

**Université de Montréal**

*Towards an ethic of cultural harmonization: translating history textbooks in the province of Québec*

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**Mémoire présenté à la Faculté des arts et des sciences  
en vue de l'obtention du grade de Maîtrise ès arts (M.A.)  
en Traduction,  
option « Recherche »**

**22 décembre 2010**

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**Faculté des arts et des sciences**

**Ce mémoire intitulé :**

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province of Québec*

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## Résumé

Confronté à un projet de traduction de manuels d'histoire du français à l'anglais, destinés aux écoles publiques anglophones au Québec, Michael Varga définit une méthode qui ne s'appuie pas sur les théories de traduction classiques reliées aux structures binaires, mais qui s'inspire plutôt du modèle de la narratologie (narrative theory) prôné par Mona Baker. Varga reconnaît la légitimité d'une pluralité de narrations en compétition entre elles qui se manifestent parmi les différents groupes socioculturels faisant partie d'une même société (le Québec). Il identifie des passages en provenance du texte d'origine qui mettent en relief des conflits reliés à l'accommodation culturelle. Il traite la façon dont ces conflits échouent à communiquer adéquatement des réalités culturelles appropriées, lesquelles seront en concert avec les normes et valeurs propres à la société québécoise. Il propose des traductions, apte au domaine pédagogique, qui désamorceront ces conflits et les accommoderont tout en respectant la pluralité des réalités culturelles en évidence dans la société québécoise.

## Mots clés

éthique de traduction, pluralité culturelle, histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté, structure binaire, narratologie, accommodement culturel, *nativization*, *foreignization*, traducteur-rédacteur

**Abstract**

Faced with the task of translating history textbooks from French to English for use in Québec's English-language public school system, Michael Varga outlines a translation approach that circumvents classical translation theories based on binary constructs in favour of a model inspired by narrative theory as proposed by Mona Baker. Acknowledging the legitimacy of multiple parallel narratives as they pertain to different socio-cultural groups within the same society (Québec), he identifies source text sections that expose conflicts related to intercultural harmony. He discusses how these conflicts may fall short of communicating appropriate cultural realities that conform to the norms and values that govern Québec society. With a focus on the educational context, he proposes translations that defuse these conflicts in a spirit of harmonization and respect for the pluralist cultural realities in evidence in Québec society.

**Key words**

Translation ethic, cultural plurality, history and citizenship education, binary structure, narrative theory, cultural harmonization, nativization, foreignization, translator-writer

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## Preliminary notes and abbreviations

1. This thesis refers to translators in the plural as well as in the singular form. In the interest of easier readability, whenever I refer to the singular form, I have limited myself to just one referential pronoun. Since the English language does not dispose of a gender-inclusive pronoun, and I am reporting the results of my research and analysis, I have allowed myself the privilege of choosing the masculine form. This should not, however, detract from the fact that any observations or conclusions made here apply in equal measure to any translator, whether male, female or any other gender.
2. In order to signal that modifying attributes, such as the primary language used by a specific human community, are subject to more complex identity realities, the adjectives ‘anglophone’ and ‘francophone’ have been retained in lower case spelling.
3. The individual sub-headings in the ‘Analysis of text excerpts’ section function as an ordering device for improved readability and in no way are meant to suggest that the issues discussed can be reduced to a singular aspect of human reality.
4. The proposed translations of the excerpts listed in this thesis conform to project directives requiring the translators to keep text lengths between the French and English versions of the textbook roughly equal (to allow for parallel pagination systems). Their linguistic improvement in terms of style and concision was mandated to the project’s copyeditor and revisor teams.
5. For in-text referencing purposes, the titles of the textbooks from which excerpts are drawn have been abbreviated to the following acronyms:

*D’hier à demain* : manuel d’élève: DDME

*D’hier à demain* : guide d’enseignement: DDGE

*Fresques 1re année (2e cycle)* : manuel d’élève: F3ME

*Fresques 1re année (2e cycle)* : guide d’enseignement: F3GE

*Fresques 2e année (2e cycle)* : manuel d’élève: F4ME

*Fresques 2e année (2e cycle)* : guide d’enseignement: F4GE

## Remerciements

Je suis reconnaissant à l'Université de Montréal qui, dans un esprit d'ouverture, de souplesse et d'accommodation, m'a accordé un généreux espace dans lequel j'ai pu entreprendre ce projet ainsi que le privilège de rédiger et soumettre ce mémoire de maîtrise en anglais. Les professeurs chargés de mes cours, notamment les professeurs Hélène Buzelin et Laurent Lamy, m'ont fourni des opportunités de grande valeur pour que je puisse développer mes idées; et à Ginette Hamel, chargée des tâches administratives, m'a aidé à comprendre et remplir les formalités pertinentes à la présentation de mon travail.

