpretive dance between cultures and languages. Moreover I address this movement as one of privilege because of its movement between language, culture, spirituality, racial lines, and physical spaces. If we recognize how the fabric of a nation’s cultural identity is a shifting space, this invites more hybridized negotiations of identity inside globalized frames of cultural exchange. National

identity within urban American and Canadian spaces is a shifting hybrid tapestry spinning new hues, new patterns and new images of cultural identity. This thesis therefore grounds its interpretations and supporting research by suggesting that “those who occupy hybrid spaces benefit from having an understanding of both local and global cosmopolitanism” (4). While this thesis ultimately focuses on hybridization as a position of power and as a site of *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages, I am aware that the fate of the *hybrid* in continual movement between spaces is not a comfortable one. In a world that demands conformity and sameness, it is difficult to move between such spaces.

#### Mikhail Bakhtin and Heteroglossia

Thus connectivity between Self and *Other* is a transitory, shifting space of meaning-making processes coming together and separating over and over again. Dialogue or code-switching encourages new spaces of *creative* connectivity. Language and linguistic identification are therefore key elements in some of the works I have selected (D’Alfonso, Goto, Anzaldúa in particular), specifically because of how these writers move between *different* languages to re-assign meaning, giving newer shapes to existing forms of communication. However in all of the selected works, having an authentic voice is about communication and code-switching between culturally encoded spaces. Thus Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas on heteroglossia and polyphonic dialogues frame the meaning-making process of narrative voice.

The words of a language belong to nobody, but still we hear those words only in particular individual utterances, we read them in

particular individual works, and in such cases the words already have not only a typical, but also (depending on the genre) a more or less clearly reflected individual expression, which is determined by the unrepeatable individual context of the utterance. Neutral dictionary meanings of the words of a language ensure their common features and guarantee that all speakers of a given language will understand one another, but the use of words in live speech communication is always individual and contextual in nature (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and other Late Essays* 88).

This notion of “speech communication ... as contextual in nature” defines the hybrid voice. The hybrid moves between cultures and languages, creating a new space “filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of “our-own-ness” ... These words ... carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate” (89). All the writers I focus on move between such degrees of *otherness* or *our-own-ness* Bakhtin speaks of.

D’Alfonso, Goto and Anzaldúa illustrate the importance of linguistic as well as cultural code-switching. They refuse to identify their voice inside fixed or singular codes of communication. As Bakhtin points out, singular forms of communication do not exist, even when people speak to each other in *one* language. This is because

utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another... Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word 'response' here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account... Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication (p.91).

Bakhtin explains how the words or the *utterances* we choose are entangled in previous words and previous meanings. Moreover each time we communicate our words, the meaning behind those words are encoded inside other meanings. When writers such as D'Alfonso, Goto and Anzaldúa code-switch linguistically they broaden Bakhtin's vision of *utterances* because they populate the meaning-making map of communication with more complex levels of encoded, superimposed *utterances*. Thus the *responsive reactions* of how language is spoken, or in this instance, written is a continuous stream of meanings coming together. Moving between French, Italian, and English, D'Alfonso re-maps his vision as Bakhtinian with "dialogic overtones" as "artistic ... born and shaped ... process[es] of interaction and struggle with others' thought" that illustrate how this "cannot but be reflected in [all] the [linguistic] forms that ... express our thought as well." (92). For Goto, the expression or *utterances* between languages becomes an assignment to reinstate linguistic and cultural codes at risk of being lost. Goto's protagonists' desire to hold on to, and engage with, the Japanese language is retaliation of an assimilation process they do not wish to take part in. In such instances "the role of the *others* for whom the utterance is constructed is extremely great... From the very beginning, the speaker expects a response from them, an active responsive understanding. [Thus] the entire utterance is constructed, as it were, in anticipation of encountering this [Japanese] response" they must engage with (94). This response or *responsive understanding* illustrated in Goto's work may be understood as new dialogues of meaning-making between

Japanese and English codes. Anzaldúa's process of *utterances* and a heteroglossic dialogue extend further than D'Alfonso or Goto. Anzaldúa moves between English, Spanish and various slangs of Spanish and Mexican, a total of seven linguistic speech patterns. In Bakhtinian terms, her particularly hybrid dialogue is "*interindividual* ... located outside the soul of the speaker ... [it cannot entirely] ... belong only to him (121). Because Anzaldúa's process of subjectivity is so multi-subjective, I apply Bakhtin's notion of *interindividual* as a two-fold process. First, her heteroglossic style of narration moves between languages and culturally coded meanings as outlined in Bakhtin's model of *utterances*. Second, her movement between standard languages and slang illustrates her inner process of heteroglossic dialogue. By this I mean that Anzaldúa communicates with herself in hybrid speech patterns as much as she does with those around her. Far from suggesting a schizophrenic dialogue, I am pointing out how intimately she embraces her hybrid subjectivity. In Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, he speaks of how

at any given moment, languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another... Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form... Therefore languages do not exclude each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways (291).

Anzaldúa embodies Bakhtin's definition of *heteroglot* not just in how she engages with language(s) but also in her process of narrative style which

brings together social, political, historical, sexual, poetic, linguistic and cultural markers of meaning.

All the writers I focus on share some aspect of Bakhtin's *Dialogic*

*Imagination* noted in the following quotation:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating I, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process... As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other... The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's "own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language... but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own (294)

As Bakhtin points out *language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other*. This notion mirrors a Ricœurian pattern of identity in that the focus, therefore the relationship between Self and *Other* can only be understood relationally. Bakhtin also reminds us (in the preceding quotation) that how we choose language is dependent on our interaction and contact with others. Perhaps most important, Bakhtin's ideas on heteroglossia illustrate the importance of how open-ended meaning-making processes are. We can never fully know or authentically translate between languages. Speaking from a hybrid perspective or a Bakhtinian polyphonic voice, meaning will always be layered, superimposed and therefore open to different interpretations and so impossible to completely know. By moving

and traveling between different linguistic and cultural codes, the writers I have selected in this thesis illustrate how fragile zone(s) of meaning can be inside frames of identity construction. Such writers do not always, as Anita Rau Badami points out “identify...with any *one* community” (qtd in Chakraborty 129). However, these writers who speak from the border zones of different cultural discourses and codes provide readers with new perspectives of identity construction. “Literature...is the most revealing mode of experiential access to ideology that we possess. It is in literature...that we observe in a peculiarly complex, coherent, intensive and immediate fashion the workings of ideology in the textures of lived experiences of class-societies” (Eagleton qtd in Smith 25). In the works I have selected, lived experience is narrated as a continual process of travel, of code-switching between cultural and linguistic codes. In those instances where *creative* connectivity occurs, the hybrid voice has value and finds temporary refuge.

#### Doris Sommer: Code-switching as Jouissance

Doris Sommer’s exploration of bilingual education in the United States, what she names *bilingual aesthetics*, also frames my thesis argument and how I assign value to spaces of *creative* connectivity. Her vision of language complements my ideas of code-switching and Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossic dialogue. For Sommer, language exchange or code-switching is a playful even humorous site of communication. As a creative model of hybridized identification, it is a valuable point of reference in how I define and explore code-switching in this thesis. Her desire for bilingual education as well

as her vision of code-switching as creative play also promotes Bhabha's movement of *discourses between pedagogy and the performative*. This thesis, through its choice of literary works, supports Sommer's claim that "the world has outgrown a one-to-one identity between a language and a people" (Sommer xv). Sommer's insists that we need to "supplement one identity with others" (xv). Moreover, the value of language preservation is validated, not diminished, inside Sommer's vision of *bilingual aesthetics*. "Lose a language, and you've impoverished the world, because each language constitutes a distinct *psyche of a people*" [my emphasis] (xvii). The writers I focus on adhere to this concept of distinctiveness we need to value in every language. Thus Sommer's insights about bi(multi)lingual communication offer a valuable frame of reference to validate code-switching. Literal translation is not a point Sommer focuses on. In those instances where languages meet and greet each other they are hybrid exchanges. "Code-switching is less dignified and more daring" therefore the emphasis is on how code-switching "plays naughty games between languages, poaching and borrowing, and crossing lines" (34). There is a distinctly Barthesian note of transgression in Sommer's tone. Moreover her reference to Barthesian *jouissance* signifies language as sexual release. As she puts it, "at the brink between one culture and another, textual engagements are so intense that they disrupt consciousness" (59). Sommer also embodies a Kantian response when she suggests that language(s) are "primitive responses" where "strangeness can inspire passion without getting stuck there ... reflection allows one to take pleasure in the intensity and in the

moral capacity to abstract from it” (63). Such patterns of abstraction or negotiations of hybridized identification and *creative* connectivity between languages and cultures are critical focal points in all the selected works explored in this thesis. Furthermore, in those instances when code-switching occurs without translation, it becomes a tool to contest the hegemony of language. Most important in this thesis is the value I assign to *creative* connectivity. In Goto’s and in Anzaldúa’s works, it is a platform from which “minority languages can make majority languages nervous for reasons beyond the obstacles to understanding” (90). Choosing not to translate *Other* languages affords these migrant writers the opportunity to focus on new processes of meaning-making while simultaneously obliging readers to find such meaning on their own.

#### James Clifford and Traveling Cultures : An Ethnographic Perspective

I understand this process of meaning-making from an ethnographer’s perspective. James Clifford asks an important question: “What does it mean to learn or use a language?” (*Traveling Cultures* 99) He answers this question, borrowing from Bakhtin in his assertion that “language is a diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no “native” –let alone visitor–can ever learn” (99). While this may be true, there is value in the negotiation and communication patterns Clifford speaks of. An ethnographer travels “for a time” wishing to “make a second home/workplace” seeking “development of both personal and “cultural” competence” (99). Similarly as immigrants travel, they will adopt new cultures (in varying degrees) depending on how

long they choose to stay and how their process of integration evolves. I would suggest that this *development of both personal and cultural competence* Clifford mentions as ethnographer can also be applied to immigrants and how they negotiate identity. I also believe that it concerns host citizens. The writers I have selected illustrate an implicit desire for such *development* hence value is created through their desire for *personal and cultural competence* between dominant and peripheral cultures. As Clifford points out the “goal is not to *replace* the cultural figure “native” with the intercultural figure “traveler” (101). Rather the focus is on “concrete mediations of the two ... both are constitutive of what will count as cultural experience” (101). Thus traveling suggests more than movement between cultures and languages. It is a desire for a more intimate understanding of such movement.

Travelers move about under strong cultural, political, and economic compulsions and ... certain travelers are materially privileged, others oppressed. These different circumstances are crucial determinations ... of movements in specific colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial circuits, different diasporas, borderlands, exiles, detours and returns. Travel ... practices that produce knowledge, stories, traditions, compartments, music, books, diaries, and other cultural expressions (108).

The writers I have selected fall under this category of Clifford’s traveler. Anzaldúa speaks from the borderlands of Mexico and the U.S. Moreover the *cultural expressions* she embraces are hybrid constituting travel between different contexts. In Hong Kingston’s and Goto’s writing, *stories* and *traditions* frame negotiation and travel between cultures. Rodriguez’s and Hoffman’s autobiographies read like diaries. While Rodriguez narrates his story as a journey between public and personal spaces, Hoffman speaks more

emotionally of her feelings of *exile*, her nostalgic *detours and returns* between Polish and North American experiences/spaces. Laferrière's use of parody effectively moves between racialized margins of *privileged* and *oppressed* spaces illustrating the importance of renaming *cultural expressions* that contain identity negatively. Finally, in D'Alfonso's vision of hybridized identification, traveling inside three cultural and linguistic contexts is a solid illustration of *creative* connectivity between spaces. In all the works, Clifford's *cultural traveler* may be understood as a "translation term ... a good reminder that all translation terms used in global comparisons ... get us some distance *and* fall apart" (110). Each work addresses traveling between cultures as a *creative* platform of identification. I view this platform as Clifford does, as a focusing lens which allows us to "learn a lot about [different] peoples, cultures, and histories ... enough to know what you're missing" (110). This process of translation between people Clifford describes is a continual site of movement, of seeking new meaning(s). Thus Clifford's model of *traduttore*, *traduttore* cultural expressions provide an important frame in how I illustrate/promote the idea of *creative* and intimate spaces connectivity in this thesis.

#### Roland Barthes: Transgressive Explorations of Identity

Finally *creative* connectivity, what I label a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*, comes up repeatedly in my thesis because it structures the idea of code-switching as an intimate (not group) exchange. This is predominantly why my thesis focuses on individual identity models rather than collective

forms. However the value of the collective formula becomes important and necessary in how I approach creative connectivity between individuals because of how collectivity evokes thoughts of our ancestors, of family, of community belonging. Therefore our cultural and linguistic roots frame an important portrait of *how* we become who we are becoming. In this vein, Barthes' vision of his grandmothers provides an interesting angle of observation about how Barthes translates his identity, his experiences. He describes his grandmothers in polarized terms.

L'une était belle, parisienne. L'autre était bonne, provinciale : imbue de bourgeoisie – non de noblesse, dont elle était pourtant issue –, elle avait un sentiment vif du récit social qu'elle menait dans un français soigné de couvent où persistaient les imparfaits du subjonctif (*Roland Barthes* 18).

Barthes does not tell us much about his *parisienne* grandmother in the preceding quotation. By simply saying she is beautiful and Parisian, Barthes suggests that no other description is necessary. With his other grandmother he refrains from speaking about her physical appearance focusing instead on her being *bourgeoise* and her mastery of French. What stands out in this juxtaposition between one grandmother's aesthetic, visual beauty and the other's more elegant inner grace is the simplicity of how he validates these women by attaching intimate importance to each one: "En Chine, il y a très longtemps, toute la communauté était enterrée autour de la grand-mère" (18). With this simple declaration Barthes signifies his grandmothers as ancestral, central figures in his sphere of intimate relationships.

This image of the grandmother as symbol of continuity, of community is an important one in Goto's writing. The symbolic centrality Barthes assigns to his grandmother exists in African, First Nations, Indian, Italian and many other cultures and literatures. The description Barthes provides of his grandmother is therefore an important reminder of the simple yet powerful role a grandmother occupies in the family pyramid. The grandmother as a trope who symbolizes the connection between past and present worlds is clearly developed in Goto's work. Such value drawn by the intimate connectivities between people shapes the heart of my illustrations about hybridized identification. Therefore Barthes' particular vision of *la relation privilégiée* is an invaluable frame in how I read individual identity and develop the idea of creative connectivity in the selected works. Barthes also traces and translates his intimate relationships through simple expressions/descriptions/photographs illustrating his desire to focus on image over words.

Mon corps n'est libre de tout imaginaire que lorsqu'il retrouve son espace de travail. Cet espace est partout la même, patiemment adapté à la jouissance de peindre, d'écrire, de classer (44).

What Barthes validates most is *la jouissance* he finds in painting, writing and classifying. His reference to classification makes sense because of how Barthes relies on image (or photographs) over stories to speak about life.

Les arbres sont des alphabets, disaient les Grecs. Parmi tous les arbres-lettres, le palmier est le plus beau. De l'écriture, profuse et distincte comme le jet de ses palmes, il possède l'effet majeur : la retombée (47).

Through descriptions of his grandmothers along with the preceding images of trees Barthes offers an excellent example of his reliance on image over story.

I understand code-switching between languages and cultures as imagery, as a process of creative connectivity between people. In *Roland Barthes*, Barthes divides his personal story as follows: In the first 48 pages pictures dominate text as he describes his childhood and the people that formed that childhood. In the next hundred pages he defines words and expressions moving between descriptive reflections of such notions as the sentence, migraines, the unfashionable, love, madness, fiction, etc. He ends with a chronology of his life events, a bibliography of works consulted and a glossary of terms explained. His work is autobiographical in style, however it is presented as a coded book of definitions on the one hand and a descriptive photo album on the other hand. There are no detailed accounts of his lived experiences. He describes his writing style as follows: “Tout ceci doit être considéré comme dit par un personnage de roman” (5). This technique of self-identification as a scripted, creative form appears in varying degrees in all the selected works. The writers I have selected illustrate the value of hybridized identification through *performative* writing strategies and descriptive narratives. Thus code-switching validates how the story is told, giving the image as much *creative* weight as the experience.

Such imagery is culturally defined. Cultural psychologist Carola Suárez-Orozco writes that “the task of immigration ... is creating a transcultural identity” (“Transcultural Identities” 1). The distinction between intercultural, transcultural and multicultural is an important one. The first implies an understanding between cultures, the goal is to “seek ways in which

such cultures could ... get on with, understand and recognize one another” (Welsch, “Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Culture Today” 2). This seems appropriate in nation states that promote the idea of pure identities as a “traditional conception of culture” (2). Similarly, multicultural frames of identity promote “tolerance and understanding” while favoring “separating barriers” between cultures (2). Accommodation between cultures is enclosed inside adjacent spaces that do not necessarily favor real points of connectivity. If we accept that cultures are autonomous as much as they are interdependent, *transcultural* spaces fit the notion of *creative* connectivity and hybridized identification I promote in this thesis. Because of globalization, the spaces between what is foreign and local have been substantially narrowed, blurred or even redefined in some instances. Music and food cultures are good examples of how we borrow and adopt/adapt new definitions out of traditional codes. Think of hybrid restaurants offering for example Indo-Chinese cuisine (popular in Toronto); electronic or house music that borrows from and recreates Disco/Afro/Latin/R&B etc. For instance classical music remixed into house sounds (see Beethoven’s Fifth house remix by Soulwax) is a creative and contemporary example of hybridized sounds in today’s music. House (or electronic music) in particular is an interesting example of hybridity. It emerged as an underground genre in the 1980s in Chicago, uniting Black and Gay communities through dance. Today, it has become a way to redefine old classics into newer forms of music. In this vein, the works I have selected offer similar underground visions of transcultural meanings, ones outside “old

homogenizing and separatist idea[s] of cultures” (4). In his article “Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today” Wolfgang Welsch points out the following:

Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures....The new forms of entanglement are a consequence of migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communication systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies .... Cultures today are in general characterized by *hybridization* (4).

Technology has certainly affected how we communicate with each other. Music remains the best vehicle to understand the way we give meaning to past experience. The group Flo Rida just released their version of Nina Simone’s song “How I Feel”, an interesting, perhaps bastardized, marriage of hip-hop and jazz-laced sounds. While some music artists would argue against such remixing, the popularity of House and Electronic music festivals worldwide speaks a different story. It is a trend that is here to stay. This coming together of different sounds in music bears a resemblance to how languages and cultures are being pushed together more and more today. This means that individual codes of identification are more hybridized. Today’s writers are not all “shaped by one single homeland, but by differing reference countries” or cultures (4). Like Welsch, I do not conflate such transcultural identity patterns with national identity issues. It is why I do not explicitly address the more pejorative issues of immigration such as the Japanese Canadian internment which began in the 1940s. Nor do I focus on American issues of denied citizenship to Asian immigrants that began in the late 1800s and continued

until the early 1940s. This exclusion does not undermine the importance of these historical moments. It is simply excluded because neither Hong Kingston's work nor Goto's work is a direct contestation of these past discriminatory experiences. However these historical forms of racism resonate subtly and they are nuanced through the way these writers choose to redefine their immigrant identity on their terms. Rather than address issues of racism, my thesis focuses more directly on how the writers I have selected emphasize (in different degrees) the difficulty of remaining bound by, and tied to, one cultural or linguistic identity when their process of identity is continually shifting between different spaces, different codes of identification.

The works I have selected represent individual characterizations of hybridized identification rather than national or even community-based identification. It is therefore understood that these representations of individual identity do not necessarily translate a cultural group's identity in similar patterns. Each writer I have selected addresses *creative* connectivity and code-switching between languages and cultures in ways that illustrate the value behind such connectivity. These writers frame their negotiation of hybridized identification and its in-between spaces as sites of value *and* conflict. However such hybrid zones offer *more* open, fluid and comprehensive understandings of different codes. In most instances, code-switching (cultural and/or linguistic) is a consequence of how (im)migrant populations draw lines between who they were versus who they are becoming. Chapter One focuses on Hiromi Goto, Maxine Hong Kingston, Eva Hoffman and Gloria Anzaldúa and how they

address the socially and culturally defined female voice in their works. They focus on how feminine subjectivity is named and how desire for *Other* spaces influence that naming process. Chapter Two addresses the socially and culturally defined male voice in the works of Richard Rodriguez, Dany Laferrière and Antonio D'Alfonso. Sexual space (or in Rodriguez's case his closeted sexuality) is an important element of male subjectivity in these works. Finally, Chapter Three looks at the importance of linguistic code-switching in the works of Gloria Anzaldúa and Hiromi Goto. These writers move between languages, often without translation, to subvert the power of the centre and the hegemony of English.

## CHAPTER ONE

**Performative narratives** and *Other* desires of the socially and culturally defined female immigrant voice.

Le mot est celui qui illumine ou redonne vie, il est la densité voluptueuse de l'esprit, celui qui déchiffre et définit, avant de te faire sombrer dans une énigme plus vaste encore.

~ Zoé Valdés

I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.

~ Oscar Wilde

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.

~ George Bernard Shaw

Understanding one person's identity as a negotiation between different cultural and linguistic markers is not an individual journey. Much like a romantic connection between two people, a successful exchange is dependent on how one person engages with another to create a harmonious *partage*. The construction of individual identity and its discourse is therefore dependent on several factors. In a literary context, a key point is the connection between a writer's intention and a reader's meaning-making process. Issues of feminine and masculine subjectivity must also be taken into consideration. This chapter focuses on feminine subjectivity as illustrated, translated and redefined in the writings of Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* (1994), Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1975-76), Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989) and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987). I frame my interpretation of feminine subjectivity in these works through

questions Gayatri Spivak asks. She does not define feminine specificity by asking “Who am I? But [rather] who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How does she name me?” (Spivak qtd. in Lionnet 3). Such questioning between self and other can also provide a better understanding of hybridized identification.

These questions are influenced by differences of color, culture, and environment. In her paper, “On Judith Butler and Performativity”, Sara Salih explains that “gender is not something one *is*, it is something one *does*, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun” (55). I understand the notion of *naming* Gayatri speaks of in the same context as Salih’s use of gender as a *verb*. Gender is therefore understood as “something that one *does*” in the writing of Goto, Hong Kingston, Hoffman and Anzaldúa. The protagonists in these works struggle to come to terms with how others wish to ‘dress’ them inside a fixed identity versus how they design identity as something more fluid. This fluidity is Barthesian in context « hors du vrai et du faux, hors du réussi et du raté... retiré de toute finalité » (Barthes, *Fragments d’un discours amoureux* 30). Moreover, I would qualify their acts of *doing* as a translation process, an artistic endeavor inasmuch as it may be understood as a living testimony of how these protagonists define their subjectivity. The translation process is also a space of reinvention in the works I have selected. In *Re-Belle et Infidèle: The Body Bilingual*, Susanne De De Lotbinière-Harwood suggests that « toutes les femmes sont bilingues. Nous « possédons » forcément la langue dominante, de fabrication masculine, puisque c’est la

seule qui a une valeur reconnue » (13). Thus validating the female voice must be negotiated outside this masculine construction.

Negotiation of the female immigrant voice outside such white, male constructions of identity aligns these women in exercises of Bhabha's *pedagogy* as they negotiate a voice outside past and present historical contexts of white male, moving into female structures of identity. Negotiating and identifying the female voice outside such constructions is particularly complex for immigrant women of color. They are confronted by a language encoded inside a masculine discourse and the white female voice. Thus the acts of *doing* for women of color involve a negotiation of the female voice outside white North American constructions of feminine identity and language and it is in these zones that they engage in Bhabha's *performative* narrative to redefine themselves. Their individual expressions, their particular narrative styles and their desire to move between cultural and linguistic codes shapes their immigrant voices as creatively colored rather than marginalized colors of difference. These writers also negotiate their female voice against the hegemony of English. Linguistic code-switching in their works (particularly Goto and Anzaldúa) may then be understood as a tool of change, a social translation process that transforms these writers as « femmes comme agentes morales ... tout à fait appropriée pour la traduction ... une pratique constant du choix » (72). The value Goto and Anzaldúa assign to linguistic code-switching will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Three. However equally important with all four writers is the process of cultural and social code-

switching which allows the female voice to be heard *between* these different junctures. This process permits them to be heard as “foreign-correspondent” (Katy Keene qtd. in De Lotbinière-Harwood 83) and as writers who « vont prendre l’expérience des femmes comme point de départ » (De De Lotbinière-Harwood 73). Bhabha’s discourse of *pedagogy* surfaces through their words as they negotiate between their historical past and present contexts.

De De Lotbinière-Harwood views writing in French as an act of survival, an examination of female voices outside labels that contain them inside dominant white labels of identification. This is a key element in the selected works. They contest labels that may restrain their feminine subjectivity inside the male hierarchical structures of their past or present cultures. Bhabha’s *performative* is therefore a key aspect of each writer’s translation process. Feminine subjectivity must be an *active* rather than *passive* negotiation of connectivity between cultures, of negotiation for a female voice outside masculine and/or white feminine constructions of identity. This *active* negotiation of connectivity between cultures shifts in meaning recreating a hybrid female voice. Taking form as Bhabha’s *performative*, the narrative subverts lines of patriarchy across different cultural contexts. « L’Autre [dans ce cas la femme] peut adopter des points de vue très différents dans sa manière de s’orienter face au groupe de référence, dans son désir ... d’appartenance » (Paterson 79). Performance thus becomes a strategy which allows these writers to encode “new meaning in existing words” and encode their subjectivity and identification process outside any “unhappy endings” (De Lotbinière-Harwood

117). Thus reinvention or performance is their tool of negotiation between cultural and linguistic codes, their version of *creative* connectivity, what De De Lotbinière-Harwood names “hybrid vigor” (86)

### Subjectivity and the Female Immigrant Voice

In the *active* negotiation of connectivity between different cultural codes, feminine subjectivity and the immigrant voice are shaped, defined and challenged by images of a North American white female voice. « Ce sont alors les images du passé qui permettent au narrateur de se construire petit à petit une nouvelle identité » (Paterson 162). Standards of beauty for instance are modelled after images of white beauty. Such particularities create, at times, a rather complex arena of negotiation and acceptance for the immigrant female voice, one that is contradictory, yet compelling in nature. De Lotbinière-Harwood reminds us that “trying to make the feminine...in any language, [or culture] is first and foremost an act of resistance” (86). The protagonists in Goto’s and Hong Kingston’s works of fiction and Hoffman’s and Anzaldúa’s life narratives are tropes of resistance in varying degrees. They cannot pinpoint their subjectivity inside fixed zones of cultural femininity encoded in their minority culture. They must also challenge white zones of cultural femininity to define their hybrid female voices as ones of value. Code-switching between different cultural and linguistic contexts allows them the opportunity to name how they wish to negotiate their female voice, as a continual state of becoming. As they move between different cultures and languages, their version of feminine subjectivity becomes richer and more complex. Their

particular form of code-switching results in a more fluid form of feminine hybridity. This fluidity is explored through the notion of desire, desire for a recreated self and a recreated connection with *Others*. I understand this fluidity as a heartfelt transfer since « le cœur est l'organe du désir » (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 63). While identity is negotiated as an act of resistance in these works, the dominant and dominating force is how each writer expresses a desire to break away from fixed models of feminine subjectivity.

Outside a negotiation of individual feminine identity, these writers also explore their desire for community and its notion of *appartenance* or what I name *ontological* security (borrowed from sociologist Anthony Giddens). Because the female voice is colored by a landscape of different cultural codes, this desire is not easily fulfilled. I understand this coloring process, a push-and-pull between cultural codes, as « un mode de circulation, d'interaction et de fusion imprévisible » (Simon, *Hybridité Culturelle* 19). Thus hybrid feminine subjectivity is shaped by a coming together and separation of what it means to be immigrant and *Other* where « les signes de la culture [féminine de nos jours en Amérique du nord] ne renvoient pas à des histoires fixes mais à un présent en mouvement » (20). This idea of a *present en mouvement* is the in-between space from which these writers re-script feminine identity, one that is shaped, influenced and marked through relationships. Cultural code-switching is therefore an important marker of identity construction in the works I focus on in this chapter. Each writer's wish to create feminine subjectivity as a fluid

concept suggests that these writers wish to bring a certain degree of originality to the term *feminine subjectivity*, one outside fixed or dominant cultural codes (as understood inside a North American context of white feminine subjectivity and *Other* fixed spaces). This need for originality reveals itself through the way these writers construct and portray relationships in their works.

Seeking originality through comparison is a difficult process since this would inevitably promote classifications of inferiority or superiority. Originality takes on real meaning when it challenges and conquers stereotypes. « Lorsque la relation est originale, le stéréotype est ébranlé, dépassé, évacué » (Barthes, *Roland Barthes* 45). Just as Barthes' *relation privilégiée* implies connectivity on an intimate level (outside a group context), originality imposes a *creative* understanding and therefore connectivity in how relationships are formed remains outside stereotypes and preconceived ideas. This *creative* aspect of connectivity scripts feminine subjectivity in each writer's work as hybrid.

### Hiroimi Goto

In Goto's work of fiction *Chorus of Mushrooms*, the process and *active* negotiation of connectivity between cultural codes is illustrated as an imaginative self-exploration and an imaginative reconstruction of cultural spaces. It is a story of "collective belonging ... [and] differing forms of collective identification" (Beauregard 3). Goto's work picks up from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, an exploration of group identity as a silenced voice. *Obasan's* silence (the old woman in this story) juxtaposes the old woman in

Goto's work who speaks incessantly in Japanese. *Obasan* is a bleak representation of the plight of the Japanese/Canadian immigrant experience. The slashes in this context illustrate a complete division of this group from Canadian society. The dispersal of the Japanese Canadian population during and after WWII is largely the cause of the group's loss of community and Canadian belonging.<sup>i</sup> I understand *Obasan* as an examination of group identity and how "through the understanding of individual experiences ... social structure shapes and mediates identities, experiences, and interactions" demonstrating "how it excludes some people and prevents many ... from truly knowing about each other" (James, 3-4). Moreover social structures are personified through the notion of "everything old" and so "every old woman ... every hamlet in the world ... stands as ... the bearer of keys to unknown doorways and to a network of astonishing tunnels" (Kogawa 16). This value assigned to the old woman is omnipresent in Kogawa's and Goto's writing. Both writers carve a creative niche for themselves by illustrating how group identity can develop a voice through literature. As Kogawa states, from "the stream down and down to the hidden voice" emerges "the freeing word" (Kogawa, 1). This *hidden* or *freeing* word in Goto's writing is her use of storytelling, a weapon to promote biculturalism. The storytellers in Goto's work, the protagonists, illustrate the important role stories play in how they connect them to family and intimate relationships and in defining their feminine subjectivity.

Murasaki and her grandmother Naoe negotiate and name their female voice inside a framework of Japanese and Canadian cultural codes. They empower their voices as Japanese/Canadian women thus symbolically erasing labels that stereotype them as silenced racialized or gendered, therefore excluded *Other* Canadians. Their personal relationship is a strong symbol of collective family love and cultural pride. In Barthesian terms,

Je-t-aime est sans ailleurs. C'est le mot de la dyade (maternelle, amoureuse); en lui, nulle distance, nulle difformité ne vient cliver le signe; il n'est métaphore de rien (*Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 176).

Indeed, Murasaki and Naoe manage to communicate with each other across barriers of space and time. Theirs is a spiritual connection. As a result, they share a heightened sense of awareness of one another, originality in how they communicate, and in how they resist the stereotypes of their Japanese feminine subjectivity. They renegotiate a “postmodern ethnicity” rescripting themselves as “reinvented and renegotiated” Japanese/Canadian women (Ang, “On Not Speaking Chinese” 18). They also illustrate the importance of connectivity between cultures through their intimate exchanges with men. These relationships form another crucial aspect of the symbolic reconstruction of each woman’s marginalized voice. Storytelling is their greatest weapon of resistance against stereotypes and fixed cultural codes. Like a patchwork quilt, their separate stories when sewn together form a complete catalogue of culturally named references between “present locations [and] imagined homeland” (Beauregard 33). I view their particular process of storytelling as an instrumental tool in how they bring together different feminine

subjectivities. Stories allow Murasaki and Naoe to insinuate interdependence between their Japanese and immigrant Canadian female voices, thus narrating feminine subjectivity inside Bhabha's third space of hybridity. By narrating their stories through a mixture of mythological and real events, storytelling "is revealed as an encounter in which teller and listener are mutually at risk" (McCullough, "Trust Me: Responding to the Threat of Writing in Chorus of Mushrooms" 151). Storytelling also becomes a hybrid arena of exchange and creation, a marriage of different literary codes.

In *Woman Native Other*, Trinh T. Minh-ha looks upon the act of writing as *a sketched window on the world*. In her words, "whether one assumes it clear-sightedly or not, by writing one situates oneself vis-à-vis both society and the nature of literature, that is to say creation" (20). I understand Goto's writing along these terms. Murasaki and Naoe share an intimate connection with each other and they tell stories across barriers of time and space, often conflating their realities with their stories. This form of mythical, almost magical storytelling allows them to bridge linguistic and generational barriers "to create a world of their own, make order out of chaos, heighten their awareness of life, transcend their existences, discover themselves, communicate their feelings, or speak to others" (Minh-ha, 21). Storytelling, a mix of fantasy and Japanese folk-tale becomes a technique to create original relationships outside stereotypes.

Murasaki's involvement with a nameless Japanese immigrant who does not speak English is a symbolic contestation "against dominant codes ... an act

of desire” (Goto, “The Irreversible Skin” 8). This involvement permits her to blur the lines between her Canadian and lost Japanese self. The fact that her lover remains nameless in her narrative suggests that he is the symbolic trope of Murasaki’s abandoned Japanese self. By engaging in a sexual relationship with a Japanese immigrant and creating an intimate bond with him, she metaphorically embodies “a reversible skin” thus repossessing her lost Japanese self (8). She re-fits and renames pieces of a Japanese femininity into her already named Canadian identity. Masculine voices in this work occupy a largely passive role. In his essay “Femininity”, Sigmund Freud refers to masculine as active and and feminine as passive (114). Murasaki’s sexual relationship with a nameless Japanese immigrant is an *active* engagement. Through “the single act of sexual union” and the re-telling of Japanese stories with her lover, Murasaki crawls inside her Japanese skin (114). She simultaneously enters Butler’s vision of feminine subjectivity by *doing* rather than simply naming herself (115). Murasaki’s nameless Japanese lover is her “irreversible skin” a “simple matter of either/or ... flip[ped] inside outside” (Goto, “The Irreversible Skin” 8). If we return to Spivak’s process of naming feminine subjectivity, we understand how the *Other’s* participation in the naming process is a fundamental aspect of how naming is a key element of cultural identity. Moreover by conflating sexual intimacy with the naming process, both processes become an intimate venue of connectivity between cultures. Dialogues with her Japanese lover suggest that Murasaki assigns the masculine voice a more-or-less passive role, one that is negotiated and defined

inside translations of feminine subjectivity. In doing so, she provides her feminine subjectivity with a more authorial voice. It is a place “where words have authority, [of] some true and untouched place that does not mutter what has been said before ... and make[s] in the very telling a proof of authenticity” (Susan Griffin qtd. in Minh-ha, 21). The manner in which Murasaki re-scripts her voice leads me to understand her behaviour and her feminine subjectivity as a form of resistance against masculine authority.

Inadvertently, she responds to Freud’s affirmation that “even in the sphere of human sexual life you soon see how inadequate it is to make masculine behaviour coincide with activity and feminine with passivity” (Freud 115). Murasaki reads their love story as an “us at this moment...committed to this love story right now” (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 184-185). However I read this admission as a moment of complete abandonment to her Japanese naming process where sexual engagement with her nameless lover represents a symbolic fusion between her Japanese and Canadian selves. Embracing her Japanese lover completely means she gives his voice cultural importance. He becomes, along with her grandmother Naoe, the cultivator of Murasaki’s Japanese growth.

Murasaki’s process of “retelling and re-creating” her moments (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 185) illustrate Minh-ha’s claim that a “distinction needs to be made between “write yourself” and “write about yourself, your body, your inner life, your fears, inhibitions, desires, and pleasures” (Minh-ha 28). In fact, Murasaki’s process of storytelling mirrors the distinction Minh-ha makes

between writing yourself and writing *about* yourself; she does both!

Murasaki's stories are chains, interlocked and interconnected inside her grandmother's and her Japanese lover's presence. Each story is a separate link in how Murasaki rewrites herself, *creatively* linking her Canadian and Japanese selves. Storytelling allows her to re-script her past and frame her present inside a more hybrid feminine subjectivity, one that is a mixture of Japanese desire and Canadian savvy. She explains how "the words give the shape to what will happen...telling our future before it ever does" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 186). Since the journey is an individual one, Murasaki's Japanese lover remains nameless for two reasons in this story. As mentioned earlier, his presence allows Murasaki to define her Japanese naming process inside a framework of desire. His nameless status also shifts the focus to how Murasaki connects more intimately with her Japanese feminine subjectivity. However her Japanese baptism (of sorts) remains contextualized inside an English Canadian cultural naming.

As a new immigrant, her Japanese lover cannot fully appreciate this dichotomy until he begins an exploration of his masculine subjectivity, his naming process, inside an English Canadian framework. Murasaki affirms the importance of this journey he has yet to embark upon, what I understand as a "gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures ... gathering in the ... fluency of another's language" (Bhabha, "Dissemination" *The Location of Culture* 199). Like Murasaki, her nameless lover needs to embrace a bicultural identity which he cannot do until he learns English. "He just got here, but he has to

arrive. You can't move on until you've arrived" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 198). By connecting with her lost Japanese subjectivity, Murasaki understands that she has "finally arrived and now ... [she] can go" (198). As a consequence of being a new immigrant, Murasaki's lover has not necessarily been exposed to many English Canadian cultural codes. Without articulating the point overtly, Murasaki suggests that his process of *arrival* is, as a result, incomplete. Her focus on departure and arrival between cultures may be understood as desire for *Other* cultures. I believe that she is suggesting that he cannot move forward until there is a marriage of sorts between his existing Japanese naming and his yet undiscovered Canadian naming. I understand this marriage between departure and arrival as a marriage between different cultural codes and this marriage cannot be consummated without movement between cultures. Murasaki takes on the role of Clifford's traveler between cultures, redefining her voice as a Barthesian « l'autre qui part ... en état de perpetual départ, de voyage » (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 19). She transmits this desire for travel to her lover by encouraging him to write his story as *he* wishes. "When I'm finished my story, you can start another if you want" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 186). Murasaki learns, through Naoe, how "it's easy to travel [cultural] distances if you fly on a bed of stories" (29) that through storytelling 'we hold the power to change our lives for ourselves' (186). In this vein, Murasaki's lover can only completely *arrive* and then *depart* once he learns this process of re-scripting and re-tells his story in the same way Murasaki and Naoe have done.

Naoe's journey differs from her granddaughter's because she steps outside her Japanese culture to explore English Canadian cultural codes. Naoe challenges and negotiates her feminine subjectivity across color lines, age restrictions, language barriers, and ultimately sexual meaning. Unlike Murasaki's sexual connection with her nameless lover, Naoe names her Albertan cowboy Tengu. There are many different definitions of Tengu in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese culture. In many ways, Goto paints Naoe as a satirical caricature. She is larger than life, an oversexed wild woman far removed from typical cultural images of a grandmother in her eighties. For this reason, I have chosen to translate Tengu as a satirical caricature. In his essay "Buddhism and Cartoons in Japan" Martin Repp explains how "humor...assumes the double character of entertainment and criticism" (Repp 187). Tengu assumes the role of entertainer and critic in Naoe's negotiation of English cultural codes. He also takes on the role of muse (normally a feminine construct), by encouraging her artistic inspirations. Moreover, the reader is not surprised to learn that Tengu has lived in Japan.

Oh, I wuz doin' a comparative study on the origins 'n developminta Japanese *enka* 'n if ther any parallels with the developmenta country 'n western in North America (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 111).

This declaration breaks down stereotypes readers may have of the white rural cowboy as a homebody. Tengu reveals that he is cultured and well-informed about cultural issues. Thus Tengu can also be assigned the role of Clifford's traveler and *foreign correspondent*. Moreover, his articulation of words is a parody in itself since Tengu converses with Naoe in Japanese and she hears

him in English. Tengu's role as a comical caricature is further highlighted by the name Naoe assigns him. The Tengu zoshi comes from the Kamkura period (1296) and in Buddhist terms it is about the "the bishop [a Buddhist monk] who transforms into a *Tengu* [a selfish and arrogant] ... devil" (Repp 192).<sup>ii</sup> In their story, it is clear that Tengu placates and pleases Naoe in any way he can. He is her muse and her sexual toy and Naoe steers their story as she wishes.

On the one hand, by naming an English Albertan Tengu, Naoe metaphorically seduces and beds a devilish Buddhist monk. In doing so, she enters taboo zones, contesting Japanese cultural codes on two levels. First she engages in a sexual relationship with a stranger. Second, she does so with a symbolic monk, perhaps a metaphorically spiritual engagement. In both instances, she illustrates her rebellious nature and her wish to define herself outside traditional visions of Japanese or Canadian feminine subjectivity. Then by naming herself Purple, an English translation of Murasaki, Naoe weaves her stories and her identity with those of her granddaughter. Both women embody their feminine subjectivity inside the creative and literary veil of the first female Japanese writer – an anti-hero. Storytelling allows Naoe and Murasaki to embrace Japanese femininity in empowering terms. Naoe admits however that "the words of an old woman can change little in this world and nothing of the past so why this torrent of words ... [she] only know[s] [she] must" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 21). Living inside her bed of stories, sharing stories with her granddaughter and later her Albertan lover allow Naoe

to empower her otherwise marginalized self. Naoe begins reciting stories to her granddaughter in Japanese well before Murasaki has learnt the language. Naoe does not believe that Murasaki's linguistic understanding of the language is important. She believes that even if "she [Murasaki] cannot understand the words ... she can read the lines on [her] brow, the creases beside [her] mouth" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 15). Naoe admits that she could speak "the other [meaning English] ... but [her] lips refuse and [her] tongue swells in revolt" (15). Listening to stories in Japanese develops Murasaki's ear for her language of origin, creating an innate desire to learn Japanese, which she eventually does. Naoe's refusal to speak in English to her granddaughter is an act of resistance that symbolically cloaks her as Murasaki's Japanese guide and mentor.

Like storytelling, the naming process in this work is a tool of feminine empowerment and cultural reaffirmations. It is also as Steve McCullough states, a narrative "in which teller and listener are mutually at risk ... where trust is responsible for the unique existence of each and for the relation between words and worlds" (151). When Naoe re-scripts her granddaughter's English Canadian name from Muriel to Murasaki, she metaphorically embodies her as writer (naming her after the first Japanese female who writes a novel in late tenth century Japan). Story shapes personality as much as personality shapes story in this work. The process of re-scripting empowers Murasaki with a Japanese femininity and as a Japanese storyteller thus allowing her to address her repressed Japanese subjectivity *creatively* and

empower any zones of “unavoidable vulnerability” (151). This moment marks the beginning of Murasaki’s quest to discover the lost parts of her Japanese self largely through storytelling. This art of storytelling passed down to her by Naoe gives Murasaki a stronger voice as she negotiates her identity between her English Canadian experiences and her Japanese ones. In addition, by conflating Muriel’s voice with that of Japan’s first storyteller and feminist hero, Murasaki, Naoe empowers Murasaki’s female voice artistically and intellectually. She thus transforms “the relationship between fiction and truth [into] a matter of readerly trust” (152). This re-scripting of her female voice allows Murasaki to question and challenge stereotypical, negative or marginalized images of women. As storyteller she reassigns her feminine subjectivity in empowering ways.

Thus when Naoe adopts an English translation of her granddaughter’s name and calls herself Purple, she marks her symbolic entry as a bicultural Japanese and Canadian citizen. “The self [or selves] to which these names refer is [or are] ambiguous ... and collapsing them into a single character is a profoundly ... interpretive strategy” (159). Until this renaming process occurs, Naoe remains inside an entirely Japanese cloak never actively experiencing English Canadian culture. However by nicknaming herself Purple, Naoe enters an English Canadian arena. This re-scripting and renaming process allows Naoe to empower and interpret her identity on her terms. Names are not simply a method of personal identification in this work, they become tools to “explore an interpersonal reality: a social reality...within the poetic image...a

community reclaimed in the making of a name” (“Culture’s In-Between”, Bhabha 158). Naoe explains that she deliberately allows others, such as her daughter Keiko, to see her as an old woman who only speaks Japanese. She admits that she “can learn French as well as the English people don’t think I already know” (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 37). What Naoe and Murasaki ultimately affirm is their desire to wear Japanese as a poetically *reversible skin*, one that grows from the inside out because “you cannot move to a foreign land and call that place home because you parrot the words around you. [You must ] [f]ind your home inside yourself first” (48). This idea of finding home inside yourself is an important aspect of *creative* connectivity and Bhaba’s *performative* because it illustrates the importance of drawing new lines from within. For Naoe this means that she must let her “home words grow out from the inside, not from the outside in” (48). Through such comments, Naoe asserts the importance of drawing lines on her terms so how others read those parts of her that are innately Japanese are illustrated as she wishes and not as they may be assigned to her by others. Holding onto her Japanese culture and language also leads Naoe to embrace a bicultural Japanese/Canadian identity.

Unlike Naoe, Murasaki’s parents have already embraced Canadian culture by assimilating. They therefore do not play an active role in how Murasaki recreates her identity as biculturally Japanese and Canadian. However Murasaki reactivates her parents’ Japanese subjectivity. Food triggers their re-entry. “Every day we ate supper around midnight, food I had made from the Japanese cookbook” (153). Their re-entry is complete when

Murasaki prepares *Tonkatsu* (also their family name), a traditional Japanese dish. This dish affirms the idea that “eating’s a part of being” (138). “It pays homage to Asian cuisine, acknowledges the role of eating as essence, as survival, both physical and psychological, and finally rewrites food images in new hybrid contexts” (Beautell 33). Sitting down for a meal as a family, ingesting *Tonkatsu* they metaphorically ingest their Japanese culture. “Eating *Tonkatsu* in the heavy silence between night and dawn, a strange configuration ... as if everything we never said burst forth and we forgave each other for all our shortcomings” (Goto 153). This is a critical moment of *creative* connectivity in the story, in Murasaki’s words, “a chrysalis time” of Japanese rebirth (153).

Just as the notion of biculturalism dominates Kogawa’s narrative, it is an important aspect of how Goto illustrates the importance languages play in rebuilding broken communities and cultures. Thus there is connective value in ingesting culture through food. It is an important example of cultural repair. Living with her daughter, Naoe has no voice in selecting and preparing Japanese food. Discouraged by her daughter’s assimilation into Canadian culture, watching her conversion “from rice and *daikon* to wieners and beans” she begins to notice how “Western food has changed” her, made her “more opaque” (13). So she secretly orders shipments of dried salted squid which she shares with her young granddaughter. Murasaki “sneaks the packages up to” her grandmother’s room “when everyone is asleep” (15). These secret food sharing sessions mark Murasaki’s entry into her Japanese cultural skin. Thus

name changing and eating form important aspects of how Murasaki, her parents and Naoe *creatively* connect with their Japanese identity.

Naoe's relationship with an Albertan allows her to explore a Canadian *Other* skin marking her entry as a bicultural citizen. This meeting marks another important process of (re)scripting identity. This time Naoe renames her cowboy *Tengu*. By embodying him as a figure of Japanese folklore, she invites (metaphorically speaking) a "white rural Albertan" to enter bicultural spaces as "Japanese Canadian ... [thus] joining the "we" of eating, of storytelling ... of sexuality" (Libin 135). Murasaki's relationship with a newly arrived Japanese immigrant is another metaphoric engagement between Murasaki and her lost Japanese self and it marks her bicultural entry. Sexual engagement with these men is a symbolic ingestion or union between cultures. Connecting on an intimate level with these men allows Naoe and Murasaki to satisfy unfulfilled desires and establish a *creative* connectivity between different cultural worlds. This connectivity signals their negotiation of hybrid subjectivity and Murasaki's rejection of her mother's assimilation process. Keiko defends her decision, explaining that "you can't be everything at once. It is too confusing for a child to juggle two cultures.... If you live in Canada, you should live like a Canadian and that's how I raised my own daughter" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 189). However, by engaging in relationships with men outside the cultural contexts of their immediate environment, Murasaki and Naoe refute this argument. Instead they choose to share a degree of "multiplicité...un tissage entre différentes réalités, une possibilité

d'harmonie parce que c'est multiple" (De Lotbinière-Harwood 174). Together they challenge cultural specificity and the idea that you cannot wear different cultural codes successfully. Thus biculturalism in this work is an important example of *creative* connectivity between Japanese people and their Canadian spaces.