Mes remerciements s'adressent, plus particulièrement, au professeur Richard Patry, qui m'a offert des conseils et des rétroactions encourageantes reliées à mes idées et réflexions, et a ainsi suggéré que j'entreprenne ce projet de maîtrise; au professeur Alexis Nouss, dont le travail sur le concept de « métissages » m'a incité à définir mes propres chemins envers des espaces de convergence; et au professeur Georges Bastin, mon directeur de recherche, qui en démontrant une généreuse mesure de perspicacité et de patience m'a offert un encadrement académique assidu et a ainsi agi comme le gardien de phare qui a assuré que ce mémoire de maîtrise puisse naviguer de la haute mer à la terre ferme.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Université de Montréal, whose spirit of openness, flexibility and accommodation granted me a generous space in which to undertake this project, including the privilege to write and submit this thesis in English. The instructors in charge of my courses, in particular Professor Hélène Buzelin and Professor Laurent Lamy, furnished me with valuable opportunities in which I could elaborate my ideas; and Ginette Hamel, the administrative assistant, helped me chart and understand the administrative and formal requirements of my work.

In particular, I am indebted to Professor Richard Patry, whose guidance and positive response to my reflections and ideas planted a first seed of possibility for this undertaking; Professor Alexis Nouss, whose work on the concept of *métissages* inspired me to seek my own paths towards spaces of convergence; and my research supervisor, Professor Georges Bastin, who by offering his astute academic guidance, insights and generous patience acted as the lighthouse keeper who ensured that this thesis would find its way from the open seas to firm ground.

# 1 Introduction

The idea for this thesis grew out of my involvement as a French-to-English translator in the production of three secondary history textbooks for use in History and Citizenship Education in public English-language schools in the province of Québec.

My rudimentary knowledge of the exact mechanics governing the textbook selection and production process may be a function of the limited role extended to translators in this project. However, the texts selected for translation were based on existing French-language history textbooks published by an independent Québec-based educational publisher and available and approved for use in classrooms in Québec. Québec's English-language school boards had a hand in selecting from a range of available choices their preferred book for translation. The actual translation project and product was subject to quality control and approval measures by public officials in Québec's Ministry of Education.

In addition to a team of four translators (each one responsible for a set number of chapters and related supplementary materials, such as teaching guides, student worksheets, and learning evaluation activities), the translation project included a project manager, a history education consultant, copyeditors, and proofreaders. As a translator, my place in the communications chain allowed for direct exchanges with the project manager and copyeditors. Any translation issues that could not be



resolved without further discussion could be described in a comment and inserted into the translated text. The comments then made their way through the production chain (project manager, copyeditor, subject consultant and proofreader). The comments thus travelled a unidirectional journey, except for intermittent but rare social occasions during which I came face to face with the other project participants. When a discussion did ensue, only the history education consultant or the project manager took positions, which were based on the fact that they either had children in the school system (project manager) or occupied a key position among the target audience (subject consultant). If the other translators did not join in the discussion, this was due to their focus on textbook chapters of their own and their unfamiliarity with the issues I had raised. Since an ethical stance was not a prescribed requirement for participation in the translation project, some players may have also not been concerned beyond producing their allotted translation quota and receiving their due payments. And even though I learned that some of my comments and suggestions had made it to the final production stage, including clearance by the Ministry of Education assessors, the communicative reach of such discussions was rudimentary at best, and so the scope for influence, follow-up and feedback in relation to my role as translator was effectively very limited.

In view of the non-existence of a reciprocal dialogue dimension in relation to the translation issues I raised and the large number of project participants, each with specific mandates and objectives, it would be difficult to discuss and assess the quality of the finished English-language textbooks (which in some cases still await

publication). Given the limitations of my participation and influence as a frontline translator, my discussion will therefore focus on the process as well as the final product, where possible. I sought to frame my mandate, my reflections and evaluations in relation to my translation decisions with a view to respecting, in the broadest sense possible, the values inherent in the laws and guidelines of Québec society (*Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms*), while giving due consideration to the needs and interests of the target audience.

In addition to my relevant education and English-language competency, my skills set as a translator in this project included a degree of experience in the areas of education and intercultural relations based on an international English-teaching career that preceded my evolution into a translator. Moreover, as my own ethno-cultural origins are neither Anglo-Saxon nor French and my mother tongue is German, my sense of ethnic, national, cultural and social belonging is perhaps more complex and diversified than might be expected from an individual born into and raised in a more homogeneous, unilingual environment. As a naturalized Canadian citizen, raised in a German-speaking environment who has made his home in Québec, my identities and affiliations are thus characterized by multiple overlaps and convergences. These plural affinities should not be seen as an internal competition for dominance, but rather preserve a measure of freedom that does not require I forge a primary and permanent identification with just a single, clearly-demarcated cultural, ethnic or language community.

In view of my stated translation objectives of inclusiveness and balance, my multiple affinities are clearly an advantage, as my translation reflections could remain fundamentally free of a dominant self-identification as either an anglophone or a francophone Quebecer. Instead, I could embrace a reality with ample space where both linguistic and cultural identity realms could converge alongside further options for consideration. As such, adopting a perspective that could readily transcend the limits of specific ethno-cultural and linguistic interests presented itself not only as a preferred approach to my translation ethic but also came rather naturally to me.

I do not claim to be impartial or maintain that my approach was always free from subjectivity; however, it is my hope that I remained free of the shackles that might have allied me with a specific community or interest group (to the exclusion of others), but instead answered to a comprehensive and inclusive set of values and realities that can prove relevant to a broad and diverse community of human beings and citizens. The translation process discussed in the following pages is thus meant to respect as well as reflect a humanist worldview and a sense of fairplay, along with the values, rights and responsibilities that underpin Québec and Canadian society.

The translation of history textbooks combines complex challenges with privilege and opportunity. Not only do these books inform and tell stories, they guide and influence young minds in their perceptions and understanding of the society to which they belong. As educational tools, they enable individuals to develop and realize their potentials, but they also fulfill a parallel role as instruments in the preservation

and furtherance of Québec's social integrity and so provide an anchoring point from which current and future social evolutions are possible.

History texts deal with the factual, the truthful, the ideological, the representative and the interpretative. If they fail to be comprehensive and inclusive, they can also become prescriptive. As such, history textbooks can be a powerful force in shaping (or, when less successful) in alienating the citizenry of tomorrow.

The degree of precision required by such a translation should not only focus on transferring the source text content into an equivalent variant in a different language, but must do so in a probing and circumspect spirit, including, whenever warranted, a critical assessment of the source text content. And so while a translator's critical eye is expected to aim for functional equivalence, he must also ensure the target as well as the source text offer educational content that can consistently live up to the prevailing values and realities of the society we answer to.

The authority and credibility behind any text depends, among other things, on whether the readers can make it their own, embrace it and believe in it. In the event that the text contains inaccuracies, errors or omissions, it may fail to adequately speak to its readers, who in turn will not make it their own, causing it to fail as a tool with which to help guide youth towards citizenship.

Because audience perceptions can be as powerful as a text's intentions, it is important to ensure that adequate consideration is given to rendering a wholesome, inclusive and effective text.

“Ideology can be thought of as a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things as in common sense and several philosophical tendencies or a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members.” [Xiao-Ling: 63]

In the context of history textbooks produced in French in Québec, we must first ask what cultural community constitutes the dominant class. On many levels, Québec society is perceived as a minority group situated within a dominant English-speaking continent. Within Québec, however, especially in view of the cultural sovereignty enjoyed by individual Canadian provinces, the dominant class is comprised of a francophone majority. As such, the stewardship of Québec's values, policies and educational priorities resides within a French sphere of language and culture.

For the purposes of this thesis, the source text culture shall be defined, in broad terms, as the majority francophone population of Québec, composed not only of French-descended individuals but also of a plurality of other backgrounds, whose common ground can be found in the sharing of French as their primary language. The translational relationship of the dominant source text culture to the minority anglophone target text culture (composed and derived not only of white Anglo-Saxon populations, but also of other originally European cultures, Aboriginal cultures, Afro-American cultures, and various other immigrant communities from the

Middle East, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere) may include conflicts that must be mediated and defused through a translation approach that answers to a values framework relevant to all interested parties. Should answers and solutions to translation issues follow categorical rules that prescribe fixed approaches—which outline solutions in favour of either the source or the target culture—or can solutions create ample room for accommodating all parties concerned?