### Maxine Hong Kingston

The focus in Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiography is more implicitly bicultural. However cultural duality and an Americanized female rebellion allow her to reconfigure herself as an empowered bicultural Chinese/American. Perhaps her strongest weapon of reconfiguration is illustrated through her re-scription of Fa Mulan, traditional Chinese heroine taken from the ancient Chinese ballad "The Magnolia Lay." In *The Woman Warrior*, Hong Kingston's Chinese and American selves cannot be dissociated from her vision of a socially and culturally defined female voice. By engaging the reader in a multi-vocal narration of factual and mythological stories, she asserts her marginal and liminal spaces as a Chinese/American woman. She negotiates feminine subjectivity through an Americanized version of being Chinese, rather than relying on her mother's more traditional views. Just as storytelling is a key element of how Goto empowers her protagonists, talk-story is Hong Kingston's prescription for empowerment. She crosses many boundaries in her narration moving between fact and fiction to identify and rewrite the Chinese and American cultural binaries that challenge her sense of self-hood. Perhaps most effective is her style in bringing together Chinese

myth and American individualism. Hong Kingston's cultural world may be understood as "the medium of the *present* ... that mediates the *past*" (Lowe 2). I understand this relational value between the past and the present as movement between Bhabha's *performative* and *pedagogy*. It is how Hong Kingston "becomes, acts, and speaks" as Chinese/American (3). Hong Kingston's Chinese self-image is negatively influenced by expressions she hears from her mother and other family members, expressions such as "girls are maggots in the rice...it is more profitable to raise geese than daughters" (Hong Kingston 43). Hong Kingston's self-image is also greatly affected by her American environment. She admits that because "the immigrants ... have loud voices un-modulated to American tones" she has "tried to turn [her]self American-feminine" (11). Hong Kingston explores her identity as Clifford's traveler by cloaking her Chinese female voice inside an Americanized feminine subjectivity. She cannot completely define herself inside one or the other. Yet she wishes to avoid being seen "as an immigrant, as the foreigner-within" (Lowe 5). For instance, as a Chinese woman she learns that "there is an outward tendency in females ... getting straight A's for the good of [her] future husband's family.... [So she] stopped getting straight A's" (Hong Kingston 47). Hong Kingston refuses this role as a *foreigner-within*. While she does not wish to reject the possibility of experiencing love with a Chinese man, she discovers that her efforts to attract the attention of Chinese boys contradict Asian beauty standards because to do so means having to make herself "American-pretty" to attract the five or six Chinese boys in the class"

to fall in love with her (12). Ironically this meant that “everyone else – the Caucasian, Negro, and Japanese boys – would” be attracted to her as well (12). Hong Kingston’s desire to turn herself *American-pretty* is an illustration of how her perceptions of beauty are entangled inside an American vision of beauty. This duality between wanting a relationship with a Chinese boy and wishing to be *American-pretty* shapes aspects of Hong Kingston’s hybrid frame of subjectivity and her “emergence of alternate identities” as Chinese/American (Lowe 12). Who is Hong Kingston empowering? Is it the Chinese woman with an American perspective or is it an American woman inside an encoded Chinese cultural context? This is an important distinction. I understand Hong Kingston’s cultural negotiation as an exchange between an American woman’s mind and a Chinese woman’s heart. For instance, she empowers herself by re-scripting Fa Mulan’s voice as her own, thus turning a Chinese “*foreign other I* [my emphasis]” into an American “*familiar I* [again, my emphasis]” (Smith 47).

Hong Kingston’s strongest weapon of negotiation or resistance to fixed cultural codes appears in those instances when she conflates lived realities with invented and mythological stories. Her struggles to put some distance between herself and her family suggest that she cannot come to terms with markers of her Chinese female identity. However these struggles also allow her to re-imagine her Chinese spaces. By conflating myth with fact, for instance, she asserts her marginal spaces as Chinese. This allows her to effectively empower her Chinese/American female voice. Paul Ricœur’s

reference to the “narrative unity of life...as an unstable mixture of fabulation and actual experience” suggests that all narrated experience is such a mixture (162). In this vein, Hong Kingston’s conflation between myth and personal experience may be understood as a needed tool of contestation in her negotiation between being American and Chinese. “Hybridity ... marks the history of survival within relationships of unequal power and domination” (Lowe 67). Conflation of fabulation and actual experience is therefore also a core aspect in how the hybrid self emerges in this work. Like Goto, Hong Kingston relies on mythological figures to redefine feminine subjectivity outside fixed cultural contexts, therefore in more hybrid and empowering terms.

Hong Kingston accomplishes this through the idea of talk-story which originates from a Hawaiian pidgin language. She engages her reader in her particular meaning-making process and reasserts her silenced, marginalized voice as a Chinese/American woman. Talk-story becomes a metaphor for knowing herself differently. By interweaving mythological tales with real experiences, Hong Kingston reconstructs her feminine otherness in a more positive way. She reacts to “struggle between the desire to essentialize [her] ethnic identity and the condition of heterogeneous difference against which such a desire is spoken” (Lowe 76). Re-scripting the story of Fa Mulan is an act of empowerment. Fa Mulan is a legendary Chinese symbol of female “heroic behaviour” (written in the fifth or sixth century A.D.). Hong Kingston narrates Fa Mulan in the first person as her own story thus naming herself

heroine and warrior (Hong Kingston 24). Whereas Murasaki and Naoe simply rename themselves to assert a certain literary identity, Hong Kingston re-scripts herself more completely *creatively* connecting her vision of a Chinese woman empowered inside an American cultural environment. Fa Mulan is a story about a girl “who took her father’s place in battle” becoming a renowned warrior and swordswoman (24). By speaking of Fa Mulan in the first person, Hong Kingston not only assumes her identity as an alter-ego in her life narrative, she also re-writes her own role from woman as victim to one of woman as victor. Such an act of resistance, albeit a Ricœurian *fabulation*, allows Hong Kingston to create an empowered image of her Chinese/American identity. Thus she equips herself to symbolically conquer negative perceptions of being Chinese. This also allows her to wear symbolic armour against the “business-suited...modern American executive...each boss two feet taller...and impossible to meet eye to eye” *and* the Chinese who believed women “failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves” (48). In the preceding quotation, she illustrates how a physical challenge, her height, impedes her sense of self-esteem. Being Fa Mulan, Hong Kingston is a wife and swordswoman, not a slave. Moreover this re-scripting allows Hong Kingston to actively participate in her mother’s narratives, re-weaving talk-story on her terms and letting the story re-write her feminine subjectivity in an empowering manner. Thus talk story is her ultimate tool of resistance.

As Fa Mulan, Hong Kingston is a Chinese warrior woman, a wife, a mother and she *still* maintains a strong self-image. If an act of resistance

means repeating something in a different way, Hong Kingston blends her personal story with the mythological one of Fa Mulan as a symbolic gesture of resistance. Robert Kroetsch said that “in a sense, we haven’t got an identity until somebody tells our story. The fiction makes us real” (*Creation* 65). Re-scripting her identity as Fa Mulan allows Hong Kingston to subvert the sense of inferiority she experiences as a Chinese woman, and subsequently deal with feelings that symbolically keep her locked inside a culture which appears to honour men over women. In Nicole Brossard’s words, « [j]e sais qu’écrire c’est se faire exister, *comme* décider de ce qui existe et de ce qui n’existe pas, c’est *comme* décider de la réalité » (*La lettre aérienne* 130-31). By conflating Fa Mulan’s story with her own, Hong Kingston empowers herself in two ways. First, she (re)constructs her experiences to assume a position of leadership, strength and honour inside her Chinese skin. Second, as Brossard suggests, Hong Kingston writes herself as she wishes to be rather than having her identity written by others. Through this re-writing, she demonstrates her *creative* connectivity with and confrontation between her American/Chinese identities. By framing herself as a Chinese mythological hero she validates her otherwise marginalized position as a Chinese woman. Hong Kingston’s desire to re-script herself as Fa Mulan illustrates her desire to (re)invent identity, to create a present self by adopting a mythological representation of an *Other* that corresponds to *her* vision of a feminine Chinese and American self. Hong Kingston seeks identity outside classifications and yet she is trapped by classifications, real and invented. This is reminiscent of Jacques Lacan’s

thoughts on the *gaze*. “What determines me at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside” (qtd. In Ty 10). This outside gaze is sometimes Chinese, other times American.

Hong Kingston’s writing shifts between personal experience and myth in this way as a negotiation technique between how she views herself and perhaps how she wishes to contest the *outside gaze*. In this conflation process, she has the freedom to create discontinuity between how she reads herself, and subsequently how she wishes to be read, through Paterson’s illustration of

la relation entre l’Autre et le ‘je’ ou le ‘nous’ du groupe de référence...celui d’une manque créé par la présence de désirs inassouvis, de souffrances multiples, de déceptions accrues, le rapport à l’Autre devient tellement crucial, parce que fondé sur l’espoir d’un autre mode de ‘présence à soi’, qu’il ouvre facilement la voie au fantasme...un lien-subtil, mais fondamental, relie fascination, désir et fantasme’ (Paterson 69-70).

Discontinuity between Hong Kingston’s Chinese/American selves may be understood through the preceding quotation. Hong Kingston negotiates her feminine subjectivity in the same manner Paterson designates the *Other* as a space of fascination, desire and fantasy. In doing so, Hong Kingston symbolically collapses the boundaries between her Chinese self and American *Other* selves. She also subverts boundaries of male patriarchy (Chinese and American) that clash with her vision of female individualism by blending real experiences with mythological talk story. Hong Kingston plays with different narrative voices and “produces a multivoiced narrative ... both American and Chinese” to (re)write feminine subjectivity (Jenkins 61).

According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, there are four 'I's' in an autobiographical narrative: the real or historical *I*, the narrating *I*, the narrated *I*, and finally the ideological *I* (59). Each one is relevant inside a time and space specific context. Hong Kingston's narrative resurrects her ideological *I* through "women and their stories that have been silenced" (Jenkins 61). The reader has access to the narrating *I* and s/he absorbs and interprets information according to how the narrating *I* choose to tell his or her story. The narrating *I* is "neither unified nor stable...split, fragmented, provisional, multiple, (it is) a subject (who is) always in the process of coming together and of dispersing" (60). Hong Kingston (re)scripts her mother's talk-stories thus (re)naming herself as the authorial/historical *I* in these stories. The narrated *I* is the protagonist of the story and for the reader, perhaps the most stable *I* in autobiography. The ideological *I* is the "concept of personhood culturally available to the narrator when he (or she) tells his (or her) story" (Paul Smith qtd. in Smith and Watson 61). Hong Kingston embodies all these different narrative forms in her writing. However since cultural concepts are time and space dependent, this *I* is also "multiple and...potentially conflictual" (62). If the only *I* the reader has no access to is the author's *real* or *historical I* because the writer is relating experiences based on memory then in Hong Kingston's case talk-story allows her symbolic access to this *I*. She "weaves together the secret life of her "forerunner" aunt, her mother's talk-stories, and her own severed tongue to produce a talk-story memoir" hybridly Chinese/American (Jenkins 62). In Hong Kingston's narrative, there is no way to categorically

ascertain real or historical accuracy. This should not be the focus of how we interpret her narrative style.

Hong Kingston's *real* or *historical I* has no universal meaning. It is an entirely subjective narration. However, if we examine Hong Kingston's narrative inside the period in which it is written, we can attribute symbolic labels to her *real* or *historical I*. Growing up in the U.S. in the 1950s and the 1960s Hong Kingston's story is a product of the civil rights and women's liberation movements. The first chapter of her work *No Name Woman* appeared in print as a short story in 1975, the year the United Nations officially recognized March 8 as International Women's Day. In this chapter, Hong Kingston learns that her father's sister in China becomes pregnant out of wedlock. *No Name Woman* is a victim of repeated rape and involuntary sex with someone from whom she has to buy oil and "gather wood in the same forest" the place he first rapes her (Hong Kingston 7). However, when she tells him she is pregnant, he organizes a town raid against her and her family. "...they threw mud and rocks at the house...they threw eggs and began slaughtering...the ... smeared [animals] blood on the doors and walls of their home" (4). *No Name Woman* subsequently kills herself and her baby. Hong Kingston's father never mentions his sister. When she begins her menstrual cycle, her mother tells her the story as a warning not to shame the family. "Don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born" (5). Hong Kingston begins her personal story with her aunt's story

thus illustrating her desire to give her dead aunt a voice, an identity, and a story she could not claim while she was alive.

Re-scripting her autobiographical story to include stories of women negatively othered because of cultural patriarchy is then a tool of emancipation, a way to reinvent female subjectivity outside a male-dominated value system. Revisionist theorists such as Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein and Jane Flax believe that

the configuration of identity and the process of individuation differ for men and women ... [where] the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine sense of self is separate...where the boy comes to speak with the authority of the father and all fathers before him, those figures of public power who control the discourse and its economy of self-hood, (where) the male experience is identified as the normative human paradigm (Smith 13).

Hong Kingston's writing style identifies her *female* experience as *the normative human paradigm*. Moreover her autobiographical text employs mythical and fictional representations of female narratives to challenge and resist entrapments of patriarchy. She fictionalizes details to reconstruct the lives of past ancestors and make sense of her marginalized present realities. Talk-story allows her to shift the focus away from male-dictated cultural codes transferring their power to female hands.

Talk-story is also a metaphor for knowing herself better. According to Jean Starobinski, "no inside is conceivable...without the complexity of an outside on which it relies....No outside would be conceivable without an inside fending it off, resisting it, "reacting" to it (qtd in Rubenstein 5). Re-scripting herself as Fa Mulan allows Hong Kingston to blur the boundaries

between her inner, imaginary world with her outer reality. This is the most significant chapter in Hong Kingston's process of female empowerment. Hong Kingston's narrating *I* allows her to define individuality as an understanding of one's "relationship with the *outside*, with that which ... (she has) never been" (4-5). These opening lines from the chapter *White Tiger* set the tone for Hong Kingston's desire to reverse her role (and that of other women in her family) from woman as victim to one of woman as victor.

When we Chinese girls listened to adult talk-story, we learned that... we could be heroines, swordswomen. Even if she had to rage across all China, a swordswoman got even with anybody who hurt her family. Perhaps women were once so dangerous that they had to have their feet bound (Hong Kingston 19).

In the preceding quotation, Hong Kingston turns an otherwise negative stereotype about Chinese women with bound feet into an example of empowerment. She does this by suggesting that perhaps women's feet were bound because women were very strong. Inadvertently, she also suggests that the Chinese practice of feet binding stems from a male fear of female prowess. Although this is pure heresy on her part, Hong Kingston chooses to interpret the custom in this way. Nancy Chodorow suggests that

[d]ifferentiation is not distinctness and separateness, but a particular way of being connected to others. This connection to others... enables us to feel empathy and confidence that are basic to the recognition of the other as self (qtd in Rubenstein 12).

Regardless of the reasons behind foot binding practices, Hong Kingston clearly wishes to challenge and re-write aspects of Chinese cultural customs that scorn or oppress the image of Chinese women.

For instance, as Fa Mulan, Hong Kingston speaks of imprisoned female servants, unable to escape because of their “little bound feet...these women would not be good for anything” so their families refuse to have them back! (Hong Kingston 44). Hong Kingston chooses to rewrite their story in more empowering tones. So she suggests that “they turned into a band of swordswomen...a mercenary army’ who only buy girl babies, who welcome runaway slave-girls and daughter-in-laws, killing only boys and men” (44). As Fa Mulan, Hong Kingston does not confirm the legitimacy of such an outcome, stating that she “never encountered such women and (therefore she) could not vouch for their reality” (45). However, she plays with such a possibility to illustrate her desire to (re)write mythological events on her terms and suggest that other outcomes are possible. More importantly, conflating Fa Mulan’s story with “fact, embellishment, invention, and fantasy” become a way for Hong Kingston to question and re-write past stories that deny Chinese women an empowered voice (Rubenstein 165).

Of equal importance in how Hong Kingston wishes to rewrite negative perceptions of Chinese women is her latent desire to re-script her American identity in Chinese terms, thus laying the foundation for a hybrid self. Hong Kingston cannot assimilate into American culture. She explains that her “American life has been such a disappointment” (45). She blames her parents for not teaching her English. As a consequence, she walks amidst hostile zones at school, feeling “beaten up” for being an outsider (46). Her need to cloak herself as Fa Mulan, a mythological swordswoman, symbolically shields her

from such childhood feelings of marginalization. Moreover, Hong Kingston's desire to retell a Chinese myth in a *new* way suggests that she wishes to reshape existing perceptions of Chinese women. In his essay, "Towards a New Identity: Maxine Hong Kingston's Rewriting of Fa Mulan", David Leal Cobos, suggests that, as a storyteller, Hong Kingston, "adapts (the old myth) to the new situation, the new audience, and the new media" (5). Cobos also reminds readers that "Hong Kingston is American-born. She was raised in the United States in an American background and (she) had not been to China when when she wrote *The Warrior Woman*" (5). Rescripting Fa Mulan as she does illustrates her western perspective as a Chinese American woman, her desire for *creative* connectivity between different cultural contexts. Purists such as Frank Chin denounce Hong Kingston's "representation of Chinese culture" as "false and based on white stereotypes" (qtd. in Cobos 2). Chin rejects "the works of Hong Kingston" stating that they "are not consistent with Chinese fairy tales and childhood literature" (3). While there is some validity in Chin's point, he fails to recognize Hong Kingston's context as a Chinese *American* writer. In Sherry Simon's words,

Au lieu de considérer ces espaces liminaires et transitionnels comme imparfaits et donc inférieurs, il faudra y voir le lieu de la construction de nouveaux signes d'identités ... [et] l'imaginaire contemporain' (54).

Here Simon speaks of geographic spaces in Montreal that bring together different cultural groups, however the underlying message of *nouveaux signes d'identités* may be applied to understand Hong Kingston's vision of how she wishes to (re)create a Chinese/American identity. Re-writing a mythological

story on her terms permits Hong Kingston to re-script hybrid identity and code-switch as a Chinese *and* American woman on her terms. She admits that she “keep[s] old Chinese myths alive...by telling them in a new American way” (Hong Kingston qtd. in Cheung 85). This process of invention is necessary, even crucial, to how she constructs her individual, hybridized Chinese/American identity. In this way, Hong Kingston validates her Chinese and American identity on her terms. She empowers her “voice of difference ... to divert us from the monotony of sameness” (Minh-ha 88). Moreover by asserting her difference she asserts her Third World voice and its relational aspect with her First World voice. As Minh-ha reminds us,

The West is painfully made to realize the existence of a Third World in the First World, and vice versa. The Master is bound to recognize that His Culture is not as homogeneous as monolithic as He believed it to be. He discovers, with much reluctance, He is just an other among others” (Minh-ha 99).

As Minh-ha suggests, by illustrating the malleable role the *Other* occupies along with the power of masculine subjectivity Third World writers such as Hong Kingston find themselves caught in a state of “triple jeopardy” (104). It is a zone where “she can be accused of betraying either man ... her community ... or woman herself” (104). Writers such as Hong Kingston must continually address this triple-edged dilemma as Third World women. I understand this process as a paradoxical one. Understanding herself and others outside one cultural or linguistic code means Hong Kingston tackles Minh-ha’s questions: “Did it really happen? Is it a true story?”(120). She answers such questions by blurring lines between fiction and reality (120)

The way Hong Kingston re-interprets the mythical story of Fa Mulan is through time and space-specific cultural codes. If we turn to religious texts, it is easy to understand this need. Imagine how suffocating, even self-erasing, identity construction would be if religious dogma was respected in its original word. There is a need, perhaps even an obligation to re-write, re-script past written records if those interpretations no longer respond to a respectful view of today's more fluid cultural codes and representations of identity. This is better understood from the point of view of historian versus storyteller. We can understand historian under Bhabha's notion of *pedagogy* and storyteller under his label of the *performative*. The act of revealing bears in itself a magical (not factual) quality ... through Minh-ha's vision

history (with a small h) thus manages to oppose the factual to the fictional ... the story-writer – the historian – to the storyteller. As long as the transformation, manipulations, or redistributions inherent in the collecting of events are overlooked, the division continues its course, as sure of its itinerary as it certainly dreams to be. Story-writing becomes history-writing, and history quickly sets itself apart, consigning story to the realm of tale, legend, myth, fiction, literature (120).

Thus, rewriting or retelling (his)stories makes room for changes in perspectives.

It seems reasonable that autobiographical telling is in essence storytelling because events can never be completely verified. In the re-telling, there will always be an element of remembering, perspective, creative freedom, therefore elements of truth and fiction are continually at play. Hong Kingston explains that she has “various ways of melding the Chinese and Western experiences...[her] hands are writing English but (her) mouth is

speaking Chinese [because she is] working in some kind of fusion language” (Interview with Dave Welch and Miel Alegre Dec 2003). Hong Kingston is clear that she is *not* representing the Chinese American group in her autobiographical story. She asks “why must [she] represent anyone but [herself]? Why should [she] be denied an individual artistic vision” of herself (qtd. in Cobos 28). Hong Kingston fails to mention how her vision of selfhood, her desire to represent herself as “an individual artistic vision” is determined, by how others name her as a Chinese woman and as an American woman. More importantly, although she claims to re-script her individual voice, she also rewrites and subsequently re-scripts the roles of some key family members: her mother Brave Orchid, and her aunts No Name Woman and Moon Orchid. Looking outside the frame of storytelling, an ethical case may be made to defend this re-scripting of family members and their stories. She becomes a beacon of empowerment for other Chinese/American women who feel marginalized as well as *Other* immigrant women who read her version of feminine subjectivity. Such a re-scripting of stories allows her to empower the collective Chinese female voice and her individual one. Her narrative blends myth and real experience. As Fa Mulan, Hong Kingston is the family’s ambassador, their swordswoman so she recognizes how “the idioms for *revenge* are to “report a crime” and [how] ... the reporting is the vengeance-not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words” (Hong Kingston 53). Hong Kingston rebels against a conventional or traditional Chinese feminine subjectivity that contains her feminine subjectivity inside an inferior frame.

She reacts strongly when she hears one of her parents say “feeding girls is feeding cowbirds ... [this would make her] thrash on the floor and scream so hard ... [she] couldn’t talk” (46). Hong Kingston defines her hybrid voice by re-writing words such as “chink,” “gook,” words that “do not fit on [her hybrid Chinese/American] skin” (53). Talk-story is a retelling of Hong Kingston’s life experiences, a negotiation of her feminine subjectivity inside a hybridized Chinese-American identity.

### Eva Hoffman

In *Lost in Translation*, the lessons Eva Hoffman learns from family differ from Goto’s protagonists and Hong Kingston’s personal experiences. Hoffman’s life story is rooted in the history of a country, a people and families (including her own) destroyed and traumatized by war. Much like oral tradition, trauma is carried from one generation to another. Thus sharing the burden of collective pain is about honoring one’s past and one’s ancestors. “My mother wants me to know what happened....It’s a matter of honor to remember...affirming one’s Jewishness....I lower my head in acknowledgement that this-the pain of this-is where I come from, and that it’s useless to try to get away” (Hoffman 24-25). Hoffman’s story winds down two narrative roads: in one, she addresses her parents’ journey out of war torn Poland, speaking of how their journey affects her lived experiences; in the other, she maps out her process of self-representation as a path of continual movement between her Polish and developing American cultural identities.

She also speaks of first experiences as an immigrant in Canada, describing this part of her story as a largely negative one.

In Hoffman's autobiographical narrative *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, she explores the in-between passages of her hybrid subjectivity, her connectivity between languages and cultures, as Gloria Anzaldúa does, in poetic terms. However her narrative is not as polemical as Anzaldúa's. Rather, it is laced inside a trauma narrative. Hoffman also scripts her personal story inside a poetically constructed debate, shifting between her Polish and English experiences. She seduces her readers into her particular meaning-making process of representation, to reveal "how [she] has become who...she is at a given moment in an ongoing process of reflection" (Smith and Watson 1). Moreover, Hoffman grounds her "process of reflection" inside the trauma narrative of her parents and their experiences of the Holocaust in Poland. Like a patchwork quilt, Hoffman pieces together her Polish and American identities, moving fluidly between parts. This fluidity is neither linear in time nor in chronology. By jumping between past and present contexts, geography, and narrating her parents' trauma narrative alongside hers, she illustrates how inextricably interwoven such life experiences are in defining her subjectivity. Smith and Watson describe trauma narrative as a complex process of "recalling and recreating a past life...organizing the inescapable but often disabling force of memory and negotiating its fragmentary intrusions with increasing, if partial, understanding" (22). Unlike Hong Kingston and Goto, Hoffman does not employ myth or legend as a tool

of female empowerment. She narrates her personal autobiographical story as a postwar child. Her movement between languages and cultural codes translates her experiences as a postwar child however in a reconstructive manner.

Although the healing of any trauma is an indefinite process of reconciliation, peace and then reconstruction, this process is also a time of *creative* connectivity. It is a period of deep reflection and therefore of understanding and acceptance. Like the different pieces of a quilt, the morsels of Hoffman's cultural experiences in Poland, Canada, and finally the United States come together to create an interesting tapestry, ultimately a hybridized, colored, identity.

There is no linear sequence of time and space in her narrative. Her story jumps between the past and present to illustrate the difficulties she faces letting go of her past in Poland and accepting her new life in North America. I read her narrative style as a musical composition, where the melodies come together awkwardly at first, in bits and pieces through random movement between past and present recollections. Moreover, this nonlinear narrative technique mirrors Hoffman's inability to keep her foot (symbolically) planted upon *one* cultural soil. Moving from Poland to North America displaces and divides her, making her see herself as a discriminated subject, culturally and socio-economically. Her insecurities as an immigrant initially materialize because of financial difficulties her family faces in Vancouver. Their story begins with "no place to go, no way to pay for a meal" (Hoffman 104). In Canada, Hoffman views her family's immigrant status as an impoverished one.

Later, as an adult, Hoffman continues to suffer from feelings of marginalization in other ways. “Insofar as I’m an outsider wishing to be taken in, I’ve come at the wrong moment...in the midst of all this...fragmenting movement, [where] the...notion of outside and inside” is a splintered one (196). Inside such fragmented spaces, inside her parents’ Holocaust trauma, and inside her desire to master English and an American cultural lifestyle on an intimate level, Hoffman is full of questions wondering “in a splintered society what does one assimilate to? ... [Is it] the very splintering itself[?]” (197). Being Jewish and a post-war child she cannot separate her Polish stories from her immigrant Canadian and American ones. Feeling marginalized, displaced, she is haunted by feelings of *residual nostalgia* unable to completely let go of her Polish past yet understanding that she cannot succeed on American soil unless she finds some harmony in her evolving hybrid feminine subjectivity. Her hybrid voice refuses colonization, thus she moves towards a “distinctive shape and flavor” looking for ways to “adopt an attitude of benevolent openness” without completely bending “toward another culture ... [and] falling over” (209). Hoffman’s desire to embrace English intimately and protect aspects of her Polish identity illustrate how “differences [can be] interesting and beautiful” (205). Navigating between Polish and American waters (figuratively speaking), she never knows how she will remain inside one culture or become stained by a new culture.

For Hoffman, negotiation between cultures and languages is an intimate experience. “Both representation and communication depend on the

individual self and the way we express ourselves” (Eriksson 7). She wonders: “Is it as easy as adopting an attitude of benevolent openness to each other?” (Hoffman 215). By expressing a growing desire to “enter into the very textures, the motions and flavors of each other’s vastly different subjectivities ... [she thus demands] feats of sympathy and even imagination” (210). Such interest illustrates Hoffman’s desire for *Other* cultures therefore it validates her growing hybrid identity as one “comfortabl[e] anyplace ... [however] always ... stuck in some betwixt and between place” (216). The value of such spaces is in how they allow her to *creatively* connect her different cultural and linguistic worlds. “Our identity, the person who we are is taken away from the language and since identity is formed both from within ourselves and from the outside by other people our identity ... [requires us] to [sometimes] use a language that is not our own” (Eriksson 7). Her narrative shifts “along the axis of bipolar ideas” between Polish and American spaces illustrating her “decentered world” (Hoffman 211). Thus Hoffman’s hybrid identity surfaces from, and shifts between, a re-telling of lived experiences in post-war Poland, Canada, and in the United States.

Since her narrative includes the trauma narrative of her parents’ experiences, how she comes to terms with their trauma determines how she experiences that trauma herself and how she then subsequently translate her identity.. A younger Hoffman cannot immediately understand the trauma her parents suffer. Cathy Caruth explains the often delayed route of understanding with experiences of trauma. “The response to an unexpected or overwhelming

violent event or events ... are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena” (91).

Hoffman learns about and grasps the trauma her parents suffer in war-stricken Poland during Hitler’s regime *after* they leave Poland. She carries their trauma on her shoulders. She “can’t go as near” their pain” as she should but she can’t “draw away from it either” (Hoffman 25). Hoffman’s mother speaks of their trauma but she also hears about it from others. A chance meeting with an old friend of her parents explains how “they [her parents] finally had to run for the bunker” and how her mother “had had a miscarriage, [because she] was too weak to walk through the snow ... (and how her) father ended up carrying her on his back, kilometer after kilometer” (25). Although originally unaware of such details, they now bear heavily on Hoffman’s conscience becoming part of “another image ... to store, [yet] another sharp black bead added to the rest” (25). However such information also allows Hoffman to understand her parents’ behavior and their reactions. “My father comes home one day reporting on a fistfight he got into when someone on the street said to him that “the best thing Hitler did was to eliminate the Jews”...that classic line...brought out whenever a Pole quickly wants to express a truly venomous hatred” (32). Such wounds never completely heal, remaining

inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind...so trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature-the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance-returns to haunt the survivor later on (Caruth 3-4).

Susan Ingram refers to Hoffman's story as a *schizophrenic autobiography*. I understand this label Ingram assigns Hoffman's narrative through Ingram's reference of "stark differences", a movement between how Hoffman remembers Poland versus how she comes to terms with her parents' war experiences (Ingram 261). Hoffman's story moves beyond a story of cultural adjustment, of learning a new language. Telling her story means Hoffman must include her parents' story of survival, to give voice to their trauma and the ongoing secondary effects of their trauma as her own.

Her parents are some of the lucky ones, escaping the deportation, torture and death that millions of other Jews (family members included) suffered. This offers them little solace since nothing can erase the cumulative memory of the experiences, loss and pain that lead to their escape. However coming to North America allows them to acknowledge their trauma, deal with their pain "between outward appearances and inner reality" more effectively (261).

The subject of anti-Semitism now comes up frequently, but when my parents—mostly my mother—speak of it, there is anger rather than shame in their voices... anti-Semitism comes under the heading of barbarian stupidity and that makes me feel immediately superior to it (Hoffman 32).

Their trauma narrative becomes part of Hoffman's life story. It is, as she describes,

the story of children who came from the war, and who couldn't make sufficient sense of the several worlds they grew up in, and didn't know by what lights to act... [they were] children too overshadowed by [their] parents' stories, and without enough sympathy for [them]selves, for the serious dilemmas of [their] own lives, and who thereby couldn't live up to [or honor their]

parents' desire – amazing in its strength - [to] create new life and to bestow on [them] a new world...[parents who did not realize, could not possibly know] that in this new world too one must learn all over again, each time from the beginning, the trick of going on (230).

The preceding quotation eloquently illustrates the silent trauma children such as Hoffman struggle with; children who can never fully comprehend their parents' suffering but nevertheless remain marked by it. Hoffman bears the burden of moving forward, away from her past, away from her parents' past. As a result she moves into a present that can never be completely her own, experiencing “a splitting or fragmentation of different self-representations that remain integrated” (Ingram 261). Such movement between worlds is a greater burden for her parents. Their story is, in Caruth words, “the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape...rather attests to its endless impact on a life” (Caruth 7). Hoffman's parents are permanently scarred by the events of their past, an “oscillation between a *crisis of death*...and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival” (7). They cannot empty the contents of this baggage, or store them away indefinitely. They are to some degree continually haunted by its contents. By telling their story, Hoffman honors and gives meaning to their experience.

There is an interwoven connection between her parents' trauma narrative, Hoffman's lived experiences, and her innate need to inhabit language so intimately that it hugs her like a second skin. Hoffman's greatest sense of loss in Canada and the United States arises from her sense of

“linguistic dispossession” as “sufficient motive for violence, for it is close to the dispossession of one’s self” (Hoffman 124). There are parallels to be made between this declaration and how trauma and its memory can manifest itself as a dispossession of identity. In many ways Hoffman’s parents suffer from a dispossession of their identity. Canada represents a new beginning for them, a chance for rebirth. For Hoffman coming to Canada means leaving behind a world she loves in Poland, entering “a perpetual search from home in language” (Ingram 273). She experiences strong feelings of displacement in Canada referring to this time as “the primal scream of my birth into the New World...a mutative insight of a negative kind – and I know that I can never lose the knowledge it brings me” (Hoffman 104). Inside her initial process of adaptation, her integration is laden with negative forms of identification.

At school, name changes are part of an English initiation, a symbolic cultural effacement. Ewa becomes Eva, and her sister Alina becomes Elaine. “My sister and I hang our heads wordlessly under this careless baptism....These new appellations...are not us...” (105). This act of naming, as Elaine Chang observes, “has shifting contextual and historical determinants: Who is using the terms, when, where, and for what purposes” locate women differently (252). In Hoffman’s and her sister’s case, their Canadian re-naming metaphorically strips down their Polish self. Hoffman states that these new “names... make us strangers to ourselves” (105). Such examples of personal effacement suggest that how one locates identity is dictated by what Spivak calls “the uneven many-strandedness of “being” ” (qtd in Chang 253). This

notion of “many-strandedness” is an important aspect of how (re)naming in this story (unlike in Goto and Hong Kingston) is a link that weakens Hoffman’s connection to her cultural origins. Naming is significant along cultural and feminist discourses. Our names are often selected by parents or other family members and sometimes they connect us to ancestors, other times they may refer to mythological and literary figures (Hong Kingston and Goto respectively). In Arab cultures names have meaning. For instance, my name means *desire* and over the years I must admit I take great pride in this cultural tidbit that translates me because I have come to understand the word *desire* as one synonymous with life and *bonheur*. In First Nations cultures, names are even more significant as Innu medicine man Marcel Grondin (who has given many conferences to my students) explains (paraphrased): When a First Nations baby is born, the weather and other signs will determine how the baby is named and what role that baby will have in the community circle. From a feminist point of view, naming evokes “concepts of identity, position and location” (Chang 253). Taking on Western white names creates a kind of “visual dis-order or double vision: a confusion between ... the white and Western eye and the woman-seeing eye, [simultaneously inducing the] fear of losing the centrality of the one even as we claim the other” (Adrienne Rich qtd. in Chang 254). As a child, Hoffman reluctantly claims Eva over the Polish *Ewa*. However as an adult when her family name changes from Wydra to Hoffman in 1971 when she marries this name change seems to affect Hoffman differently. Later when she divorces in 1976, she keeps her married name. I

understand this choice she makes as an illustration of her desire to identify herself as American over Polish and therefore as an acceptance of her growing attachment to American spaces.

Moreover, because of the trauma her parents suffered as Jewish people in Poland, renaming in Hoffman's story is a particularly negative sign of cultural effacement since it strips away a Polish marker of her identity. While Hoffman's parents struggle with the perceived stigma of being Jewish, she struggles with the loss of her ties to her Polish and Jewish roots. However by deciding to hold onto an American family name, Hoffman illustrates a latent unease with her traumatic past. For her parents and for Hoffman, the trauma experience transcends the lived experience. "Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?" (Caruth 7). There is of course no concrete way to separate the two. The pain that comes from *how* the Hoffman family survives trauma is experienced through the narrative process of recollection and retelling of events. It is also "an exercise in imagining a past to fit the present" (Stern-Gillet 132). Past post-war experiences haunt the Hoffman family in different degrees as feelings of shame, rejection, or disapproval surface. Telling their story is also the result "of a post-traumatic attempt to recover a lost self" (132).

Some of how Hoffman witnesses her parents' ongoing experience of trauma is felt through her father's silence. She inadvertently bears aspects of his silent burden as her own. "My father almost never mentions the war; dignity for him is silence, sometimes too much silence" (Hoffman 23). She

hears about some stories from her father, but “it is not until the events have receded into the past...by that time so far removed that they seem like fables” (23). Although Hoffman feels this burden her father shoulders, she also admires his inner strength and his resolve to move forward.

Through the war, the death of his close ones, through the remaking of his life in Poland, my father had never lost his basic, animal composure which was made up of an unquestioned will to live and enough vitality to know that the will, one way or another, would prevail (128).

Her father’s steel-will perception teaches Hoffman the importance of self-reliance. In Poland, her father has learned what it means to “out-wit...the System” and how “everyone...is involved in an illicit activity of some kind...for the normal job wage is hardly enough to feed a family, never mind to clothe them” (14). Hoffman bears witness to such hardships her parents endured by speaking about them. These hardships may be understood as “the enigma of the otherness of a human voice [that of her parents] that cries out from the wound, a voice that witnesses a truth ... [a suffering, Hoffman] cannot fully know” (Caruth 3). Even as she narrates her parents’ silent suffering Hoffman cannot alleviate the burden of such silence. She understands the knowledge “that knowing and not knowing are entangled in the language of trauma and in the stories [in this case, her parents’ own stories]” (4). This understanding of her parents’ trauma is, at its core, the key to a deeper understanding of Hoffman’s struggles and challenges in defining her socially and culturally defined female voice.

In America she works hard to create a successful *Americanized/Polish* identity for herself. She labels herself “a professional New York woman and a

member of a postwar international new class...one of a new breed, born of the jet age and the counterculture, and middle-class ambitions and American grit” (Hoffman 170). Andrew Brown of *The Guardian* newspaper speaks of Hoffman as someone who understands “that life must be constantly made understandable, yet will never become familiar ... [and how] everyone is on someone else's periphery”. Hoffman is at times perched on the periphery of her mother’s Polish cultural codes. Hoffman’s more Americanized cultural views differ from her mother’s Polish ones. She learns for instance that her mother

has a not-so-hidden respect for lazy women. Laziness shows a certain luxuriance of character, the eroticism of valuing your pleasure...Such egoism is at the heart of feminine power, which consists in the ability to make others do things for you, to be pampered (15-16).

This philosophy is an illustration of Hoffman’s mother’s Polish feminine subjectivity, another consequence of her wartime suffering. Hoffman is quite different.

My mother will be amazed at how much energy I’m willing to expend in order to feed my ambition. She can’t quite figure out-and who can blame her – why I’m in such a rush, where I’m trying to get to (16).

Her mother’s vision is one “born of the War...with its gamble that since everything is absurd, you might as well try to squeeze the juice out of every moment” (16). Hoffman’s mother’s desire to live a lazy life is a consequence of her traumatic experiences in Poland. Her mother’s views reinforce Hoffman’s ongoing belief that financial wealth is a marker of a successful immigrant story. It is also an ongoing focus in her life, an unconscious manifestation of this mentality.

Hoffman's insecurities about her economic status first surface in Canada. Seeing her parents struggle in Canada manifests itself as inadequacy, a void, in Hoffman's mind. She does not view her family's arrival in Canada as a guarantee of a *better* economic life. The reality of her parents' financial hardships in Canada becomes a negative reminder of class-based success, something she does not experience in Poland. Hoffman's first impressions of life in Vancouver are scarred by her family's experiences with the Rosenbergs, a big name in the small community of established Polish Jews, "most of whom came to Canada shortly after the war ... made good in junk peddling and real estate ... but .... Mr. Rosenberg ... had the combined chutzpah and good luck to ride Vancouver's real estate boom-and now he's the richest of them all"

(103). Hoffman describes Mr. Rosenberg

not as...benefactor but as a Dickensian figure of personal tyranny...He has made stinginess into principle...he demands money for our train tickets...as soon as we arrive....I never forgive him...my father gives him all the dollars he accumulated in Poland...we'll have to scratch out our living...from zero (103).

While Hoffman cannot control this economic reality, she acknowledges that "the class-linked notion that I transfer from Poland is that belonging to a "better" class of people is absolutely dependent on speaking a "better" language" (123). For Hoffman, learning English, speaking it intimately, becomes an important marker of immigrant success. It is how she claims a connection to her new place.

In spite of her parents' suffering(s), Hoffman's memories of living in Poland as a child are positive ones. Her memories of her first love Marek are inextricably linked to her attachment of her native country, Poland.

Insofar as we retain the capacity for attachment, the energy of desire that draws us toward the world and makes us want to live within it, we're always returning...to...that first potent furnace, the uncompromising, ignorant love, the original heat and hunger for the forms of the world, for the here and now (Hoffman 75).

Living in Canada and then in the United States, Hoffman's desire for Poland does not fade easily. I understand this desire as Proustian nostalgia.

When from a long-distant past nothing subsists...after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection (Proust 53).

In a similar vein, Hoffman's recollection of simple childhood attachments is sensorial, nostalgic.

Why did that one, particular, willow tree arouse in me a sense of beauty almost too acute for pleasure, why did I want to throw myself on the grassy hill with an upwelling of joy that seemed overwhelming, oceanic, absolute? (74)

She explains such longings as "the substance of ourselves – the molten force we're made of ... not yet divided" (74). First in Canada and later in the United States she comes to terms with the idea that such sensorial attachments will never be as intimately connected to her as they were in Poland. Moreover a departure from Poland had meant leaving behind her childhood sweetheart and first love. Of all her past attachments, leaving behind her friend Marek is the most painful loss. She must, as Mark Edmundson points out, accept the fact

that “in love, more than at any other time, we are dwelling in the past” (Freud vii). Edmundson goes on to suggest that “to love, according to Freud, is to ‘over-estimate the erotic object’” (xiii). Applying this notion, Hoffman’s love for Marek and for Poland exists primarily through a past feeling that cannot be imitated or carried forward in a Canadian or American context. It is a “contemporary moment that is historically untimely, forever belated” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 56). Marek, like Poland, is symbolic of a past that Hoffman cannot reclaim in a present context. It is only when Hoffman sees Marek as an adult that she grasps this ideal of living in a moment that is as Bhabha states, “forever belated” (56).

Of course, I would have wanted to marry my fantasy lover, but Marek isn’t the figment of my imagination anymore. He has grown more substantial, more mysterious, more himself. Really, I no longer know who he is. He has escaped me.... We moved... for those few days in Boston, in refracted time, neither quite in the past nor fully in the present... veiled by the haze of memories (Hoffman 229).

Later, news of Marek’s subsequent suicide illustrates the irreparable consequences of war and its post-traumatic effects on “children who came from the war, and who couldn’t make sense of the several worlds they grew up in” (230). Marek’s suicide signals that he did not learn the “trick of going on” (230). Hoffman confesses, “in my illusion of knowing him so well, I failed to know him better” (230). Hoffman’s distance from Marek, physically and emotionally means that she could not understand the depth of his pain, a pain that results in suicide. Physical distance and different cultural realities separated them, past closeness shadowed memories of what was once vibrantly alive between them.

Marek's suicide signals his deep suffering, "an inexplicably persistent" zone of conflict (Caruth 1). To avoid another kind of suffering, Hoffman must accept her "nostalgia...[as] a historical emotion, [as] ... a longing for that shrinking space of experience" that no longer fits the new horizon of expectations (Boym 10). In the same way that she could not possibly know Marek intimately, after being separated from him for such a long time, her knowledge of herself needs to be understood and recreated in a *present* context of time and cultural space. Hoffman's "nostalgia was not merely an expression of [a Polish] local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into "local" and "universal" possible (Boym 11). Hoffman must confront and accept a certain degree of alienation from her Polish world before she can embrace and fall in love with English, and its sociolinguistic codes. What she is resisting, in my opinion, is the idea of transgressed pleasures, of loving *outside* Polish sociolinguistic values and beliefs she holds so dearly. I understand this resistance as a resistance against moving towards a new love.

Il y a deux affirmations de l'amour. Tout d'abord, lorsque l'amoureux rencontre l'autre, il y a une affirmation immédiate... dévoré par le désir, l'impulsion d'être heureux... j'affirme la première rencontre dans sa différence, je veux son retour, non sa répétition. Je dis à l'autre (ancien ou nouveau) : *Recommençons* (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 31).

In the preceding quotation, Barthes explains how in that first meeting between two people, after an initial attraction for the other, two people will try to recapture that initial moment of desire. However, each moment must be embraced as time specific. Thus other feelings and other moments will overlap

and reshape the initial connection. I understand Hoffman's desire to embrace and move between her Polish and American cultures as a Barthesian notion of "desire for the Other" "doubled by ... language which *splits the difference* between Self and Other so that both positions are partial; neither is sufficient onto itself" (72). When Hoffman finds herself engaging in a full-fledged and intimate relationship with the English language, she begins to see linguistic and cultural *difference* in more empowering terms.

Learning English as intimately as she knew Polish allows Hoffman to connect on a deeper, more profound level with the reality of present socio-linguistic American codes. Mastering English on an intimate level means she is

back with the music of the language.... Words become as they were in childhood, beautiful things-except this is better, because they're now crosshatched with a complexity of meaning, with the sonorities of felt, sensuous thought (Hoffman 186).

This musicality Hoffman speaks of is the sound of hybrid meaning. Hoffman's mastery of the English language holds the same sensual, passionate pleasure a lover experiences when s/he uncovers his or her partner's hidden points of desire. Her choice to write in her diary in English signals her desire to embrace her adopted language more intimately, to learn English from an insider's position. This is a strong marker of Hoffman's desire for hybridized identification. While she never loses her love of Polish, learning English means she negotiates language through different linguistic codes thus *creatively* adopting English inside her understanding of Polish codes.

Speaking English and using it intimately is not without its challenges especially when she cannot “empathize with her American friends” (Stern-Gillet 136). Initially, her inability to speak English prevented her from developing any positive attachments to Vancouver, and Canada. Mastering English in the United States, first in Texas, later in Boston allows Hoffman to create a more intimate attachment as a bicultural *Americanized Polish woman*, or a Polish woman with an *Americanized* edge.

I receive the certificate of full Americanization....I am the sum of my parts....Harvard has been accepting of me, the American education system as hospitable and democratic as advertized. Respected men of letters have taken my literary opinions seriously (Hoffman 226).

Hoffman trains herself linguistically in the same way an athlete trains for the Olympics. She perfects her skills in English. Language is a “crucial instrument” for her to “overcome the stigma of [her] marginality” (123). She describes herself as someone “who wants to live within language and to be held within the frame of culture” (194). Contrary to her desire to master language within its cultural context, her American friends “want to break out of the constraints of both language and culture” (194). As Hoffman points out,

insofar as I’m an outsider wishing to be taken in, I’ve come at the wrong moment, for in the midst of all this swirling and fragmenting movement, the very notion of outside and inside is...quaint....I can go anywhere at all and be accepted there. The only joke is that there’s no there [once] there (196).

The preceding quotation suggests that the American center is not so strong or visible to Hoffman. As Eleanor Ty points out “subjectivity is not essential but constantly reprocessing itself” (Ty 72). Her experiences in America teach her that “instead of a central ethos, [she] has been given the blessings and the

terrors of multiplicity” (164). For the hybrid individual, the challenge lies in juggling these blessings and terrors. Hoffman must explore identity as “the sum of her languages” and cultures (Stern-Gillet 138). Anthony Giddens suggests that “the best way to analyze self-identity in the generality of instances is by contrast with individuals whose sense of self is fractured or disabled” (Giddens 53). In this regard, Hoffman negotiates her subjectivity, or “selfhood as the core of one’s being, unique, continuous, and immediately accessible to introspection” (Stern-Gillet 137-138). Moving between different cultural contexts, Hoffman deals with her “foreign environment[s]” by shifting her “aspirations towards integration” (137). However Hoffman’s “perceived marginality” surfaces through her nostalgic rumination of Poland (137).

Immigrants who do not wish to assimilate have no choice but to negotiate their identity between cultures. Thus “the metaphor of fidelity to an original is an especially suggestive one in the context of an immigrant’s life” (Besemere 327). In this position, holding on to, living inside, *one* center is not only difficult, it can be an alienating and painful process. However uncomfortable it may be to travel between cultural codes, such an experience can also be a rewarding one. Connectivity between cultures can be a privileged space. Hoffman describes it as

an experiment that is relatively rare [because it means that people] want to enter into the very textures, the motions and flavors of each other’s vastly different subjectivities—and that requires feats of sympathy and even imagination in excess of either benign indifference or a remote respect (Hoffman 210).

Hoffman privileges the idea of people entering each other's subjectivity in meaningful and profound ways. Entering another's subjectivity with such intimacy is also a fundamental aspect of how an individual narrates trauma narrative and personal autobiography, or lived experience, as a profound, meaning-making process. Her story is a "movement back and forth between two possible selves, associated with two distinct cultural and linguistic life-models" (Besemere 329). For Hoffman, it is important to "to rewrite the past in order to understand it" (Hoffman 242). Acknowledging the different linguistic, cultural and traumatic narrative passages she is confronted by allow Hoffman to learn to negotiate connectivity between these different points.

Hoffman's mastery of English gives her a stronger American voice. She validates "the metaphor of voice ... [as] important" and necessary in how she assigns value "between language and the self" thus attaching importance to her hybridized identification (Besemere 330). For Hoffman, "America is the land of yearning, and perhaps nowhere else are one's desires so wantonly stimulated...under the constant assaults of plenitude, it is difficult to agree to being just one person" (Hoffman 139). Living in America, Hoffman understands that she must discard parts of her Polish skin; however, she cannot crawl into a completely American costume either. Hoffman accepts this as "the process of (fluid) Americanization" one that makes "assimilation an almost outmoded idea" (195). Such a process takes her "into a culture that splinters, fragments, and re-forms itself as if it were a jigsaw puzzle dancing in a quantum space" (164). Mary Besemere points to Hoffman's "confident

working American voice and her rarely exercised Polish one” as suggestive of Hoffman’s identification process becoming more dominated by American codes (Besemere 343). Hoffman is also confronted by “the question of femininity” wondering how she is “to become a woman in an American vein...gender is different here, and it unfolds around different typologies and different themes” (Hoffman189). As Butler states “the script...is always already determined...the subject has a limited number of “costumes” from which to make a constrained choice of gender style” (Butler 56). When Hoffman falls in love with an American, she falls “in love with otherness” (Hoffman 186). Falling in love with, and marrying, an American mean “there is an even stronger than usual impetus to understand and be understood” in English and move within American cultural codes (Besemere 340). Hoffman’s intimate relationship illustrates another way she embraces desire for connectivity between cultures. However it does not come with a guarantee (like any relationship). When she divorces, their separation becomes an acknowledgment of “ineradicable separateness” because she faces the reality that “they do not share a common language” (Hoffman 340). Hoffman makes the following confession: “in the smallest, quietest phrases ... I know most poignantly that we don’t speak exactly the same language” (190). This confession suggests that love means loving the person *and* their world, entering their cultural and linguistic codes intimately. Hoffman’s success in a subsequent relationship may be attributed to her “deepening ... English-language sense of self” (Besemere 341).

### Gloria Anzaldúa

Unlike Hoffman, Anzaldúa's story is *not* about choices she makes to juggle between cultures and languages. Rather it is a personal and politically voiced narrative about embracing hybridized identification. The cultural group occupies a dominant role in how Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* addresses issues of identity. In this *autohistoria* (a mixture of autobiography and historical experience) Anzaldúa claims a multi-subjective identity inside "psychological and spiritual borderlands" that frame her "creative process" as Chicana (Câliz-Montoro 11). Like Goto and Hong Kingston, Anzaldúa re-scripts her otherwise marginalized female voice as an empowered one. Her *autohistoria* is, in my opinion, a more complex narrative structure than Goto's 'process of re-telling personal myth...a departure from historical 'fact' [her grandmother's history] into the realms of contemporary folk legend' (Acknowledgements Goto). It is also different from Hong Kingston's conflation of mythological and real experience because Anzaldúa embodies *different* mythological and real subjects in her narrative. She questions herself as "a subject [who] occupies multiple spaces simultaneously" (Câliz-Montoro 11). In addition, as an autobiography, Anzaldúa's life story also differs from Hoffman's. It is more than a re-telling of childhood and adult life experiences. Her *autohistoria* is, as Sonia Saldivar-Hull points out, a "socio-politically specific elaboration of late twentieth-century *feminist* Chicana epistemology" (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 1). Anzaldúa grows up in a

cultural environment where “males make the rules and laws; women transmit them ... [where] the culture and the Church insist that women are subservient to males” (38-39). Her story is therefore “riddled with uncertainties, paradoxes and double even triple binds” (Câliz-Montoro 12). She rebels against fixed models of thinking that refuse her access to such multiple *binds*. “Even as a child I would not obey....Instead of ironing my younger brothers’ shirts or cleaning the cupboards, I would pass many hours studying, reading, painting, writing....Nothing in my culture approved of me” (Anzaldúa 38). As a lesbian, and as a woman of color, Anzaldúa’s desire to formulate gender and subjectivity on her terms is more combative, polemical than the other writers I focus on in this chapter.

In essay two, *Movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que traicionan* Anzaldúa speaks about personal rebellion and betrayal. Angry, she reveals her desire to deconstruct the dominant male ideology of her community. She asserts her voice as an “Aztec female” illustrating how “her Chicana identity is grounded in the Indian woman’s history of resistance” (43). “Chicana borderland aesthetic is one which is in a constant state of transition” (Câliz-Montoro 14). This transition mirrors Anzaldúa’s movement between codes. Her desire to move between subjectivities reminds readers of how Anzaldúa like other feminists are as women “skilled at stepping into spaces (forms) created by the patriarchal superego and cleverly subverting them” (De Lotbinière-Harwood 94). This act of subverting the patriarchal voice dominates Anzaldúa’s narrative as a “writer, as a woman...as a woman of

colour” and as a lesbian of colour (Minh-ha 28). In essay three entitled *Entering Into the Serpent* Anzaldúa talks about pagan beliefs specific to Mexican Catholics, grounding her faith in both physical and spiritual/psychic realities. She rewrites herself by “tracing the mythic landscape which originates in Aztec tradition” (Câliz-Montoro 13). Through a conflation of spiritual references and factual personal realities she illustrates her desire to elevate her feminine subjectivity towards a more spiritual realm. Moreover, language becomes

l'équivalence de l'amour et de la guerre: dans les deux cas, il s'agit de *conquérir*, de *ravir*, de *capturer* ... l'amoureux – celui qui a été ravi – est toujours implicitement féminisé (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 223).

The serpent represents occult spirituality, feminine subjectivity and sexuality.

It is

the symbol of the dark sexual drive, the chthonic (underworld), the feminine, the serpentine movement of sexuality, of creativity, the basis of all energy and life (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 57).

Throughout her *autohistoria*, Anzaldúa conflates historical and personal experience with spiritual and sexual undertones. This is her strongest tool of empowerment. By weaving personal story inside historical references, she illustrates her desire to be understood collectively thus entwining her personal revolution with that of the communal Chicano revolution. Spiritual references empower her lesbian feminine sexuality. For instance, “the serpent’s mouth ... guarded by rows of dangerous teeth, a sort of *vagina dentate* ... [is] the most sacred place on earth, a place of refuge, the creative womb from which all things were born and to which all things returned” (56). In this way, the

serpent's mouth becomes a symbolic entry into the spiritual and creative essence of Anzaldúa's sexual and feminine subjectivity. Moreover, the serpent goddess is a strong symbol against the hierarchy of the male-dominated Azteca-Mexica. Even more compelling is the image of the "desexed *Guadalupe*" the Mexican Virgin Mary in the role of "defender (or patron)" a role "traditionally ... assigned to male gods" (51). By weaving the story of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and drawing upon the sexual symbolism of the serpent into her story, Anzaldúa gives her Chicana lesbian voice a powerfully *hybridized identification* of feminine subjectivity.

In the fourth essay *La herencia de Coatlicue/The Coatlicue State*, she "enacts her multiple subjectivities" through "her "inner self, the sum total of all [her]...reincarnations [and her lesbian desires as], the godwoman," that "pulsate" in her body and grow stronger (72). She refers to the Coatlicue state as the "symbol of the underground aspects of the psyche" (68) stating that knowledge and consciousness (perhaps a deeper awareness of her sexuality) allow her "a travesia, a crossing," a move forward (70). This notion of 'travesia' is an integral component of how Anzaldúa (re)writes herself. In her essay, "A Not-So-New Spelling of My Name", Elaine Chang explains that for feminists such as Anzaldúa, "the partial perspective of the white Western feminist is a kind of visual dis-order or double vision" (254). For Anzaldúa, locating oneself as the product of "racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollination" engenders a kind of "hybrid perception [which is] anchored in a hybrid subjective reality" (255). Anzaldúa views the borderlands,

geographically and metaphorically, as a physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual space. As she states, it exists “where two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy” (Anzaldúa 19). To shrink the space between her multiple subjectivities, Anzaldúa writes to “hear about Herself . . . the emergence of a writing self . . . to a consolidation of writing from the self” (Minn-ha 28). Anzaldúa allows her writing self to surface from her innate desire to free *Herself* and all her multiple subjectivities.

As I point out in Chapter Three, writing simultaneously in different languages without translating everything into English is a powerful tool of expression for Anzaldúa. “It has tongues which are split with Spanish and English and sprinkled with Nahuatl” (Câliz-Montoro 12). She breaks down paradigms and extract her narrating *I* and her ideological *I* from any fixed “traditional frames . . . oppressive histories and myths that censor” her difference(s) (Smith 154). Her multilingual discourse may be understood as a symbolic assertion of her dualities and contradictions as a mestiza Chicana lesbian feminist. This position is not a comfortable one. As Homi Bhabha explains

the inscription of the minority subject *somewhere between the too visible and the not visible enough* returns us to Eliot’s sense of cultural difference and intercultural connection, as being beyond logical demonstration. And it requires that the discriminated subject, *even in the process of its reconstruction*, be located in a present moment that is temporarily disjunctive and effectively ambivalent (“Culture’s In-Between” (56).

Anzaldúa's multisubjectivity is a key element of *reconstruction* in how she chooses to define herself. As she moves between the different linguistic voices and cultural codes of her hybrid subjectivity, she illustrates her simultaneous ambivalence and comfort in this movement between selves. Her narrative sits inside a Bakhtinian discourse where "the collision between differing points of view on the world...are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words" (Bakhtin qtd. in Bhabha 58). Anzaldúa explains that "The *Aztecas del norte*...compose the largest single tribe or nation of Anishinabeg (Indians) found in the United States today....[who]...call themselves Chicanos and see themselves as people whose true homeland is Aztlan (the U.S. Southwest)" (Anzaldua 23). However, out of shame, many Mexicans do not acknowledge their indigenous ancestry. The following poem illustrates Anzaldúa's multisubjective identity:

To live in the Borderlands means you  
 Are neither *hispana india negra española*  
*Ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata*, half-breed  
 Caught in the crossfire between camps  
 While carrying all five races on your back  
 Not knowing which side to turn to, run from,  
 To survive the Borderlands  
 You must live *sin fronteras*  
 Be a crossroads (Anzaldúa qtd. In Câliz-Montoro 14).

Thus her hybrid literary strategy, her "autobiographical manifesto" between languages and cultural codes allows Anzaldua to transcribe her narrating *I* as a "moi poétique"<sup>iii</sup> (Smith 155). It also permits her to employ language as a metaphor of desire because she enters a "dialogical engagement with history and fantasy" (154). By conflating her ideological *I* with a "moi poétique" she

also conflates her role as writer and poet. Her description of the geographic and political significance of the U.S.-Mexican border as an open wound: “*es una herida abierta,*” where the “Third World grates against the first and bleeds” confirms the importance she places on a poetic communication (Anzaldúa 25).

In a more polemical example, she juxtaposes the arrogant tone of an English poem inside a bitter commentary. This strategy allows her to challenge the dominant message of white American superiority. In her essay entitled *The Homeland Aztlán/El otro México*, the following poem asserts her point of view.

The justice and benevolence of God  
 will forbid that...Texas should again  
 become a howling wilderness  
 trod only by savages, or...benighted  
 by the ignorance and superstition,  
 the anarchy and rapine of Mexican misrule.  
 The Anglo-American race are destined  
 to be forever the proprietors of  
 this land of promise and fulfillment.  
 Their laws will govern it,  
 their learning will enlighten it,  
 their enterprise will improve it.  
 Their flocks range its boundless pastures,  
 for them its fertile lands will yield...  
 luxuriant harvests...  
 The wilderness of Texas has been redeemed  
 by Anglo-American blood and enterprise (Wharton qtd. in  
 Anzaldúa 29).

Anzaldúa’s response to this poem written by William H. Wharton is a scathing condemnation of “white superiority [and how they] seized complete political power, stripping Indians and Mexicans of their land while their feet were still rooted in it” (29). Inserting such poems into her *autohistoria* allows Anzaldúa

to contest hegemony, what Sidonie Smith refers to as “the subjectivity of [the] universal man,” someone who represents “authority, legitimacy, and readability” (Smith and Watson 155). Moreover, by including poems, epigraphs, phrases and words in her autobiographical manifesto, in a mixture of Spanish and English, Anzaldúa not only celebrates difference, she asserts her hybrid subjectivities.

Anzaldúa’s writing goes further than Goto’s or Hong Kingston’s in the ways she chooses to re-script her identity. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she re-molds differences of language, race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation to shape her *mestiza* (hybrid) identity. The anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, published in 1981, provides a time-specific framework for Anzaldúa’s polemical discourse in her *autohistoria* (an autobiographical and historical story account of her personal life). In the anthology, she identifies herself as a Third World woman writer thus differentiating her position and female voice from white feminist writers. She can only wield her power through writing and by reclaiming all her tongues. It is this reclamation that is perhaps the strongest marker of her hybrid identity.

In essay five entitled *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, Anzaldúa claims her multiple subjectivity through the eight languages she speaks: Standard English, Working class and slang English, Standard Spanish, Standard Mexican Spanish, and related dialects. However, she refers to this multiplicity as “linguistic terrorism” because Chicanas view their language “as illegitimate, a bastard language” criticizing how they “internalize [the way

their]...language has been used against [them]...by the dominant culture” and how they now use their language against each other (Anzaldúa 80). Playing with language in this way, in all seven of her essays also illustrates Anzaldúa’s desire and her longing to give her multiple subjectivities a powerful voice. Moreover, as a lesbian of colour in the 80s, she views herself as “invisible both in the white male mainstream (literary) world and in the white women’s feminist world, though (she acknowledges that) in the latter this is gradually changing” (Anzaldúa 165). Her refusal to translate the Spanish and Nahuatl words, phrases, epigraphs and poems in this *autohistoria* asserts her *mestiza* specificity. “The metaphor of crossroads ... inconclusiveness ... best reflects [Anzaldúa’s] Chican[a] reality” (Câliz-Montoro 14-15). This need to evoke, and openly experience her multiple subjectivities is obvious in the way Anzaldúa views notions of territory, and nation.

Homi Bhabha suggests that the boundaries that separate one group of people from another are “Janus-faced ... both communal and authoritarian, friendly and bellicose, all at the same time...the most vital thing about it is its chameleon content” (Nation and Narration 45). In essay one, *The Homeland, Aztlan/El otro Mexico*, Anzaldúa traces the historical and political events which lead to the appropriation of Mexican land, the creation of borders between Texas and Mexico that resulted in illegal crossings. By referring to Texas as Aztlan, she voices her desire to reclaim this land as Mexican and indigenous, simultaneously claiming hybrid specificity as a consequence of such cultural crossing.

Anzaldúa's desire to reclaim her multiple subjectivities across borders takes her beyond geographical and political lines into "discussions of intersecting oppressions" (Martinez 544). She refers to the borderlands as a physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual space. To shrink the space between her multiple subjectivities, Anzaldúa interweaves Spanish into her English narrative. This, as Smith and Watson point out

effectively traces the hybridity of her own identity in a way that suggests how multiple and intersectional identities can be. The very title both differentiates English from Spanish and joins them at the border of the slash. The "I"/eye moves back and forth across the border, just as Anzaldúa writes of navigating the intersections of sexuality, ethnicity, gender, and nationality at the constructed borderland of Texas and Mexico (37).

Anzaldúa cannot define herself through any *one* space of reference. She understands that

(a)s a *mestiza* [she has] ... no country...yet all countries are ... [hers] because ... [she is] ... every woman's sister or potential lover. As a lesbian [she has] ... no race, [her] ... own people disclaim ... [her]; but ... [she is in essence] all races because there is a queer of ... [her] in all races. [She is] ... 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, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, [she is] ... an act of kneading, of uniting and joining...a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings (Anzaldúa 102-103).

I characterize Anzaldúa's desire to embrace her subjectivity in such multiple terms as her most powerful tool of resistance. "The blurring of boundaries ... in her narrative of bloodlines and borders ... is an oppositional stance ... within the hegemonic domain of power" (Martinez 546). By blurring boundaries, she

asserts her othered identity as a lesbian/male/female, a mestiza Texan/Chicana, and a Chicana feminist. She reveals her particular mestiza genealogy by defining her sexuality as “being both male and female...the embodiment of the *hieros gamos*: the coming together of opposite qualities within” (Anzaldúa 41). This example also reveals her desire to cloak her identity in fluid terms.

She contests any ideology that denies her right to be:

Catholic/divine/pagan/supernatural, sexual/homosexual, Mexican/indigenous/Texan, and male/female. I employ slashes between these words to demonstrate how “multiple and intersectional” her identity is, both joining and dividing her at these different borders (Smith and Watson 37). To address her dualities and contradictions, she refers to herself as the Shadow-Beast, the symbol of rebellion.

Moreover, focusing on her multiple subjectivities also allows Anzaldúa to distinguish her feminist discourse from that of white feminists, another representation of an unfulfilled longing to establish her own Chicana feminist specificity. In her essay: “Beyond postmodern politics: Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault,” Honi Fern Haber speaks of Foucault’s “view of the relationship between language and power” rejecting his “view that the power of phallogocentric discourse is total” since “discourse is ambiguous and plurivocal, it is [therefore also] a site of conflict and contestation. Thus, women, [like Anzaldúa] can adopt and adapt [discourse]...to their own ends” (102). “Use of her own personal biography to describe the injustices suffered by her family in Texas and her use of poetry to convey a history of the Mexican people ... are

forthright critiques of oppression” (Martinez 549). Anzaldúa “contests the old inscriptions, the old histories, the old politics, the *ancient regime*...our social reality...what Donna Haraway describes as our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction” (Smith 157). Anzaldúa constructs her own particular hybrid genealogy and feminist discourse that “interpolates [her]...as native to the Americas and with a non-Western, multiple identity” (Anzaldúa 2). She refuses to accept a feminist discourse derived from a Western perspective, based on binary forms of representation.

They were white and a lot of them were dykes and very supportive. But they were also blacked out and blinded out about our multiple oppressions....They wanted to apply their notion of feminism across all cultures....They never left their whiteness at home....However, they wanted me to give up my Chicananess and become part of them; I was asked to leave my race at the door” (231).

Thus, she creates a narrating *I* that allows her to “find [her] own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on [her]” (38). She explains that nothing “in [her] culture approved of” her so she must confront the “rebel” within, her (38). In essay six, *Tilli, Tlapalli/The Path of the Red and Black Ink*, she focuses on her writing as her greatest desire, an “endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be” (95). She refers to her stories as “acts...enacted” every time they are spoken aloud or read silently,” they translate as “performances and not as inert and “dead” objects...the work manifests the same needs as a person, it needs to be “fed,” *la tengo que banar y vestir*” (89). In her final essay *La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness*, she concludes by expressing a desire for “a mestiza

consciousness ... [and asking for a] breaking down of paradigms [ones dependent] ... on the straddling of two or more cultures” (102). Anzaldua wishes to converge binaries that divide her identity resonate in all her essays and poems. She describes her existing hybrid in-between space as “awkward, uncomfortable and frustrating...because... [she is] in the midst of [continual] transformation” (Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera* 237). This transformation process is inevitably multi-faceted, full of contradictions and connections. Drawing upon contradictions and connections to trace hybrid subjectivities are of great value in how we can begin to understand and accept difference(s) as creative spaces.

### Conclusion

In the four works that are the focus of this chapter, it is clear that storytelling plays a dominant role in how feminine subjectivity is negotiated and (re)constructed. The “use of biography and fiction to convey injustices and atrocities ... is evocative of a tradition among sociologists who used fictional works to convey sociological meaning” (Martinez 550). The narrators in question are “disconcertingly hybrid native[s] ...strangely familiar, and different precisely in that unprocessed familiarity” (“Traveling Cultures”, Clifford 97). Moreover, in the writings of Goto, Hong Kingston, and Anzaldúa the issue of being women of colour has a significant impact in their methods of resistance and their construction of feminine subjectivity. Their affirmation of a hybrid feminine identity is a negotiation and a celebration of their differences. Poetic and polemical, in varying degrees, their stories offer a

substantive and validating point of view of hybridized identification and code-switching between cultures and languages rather than simply presenting a glossed over desire for exotic *otherness*.

Their meaning-making process and translation of feminine subjectivity suggests that people who live between different cultures seek *creative* connectivity as a hybrid push-and-pull between different feminine codes. Addressing issues of identity and feminine subjectivity inside such a framework, it becomes almost impossible to claim self-representation as a construction of singular or even homogeneous cultural values. No matter how hard they try to resist, such individuals inevitably find themselves drawn in by different cultural, linguistic, and historical markers. They must cloak their specificity in heterogeneous markers of culture, shifting between ambiguity, concealment, and contradictory visions of Self and *Other*. Their in-between passages and connectivity between cultures may be better understood as a reframing of Freud's vision of how "we regress [and advance] where and when we can, and what we regress [and advance] to [as] the dream of perfect authority and love" (Freud qtd. in Edmundson xi). If as Freud suggests we spend our entire lives trying to fill the gaps "between desire and delivery" left to us by our mothers and fathers, then I read the gaps between cultural connectivity in similar terms (xi). Such parental notions of *desire and deliver* should, in my opinion, extend beyond what is passed onto children by their parents. If for instance, an individual's sense of self and perhaps even self-worth is determined, or strongly dictated, by voids left in unsatisfied parent-

child relationships I would then suggest that the connection between individuals and *Other* people and their cultural codes are important, even complex, aspects of how such voids could be filled. Moreover, I would argue that the desire to experience culture outside fixed codes leads to more creative spaces of belonging and connectivity between people. Creativity is an art form as much as it is a coping mechanism for what life throws at people. How different cultural and linguistic codes come together in models of identity construction are complex and challenging. However I would further argue that the potential for creative reward justifies these zones of conflict and connectivity. Any environment that encourages individuals to learn about and to understand their differences in relation to *Other* differences has value. As rose-colored as it may be, I believe that confronting and understanding zones of conflict caused by differences will ultimately lead to connectivity between people, their cultures and their different views of how life should be experienced. If individuals can find pacific, harmonious, even lyrical ways to define and accept difference then there is greater hope for a future of hybridized communities. Literature, like all art forms, affords us this opportunity to dream about such spaces of connectivity.

All the texts that are the subject of this chapter address hybridity as an inevitable aspect of the immigrant female voice. Paterson explores this idea in her analysis of *Other* and how it surfaces in Quebec literature. She explains how

hybridité constitue à la fois la forme et le sens du texte. Comment en effet dire l'exil, la fragmentation de l'être, la perte identitaire sinon par

le biais de l'hybride....Au cœur de cette hybridité où se croisent tant de textes et de discours, il y a encore un autre sens à dévoiler : celui d'une écriture qui s'exhibe dans la productivité, sa matérialité et son désir....Écrire alors dans l'espoir de se refaire une identité, de se reconstituer comme sujet dans la société et l'Histoire; écrire pour se souvenir et pour oublier en même temps; écrire...pour dire la parole immigrante (Paterson 163-164).

The vision of the immigrant *Other* voice in Quebec literature that Paterson advocates as a positive image may be applied to the writings of Goto, Hong Kingston, Hoffman and Anzaldúa. Desire for *Other* is ultimately a validation of how individuals wish to translate themselves. In the preceding quotation, Paterson states that we write to remember and to forget. It is an act of giving birth to something new by retelling the story in different forms and by validating *Others* rather than marginalizing them. This is particularly true for an immigrant who must negotiate a new voice alongside the voice of their cultural origins. Such voices then are an affirmative representation of hybrid identity and connectivity between cultures. They are transgressed, even ambivalent spaces that illustrate the importance of reinvention if we wish to *creatively* connect between cultures and tear down fixed or binary positions that negatively other communities, cultures and individuals.

It is understood, even expected that there will always be some level of marginality in any outsider position. It is a fragile zone of negotiation where the ontological screen of reference becomes, in varying degrees, punctured, multiple. However I understand this zone of negotiation between cultures and languages as one of privilege. Readers can and should focus on the richness they experience through an understanding and sharing of such relationships. I

would equate this privilege as a sensorial discovery of *Other* worlds, *Other* cultural and linguistic codes which allow us to (re)assign value in how we translate identity. It is, in many ways, a seductive meaning-making process, a kind of love-making, a dance between Self and *Other*, where the song and the music is experienced through the written words. Thus the process of *how* we translate experience is emphasized as much as the meaning of the experience. Intensely passionate, the works of Hong Kingston, Hoffman, Anzaldúa, and Goto project *otherness* and difference as a challenging, intimate process of self-awareness and self-acceptance. These writers remind readers, at times diabolically, of how we are different yet similar. Negotiating identity is a process of continuous change, and redefinition, especially in how immigrant feminine subjectivity is addressed inside North America's growing diversity. I view each difference, each change as something unique, and privileged. Literature, like poetry, music and dance affords us an intimate and *creative* vision of how we connect with each other. It is a personal sacred negotiation between how words and worlds come together across barriers of difference(s). To frame the idea of *creative* connectivity between cultures and/or languages I promote in this thesis, the negotiation process is best understood within a Barthesian sphere of friendship – *une relation privilégiée*.

Marquée par une différence sensible, rendue à l'état d'une sorte d'inflexion affective absolument singulière, comme celle d'une voix au grain incomparable ; et chose paradoxale, cette relation [*privilégiée*] [sans]...aucun obstacle à la multiplier : rien que des privilèges, en somme ; la sphère amicale était ainsi peuplée de relations duelles (d'où une grande perte de temps : il fallait voir les amis un à un : résistance au groupe, à la bande, au

raout). Ce qui était cherché, c'était un pluriel sans égalité, sans in-différence (Barthes 67).

In the preceding quotation, Barthes speaks of privileged connections between friends. Similarly, the selected works in this chapter illustrate how individual identity, in this instance feminine subjectivity, must be understood as a desire for a hybrid negotiation of connectivity between selves, and between cultures. Such an experience is best understood one experience at a time, outside the pressures and boxed in definitions of collective models of identity. Such a zone of privilege can, in my opinion, offer individuals a better understanding of collective narrative identities. The relational aspect of hybrid identity between groups should never be overlooked because individuals must find connectivity inside groups. However such connectivity becomes more *creative* when it is discovered and understood as *une relation privilégiée*, like the sphere of friendship spoken of by Barthes, one relationship at a time.

## CHAPTER TWO

**Performative narratives** and *Other* desires of the socially and culturally defined male immigrant voice.

To imagine that some little thing – food, sex, power, fame – will make you happy is to deceive yourself. Only something as vast and deep as your real self can make you truly and lastingly happy.

~ Nisargadatta

I continue my exploration of the hybrid self, a negotiation of passages between dominant and minority representations, this time through the socially and culturally defined male voice. In Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory* (1982), Dany Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un negre sans se fatiguer* (1985), and Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion* (1990), the hybrid self emerges in those instances where there is connectivity between cultures. As in chapter one, this connectivity with *Others* is experienced and explored as a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. The selected works in this chapter illustrate how an individual's relationship with *Others* needs to be understood as « un pluriel sans égalité » outside the pressure of group dynamics. In this chapter, sexual space is an important focus because it captures different images of how these writers read themselves and how they wish to be read by others. Each writer's vision of sexual space is a key factor in understanding their particular (dis)connectivity between dominant and *Other* cultures. Thus, there is an important link between sexual space and the physical and cultural environment each protagonist occupies. This link is a

critical backdrop for understanding how each writer conveys the male voice in his works.

In the same way that a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* with *Others* validates the importance of relationships as one-on-one encounters rather than those formed inside group dynamics, I rely on Paul Ricœur's idea of *Oneself as Another* to illustrate a correlation between self-identification and multiple subjectivities or hybrid identity under the same lens of intimate connectivity.

Within a Ricœurian discourse, this notion can be broken down in two ways:

- Les événements mentaux et la conscience, en quelque sens qu'on prenne ce terme, pourront seulement figurer parmi les prédicats spéciaux attribués à la personne. Cette dissociation entre la personne comme entité publique et la conscience comme entité privée est de la plus grande importance.
- ... une conscience n'est pas exclusivement exprimée par les pronoms de la première et de la seconde personne du singulier .... Ils sont attribués à *quelqu'un* qui peut être aussi une troisième personne. (Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* 47).

What Ricœur speaks of in the preceding points is the notion of selfhood as a public and as a private entity. I focus on selfhood as a movement between private and public spaces in this chapter. However a person can only understand themselves, i.e. how they see themselves in the first person through the presence and the vision of the second person. In his second point Ricœur goes on to state that the first person may also be identified through a third person. This premise of the subject 'I' being understood as a private entity in the second and third person is quite pertinent to understanding the narrative styles in the works of Rodriguez, Laferrière and D'Alfonso. I understand

subjectivity in these works through Bhabha's *performative* discourse, as a reflective illustration between Self and *Other*.

In these works, this idea of recognizing oneself through the image of the *Other* is ultimately a connective state between the subject *I* and his vision of himself as seen through the second person and third person singular. In their desire to reconcile culture, citizenship, and self-identity, Rodriguez, Laferrière and D'Alfonso promote subjectivity as a hybrid concept in the third person, created somewhere between the connectivity of the subject *I* and his counter *Other*. Such relational connectivity is also negotiated inside group dynamics or constraints therefore "there is no single concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes" (Young 27). The emphasis is on the impossibility of locating the self, one's subjectivity, without reference to one's *Other* aspects, seen through *Others*. Moreover, the notion of selfhood is a reminder that the fate of one individual is tied up in the fate of *Others*.

If one's selfhood comes about through the coming together and separation of oneself and *Other* then selfhood is also a construction of the third person. I would then argue that the relational value of Self and *Other* is therefore dependent on the third person, one that is more-or-less always in movement. This movement is illustrated differently by the three writers I focus on in this chapter. Laferrière toys with self-hood and connectivity between Self and *Other* by interlacing his public and private spaces in a black and white sexual frame. D'Alfonso addresses selfhood as a movement, a process of creation between different public and private cultural spaces. Rodriguez

illustrates a more analytical expression of self-hood focused on his public spaces. In these spaces, he becomes a third person translation, a distanced *I* alienated from his private cultural and sexual identities. I therefore position his subject *I* inside shifting public American spaces.

Ricœur's ideas of narrative emplotment or "the kingdom of the as if" that I understand as unfulfilled longings for hybrid relationships help us distinguish between Rodriguez and the other two writers. In Rodriguez's "kingdom of the as if" desire for citizenship in white American terms prevents him from embracing his Mexican culture wholeheartedly. Consequently there is a brick wall between his selfhood and his corresponding images of *Other* selves. This means that Rodriguez, at least in this period of his life, remains trapped inside a more-or-less Americanized public vision of self-hood. Unlike Ricœur's model, his third person entity cannot freely dialogue or identify with his first person self. So rather than forming a connective state between these entities, Rodriguez's sense of self-hood is barricaded inside a static and isolated lens. Unfortunately the version of American citizenship offered to him does not correspond to his vision of American privilege. Moreover he finds himself forced to straddle aspects of a Mexican cultural self (through Affirmative Action programs for instance) he has not chosen for himself. Unlike D'Alfonso and Laferrière who tease readers by playfully straddling different cultural codes, Rodriguez's narrative translates such movement between cultures as zones of conflict. His narrative voice remains fixed inside zones of *pedagogy* unable to move into spaces of the *performative*.

Contrarily, Laferrière's writing plays with cultural codes. He provokes a Ricœurian understanding of the "kingdom of the as if" by collapsing and subsequently reinventing stereotypes of black and white relationships. In his narrative, self-hood is an invention of how Self as *Other* playfully creates connectivity. Shifting playfully between Bhabha's notion of *pedagogy* and the *performative*, Laferrière blurs binaries between stereotypes. In another vein, D'Alfonso's protagonist Fabrizio "organize[s]...life retrospectively," re-creating his lived experiences on his own cultural terms, ones clearly hybrid in nature (Ricœur 162). Laferrière and D'Alfonso illustrate a desire for « la traversée vers l'autre...le retour vers soi...le vœu d'établir une nouvelle relation, à travers la rencontre » with *Others*, ultimately a *performative* space (Simon 65). Laferrière explores such desire through sexual experiences between his black protagonist and college-aged white women. He assigns each woman in his story with the prefix *Miz* thereby toying with stereotypes and how he assigns them to white women. This assignment reverses power dynamics since the black protagonist names the players and decides how their personalities will be translated. In D'Alfonso's work, a *nouvelle relation* between Québécois and immigrant populations may be viewed as a needed convergence of cultural, sexual and romantic differences. In both works, the hybrid self emerges as an unfulfilled longing for connectivity with *Others* witnessed through geographic, political, sexual and cultural tensions and/or *creative* connectivities.

Rodriguez cannot embrace his self-hood as a construction of connectivity between cultural or sexual spaces. First, becoming an American culturally and linguistically means he cannot embrace his *Other* status as Mexican. Moreover because he does not speak of his homosexuality in *Hunger of Memory* the parts he suppresses prevent readers from engaging with his particular construction of selfhood intimately. In this work, the absence of Rodriguez's personal experiences with *Others* interfere with a more complete understanding of his life. "I wanted something – I couldn't say exactly what. I told myself that [what] I wanted [was] a more passionate life ... [one that was] less thoughtless ... less alone" (71). I read the loneliness Rodriguez speaks of as a marker of his low self-esteem brought upon by his cultural loss and his closeted state. In his later works, he speaks openly of his homosexuality and why he could not come out in this first publication of his life story. The absence of more intimate details about Rodriguez suggests that his self-hood is negatively affected by his negotiation of identity. His frame, a Ricœurian *soi-même comme un autre* model of identity has negative consequences. He can only re-frame himself as a multiple subject once he embraces those parts of his identity that focus on his differences: his Mexican culture and his homosexuality.

The passionate life Rodriguez seeks, Laferrière's protagonist Vieux lives, albeit in a *performative* context. He celebrates being black through a satirical representation of his sexuality. Vieux's life consists of writing, reading, eating, and having sex. He does not explicitly express the same

concerns as Rodriguez about citizenship and its perceived advantages. He focuses instead on life's simple pleasures, letting them satiate his basic needs. Laferrière parodies the sexual prowess of the black man to mockingly confront « le mythe du Nègre animal, primitif, barbare, qui ne pense qu'à baiser, être sûr que tout ça EST vrai ou faux » (Laferrière 48-49). Such statements may be read as messages of contestation against the stereotyping or marginalization of black men. As Homi Bhabha points out, "the strategy of colonial desire is to stage the drama of identity...at the edge, in-between the black body and the white body, [where] there is a tension of meaning and being, or some would say demand and desire" (*The Location of Culture* 89). Laferrière's conflation of fantasy and the real play on the ideas of "demand and desire" Bhabha speaks of. He seeks an original representation of selfhood, outside pre-determined dynamics of racial power, one that allows him to openly and intimately engage with *Others*.

D'Alfonso's focus on sexual relationships also fits a Ricœurian vision of self-hood. Through the negotiation of passages between different cultural and linguistic lines, his narrative favors an interaction between cultures. Fabrizio's first romantic encounter is with Léah, a young Hungarian girl. She becomes an important symbol of how Fabrizio claims his desire for *Other* spaces. Her attraction to Fabrizio illustrates her wish to engage with someone outside her culture. « J'ai tellement envie de poser mes lèvres hongroises sur celles d'un Italien » (D'Alfonso, *Avril ou l'anti-passion* 74). At 16, the protagonist Fabrizio begins his encounter with the *Other* through what he

refers to as « une longue série de rencontre-promenades » (74), meetings that teach him about the complications and pleasures of loving someone « qui peut aimer sans frontières, sans loi, sans raison » (82). I read sexual exchanges in Laferrière's and D'Alfonso's works as a conflation of sex and language(s) and sex and culture(s). I interpret this focus on sexual relationships between different races and cultures as a symbolic consumption of *Other* cultures, and as an affirmation of Ricœurian self-love therefore a proclamation of love for *another*. In his work(s), Rodriguez does not openly speak of sexual relationships. Unable to openly embrace his homosexuality, low self-esteem and loneliness punctuate Rodriguez's narrative.<sup>iv</sup> In contrast the symbolic function of sexuality (absent in Rodriguez's writing) I speak of in the works of Laferrière and D'Alfonso provide a framework for understanding hybrid subjectivity as a validating construction of an individual's negotiation of passages between cultural markers.

Rodriguez's story is situated in Sacramento, California in the 1960s and the 1970s. Laferrière's story takes place in the 1980s in Montréal. Like Rodriguez, D'Alfonso's protagonist grows up in the 1960s and 1970s, but in Montréal. Inside these geographic spaces and time specific narratives, the three works illustrate negotiations between dominant and minority cultures differently. Laferrière and D'Alfonso embrace their cultures of origin, their sexuality, and their love of others openly. Their desire to engage in an intimate relationship with *Other* cultural spaces is illustrated through their construction of personal relationships and the level of intimacy and sexuality projected

inside those relationships. How they negotiate identity is time specific and it is a key factor in how each writer assumes his socially and culturally defined masculine voice. For Laferrière and D'Alfonso, it is apparent that intimacy with *Others* is a vital aspect of selfhood. They negotiate their subjectivity one relationship at a time as a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*.

However all three writers fragment and perform the voices of the *Other* citizen, the one who speaks from the peripheral margins of a dominant centre as a movement between inner and outer selves. In *Finding Your Own North Star*, Martha Beck refers to the essential self as “the basic you, stripped of options and special features...the essence of your personality” while the social self develops “in response to pressures from the people around you” (11-12). My usage of essential is limited to Beck’s definition of the word and it should not be conflated or confused with any reductionist theories of essentialism. Beck characterizes the behavioural patterns of the essential self as “attraction-based, unique, inventive, surprising, spontaneous [and] playful” and the social self as “avoidance-based, conforming, imitative, predictable, planned [and] hardworking” (13).

By rejecting and silencing characteristics that point to his Mexican ethnicity, Rodriguez’s essential self remains hidden from readers. On the other hand, Laferrière’s use of satire, i.e. the sexual relationships between his black protagonist and white women, is an illustration of Beck’s essential self. His playful humour and satirical style illustrate his *inventive* side and how his writing is *performative* in the ways it mocks and contests stereotypical

representations of identity in the black/white binary. Laferrière moves between aspects of Beck's essential and social selves each time he plays with this black/white binary. D'Alfonso's protagonist Fabrizio lives the role of a hybrid citizen as an Italian living between the French and English cultures. He illustrates the impossibility of living outside a hybrid perspective. His narrative suggests that he combines (rather than moves between) Beck's version of the social and essential self. Having to continually negotiate between two dominant linguistic and cultural climates, Fabrizio's journey towards hybrid subjectivity is more or less a foregone conclusion. However such a hybrid position is easier to negotiate for Fabrizio because he is a white *Other* traveling between two dominant white cultures. For Rodriguez and Laferrière, racial differences mean that negotiating connectivity between cultures is more complex and challenging. They must deconstruct their subjectivity while unconsciously eschewing the label of the *exotic*, visibly different *Other*. In her essay, "Nostalgic Narratives and the Otherness Industry," Mridula Nath Chakraborty explains this paradox of the *Other*: "In pluralistic democracies [the *Other*] becomes fetishised and multiply produced as an object of desire, while at the same time being socially articulated/discriminated against through the politics of difference" (127-128). While there is a sense of self-acceptance, pride and love of culture(s) and language(s) present in the works of D'Alfonso and Laferrière, it is hidden or absent in Rodriguez's writing. His exploration of selfhood is an illustration of class-based and colour-based choices one could say a street-smart *pedagogy*. Through distinct narrative strategies, each

writer's work illustrates an encounter with the *Other* through ties to family, sexuality, cultural and other community codes.

### Dany Laferrière

In Dany Laferrière's novel, *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* published in 1985, the protagonist, Vieux recounts his experiences in Montreal as he writes his novel *Paradis du dragueur nègre*. At the end of his work, Laferrière provides a chronology of his personal life from 1953 to 2002. This permits readers to vet the links between Vieux's experiences and Laferrière's personal ones. I will illustrate how the symbolism behind these relationships may help us understand Vieux's engagement with *Others* as a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. Even though the following list of chapter titles is extensively long, I include it here to illustrate and accentuate Laferrière's humorous tone:

*Le Nègre narcisse/la roué du temps occidental*  
*Belzébuth, le dieu des Mouches, habite l'étage au-dessus*  
*Le Nègre est du règne végétal*  
*Le cannibalisme à visage humain*  
*Quand la planète sautera, l'explosion nous surprendra dans une discussion métaphysique sur l'origine du désir*  
*Faut-il lui dire qu'une bauge n'est pas un boudoir?*  
*Et voilà Miz Littérature qui me fait une de ces pipes*  
*Miz Après-Midi sur une radieuse bicyclette*  
*Une Remington 22 qui a appartenu à Chester Himes*  
*La drague immobile/Miz Suicide sur le divan*  
*Un bouquet de lilas ruisselant de pluie/Comme une fleur au bout de ma pine nègre*  
*Nous voici Nègres métropolitains*  
*Une jeune écrivain noir de Montréal vient d'envoyer James Baldwin se rhabiller*  
*Rhyme électronique pour Miz Orange mécanique sur fond de conga nègre*  
*Une chronique de ma chambre au 3670 rue Saint-Denis*  
*Miz Snob sur un air d'India Song*

*Miz Mystic revient du Tibet*  
*Le poète nègre rêve d'enculer un bon vieux stal sur la perspective*  
*Nevsky*  
*Le pénis nègre et la démoralisation de l'Occident*  
*Le chat nègre à neuf queues/L'Occident ne s'intéresse plus au sexe,*  
*c'est pourquoi il essaie de l'avilir*  
*Le premier Nègre végétarien/Ma vieille Remington s'envoie en l'air en*  
*sifflotant 'y'a bon banania'*  
*Les Nègres ont soif*  
*On ne naît pas Nègre, on le devient.*

Laferrière's playful side surfaces through his choice of subtitles that parody the image of *le Nègre* while poking fun at white feminism. These subtitles are substantive enough to tell an entire story. I would like to point to the first (*le Nègre narcissé*) and last (*On ne naît pas Nègre, on le devient*) chapter headings as key ingredients in my interpretation of Laferrière's writing. Through parody his protagonist, the black *dragueur* Vieux, offers readers a symbolic understanding of his various sexual relationships with white women. His play with white feminism surfaces through such heading as *Et voilà Miz Littérature qui me fait une de ces pipes*. Such subtitles illustrate the *performative* aspects of Laferrière's narrative and aspects of his essential *inventive* self. At the end of this work, he also includes an extensive reference of the works he consulted to write this story. This list offers readers insight into the inspiration behind his writing.

Vieux taps into his essential self by reading such writers as Hemingway, Proust and Dante, having sex and drinking wine (21). Such artistic forms of hedonism sustain Vieux's core creative process, his *nègre narcissé*, as he writes his novel *Paradis d'un dragueur nègre*. The story takes place in Montréal in the 1980s. Vieux shares a very tiny apartment above a

topless bar (another marker of sexuality) with Bouba who lives on the couch. Vieux's bed is his life stage where « [i]l boit, lit, mange, médite et baise » (Laferrière, *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* 12). Their living conditions suggest they are poor. Unlike Rodriguez's story, class-based issues are not an explicit focus in Laferrière's work. However they satirically surface in those moments when Vieux engages in sexual activity with young white women from Westmount, a wealthy English neighborhood in Montreal. Bouba can play his music at three o'clock in the morning where even with « des murs aussi minces que du papier fin » nobody complains (11). It is another example of their impoverished but free lifestyle. Jazz (another symbolic marker of their improvised and impoverished life as Black men) music filters through their apartment day and night, an artistic backdrop for a rather hedonistic lifestyle. Vieux describes their lifestyle as « une ambiance assez baroque...le DÉJEUNER DES PRIMITIFS » (35). In Chapter One, *Le Nègre narcisse*, Vieux refers to the social climate in Montréal as difficult : « Ça va terriblement mal ces temps-ci pour un dragueur consciencieux et professionnel... une pierre noire dans l'histoire de la Civilisation Nègre » (17). In the French Larousse, the word dragueur means: « aborder quelqu'un en vue d'une aventure amoureuse ». In the Oxford dictionary, the English equivalent is 'flirt' meaning "to behave towards someone as if one finds them physically attractive but without any serious intention of having a relationship." In both definitions, it is understood that a sexual relationship does not equal an emotional one.

A polemical discourse underlies Vieux's escapades as a black dragueur. His sexual conquests may be read as a conquest of *Other* spaces. It is in the ambivalence of his message(s) that his negotiation as hybrid citizen and his desire for *creative* connectivity between cultures surfaces. He effectively blurs white and black stereotypes through his parody of sexual intimacy. I perceive Vieux's sexual relationships with different white women as a symbolic invasion of the occidental white man's geographic and personal territories. In Vieux's words : « C'EST SIMPLE : JE VEUX L'AMERIQUE. Pas moins. Avec toutes les girls de Radio City, ses buildings, ses voitures son énorme gaspillage et même sa bureaucratie » (31). Vieux's desire to possess *l'Amérique* mirrors Laferrière's refusal to attach his ontogenetic self (to borrow the term from John Eakin), his sense of belonging and nation to one particular place:

Je suis vraiment fatigué de tous ces concepts (métissage, antillanité, créolité, francophonie) qui ne font qu'éloigner l'écrivain de sa fonction première, faire surgir au bout de ses doigts, par la magie de l'écriture, la fleur de l'émotion (*Je suis fatigué* 115).

Laferrière's attachment to different spaces/places means that he does not like labels that force him to choose. Moreover his desire to be inventive and creative as a writer (qualities of Beck's essential self) takes precedence over cultural origins. His narrative style such as his chapter headings along with his protagonist Vieux's sexual encounters with different women is an illustration of the multiplicity of spaces he wishes to occupy and ultimately how he plays with stereotypes thus reversing the power dynamic in the black/white binary. This desire to move between literary and sexual spaces fits well with Beck's

model of the essential self as attraction-based and the idea of *creative* connectivity explored in this thesis.

Through Vieux's sexual encounters with affluent, young, white women Laferrière simultaneously mocks the role of the *black dragueur* and white women, feeding and collapsing different stereotypes. Vieux's most intimate relationship with *Miz Littérature* validates and combines his love of literature and sex. Such intimate connections with oneself (writing and reading) may be understood as an aspect of Bhabha's *pedagogy* and his sexual adventures with white *Others* as *performative*. Both aspects translate the notion of a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. The intimate manner in which *Miz Littérature* connects with Vieux may be read as an act of complete surrender. During the throes of passion, she yells out «BAISE-MOI» followed by « TU ES MON HOMME...TU ES LA PREMIÈRE PERSONNE À QUI JE DIS ÇA...JE VEUX ÊTRE À TOI » (Laferrière, *Comment faire l'amour* 50-51). I read Vieux's intimate relationship with someone named *Miz Littérature* in three ways. First, her desire to feel such closeness with Vieux is symbolic of the intimacy possible between a black man and white woman. Sexual exchanges are also the impetus for creative writing. In his most recent work, *Je suis fatigué*, Laferrière explains that he writes « généralement à l'aube, juste après avoir fait l'amour » (50). In *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer*, Vieux also writes after sex. Lastly, this relationship can be read as an allegory of Laferrière's romance with literature since he sometimes reads and shares sexual intimacy simultaneously. Moreover all of Vieux's sexual

encounters are with educated white women. The following declaration illustrates his desire to collapse other stereotypes. « Un Nègre qui lit, c'est le triomphe de la civilisation judéo-chrétienne ! La preuve que les sanglantes croisades ont eu, finalement, un sens. C'est vrai, l'Occident a pillé l'Afrique, mais ce NÈGRE EST EN TRAIN DE LIRE » (42). Once again, Laferrière's tone is humorous but laden in sarcasm towards those who continue to negatively marginalize black people. In such instances, Laferrière's narrative style illustrates his movement between Beck's model of an essential and social self as he sarcastically validates the black man who reads, an inventive approach in how he addresses prejudices.

Bouba is not only Vieux's roommate but his alter-ego. He is also a model of Beck's essential self, however a more simple one than Vieux. He drinks copious quantities of tea, eats, sleeps, listens to Jazz artists such as Charlie Parker and Miles Davis and cites passages from the Qur'an. He seems content doing nothing and going nowhere. Music, prayer and occasional counseling sessions with young women complete his daily routine. He has no real vocation and he appears unaffected by the outside world, except in his role as counsellor or mentor to white women in need. I view Bouba as Vieux's muse of spirituality. In fact when Bouba begins counselling *Miz Suicide*, Vieux does not understand. He describes her as « cette horreur aussi sexy qu'un poux » (70). Bouba responds: « La charité Vieux, tu ne connais pas ça » (71). There is indeed an ironic overtone as well as a latent sarcasm in this response with the idea that charity is offered by a black man to a white

woman! This collapse and reversal of black/white roles is *performative* in narrative style.

The first of ten instalments in Laferrière's *Autobiographie américaine*, Laferrière experiments with the notion of creative freedom. He refers to the conflation of fact and fiction in life and in literature as «la liberté totale» (*Je suis fatigué* 87). He views « le Nègre » as « une invention purement nord-américaine » and parodies this image in his work (*Je vis comme j'écris* 91). In this vein, he blurs the borders between his creative spirit and his personal interests. For instance, his references to great jazz artists and his numerous quotations from the Qur'an are *not* an illustration of his love of jazz or his faith in Islam. As he explains,

je me suis acheté un petit livre sur le jazz, un truc sommaire...j'ai fait la même chose avec le Coran. J'ai acheté un bouquin de règles coraniques et je m'en suis servi. Je m'en fous du contenu. C'est le rythme qui m'intéresse...quand les gens essaient de retrouver ma vie à chaque coin de page, ça me fait rigoler (*J'écris comme je vis* 101).

The title of his work *J'écris comme je vis* contradicts Laferrière's preceding words. The ambivalence in his writing is part of his creative writing strategy. I understand this ambivalence, Laferrière's « rythme » as his desire to create a kind of New Age music. This idea of jazz music as a tool to inspire, relax and even instill optimism in its listeners also has symbolic value because the improvisational aspects of jazz are like Vieux. The varied personalities of his lovers, for instance, illustrate Vieux's ability to improvise with each one in much the same ways instruments communicate between each other. Each encounter he has I understand as a solo, improvised and original in how Vieux

communicates with these women, creatively and with a certain musicality. His choice of white women allows him to toy with patterns of intellectual bourgeoisie and playfully, almost sardonically, question identity construction by moving between Beck's model of the social self as *imitative, planned* and the essential self as *inventive*. As Laferrière states in *Je suis fatigué*, « il faut jeter les idées et les émotions sur la page blanche, comme des légumes dans un chaudron d'eau bouillante. Mais d'abord et surtout, on doit commencer à écrire quand on ne sait pas quoi dire » (65). His desire to write is « tout simplement...quelque chose surgissant de [s]on intimité la plus profonde » (75). It is not his intention to « faire la sociologie urbaine » or to respond to such questions as: « Comment un jeune Haïtien nous voyait-il? » (75). He writes to « jeter la pleine lumière sur » lui et « [d]e descendre dans les ténèbres de [s]a pauvre âme » (75). While this may be true, Laferrière's style of parody and his treatment of black and white stereotypes suggest that he taps into Beck's model of the essential and social self by toying with socially accepted ideas. He also reveals his extended consciousness as he redefines such stereotypes. Antonio Damasio defines the extended consciousness

as going beyond the here and now of core consciousness. The here and now is still there, but it is flanked by the past, as much past as you may need to illuminate the now effectively, and, just as importantly, it is flanked by the anticipated future" (195).

Laferrière's satirical tone illustrates his implicit resistance to racial divisions as well as his desire to collapse fixed forms of subjectivity. In this way, his vision of self-hood is in continual movement between black and white binaries of self-hood. This brings to mind Harris's observation that

all patterns [of self-representation] are partial and as they break, the image changes. It appears to be the same image...two forces which resemble each other but are not the same. Thus one begins to open oneself up to new undreamt-of dimensions and regenerative possibilities” (Harris qtd. in Nasta 39).

For instance, Laferrière refers to Vieux and Bouba as occidental men who share an Islamic faith. George Elliot Clarke points out that the Qur’an “highlights [Laferrière’s] dissident vision of the Caucasian Occident (marked by the sign America) as a citadel of “evil-doers” and “infidels” (6). Laferrière also plays with the notion of white superiority within the master/slave context. « Se faire servir par une Anglaise (Allah est grand). Je suis comblé. Le monde s’ouvre, enfin, à mes vœux » (Laferrière, *Comment faire l’amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* 29). Moreover, through his interpretation of « le Nègre » he paints an image of these black men that is stereotypical in some ways and completely inventive in other ways. Such references illustrate his satirical contestation of black marginality.

In Jana Evans Braziel’s words, Laferrière’s “Haitianiz[ing] of white North America” shows his vision of identity and place to be consistent with my idea of hybrid identity (874). It is a continual negotiation of passages between culture(s) and place(s):

La vie est un acte collectif. Et si vous ne vivez pas dans le pays que vous habitez, ce que vous risquer c’est de tomber, très vite, dans l’univers de la fiction. De devenir en quelque sorte un être fictif (Laferrière, *Je suis fatigué* 102).

Laferrière detests labels that box him into a fixed category. He simply wants to be « un homme du Nouveau Monde » (115). However in the selected work I focus on his protagonist plays inside the French English language debate as a

French-speaking black man who engages in sexual relationships with white women. He chooses « une position mitoyenne » as American (115). « En acceptant d'être du continent américain, je me sens partout chez moi dans cette partie du monde » (*Je suis fatigué* 115). Since he speaks and writes in French, Laferrière negotiates subjectivity through his encounter with white Anglophone women. Moreover his desire to collapse black and white stereotypes illustrates, albeit through parody, his need for connectivity between cultures, color lines and male/female dynamics. Having lived in Port-au-Prince, Montréal and Miami, Laferrière also understands the complexities of labeling himself as simply Haitian. His nostalgic reflections of life in these cities illustrate a genuine connection to place:

Port-au-Prince, c'est le désir tourmenté qu'on trouve dans les paysages insolites et mystiques...Montréal m'a toujours fait penser à une jeune fille fraîche, directe et bien dégourdie. Montréal est devenu mon choix d'homme. Et Miami, mon lieu d'écriture...Port-au-Prince occupe mon cœur, Montréal ma tête, Miami mon corps...je ne quitte jamais une ville où j'ai vécu. Au moment où je mets les pieds dans une ville, je l'habite. Quand je pars, elle m'habite (*Je suis fatigué* 193).

The preceding quotation is taken from the last of his ten autobiographical works *Je suis fatigué* published in 2001. It provides an interesting commentary on Laferrière's satirical explorations of Vieux's sexual relationships with young women in Westmount, Montréal in *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer*. I read this first instalment of his autobiographical collection as Laferrière's own *drague* with Montréal. On the one hand, Vieux's sexual experiences with attractive white women in Montréal can be read as his simple appreciation of them but if we read all ten of his fictional

works (yet autobiographical in form), we understand how in his first work these sexual relationships can also be understood as Laferrière's symbolic and initial engagement with the city of Montréal.

Vieux's sexual experiences with young white women can also be read as a conquest of white space(s) and as an expression of his desire to engage in an intimate and passionate relationship with *Other* geographical spaces. Furthermore, his symbolic engagement with White America, parodied through his sexual encounters with White women, needs to be read as a tongue-in-cheek caricature of the negative stereotypes he mocks through humorous renditions of sexual conquest. What is particularly effective in his use of satire along sexual lines is illustrated in the ambivalence of who is being mocked: Is it the black man or the white woman, or both? Chapter headings such as «Et voila Miz Littérature qui me fait une de ces pipes» or « Le pénis nègre et la démoralisation de l'Occident » or « Le chat nègre a neuf queues » illustrate Laferrière's playful yet sardonic tone. Perhaps the most telling chapter title is the last one: « On ne naît pas Nègre, on le devient! » Borrowed from Simone de Beauvoir's famous quotation: « On ne naît pas femme, on le devient », the message is one of social construction. Laferrière thus reminds the reader that identity with all of its identifiable characteristics of color, sexuality, beauty, attraction, etc. is assigned to individuals by others, a concept created through what a *particular* society and culture deems appropriate. I read Laferrière's play of sexual spaces between a black man and white women as parody. When

Vieux meets one of *Miz Littérature*'s friends and she immediately ask him « Tu viens d'où? » he is unimpressed (Laferrière, *Comment faire l'amour* 112):

À chaque fois qu'on me pose ce genre de question, comme ça, sans prévenir, sans qu'il ait été question, au paravant, du *National Geographic*, je sens monter en moi un irrésistible désir de meurtre... Il n'y a rien à faire, c'est une snob, *Miz Snob* (112).

Laferrière mocks *culturally appropriate* markers of conduct that negatively define black men as objects of curiosity.

Moreover Vieux's description of his sexual experiences with white women traces the image of « le nègre » as a caricature rather than a real person. This leaves the reader wondering about Laferrière's motives. Is humor or parody the goal? Is there a more complex dynamic at play? Is the focus then a desire for real intimacy between the races or a desire to reverse roles of dominance? Various examples throughout the text suggest that it is a combination of all these factors:

quand on commence à déballer les phantasmes, chacun en prend pour son compte...il n'y a pratiquement pas de femmes dans *ce* roman. Mais des types. Il y a des Nègres et des Blanches. Du point de vue humain, le Nègre et la Blanche n'existent pas (153).

Such quotations suggest that labels, even references such as black and white are constructed images, often far removed from reality. These references ultimately offer readers a unique and humorous approach in (de)constructing racial lines and appreciating the bonds of attraction humans develop for the *other* even when they consider the *other* different or inferior.

In her short story *Histoire noire*, Suzanne Lantagne empowers blackness by suggesting that it embodies the “source of life, of enjoyment”

(qtd. in Clarke 4). In this story, King is an African who speaks Italian, English « et probablement zoulou » (19). Like Laferrière, the narrator illustrates her sexual desire for black men as she parodies black stereotypes to explore and question her sexual desires. Men like King inspire her simply because they are black, cultured and educated. King explains the reasons for her attraction as follows:

Avec un Blanc, j’aurais l’impression d’être gênante; il regarderait autour, serait légèrement mal à l’aise et surtout ne saurait pas quoi faire de ses deux mains. Mon partenaire noir me suivait, connaissait le désir derrière le moindre de mes sourires...me tenait, me provoquait, me manipulait, me consolait, me regardait, m’embrassait, me serrait, me faisait rire et fondre, me prenait (20).

In the preceding quotation, verbs such as provoquer, manipuler, and prendre, permit Lantagne to engage in Fanonesque rhetoric, reversing the hierarchical black/white binary. The power of seduction and control falls in the hand of black men. Like Lantagne, Laferrière also toys with stereotypes, mocking the underlying white fear of interracial sexuality. Are white women fascinated by Vieux because he is black? « On a déjà vu des jeunes filles blanches, anglo-saxonne, protestantes, dormir avec un Nègre et se réveiller le lendemain sous un baobab, en pleine brousse, à discuter des affaires du clan avec les femmes du village » (Laferrière, *Comment faire l’amour* 83). Once again, Laferrière playfully, perhaps wilfully, transforms these white women as « femme[s] du village » toying with their independence and their autonomy.

Braziel situates Laferrière’s text “within an African American grand narrative” (880) to point “to the ways in which black masculinity and black male sexuality are always framed by a racialized erotic economy defined

within the parameters of white, masculine, heterosexual parameters that trap black men” (881). Laferrière’s transgressive tone is evident when he has Vieux state, «JE VEUX BAISER SON IDENTITÉ» (81). These capitalized words emphasize Vieux’s explicit desire to bring his lover, in his words, «à ma merci» (81). This «baise métaphysique, » also blurs the colour lines and permits Vieux to symbolically reclaim his African identity (81):

[Elle] est couchée sur le dos. OFFERTE [in capital letters emphasizing her openness and her vulnerability]... Cette fille judéo-chrétienne, c’est mon Afrique à moi. Une fille née pour le pouvoir. En tout cas, qu’est-ce qu’elle fait ainsi au bout de ma pine nègre? (80)

Each of Vieux’s sexual relationships with white women metaphorically bridges the racial divide. « Ce n’est pas tant baiser avec un Nègre qui peut terrifier. Le pire, c’est dormir avec lui. Dormir, c’est se livrer totalement. C’est le plus que NU. Nu Plus... danger de véritable communication » (83). Since all his lovers spend the night with him, we could say that Vieux experiences a deeper intimacy with these women.

If I adopt Laferrière’s satirical tone, I would suggest that how individuals choose to relate to some more intimately than to others is dependent on what is *en vogue* at a particular moment in time. Vieux’s dialogue resonates inside an *en vogue* commentary through such comments : « BAISER NÈGRE, C’EST BAISER AUTREMENT. L’Amérique aime foutre AUTREMENT. LA VENGEANCE NÈGRE ET LA MAUVAISE CONSCIENCE BLANCHE AU LIT, ÇA FAIT UNE DE CES NUITS » (19). Such comments should not be interpreted literally. I believe that Laferrière

wishes to provoke his readers. He invites them to participate in a *performative* understanding of culture, perhaps to question the way society (in the 1980s) views relationships between white and black people. At the same time, he sardonically plays with sexual interactions to erase past injustices against black people. « Le Grand Nègre de Harlem a le vertige d'enculer la fille du propriétaire de toutes les baraques insalubres de la 125<sup>e</sup>..., la baisant pour toutes les réparations que son salaud de père n'a jamais effectuées...LA HAINE DANS L'ACTE SEXUEL EST PLUS EFFICACE QUE L'AMOUR » (19). The reader must take such comments as they are meant. The sense of conquest along with the need for black dominance is palpable in the preceding quotation. Whether it is delivered satirically or seriously, the underlying intention to collapse and reverse the notion of white dominance cannot be ignored. It is often stated that humor allows individuals to deliver messages they are otherwise afraid to voice. Like all art forms, humor is an important tool to address issues that people are otherwise uncomfortable expressing.

Laferrière's brand of satire is mocking, sarcastic and always ambivalent in its messages. This ambivalence resonates in every experience, every incident, and through almost every piece of information he shares with his readers. He explains sexuality and color lines as some sort of cruel fad of the moment, one that encourages a certain wonton, transgressive behavior. As he states, if the focus in the 80s is the color black, in the 70s it was red.

« Dans les années soixante-dix, l'Amérique était encore bandée sur le Rouge. Les étudiantes blanches faisaient leur B.A. sexuelle quasiment dans les réserves indiennes » (18). Such lines he draws between sarcasm and humour are fine ones and Laferrière exploits them fully.

Thus sexual relationships between Vieux and white women may be read satirically and polemically as acts of vindication. In as much as Laferrière parodies the role of the over-sexed black man, he also mocks the role of white women who feel the need to validate their sense of *broadmindedness* by engaging in a conversation or in a sexual relationship with a black man. In doing so, these women symbolically acquiesce to the black man. By giving these women nicknames such as *Miz Littérature*, *Miz Sophisticated Lady*, *Miz Snob*, *Miz Chat*, etc. Vieux not only strips these women of an individual identity, he parodies their personalities as he empowers himself. Each woman is a prototype of all the others who fit this description. Thus, by sleeping with one *Miz Littérature*, he sleeps with all of them. Each encounter may be interpreted as Vieux's metaphoric conquest of *Other* white, wealthy socialites studying at McGill University and ultimately of white America. « C'est que dans l'échelle des valeurs occidentales, la Blanche est inférieure au Blanc et supérieure au Nègre » (48). Laferrière parodies sexual desires as black. The reader is never certain of who controls whom in the « RÔLE DES COULEURS DANS LA SEXUALITÉ » of who is superior and who is inferior (49). Through such ambivalent states, Laferrière succeeds in illustrating the potent connection between power and sexuality. On the one

hand, Laferrière parodies black and white stereotypes to contest past and present notions of white superiority and the complex spaces of black inferiority. On the other hand, in Barthesian terms, his self-identification process is “an unfixed repertoire of many subject-positions,” focusing on his “inability to make cohere all the jostled and jolted “subjects” (Smith 107). “In this mobility ... [he derives] a certain pleasure—the pleasure of being the place of transgression in relation to the cerned subject [he] is presumed to be” (Smith, 107). This is a site of transgressed jouissance, a symbolic code which focuses on the multiplicity of the subject. “Jouissance is specifically transgressive and it marks the crossing by the human agent of the symbolic codes which attempt to keep us in place as one subject” (107). Laferrière enters a “dialogical engagement with history and fantasy,” (Smith 154). He assigns the black man a transgressive power. By focusing on Vieux’s sexual relationships with different white women, Laferrière enters, one could even say conquers, white spaces over and over again. In a paper entitled “Ethnicity and race: Canadian minority writing at a crossroads,” Enoch Padolsky suggests that Laferrière’s “sexual encounters and identity musings ... [with] “white” Westmount “imperialist British-Canadian women” corresponds with “his own “race-oriented” (and gendered) discourse” (9). Positions of white power are reversed, collapsed through Laferrière’s parody of sexual relationships.

#### Richard Rodriguez

In Richard Rodriguez’s *Hunger for Memory* published in 1981, those in power are white and they speak English. Rodriguez laments about his move

away from his Mexican culture and his assimilation into the American one. In this work, he expresses his disdain for any overt forms of negotiation between cultures and his distaste for any form of segregation that denies him full American citizenship. Readers learn of Rodriguez's difficulties adapting to the social and political climate in Sacramento, California in the 1960s and 1970s. He knows about 50 words in English when he begins his schooling. Rodriguez categorizes English as the "language of public society" (19) and Spanish as the "language of home...the language of joyful return" (16). However by forsaking his Spanish culture and language to master English, and by fully assimilating into an American cultural lifestyle, Rodriguez loses his intimate connection to home and to his parents thus illustrating how linguistic code-switching is not a site of *creative* connectivity in his experiences.

Rodriguez negotiates selfhood inside an American group dynamic. First, he forsakes certain aspects of his Mexican origins believing that such a sacrifice will allow him to construct a more successful American self. He conforms to an American vision of subjectivity dictated by white dominant cultural values. Remaining in the closet about his homosexuality until his 30s means that Rodriguez's adolescence and early adult life translate his sense of self-hood negatively. In numerous chapters of *Hunger for Memory* he illustrates this insecurity through deprecating comments about himself. His lack of self-confidence may be understood as fear of how he believes others perceive him, an example of Beck's social self. Coming out about his homosexuality would have been difficult, even dangerous for Rodriguez. This may account for his

silence, his fear and ultimately his inability to embrace his multiple subjectivities with the same humor as Laferrière or ease as D'Alfonso. The personal void he suffers as a consequence of cultural sacrifices and his repressed homosexuality are key factors that prevent readers from seeing his intimate engagement with *Others* and an absence of a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. His desire is for group privilege, American privilege. This is in stark contrast to Gloria Anzaldúa's vision of cultural and sexual politics. For her

... lineage is ancient  
 ...firmly planted  
 ...toward that current, the soul of tierra madre-  
 [her] origin (*Borderlands* 224)

Rodriguez does not exhibit the same love for his Hispanic lineage. While his disconnection to his culture and to his sexuality may not have been voluntary, it plays an integral role, negatively I might add, in how he negotiates his voice.

It was not until the publication of *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (published in 1991) that Rodriguez would speak of his homosexuality in his writing. Even in this later work, Rodriguez remains private, divulging very little about this aspect of his personal life. In *Hunger Of Memory* the readers' understanding of Rodriguez's choice to become an American scholarship boy can be negatively perceived quite easily because this key piece of information about his identity is missing. His autobiographical story and chapters read like essays rather than a personal story. This essay writing style is an illustration of Rodriguez's desire to remain

private about many matters. However his need for privacy prevents readers from accessing or understanding his more intimate thoughts.

In his subsequent work, *Days Of Obligation* Rodriguez speaks of homosexual identity in the same way he speaks of cultural identity, in political not personal terms. He clearly wishes to keep a distance between his private and public worlds. Although “in 1975, the state of California legalized consensual homosexuality” it was far from being a publicly embraced identity (*Days of Obligation* 35). The one label Rodriguez seems comfortable embracing openly is one that recognizes him as American. “A scholarship boy, and sexually secretive...I did not know the great drama of integration” (22).

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson explain that “life narratives appear to be transparently simple. Yet they are amazingly complex” (15). I would agree. After reading *Days of Obligation* and his later work *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* published in 2001, I have a different understanding of the decisions and sacrifices Rodriguez makes to turn himself *American-public*. Rodriguez explains that his book “is necessarily political...for public issues...in some sense...political because it concerns my movement away from the company of family and into the city” (7). He divides his life story into a series of essays: *Middle-class Pastoral*, *Aria*, *The Achievement of Desire*, *Credo*, *Complexion*, *Profession* and *Mr. Secrets*. Rodriguez speaks about what it means to be “a socially disadvantaged child... [and how his assimilation] as a middle-class American” occurred (3). Although implicit, Rodriguez’s writing enriches my discussion of connectivity between cultures

as an example that defends the benefits of such a connection precisely through its absence. As Madeline Ruth Walker points out, he “rejects Chicano identity ... for complex reasons that stem from contradictions in Mexican history and the cluster of class-race beliefs” he addresses in *Hunger* (“Converting the Church” 81). Yet Rodriguez remains, in spite of his best efforts, (categorized) outside the umbrella of white American culture, destined to roam literary shelves under *Other* literatures, a role he does not enjoy: “Three decades later, the price of being a published brown author is that one cannot be shelved near those one has loved. The price is segregation” even from the literature he has grown to love most (26). He wants his literary contributions to be recognized as American works. “I trusted white literature because I was able to attribute universality to white literature, because it did not seem to be written for me” (Rodriguez, *Brown* 27). The preceding quotation from his work published in 2001 reinforces assimilation and a homogeneous American vision of selfhood as negative consequences for immigrants, ultimately a failure to *creatively* connect between languages and cultures. Rodriguez’s desire to remain outside hybrid categorizations of identity backfire when he finds himself awkwardly positioned between Mexican and American cultural spaces, liminal and isolating at both ends.

The most important theme to my writing is now impurity. My mestizo boast : ... a queer Catholic Indian Spaniard at home in a temperate Chinese city in a fading blond state in a post-Protestant nation (35).

This quotation appears in *Brown* and classifies Rodriguez’s identity as a series of labels, ones that challenge or collapse boundaries between dominant and

peripheral cultures. Although he does not embrace hybridized identification with the same openness as Anzaldúa does, in *Brown* he illustrates his growing peace with being *mestizo*. Walker argues that “Rodriguez’s narrative is about the *absorption of culture* rather than *by culture*. It is a critical means of “cultural and other transformations” suggesting how *absorption of culture* implies “a robust self” (82). However I think Rodriguez better fits Walker’s reference of someone who “represents an undeveloped self” a product of the political and socially constructed environment of the 1960s in the United States (82). For this reason, Rodriguez’s selfhood corresponds with Beck’s model of the social self as someone trapped by outside constraints of *whom* and *how* he should be.

Through his narrative, Rodriguez illustrates his insecurity about his physical appearance and his dark Indian features resulting in his inability to explore Beck’s model of the essential self. Arguably, he suffers from low self-esteem. Rodriguez spends a large part of his youth and adult life suppressing his *Other* identities as a Chicano and as a homosexual refusing “to participate in the expected arguments ... of his people” (85). I believe that Rodriguez’s repressed homosexuality in *Hunger* is an illustration of the latent struggles between binary positions that Walker suggests he takes on. She describes his identity as polarized. In her opinion, he chooses between “private/public, Spanish/English, Mexican/American, Catholic/Protestant, working class/middle class, inauthentic/authentic, tragic/comic, feminine/masculine” (82). I understand binary positions as ones dictated by social and political

norms. Therefore they do not always correspond to, or respect, how individuals can explore their selfhood creatively. For this reason, I am not sure if Rodriguez is a tragic hero or victim. I believe he is both. As much as Rodriguez tries, he cannot simply be American or Mexican. In varying shapes, he remains tied to both labels. It is only in *Brown* that Rodriguez's dualities and hybridized identification surface. Moreover had he been able to express his Chicano and homosexual spaces openly in *Hunger of Memory*, I am convinced that this first instalment of his autobiographical story would resonate as a more hybridized narrative.

Since Rodriguez makes no mention of his homosexuality in *Hunger of Memory* the *performative* aspects of his identity remain hidden to readers. While I read Laferrière's ambivalent address of issues of race as playful and satirical, this is clearly not Rodriguez's strategy. His ideas about race and culture come across as a bilan of *pedagogy*. He claims that "diversity admits everything, stands for nothing" (Rodriguez, *Brown* 169). It is however interesting to see how Rodriguez projects great strength of character when he speaks of his devotion to Catholicism. This aspect of his intimate side he shares with readers.

There is much in Christianity that I use, steal, learn from, borrow, depend upon. Its inability to teach me about my experience of love is insufficient for me to walk away (Walker 99).

I find it ironic that Rodriguez is willing to overlook the Church's inability to educate him about love since the basis of religious faith is about love and devotion. In my opinion, the church is another example of an external force

that negatively contains Rodriguez and prevents him from publicly claiming a hybridized, homosexual identity.

Even in *Brown* as Rodriguez's narrative takes on a hybridized desire for an Americanized identity, he remains silent about his homosexuality and how this impacts on his understanding of identity and his life experiences.

When I go into your house, and I suddenly realize that you are not foreign, when I begin to borrow your language and your humor, when your mother invites me to dinner, and I begin to eat your food, when I begin to walk like you down the street, which is what Americans do, we all walk like each other, then I become brown (Interview Moyers & Rodriguez).

In spite of his acceptance of a *browned* American identity, Rodriguez remains trapped inside a zone of white Americanism because the most critical element of his identity, his homosexuality, still appears to be a taboo subject, at least in his autobiographical works. If autobiography is a translation of an individual's life and personal experiences, then I understand his masked and guarded sharing of his homosexuality as a negative suppression. His narrative style continues to illustrate the importance he places on his public voice. The reader is not privileged to enter the zones of his private voice. Even though he speaks in the first person, Rodriguez's autobiography resonates as a third person biographical story with significant missing links in how his life experiences shaped the person he has become. As a consequence, his autobiographical story reads more like a persuasive essay rather than a personal life story. He laments in a professional voice about his early life, his struggles as a child to learn English, and his eventual integration into American academic circles. According to John Eakin, "language in autobiography operates as a kind of

‘focusing glass,’ [it] brings together the personal, unassimilated experiences of the writer and the shared values of his culture” (73). In Rodriguez’s work, his intimate thoughts, personal experiences and the shared values of his culture become deformed inside an American representation of identity. I read this form of narrative as a distorted vision of self-hood. Rodriguez seems to exist in a liminal state, not quite Mexican or American.

The distance he places between himself and his Mexican cultural origins initially appear legitimate. He does not feel that he can simultaneously nurture linguistic ties with his Mexican *and* American worlds. Learning English separates, even alienates, him from Spanish. However there are examples in the work of his deep-rooted sense of *ontogenetic* insecurity. Mastering English and becoming a successful academic separates Rodriguez from his family and his Mexican culture. “If because of my schooling, I had grown culturally separated from my parents, my education finally had given me ways of speaking and caring about that fact” (Rodriguez, *Hunger* 72). He refers to himself as a “comic victim of two cultures” (5). There is nothing polemical about his narrative. Rodriguez wishes “to be colorless and to feel complete freedom of movement” (140). He seeks recognition and approval inside a vision of English American nationalism and an English education he labels “white freedom” (*Brown* 142). Below the surface of his eloquent writing style, a deep melancholic chord resonates.

Being colorless and experiencing complete freedom are elusive concepts in Rodriguez’s world. He speaks out against bilingual education

believing that such a system “reinforces feelings of public separateness” dividing people instead of bringing them together (34). Although he takes a personal stance against affirmative action, he admits, “I complied...I permitted myself to be prized...I accepted its benefits” (152). In spite of such benefits, Rodriguez’s Americanized education does not give him “a centered, unified subject or self” (David Vincent and Nan Hackette qtd in Eakin 79). He speaks against bilingual education, affirmative action, and any system that expects him to move between the American and Mexican cultures and languages, yet he contradicts these affirmations by accepting the perks that come from such policies meant to equalize opportunities for immigrants. Moreover, the value he assigns to minority literature in course curriculums is colored by how he perceives it will be understood by the minority public. He states that “any novel or play about the lower class will necessarily be alien to the culture it portrays” (Rodriguez, *Hunger* 161). Is this a good reason to veto its existence? Rodriguez remains skeptical about the place of Hispanic literature(s) on the bookshelves of academic departments.

Contrary to Rodriguez’s doubtful narrative on this issue, Anzaldúa’s mestiza vision of culture encourages the value of Hispanic literature(s). Her polemical writing style suggests that she writes about what she believes in. She does not appear to focus on readership or politically correct discourse. Her writing illustrates her desire to be understood on a personal and passionate level. Through her polemical writing style she also incites her rebel-spirit to surface, to find the courage to live against the grain of what society dictates by

setting new precedents. She refers to herself as “mediator...through our literature, art, *corridos*, and folktales we must share our history with them so...they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorances” (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 107). Her desire for hispanic curriculum brings together *pedagogy* and the *performative* because she places great importance on past historical experience and rewrites those aspects of that past that negatively contain her identity. Rodriguez's narrative style illustrates a more practical objective. He does not believe that Hispanic literatures will be read by a mainstream audience. By denying its importance, he takes, in my opinion, a negative position on the value such literature holds, both in a historical and present context. Although access to such works may not reach all mainstream audiences, I think he misses a point that Anzaldúa clearly advocates and that is the importance of *encouraging* such works to be written and to be included in academic circles!

Growing up in the 60s and 70s, minority writers and their voices represented a marginalized population and in his writing Rodriguez illustrates this reality. Through his choices to assimilate, to feel American in every sense of the word, he inadvertently supports the marginalization of his cultural Spanish community. His dark skin prevents him from fully escaping his world he views as disadvantaged. “You can say I'm self-consciously black” (Rodriguez, *Brown* 138). Such references suggest that he wears his color uncomfortably. There is a rather dismal tone in such words. Moreover, he certainly does not, as Anzaldúa does, take on any role as mediator between

Mexicans and white Americans. Comments such as: “[f]rom childhood I have resisted the notion of culture in Spanish” do not offer readers sufficient reason to understand why (128). This resistance or an absence of understanding works against Rodriguez’s construction of self-esteem and how readers perceive him. In my opinion, it traps him further inside Beck’s vision of the social self as *conforming* and *imitative*. Rodriguez explains his distance from his Mexican culture.

Aztec ruins hold no special interest for me. I do not search Mexican graveyards for ties to unnameable ancestors.... I also speak Spanish today. And read Garcia Lorca and Garcia Marquez ... but what consolation can that fact bring ... [?] What preoccupies me is immediate: the separation I endure with my parents in loss (Rodriguez, *Hunger* 5).

This cultural separation from his parents Rodriguez speaks of is an irreparable disconnection. It is another consequence of his move towards an American identity. Then, living secretly about his homosexuality means intimate aspects of his selfhood remain hidden thus robbing him of self-esteem during his youth and young adult life. The social and political environment he experiences during his 30s and 40s dictate the precise ways Rodriguez chooses *not* to embrace hybridized identification, code-switching and keep his homosexuality a private matter. His public American spaces prevent him from openly exposing and exploring his intimate spaces before readers and with family.

Rodriguez also grows up feeling uncomfortably alien in his dark skin, different even from his immediate family. His mother is often mistaken as Italian or Portugese – “she looks as though she could be from southern

Europe” – while his older brother’s skin “never darkened” like Rodriguez and his “youngest sister is exotically pale, almost ashen” (*Hunger* 114-115). Even his older sister, although as dark as Rodriguez, has “facial features...much less harshly defined” (115). Rodriguez sees himself as “the only one in the family whose face is severely cut to the line of ancient Indian ancestors” (115). There seems no sense of pride in this declaration. When his mother discourages him from playing in the sun, he confesses: “that incident anticipates the shame and sexual inferiority I was to feel in later years because of my dark complexion” (124). Rodriguez views his dark complexion as a negative marker of beauty:

I didn’t really consider my dark skin to be a racial characteristic...I felt myself ugly....I felt my dark skin made me unattractive to women....With disgust then I would come face to face with myself in mirrors....I grew divorced from my body (125).

Of greater consequence, the preceding quotation alludes to his closeted homosexuality during this period in his life. Moreover, Rodriguez is caught inside models of desirability based on heterosexual standards. Here Ricœur’s notion of *oneself as another* takes on a negative image. Self-loathing is a by-product of his suppressed homosexuality. Rodriguez speaks of being unattractive to women but it is in reality his interest in *men* that he cannot qualify or speak of in his writing. I believe that his negative self-image is further aggravated by his religious education. “I am often enough asked how it is I call myself a gay Catholic. A paradox? ...What you are asking is how can I be an upstanding one and the other....The answer is that I cannot reconcile. I was born Catholic....I was born gay” (*Brown* 224). Rodriguez’s inability to *reconcile* these two intimate aspects of himself further alienates him from who

he wishes to be: “I lived my life in fragments ... I knew nothing so dangerous in the world as love, my kind of love ... I mean my attempt to join the world” (206). However he cannot wear his religion and his homosexuality together. His religion, like other religions, forbids it! Rodriguez also admits that “the way we are constructed constructs love? Limits love?” (207). Here I agree with him. How can we openly love *another*, or participate in a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* or even a Ricœurian concept of *oneself as another*, if we cannot openly love ourselves and those defined as *Others*? Such limitations project a negative image of difference.

Rodriguez wishes to disassociate himself from “the connection between dark skin and poverty” (117). This disassociation begins in his childhood. It was “an accident of geography...where all [his]...classmates were white, many the children of doctors and lawyers and business executives” (11). Being in a school with upper-class white students, Rodriguez views his color as a barrier to achieving social and economic success. He does not have any Mexican role models in his community who live in an upper-class lifestyle, so is vying for such a position a normal reaction? His desire to silence his voice as a Mexican *Other* answers this question by illustrating his wish (through the choices he makes or is forced to make) to join the ranks of the upper-class.

Rodriguez learns that he cannot be a successful Mexican *and* a successful American. Moreover, he feels he can best enjoy the benefits and privileges of being American by focusing on a strictly American-style

education. I define an American-style education through Rodriguez's own definition of the scholarship boy. His perspective of himself as a scholarship boy is a rather bleak one. He feels incomplete, unworthy, lacking a real identity:

The scholarship boy does not straddle, cannot reconcile, the two great opposing cultures of his life....There is no trace of his parents' accent in his speech....He lifts an opinion from Coleridge, takes something from Frye or Empson or Leavis. He even repeats exactly his professor's earlier comments. All his ideas are clearly borrowed. He seems to have no thought of his own...the scholarship boy makes only too apparent his profound lack of *self*-confidence (*Hunger* 66).

By italicizing the word *self* in the preceding quotation, Rodriguez employs it in two ways: as a lack of selfhood and what I read as a lack of Beck's essential self. There is nothing *unique* or *inventive* in his status as scholarship boy. He cannot love himself, i.e. love *all* aspects of himself culturally and sexually. As a result, his notion of selfhood, his ontological self is "a construct of a construct [contained, even trapped, inside his vision of white American nationalism]...whether literary or psychological" (Eakin 102). His inability to fully embrace Mexican *and* American cultural codes scars him negatively. Moreover, suppressing his homosexuality (whatever his reasons) negatively colors his perspective. Rodriguez's status as a scholarship boy belies his low self-esteem. An American education depreciates the value he attributes to Mexican culture. By adopting the role of a scholarship boy he robs himself of an intimate Mexican identity. As a scholarship boy he considers himself "a very bad student...the great mimic...the very last person in class who ever feels obliged to have an opinion of his own" (67). Through such observations,

Rodriguez illustrates his implicit desire to be an authentic person. I translate this desire for authenticity as Rodriguez's latent need to embrace his Mexican culture and language and live openly as a homosexual. It is his writing voice that allows him to embrace such authenticity because in his real world he cannot seem to reconcile being American with being authentic.

His lack of an intimate or *creative* connectivity between his Mexican and American selves prevents him from experiencing a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* as a Mexican, as a homosexual, at least before his readers. Thus Rodriguez's loneliness and fragmented vision of himself position him negatively as a model of hybrid identity. His discourse conveys a Lacanian "imaginary" what Kaja Silverman describes as "the subject's experience ... [it is] dominated by identification and duality" (157). A public American identity contains Rodriguez inside a zone of pleasure which "relies upon the fixity of the "subject within the codes and conventions it inhabits" (Smith 107). Rodriguez's individual subjectivity, a model of Beck's social self, may also be understood as Althusserian because it is "generated through social forces" ("Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)" 1478). Rodriguez's "real conditions of existence" such as his homosexuality and his linguistic and cultural ties to Mexico are silenced (1498). He confesses that he "distances him[self] from a life he loved, even from his own memory of himself," (Rodriguez, *Hunger* 48). Thus he cannot sustain a positive image of his essential self or construct a loving self-regard.

In her essay, “On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics of Diaspora”, Ien Ang speaks of autobiography “as a more or less deliberate, rhetorical construction of a ‘self’ for *public* not private purposes: the displayed self is a strategically fabricated performance, one which stages a useful identity, an identity which can be put to work” (4). Rodriguez’s narrative fits Ing’s comments about public identities. For instance, in Chapter Five entitled *Profession*, he rejects affirmative action in education and “summer study grants...[or] teaching assistantships” because he sees that he is a recipient namely because of his “Spanish surname or the dark mark in the space indicating...[his] race” (Rodriguez, *Hunger* 143). Essays he writes against such “affirmative action” programs emphasize his disdain for such programs (148). Although he is not qualified to speak as one, he is often invited to conferences as a “Chicano intellectual” (162). He blames

those in White America...[who] would anoint [him] to play for them some drama of ancestral reconciliation...[M]arked by [his] indelible color they easily suppose that [he is] unchanged by social mobility, that [he] can claim unbroken ties with [his] past” (5).

He wears his title as a “Chicano intellectual” uncomfortably, reluctantly acknowledging the benefits it accords him.

Rodriguez’s academic success, the foundation of his public American identity, allows him to escape his status as the “socially disadvantaged... son of working-class [Mexican immigrant] parents” as he moves closer to realizing his American dream (12). This movement away from Spanish and “the company of his family” distances him even further from his Mexican culture. He believes that “the child who learns to read about his nonliterate ancestors

[rather than actively engage in their ancestral world] necessarily separates himself from their way of life” (161). Such comments elicit a very negative reaction from Hispanic students in his academic milieu. Rodriguez senses their “scorn” and after meeting him they label him “a coconut—someone brown on the outside, white on the inside” (161-162). He refers to himself as “the bleached academic – more white than the *anglo* professors,” the model of ethnic representation that others “feared ever becoming” (162). Sadly, Rodriguez acknowledges how his education as a scholarship boy robs him of his Mexican identification.

Even though he refers to the local “ghetto black teenagers” as “the outsiders”, their “accented versions of English” are reminders of his loss, the Spanish accent he no longer possesses (31). These teenagers remind him that “being loud—so self-sufficient and unconcerned . . . [is] a romantic gesture against public acceptance. Listening to their shouted laughter” he feels “envious, envious of their brazen intimacy” (31). He lacks this closeness within his linguistic spaces. Moreover his movement between academic and cultural spaces is a constant reminder of his negatively *Othered* self. Rodriguez has difficulty embracing his subjectivity in multiple terms because his Mexican identity has been weakened. His assimilation into an American vision of cultural identity means that he cannot be intimately connected to more than one culture and language. This prevents him from negotiating identity as a passage, or negotiation, between cultures. “The price of entering white America is an acid bath, a bleaching bath—a transfiguration—that burns

away memory. I mean the freedom to become; I mean the freedom to imagine oneself free” (140). Sociologist Anthony Giddens suggests that *ontological* security develops from “an emotional, and to some degree...cognitive sense...in the reliability of persons ... [where]...basic trust [is linked to]...self identity ... [and] the appraisal of others” (38). Rodriguez cannot locate this *ontological* security inside the appraisal of a white American centre. Moreover he chooses not to travel between cultures so his Mexican culture becomes a hindrance in his success as an American. This is where I believe he fails. He experiences further loss because he can no longer engage in a *relation privilégiée* with his parents in Spanish. Moreover, his status as an American “scholarship boy” leaves him in a state of *inner deadness*. Anthony Giddens employs this term to describe individuals who “blend with the environment so as to escape being the target of the dangers which haunt them...[as a result] the individual feels morally ‘empty’ because he [or she] lacks the ‘warmth of a loving self-regard” (54). Rodriguez’s inability to communicate effectively in Spanish with his family erases the intimate connection he shared with them. Moreover, I view his silence about his homosexuality as the key factor that haunts him and the dominant cause of his *inner deadness*:

A high school student...visited me...for an interview....He said it was cool with him that I was gay but he wanted to know how I measured the influence of homosexuality...on [my] writing, since [I] never say (222).... [Rodriguez admits:] *It’s true, I never say...* Walt Whitman I said. Whitman’s advantage was that— prohibited from admitting the specific—he learned to speak of the many....Of every hue and caste am I, he sang, while the heterosexual nation tore itself asunder as blue or gray (Rodriguez, *Brown* 223).

His adoption of the English language robs him of the intimate connection he once experienced speaking Spanish. “Always there are moments in the text when that impression of narrative coherence breaks down...in digressions, omissions, gaps, and silences about certain things, in contradiction” (Smith and Watson 64). I believe that Rodriguez’s public spaces teach him to view his differences – his skin color and his homosexuality – as obstacles to his construction of American selfhood. As Smith and Watson point out “when we read or listen to autobiographical narratives, we need to attend to methods of self-examination, introspection, and remembering...And sometimes [a narrator] refuses the very possibility of self-knowing” (71). Clearly, for Rodriguez self-knowing is a private journey. It appears difficult to separate Rodriguez’s political agenda from his personal one. I continue to interpret his narrative as an essay, perfectly argued yet somehow lacking *Chutzpah*, a Jewish term used in contemporary North American speech to express admiration for non-conformist but gutsy audacity. His narrative style, how he tells his autobiographical story, is an illustration of conflict rather than *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages.

#### Antonio D’Alfonso

While Rodriguez’s story focuses on his move away from his Mexican cultural identity into a white-washed version of an American identity, in Antonio D’Alfonso’s *Avril ou l’anti-passion*, the protagonist Fabrizio explores hybrid identity by straddling three linguistic and cultural spaces. D’Alfonso’s writing suggests that traveling between cultures is a natural aspect of

immigrant life in Montréal. As a cosmopolitan city, I view Montreal as a city that boasts a Ricœurian personality of *soi-même comme un autre* where images of self-hood are constructed and re-imagined as *Other* positions. For instance, Fabrizio lives in Montréal as « trois personnes en une seule » (*Avril* 180). The first three chapters of D'Alfonso's work focuses on Fabrizio's parents Lina and Guido and their life in Italy. Fabrizio shares excerpts from Lina's personal journal and letters Guido writes to Lina during his military service. He traces the events that bring his parents to Montréal. They serve as important testimonials and symbols of cultural connection to Italy. Fabrizio's narrative of these testimonials illustrates his desire to give meaning to his parents life *before* they come to Montréal. Moreover by speaking of Italy, Fabrizio assigns a strong cultural importance to his Italian origins. Readers learn that the move from Italy to Canada is harder for Lina than it is for her husband Guido. « Je suis née à Guglionesi et c'est là que je veux mourir » (38). However she is hopeful that a better life awaits her in Canada. « Comment ne pas croire à un paradis lorsque le pays dans lequel nous vivions ne présentait plus aucun espoir? » (38) Guido on the other hand understands that « il faut partir au plus vite, rester ne sert à rien, sinon à se nourrir des fausses images que nous avons de nous-mêmes....Je crois que vivre dans ce pays est devenu impossible » (26). Having served time in the military, Guido experiences the negative effects of war first hand. « Il est furieux de voir les Allemands pilonner la terre de ses parents » (15). Even after Italy is freed from the Germans, Lina recognizes that the road ahead is a difficult one. « Nous avons

besoin de toutes nos forces pour reconstruire le monde » (20). In April, 1950, Lina leaves for Canada. April is therefore symbolic of freedom and change. Hence the title of this work as *Avril ou l'anti-passion* seems fitting. Moreover this information about his parents' life in Italy frames the importance Fabrizio assigns to travel between cultures and languages. He illustrates the strong ties he shares to his Italian culture through his relationship with his parents and he promotes a hybridized identification by assigning value to his Québécois identity.

Just as April marks an important moment in Italy's history and April marks Lina's departure from Italy, Fabrizio's personal story begins in April, 1959 and it ends in December, 1988. This portion of the novel is divided into the following chapter headings: *Notre maison/Cicatrices/Bête noire/Désamour/La jalousie des deux amis/La guerre/Parlons un peu de ma famille/Lasagne in brodo/Romance/La messe des morts/Un cauchemar/Le parfait esclave/Peter est invité à dîner/Le couple/Le téléphone/Nonna Angiolina/Une promenade avec Mario/Journal d'un film inachevé/Antigone et Hémon/La désincarnation/Un suicide en chœur/La mise en scène*. Like Laferrière, D'Alfonso's numerous chapter headings illustrate his creative *performative* side, a characteristic of Beck's model of the essential self. I list these headings here to provide a basic framework of comparison between these chapter headings and the ones Laferrière employs in his work. While Laferrière focuses on headings that satirically reconstruct or deconstruct the image of the black man, D'Alfonso's chapter headings illustrate the simple

and more complex experiences that give shape to Fabrizio's hybrid subjectivity. Titles such as *Notre maison/Lasagne en brodo* demonstrate the effortless, loving elements that make up Fabrizio's Italian life: his family and his connection to food. « Je sais que je suis le fils d'un amour absolu...omniprésent et solidaire...tout conflit a toujours été réglé à la table » (148). Consuming food is synonymous with sharing love, culture, and family. Thus private local Italian spaces frame Fabrizio's public French and English Canadian spaces. His negotiation as a hybrid subject, one who seeks connectivity between *Other* cultures, is best understood through his connection to Léah in *Bête noire* and *Romance*, Fabrizio's relationship with his closest friend Mario Berger in *Une promenade avec Mario*, and Fabrizio's desire for creative freedom as illustrated in *La désincarnation* and *Journal d'un film inachevé*. His hybrid subjectivity is revealed through his interactions with these *Other* aspects of his life. His friendship with Mario, a Québécois, and his affair with Mario's wife, Léah, a woman of Hungarian cultural origins, are symbolic zones of *creative* connectivity and conflict between dominant and *Other* populations. Moreover, his desire to produce a film that does not address topics such as immigration validates Fabrizio's need to define himself outside dictated parameters of creativity and assert his creativity outside such mainstream platforms.

Unlike Rodriguez and Laferrière, Fabrizio does not explicitly address issues of race or gender as barriers in his construction of self-hood. His godparents' relationship serves as a positive model of the hybrid lifestyle he

longs for. He describes his godfather as « un Notte québécois...tout ce qu'[il] désire devenir » (*Avril* 63). His Montreal born Italian godfather marries a Québécoise and Fabrizio cannot believe that she speaks his family's Italian dialect as fluently as his parents. I view her ability to speak Italian as validation of code-switching, an aspect of « la modernité, de l'ouverture québécoise » Fabrizio admires (62). Such narrative suggests that Fabrizio's personal story is an allegory of the Québécois and their process of negotiation with *Other* cultural groups such as Italians. This may be why in the first film he produces, Fabrizio focuses on Antigone, a character without citizenship. « Elle n'est d'aucun pays, ne possédant aucune langue maternelle, n'appartenant à aucun parti politique » (59). By choosing to focus on Antigone as his heroine rather than immigrant models (as he is often asked to address) Fabrizio illustrates his implicit desire to live outside barriers of nationhood. This desire to step outside socially constructed and constricting parameters of fixed cultural origins mirrors Fabrizio's need to live in a Ricœurian "kingdom of the as if" a validation of Beck's notion of the essential self. In D'Alfonso's other works, this concept of identity as a hybrid construction is omnipresent in his stories, in his poetry and in his essays. Moreover D'Alfonso's writing in English, French, and more recently in Italian illustrates his *creative* connection to different languages and cultures. D'Alfonso, like his protagonist Fabrizio, negotiates identity as a passage of connectivity between different codes, promoting a hybridized identification through his writing style.

D'Alfonso grounds this connectivity between cultures in *Avril* through Fabrizio's negotiation of intimacy with Léah and Mario. In his essay, « La Passion du retour: Ecritures italiennes au Québec, » Pierre Nepveu suggests that « l'un des passages les plus révélateurs du roman est celui où Fabrizio se retrouve une fois de plus avec son amante d'origine hongroise, avec laquelle il trompe son meilleur ami québécois, Mario, triangle dont la dimension symbolique interculturelle est assez savoureuse » (113). Since Léah stands between Mario and Fabrizio, I view her Othered presence as a bridge that unites and divides the Québécois from *Other* minority groups.

At 16, Fabrizio has his first meeting with Léah. In the chapter *Bête noire*, he describes his first experiences with Léah. « Cette fille dont les yeux ne se détachent plus de moi. Elle détourne la tête, mais pas les yeux » (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 73). Fabrizio's first sexual experience with her is one of complete submission on his part. « Elle monte sur moi...ne bouge pas. Ne respire pas...je ne fais absolument rien...Puis voilà que, tout d'un coup, j'éjacule » (74). Fabrizio's *immediate* submission may be understood as an involuntary desire to engage intimately with Other spaces. Their sexual intimacy continues even after Léah begins seeing Mario. Thus infidelity becomes a marker of tensions between cultures. However Fabrizio's inability to break away from Léah may be understood as the push-and-pull for desire and distance from the *Other*. It is a desire that unifies and divides the Québécois from its *Other* populations.

In her teens, Léah acquires a reputation. « Elle avait d'autres amants. Aucun de nous ne sait vraiment la satisfaire ni la rendre heureuse » (76). Fabrizio quickly discovers that she cannot be controlled. « Je suis libre de faire ce qui me plait » (79). And what pleases her is Fabrizio's best friend Mario. « Je comprends parfaitement comment Léah a pu tomber amoureuse de cet ami. Et... [Fabrizio] éclate en un rire énorme et terrible » (80). Like Léah, Fabrizio is part of the *other* population in Québec so Léah's desire to build a solid relationship with Mario instead of Fabrizio may be read as her symbolic choice to find belonging inside a Québécois context. Her betrayal and ongoing affair with Fabrizio may be read as her *simultaneously* symbolic pull towards *Others*.

As the third person entity in this story between Léah and Mario, Fabrizio constructs his experiences of love as an outsider. In the chapter *Désamour* Fabrizio speaks of his first experience with unrequited love. « Le poème le plus laid du monde...un amour non partagé, le poème du suicide....Je ne vois plus, je suis dans le noir des regards de l'autre » (80). Blinded by his feelings for Léah, Fabrizio feels trapped. He describes his pain as his inability to engage intimately with her. « Ne plus pouvoir rimer avec celle que j'aime, voilà ma laideur, ma prison. Ce suicide de si mauvais goût je te l'offre, *amore* » (82). Fabrizio cannot leave her anymore than Léah can completely love him. He describes Léah as « quelqu'un endurci comme la carapace d'un crustace...elle régénère les parties de son corps qu'on arrache »

(101). Léah is a source of personal conflict in Fabrizio's life. However as Fabrizio explains, « elle m'éreinte et me prend la quasi-totalité de mon énergie » but she supports his work (101). « Elle rend possible le tournage de mon film sur Antigone, *Le Choix* » (101). This support for Fabrizio's film may be understood in two ways: as an act of friendship and as a validation of Fabrizio's desire to create something original, outside the parameters of mainstream cinema. The two people Fabrizio loves dearly promote his artistic career choices, thus symbolically entering his creative space(s). They also represent cultural difference. In this way, the title *Le Choix* is entirely appropriate. Moreover Fabrizio's attraction to Léah, whom he describes as « celle qui ne me ressemble pas » may be interpreted as his desire to embrace those aspects of himself that *Other* him in the eyes of the dominant majority (101). However his ability to love Léah in spite of differences points to the importance of loving outside a mainstream cultural context.

In his work, *Un vendredi du mois d'août*, D'Alfonso illustrates this idea. « On doit pouvoir aimer son compagnon pour ce qu'il est. Imaginez signer un contrat avec quelqu'un pour ce qu'il doit être » (11). This notion of loving someone as they are validates the importance of accepting difference(s) in *Others*. Fabrizio is not proud of his affair with Léah « l'épouse de l'ami » (105). He refers to himself as « le toxicomane et l'alcoolique... tout le temps entre les cuisses de Léah et chaque fois le baiser partagé comme si c'était le premier » (*Avril* 105). I read Fabrizio's obsession with Léah as Barthesian.

« Je fouille le corps de l'autre comme si je voulais voir ce qu'il y a dedans, comme si la cause mécanique de mon désir était dans le corps adverse » (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 85). This idea of understanding oneself is linked to understanding one's desire for another in the preceding quotation. I understand Fabrizio's attraction to Léah as an all-encompassing passion.

However Léah's admission that she can never love Fabrizio is another important aspect of connectivity between dominant and *Other* cultures. « Je me suis fait avorter: je ne veux pas d'enfant de toi » (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 107). By refusing to keep his baby, Léah illustrates her resistance to openly loving Fabrizio. This inability to love Fabrizio may be understood as loyalty to Mario in two ways: ethically because she is Mario's wife whereas Mario is the bridge between the Québécois and its *Other* populations. Therefore this connection cannot be destroyed. Léah embodies difference and at the same time she symbolizes division and union between cultures. This fascination for *Others* may be understood in Ricœurian terms. « On cherche quoi au fond chez l'autre? Soi-même? La différence? Je cherche peut-être le contraire de celle que je suis » (133). Mario is the symbolic passage of connectivity between dominant and peripheral cultures. Then Léah cannot leave Mario to be with Fabrizio because this could be understood as a symbolic rupture between the dominant and peripheral cultures.

Like Laferrière, D'Alfonso also addresses the notion of connectivity between cultures through sexual and creative spaces. During a conversation

with Mario (taken from the chapter *Une promenade avec Mario*), Fabrizio explains the evolution of his film *Antigone*, a woman without citizenship. « Antigone personnifie l'espoir face à la dévastation de la guerre » (*Avril* 191). He tells Mario that after « quelque vingt versions...je pense à d'autres choses qu'au cinéma. À la politique, à l'amitié, à la passion... » (147). His desire to create a film on his own terms allows Fabrizio to envision « une société sans limites...pas de limites dans le laboratoire, pas de limites dans la rue » (147). Mario's response to Fabrizio alludes to a more conservative approach: « concentre ton énergie dans l'écriture....Pense *limites* » (147). However Fabrizio continues to pursue his creative desires without barriers, limits. For Fabrizio, cinematic freedom means « aucune barrière physique ou morale, je me suis étendu de tout mon corps sur les autres » (147). The key words in the preceding quotation are *les autres* a reference to a horizon without limits. As Fabrizio asserts « je ne me limite pas à mon sang, ni à ma langue, ni à un drapeau...je suis un roc qu'aucune vague n'effratera. Ce *trop* ne s'associe pas à un territoire ou, pire, à un peuple » (148). During this conversation with Mario, Fabrizio brings up the subject of *Éros*, a reference to the Greek god of love. Eros defines an individual's experience of sexual yearning or desire. However *Eros* may also be understood as a symbol of an individual's connection to their passions and their creative spirit. It is how I read *Eros* in D'Alfonso, as desire for creative freedom. Nevertheless, Mario's vision of *Éros* may be read as a sexual concept, one that is disillusioned:

Éros me paraît laid...j'attends impatiemment le jour où nous vivrons d'un amour éthique, d'un amour durable, d'un amour qui ne perd

jamais de vue la réalité de la foi. Je veux croire à l'abandon absolu, à l'oubli de tout...mais je n'arrive pas à croire à l'Éros qui naît de la promiscuité et de l'adultère...comment peut-on croire que le corps puisse parler si l'âme n'y est pas? (150-151).

Mario's vision of an ethical, untainted love is marred by Fabrizio's confession of his indiscretion with Léah. Yet Mario's continued interest in Fabrizio suggests he forgives his friend and symbolically illustrates his desire to protect spaces between the dominant culture and its *Other* cultures: « Nous nous regardons amicalement, avec dans les yeux ce sourire complice d'acteurs épris » (155). Fabrizio's profound attachment to his friend Mario, a sign of Fabrizio's attachment to the Québec culture is obvious when he says: « Mario, tes yeux sont mes huiles et musiques » (155). This sharing unites these men at a time that should divide them. Thus their intimate Barthesian *relation privilégiée* holds more value than the black mark of infidelity created by Fabrizio's affair with Léah.

Fabrizio's desire for artistic freedom is another way in which he validates his self-hood as creative and performative.

Pour capter la sacralité fuyante des corps et des objets devant nous, il faudra nous abandonner totalement....Surtout ne bougez pas, respirez lentement, pleinement, et écoutez cette lumière surgir des iris de la vie (155).

This notion of complete abandon that Fabrizio speaks of may be read as his desire for complete creative freedom. I read this desire for creative freedom through Fabrizio's innate connection to Antigone, the focal character of his film. Antigone is an integral ingredient in how D'Alfonso constructs Fabrizio's identity, linking his self-esteem to his ability to freely explore his

creative desires. Antigone is a woman who is prepared to sacrifice her life to give her brother a proper burial, a woman who symbolizes the *ethical* love Mario speaks of. By focusing on a film about Antigone, Fabrizio lives outside labels that barricade his creative spirit. When his film is rejected because it is not about immigration, he does not give in and re-write a script that will provide him with the recognition and accolades of producers. Fabrizio is determined to get his film produced on his terms:

Je ne cherche pas à être différent. Je cherche à être moi-même. La différence n'a de sens que si elle provient de l'essence de la personne. Les idées qui créent un film doivent être foncièrement objectivées. Autrement dit, elles doivent être extirpées de leur contexte émotionnel (163).

I understand Fabrizio's *contexte émotionnel* as his desire to explore *Eros*, his creative desires as an exploration of his deepest passions.

This exploration of creative desire in *Avril* is also illustrated in D'Alfonso's work *En Italiques: Réflexions sur l'ethnicité* published in 2000. In this work, D'Alfonso asks the following question in his opening chapter: « Serait-il possible que *identité* veuille dire 'la nature essentielle de l'inconscient? » (15). I would answer yes because individual identity (not collective identity) is shaped through personal, creative experiences. One person's response and connectivity with his or her cultural community is dependent on the person's sense of self-esteem and desire for acceptance and/or admiration of *Others*. Self-esteem, however, develops in large part through an individual's sense of belonging in specific cultural spaces. D'Alfonso addresses *his* selfhood and identity as a *pluricultural ethos* (*En*

*italiques* 143). I understand this *pluricultural ethos* as creative desire or *creative* connectivity between different cultures and languages. D'Alfonso refers to himself as "Abruzzese/Molisano/Canadian/Italian/European/North American" because he cannot choose between his various cultural selves. This hyphenated breakdown of D'Alfonso's identity resembles Anzaldúa's multisubjectivity. D'Alfonso does not separate his Canadian self from French and English because his connection to cultures is actually three-fold and therefore it cannot be polarized. This idea surfaces in *Avril* when Fabrizio speaks of his attachment to Montréal:

Enfant tripartite, j'aligne mes trois visions différentes sur la même ville. Que dire du fantasme nationaliste qui prétend que tous et chacun dans une région du monde sont issus d'une même race (*sic*), détentrice d'une même et unique vision de la réalité sociale, culturelle et politique (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 180).

In D'Alfonso's vision of space « il n'est plus seulement question de la pureté de la culture ou de la perte de la culture » (*En italiques* 21). The movement between dominant and *other* cultures that takes place in regional cosmopolitan spaces such as Montréal cannot remain static because culture cannot be contained. Hybrid spaces of cultural movement are complex models inside national cultural contexts. However there is always a regional thread inside any national context of identity and inside these regional threads identity is understood as the coming together of differences, not the coming together of same-ness. « L'hybride est un lieu de contestation quand il force les catégories et nous oblige à redéfinir les critères de la beauté et du savoir » (Simon, *Hybridité culturelle* 28). In the work of D'Alfonso (even Laferrère) notions of

beauty and knowledge are aligned with Simon's vision of hybridity as a space which contests categories of sameness and validates difference. The connection between space and beauty, space and knowledge, are obvious in the way Fabrizio embraces Montréal's cosmopolitan identity.

Montréal aux regards divers...plein de larmes, au sourire arrogant, ville prétentieuse. Ma ville natale qui parfois m'est plus étrangère que Rome, ou Paris, ou Francfort, ou Mexico (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 180).

Even if Fabrizio is born in Montréal, he finds alliances and even allegiances in *Other* cities as well. Like Laferrière, space inhabits him long after he leaves particular spaces. Thus these writers value the notion of how individuals inhabit space. Their vision of space is not limited to cultural origins. While neither D'Alfonso nor Laferrière challenges the value of cultural origins, each one defends (in different ways) the importance of connectivity between cultures. Moreover in D'Alfonso's other works, he addresses subjectivity as a concept anchored to one's level of attachment to regional space(s) one occupies in a present context. « Je suis chez moi là où je me sens bien dans ma peau, partout et nulle part à la fois » (D'Alfonso, *Un vendredi* 37).

Thus validation of self-hood is an integral aspect in D'Alfonso's writing and in his vision of identity. As he says, « le respect d'autrui dépend de la dignité de soi » (109). The greatest challenge in the construction of self-hood is the need to feel loved and admired by *Others*. Moreover it is difficult to live with one's sense of individuality when that individuality continually shifts between different cultural and linguistic codes. I believe how individuals love themselves largely depends on how they engage inside public and private

spaces of culture(s) and language(s). In D'Alfonso's words "[s]ono quello che sono. I am what I am. A difference imposed on me by history. [It is a] way of living up to the standards imposed on myself by myself" (*The Other Shore* 117). Individuals like D'Alfonso negotiate identity as an intimate zone thus inside Barthesian zones of *relation privilégiée*. He therefore projects Beck's model of the essential and social self because his work draws inspiration from within and from an outside context of socially accepted standards, ones dictated by different cultural space(s). D'Alfonso reacts to outside cultural pressures differently than Laferrière or Rodriguez. His discourse does not address hybrid subjectivity through differences of skin color. This is not an issue that touches D'Alfonso's understanding of cultural identity because his physical appearance does not visibly separate him from white mainstream culture as explicitly as Laferrière or Rodriguez. However I read his negotiation between cultures as a by-product of colonial desire(s) in two contexts: French Canadian and Italian, English and French Canadian.

An individual's birthplace will always play a role in identity negotiation. However in today's globalized economic and cultural markets, the concept of a pure nation, a pure culture, a pure race, or even for that matter heterosexually dominated cultural codes, is in my opinion, a dated notion. Rodriguez's process of assimilation and his closeted homosexuality are time and space specific. Therefore his personal story does not *clearly* promote the idea of the *creative* connectivity between cultural and linguistic codes I wish to promote in this thesis. However his desire for hybridized identification,

albeit latent in many instances, illustrates his negotiation between different spaces. His confrontation of political issues such as bilingual education and affirmative action highlight the climate in which Rodriguez had to negotiate his place as an American citizen.

D'Alfonso's discussions about such political climates and nationhood are addressed differently in his work. This story takes place during a period in Québec when the province is fighting hard to maintain its distinct identity, one apart from an English Canadian context. It is interesting to note that Fabrizio's vision of nation tells another story. He suggests that « il n'y a plus de pureté racial, il n'y a que des impuretés qui permettent d'accroître la connaissance de soi, pour ensuite créer une harmonie universelle » (*Avril 22*). D'Alfonso's message below illustrates his position on the connection between culture and nation.

Si je me suis longtemps senti mal dans ma peau – et sans doute le serai-je jusqu'à la fin de mes jours – c'est que ma condition sociale m'a transmis des conditionnements historiques particuliers que je porte en moi, malgré moi....Ce qui me fascine...le fait qu'une culture sans nation soit *une culture faible* (*En italiques 16*).

In the preceding quotation, D'Alfonso's reference to the *conditionnements historiques particuliers que je porte en moi* illustrates the notion that one's identity can bear a direct correlation to one's inner state of mind, what he later refers to as *l'inconscient*. Speaking in this way D'Alfonso taps into a state of extended consciousness illustrating that his past is an integral part of how he reads his present and future. The idea of culture *and* nation as one concept no longer fit D'Alfonso's vision of subjectivity. He must continually juggle

notions of cultural identity inside an Italian and French Canadian frame, insisting on the relevance of ancestral history.

As in Hoffman's story, in D'Alfonso's narrative there are undertones of an ethical responsibility. There is therefore a symbolic importance attached to Fabrizio's narration of his parents' story before coming to Canada. Moreover, living in Québec means that Fabrizio (like D'Alfonso) is unwittingly caught negotiating his subjectivity between the French and English cultures. Thus, for Fabrizio, growing up in Montreal amidst English and French cultural and linguistic divides means that he must negotiate identity *between* these dominant cultures. However as a white immigrant, he negotiates mobility between such spaces differently therefore more fluidly than Laferrière or Rodriguez. Rodriguez needs to Americanize his identity while Laferrière parodies the black man. Both techniques may be read as tools of empowerment in how these men negotiate their masculine subjectivity between spaces. Such techniques are not present in D'Alfonso's work. His vision of hybrid subjectivity and his negotiation of self-hood are not complicated by issues of color.

For visibly different writers such as Laferrière and Rodriguez, color lines create tougher challenges, and these challenges surface in varying degrees in their writing. Cultural pride and linguistic rights during this period in Québec in the 1960s are shaped and dictated inside a dominant white national Canadian political and cultural environment. The immigrant presence was not always viewed positively by nationalists who advocated for a pure

Québécois French-speaking nation. I believe this has played a role in how immigrants define themselves inside a hybrid context, differently in Montréal than in other urban cities in Canada because immigrants in Montréal are continually negotiating agency and voice between English and French Canadians. The battle for education in French in schools became a battle in other arenas as well. For writers like D'Alfonso, achieving literary success was possible only in one of two ways:

If you wrote in French and did not belong to the *Modernité* group, or if you wrote in English and did not belong to the regional “in-power” group, you simply did not stand a chance of ever seeing your work in print....You were left out in the cold for no other reason than for being alone. You had to belong (D'Alfonso qtd. in Pivato, *Contrasts* 217-218).

While the Québécois were fighting for recognition inside dominant English Canada, immigrants in Montréal were also facing similar struggles, however their fight was somewhere between English and French. Where the immigrant struggle is more challenging, especially in the 1960s, is in defining and asserting differences positively inside a space defined by white French patriotism and white English dominance.

L'hybridité appartient pleinement à la mouvance de la pensée postmoderne dans la mesure où celle-ci n'imagine plus le monde progressant vers un seul idéal de vérité universelle, mais reconnaît une multiplicité des savoirs prenant des configurations diverses et variées (Simon, *Hybridité culturelle* 27).

Within this politically charged social arena, I believe that Italian immigrants paved the way for a hybrid climate in Montréal today. Italians like D'Alfonso define themselves through three national contexts: English Canada, French Canada and Italy. What seems obvious is the rather unique cultural climate in

Montréal, differently hybrid in nature than other Canadian cities because immigrants are continuously challenged to negotiate selfhood between two dominant cultures. Other Italian writers like Filippo Salvatore feel a sense of fascination and connection to the Québécois culture and “geographical milieu”, however they are always conscious that the “historical vision of Québec that the intelligentsia and the Péquistes offer” does not mark their selfhood in the same way (qtd. in Pivato, *Echo* 225). Salvatore understand his “sensitivity is fundamentally Mediterranean and Southern” (225). However D’Alfonso recognizes that “if Italian writers in Canada and Quebec want to leave their indelible traces on our culture, they must study and absorb Italian literary tradition as well as English and French” (qtd. in Pivato, *Contrasts* 220). D’Alfonso reminds us of the co-dependent relationship of cultures, of people. “Beauty is not inborn. It is the fruit of learning. Beauty has to be taught” (221). This notion of beauty D’Alfonso speaks of validates the need for connectivity between cultures and the more hybrid vision of subjectivity that I promote in this thesis.

### CONCLUSION

According to Susan Friedman, “the important unit is never...the isolated human ... but the presence and recognition of another consciousness (qtd. in Eakin 80). For Laferrière, that consciousness comes from his ability to laugh at himself. He refers to the « étalage sexuel » in his texts as « le dictateur du plaisir » (Laferrière, *Je suis fatigué* 54). He refuses the label

« Noir...[ou] immigrant » (53). Moreover, by embracing Haiti, Canada and the United States as one America, Laferrière blurs geographic boundaries and nationalist rhetoric that would force him to choose one country over another. In his words, « Qui suis-je? » can only be defined by « Où suis-je? » (*Je suis fatigué* 82). He aligns himself regionally with three cities: Montreal, Miami and Port-au-Prince. Contrarily, Rodriguez wonders how “the child of immigrant parents is supposed to perch on a hyphen, taking only the dose of America he needs to advance in America” (*Day of Obligation* 159). In an interview with Claudia Milian Arias, Rodriguez admits his “contradiction—the gringo [he] became, the Mexican [he] remain[s]”.

I read Laferrière’s parody of black and white relationships as an illicit or forbidden affair. It may be understood as an involuntary representation of hybridity however it is nevertheless a validation of connectivity between dominant and *other* groups. D’Alfonso’s writing promotes a more open argument in favour of relationships and ideas outside dominant ideologies. Rodriguez, as hard as he tries to fit into the skin of American selfhood cannot escape his cultural voice as *Other*. We live in a society inundated by labels where choice is sometimes pre-determined. What we wear, what we eat, what we drive, where we work, etc., every aspect of who we are, is dictated by trends and advertisers. There is nothing we do that is untouched by the far-reaching hand of local, national, and international advertisers. With the internet, this influence is impossible to escape. Before we can become individuals, we are labelled: man, woman, rich, poor, young, old, Black,

White, Catholic, Muslim, French, English, etc. Inside such categorization, our greatest challenges are perhaps in how we choose intimate connections, a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* with those who are most *unlike* us! This passage of connectivity or negotiation for possible connectivity inside zones of difference is not an easy one but as Barthes points out, it is not necessary to live in binary terms of success or failure.

Le monde soumet toute entreprise à une alternative; celle de la réussite ou de l'échec, de la victoire, ou de la défaite. Je proteste d'une autre logique : je suis à la fois contradictoirement heureux et malheureux : réussir ou échouer...ce qui m'anime, sourdement et obstinément, n'est point tactique: j'accepte et j'affirme, hors du vrai et du faux, hors du réussi ou du raté...je n'en sors ni vainqueur ni vaincu (*Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 29-30).

In the works of Rodriguez, Laferrière and D'Alfonso, different visions of connectivity between cultures validate the notion of hybrid subjectivities and a negotiation of passages between dominant and *other* cultures. It is a negotiation fraught with tensions, challenges, gains and losses. It is however, as Barthes reminds us, not so important if such negotiations fail or succeed. What is important, even necessary, is that individuals continue to embrace these ambivalent zones because « le vrai lieu d'originalité n'est ni l'autre ni moi, mais notre relation elle-même. C'est l'originalité de la relation qu'il faut conquérir...lorsque la relation est originale, le stéréotype est ébranlé, dépassé, évacué » (44-45). The preceding quotation appears again in this chapter as an important reminder of difference (s). This is perhaps the most important common thread in the works of Rodriguez, Laferrière and D'Alfonso. Their writing styles illustrate a wish to break free from stereotypes that dictate or

control their particular negotiation of identity, or any stereotypes that rob them of an authentic foundation of self-esteem and ontogenetic security.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Linguistic Code-switching and Non-translation

Perhaps it's good for one to suffer. Can an artist do anything if he's happy? Would he ever want to do anything? What is art, after all, but a protest against the horrible inclemency of life?

~ Aldous Huxley

By and large, language is a tool for concealing the truth.

~ George Carlin

The force of desire compelled us to translate imagination into action ... into the manic estatic [sic] tongue of love.

~ Patti Smith

Just as music is an art form that communicates messages emotionally through its different genres, languages are also artistic expressions of communication. As an art form, code-switching between languages, without translation, is a particularly innovative and creative artistic tool. Within my list of works selected, Gloria Anzaldúa and Hiromi Goto most effectively employ linguistic code-switching artistically in their works. They also challenge and subvert the power of the dominant centre through their use of untranslated words and passages. Therefore, they are the focus of this chapter. I am interested in contrasting Anzaldúa's *autohistoria Borderlands/La Frontera* with Goto's work of fiction *Chorus of Mushrooms* for the following reasons: First, in spite of differences of sexuality, ethnicity, culture and citizenship, the two writers share an affirmative view of linguistic hybridity. Second, to different degrees, these works contest the hegemony of language through

code-switching. I read linguistic hybridization in both works as a form of connectivity between people, a game of wit and fencing between languages and cultures. It is as much about respect and love for more than one language and one culture as it is about an intellectually *creative* challenge for writer and reader. In these works, the interaction of un-translated minority languages with majority languages may be read first and foremost as a polemical argument against “assimilation to the dominant norm, to the language of hegemony, English” (Cutter 3). However, such linguistic code-switching may also be read as a celebration of the hybrid voice and connectivity between cultures. Since code-switching between languages can create bridges or gaps in how readers engage in the meaning-making process, it is a creative *jeu de compréhension* of sorts, a dynamic power play between meaning and intention that is not always clear.

I understand linguistic code-switching as a *creative* tool of connectivity: it instills interest, curiosity and perhaps even desire for the *Other* language and *Other* culture. I also view it as a sort of linguistic foreplay in that it teases the meaning-making process by creating and instilling desire for *Other* language(s). “Getting meaning right” is a way “to read desire” (Sommer 70). Moreover, I view this linguistic foreplay as a necessary tool of expression for writers of color such as Goto and Anzaldúa whose process of identity negotiation is particularly challenging linguistically and culturally. Their hybrid position of movement is best understood through James Clifford’s intercultural identity question, “Where are you between?” rather

than “Where are you from?” or where will you end up. It is a space “more or less permanently in transit” between cultural and/or linguistic spaces (Clifford, *Traveling Cultures* 109). Linguistic foreplay or code-switching in Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s works illustrates each writer’s use of, and attachment to, her language of origin alongside the dominant English. The dynamic *between* and *within* languages, each writer’s system of multiple meanings embodies Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of “exotopy...the most powerful level of understanding,” where one culture and one language can only be understood through their internal *and* “external aspect’ to another culture” and another language (Todorov 109). In Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s works, the point where when one language is interrupted and an *Other* language is uttered is not always easily understood. In some instances, these writers avoid direct translations of *Other* words and sentences. This can create a gap between the reader’s understanding and the writer’s intention. The ability of readers to decipher linguistic codes and interpret them is dependent on their knowledge of the dominant and peripheral language(s).

If unilingual readers do not seek translation, they remain more-or-less excluded from the creative dynamics at play. The dialogue is always Bakhtinian because speech is about *heteroglossia* therefore polyphonic and many-voiced. “This is why the unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuous and constant interaction with others’ individual utterances” (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* 89). While a Bakhtinian code-switching exists inside all language, a more complex

version of code-switching occurs in those instances when it occurs between different languages. Nuanced meanings are privileged over literal translation. In such instances, reader and writer engage in a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* (outside the sphere of a group). The communication is more intimate because it privileges the “value of beauty ... as culturally specific” (Sommer 50) while the meaning-making process simultaneously brings together “people who live in two or more languages” (34). Such an exchange would not be effective in a group dynamic, say in business or in politics unless all parties could fluently code-switch between languages. This form of code-switching between two people creates a “bristl[ing tone] when the game changes codes and shifts them to outside positions” (36). Interchangeable outside positions encourage a better understanding of differences promoting more respectful relationships between people.

In Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s works, linguistic hybridity is explored primarily as a polemical tool. Meaning-making and intention are at times deliberately marred by un-translated sections. Neither writer assumes that readers can code-switch. Thus there is a deliberate focus on blocking (to some degree) the meaning-making process of readers who speak the dominant language but not the *Other* language(s). In my opinion, readers can benefit from such code-switching techniques as it can motivate them to explore a more intimate, unchartered promenade or engagement with *Other* languages. Robert Frost’s message of taking the road less traveled fits this concept of the unchartered *promenade* I speak of. As well, as Sommer points out, “a little

irritation ... just enough to get a rise out of people who think difference is an obstacle to level and leave behind – is good for liberal democracy” (36). Untranslated linguistic hybridity in such written works encourages readers to read differently. While it may reduce readership because the process making-meaning is more complicated, I believe that encouraging such hybrid processes of meaning-making can be valuable. By seeking meaning outside dominant linguistic and cultural codes, writers such as Goto and Anzaldúa wish to “deliberately distort or appropriate the source-language ... to suit ... political or cultural” agendas (De Lotbinière-Harwood 98). They choose how and when (non)translation occurs. In this way, they decide “what ideological stances and cultural values [they] ... consciously or not, want to foreground or mute” (100-101).

I understand their process of (non)translation as “the transformation of displeasure into pleasure ... [where] hard work ... [is] not ... a matter of inspiration ... but rather of a *slow and even painful process* of improvement” (Sommer 120). While Goto’s approach to how this transformation takes place is less polemical than Anzaldúa’s, Goto’s writing (just as Anzaldúa’s) defends my position in this thesis that *Other* languages (and cultures) deserve a more authentic and prominent voice in literary works. Therefore like Clifford’s ethnographer, these writers travel between cultures, exploring identity construction in “mixed, relational, and inventive” terms (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 10). As Sherry Simon puts it, « c’est dans et par l’étrangeté que se construit l’identité » (Simon, *Trafic des langues* 46). By choosing the less

traveled path of non-translation in their works, Anzaldúa and Goto take an important stand in favour of code-switching which implicates the reader in a pedagogical process of translation. In such a process, there is *creative* connectivity because host and adopted citizens communicate, listen to, and understand each other more intimately.

To appreciate the qualities of such a meaning-making process and connectivity between cultures, in this chapter I focus on three aspects of linguistically hybrid dialogues present in both works: i) the possible gains and/or losses unilingual dominant language readers face when they are confronted by *Other* un-translated languages in English works; ii) non-translation and code-switching as a contestation of the hegemony of the English language voice in North American life stories; and iii) the desire between characters that is also a metaphor of desire for *Other* languages and *Other* cultures.<sup>v</sup> I focus on how a linguistically hybridized narration contextualizes travel between languages and how code-switching is ultimately a tool of connectivity between people, languages, and cultures. To solidify points of connectivity rather than focus on how hybridization can isolate, separate, and even alienate people from the dominant centers of society, I am especially indebted to the following works: Chantal Zabus's *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* (1991), Sherry Simon's *Le Trafic des Langues* (1994), Catherine Leclerc's Ph.D. dissertation « Des langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine » (2004) and Doris Sommer's *Bilingual*

*Aesthetics* (2004). Roland Barthes' vision of *la relation privilégiée* and *jouissance* is nestled between these works framing my view of linguistic and cultural code-switching as manifestations of desire for the *Other*.

### Chantal Zabus

Zabus' focus on linguistic code-switching illustrates the un-transferability of culturally specific linguistic expression. In her study, she examines West African linguistic patterns to deconstruct dominant and authoritarian inscriptions of cultural and linguistic signs, to reveal how the dominant English language is affected by, or transformed as a result of, an interaction with *Other* languages. There is a similar deconstruction of dominant and authoritarian cultural and linguistic signs that is of great value in Anzaldúa's and Goto's use of linguistic hybridity. The focus of Zabus' work in the *The African Palimpsest* is on Third World Languages, cultural codes of *cross-fertilization* and *métissage*. Like the method of *indigenization* spoken of by Zabus which aims at "naming and identifying the gap between mother tongue and other tongue without necessarily bridging it...without necessarily resorting to translation" Anzaldúa's and Goto's code-switching techniques are also the "site of the pull between mother tongue and other tongue" (Zabus 8). Goto's protagonist, Murasaki, understands that "when there isn't one word in English, it will be there in Japanese" (Goto 54). In Anzaldúa, the line between mother tongue and other tongue(s) collapses: "there is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience" (Anzaldúa 80). There is however one important point in my focus on these works that is not addressed

in Zabus' work on West African code-switching. In Zabus, the process of reading is understood as superimposed and layered. While code-switching between cultural codes remains layered, there is also an *adjacent* or connective meaning-making process that occurs in Anzaldúa's and Goto's works. The dominant language sits *beside* an un-translated *Other* language, thus creating a more challenging process of interpretation and meaning-making.

### Catherine Leclerc

In Leclerc's dissertation which focuses on the cohabitation of French and English in contemporary literature, she defends the place of minority languages. She addresses the viability and consequences of co-lingual texts that share an equal, or near equal amount of narration in French and English. Her position of how languages can and perhaps should co-exist in literary works is an important one.

Fragmentant l'unité fictive à l'enseigne de laquelle logent les langues nationales, les revendications des minorités linguistiques ont contribué à faire du plurilinguisme le phénomène incontournable qu'il est en voie de devenir dans la pensée contemporaine (Leclerc 2).

Leclerc views the future role of minority languages in contemporary literature as one of value. The writers I focus on in this chapter illustrate a natural desire to linguistically *and* culturally code-switch. Although Leclerc's point on the viability and consequence of a hybrid narration addresses the cohabitation of English and French, her defence of this cohabitation lends itself well to how I frame and defend code-switching in Anzaldúa's and Goto's works.

Moreover, I agree with Leclerc's claim that « la littérature pourrait s'avérer riche d'enseignement quant aux types de rapport entre les langues susceptible

de se développer à la faveur de ce climat doublement favorable au plurilinguisme » (3). There is a strong pedagogical intent behind the *plurilinguisme* she speaks of. For instance, there is a didactic purpose to how Anzaldúa switches between “anglicisms or *pochismos*...anglicized Mexican ... [a language] with an accent characteristic of North Americans ... distort[ed] and reconstruct[ed] ... according to the influence of English” (Anzaldúa 78). The didactic value comes from an understanding of *how* slang can be “a language of rebellion” (78). Switching between different linguistic codes of slang signals different forms of linguistic rebellion Anzaldúa engages in. Her usage of slang establishes a strong polemical stance against literal translations as they will fail in providing accurate, intimate meaning(s). The use of slang also illustrates how cultural codes exist within the same linguistic references. Language and culture cannot be understood exclusively of each other. Thus Anzaldúa’s “ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity” because as she points out

until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate” (81).

This legitimacy that Anzaldúa wishes is also a by-product of historical, political, and cultural events. She legitimizes her hybrid voice through untranslated code-switching techniques. For instance, she validates her intimate connection to Mexican spaces by expressing this connection differently in English and in Spanish.

This land was Mexican once,

was Indian always  
and is  
And will be again (25).

Yo soy un Puente tendido  
Del mundo gabacho al del mojado.  
Lo pasado me estira pa'trás  
Yo lo presente pa' 'delante,  
Que la Virgen de Guadalupe me cuide  
Ay ay ay, soy mexicana de este lado (25).

Translated by Carlos Jiminez as:

I am the lying bridge  
From the *foreigner* to the wet back worlds  
The past pulls me backwards  
And the present forward,  
Guadalupe virgin watch for me (take care of me)  
Ay ay ay, I'm Mexican from this side.

The English message is somewhat polemical in its wish to reoccupy lands once Mexican and Indian, now the American states of: "Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California" (Anzaldúa 29). However the Spanish reference noted above with its English translation illustrates Anzaldúa's sentimental, more intimate voice, one she reserves for Spanish readers. Regardless of why she code-switches, Anzaldúa insists on being heard through the different codes (cultural and linguistic) that shape her identity. I also understand her code-switching style as a pedagogical process. The reader enters a didactic journey when reading Anzaldúa. She leads readers into a pedagogical process to "change the disciplines ... the genres ... how people look at a poem, at theory" (232-233). Anzaldúa writes as a teacher would, to educate readers to learn about and understand her *Other* worlds. In the spaces she moves between "borders are transgressed constantly" (233). These border

spaces are fraught with many tensions for her and for others, tensions that are sometimes difficult to reconcile. For instance, Anzaldúa refers to Chicano Spanish as something equivalent to “linguistic terrorism” an “illegitimate...bastard language” (80). The Chicanos, “internalize how ... language has been used against ... [them] by the dominant culture” creating a vicious cycle whereby Chicanos use their “language differences against each other” (80). As she points out, linguistic conflicts must be resolved inside a community before they can be addressed and repaired with other communities. Anzaldúa embraces language(s). This is a necessary tool in how she respects herself while recognizing and legitimizing *Other* languages. As Leclerc notes, « [e]n mobilisant plus d’une langue à titre de véhicule narratif, le texte colingue – sans abandonner tout à fait la notion de langue titélaire – la fragilise néanmoins » (Leclerc 318). Anzaldúa’s movement between languages sometimes creates gaps in how the English reader understands her words. While the English reader never misses any important points Anzaldúa wishes to make, s/he is not always actively involved in Anzaldúa’s meaning-making process. I view this exclusion as Anzaldúa’s desire to force the English reader into a pedagogical exercise. Engaging meaningfully with *Other* cultures means knowing *Other* languages.

Immigrant cultures will influence (in varying degrees) dominant cultures, therefore a reciprocal relationship between host and immigrant can (re)shape our vision of connectivity between cultures as a key aspect of how urban centers in North America and elsewhere function within hybridized

frames of identification. I would then argue that we can engage with *Other* cultures and languages on a deeper level, more openly if we have the ability to code-switch between languages. As Zabus points out, “culture change always involves language change” (ii). Leclerc also speaks of this relational movement between culture and language by referring to code-switching as a consequence of cultural diversity. The value of such movement in literature is seen as Leclerc points out in how « le colinguisme prend le plurilinguisme pour point de départ ... il rend possible la découverte d'affinités transversales entre des textes auxquels le découpage linguistique des littératures assigne des attaches différentes » (Leclerc 321). I would even suggest that code-switching should be understood as a fiduciary/ethical responsibility. We cannot intimately engage with language(s) without having a cultural understanding of that language just as we cannot engage intimately with culture without speaking the language.

### Sherry Simon

Just as Leclerc's thesis draws its inspiration from Simon's work on plurilingualism, Simon's understanding of hybridity in Quebec literature has inspired my illustration of linguistic hybridization in two ways: i) as a specific social and linguistic *other* code within an existing hierarchical social and linguistic structure; and ii) as a hybrid-multi-lingual narration or dialogue. The effects of translation Simon explores are particularly important in my perceptions of code-switching and non translation narration techniques. If a reader understands more than one language in a meaningful way then such

slips as « les mots déguisés, les faux amis, les traductions littérales » will be better understood in their nuanced meanings (Simon, *Trafic des langues* 44). Simon's example of Jean Le Moyne (best known for his publication *Convergences* in 1961) is a particularly important one in understanding the importance of non translation. Le Moyne is an insightful example because he openly embraced his knowledge of English, his *Other* language. As he notes in his work *Convergences*: "I want to keep my French heritage, but it is just as important for me to keep my English chattels and to go to the limit of my American gift of invention." This example also validates movement between languages in literary readings.

En lisant son auteur américain préféré Henry James, Le Moyne se rend compte qu'il ne traduit plus, qu'il assimile en d'autres mots cette littérature de façon non médiatisée. Cette prise de conscience est dramatique...et révèle le fait que la réalité "américaine" est irrévocablement de langue anglaise (45).

The preceding quotation sums up a major point in favor of code-switching without translation. To respect the cultural context, it makes most sense to decipher meaning-making *inside* each language by *knowing* the language, rather than through direct translation techniques. Although Simon's ideas in *Trafic des langues* applies to Québec's changing literary circle since the 1980s, writers such as Anzaldúa and Goto, through their usage of *Other* non-translated languages validate Simon's point that « toute culture conserve son dynamisme grâce justement aux contacts et aux liaisons qu'elle établit dans l'ouverture et le dialogue avec une diversité de traditions » (18). Non translation writing techniques promote this *ouverture* Simon speaks of. In

those moments where meaning from one language to another is understood without translation, the process remains encoded inside cultural references. This form of understanding is less literal therefore more nuanced in intimate meaning than translation. This process is significant because readers seek meaning outside pre-established dominant codes. We can understand this idea more clearly by looking at Simon's ideas on translation: « Le but de la traduction est de renverser les effets de domination culturelle inhérents au système colonial, d'absorber et de transformer les modèles de la culture européenne et de les intégrer à la culture indigène » (Simon, *Le trafic des langues* 23). I agree with Simon that translation is a necessary process for readers who do not speak the languages in question. I would nevertheless like to emphasize that readers who code-switch without seeking literal translations engage in a more intimate heteroglossic Bakhtinian process of meaning-making because "languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another" (*The Dialogic Imagination* 291). Thus knowledge of *Other* languages is an important process in how we successfully co-habitate with *Others*. If this type of process motivates dominant language speakers to understand and encode meanings by learning *Other* languages, then code-switching becomes a valuable pedagogical tool. Such pedagogy would also lead to a more inclusive addition of minority literature in university curricula because social/cultural codes often dictate academic choices. While such code-switching techniques may discourage some readers from such works, I would argue that these works are a necessary addition to today's

literary publications and on our academic shelves. On another equally important note, Anzaldúa's hybrid voice mirrors « le pouvoir transgressif du texte plurilingue [Simon speaks of] ...dans sa contestation des frontières nationales et culturelles, dans sa tentative de mettre en cause le rapport à la communauté et aux identités collectives » (*Hybridité culturelle* 27). Anzaldúa cannot abide socially dictated costumes or cultural dominated customs of nationhood or any codes that bind her inside one fixed identity. She believes that it is

[o]ur role to link people with each other – the Blacks with Jews with Indians with Asians with [W]hites and extraterrestrials. It is to transfer ideas and information from one culture to another....The *mestizo* and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is intricately woven together, and that we are spawned out of similar souls (Anzaldúa 106-107).

In the preceding quotation, Anzaldúa does not capitalize *whites*. This is an example of how she contests the dominance of White discourse in cultural and linguistic politics. Perhaps it is her intention to promote and validate the voice of *Other* groups over that of the dominant English White group. Or she may simply wish to strip the label of white race or nationality of its power. I have however chosen to capitalize *Whites* to contest the marginalization of any groups, dominant or otherwise.

Goto also speaks out against marginalization by code-switching between Japanese and English. She illustrates how English readers need to experience gaps in understanding (just as *Other* cultures do). We can understand Goto's refusal to translate certain Japanese words and phrases, as

an example of the very naturalness of such mis-understanding. « L'entreprise paradoxale de la non-traduction, en déstabilisant l'autorité de la signature, a pour effet de déplacer les frontières entre traditions poétiques » (Simon, *Trafic des langues* 71). Most of Goto's play between languages does not oblige readers to seek translation. I believe that this is a deliberate strategy. She inserts just enough Japanese to destabilize the English reader's process of intimate meaning, leaving the English reader wondering if s/he has missed any nuanced meaning. However unlike Anzaldúa, Goto's process of code-switching does not force the English reader to seek translation, even if it does create small gaps in his or her understanding of more intimate meanings. For instance, the following Japanese question: "Wakatte kurera kashira?" is followed by an English question: "Can you listen before you hear" (Goto *Chorus* 2) The literal translation of the Japanese is: "Would you understand me?" I understand this switch between Japanese and English Goto makes as a validation of code-switching over literal translations. Because Goto fluently speaks both languages, she has the ability to assign meaning intimately as she code-switches between the two languages. However a unilingual English speaker who relies on literal translation would lose the nuanced beauty of shifting between the cultural codes of meaning in language. I also link Goto's language strategy to Simon's reference of cultural expressions.

Les solutions "aux colles" de la traduction ne sont pas toujours à chercher dans les dictionnaires : elles se trouvent plutôt dans une analyse de l'état des relations entre les groupes... et leurs expressions culturelles (55).

An intimate understanding between cultures occurs when there is an effective process of communication. Therefore knowledge of *Other* languages can be understood as an effective tool to encourage code-switching and/or hybridized processes of meaning-making. My understanding of Anzaldúa's and Goto's hybrid writing strategies interfaces particularly well with Simon's description of Montreal's population and landscape in *Hybridité culturelle*. Montreal could easily be showcased as an example of a hybrid project. It is a city in continual evolution and movement between cultural and linguistic codes. Simon's example of Montreal's Mile End neighbourhood assigns a unique value to this neighborhood's diverse and changing cultural makeup.

...l'hybridité se vit dans le Mile-End de façon intense, visible et consciente....Le Mile End est depuis toujours un espace marginal où les migrants de tout genre se reconnaissent (Simon, *Hybridité culturelle* 21).

Today this Mile End neighborhood may not have the same hybrid population it once did. Nevertheless it is an interesting model of hybridity, visible in the way this neighborhood came together at one point to celebrate le Saint-Jean-Baptiste (Québec's national holiday). Unlike the musical festivities I am familiar with on the Plains of Abraham in Québec City where Québec artists belt out francophone beats to create solidarity and pride in being Québécois, in Montreal's Mile End, the musical ambiance begins with

[les] groupes de danse folklorique...[et] plus tard une musique plus vivante: le *rai* algérien, les *sambas* brésiliennes, le *soukus* africain. C'est au son de ces musiques du monde que la foule célèbre la fête nationale du Québec (18).

There is great value in holding on to traditional music and local customs. However what I respect in the vision of Montréal's Mile End neighborhood that Simon shares with readers is how a national holiday has become a harmonized sharing between dominant and *Other* music to create a hybrid vibe. As Simon points out, it has become « la fête de ceux et celles qui veulent célébrer un Québec ouvert aux influences culturelles les plus diverses » (18). As I understand it, it would be of even greater value to have such festivities alongside more traditional ones as a way to acknowledge the importance of past cultural codes and new evolving markers of hybridized cultures.

Such celebration between cultural codes is an important aspect of how Goto describes her protagonist Naoe, a Japanese woman in her 80s who chooses to actively participate in the Calgary Stampede as a bull rider. Moreover Naoe's relationship with an Albertan cowboy she names Tengu who speaks Japanese completes the image of a hybridized couple. Simon's descriptions of St. Jean festivities in the Mile End neighborhood corresponds with my reading of Naoe and Tengu as a symbolic coming together of different cultures. Moreover, Naoe's entry as a bull rider in her 80s illustrates her desire to embrace *Other* cultural traditions thus proving that *creative* connectivity is possible at any age! This vision of an old woman is not as far-fetched as it seems. On her blog, Phyllis Sues who turns 90 on April 4, 2013, tells readers how she starts her own fashion label at 50, becomes a musician and learns French and Italian in her 70s, takes tango and trapeze classes at 80 and takes up hot yoga at 85. So in her words "if you think you're old, think

again.” Such stories may be exceptional however they motivate people to step outside accepted norms of thinking that negatively age people. Thus Goto’s depiction of Naoe is more than plausible. I would argue that such examples illustrate more daring forms of transgressed Barthesian desire and more playful zones of cultural *jouissance*.

### Doris Sommer

This cultural *jouissance* I speak of Goto also expresses through storytelling. She thus illustrates the importance of oral tradition as another aspect of one’s creative journey. I frame the narrative techniques in Goto’s and in Anzaldúa’s writing along with their particular process of hybridized identification inside Doris Sommer’s work in *Bilingual Aesthetics*, subtitled *A Sentimental Journey* of bilingualism and code-switching. Her ideas favour connectivity between cultures. Sommer’s work focuses on an Americanized vision of *diglossia* or bilingualism. In the following quotation, Zabrus points out how minority languages do not share the same position of prestige as dominant languages (such as English and French) in public spaces.

A situation of diglossia is generally understood as one in which the linguistic functions of communication are distributed in a binary fashion between a culturally prestigious language with a written tradition and spoken by a minority, and another language, generally widely spoken but devoid of prestige (Zabrus 13).

This idea of language prestige is also present in Sommer’s writing. However she looks at prestige and how it is missing for minority languages from another angle. If “foreign languages are prized in elite education and dismissed for foreigners” then the notion of prestige is a condition of social and economic

status more than pride in language(s) (Sommer 7). Thus language acquisition versus language preservation becomes an issue and a fight inside political, social, and economic value systems. I choose to look at language communication of *Other* languages alongside dominant ones in the same way I understand dance, music, and art training, as a creative engagement with oneself and with *Others*. Like the arts, languages deserve a more prestigious voice in colleges and university curriculums. Such creative processes of communication would increase the number of readers able to grasp the distinction between meaning and intention as they move between languages, rather than translating from one to another. Such “intellectual stimulation,” what Sommer refers to as “being on the edge sharpens the wits, flexes democratic systems, and generally goads creativity” (xvi). Sommer’s vision of bilingualism as an aesthetic tool complements Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s use of linguistic hybridity. The fruit of this thesis is recognizable by how value is assigned to what Sommer’s labels *intellectual stimulation*. She suggests that “real authenticity means being more than one,” (xxii). Such writing techniques also allow readers to become more adept at reading and understanding different cultural and linguistic codes, question status quo cultural biases, and ultimately engage actively with *Other* cultures and *Other* languages more meaningfully. Moreover such code-switching techniques encourage readers to seek meaning intimately outside the constraints of a group dynamic, inside a Barthesian sphere of *relation privilégiée*. This level of intimacy has, in my opinion, a priceless human and even ethical value. As Sommer’s points out,

being *more than one* allows people to think “in simultaneous and competing codes [and it also] trains people in multiple perspectives and uncharted possibilities” (4). But *being more than one* is difficult to navigate inside a group or community-based environment. It is inside the realm of one-on-one relationships that the notion of hybridized identities can be most respected because the exchange and the meaning-making process are not open to group interpretation and cultural politics.

While Sommer situates her understanding of bilingualism within an American framework, her global defence of what she calls *bilingual aesthetics* is pertinent in how I interpret code-switching and connectivity between languages and cultures in Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s works. These writers engage with dominant and *Other* language(s) as a personal tool of expression, and as a necessary condition of how they dwell between cultures and between languages. Anzaldúa’s bond with language(s) is a deeply hybrid one. “I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself...[u]ntil I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate” (Anzaldúa 81). For Goto’s protagonist Murasaki, the desire to communicate in Japanese corresponds with her hunger for intimate exchange.

Even when...[she] was very little. Dad... [was] the man without an opinion and Mom [was always] hiding behind an adopted language...Obachan [her grandmother Naoe] took another route, something more harmonious. [She] showed me that words take form and live and breathe among us. Language is a living beast. (Goto, *Chorus* 98-99).

Anzaldúa’s exploration of language(s) is a more conflicted hybrid process than Goto’s. “Being caught speaking Spanish at” school for instance meant “three

licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler” (Anzaldúa 76). Anzaldúa’s greatest challenge was in trying to understand why she could not speak both Spanish and English. She did not know how to “tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet...bridle and saddle it” (76). Moreover, speaking Chicano Spanish was seen as another form of betrayal, purists viewed it as “deficient, a mutilation of Spanish” (77). So from a young age, Anzaldúa learned to speak (eight languages and dialects) in different tongues with different groups. Her writing is a coming together of all these tongues. In her creative sphere, she cannot separate or ignore any of her linguistic voices.

I understand both writers’ use of code-switching as an intimate validation of their hybrid identities. I view this intimate validation as *jouissance*, a release Barthes validates as being more powerful than simply an orgasmic experience. Sommer’s elaborates upon this distinction Barthes makes. “[H]ybrid encounters [are] of sexual release ... [or] ... *jouissance*, translated as bliss because orgasm is too anatomical” (Sommer 58). Moreover, Barthes’ sphere of *la relation privilégiée* complements his description of *jouissance* because his interpretation of both terms insists on a more intimate connection between *two* people. Hybrid identity, code-switching and connectivity between cultures and languages in Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s works and throughout this thesis borrow upon Barthes’ vision of human relationships. His ideas transgress the borders of normally accepted cultural codes. There is also a continual interrogation of conventional social codes in his writing that complement how I interpret Anzaldúa’s and Goto’s hybrid style of writing.

Because of the vast differences between them my juxtaposition of Goto and Anzaldúa is a somewhat transgressive act. These writers represent different geographic, cultural and linguistic origins, however I do not attempt to compare or contrast these differences. Their voices, voices that speak from the periphery, are initiators of a communicative approach I interpret as a dance form where readers are seduced by an image. An instantiation of this image is their usage of linguistic code-switching. The points of convergence in these works are therefore limited to their use of linguistic hybridity understood as a tool of intellectual and seductive communication between two people.

#### Historical Context

*Borderlands/La Frontera* addresses differences of language, race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation that shape Anzaldúa's *mestiza* identity. The anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, published in 1981, provides a time-specific framework for polemical discourse in Anzaldúa's *autohistoria*. The collection of letters, public addresses, poems, transcripts, personal conversation and interviews illustrates different feminist perspectives of women of colour in the U.S. in the 1980s. In the anthology, Anzaldúa identifies herself as a Third World woman writer "similar and yet so different" from other writers (*Bridge Called My Back* 163). She can only wield her power through writing and by reclaiming all her tongues.

Moreover, as a lesbian of color in the 80s, she views herself as "invisible both in the white male mainstream [literary] world and in the white women's feminist world, though [she acknowledges that] in the latter this is

gradually changing” (165). She describes her writing as organic, stating that “it works when the subject [she] started out with metamorphoses alchemically into a different one, [for instance] one that has been discovered, or uncovered by the poem” (172). She measures “the meaning and worth of [her] writing by how much [she puts herself] on the line and how much nakedness [or vulnerability]” she achieves (172). Her refusal to translate the Spanish and Nahuatl (indigenous) words, phrases, epigraphs and poems in *Borderlands/La Frontera* asserts her *mestiza* specificity. The title *This Bridge Called My Back* brings together the desire for *mestiza* solidarity and a Chicana feminism. Chrrie Moraga translates this solidarity as “family who first only knew each other in ... [their] dreams ... who have [now] come together ... to make faith a reality [of] ... a life between all of us” (xix). For Moraga, the dream of a life together means being “met at the river” (xix). I understand the river as a metaphor of continuity, of fluidity between women.

Goto’s *Chorus of Mushrooms*, in many respects a sequel to Joy Kogawa’s novel *Obasan*, presents travel between languages as an instrumental aspect of (re)constructing an immigrant’s marginalized individual and group image. Thus this work explores continuity and fluidity differently. In *Obasan* the story focuses on the oppression, internment, and dispersal of Japanese Canadians during and after WWII, in the wake of Pearl Harbour. This period in Canadian history marks the racial segregation of an entire population of Japanese Canadians, discriminated against and stripped of their rights as Canadian citizens. Symbolically, *Chorus of Mushrooms* may be read as a

vehicle of repair, restoration, and reinvention of the fragmented, silenced Japanese Canadian voice. In Kogawa's and Goto's novels, the old woman embodies the group, the voice of continuity. Obasan's silence in Kogawa's novel symbolizes the group's silenced and fragmented identity. In Goto's novel, Naoe's incessant communication in Japanese symbolically (re)constructs and (re)asserts the silenced collective voice of Japanese Canadians. "Words, words, words, WORDS....My body folds over itself under the weight....*akiramete*...the words seep from my nostrils, my ears, even leak from my paper dry eyes" (Goto, 21). Naoe and her granddaughter, Murasaki (re)claim their Japanese voice and also validate their ties with the dominant English Canadian culture through their desire to be a part of both worlds. Moreover, as women of colour, they construct their particular feminist voices (like Anzaldúa) through a celebration of their cultural and linguistic differences.

### Gloria Anzaldúa

I read the celebration of difference in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* as a multi-lingual and culturally hybridized dance between different forms of expression, poetically strung together.

Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian...resemble the bordertowns....The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 109).

The preceding quotation, taken from the chapter entitled *La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness*, is an appeal to her Chicano community to reclaim its “true faces...[their] dignity and [their] self-respect” (109) Her inner struggles and need for validation of self come across even more intimately when she addresses readers in her Chicano language(s). In this chapter, she speaks of the *Mestiza Way* and what it means to “take inventory ... from her ancestors” (104). Anzaldúa shifts between first person and third person narration in this chapter to speak personally and objectively. In Spanish she voices her desire to “get rid of the unworthy, the denial, the confusion, the brutalizing. Keep the judgment, deep and rooted, from the elders” (Translation Jimenez). This English translation of her Spanish words: “Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmientos, los desencuentos, el embrutecimiento. Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado, de la gente antigua” continues with an English commentary about oppressive traditions that contain women and queers negatively. Thus in the preceding English translation she addresses the close-minded views of the elders in her community however she does not deliver this message to English readers in quite the same way. This technique of code-switching that Anzaldúa seems to effortlessly engage in illustrates her desire to not only move fluidly between words, between worlds but to privilege certain people with her meaning-making process and exclude others.

Anzaldúa’s desire for such fluidity and her need to decide who she privileges with her communication and more importantly *how* she may be understood are emphatic refusals on her part of hegemony and domination

present inside any culture. Language is a powerful tool in this process of contestation. We must remember, as Zabus points out that

the domination of ... [language] has nothing to do with any allegedly inherent linguistic superiority of the European language over [an Other] ... language, although some upholders of a decadent purism will advance obsolete arguments on linguistic superiority (Zabus 42).

Anzaldúa's position on this issue is clear. She does not see herself as a product of *one* homogeneous cultural or linguistic identity so she employs different linguistic expressions as a strategy for remaining outside the ideology of one dominant linguistic, social, or cultural group. Anzaldúa's perspective, which remains on many levels *between* and *outside* the Chicano and American culture, is nevertheless a powerful symbol of connectivity, of code-switching between cultures, and of linguistic and cultural hybridization. Her writing style is transgressive, edgy, and rebelliously in opposition to dominant social codes of conduct and behaviour.

Her rebellion reveals itself most effectively in her mix of languages, in her refusal to translate her references in *Other* languages where meaning is necessary to grasp some of her deeper intentions. In order to cast a more favourable light upon the somewhat *forced* pedagogical process that is expected of readers (through personal translation), I locate its value in terms of *beauty* and the *sublime* as presented in Kantian terms in Sommer's writing. According to Kant, "beauty excites love...the sublime elicits respect because it threatens love...the delight in the sublime does not so much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect" (quoted in Sommer 127). I equate beauty to single linguistic codes, in this case English and French, the two ruling

European languages in many parts of Europe and the official languages here in Canada. In my understanding of code-switching between languages without literal translation, I understand the term *sublime* as *admiration or respect* of *Other* linguistic and cultural codes. Moreover, writers who engage a dominant tongue in a hybrid discourse with their respective (m)other tongues are trying to “uncover the cultural layers and contesting worlds in ferment” in the wake of a dominant and dominating narrative (Zabus 2). Unlike Chantal Zabus’ palimpsest, where meaning between dominant and Other tongues is an “overlapping space”, Anzaldúa paints meaning between (m)other tongue(s) and English alongside one another, on the same canvas. Languages are understood as adjacent, connective spaces. This position promotes a fluid communication between languages and cultural codes. It is also a space of continual movement between fixed binary positions. Dwelling in this space has its rewards and challenges.

For instance, in Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera*, un-translated words and sentences *create gaps* in how the English reader engages in the Chicana writer’s meaning-making process. There are many moments in Anzaldúa’s work where a translation is critical if the reader wishes to understand the meaning as much as the intent behind her words. However a literal translation does not always provide an effective answer. Just as Zabus speaks of “indigenization as a “double-edged weapon, a tortuous instrument of liberation” code-switching in Anzaldúa’s writing illustrates her attachment to different linguistic voices as her own *tortuous* process of liberation (Zabus 44).

In this process, she complicates the writer/reader pact, the process of communicative exchange (see Smith and Watson) and coherence through *many* intersections of un-translated words and passages in Spanish and other Chicano/Indian dialects and/or languages. These intersections express Anzaldúa's desire to validate her hybrid linguistic and cultural spaces. Thus she deliberately complicates the communicative exchange in her writing. In this *autohistoria* her lived experiences as a *mestiza* Chicana feminist and lesbian frame her desire to liberate her multiple subjectivities. However she insists on being heard on her terms which means through a multiplicity of voices. In the first part of the text, there are over twenty short and long epigraphs along with random words and phrases interspersed on almost every page of her seven essays. The second half of the text is a collection of Anzaldúa's poetry. Her hybrid language writing strategy, with its fusion of poems, Indian legends and myths, historical and personal stories, allows her to choose when and how she privileges bilingual English and Chicano readers over unilingual English readers.

### Hiromi Goto

In a different vein, Goto's use of code-switching and hybridity in *Chorus of Mushrooms* toys with language so that the meaning-making process is at times a negotiation of how readers understand Japanese cultural and linguistic codes. Goto sprinkles Japanese words and phrases throughout her story to tease the reader's understanding of meaning behind Goto's words. Through this teasing out process, there are also some humorous aspects. Her

play with the term *oriental* for instance is a satirical reference aimed at those who employ it as an adjective without necessarily understanding its meaning in concrete terms. Murasaki learns of the expression *oriental sex* from her junior high school boyfriend. However it is clear that she has no real understanding of what it means. Murasaki teases her mother about the reason for her breakup saying “Mom, he wanted to have Oriental sex with me” and when her mother responds with “Oh well, the Bible says we should wait”, granddaughter and grandmother chuckle at her response (Goto, *Chorus* 124). Later as an adult, Murasaki asks her Japanese lover to “have Oriental sex” with her (123). Neither knowing its literal definition, they agree to make it up as they go along. Thus Goto’s use of *oriental* in this way suggests that some expressions or words are encoded inside stereotypes. Such expressions are created without any real sense of meaning behind them. These types of examples invite readers to speculate on how empty stereotypes find their way into mainstream thinking. With such references Goto’s tone is somewhat mocking however no cultural or linguistic translation is needed to understand her point. However like Anzaldúa’s use of non translation writing techniques that privilege certain readers over others, there are also instances in Goto’s writing where the reader needs to seek translation in order to engage more intimately in a dialogical exchange.

Goto’s use of untranslated Japanese words and phrases is targeted at English readers. Unlike Anzaldúa, who, at times, speaks directly to the readers in her Chicano community, Goto’s focus is on the unilingual English reader.

Moreover, her hybrid linguistic exchanges hold a *less* polemical tone than Anzaldúa. The protagonists in this story, Naoe and her granddaughter Murasaki, employ the oral tradition of telling stories to reinvent themselves as bicultural (Canadian and Japanese) women and celebrate their different voices. Naoe communicates with Murasaki in Japanese even before Murasaki learns the language. Later when Naoe leaves the family home, grandmother and granddaughter continue to communicate across barriers of space, symbolically collapsing such barriers. I read non translation in their dialogue as an assertion of their need to remain connected intimately, thus moving between Japanese and English. When Murasaki needs advice she calls her grandmother who immediately answers in Japanese: Hai! Obachan da yo. Dòshita no, sonnani òkina koe o dashite. This translates roughly as: Yes, it's me. What's the matter? You are shouting. Murasaki's subsequent response does not offer the English reader any information about what Naoe has just said to her granddaughter. "Oh Obachan. Am I losing my mind? I can understand what you're saying, and how can we be talking anyway? I must be insane!" (130). Like Anzaldúa, the contextual meaning of Goto's writing style is not lost however in such instances the nuanced more intimate dialogue is unavailable to the English reader. Through their relationships with an English Canadian and a Japanese immigrant, Naoe and Murasaki also illustrate their desire for *Other* languages. Anzaldúa and Goto posit intersections between Spanish and Japanese – their language(s) of cultural origin (respectively) – in dominant English texts. This allows them to create a certain opposition between

languages and at the same time illustrate how celebrating such difference can bring cultures together, through a deeper understanding of the *Other* (especially in Naoe's case because she lives an adventure with an Albertan cowboy, on *her* terms).

### Unilingual Readers

A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.

Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*

If the lens of multiplicity is focused on the reader (as Barthes suggests), then it seems like a logical conclusion that writers who draw upon different linguistic and cultural codes in their works are writing to provoke and tease readers with their hybrid writing style. Again Barthes' view of friendships as *une relation privilégiée* is a valuable reference in understanding code-switching techniques. The process of meaning versus intention inside linguistic and cultural codes is best understood, in my opinion, when it occurs between two people. This focus on personal relationships is an important one in my understanding of code-switching and how readers engage directly with the meaning versus intention behind the writer's words, especially when they choose to seek meaning inside a hybrid landscape of cultural and linguistic references. These readers implicitly consent to a different kind of communication process, one that implicates them more actively in how they

read stories. In such instances, how is the role of the unilingual reader complicated *and* privileged through the process of negotiating code-switching and un-translated passages in Other languages?

In Anzaldúa's work, code-switching between Spanish, other dialects, and English obliges the reader to recognize and decipher various cultural and linguistic references. Without a *complete* engagement with dominant and *Other* languages, the meaning-making process is, in some instances, compromised. In this work, an intersection between un-translated minority languages and dominant ones encourages readers to confront cultural and linguistic differences and seek meaning in plural terms, *outside* the hegemony of the English language. Anzaldúa engages the unilingual reader in an interactive process of meaning-making between languages. By doing so, readers navigate inside "a world with too many voices speaking all at once, a world where syncretism and parodic invention are becoming the rule, not the exception...[where] it becomes increasingly difficult to attach human identity and meaning to a coherent 'culture' or 'language'" (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 95). Anzaldúa's linguistic hybridity does not pigeonhole narrative identity inside one linguistic voice. In the first part of the text, there are over twenty short and long epigraphs along with random words and phrases interspersed on almost every page of her seven essays. When it is simply a question of *Other* linguistic words nestled between English ones, the meaning-making process may be viewed as a creative journey. An understanding of the main points is not hindered in any significant manner. For instance, when

Anzaldúa refers to the “prohibited and forbidden [as] *Los atravesados* [who] live here” no translation is needed to understand that she speaks of people on the margins, people she classes as “those who cross over, or go through the confines of the “normal”” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 25). Without compromising meaning, such an insertion of another language simply adds a more creative edge to the meaning-making process. However when Anzaldúa speaks of her rebellion against cultural and social codes *inside* her Chicano world, the torrent of linguistic hybridity becomes more difficult to decipher. She explains how she

had to leave home...to find [her] own intrinsic nature...buried under the personality that had been imposed on [her and how she] was the first in six generations to leave the Valley, the only one in [her] family to ever leave home...of [her] own accord *me dicen, Como te gusta la mala vida* (38).

The last portion of the preceding quotation offers readers no clear translation. While readers understand that Anzaldúa’s decision to leave home is not an easy one, they cannot fully grasp the more intimate meaning behind these last words. It roughly translates as “her taste for a bad life” suggesting that leaving home means going after something negative. Her desire to leave home is only understood as a transgressed act through the meaning in the last sentence. Later when Anzaldúa speaks of *Guadalupe* as “the chaste protective mother, the defender of the Mexican people” the epigraph that follows, more than 20 lines, is entirely in her Mexican languages and/or dialects (50). Following the epigraph, the reader is given a brief history of *Guadalupe* and therefore s/he is able to understand its general gist. However, the deeper meaning as well as the

tone behind her words remains lost to the reader. It is an important example so

I include the Spanish and translated versions here.

El nueve de diciembre de año 1531  
 A las cuatro de la madrugada  
 Un pobre indioque se ilamaba Juan Diego  
 Iba cruzando el cerro de Tepeyác  
 Cuando oyó un canto de pájaro.  
 Alzó la cabeza vio que la cima del cerro  
 Estaba cubierta con una brillante nube blanca.  
 Parada en frente del sol  
 Sobre una luna creciente  
 Sostenida por un ángel  
 Estaba una azteca  
 Vestida en ropa de india  
 Nuestra Señora Maria de Coatlalopeub  
 Se le apareció.  
 ‘Juan Dieguito, El-que-habla-como-un-águila,’  
 la Virgen le dijo en el lenguaje azteca.  
 Para hacer mi altar este cerro elijo.  
 ‘Dile a tu gente que yo soy la madre de Dios,  
 A los indios yo les ayudaré.’  
 Estó se lo contó a Juan Zumárraga  
 Pero el obispo no le creyó.  
 Juan Diego volvió, llenó su tilma  
 Con rosas de castilla  
 Creciendo milagrosamente en la nieve.  
 Se las ilevó al obispo,  
 Y cuando abrió su tilma  
 El retrato de la Virgen  
 Ahí estaba pintado (50).

Englishd translation by Carlos Jiminez:

On December ninth of 1531  
 At four in the morning  
 A humble Indian whose name was Juan Diego  
 was crossing the Tepeyac hill  
 when he heard a bird’s song.  
 He raised his head to see the top of the hill  
 Covered with a bright white cloud  
 Standing in front of the sun  
 Over a crescent moon  
 Sustained by an angel  
 There was an Aztec woman

Dressed with indigenous clothes  
 Our Lady Mary of *Coatlalopeub*  
 She appeared to him  
 “Juan Dieguito, he who speaks like an eagle”  
 The virgin said in the Aztec language.  
 I choose this hill to build my altar.  
 “Tell your people I’m the mother of God,  
 I’ll help the Indians.”  
 He told this to Juan Zumarraga  
 But the bishop didn’t believe him.  
 Juan Diego came back, fill his *tilma* (tilma: apron like garment)  
 With Castilla roses  
 Growing mysteriously in the snow.  
 He took them to the bishop,  
 And when he opened his *tilma*  
 The virgin portrait  
 Was painted on it (tilma)

The English explanation Anzaldúa provides is much shorter and the personal dialogues in the preceding translation are not given. This omission does not negatively exclude the English reader, however it does not give the English reader the same intimate understanding of Maria Coatlalopeuh suggesting that Anzaldúa chooses when and how she excludes English readers from intimate exchanges of meaning. In such instances the unilingual reader makes the choice to either seek some sort of translation or simply focus on the brief summary Anzaldúa provides. I must admit that I found these instances difficult. However it was a frustration that resulted from my desire to know the *Other* language rather than seeking a literal translation which I am certain does not capture the more intimate nuanced meaning given in Spanish. However I would not have been completely satisfied relying only on the summarized account of events. I felt goaded and teased into wanting a deeper understanding of Anzaldúa’s words. I have included some other examples of

how Anzaldúa privileges Spanish speakers over English ones (see the appendix at the end of this chapter) to illustrate how Anzaldúa complicates and/or compromises meaning-making for English readers. If I wish to respect Sommer's vision of a *creative challenge* it is clear that a bilingual reading would have offered me a more privileged journey in Anzaldúa's meaning-making process.

The second half of the text is a collection of Anzaldúa's poetry. Her hybrid writing style moves effortlessly *between* Spanish and English stringing together poems alongside Indian legends and myths, and juxtaposing historical contexts alongside Anzaldúa's personal stories. Such hybrid writing allows her to choose when and how she privileges the Chicano community, the English one, or both, with a more intimate reading of her narrative. In these instances, the monolingual reader is sometimes excluded from an intimate understanding of her process of meaning-making versus intention. In this half of her book, translation is an absolute must because poems are either entirely in English or in Anzaldúa's (m)other languages. It is in these sections that the unilingual reader cannot effectively trace the meaning behind all her words. The epigraphs and comments Anzaldúa makes without offering readers a direct translation are an overt tool of contestation against the hegemony of the language.

In the final part of Anzaldúa's *autohistoria* an interview between Karen Ikas and Anzaldúa allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the writer. This last section rounds out the book's many hybrid sections perfectly

because it allows readers to end their meaning-making journey with Anzaldúa on a personal note. She speaks of her childhood, her views on education, the children's books she writes, her connection to languages, and ultimately her understanding of what it means to be a *border* person. Her affinity and desire to speak and to write in different languages, to code-switch, are tools to legitimize her differences. Interestingly enough Anzaldúa claims that her code-switching in *Borderlands* respects "certain standards...certain rules" and therefore the majority of her writing does not render the meaning-making process "inaccessible" to English readers (Anzaldúa 232). While it is not inaccessible, it is most definitely a challenge to read. I understand this challenge Anzaldúa creates for unilingual readers as a natural consequence of Anzaldúa wishing to "write for different audiences...more of an international audience that came across from one world to the other and that has border people" (233). Her desire to code switch is as important as her need to write in different genres such as "autobiography, fiction, poetry, theory, criticism" because, as she points out, she wishes to "change the disciplines, to change the genres, to change how people look at a poem, at theory or at children's books" (232-233). Ultimately Anzaldúa wishes to transgress as many lines and *established* rules as she can. She understands that there is a fine line between rules to break and readers to reel in. She is aware that she needs "other people who deepen ... [her] fears, like professors, critics, the students" (233). She admits that she wants and needs their approval and their acceptance. In spite of this confession by Anzaldúa, I still believe that there are enough moments of

*inaccessibility* in her use of code-switching between languages that forces readers to engage in a certain translation process if they do not know her (m)other languages. However I view this challenge, as previously noted, as a creative challenge and as a necessary obstacle.

Goto's usage of untranslated Japanese words and phrases in *Chorus of Mushrooms* is not as extensive as Anzaldúa's use of code-switching between her languages of reference. However, similar to Anzaldúa, there is also a hybrid, linguistic process of communication in Goto's work which illustrates her desire to communicate and write in different languages, without always translating. With Goto, however the meaning-making process is between Goto and English speakers. In her essay, "Words Like Buckshot": Taking Aim at Notions of Nation in Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*," Mari Sasano suggests that Goto's refusal to translate Japanese words is her way of "marking out her liminal territory to her readers" (Sasano 6). In an article entitled "Translating the Self: Moving between Cultures," Goto explains that "the text is also a place of colonization" where "difference exists, all cannot be understood, language could and can be a barrier" (Goto, *Translating the Self* 12). As I understand Goto, language difference should not be erased; rather, it needs to be articulated as an obstruction, otherwise the language in question will disappear or be replaced by another language. Goto assumes that most of her readers are "English-speaking and [they] do not understand Japanese" (12). Unlike Anzaldúa, who speaks to readers in her Chicana and English communities, Goto tells us that her target reader is the unilingual English one.

The words or sentences in Japanese that remain un-translated in Goto's work are generally simple expressions. Unlike Anzaldúa's usage of non translation which addresses political, social, and even racial issues, in Goto's un-translated Japanese references there are no passionate declarations or angry tirades. Rather her integration of Japanese may be read as a natural process of immigrant storytelling, where a hybrid dialogue is to be expected. Throughout the book, there are many sections that begin with the words "mukāshi, mukāshi, ōmukāshi" which translates as "long long time ago" thus blurring the lines between past and present moments. In these instances, non translation may be read as a converging of time lines so that the events are the focus and not when they occur. When Naoe tells Murasaki about her childhood in Japan, she first mentions the word *hanko* on page 8 without providing a translation until page 10. From the information she shares, it is easy for the reader to understand the meaning of this word as some sort of a personal family seal, which Goto later confirms. The importance of this reference is one of family tradition and family pride. "If someone were to ask you to sign a letter of recommendation and you didn't have your *hanko*, why you would shame the name engraved on it, passed down from fourteen generations" (Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms* 8) By avoiding an immediate translation, Goto attaches a more authentic value to the notion of a family seal as an important signifier of personal and specific identity.

Similar to the introduction and explanation of the *hanko*, Goto develops Naoe's character in a unique style. The reader's first understanding

of Naoe is of a woman in her eighties who rambles on in Japanese, whether she has an audience or not. Later the reader recognizes that behind these ramblings is a very sharp mind that has managed to learn English and French by watching *Sesame Street*. This is perhaps Goto's strategic way of illustrating that immigrants can learn *Other* languages at any age. That language acquisition occurs through a children's show is somewhat comical and yet shrewdly intelligent because it breaks down barriers between how children and adults learn, how children and adults behave. Many of Naoe's antics, actions, and reactions may be interpreted as childlike. Like a child, she speaks spontaneously and her storytelling skills suggest that she has an extremely active imagination. However, there is also great wisdom behind Naoe's way of engaging with language(s). Naoe's renaming of her granddaughter from Muriel to Murasaki is not simply a gesture of stamping her granddaughter with a Japanese identity; it is also about bestowing upon Murasaki the gift of discovery that comes from storytelling. When her granddaughter asks her why she has been renamed Murasaki, Naoe's response in Japanese: "*Ana ga jibun de imi o sagashite chiyodai*" is not translated for Murasaki or English reader(s) (17). I felt a strong desire to understand these Japanese words so I sought the translation from a friend. This phrase which translates as: "you should find the meaning of it by yourself" has an important significance. Naoe's desire for Murasaki to find the answer herself signals the crucial links between discovery, knowledge, and identity construction. I read the journey Murasaki embarks upon as the *intellectual stimulation* Sommer's speaks of in her

defense of bilingual education. This rather simple example also accentuates the way Goto plays with Japanese words to create some deliberate gaps in meaning for English readers.

The desire to sabotage the meaning-making process is addressed differently in Anzaldúa's and Goto's writing. However both writers converge on one point: in their travel between languages, they construct hybrid narrative identities that stand in opposition to and challenge notions of authenticity based on dominant languages and pure cultures. Moreover, I view their non-translation writing strategies as a creative privilege because this strategy obliges the unilingual dominant language reader to seek meaning outside the dominant language. In addition, these code-switching writing strategies allow readers to experience language in Bakhtinian terms, what Simon refers to as « un jeu ouvert de langages en dialogue » (Simon, *Trafic des langues* 28) where, as Simon suggests, the "I" of the minority voice weakens the "we" of the dominant voice (144). Simon also affirms the notion of (re)invention stating that « la langue et la culture ne sont pas à retrouver dans une logique de la conservation, mais à inventer, dans le risque et l'exigence de la créativité » (47) Self-understanding, I believe, develops from a deeper, more creative understanding of the *Other* and the act of non-translation in texts promotes a more enriched exchange between readers and the stories they read. Anzaldúa's voice may be heard as personal *and* collective. She shares her story and her vision in both contexts. She also speaks personally and collectively for

Chicana women whose voices are suppressed behind male cultural codes from both sides of the border: Mexican and American.

Similarly, Goto's protagonists should be heard personally and collectively. The stories Naoe shares with Murasaki and the stories Murasaki shares with her Japanese lover illustrate the generational value of oral traditions as markers of linguistic and cultural identity. Anzaldúa and Goto, in their respective styles, insist on and contest the hegemony of one language and engage the reader in a multilingual and bilingual (respectively) interpretation of their works. By aiming to unite readers inside a linguistic and cultural communication between languages, such writers align their ideas alongside Zabús' vision that "culture contact, even in the form of the notorious culture clash, always leads to the mode of linguistic hybridization" (Zabús ii). Anzaldúa's and Goto's *mode of linguistic hybridization* is both fluid and distinct. The intersection of languages creates gaps in some instances and in other instances code-switching between language(s) is simply a tool to identify and validate the different linguistic and cultural voices of these writers. Any clashes between culture and hybridization can be better understood if we look at how music today, especially inside a North American context, has evolved. Music inside a North American context cannot be understood outside the influence of jazz which is rooted in black slavery. Similar to Zabús' *African palimpsest* which is layered and cross-pollinated by different cultural and linguistic codes, virtually all of today's musical genres are layered and cross-pollinated by black jazz and blues influences.<sup>vi</sup>

In a similar vein, some of Anzaldúa's references to music validate the hybrid value in music. References to *norteño* music, "North American border music" or *conjuntos* folk music "borrowed from German immigrants" or *corridos* about "Mexican heroes who do valiant deeds against the Anglo oppressors" illustrate the various cultural influences music has had in shaping Anzaldúa's attachment to her cultural voices (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 83). Music, from whatever genre or style, has become a universal and unifying language and its ability to borrow from, (re)create, mix, (re)invent styles is a great testament to its power and to its ability to bring together people of different races, ages, cultures, even religions. Such universal appreciation inevitably creates a more fluid passage between different cultural and linguistic voices. Although music without lyrics is a nonverbal form of communication, in its rhythms and beats it evokes emotions in its listeners. It is why music is such a powerful tool of creation, of healing, and ultimately of communication. I view the value of code-switching and hybridity in the works of Anzaldúa and Goto as a creative cross pollination between language(s) and culture(s), ultimately as music, as a dance of sorts between people.

#### Non translation and Code-Switching

*Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? Il faut à tout prix transformer le fait en idée, en description, en interprétation, bref lui trouver un autre nom que le sien.*

Roland Barthes

If I contrast Goto's use of code-switching with Anzaldúa's, I would say that Goto's method may be viewed as a flirtatious engagement between

languages. While there are instances where un-translated words or passages require the reader to seek translation, the tone of Goto's writing is not as polemical as Anzaldúa's. For instance, she describes the scarecrow on their mushroom farm in Japanese. There is no literal translation offered however the Japanese is nestled between English in such a way that the reader understands meaning contextually as illustrated in the following quotation:

Our *teru teru bozu* swung barely, almost motionless, from the rafters  
outside the house. In the warm wet of summer rain.  
*Teru teru bozu*  
*Teru bozu*  
*Ashita tenkini shite okure*  
He would charm the rain away and Obasan would take us to the park  
(Goto, *Chorus* 6).

Such code-switching between English and Japanese is sporadically present in the entire work. In those instances when translation is necessary, readers never experience exclusion from meaning as they do in Anzaldúa's work. For this reason, in this section I focus more-or-less exclusively on Anzaldúa's writing. Contrary to Goto's more playful tone, Anzaldúa emphatically contests the hegemony of *any* one language. Her linguistic hybridity is imbedded in fragmented meanings, code-switching between dialects *and* languages. Since she does not, or more importantly cannot, translate herself inside one homogeneous cultural or linguistic identity, employing different linguistic expressions is a strategy for remaining outside the ideology of one dominant group, language or cultural reference. By "intervening in an interconnected world, [she is]...to varying degrees...caught between cultures [and] implicated in others" (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 11). Anzaldúa bears the same

task as James Clifford's ethnographer; she travels between cultures, exploring her identity as an in-between passage continually in movement between cultures and languages, not as a fixed point of contact inside one linguistic or cultural space. Anzaldúa's perspective, a blend of connectivities between languages and cultures outside dominant and fixed Chicano *or* American English cultural codes is an important one. A strong level of interconnectedness between languages juxtaposes Anzaldúa's stance against any universal readings and even against how something is *labelled* universal. In this way, her greatest weapon of resistance against the hegemony of language(s) is a multi-voiced narrative. Rather than marginalizing her, I see Anzaldúa's linguistically hybrid voice as a position of value. In her role as *Other* I believe that she privileges her many voices and defends linguistic hybridity in identity construction.

As Bakhtin points out "in the realm of culture, outsidersness is a ... powerful factor... [I]t is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (Bakhtin 7). Anzaldúa identifies her outside position in the borderlands as a physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual space. It exists "where two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 19). This notion of intimacy is a key element of this thesis and how it expresses the value of code-switching without translation. To shrink the space between her multiple subjectivities,

Anzaldúa interweaves Spanish and English narratives. According to Smith and Watson (previously quoted in Chapter One, it is also pertinent here), she

effectively traces the hybridity of her own identity in a way that suggests how multiple and intersectional identities can be. The very title both differentiates English from Spanish and joins them at the border of the slash. The [subject] “I”/eye move back and forth across the border, just as Anzaldúa writes of navigating the intersections of sexuality, ethnicity, gender, and nationality at the constructed borderland of Texas and Mexico (Smith and Watson 37).

Anzaldúa (1999, 20) explains that “the switching of ‘codes’ in this book from English to Castillian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all these, reflects [the Chicano]...language, a new language—the language of the Borderlands”.<sup>vii</sup> Writing simultaneously in different languages without translating everything into English allows her to break down paradigms and extract her narrating “I” and her ideological “I” from any “traditional frames...oppressive histories and myths that censor” their difference (Smith, 154). For instance, the section in the first essay of *Borderlands/La Frontera* following a Spanish epigraph, reads “The *Aztecas del norte*...compose the largest single tribe or nation of Anishinabeg (Indians) found in the United States today....[who]...call themselves Chicanos and see themselves as people whose true homeland is Aztlan (the U.S. Southwest)” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 23). However, in another essay Anzaldúa explains that, out of shame, many Mexicans do not acknowledge their indigenous ancestry. This quotation, nestled between Mexican lyrics and an English poem interspersed with Spanish, speaks to her immediate need to assert her indigenous heritage.

Each of Anzaldúa's seven essays illustrates her different desire(s) and her longing to "enact her multiple subjectivities," each as a Barthesian *relation privilégiée* (Anzaldúa 72). As I mention in my previous chapters, Barthes' view of friendship, of exploring relationships as an intimate exchange between two people, may be applied here metaphorically to illustrate the idea that language communication is first and foremost an intimate exchange between two people. Inside the context of a group, it is perhaps simpler, even necessary, to communicate in *one* language to render the meaning-making accessible to everyone simultaneously. This need for a cohesive understanding inside a group is illustrated in Zabus' example of Nigeria, a multi-lingual nation-state "where several hundred languages are spoken, [where] the Head of State addresses his fellow-countrymen in English and in nine major languages, including the Arabic exolect; [and where] his message is further translated into about forty languages without actually reaching all the people of Nigeria" (Zabus 25). Within a political and national context, the logic of having one common language to promote consensus on such issues as trade, law, government, education at the primary and secondary levels, religion, et cetera seems logical. Even though, within a West African context, "linguistic imperialism is presented as the most insidious and pervasive aspect of colonialism" it is understandable why "West Africa has ironically perpetuated the dominance of the official European language" – because English has "come to represent a unifying medium triumphing over the mutually unintelligible West African languages" (Zabus 25). The point I wish to make

here is that within a political and national context, I support the use of one dominant language as a tool of effective communication. This vision does not however hinder my desire to encourage the study of *Other* languages in education. While it may seem a bit archaic, I would suggest that just as religious studies dominated education in the past, language study should be a greater focus in today's education system. Moreover, I believe, as Sommer suggests, that there is a humbling process for dominant language readers who are confronted by *Other* languages, especially when there is not always a translation available. It is visible with its "in-your-face foreignness...[one that] disables nativists and makes them outsiders to some games. You don't know me. You don't own me," is the resounding message (Sommer 63). Such barriers that divide nativists from foreigners are not healthy divisions. Knowledge of multiple languages seems like the first step towards bridging such divisions.

I would argue that Anzaldúa takes the idea of *disabling nativists* even further. I understand her approach in terms of nation as Homi Bhabha speaks of it in *Nation and Narration*. Bhabha suggests that the "essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things" (*Nation and Narration* 11). This idea of commonality is illustrated in each of Anzaldúa's six essays, a mini-portrait of her personal story nestled alongside a particular historical and cultural context that has shaped, and continues to shape Mexico's linguistic and cultural identity. It is a past Mexico that Anzaldúa identifies with, a Mexico before its American

conquest. Bhabha claims that there is no pure European race since “the leading nations of Europe are nations of essentially mixed blood” (15). This is certainly true of mixed Chicano blood. Much of Anzaldúa’s polemical narrative stems from her desire to have this mixed blood accepted in respectful terms. In the introduction to Anzaldúa’s work, Sonia Saldivar-Hull’s translation of one of Anzaldúa’s Spanish epigraphs provides readers with the source of her rebellion and her desire to confront her “Shadow-Beast”. Anzaldúa’s “proclamation of independence for the *mestiza* bound within a male-dominated culture,” is a personal address to the “men and male identified women in her community” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 3). As a proclamation, it also becomes an official document, therefore reading it in Spanish authenticates its message within the Chicano community. Anzaldúa establishes an intimate dialogue between herself and this audience [her Chicano community elders] “who [could, but] refused to speak English” (3). Her refusal to translate this epigraph suggests that she wishes to dialogue with her community members on their linguistic terms. For Anzaldúa, these members, those who represent its phallogocentric population, the Chicano, *mexicano*, and even some Indian cultures “have no tolerance for deviance....[They view] the queer...[as] the mirror reflecting the heterosexual tribe’s fear [of] being different, being other and therefore lesser” (40). While Anzaldúa does not ignore negative attitudes towards lesbians outside these cultures, this quotation illustrates the sense of otherness she experiences within her own Chicano,

Mexican and Indian cultures. She also experiences this sense of otherness from the American side of the border as well.

I read essay one as an address to an American public. She articulates her desire to reclaim Texas land as Mexican and indigenous, viewing it as “the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture” (25). She describes the borderland as “a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (25). In essay two she speaks about personal rebellion and betrayals and her desire to be heard as an “Aztec female” because “her Chicana identity is grounded in the Indian woman’s history of resistance” (43). Essay three speaks of pagan beliefs specific to Mexican Catholics. “*la Virgen de Guadalupe* is the single most potent religious, political and cultural image of the Chicano/*mexicano*... a synthesis of the old world and the new, of the religion and culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered” (52). Guadalupe is an important symbol in Anzaldúa’s story because it

unites people of different races, religions, languages: Chicano protestants, American Indians and whites...she is the symbol of ethnic identity and of the tolerance for ambiguity that...people who cross cultures, by necessity possess (52).

In essay four she speaks of the Coatlicue state, another symbol, this time a “symbol of the underground aspects of the psyche” (68) and how knowledge and consciousness (in her case, asserting her lesbian sexuality as *une relation privilégiée*) allow her “a travesia, a crossing,” a move towards a deeper self-awareness and inevitably, self-acceptance (70). Similarly, in essay five, *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, Anzaldúa explains how the Chicano languages are

“neither espanol ni ingles, but both...a forked tongue, a variation of two languages” (77). As a result, she speaks Standard English, working class and slang English, Standard Spanish, Standard Mexican Spanish, and other related dialects (77). Traveling between languages, Anzaldúa demonstrates her desire to have, and to use, her “Indian, Spanish, [and] white...tongue” and explore her multiple subjectivities (81). In essay six, she reveals that writing allows her to express her multiple desires, “making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be” (95). In her final essay, she seeks “a *mestiza* consciousness...a breaking down of paradigms [one that]...depends on the straddling of two or more cultures” (102). Each of these chapters relays a different aspect of the straddling of cultures that Anzaldúa speaks of.

Anzaldúa’s writing illustrates different forms of insider/outsider positions. Her usage of code-switching between languages *and* cultural codes allows her to navigate between her different selves in a manner that respects her multiplicity. For the reader, the value of such code-switching is first and foremost a pedagogical one since meaning must be sought before the reader can engage in a meaningful understanding of Anzaldúa’s story. This requires the reader to speak her (m)other languages or seek translation. If the reader speaks only English or Chicano Spanish then s/he risks mis-understanding some of the deeper messages behind her hybridized cultural references. Second, through such a process of code-switching Anzaldúa also engages readers in a culturally and linguistically hybrid process of meaning-making. Looking outside group dynamics, it seems the best form of connectivity

between cultures occurs when communication takes place inside a Barthesian sphere of *une relation privilégiée*. In such a process of exchange, *beauty* (in Kantian terms) takes a backseat to the *sublime*. There is a respectful cohabitation between different cultural and linguistic codes and in how one person understands another. When individuals communicate in different languages with each other, linguistic communication becomes a playground for linguistic foreplay or Barthesian *jouissance*. Linguistic communication that is hybridized creates desire for Other worlds and Other languages.

For Anzaldúa, her multi-linguistic play with words, phrases, poems, operates in such a field of foreplay. Moreover her code-switching is a continual reminder of how *Other* voices deserve recognition and respect. I understand her desire for recognition and respect as something akin to Bhabha's vision that "nation is a soul, a spiritual principle" (*Nation and Narration* 19). Although her multilingual voices bear the mark of *strangeness* for readers grappling with meaning against a backdrop of words and references that code switch between cultural, linguistic and historical lines, they are a natural process of communication for Anzaldúa. I interpret the intensely polemical code-switching Anzaldúa engages in as her desire to "inspire passion without getting stuck there, because reflection allows one to take pleasure in the intensity and in the moral capacity to extract from it" (Sommer 63). Such reflection that begins from a vantage point of *strangeness* leads to different meaning-making processes where a multi-layered catalogue of

linguistic and cultural codes allows readers to grasp meaning and intention outside the realm of different cultural and linguistic markers.

There is a surprising desire for solidarity present in Anzaldúa's hybrid literary mix in different languages of narrative and poetry within a historical and personal context. By evoking a historical past, she attempts to breathe the fire of that past into a present-day context.. She is staking a claim to nation as a hybrid playing field. Her writing for this reason may be understood as an "autobiographical manifesto" because it allows Anzaldúa to transcribe her narrating *I* as a "moi poétique" (to borrow the expression from Quebec poet and translator Jacques Brault, previously mentioned in Chapter One it is also of value here)<sup>viii</sup> (Smith and Watson 155). By having her ideological *I* and her "moi poétique converge," Anzaldúa speaks as writer and poet and enters the realm of *jouissance* (over orgasm that Barthes differentiates between) and a spiritual unity of nation Bhabha supports (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 155). For readers, this terrain of *jouissance* and spirituality is understood through their level of engagement with the various passages Anzaldúa poetically narrates through multiple code-switching techniques.

Anzaldúa even speaks of historical events in poetic terms. For instance, her bilingual description of the U.S. and Mexican border as an open wound-*una herida abierta*-where the "Third World grates against the first and bleeds," conveys a political message poetically. In more complex undertones, the use of untranslated Spanish also allows Anzaldúa to contest, as she puts it, the "white superiority [of Americans who] seized complete political power,

stripping Indians and Mexicans of their land while their feet were still rooted in it” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 29). However many of the translations (from Spanish to English) I sought reveal that Anzaldúa’s refusal to translate is not always an overt tool to exclude the unilingual English reader. In some instances, it is simply a marker of desire to express herself in different languages, straddling her various identities as she chooses. For instance, the following expression:

Son las costumbres que traicionan. La india en mi es la sombra: La Chingada, Tlazolteotl, Coatlicue. Son ellas que oyemos lamentando a sus hijas perdidas” (44) roughly translates as

It is the customs that betray. The indian in me is a shadow: the fucked one [her own translation from earlier on], Tlazolteotl, Coatlicue [proper names]. They are the ones we hear lamenting [or mourning] their lost daughters.

The English references before and after this Spanish reference arguably convey a similar meaning. In these passages Anzaldúa speaks about betrayal from inside one’s own culture. For instance, she states that “the worst kind of betrayal lies in making us believe that the Indian woman in us is the betrayer...not me sold out my people but they me...because of the color of my skin they betrayed me” (44). This convergence of similar meanings demonstrates Anzaldúa’s desire to “write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to [directly] translate” from Spanish to English (81). Moreover, her refusal to translate *all* her references from Spanish to English illustrates her refusal to accept English as her only language.

Zabus refers to code-switching between languages as an assertion of choice and as a resistance to domination. According to African writer Chinua

Achebe, “the complete renunciation of English” (qtd. in Zabus 35) is an irrelevant option in a nation where “people...speak different mother tongues” (25). However, Achebe also recognizes that “English [alone] is inherently unsuitable for conveying the African experience” (35). Similarly, Anzaldúa’s integration of Chicano languages demonstrates her desire to create fluidity between binary positions, to converge her multiple selves and express her particular subjectivity as Chicana. In doing so, she claims what Smith refers to as “the subjectivity of [the] universal man,” where the focus turns to “authority, legitimacy, and readability” (Smith, 155). However, she does this outside a phallogocentric claim of universality. She defines this genealogy as (as previously cited) “being both male and female...the embodiment of the *hieros gamos*: the coming together of opposite qualities within,” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 41). Employing a hybrid writing strategy also allows Anzaldúa to assert her *particular* vision of Chicana feminism. She contests any ideology (including her Chicano culture) that denies her right to be Catholic/divine/pagan/ supernatural/sexual/homosexual/ Mexican/Indian/Texan/male/female. I employ slashes (a strategy I mention in my Introduction and in Chapter One again) between these words to demonstrate how “multiple and intersectional” her identity is, both uniting and dividing her at these different borders (Smith and Watson 37). She explains that nothing “in [her] culture approved of” her so she confronts the “rebel” within, her “Shadow-Beast” on her terms, outside labels proscribed by

conventional markers emanating from an American and/or Chicano context. (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 38).

Her hybrid discourse and emphasis on cultural differences distinguishes her feminism from the dominant discourse of white feminists. This attachment to different languages also asserts Anzaldúa's Chicana lesbian specificity. As previously quoted in Chapter One, Spivak's questions "Who am I? [must be extended in its inquiry to also ask:] Who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How does she name me?" are valid in understanding the voice of the socially and culturally defined feminine voice *and* here in this chapter on linguistic hybridity. (Lionnet 3) Anzaldúa rejects white feminists who "want...to apply their notion of feminism across all cultures....They never left their whiteness at home....However, they wanted ... [her] to give up ... [her] Chicaneness and become part of them; [which meant she] was asked to leave [her] race at the door" (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 231). Anzaldúa rejects any universal reading of her Chicana subjectivity, particularly her Chicana lesbian feminism. This includes the linguistic barriers she faces.

Thus she asserts her own particular hybrid genealogy through a feminist discourse that "interpolates [her]...as native to the Americas and with a non-Western, multiple identity" (2). She employs a narrating "I" to "find [her] own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on [her]" (38). As she puts it, "I am my language...[and] until I can accept as legitimate Chicana Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself" (81). In "Beyond postmodern

politics: Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault,” Honi Fern Haber states that Foucault’s “view of the relationship between language and power” rejects “the view that the power of phallogocentric discourse is total” (Haber 102). In this essay, Haber argues that since “discourse is ambiguous and plurivocal, it is [also] a site of conflict and contestation. Indeed, women, [like Anzaldua] can adopt and adapt [discourse]...to their own ends” (102). For instance, Anzaldúa’s process of interweaving songs and poetry in her narrative allows her to connect her Indian origins with her Mexican ones on her terms. She “contests the old inscriptions, the old histories, the old politics, the *ancien regime*...[of] social reality...what Donna Haraway describes as our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction” (Smith 157). Anzaldúa rejects social stations created by Chicano and white male cultural codes.

#### Conclusion: Metaphor of Desire

La jouissance ce n’est pas ce qui *répond*  
au désir (le satisfait), mais ce qui le  
surprend, l’excède, la déroute, la dérive.  
Roland Barthes

In the personal interview section of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa shares an insight about her writing that lends itself well to contrasting the writing styles between her and Goto. She admits that she “didn’t know how to write fiction...to do fiction you have to be free, imagine things, exaggerate – whatever you need to do in order to convey the kind of reality that you are trying to transmit” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 244). Where Anzaldúa struggles, Goto seems to have mastered this art of imagining, exaggerating, and (re)creating realities. Goto’s protagonists tell stories that create a certain

connection between groups, in this instance the Japanese group and more specifically Japanese women. In the acknowledgements, Goto explains how “in the process of re-telling personal myth ... [she has] taken tremendous liberties with ... [her] grandmother’s history”. Through the liberties Goto exercises in (re)shaping stories, she focuses on personal relationships to symbolically create group bonds. Whether fictional or based on real events, Goto’s approach suggests that relationships can be best understood inside a Barthesian sphere of *relation privilégiée*.

In *Chorus of Mushrooms*, grandmother Naoe and her granddaughter Murasaki construct their own bridges between Japanese and Canadian cultures, largely through the process of one-on-one storytelling. As the title suggests, mushrooms are symbolic of the musicality of sound(s) and smell(s). Language and food play an integral role in how cultural identities are (re)constructed. Murasaki’s involvement and intimate exchanges with a nameless Japanese immigrant who does not speak English are a condensation of her desire for recognition inside the feminine Japanese voice. Her nameless lover is a symbol, or trope, of Japanese identity. Murasaki’s relationship with him illustrates her longing to connect with her lost linguistic and cultural Japanese origins. Growing up in rural, white Alberta, she discovers as early as eleven years of age “that the shape of [her] face, [her] eyes, the colour of [her] hair affected how people treated [her]” (175). It is her grandmother Naoe, not her parents, who instils a sense of pride in Murasaki and educates her about Japanese culture through stories. Storytelling is a powerful tool in this work,

one that bridges linguistic and cultural gaps between English and Japanese codes. Although Murasaki's journey to discover her Japanese culture and language is an important one, I view her relationship with Naoe along with Naoe's experiences as the strongest symbol of connectivity between culture(s) and language(s). First, Naoe's admits that she speaks English, even French. Second, she leaves the sanctity of her daughter's home, hitch hikes, and embarks upon a series of roadside and sexual adventures with an Albertan who happens to speak Japanese. At the end of Naoe's journey she becomes a masked bullrider in a rodeo, the ultimate symbol of how she appropriates an Anglo male identity as her own. These clandestine adventures Naoe lives do not interfere or compete with her passionate connection, linguistically and culturally, to her Japanese origins. Rather, I view her adventures in complementary terms. They illustrate her desire to engage with English Canada. Moreover, her sexual experiences with Tengu the Albertan, validate the importance Naoe places upon seeking out the *Other* to preserve oneself, linguistically and culturally.

Naoe's need to preserve her cultural and linguistic authenticity while experiencing desire for *Other* cultures and languages is also illustrated through the stories she tells Murasaki. Naoe's greatest voice is as spokesperson and symbol of Japanese "women's voices, storytelling, and female creativity" (Ty 152). She empowers Murasaki's Japanese female voice and names herself defender and spokesperson of Japanese myth and legend. For instance she tells Murasaki about the legendary sister and brother "Izanami and Izanagi" who

leave “their celestial home to create the world...Japan” (Goto, *Chorus* 45). Through this story, she reshapes the Christian story of creation into a Japanese one. Through another story, she speaks about a *yamanba* [a mountain woman] who swallows maggots and pumps them from her breast as “millions of soft-skinned people,” emphasizing the importance of creativity and the power stories hold in (re)constructing and (re)affirming lost or forgotten traditions (118). In the essay, “Thrumming Songs of Ecstasy: Female Voices in Hiromi Goto’s *Chorus of Mushrooms*,” Eleanor Ty describes the rewriting of folktales in this novel as “attempts to re-script Japanese Canadian female subjectivity and to challenge...the ‘old story’ of otherness”(Ty 153). Naoe’s imaginative storytelling skills allow her to reconstruct the collective identity of Japanese Canadian women and empower them – freeing them from both the constraints of the male dominant Japanese culture and the dominant white Canadian culture.

Naoe also re-scripts her granddaughter Muriel’s Canadian identity by renaming her Murasaki, after the first female to write a novel in late tenth century Japan. By renaming her granddaughter, Naoe symbolically transforms Murasaki into a renowned storyteller and feminist hero. Similarly, Naoe adopts an English translation of Murasaki and calls herself Purple. This English translation marks Naoe’s entry as a bicultural Japanese-Canadian citizen. It also allows Naoe to enter the rodeo, an Albertan English space, as the “Purple Mask...a mystereeerious bullrider and participate in a male-dominated white sport” (Goto, *Chorus* 160). Masking her identity, “[s]he

becomes “known, even renowned, but [since] no one knows who the Purple Mask is, [it represents] both an unmistakable sign of identity and a guarantor of anonymity” (McCullough 160). Naoe’s masked participation suggests that she does not want the dominant group to be privy to her entry into their world—thus implying there is more power in anonymity. Neither Murasaki nor Naoe hides “behind [their] new names,” they simply “adopt names to suit their identities, creating a movement between what each is born with and what each eventually chooses [or longs] to become” (Sasano 4). These new names symbolically allow each woman to enter *Other* linguistic and cultural spaces.

#### Contrasting Metaphors of Desire

The struggle is inner...the struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.      Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*

By way of concluding, I would like to contrast the different metaphors of desire in each work. Anzaldúa’s desire for binaries to converge resonates in all her essays and poems. She describes her existing hybrid in-between space as “awkward, uncomfortable and frustrating...because...[she is] in the midst of [continual] transformation” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 237).

Acknowledgement of this transformation is a valuable message because it promotes self-love, ultimately Anzaldúa’s acceptance of her multiple selves. Similarly, Naoe and Murasaki reveal their desire to be recognized and respected as bicultural Japanese and Canadian citizens. Their respective

experiences with Tengu (symbolic of the Canadian English culture) and an unnamed Japanese immigrant (symbolic of the Japanese culture and language) address their longing to (re)connect with Canadian and Japanese cultural codes. Murasaki celebrates the importance of speaking English *and* Japanese. Through her hybrid discourse, she promotes Leclerc's co-habitation of languages. Although the untranslated Japanese references do not equal the English ones, the Japanese cultural codes co-exist on a creative level, on an equal footing with English. Linguistic fluidity is personified by Murasaki's inability to hear difference between languages.

At one point, she questions her lover about his fluent English, knowing that he has never formally studied it (Goto, *Chorus* 187). However he responds by stating, "[W]hen I speak with you, I only speak in Japanese" (187). Murasaki's inability to distinguish between English and Japanese words may be interpreted as her inability to choose one language over the other. As she tells Naoe, "when there isn't one word in English, it will be there in Japanese and if there's something lacking in your tongue, I'll reach for it in English. So I say to you in English [:] I love you Obachan" (54). Through this quotation, Murasaki implies that her words in Japanese cannot complete all her thoughts so she needs *both* languages to express herself. Thus, interweaving English with Japanese in her discourse means that Murasaki needs both languages to communicate. Before learning Japanese, Murasaki is trapped inside her mother's desire to completely assimilate her into English Canadian culture. With Naoe's help, Murasaki understands that her new found bilingual English

and Japanese identities allow her to blur the space between where “one thing end[s] and another begin[s]” (213). Similarly, Naoe’s confession that she knows English reveals her hidden bilingual identity. However refusing to speak the English language illustrates Naoe’s pride in the Japanese spoken word. More importantly, it illustrates her desire to keep the spoken Japanese word alive. Ultimately, Naoe’s desire to enter the rodeo, an English Canadian cultural event is the strongest symbol of her desire to move fluidly between cultural spaces.

For Anzaldúa, this fluidity between spaces, people, and languages carries a more educational and philosophical message. For example, she refers to the mirror “as an ambivalent symbol...it reproduces images...contains and absorbs them” (Anzaldúa, *Borderland* 64). She explains that “a glance can freeze us in place; it can “possess” us. It can erect a barrier against the world. But in a glance also lies awareness, knowledge” (64). The awareness and knowledge behind a glance she speaks of can be interpreted as a bridge, as a space of continual movement between her multiple selves where the images keep changing and the changes are not always easy ones. “Every time she makes “sense” of something, she has to “cross over” kicking a hole out of the old boundaries of the self and slipping under or over, dragging the old skin along, stumbling over it...It is only when she is on the other side [not in any permanent sense] that she sees things in a different perspective” (71). I read this *different* perspective as the *ultimate* passage (of fluidity) between diverging cultural codes, sexual codes, languages, religions, countries, and

ultimately between people. Anzaldúa's desire to converge her binaries illustrates a latent dissatisfaction in such fluid passages. I read this dissatisfaction as her desire for meaningful contact between binaries. This fluidity—a radical putting into question of binaries—exists in both texts. It is an important form of movement between foreign and dominant languages.

## CONCLUSION

### Where can we go from here?

The person who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner, he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong person has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his.

Hugo of St. Victor (qtd. in  
*Culture and Imperialism*,  
Edward Said)

Because culture changes, continually absorbing other cultural and linguistic codes, we need to look at new ways to tell stories, newer ways to approach ideas of family, love, relationships. Inside cultural codes, our desire for self-fulfillment is an important aspect of how we negotiate identity, translate our values and understand our life experiences. My interest in hybridized identity and the *creative* connectivity present in code-switching between cultures and languages is motivated by personal and pedagogical interests. Therefore my concluding commentary branches out in two directions: as a personal journey and professionally as a language teacher. In both instances, my focus is on the connectivity between cultures and languages as connectivity between people.

I view human contact as an exchange of energy and vibrations, a spiritual connection which allows us to identify who we are by embracing people around us. If “communities are to be distinguished, not by their

falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” how desire for difference(s) and how desire for *Others* are imagined may be understood through Benedict Anderson’s vision of *imagined communities* (6). In these imagined sites “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7). This idea of a *horizontal comradeship* implies a relational connection between people therefore I understand it as Ricœurian – *soi-même comme un autre*. Thus how we interconnect our spaces with *Other* spaces is an important aspect of community, imagined or real. We must not forget that “the world is a crowded place, and that if everyone were to insist on the radical purity or priority of one’s own voice, all we would have would be the awful din of unending strife” (Said xxi). Today, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define groups as radically pure. In our desire to preserve and protect cultures and languages, defending the platform of pure notions will not disappear. However we need to ask ourselves how we can move forward from this debate. Thus this thesis views code-switching as a necessary tool to move forward. *Creative* connectivity, a fluid movement between languages and cultures has value. Such movement is an acknowledgment and an acceptance of the idea that

subjectivities and identities are constructed in multi-layered and contradictory ways. Identity in this sense is seen not only as a historical and social construction, but is also viewed as part of a continual process of transformation and change (Giroux 207).

We can also embrace this *continual process of transformation and change* positively if we recognize (as I have done throughout this thesis) the pedagogical and artistic value of code-switching and hybridized identification.

I have relied on Bhabha's *discourses between pedagogy and the performative* to broaden the definition of culture outside fixed zones of national identity. In his essay, "Resisting Difference: Cultural Studies and the Discourse of Critical Pedagogy", Henry A. Giroux outlines four reasons why cultural studies are important. I list them here as a way to trace, concretize and summarize the value I have assigned to code-switching throughout this thesis.

- a) Cultural studies are important to critical educators because it provides the grounds for making a number of issues central to a radical theory of schooling. First, it offers the basis for creating new forms of knowledge by making language constitutive of the conditions for producing meaning as part of the knowledge/power relationship.
- b) Second, by defining culture as a contested terrain, a site of struggle and transformation, cultural studies offers critical educators the opportunity for going beyond cultural analyses that romanticize everyday life or take up culture as merely the reflex of the logic of domination.
- c) Third, cultural studies offer the opportunity to rethink the relationship between the issues of difference as it is constituted within subjectivities and between social groups.
- d) Finally, cultural studies provides the basis for understanding pedagogy as a form of cultural production rather than as the transmission of a particular skill, body of knowledge, or set of values (201-202).

From the preceding references, the following points stand out: *new forms of knowledge*, what constitutes a *site of struggle and transformation*, the *relationship between difference, subjectivities and social groups*, and perhaps most important the idea of *pedagogy as a form of cultural production*. This means that we must, as Edward Said reminds us, move beyond simply "learning about other cultures" focusing more on "studying the map of

interactions, the actual and often productive traffic occurring ... among states, societies, groups, identities” (20). My literary exploration of code-switching in the selected works has been a small step towards a better understanding of the complex yet meaningful process of how we might begin to “rejoin experience and culture” by directing our attention “to read texts from the metropolitan center and from the peripheries contra-punctually, according neither the privilege of “objectivity” to “our side” nor the encumbrance of “subjectivity to theirs” (259). To understand *Other* cultures and move fluidly between different codes, it is imperative that we widen our selection of *what* should be read and more importantly *how* it should be read (328). Said asks us to discard “right-thinking response[s]” involving “newly empowered marginal groups” in literatures that describe “the African [or Asian, or feminine] Proust” (328). There is no contest in how we assign value to writers like Proust yet we must remain open to new forms of expression, leaving behind the insecurity that “if you tamper with the canon of Western literature you are likely to be promoting the return of polygamy and slavery” (328). While there is a wider selection of post-colonial literature in university curricula, immigrant/migrant literatures need more visibility and study.

In his essay, “Diversity in the United States and Abroad: What Does It Mean When American Studies Is Transnational?”, Emory Elliot asserts the importance of focusing on *Other* literatures, “to turn attention to the way the United States is interconnected inter-culturally, not only to Europe, but also to Africa and Latin America” (8). Moreover he recognizes the value of “diasporic

literature ... rich in autobiographies and fictional narratives” (16). The selected works in this thesis represent a modest beginning in how we may begin “to understand [the] deeper psychological and emotional experiences” of movement between cultures. We should not dismiss works of fiction in our understanding of *Others*. “When people say that they do not read fiction because it is not about *real* life, they deny themselves access to imagined parallel worlds in which readers can vicariously encounter the intimate lives of characters who are unlike themselves but are very much like real people” (16).

My exploration of *Other* literatures (fiction and autobiography) has been a personal experience in as much as it has opened my eyes to issues of how people negotiate identity from such different perspectives and angles. Here is a re-cap of how the selected works are positioned in identity negotiation in this thesis: Anzaldúa’s *autohistoria* is a Mexican/American border theory narrative as much as it is a personal story about being a colonial hybrid; Rodriguez’s autobiography is a narrative about repressed identity issues inside a politicized and socially shifting period of American culture; Hoffman’s autobiography is a trauma narrative as well as a quest for a new Americanized/Polish identity. Kingston’s autobiography is a hybrid blend of myth and lived experience, a re-scripting and empowerment of Chinese/American feminine identity; Goto’s work of fiction is a reclaiming of identity, a redefinition of bicultural voice; Laferrière’s work of fiction offers a Pan-American vision of identity inside a racial and satirical discourse of black and white stereotypes; Finally, D’Alfonso’s work of fiction illustrates multi-

subjectivity as a natural consequence of immigration. The common thread in all the works is a universal desire for inclusiveness that is genuine and respectful.

My experiences in Québec City over the last decade have led me to continually interrogate what it means to seek such inclusiveness and how I have drawn lines between fitting in and translating my minority *Other* experience on my terms. By exploring *Other* literatures, the works in this thesis have allowed me to broaden my vision and recognize, as Elliot points out, “that there are few pedagogical activities more important for us to be doing today than fostering international exchanges” (“Diversity in the United States and Abroad: What Does It Mean When American Studies is Transnational?” 8). As a teacher, I have become quite passionate about educating my students in communicating and interacting effectively with *Other* communities in Québec City. I believe such contact is an important aspect of critical thinking because it involves students in a meaningful exchange with *Other* cultures in their community. As educators if we “merely ... urge students to insist on one’s own identity, history, tradition, uniqueness” it would be inadequate (Redinger 331). What is required is a relational vision of such issues. We therefore “need to go on and situate these in a geography of other identities, peoples, cultures, and then to study how, despite their differences, they have always overlapped one another, through unhierarchical influence, crossing corporation, recollection, deliberate forgetfulness, and, of course, conflict” (331). When I think of my personal experiences of identity negotiation in Québec City’s dominant population and its peripheral *Other*

cultures, I must admit that I have dealt with some tension and at times questioned how I fit in, both within the dominant frame *and* even its peripheral spaces. My outsider position, a hybrid composition of different cultural codes, has however allowed me to understand the importance of remaining curious, open, and accepting of difference(s).

In her essay, “Corridors: Language as Trap and Meeting Ground”, Angèle Denis, a young Québécoise francophone from Québec City speaks about her experiences of living in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa/Hull. In some ways, her experience translates my impressions of living in Quebec City. Living in Quebec City has made me more aware of how passion and desire are important elements of happiness. How we choose to interact with *Others* for instance should be desire-based. As Denis points out “meeting others and being elsewhere allow you to become conscious of your social and internal Daedalus: of what you are and of what makes you who you are” (133). Living passionately means embracing contradictions and different codes. Just as my journey has been about rescripting my English Canadian voice and Indian/Arabic experiences inside a French Canadian voice, Denis speaks of how she has had to renegotiate a French Canadian voice inside the English spaces of Toronto and the bilingual spaces of Montreal and Ottawa/Hull. While I was disappointed to hear about some of the negative aspects of Denis’ experience in Toronto, it was an eye-opening revelation. It has allowed me to understand how we can all, as Paterson states, become *l’Autre*. However Denis

and I agree on one point: we need to remain open to language(s) and culture(s).

Her view of translation as problematic corresponds with mine. Moving to Toronto meant Denis had to “learn the local language” (134). Moreover for Denis “having lived in English” in Toronto as I do in French in Quebec City mean we “understand the loss of spontaneity that [sometimes] comes when” we express ourselves in a “foreign idiom” (134). However neither of us can dispute the value that comes from speaking in Canada’s official languages fluently (in spite of the voids we sometimes experience because of differences in cultural codes). I share in Denis’s view of language as a “marvelous tool ... to express visions, emotions, the world” (138). Perhaps the most appealing aspect of movement between languages (code-switching) is in how it allows people to “penetrate the ways in which others felt or saw the world” (138). This idea of penetrating another person’s cultural and linguistic space corresponds to my vision of intimate connections (a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*), hybridized identification, and code-switching between spaces promoted throughout this thesis. The outsider position I have sometimes felt in Quebec City, Denis has experienced in Toronto, “sitting on a fence ... no longer a standard Québécois, yet in [English] Canada ... [feeling] politically marginal as Québécois and francophone” (138). She goes on to explain how her move to Montreal was a more comfortable experience. She views Montreal as

a city of possibilities, a place where some corridors were transgressed and some walls shattered ... where there was a third reality/way

between French and English ... where newcomers, refusing to be confined to one or the other linguistic labyrinth, put bilingual messages on their answering machines (140).

This third reality Denis speaks of I understand as inherently hybrid. For Denis (and I share this view) “human life is about transgressing and transcending borders, we all have to move within our own heads, to meet in new ways and to consider the creation of spaces rather than barriers” (145). We need more focus on *transgressing and transcending borders* – Barthesian in perspective. We also require more ethical forms of *creative* connectivity between people, languages, and cultures, where “true engagement and respect are ... developed and nurtured” (145). For such connectivity to exist, encouraging people to code-switch between languages seems like an appropriate first step.

If we feel desire for spaces outside our cultural and linguistic zones of identification (our spaces of comfort), then I believe we have, in some respects, defeated racist thought. Having lived in India, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Ontario, and now in Québec, I have come to the realization that I am a composite of many regional (and not national) identities. I therefore understand my hybrid subjectivity as one shifting between spaces of local *Other* cultures. As a result, the selected works in this thesis have been a source of personal value. Each writer’s particular vision of identity has helped me trace a more *creative* connectivity between how I understand my movement between English and French cultural and linguistic codes in my daily reality alongside the Indian and Arabic voices of my inner consciousness. I have also come to understand and accept how cultural identification can be assigned to

us through our external spaces by the way we allow such external spaces to inhabit our subjectivity. There are certain markers of identity we cannot escape: color, appearance with its labels of beauty, religion, age, language and cultural codes that differentiate our way of thinking from another person. In order to wear such markers with pride and dignity, we must accept some responsibility for how we negotiate our particular process of identity translation. We must not forget that

just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things (Said 336).

This connection Said speaks of is something I strongly believe in. This thesis has therefore been an important process in how I understand and apply Said's desire for such connection in my personal and professional spaces. This does not mean that I do not recognize value in traditions, cultural and linguistic origins. I believe that community belonging promotes better self-esteem. However I also understand, as Said points out in the preceding quotation, how our connection between people is a critical aspect of respect, desire, and admiration of *Other* codes. Throughout this thesis I have thus focused on hybridized identification (in spite of its challenges) as a source of value.

Does hybrid identification offer better connectivity between people?  
A Barthesian *relation privilégiée*

I share in D'Alfonso's, Goto's and Anzaldúa's desire to move fluidly between languages and cultures. I understand community and society as

ethical spaces of love. By this I mean that we need to engage more intimately with people around us. We have a tendency to interact with family and friends who resemble us. Inadvertently we draw lines around our identity by negotiating who we are inside familiar, fixed, cultural and linguistic spaces. By broadening our circle, we can then embrace and accept that “The New Immigrant is as much the name of a figure as the Native Informant” (Spivak 394). We can thus invite people into Anderson’s *imagined community*, a space Spivak imagines through figures “woven in the folds of a text” (394). The text provides a testing ground to imagine/reshape ourselves and others. As Spivak points out, “a figure makes visible the impossible, it also invites the imagination to transform the impossible into an experience, a role” (394). Doris Sommer’s vision of cultural and linguistic code-switching as *creative play* effectively illustrates this idea of imagination and how value is dependent on *how* we engage with *Other* languages and cultures. How we interact with *Others* determines the effectiveness of code-switching and how we form relationships with people outside our cultural and linguistic spaces of identification. The ability to code-switch would remove, or at the very least weaken, the strongest obstacle that separates people – fear.

Moving away from such fear brings me to how Spivak grounds her definition of *ecological justice* “inside a learning of world visions” (383). According to Spivak, “learning can only be attempted through the supplementation of collective effort by love. What deserves the name of love is an effort ... which is slow, *attentive* [my emphasis] on both sides” (383).

This collective effort Spivak mentions can also be understood through Laferrière's Pan-American vision of identity because he understands and defines identity outside geographic borders therefore collectivity is not defined inside *one* geographic space. In my opinion, less emphasis should be attached to geographic and homogenized cultural spaces and more importance given to cultural and linguistic connections. This world is increasingly *transnational* (to borrow from Spivak) so the movement of people between cities and countries demands more focus. We must learn *how* we can bridge gaps between difference, *how* we can tackle zones of hybridization inside communities (412). I do not believe that an individual's loyalty to place should be exclusive to his or her place of birth. Just as an individual is influenced and shaped by *Other* cultures, so too can s/he be defined through different cities and countries. Like Laferrière, I feel that place should inhabit the person, that attachment between person and place should be as intimately reciprocal as a relationship between two people – a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. Moreover Laferrière's romance/shifting allegiance between the spaces of Paris, Miami and Montréal illustrates the global connectivity and attachment of hybridized identification I address in this thesis.

Regional spaces promote citizenship and selfhood in more hybrid terms than national ones. To emphasize this point, I would select D'Alfonso's vision of Montreal and his belief that "conscious identities" are based on "free choice" (D'Alfonso qtd. in Chanady 12). However Amaryll Chanady points out that "positive multiple identity may not be accessible to everyone,

especially to those belonging to a visible minority” (Chanady 33). I therefore agree with Chanady’s observation that being *visibly* different blurs or compromises a negotiation of *conscious identities* since those who are visibly different do not have the same *free choice* to define their multiple selves. Laferrière’s desire to embrace regional city spaces as intimately as his protagonist embraces sexuality is another example of a positive model of *free choice*. His parody of Black and White roles however is only a symbolic illustration of how he takes possession of spaces that may otherwise marginalize him as a Black man.

*Free choice* in this context does not seem to be an option for Rodriguez. He explains how his visibly different appearance (his dark skin) marginalizes him and impedes him from gaining full entry as an American. For Rodriguez, the pressures to conform to mainstream visions of identity (in the 1960s and 1970s) and assimilate into an Americanized identity were strong. However we must not forget that

hybridization is not the “free” oscillation between or among chosen identities. It is the uneven process through which immigrant communities encounter the ... capital imperatives served by the United States and by the Asian states [and French and English Canadian spaces] from which they come, and the process through which they survive ... by living, inventing, and reproducing different cultural alternatives (Lowe 82).

Thankfully today’s environment in North America (for the most part) offers more freedom in how people challenge negative forms of cultural containment.

Rodriguez wishes to empower his American public voice because he views empowerment as an American cultural tool, one that his Mexican

culture cannot give him. His public voice is an illustration of a particular form of empowerment not present in the other works. Rodriguez views his commitment to American culture and to his “future as someone who grew up in California” whose vision is therefore more American than it is Mexican (Marzán 47). Learning English as a child meant distance from Spanish therefore writing about his life experiences as an adult means that Rodriguez cannot allow readers a deeper exploration or even understanding of his private thoughts on what it means to be a Mexican, Spanish-speaking immigrant. After reading J.A. Marzán’s “The Art of Being Richard Rodriguez” I found myself retracing my first impressions of Rodriguez (45). While Rodriguez’s narrative suggests that hybridized identity is a precarious position, he also contradicts himself, thus destabilizing how readers grasp the intent behind his words. For instance, he tells Marzán he no longer views himself as a minority, stating that his “students chose to live in the past .... They were minority because they clung to Spanish” (48). However in *Hunger* he speaks about his private family life and how his move away from Spanish was a deep loss. Moreover the anger he displays when he hears Marzán speaking to his wife on the telephone in Spanish is also a sign of Rodriguez’s contradictions (48). Another compelling point is Rodriguez’s response to some of the choices he has made, visible in how he chooses to respond to Marzán questions. For instance when Marzán asks: “You completed your undergraduate and graduate studies on minority scholarships, so why did you put down other Chicano students because they received financial aid?” Rodriguez replies: “I had

accepted the aid out of necessity, but I am still opposed to giving minorities special scholarships” (53). He admits he is “being contradictory” when he accepts such aid thus illustrating acquiescence to a system of scholarship he does not respect (54). It is why I do not understand his criticism of other minority students who accepted the same benefits he did. Social and economic disparities are indeed dragons that breathe fire over many citizens who live on the peripheries of a dominant culture. He admits that he “was no longer like socially disadvantaged Hispanic-Americans [admitting in the same breath how this brings him] a greater degree of success ... [because as a] published minority student ... [he] won a kind of celebrity” (55). Marzán points to Rodriguez’s denial of his Hispanic American culture on the one hand and how on the other hand he boasts (rather cynically) about “becoming a nationally applauded minority writer” (55). I understand his cynicism as a marker of the cultural duality Rodriguez cannot escape. He may have chosen to remove himself from his Hispanic culture because of the distance he suffers with his father and his siblings because they do not fully accept his homosexuality (57). As I understand it, such disapproval from family members pushes Rodriguez even further inside zones of public space. Ironically, he does not distance himself from the Catholic religion, a public space that refuses to acknowledge or accept homosexuality. I do not criticize this decision, however it seems at odds with some of Rodriguez’s other choices. I offer this more detailed retrospective view of Rodriguez here (in comparison with the works) because I

understand his autobiographical story as an illustration of the negative impact of repressed desires.

As I mention in my introduction, in spite of Rodriguez's American assimilation, his hybridized hues seep through. However his narrative style sits in opposition to Anzaldúa's openly hybrid negotiation of identity. Moreover, Anzaldúa's desire to embrace her Mexican border identity, her pedagogical and political discourses as well as her linguistic hybridity illustrates her pride and high level of self-esteem. Building "psychological and spiritual borders ... [are] integral ... [of the hybridized] Chicano creative process" (Câliz-Montoro 11). Rodriguez's disengagement with his Chicano roots is, in my opinion, the root cause of his contradictory and arrogant knee-jerk responses/reactions with interviewers like Marzán. I therefore understand Rodriguez's narrative as a repressed trauma narrative.

Kingston's desire for *free choice* is another complex process of identity negotiation. Her use of talk-story to re-invent herself along with her mixing of myth and lived experience has been a source of criticism. Her most scathing critic has been Frank Chin, notably for referring to Kingston as a "white racist genius" (Chin 27). He accuses her of defending her "revision of Chinese history, culture, and childhood literature and myth by restating a white racist stereotype" (29). Even the title of his article expresses his level of contempt: "Come All ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake". Clearly Chin's view is that writers like Kingston (and Amy Tan) have betrayed their cultural heritage. However as Lowe points out "perhaps one of the most

important stories of Asian American experience is about the process of critically receiving and rearticulating cultural traditions in the face of a dominant national culture that exoticizes and “orientalizes” Asians” (65). Kingston re-scripts her voice as Chinese/American to empower an oriental image of who she is outside dominant and minority positions. Lowe reminds us that “cultural identity is not an essence but positioning” (Stuart Hall qtd. in Lowe 83). Kingston repositions herself by mixing fact with myth to empower her Chinese/American voice. Her decision to re-script myth is a tool of empowerment. It should not be read as a promotion of stereotypes. Rather we should view Kingston’s narrative (along with her narrative technique) as “a new form of female self” (Ahokas 107). Moreover, Lowe cites the 1990s in the United States as a period “to include a more heterogeneous group and to enable crucial alliances – with other groups of color, class-based struggles, feminist coalitions, and sexuality-based efforts – in the ongoing work of transforming hegemony” (83). Kingston’s desire to re-script old stories in new ways allows her to empower her marginalized voice. She “uses the mythic form to reflect her hard situation as a woman in the traditionally patriarchal Chinese society, and to show that there exists a way of challenging its marginalizing assumptions” (Cobos 19). The mythic form also allows Kingston to question old stereotypes and “come to terms with her American self” – a hybrid Chinese/American voice (19).

In her autobiography, Hoffman speaks openly about her intimate experiences as an immigrant in North America and how she comes to terms

with her parents' Polish traumatic war experiences. Moreover Hoffman's desire to speak her adopted language intimately by making linguistic and cultural comparisons with Polish allows her to define her American identity in more empowered ways than Rodriguez. Mastering English "becomes a matter of [negotiating a more intimate] existence" (Ingram 272). Hoffman's desire to embrace language intimately becomes paramount in how she redefines herself. Rodriguez experiences private loss when he has to give up Spanish, referring to English as his public language. Hoffman on the other hand expresses a desire to adopt English as privately as she speaks Polish. She refers to her loss of Polish as "the loss of [a] living connection" (Hoffman 107). Hoffman translates her life experiences poetically. For Hoffman "representation without the expressional is not satisfying" (Eriksson 8). This idea of *expressional* representation is an aspect that is visible in Goto's narrative style as well.

Guy Beauregard refers to her writing as *playful subversive self-fashioning*. Such terms situate her work alongside Kingston's re-scripting of myth. "Despite their different national and ethnic locations, Goto and Hong Kingston share a diasporic position in which neither writer has direct access to "authentic" traditional culture" (Beauregard 49). Like Kingston, Goto's narrative style is a hybrid mix of story and myth – a revoicing of tradition on their terms. Thus reinvention is an important tool in how Goto and Kingston recreate bicultural voices (Japanese/Canadian and Chinese/American). Like Hoffman, Goto also illustrates a desire to poetically play with language. In this way, they promote code-switching inside language.

Barthesian *Jouissance* and Cultural Play

As I mention in my introduction, music is an excellent example of hybrid value. Just as powerful as sexual and linguistic play, there is a Barthesian element of *jouissance* in music because today's music encourages artists to transgress borders by mixing different genres. Moreover linguistic hybridity in songs like "Femme Like U (Donne-moi ton corps)" by Canadian artist K.Maró (Cyril Kamar) offers an interesting illustration of hybrid desire. K. Maró often mixes French and English lyrics sometimes even adding Arabic. Another example is Kylie Minogue's song "Chiggy Wiggy" featuring Sonu Nigam and Suzanne D'Mello. This song moves between English and Hindi lyrics more fluidly therefore it is a better example of lyrical code-switching than K. Maró's scattering of English words inside French lyrics. However I include both (there are many more) as examples because they complement the idea of desire as Barthesian *jouissance*. Another example of *creative play* is hybrid humor because "like hybridity, humour also rests on an exchange, usually between two positions" (Dunphy and Emig 25). In my opinion, humor is one of the most difficult forms of code-switching. It requires a very intimate understanding of cultural codes. Thus I would argue that the hybrid occupies a position of great privilege when s/he can step inside an arena of cultural humor that moves between codes. If we understand "cultures as overlapping circles ... communities can meet in the intersection, but only the hybrid can move easily throughout the full diameter of both" (30). By looking at culture outside a political arena of nation and understanding culture and language interactions

in the same way as love-based sexual attractions between people (a Barthesian *jouissance*), as musical mixing, and as humorous plays, the value of code-switching and hybridized identification increases exponentially. For instance, "jokes are first and foremost linguistic performances that require the recognition of an existing code and then its variation all the way to the transgression and violation as merely playful, in fact as the shift or switch to yet another set of norms and rules" (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 27). The idea of *transgression and violation as merely playful* in linguistic expressions of humor does not accurately complete our understanding of identity negotiation. "Obviously, race, ethnic, and language identities intersect with social class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, age, and other demographic characteristics to form the complex, multiple, dynamic, and contingent identities that we all have" (James and Shadd 2). However humor, particularly hybrid humor (like music), is a creative tool of expression training us to be more flexible in how we share and absorb cultural codes. Through our ability to laugh at cultural (mis)understandings we can also lighten tensions and perhaps approach zones of conflict more openly.

Social media is another growing reality of today's hybrid culture. Networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter instantly connect people from different cultures and countries. They have become a reality of how today's generation meets, greets and socializes with others. Exchanging phone numbers has been replaced by demands for Facebook friendships just as texting has replaced phone conversations. In this era of electronic exchanges,

desire for *Other* cultures and languages (especially with high school and college-aged students) has increased. I view this shift in how we socialize as a validation of hybrid desires because social media brings together people from all walks of life thus bridging gaps between cultural codes. Today, people exchange music, pictures, news stories, enter political and philosophical discussions as easily as they flirt and chat. While it may be a less intimate form of communication and connection, such giant chat-rooms encourage *creative* connectivity between people. They allow people to participate in Bhabha's *discourses of pedagogy and the performative* because people can instantly exchange personal stories and recreate themselves as they wish. I understand the value of Facebook as « un lieu privilégié à soi et à l'autre ... à chacun d'être vivant et désirant » (Marzano 19). In as much as Facebook and texting is every teacher's nightmare because students are so easily distracted by such media in the classroom, there is creative value in social media that cannot be disputed. Moreover, social media allows individuals to share information (sometimes before newspapers and journalists have had a chance to evaluate how and if they will publicize certain stories) freely across cultures and geographic borders. Therefore media networks have less time to react and organize how they choose to share information with the public. This creates an environment of freer access to information, one outside the regulations and constraints of media-related political and social plays.

Looking at social media from another, less optimistic angle, we see its more invasive, even dangerous, side. The recent language debate in Québec

over French signage went viral almost immediately receiving worldwide media attention illustrating how social media can sometimes negatively connect us with the world. Facebook posts and Twitter feeds allowed people to instantly access local news thus removing an important filter of privacy we once had. How a local culture chooses to include or exclude its neighbors in their lives is no longer limited by how journalists and television choose to report/broadcast information. Today, any individual can distribute information using social media, creating an instant outward spiraling effect. So while public media may seem invasive in how it sensationalizes news stories, I would argue that social media is more invasive because it allows people to subjectively and instantly sensationalize stories from the comfort of their personal home computers and smart phones.

For instance, the latest *pastagate*<sup>ix</sup> buzz in Montréal created by the OQLF's (Office québécois de la langue française) mandate to enforce French signage has ruffled feathers. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter made it impossible to contain public exchanges and limit the sharing of opinions, illustrating how our process of exchanging information has radically changed. The average Joe's commentary feed facilitates, sometimes negatively, the sharing of ideas and opinions. Information is instantly accessible to friends and friends of friends in different networks, cities, and countries around the world. Without entering into the pros and cons of the OQLF's decision and rationale behind their language policing, I would simply argue that as we move towards a more globalized market, culturally and economically, such connectivity with

the world puts into perspective rather quickly how self-defeating information sharing can sometimes be. It is however a reminder of how powerful our global networking systems have become and it is perhaps a wake-up call about how we need to find value in interconnected spaces. From a global perspective it is difficult for people outside a particular cultural arena to objectively understand local politics, social climates or issues.

I understand the signage debate as an aesthetic and cultural issue rather than a linguistic battle. I bring it up here because I believe that it is an important example that favors code-switching as I promote it in this thesis. In cities such as Montréal being bilingual even trilingual is a growing reality. Therefore it seems quite unrealistic to believe that *Other* codes will not bleed into and infect the lining of Québec's French cultural, linguistic, and aesthetic fabric. I believe that such bleeding should be accepted, even welcomed. However this acceptance need not result in a weakening of a *distinct* francophone personality for Québec. We need less focus on *tolerance* and more emphasis on an *acceptance* of difference(s). In my opinion, learning to effectively code-switch between cultures and languages should be part of this process of acceptance because "genuine inclusiveness and broad international collaboration are especially crucial to our work in the twenty-first century" (Elliot 6). History has taught us that neither culture nor language is static. Thus how we consume and understand culture and language must be a site of continual transformation. While we are instinctively attracted by difference we are conditioned to be with people who share our customs and habits. We take

comfort from such connections in the same way we crave our mothers when we are sick, enjoy romping around at home in our favorite pyjamas or following the same daily routines. As creatures of habit, we tend to choose life partners and jobs that mirror our cultural codes. (The Fido advertisement of owner and dog that look alike is an interesting satirical example.) In spite of our tendency to move towards what is familiar, this thesis names desire for difference as inherently valuable. Breaking rules and accepted norms of behavior promote Barthesian *jouissance* and validate Sommer's *creative play*. Elliot's desire for transnational studies seems like an appropriate way to make *jouissance* and *creative play* realities rather than just literary expressions of joy. He asks: "How can we, through our teaching and research, more effectively generate developments that will lead to thoughtful citizenship and to a more humane future?" (5) Perhaps a greater emphasis on multilingual education is one answer.

#### Multilingual Education: Desire for *Other* Codes

As the cultural makeup of our North American populations continues to grow and change so must the parameters of its education system. I would therefore argue that a focus on migrant writers and code-switching should occupy a more dominant place in college and university literary curricula. Daniel Redinger's Ph.D. on (the principality of) Luxembourg offers an interesting study of multilingual education, albeit as an international perspective outside the North American focus of this thesis. Moving out of literary zones of code-switching into models that illustrate its benefits and

challenges inside spaces of pedagogical identification illustrates code-switching in more real terms. Why do I focus on this model (rather than Canadian or American ones) of multilingual education? There are a number of studies and research available on the advantages of bilingual education in North American cities. My decision to focus on the “language situation in Luxembourg [developed because it] has been described as *triglossic*’ [my emphasis] ... with regard to the country’s official recognition of Luxembourgish, French and German” (Redinger 22). In Luxembourg, “thirty to 40 percent of school lessons are dedicated to language teaching” (22). This model is therefore a particularly important and interesting illustration of why we can no longer think of language inside socio-cultural vacuums or as an option of elite education. While language is the principal marker of cultural difference, culture is not homogeneous. Moreover the multilingual education model in Luxembourg supports the idea of linguistic mobility as a viable solution for an effective integration between peripheral and dominant groups. In this way, it implicitly speaks in favor of how I place value on code-switching in this thesis. Redinger classifies multilingual language learning into three elements: “code-switching for curriculum access, code-switching for management of classroom discourse and code-switching for interpersonal relations” (29). In his socio-linguistic study, he explains how

35 to 40 percent of school lessons are dedicated to language teaching at primary and secondary school level. German and French are compulsory languages throughout schooling. English is introduced as a foreign language at secondary school level where students can also opt to study Latin, Italian and Spanish. German and French are employed as languages of instruction at different levels in the curriculum.

German is the language of alphabetisation and is mostly employed as a medium of instruction throughout primary education and the first years of secondary schooling (41).

Such models of multilingual education (or bilingual systems of education) deserve more focus. “Education emerges as a particularly important domain for the study of language attitudes as it has been shown that language attitudes can considerably influence students’ academic achievements and career opportunities” (54). The idea of *how* we communicate becomes even more important when pedagogy is approached from a bilingual or multilingual point of view. For instance, the distinction between “situational switching” and “metaphorical switching” is important (59). The first form is activity-based whereas the second one is employed “to add cultural flavor to a joke or meaning” (59). While this notion of *metaphorical switching* resembles Sommer’s model of an *aesthetic bilingual education*, it goes further.

Daniel Redinger’s Ph.D. thesis, a study of multilingual education in Luxembourg, frames my position that there is value in code-switching between languages and cultures. It is also a creative reflection of identity politics because it favors a more intimate contact between individuals. Speaking several languages creates opportunities to communicate more creatively. Although Redinger explains how multilingual societies such as Luxembourg come with their particular set of challenges, this is partly due to the fact that “academic research focusing on Luxembourg’s linguistic situation is ‘still in embryo’ and [Redinger] attributes this lack of research to the absence of a university in Luxembourg until 2003” (22). In North American cities such as

Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, New York, Miami, San Francisco (to name a few) minority groups continue to grow in numbers. I believe it is therefore time to focus more on models such as Luxembourg. To avoid, or minimize the negative aspects of such multilingual models of society, research needs to focus on more *triglossic* (rather than simply bilingual) models of education. The benefits of bilingual education are difficult to dispute.<sup>x</sup> I therefore believe that multilingual education is a model that best illustrates the cosmopolitan reality of urban cities across Canada, the United States and the world (even though it continues, for now, to be a choice available to those in positions of higher socio-economic classes).<sup>xi</sup> In addition, such research needs to focus on the importance of promoting and preserving minority languages within the framework of dominant cultures and their languages. In this way, cultural and linguistic pride can prevail inside minority groups. If we look at Mother tongue-based instruction we can understand how language plays a critical role in identity construction. In her paper, “Enhancing Learning of Children from Diverse Language Backgrounds: Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual or Multilingual Education in The Early Years,” Jessica Ball explores the value of “maintaining the world’s languages and cultures by promoting and resourcing mother tongue-based education for young children” (5). The importance of continuity of language and cultural heritage are definitely a challenge for second and future generation immigrants. Many factors will determine how such continuity can take place. Ball explores issues of socio-economic status, access to schools as well as the status of the mother tongue within the

dominant society in her article (6). For immigrants, the pressing question and challenge will be in the recognition of the mother tongue during preschool and primary school years (7). Rodriguez is a good example of how the absence of such recognition in his childhood had negative impacts. Ball's report concludes that "children learn best in their mother tongue as a prelude to and complement of bilingual and multilingual education" (7). Rodriguez's separation from Spanish at a young age then is a strong example of how linguistic loss equals cultural loss. Language *and* culture are crucial elements of how identity patterns are formed in children.

As a country that promotes itself as bilingual, with two official languages (English and French), Canada is positioned to explore Ball's findings and develop mother tongue-based education schools, especially in urban cities where immigrant populations continue to grow. As religious accommodation continues to occupy political and social agendas (see Quebec's recent Values Charter), I believe that we should invest our time and energy in linguistic-based research. This would positively favor multilingual populations. Through Redinger's and Ball's work we can understand the importance of creating a society that educates its citizens in dominant and *Other* languages in more inclusive and exact ways. We need language study that works to incorporate "practical, political, and economical" value into its curricula (11). There will always be battles of "legal authority" and "choice of language" promotion however I think it would be difficult for policy makers to argue against the value of multilingual education in the wake of globalized

world markets. Few can deny that “language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group” (13). Educational strategies that privilege official languages while promoting *Other* mother tongues by including such languages in their curricula are an important aspect of how well *Other* communities will function and integrate into their host, dominant cultures. I believe, as Ball points out, that “learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world, encouraging inter-cultural understanding and helping reduce xenophobia” (14).

Redinger’s thesis and Luxembourg as a model of multilingual education are therefore a valid and important choice in how I illustrate the value of code-switching in this thesis. Multilingual education policies promote more cohesively connected communities. Moreover Ball’s vision of an “additive approach to bilingualism” is in my opinion a more favorable model than simply having children learn their “second language as a language of instruction” (14). While immersion programs have great value, they do create challenges in how well first languages will be mastered. If children’s “cognitive flexibility” and “metalinguistic awareness” develop from a young age, it seems reasonable to conclude that their ability to effectively move between cultural codes will be stronger than someone who learnt *Other* languages later in life or grew up in a monolingual environment (19). When I speak of *creative* connectivity between cultures and languages, my focus is

primarily on how such connectivity promotes more intimate desire and acceptance between individuals and groups. As stated previously, Quebec's immigrants, for instance those in Montreal, face different challenges living between two official languages than Canadian immigrants in other cities. For such immigrants, multilingual positioning is critical.

Many linguists, psychologists, and educators argue that respecting learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in educational settings is crucial in fostering their self-confidence as persons and community members, and in encouraging them to be active and competent leaders (24).

The preceding quotation may be taken as another point in favor of code-switching. Unfortunately, the greatest challenge for bilingual and multilingual education programs remains in restrictions based on "socio-economic status" and "socio-linguistic status" as well as "a dire need for research on effective mother tongue-based education" (25). According to Ball's research, "engaging parents and other caregivers more actively in children's development and learning and working with linguistically and culturally diverse children are two areas that have been identified [by UNESCO] as lagging behind" (41). If this is true then a more active communication and connectivity between different caregivers and educators are required. A larger linguistic variety of first-language teachers are also needed in our education system. Of course *political will* and *economic gain* (two points Ball raises) will continue to dominate and dictate how multilingual education policies will be implemented (44).

Dominant groups will invariably view the minority groups' presence (especially if pedagogical policies and societal values are adversely affected) as a threat to the continuity of their cultural and linguistic identity. Thus how host communities choose to integrate *Other* groups into the dominant culture plays a critical role in how both sides communicate and respectfully co-exist. I believe that further study of multilingual education curricula should be more of a focus in our research topics. I therefore propose such studies as an important continuation of code-switching research. "For ... [any] minority language to survive, it must have separate and distinct uses in society" (Redinger 86). French immersion schools in English Canada are good examples, in my opinion, in how they encourage Anglophone students to speak their second language. Based on my experiences in Toronto and at the University of Toronto, I found that immersion students who were in my French classes had distinctly stronger communication skills in French than those (like myself) who learned their second language as an adult. It is therefore difficult for me to dispute Redinger's study which clearly favors multilingual education.

Living in Québec City has increased my inner pride for all the places, cultures and languages that have defined and continue to define who I am. Living here has also made me painfully aware of my linguistic losses because as Redinger points out, "although language separation can be easily controlled in an educational context, it is 'uncontrollable within the mind'" (86). While regret is futile, I sincerely view the loss of Arabic and Urdu (my childhood languages) as significant markers of cultural distance as well. This loss has

influenced how I have interpreted Rodriguez in this thesis. I therefore understand the value behind Québec's desire for linguistic and cultural preservation. However I believe that effective preservation and protection of language and culture means better education policies and democratic (not restrictive) language laws. In this vein, I view multilingual education as an effective tool to validate code-switching as it has been promoted in this thesis. Moreover, I frame multilingual education inside Bhabha's *discourses between pedagogy and the performative*. In Redinger's study we learn that

students from immigrant backgrounds engage more extensively in multilingual language practices outside the educational context than their Luxembourgish peers who almost exclusively employ Luxembourgish as a medium of communication at home and with friends. However, students from the various immigrant communities also frequently speak Luxembourgish with friends as well as with members of their family at home (156).

In those instances where immigrants hold on to their language of origin yet engage in intimate relationships with people from their host city in their dominant language, I believe they forge stronger cultural and patriotic ties with their adopted country. By speaking their language of origin as well as their adopted language(s) immigrants position themselves inside a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*. They have a more expansive and inclusive sense of cultural and linguistic pride. The cultural identity of the host population would gain more *aesthetic* (Doris Sommer) value if it favored multilingual education. In my opinion, in those instances when host cultures can seek *creative* connectivity with people from *Other* cultures by communicating in *Other* languages then the host population would be more empathetically and

creatively equipped to address the challenges that are created in cosmopolitan spaces. However I am aware that such a position of multilingual education invariably touches upon issues of national identity. Therefore I would suggest we promote code-switching through Laferrière's vision of Pan-American identity. Thus we should approach identity negotiation as a superimposed (along Stabinger's idea of superimposed selves) building block of regional and cultural identities.

In his essay "The Road Between Essentialism: For an Italian Culture in Quebec and Canada", D'Alfonso's vision as poet supports the desire for connectivity between cultural spaces and code-switching this thesis promotes. The poet has "a space large enough to cover the hiatus between two worlds, a space which can serve as an intersection for different realities" (Pivato, *Contrasts* 215). D'Alfonso's poetic playground resembles Sommer's idea of *creative play* reconciling "that which is [not easily reconciled] in his reality ... to re-invent a way of expressing himself" (216). Moreover what I particularly value in D'Alfonso's vision of identity is his desire for inclusivity inside Italian, Québécois, and Canadian literature: "If Italian writers in Canada and Quebec want to leave their indelible traces on our culture they must study and absorb Italian literary tradition as well as English and French" (220). In her essay, "Land to Light On", Sherry Simon voices the contradictory role critics face in Canada. On the one hand, they express their "desire to document the diversity of voices in Canadian literature" (19). On the other hand, they also wish to "explore the individuality of writers and to understand their often

difficult relationship to their communities” (19). Clearly attention in both areas is necessary. Our educational institutions are perhaps the best places for such exploration. If, from an early age, students are taught about migrant literatures and the acquisition of language(s) is an integral aspect of their curriculum, as adults I believe they would be better equipped to navigate freely between different codes and enjoy more respectful connections with people from *Other* cultural and linguistic communities.

An important obstacle in multilingual education is its perceived threat to host language(s). Just as fidelity is an ambiguous term in intimate relationships, it is an equally contentious one in language issues. My thesis has explored *creative* connectivity and code-switching between languages as a Barthesian *relation privilégiée*, thus promoting an intimate connection between people, a fluid movement between cultural and linguistic codes. Sommer links communication between languages as a Barthesian *jouissance* and what I name linguistic foreplay. The parallel between sexual and linguistic pleasure may also be understood as an expression of infidelity. In her book *La fidélité ou l'amour à vif*, Michela Marzano defines fidelity as « extrêmement ambigu ... à propos de l'amour et de l'amitié, mais aussi quand il est question de valeurs, de promesses, de souvenirs, de traductions » (11). She divides the idea of fidelity into the following three parts: vertu sociale (respecter les engagements), vertu théologique (l'alliance sacrée entre Dieu et les hommes) et vertu privée (une qualité de relation à soi-même et à autrui). I am interested in *la vertu privée* because it illustrates the same vision of interdependence

between Self and *Other* as Ricœur. Marzano defines her reference of Self and *Other* as a position where : « celui qui va vers l'autre porte toujours en soi quelque chose de mystérieux, de secret, d'en fou ... il vient d'un ailleurs ... jamais complètement disponible ... face à une absence [ou présence qui est] ... à la fois le sien et celui de l'autre » (139). Just like Bhabha's hybrid, Marzano's model of the *Other* shifts between zones of inclusion and exclusion, knowing and not knowing. Moreover Bhabha's *discourses between pedagogy and the performative* can be applied to Marzano's model of fidelity. Any movement that takes one individual into new spaces of identification can be viewed as pedagogical in how it instructs individuals about difference and acceptance. Similarly, new spaces of identification and desire are attractive because of the mystery that surrounds them. How individuals navigate between such spaces is an illustration of *the performative* Bhabha speaks of in his discussion of nation.

#### Code-Switching: Desire for Others

Cosmopolitan spaces such as Montreal are interesting models from which to define and identify the value of code-switching between cultures and languages. While Quebec City is still made up of a majority white francophone population, the immigrant population has grown over the last five years and indicators suggest that more immigrants will continue to move here. I am therefore particularly intrigued and pleased by the change of attitudes I have witnessed from students in my classes towards new immigrants. In the last three years, I have noticed a tangible improvement. This new generation

(between 17 and 20 of age) is more open and interested in *Other* cultures. Moreover these students express a genuine desire to intimately interact with their immigrant population. This openness is unfortunately not something that I always sense with adults in the post-university age group, generally 30+ years of age. My observations here are based exclusively on my personal experiences in Québec City over the last decade and while I do not speak of overt racism or discrimination, I view a guarded tolerance or reluctance when exchanges with *Others* shift into more intimate zones. I base such conclusions on personal interactions and impressions shared with other minority groups in my networks. In spite of this reluctance in adults, I find the change in student attitudes very encouraging. In order to steer this new generation towards a stronger desire for *Other* cultures and languages, I feel strongly that we must include more *creative* examples of cultural and linguistic connectivity in academic curricula. Consequently I have steered my classroom curriculum (as much as it is possible inside the pedagogical objectives of each course) to include material that promotes a better understanding of *Other* cultural codes and how we might exchange with *Others* more effectively inside the context/base of Québécois culture.

As a result, many of my lesson plans draw upon such issues as First Nations, Black History, immigrant issues, etc. Unfortunately, such topics are not a focus in many high school curricula in Quebec City therefore students entering college programs have little knowledge of, or no background on, these subjects. In some program specific courses offered through the Arts and

Letters program, I have more liberty with curriculum choice. I therefore include a substantial segment on cultural diversity. For instance, such topics as the origins of blues and jazz in North & South America offer students a great illustration of how culture has dictated subsequent musical genres. Music is an excellent tool to stimulate student interest for *Other* cultures. Moreover, music is one of the best examples of code-switching and how we assign value to language(s). An artistic education (and I include language in this category) in music, theater, dance, etcetera, feeds and energizes our spirit promoting more openness towards cultural diversity. In the last two years I have organized jazz related conferences and music shows for my students. It has been a new approach (first of its kind at my college) and a different model of instruction for students to learn about Black history, slavery and the role music has played and continues to play in translating cultural identity. Today's music in North and South America can be traced back to West African gospel, blues and jazz sounds. I am proud to say that the music shows and conferences I have organized have been an effective strategy in teaching students about Black culture while illustrating how music and language(s) are hybrid products of culture(s).

Just as I view music as a cultural dance, I understand immigrant contact with host citizens as code-switching – a hybrid dance of *creative* connectivity. My students express a strong desire to intimately interact with immigrants. I view their interest as a valuable way for immigrants to integrate into the dominant culture. As a member of the minority immigrant population in

Québec City, I am quite fascinated by their curiosity and genuine interest in immigrant populations. Consequently, I feel that language learning should include such interactions with *Other* cultures whenever possible. For instance, in some of my classes, students have the opportunity to meet new immigrants in *les cours de francisation* as part of their curriculum requirements. Such exchanges encourage students to participate in Bhabha's *discourses between pedagogy and the performative* in ways that benefit their process of identification while promoting better intercultural relationships in their community. Today, students (especially here in North America) are sometimes labeled *spoiled, self-indulgent* individuals who expect to receive a lot while contributing little. This may describe *some* students however there are fortunately many others who work hard and express a genuine desire for learning and ethical participation in their communities. As a teacher, I feel privileged when I come across such individuals because I believe it is an honour to be part of their learning processes. Students today have a stronger voice in public, cultural, spaces.

Whether in Chongqing, China, or Riverside, California ... with their computers, cell phones, iPods, fluent English, and knowledge of global popular culture ... [they] have far more in common with other students like themselves in other countries than they do with ninety percent of the people who live in their own regions. The same common ground is true for teachers at every level, who have more in common with each other than they do with large segments of their surrounding populations (Elliot 6).

This commonality Elliot speaks of between students and teachers across international borders is an interesting observation. My observations with

students and immigrants have shown me how open students are to people from *Other* places.

Having the opportunity to encourage immigrants to speak French and to act as welcoming ambassadors of the Québécois language and culture instills great pride in my students. Moreover immigrants enjoy the opportunity to meet students and exchange cultural stories. This exchange of stories is an important aspect of cultural code-switching because it encourages acceptance between different groups and promotes a better understanding of difference(s). The school trips have been so successful that I have started a social/cultural club outside class. Cégep students and immigrants meet once a month to socialize and exchange more intimately with *Others*. I feel confident that encouraging such exchanges and such forms of cultural code-switching has a positive and motivating impact on my students and on their attitudes towards new immigrants. Equally important, immigrants enjoy a relaxed, intimate setting where they can practice their French, learn about Québec's particular cultural context(s) and most important make friends inside Barthes' sphere of friendship – *une relation privilégiée*.

As more immigrants are welcomed into Québec City's majority francophone community, teachers in *francisation* programs need to approach language instruction as an empathetic understanding of *Other* cultural codes. The teachers I have met in these programs are trained to teach language with a greater emphasis on cultural codes. Their enthusiasm and desire to code-switch with their students has increased the interest of some of my students to pursue

such specialized language teaching. I believe that teachers at all levels, primary, secondary, and post-secondary, should include *some* culturally diverse code-switching material to promote a more inclusive and respectful dialogue between people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Such a focus equips students to intimately communicate with *Others* and compete more effectively in today's job market infected/affected by globalization. Teaching students to code-switch, encouraging them to become multilingual, offers students a better understanding of, and better interaction with, people from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Such interactions and language education which focus on multilingual growth would promote, in my opinion, a better social/political/economical climate between Québécois and *Other* groups. In most instances, distance between people is a manifestation of fear and insecurity about change or shifts in power dynamics between cultural groups. However if people communicate intimately with each other such barriers are bound to weaken since it is difficult to harbor negative feelings towards people we intimately identify with. While this may seem utopic in its vision, I would argue that it is an important strategy.

If we look at Québec's *Loi 101* and how it is applied today there are some obvious problems. I believe it is time to introduce English immersion into our public school system (similar to the English Canadian model of French immersion) here in Quebec. As well, rather than viewing English as a continued threat to the French language, as a teacher I believe more focus is required on *better* French education at the primary, secondary, and post-

secondary levels. An equal focus on *better* English education at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels is also needed. In today's globalized culture, fighting the hegemony of English (at least in a business context) seems futile. There will always be power struggles between language(s) and culture(s).

In Québec, the desire to privilege French in the community and the workplace has merit. But Québec would be, in my opinion, a more formidable opponent in its ongoing war against the hegemony of English if its citizens *mastered* English! If we look at the number of private language schools in Québec City that offer classes to businesses and governments, it becomes difficult to contest the need for better education in English *before* citizens enter the job market! By the same rationale, new immigrants should be encouraged to *preserve* their language of origin while *becoming* proficient in French and in English. Such reciprocity fosters more harmonious meetings between citizens and immigrants. More importantly, services immigrants receive to integrate into their adopted communities would not be wasted as more immigrants would choose to stay in smaller spaces such as Quebec City. If the goal is the integration of new immigrants over assimilation then the value of speaking different languages must be respected and therefore promoted. Because language preservation and cultural pride are strong aspects of every culture, I believe a better understanding and acceptance of differences must also be promoted in the home and by extension encouraged and taught in

the classroom. In this way it is more naturally translated into the daily fibre of our social, cultural, and political lives.

#### Final comments

As our immigrant population increases, our education system needs to focus more on literatures produced by migrant writers. We need to find more examples of migrant writers who employ code-switching techniques, focus on more models of bi(multi)lingual education. Just as medical research seeks new methods of healing, protection, and understanding of disease, research in education must continually move in more innovative directions. I believe that classroom curriculum should be designed to effectively bridge gaps between people and foster *creative* connectivity. Broader, more culturally inclusive literary choices are therefore an important step in this direction. After all, where a person *should* be culturally and linguistically is a matter of social and environmental conditioning. We are all *educated* inside spaces of tradition, religious codes/signs framed by cultural and communal values. Thus how we negotiate identity between such codes/signs determines our social and cultural identity. What is important is how we challenge cultural codes and modes of behavior that fail to honor respectful connections between people. In any region populated by people of different races and cultures, the codes that define that particular culture will bend and shift as the population becomes more culturally mixed. Globalization has accelerated this process and our need for multilingual communication and connectivity between cultural codes. Here in Canada, we should address the value of code-switching and multilingual

education in cities like Montréal. What separates Montreal from other cosmopolitan cities in Canada is its political climate. Montreal moves between French and English inside political, social, and cultural zones of identification. Thus how immigrant populations name themselves and assert their cultural specificity is necessarily a product of negotiation inside two dominant cultural and linguistic frames: English and French. In a city like Montreal “being two- or three-headed ... should become the accepted norm, and corridors should be replaced by open spaces” (Denis 145). Corridors suggest that people move in specific directions whereas open spaces illustrate movement as a freer more fluid concept.

In urban spaces like Montréal, this fluidity may be understood through the city’s international personality. Cuisine for instance is part of any city’s culturally diverse personality. Whether we live in urban spaces or not, we all wear clothes imported from other countries, adopt fashion styles different from our own without viewing these adoptions negatively. Look for instance at how far the notion of piercing or tattooing has evolved as fashion and as an artistic cultural expression of individual identity. In fact if we stop and study our consumption styles in fashion, clothing, music, arts, food and even our communication styles (Facebooking) we quickly discover that we consume hybridity on a daily basis. Then again, look at how hip-hop music and how its vernacular language has impacted youth from different cultures. Is it even possible to control or limit such shifting processes of linguistic and artistic meaning-making? We tolerate even accept such changes quite easily. Coming

back to the issue of language laws and signage in the news recently, the following example illustrates how quickly some points can become political. A restaurant in Québec City, Conti Caffé was asked to change its name and replace all its glassware (a cost of over \$15,000) because *caffé* is not a French word. The cultural and artistic value behind this issue has been ignored. Personally, I view such signage as an artistic form, what Sommer's labels *creative play*. Moreover expressions or words like *caffé* are universally understood in most developed countries. Should we begin restricting signage in this way? I cite this example here (not as a political point of debate) to illustrate an important point I focus on in this thesis – the artistic and creative value of linguistic and cultural code-switching. Unfortunately how host cultures choose to integrate new immigrants into the dominant culture is first and foremost a political issue. If respect between people is a priority then code-switching seems like a healthy way to connect people. In those instances when minority cultures attempt to (re)instate or integrate their minority language(s) or specific cultural codes (visibly and non-visibly) inside the dominant cultural center, tensions are bound to arise. The OQLF's recent tactics have been cited by some as assimilating/effacing strategies designed to suppress *Other* cultures. By rattling the chains of established/old codes within religion, tradition, customs, language and culture, people can engage in new patterns of meaning. I understand this rattling as a kind of traumatic re-awakening, a long overdue confrontation. I view it as an *active* state of *being*

because it encourages discovery and a creative reassignment of cultural and/or linguistic codes.

## APPENDIX A

Translated by: Keith Santorelli, David Warriner  
Excerpts from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Meaning was not always clear in the sections preceding or following these Spanish references. Anzaldúa begins her *autohistoria* with an untranslated epigraph in Chapter One entitled *The Homeland, Aztlán*. Here is a rough translation. This meaning is not provided for the reader, not in any concrete terms.

El otro Mexico que aca hemos construido  
el espacio es lo que ha sido territorio nacional.  
Este es el esfuerzo de todos nuestros hermanos  
y latinoamericanos que han sabido progresar (23).

The other Mexico that we constructed  
The space we call our national territory/home and native land.  
The fruits of labour of our brothers and other  
Latin Americans that advanced the cause.

The next passage I chose to translate is from Chapter Two entitled *Movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que traicionan*. This untranslated passage is preceded by the following information that provides the reader with the essence of its meaning: “Women are made to feel total failures if they don’t marry and have children” (39).

Y cuando te casas Gloria? Se te va a pasar el tren. Y yo les digo, Pos si me caso, no va ser con un hombre. Se quedan calladitas. Si soy hija de la Chingada. I’ve always been her daughter. No ‘tés chingando (39).  
When are you getting married Gloria? You might miss the boat (very loose translation). If I get married it won’t be to a man. ‘Calladitas’ slang for lesbian? If I’m the daughter of the fucked one (I’ve always been her daughter) then I’m not fucking.

In the preceding quotation, it is the more profound meaning (what we understand as nuance) that escapes the unilingual reader. In the next epigraph,

taken from Chapter Five *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, the subheading preceding the epigraph reads *Overcoming the Traditions of Silence*. This subheading allows unilingual readers to recognize the intent behind the untranslated epigraph.

Ahogadas, escupimos el oscuro.  
 Peleando con nuestra propia sombra  
 El silencio nos sepulta (76).  
 Smothering the darkness/obscurity  
 Fighting our own shadow  
 Our silence buries us.

Once again, the more profound meaning, its nuance, remains obscure for the unilingual English reader. Similarly, the following epigraph taken from Chapter Seven *La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness*, is another example of how the emotion behind the meaning remains absent for the unilingual reader. The subtitle *Somos una gente* means *We are a people* and here is the subsequent epigraph and its translation.

Hay tantisimas fronteras  
 Que dividen a la gente  
 Pero por cada frontera  
 Existe tambien un Puente (107).  
 So many frontiers/borders  
 that divide people  
 but for every border  
 there is also a bridge.

This idea of a border as a bridge between two peoples is not clearly heard in Anzaldúa's English words. She makes it clear that chicanos "need to allow whites to be...allies...[that through their] literature, art, *corridos*, and folktales [they ] must share [their] history [so the whites] will come to see that they are not helping...but following our lead" (107). Anzaldúa's tone suggests that

chicanos need to start taking the lead rather than following the herd. Thus the intention of her words does not translate the idea of a bridge between different peoples; rather, it is about shifting power from one to another.

APPENDIX B  
Translations for Chapter Three by Carlos Jimenez

I had a more poetic connection with, and understanding of, Anzaldúa's story once I had these translations! If I spoke Spanish and understood the nuances, I am certain that my appreciation would have been greater!

**No. 1**

Yo soy un puente tendido  
Del mundo gabacho al del mojado  
Lo pasado me estira pa' 'tras  
Y lo presente pa' 'delante,  
Que la Virgen de Guadalupe me cuide  
Ay ay ay, soy mexicana de este lado

I am the lying bridge  
From the *foreigner* to the *wet back* worlds  
The past pulls me backwards  
And the present forward,  
Guadalupe virgin watch for me (take care of me)  
Ay ay ay, I'm Mexican from this side

**No. 2**

Tihueque, tihueque,  
Vámonos, vámonos.  
Un pájaro cantó  
Con sus tribus salieron  
De la 'cueva del origen'  
Los aztecas stiguieron al dios  
Huitzilopochtli

Tihueque, tihueque  
Let's go, let's go.  
A bird sang  
With his tribes came out  
From the "cave of the origin"  
The Aztecs followed the Huitzilopochtli god (War god)

**No. 3**

Ya la mitad del terreno  
 Les vendió el traidor Santa Anna  
 Con lo que se ha hecho muy rica  
 La nación americana  
 Qué acaso no se conforman  
 Con el oro de las minas?  
 Ustedes muy elegantes  
 Y aquí nosotros en ruinas  
 Half of the land  
 Was sold by Santa Anna the traitor  
 And this has enriched  
 The American nation.  
 Don't they conform  
 with the goldmines?  
 You really elegant  
 And us in ruins

**No. 4**

Estas carnes indias que despreciamos nosotros los mexicanos asi como  
 despreciamos condenamos a nuestra madre, Malinali. Nos condenamos a  
 nosotros mismos. Esta raza vencida, enemigo cuerpo.

These Indian meats that us Mexicans despise, just like we despise  
 We condemn our mother, *Malinali*. We condemn ourselves. This defeated  
 race, hostile body

**No. 5**

Aquí en la soledad prospera su rebeldía  
 En la soledad Ella prospera

Here in solitude their rebellion thrives  
 In solitudes he prospers

**No. 6**

El nueve de diciembre de año 1531  
 A las cuatro de la madrugada  
 Un pobre indioque se ilamaba Juan Diego  
 Iba cruzando el cerro de Tepeyác  
 Cuando oyó un canto de pájaro.  
 Alzó la cabeza vio que la cima del cerro  
 Estaba cubierta con una brillante nube blanca.  
 Parada en frente del sol  
 Sobre una luna creciente  
 Sostenida por un ángel  
 Estaba una azteca  
 Vestida en ropa de india  
 Nuestra Señora Maria de Coatlatlopeub  
 Se le apareció.  
 ‘Juan Dieguito, El-que-habla-como-un-águila,’  
 la Virgen le dijo en el lenguaje azteca.  
 Para hacer mi altar este cerro elijo.  
 ‘Dile a tu gente que yo soy la madre de Dios,  
 A los indios yo les ayudaré.’  
 Estó se lo contó a Juan Zumárraga  
 Pero el obispo no le creyó.  
 Juan Diego volvió, llenó su tilma  
 Con rosas de castilla  
 Creciendo milagrosamente en la nieve.  
 Se las ilevó al obispo,  
 Y cuando abrió su tilma  
 El retrato de la Virgen  
 Ahí estaba pintado.

On December nine of 1531  
 At four in the morning  
 A humble Indian whose name was Juan Diego  
 Was crossing the Tepeyac hill  
 When he heard a bird's song.  
 He raised his head to see the top of the hill  
 Covered with a bright white cloud  
 Standing in front of the sun  
 Over a crescent moon  
 Sustained by an angel  
 There was an Aztec woman  
 Dressed with indigenous clothes  
 Our Lady Mary of *Coatlatlopeub*  
 She appeared to him  
 “Juan Dieguito, he who speaks like an eagle”

The virgin said in the Aztec language.  
 I choose this hill to build my altar.  
 “Tell your people I’m the mother of God,  
 I’ll help the Indians.”  
 He told this to Juan Zumarraga  
 But the bishop didn’t believe him.  
 Juan Diego came back, fill his *tilma* (tilma: apron like garment)  
 With Castilla roses  
 Growing mysteriously in the snow.  
 He took them to the bishop,  
 And when he opened his *tilma*  
 The virgin portrait  
 Was painted on it (tilma)

### No. 7

A mis ancas caen los cueros de culebra  
 Cuatro veces por año los arrastro,  
 Me tropiezo y me caigo  
 Y cada vez que miro una culebra le pregunto  
 Qué traes conmigo?

Snake skin falls into my haunches  
 Four times a year I drag them,  
 I trip and fall  
 And every time I see a snake I ask  
 What is your problem with me?

### No. 8

Intocada piel, en el oscuro velo con la noche. Embrazada en pesadillas,  
 escarbanado el hueso de la ternura me envejezco. Ya verás, tan bajo que me he  
 caído. Dias enteros me la paso atrancada con candado. Esa Gloria. Que estará  
 haciendo en su cuarto con la santa y la perversa? Mosquita muerta, por qué  
 ‘tas tan quietecita? Por qué la vida me arremolina pa’ ca y pa’ ya como hoja  
 seca, me araña y me golpea, me deshuesa – mi culpa por qué me desdeño. Ay  
 mamá, tan bajo que me he caído.

Untouched skin, in the dark veil with the night. Pregnant with nightmares,  
 digging the tender bone as I get older. You will see, how deep I’ve fallen.  
 I spend whole days locked under key. That Gloria. What is she doing in her  
 room with the saint and the pervert? “innocent girl” (mosca muerta), why are  
 you so quiet? Why does life twists me back and forth, like a dry leave, it  
 scratches and hits me, debones me – my guilt, why do I disdain myself. Oh  
 mother, how deep I’ve fallen.

**No. 9**

Esa Gloria, la que niega, la que teme correr desenfrenada, la que tiene miedo renegar al papel de víctima. Esa, la que voltea su cara a la pared descascarada. Mira, tan bajo que se ha caído.

That Gloria, she who denies, she who is afraid to run unbridled, she who is afraid to return to the victim role. She, who turns her face to the peeling wall. Look, how deep she's fallen.

**No. 10**

Despierta me encuentra la madrugada, una desconocida aullando profecías entre cenizas, sangrando mi cara con las uñas, escarbando la desgracia debajo de mi máscara. Ya vez, tan bajo que me he caído.

The morning finds me awake, a stranger howling prophecies among ashes, Making my face bleed with my finger nails, digging the disgrace from under my mask. You see, how deep I've fallen.

**No. 11**

Se enmudecen mis ojos al saber que la vida no se entrega. Mi pecado no es la rebeldía ni el anajamiento. Es que no aimé mucho, que anduive indecisa y a la prisa, que tuve poca fe y no fui dispuesta de querer ser lo que soy. Traicioné a mi camino.

My eyes mute to know that one should not surrender to life. My sin is not the rebellion nor the alienation. I didn't love enough, I was undecided and in a rush, I had little faith and didn't have the will to want to be what I am. I betrayed my path (journey)

**No. 12**

Ya verás tan bajo que me he caído. Aquí nomás encerrada en mi cuarto, sangrádome la cara con las uñas. Esa Gloria que rechaza entregarse a su destino. Quiero contenerme, no puedo y desbordo. Vas a ver lo alto que voy a subir, aquí vengo.

You will see how deep I've fallen. Here I am locked in my room, making my face bleed with my finger nails. That Gloria, who refuses to give up to her destiny. I want to restrain myself, I can't and I overflow. You will see how high I'll rise, here I come.

**No. 13**

Los que están mirando (leyedo),  
 Los que cuentan (o refieren lo que leen).  
 Los que vuelven ruidosamente las hojas de los códices.  
 Los que tienen en su poder  
 La tinta negra y roja (la sabiduría)  
 Y lo pintado,  
 Ellos nos llevan, nos guían,  
 Nos dicen el camino.

Those who are looking ( Reading),  
 Those who tell ( or refer to what they read).  
 Those who go thru the code's pages loudly  
 Those who have in their power  
 The black and the red ink (wisdom)  
 And the painted,  
 They take us, guide us,  
 [they]Show us the way.

**No. 14**

Tallo mi cuerpo como si estuviera lavando un trapo. Toco las saltadas venas de mis manos, mis chichis adormecidas como pájaras al anochecer. Estoy encorvada sobre la cama. Las imágenes aletean alrededor de mi cama como murciélagos, la sábana como que tuviese alas. El ruido de los trenes subterráneos en mi sentido como conchas. Parece que las paredes del cuarto se me arriman cada vez más cerquita.

I rub my body as I'm rubbing rags. I touch the dilated veins in my hands, my numb breasts like birds at night. I bent over the bed. The images flutter around my bed like bats, and the sheets as if they had wings. The noise of the underground trains on my senses like shells. It feels as if the walls in my room come closer and closer.

**No. 15**

Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmientos, los desencuentos, el embrutecimiento. Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado, de la gente antigua.

Then get rid of the unworthy, the denial, the confusion, the brutalizing. Keep the judgment, deep and rooted, from the elders.

**No. 16**

Eres pura vieja

You are pure, old lady (or, you are plain old)

**No. 17**

Estamos viviendo en la noche de la Raza, un tiempo cuando el trabajo se hace a lo quieto, en lo oscuro. El día cuando aceptamos tal y como somos y para donde vamos y porque – ese día será el día de la Raza. Yo tengo el compromiso de expresar mi visión, mi sensibilidad, mi percepción de la revalidación de la gente mexicana, su mérito, estimación, honra, aprecio, y validez.

We are living in the night of the Race, a time when the work is done quietly, in the dark. The day when we accept what we are, where we are going and why – that day will be the day of the Race. I have the commitment to express my vision, my sensitivity, my perception or the renewal of the Mexican people, their merit, esteem, honor, appreciation and validity.

**No. 18**

Tanto tiempo sin verte casa mía,  
Mi cuna, mi hondo nido de la huerta.

Long time no see, my home,  
My cradle, my deep nest in the orchard

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS

Five respondents from Montréal, One respondent from Québec City

This small sampling is a tiny step forward in a larger survey I would like to do in the future, comparing code-switching and how people view cultural/linguistic attachment(s) between Montréal and Québec City.

<u>Number of years in Montreal identity</u>	<u>Attachment to the city's cosmopolitan identity</u>
14	YES
52	NO
11	Anglophone culture
31	YES
9	YES

Québec City: 32  
(Franco)Anglophone culture

<u>Identify with origins, adopted, country, etc</u>	<u>No. Of languages spoken</u>
<u>Code-switching</u>	
Adopted city of Montreal	3
always	
Origins-Italian	3
depends	
Ethnicity, gender, language, occupation	3
always	
Origin, ethnicity, occupation	3
sometimes	
Two ethnicities	3
sometimes	
Two ethnicities	2
sometimes	

Since this is such a small sampling, I do not wish to make any assumptions or conclusions. However I wanted to include these results here to illustrate the role language plays in *how* people communicate. Although there are many

challenges, I am convinced that code-switching (or simply the choice of switching between languages) offers people a more intimate connection/communication with others.

## INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

## 1) FRANCO FABI

Where were you born? **Sherbrooke, Canada**

How long have you lived in Montréal? **Twice: 4 years and 10 years**

Do you feel that you identify with Montréal in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**I think so, Montreal is very open to different cultures and I've traveled a lot so I like to think that i can understand and adjust to differences, it make life more fun.**

How do you view Montréal's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Montréal's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**A great deal... coming from a small city I grew up in French in a very narrow minded city... on the other hand my family is very open being Italian so they showed me diversity, food, religion etc... I have lots of family I could visit in other countries so i guess it made me want to see more of the other cultures.**

**When I moved to Montreal I met so many people from so many different backgrounds and i played soccer so we had a mix of everything on the team and also working in a club we met so many people.**

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**I'm actually not very attached to Canada and Quebec. probably more Montreal if I had to choose. I really don't like the French Canadian mentality... so I guess I feel closer to my Italian origins... I really don't like any religion that preaches disrespect of the other religion. I like everybody lol.**

How many languages do you speak?

**2 1/2 my Italian is not very strong anymore.**

Identify the languages you can read and write in?

**French and English and I can read Italian.**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**We speak French at home. I speak English in most of my work except at Maurice.**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents?

Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**We spoke French and English 60/40.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never?

**Always!**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**The city was not diverse at all but all of my friends on my soccer team were very diverse for such a small town... I probably had six different cultures represented on my team.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all

**Not at all, I live in Sillery, Quebec lol**

## 2) STEVE GALLUCCIO

Where were you born? **I was born in Montreal.**

How long have you lived in Montréal? **All my life (52 years).**

Do you feel that you identify with Montréal in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**Yes I do. Montreal is a city of immigrants, much like New York. The multi-cultural fabric is what makes this city so vibrant.**

How do you view Montréal's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Montréal's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**Not at all, but I'm quite self-centered. I am who I am and if someone doesn't like it, they can get go fuck themselves (pardon the raw language).**

Consider your response to the previous question and provide one or two concrete examples.

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**I identify first and foremost by my nationality. Italian. North American Italian. Not European Italian. Italian-Montrealer. We have a created our own culture here which is quite different than the European Italian culture. I feel the need to hang out in Little Italy at least once a week, I do my grocery shopping at Milano, I never buy Italian products in a Loblaws. That's about all the examples I can think of.**

Consider your response to the previous question. How strong would you say your level of attachment is to the choice you identify with? Would you say your attachment is: {not strong at all, slightly strong, somewhat strong, or very strong}? Justify/explain your response.

**Very strong. The way I speak, the way I look at things, the way I work. It's all very Italian. Quite over the top sometimes, and things get done but not in a very linear fashion. My life is quite chaotic and abstract. I read a quote by Oscar Wilde I believe it went something like this, speaking of Italy: "For a country with little money, I have never seen such palatial train stations". Italy is full of contradictions. And I believe I am one big contradiction.**

How many languages do you speak?

**Three.**

Identify the languages you can read and write in?

**English, French, Italian**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**I speak mostly both English and French at home, and French or English depending on who I am with outside the house. I would say I use both languages equally.**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**I never spoke English with my parents. Always Italian.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never?

**Again it depends on the group I am with. But I don't like switching languages. I prefer that the conversation stay in the language it started in. I abide by one simple rule: always finish the sentence with the language you started it with.**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Not very diverse.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Somewhat diverse.**

3) ITALIAN FEMALE – wished to remain anonymous

Where were you born? **Toronto, Ontario.**

How long have you lived in Montréal? **11 years.**

Do you feel that you identify with Montréal in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**Sometimes. I identify with Montreal ( part of my cultural identity-Anglophone Canadian) but not in the other part Italian. There are distinct groups of Italians that immigrated to different parts of North America (North, Central, South, ect.) and that affects the cultural traditions one is exposed to in each city.**

How do you view Montréal's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Montréal's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**Somewhat**

Consider your response to the previous question and provide one or two concrete examples.

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**If it is the main identity markers which is being asked---it would be a combination of ethnicity, gender, language(s) and occupation.**

Consider your response to the previous question. How strong would you say your level of attachment is to the choice you identify with? Would you say your attachment is: {not strong at all, slightly strong, somewhat strong, or very strong}? Justify/explain your response.

How many languages do you speak? Identify the languages you can read and write in?

**English, French , Italian, Spanish (read in )  
English and French (write in)**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**Usually.**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**Sometimes with parents, often with grandparents.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never?

**Always.**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Somewhat diverse.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Very diverse.**

4) PATRICK JEAN BAPTISTE

Where were you born? **Haiti**

How long have you lived in Montréal? **Since May 1982 - almost 31 years.**

Do you feel that you identify with Montréal in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**Oui je me suis bien intégré avec la culture à Montréal. J'ai fait tous mes études ici.**

How do you view Montréal's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Montréal's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**Beaucoup d'activités culturelles surtout pendant l'été.--- a great deal**

Consider your response to the previous question and provide one or two concrete examples.

**Activités culturelles et activités d'intégration à la culture québécoise.**

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**Origin, ethnicity and occupation**

Consider your response to the previous question. How strong would you say your level of attachment is to the choice you identify with? Would you say your attachment is: {not strong at all, slightly strong, somewhat strong, or very strong}? Justify/explain your response.

**Somewhat strong: distinction énorme au niveau de la couleur de la peau pas du langage, certaines personnes ont quand même une mauvaise opinion des gens de couleur.**

How many languages do you speak? **Three**

Identify the languages you can read and write in? **French and English**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**Always.**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**Always.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never?

**Sometimes.**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Somewhat diverse.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Not very diverse.**

5) MARIE-CHRISTINE DEPESTRE

Where were you born? **Montreal**

How long have you lived in Montréal?

**I lived with my parents in Laval for 22 years, so I've lived in Montreal for almost 9 years.**

Do you feel that you identify with Montréal in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**Yes, I consider my self as a French-Canadian Quebecer of Haitian descent. All these roots are very well represented in Montreal. There are still a lot of french speaking citizens in Montreal and also it's one of the places where a lot of Haitian immigrants moved to from the 1960's till now.**

How do you view Montréal's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Montréal's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**A great deal.**

Consider your response to the previous question and provide one or two concrete examples.

**I think I have a very good understanding and idea of many different cultures being that they are so well represented in Montreal. When you interact with people from different backgrounds you're bound to exchange knowledge. In my opinion, any city that has a little Italy and a Chinatown is somewhat rich culturally speaking.. In Montreal, you'll find groups and cultural community centers from a lot of ethnic groups. For example, the HCGM (Hellenic community of Greater Montreal), I used to go there because of my Greek friends and would learn a lot about their culture, and even learned a few of their traditional dances.**

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**I identify with the French Canadian culture because I went to a French school but I have my Haitian roots that are a big part of who I am. I understand and speak Creole, cook Creole food and was baptised like a lot of people from Haitian descent.**

Consider your response to the previous question. How strong would you say your level of attachment is to the choice you identify with? Would you say your attachment is: {not strong at all, slightly strong, somewhat strong, or very strong}? Justify/explain your response.

**Very strong. It's what I've been exposed to the most and at the earliest stages of my life.**

How many languages do you speak? **Three**

Identify the languages you can read and write in?

**French, English and Creole.**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**Usually.**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**Usually.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never? **Sometimes.**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Not diverse at all. It was the early stages of suburbs neighborhoods.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Very diverse.**

6) GERRY LESCOT

Where were you born? **Port-au-Prince**

How long have you lived in Québec City? **32 years**

Do you feel that you identify with Québec in terms of your cultural identity? Explain why or why not.

**Quebec City is a predominantly white town but it does not matter to me because I get along with the Whiteys.**

How do you view Québec's cultural diversity in relation to your personal identity? To what degree has Québec's diverse make-up of immigrants and its Anglophone and Francophone populations had an impact on the way you translate your own identity: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.

**I feel comfy in both French and English.**

Consider your response to the previous question and provide one or two concrete examples.

**When it is time to communicate with an Anglophone, I don't look down on the pavement.**

Do you identify first and foremost by your {nationality either country of origin or host/adopted country, your ethnicity, your race, your language, your religion, your social class or your occupation}? If you believe none of these responses are applicable, explain why?

**Sometimes I say I am a Quebecer, sometimes I say I am Haitian depending on what kind of answer my opposite want to hear.**

Consider your response to the previous question. How strong would you say your level of attachment is to the choice you identify with? Would you say your attachment is: {not strong at all, slightly strong, somewhat strong, or very strong}? Justify/explain your response.

**Feel very strongly about being both Quebecer and Haitian.**

How many languages do you speak? **Two**

Identify the languages you can read and write in?

**French and English**

How often do you speak a language other than English at home, with friends or at work? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never speak a language other than English?

**French 80% of the time**

As a child, how often did you speak a language other than English with your parents? Would you say always, usually, sometimes, or never spoke a language other than English with your parents?

**Haitian Creole but didn't pick it up properly, my parents teaching of that language was too sporadic.**

If you speak more than one language, do you switch between languages when you are conversing with friends? How often would you say you switch between languages in a single conversation, always, usually, sometimes, or never?

**With my bilingual friends, I may be tempted to switch between English and French when I realize one of the languages is more precise for what I am trying to say.**

How culturally diverse was your childhood neighborhood: Would you say it was very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Not very diverse.**

How culturally diverse is your current neighborhood: Would you say it is very diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse, or not diverse at all?

**Not very diverse.**

## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Obasan's silence marks individual and group struggle to hold onto their dying Japanese culture. Her silence also symbolizes her feeling of gratitude and her defence of Canada, even as the country marginalizes her status as a Canadian and tries to efface Japanese Canadian communities. However, Obasan's silence does not in any way negate her as "the true and rightful owner of the earth" (Kogawa 16). Rather it hides her grief "somewhere between speech and hearing" with dignity (269).

<sup>ii</sup> The *Tengu zoshi* is a picture scroll from the Kamakura period (1296). However, unlike the *Choju giga*, its subjects of caricatures can be identified with certainty because its pictorial part is accompanied with texts, and some figures in the pictures are identified by captions. In its first five scrolls, the *Tengu zoshi* critically addresses problems of the older Buddhist schools by a twofold technique. On the one hand, in the textual part it first provides the official histories of temples. Then, however, it adds a critical paragraph at the end of each and deplores that the high priests, boasting of their prestigious heritage, tend to become tengu, i.e. selfish and arrogant. (Umezu 1978: 2 [English text]) On the other hand, parts of the pictures themselves directly illustrate the realities of the haughty monks pursuing their egoistical ends, not mentioned in the text. (Ibid.) It criticizes especially the power struggle between the temple complexes and the employment of the warrior monks. Umezu (1978: 2) considers the artist to have had a critical, satirical spirit, and assumes that he belonged to Tendai. In the text of the scroll centered on Kofuku-ji, which serves also as preface for the whole set of the *Tengu zoshi*, the author states the theme of his work: these (priests of the major temples) all dwell in ego attachment, harbor arrogance, and consider fame and profit as an important matter. For this reason, they will without fail fall into the realm of ma [i.e. the Buddhist devil]. □ (Wakabayashi 1999: 493) In order to express such bad state of affairs, the *Tengu zoshi* employs the figure of the tengu in its depiction of monks. Thereby it attempts to caricature the Buddhist sects, old and new. (Umezu 1978: 2)

<sup>iii</sup> See page 62: Simon, Sherry. *Le trafic des langues: traduction et culture dans la littérature québécoise*, Québec, Les Editions du Boréal, 1994.

<sup>iv</sup> In his subsequent work, *Days Of Obligation*, Rodriguez addresses his silence about his homosexuality.

<sup>v</sup> Several sections in Chapter Three were taken from my essay "Linguistic Hybridity in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion*, and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* published in *Translating Identity and the Identity of Translation*. Editors: Madelena Gonzalez and Francine Tolron. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006. (3-19).

<sup>vi</sup> I understand these influences more clearly after having visited the Musée de la civilisation in Québec City in the fall of 2010 to see the exhibit entitled RIFF: Comment l'Afrique fait vibrer les Amériques. It was an insightful, interactive exhibit that traced the origins of jazz and blues music in the Americas. Its influences can be heard in every genre of North and South American music. Today's music has been and continues to be influenced and cross-pollinated with jazz and blues vibes.

<sup>vii</sup> The notion of the new language may be interpreted as « Un texte à côté d'un texte...qui n'arrête pas de parler...les rapports entre les langues mettent en jeu des asymétries de pouvoir, mais que la vérité de la langue fonctionne à la fois en surface et ailleurs » (Brault qtd. In Simon, *Trafic des langues* 61).

<sup>viii</sup> Brault explains, « je flotte dans une inter-langue...un texte ni d'un autre, ni de moi, se dessine en forme de chiasme...la voix cassée invite à la mort, comme elle ouvre à l'infini du possible » (qtd. in Simon, *Trafic des langues* 62-63).

<sup>ix</sup> The *pastagate* issue went viral on February 14, 2013 with its broadcast through Twitter, Facebook and newspapers reaching audiences in Canada and all over the world. When Buonanotte Restaurant in Montreal was fined for using Italian words on its menu instead of

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French ones, they went public with their story. Ironically, this particular issue had begun while the Liberals were in power. This restaurant was one of many others like Portofino and Conti Caffé in Québec City that had received letters from the OQLF long before the Parti Québécois had come into power. However the media attention Buonanotte created in February, 2013 resulted in a great deal of negative publicity against the *Parti Québécois*. The *Parti Québécois* wished to toughen language laws (through Bill 14 which was being proposed in Parliament in February, 2013) so the issue of public French signage became one of its primary focuses. However all the negative media attention and publicity worked against their efforts and led to the resignation of Louise Marchand, the head of the OQLF on March 8, 2013.

<sup>x</sup> In her study, “Early French Immersion: How has the original Canadian model stood the test of time?”, Marjorie Bingham Wesche illustrates the benefits of early immersion programs. Her findings suggest that “EFI students achieved both a high level of L2 development *and* mastery of school subject matter equivalent to that of similar students studying through their L1, English. These results hold for mathematics, geography and other social sciences, science, and the other components of the elementary school curriculum including English L1 development” (360). On the basis of such findings, I believe that triglossic educational models like the ones in Luxembourg merit more attention.

<sup>xi</sup> As Wesche points out, “European schools are particularly interesting for their success in incorporating ambitious language arts components in each language into the regular school program. In the case of a second or third language, language arts instruction is provided for a period of time before the language is used as a medium of instruction. These schools also provide regular contact with native speaker peers and adults – opportunities also widely available out of class. This contrasts with the experience of Canadian immersion children, who are lucky to be involved in class trips to French-speaking areas or bilingual exchanges once or twice during their schooling. The importance of these components is indicated by the results of a comparative study (Baetens 370 *Marjorie Bingham Wesche* Beardsmore & Swain 1985, Baetens Beardsmore 1993), in which, although Canadian French immersion students gave solid performances, grade 8 European School learners of French outperformed immersion learners of the same age on tests of both grammatical accuracy and conversational fluency. These results probably relate not only to the unique curriculum but also to the characteristics of many of the students (in terms of parents' socio-economic level, educational background and knowledge of other languages), and to the immediate pertinence of the L2 for both social interaction and consequential school-leaving exams. Needless to say, the European Schools are very expensive and extremely complicated to run. However, they successfully provide multilingual schooling to approximately 12,000 children, demonstrating what is possible for school language instruction under favorable conditions. They are thus a beacon for multilingual education elsewhere” (369-370).

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