Since Québec society is composed of cultural pluralities, this will be an important question to explore. If children are to be educated to become citizens and assume responsible and participatory roles within Québec society, they must be able to see themselves appropriately represented and included in the socio-historical narrative of Québec; otherwise they may fail to embrace their role as citizens, along with the privileges and responsibilities this entails. Such an outcome would not only be counterproductive in terms of history education, but it would endanger the chances of successfully integrating youth into the norms and values framework of the society to which they belong and owe allegiance, so that it may prosper, develop and survive into the future.

In response to the increasingly pluralist composition of Québec society, a public debate has emerged that seeks to find means and ways to reconcile the established majority culture of French Canadian Quebecers with its increasingly heterogeneous minority cultural communities. Given the comparatively small population numbers and the heterogeneous composition of Québec's anglophone minority population,

this debate is equally relevant to translators engaged in the production of English-language history textbooks in Québec.

The practice of translation, by virtue of its organization around a source and a target text, is readily accommodated within a binary framework that places the original text in opposition to the translated text and vice versa. The cliché of the translator as a bridge, whose task it is to connect these textual opposites, however, does little to dispel the fact that the inherent two-sidedness is one of difference, even conflict, and as such resembles a battlefield rather than a creative space of production. The history of Western translation is peppered with arguments and ideas that vacillate between different variants of source language-focused and target language-focused prescriptions and strategies, and thus tends to ally the translator with either the source culture or the target culture. The high degree of multilateral cultural influences and convergence impacting on most contemporary cultures raises doubts as to whether specific cultures and their texts can still be considered as fixed and homogeneous entities today. Meylaerts, for instance, declares her scepticism about stable identities, unique mother tongues and monolingual (national) identities by suggesting these have been replaced by a vacillating fluidity:

“...the ‘new’ nomadic citizens are characterized as polyglots travelling between languages, in a permanent stage of (self-) translation.” [Meylaerts 2006: 1]

The *Skopos* theory advocated by Christiane Nord, represents a partial evolution away from the translation battlefield. It shifts the debate from arguments of fidelity and allegiance for aesthetic, political or social concerns to more practical, utilitarian objectives. As a detraction from the translation battleground, the purposeful ceasefire of the *Skopos* will map out and help determine many purpose-oriented solutions to translation problems with an eye to the target culture's needs, but in so doing may also widen the distance to the source text. The target text may end up being a stand-alone entity whose accuracy and quality are primarily answerable to the target audience. Since the *Skopos*-focused translator is active on behalf of one side to the detriment of the other, the binary model essentially remains intact, bestowing a foregone victory trophy on the target culture, while the armies of the source text are relegated to disengagement, leaving source text elements sidelined or totally ignored.

Lawrence Venuti shook up translation studies when he proposed a strong political role for translation theory and practice that takes into account the relative power and status of languages within the global community. Such relativism succeeds in moving away further from structural absolutes, and even engages in socio-political policies on behalf of disempowered languages and cultures in respect of their specific position on the translation divide in order to augment their status, visibility, and voice. This would determine the translator's focus and loyalty not based on a source and target binary but on a dominant-dominated or majority-minority bipolarity. Such a paradigm may redress intercultural power imbalances and open up a path to protect and preserve minority cultures, but since it still requires a clear



decision in favour of one particular side, it would merely amount to a shift in emphasis and allegiance but would keep intact the binary model. The promotion of “underdog” cultures—in certain contexts this description may fit Québec’s francophone population, in others it more aptly describes Québec’s anglophone population—adds an important consideration to the translation battleground but at the same time maintains a prescriptive, absolute approach that can leave very little space for cultural and textual elements that are less readily categorized in minority-majority terms and therefore risk falling by the wayside.

Other theorists, such as Michael Cronin, acknowledge that the minority and majority roles of respective cultures are neither fixed nor static, but inhabit a relational space that differs in relation to various other languages [Cronin: 254]. German, for example, may function as a majority language in its translational contacts with Dutch or Czech but as a minority culture in its translational engagements with US English. This role may fluctuate further in relation to geography, political empowerment, the types of texts in question or their historical origins, and may thus position German as a majority language (versus practically all other languages in Central and Eastern Europe) in the scientific field in the early 20th century but as a minority language (versus US English) in that same domain in the early 21st century.

The role of Québec in this respect is particularly chameleon-like, since its geopolitical reality imposes a minority role for French on a continent dominated by English-speaking populations on the one hand, while in a localized context the

French-speaking core population within Québec represents a linguistic majority when considered against the 13.4 percent of speakers of English as their first official language [Statistics Canada 2010]<sup>1</sup> that form part of Québec society.

Whereas in the Canadian context, numerous aspects of rights and empowerment transcend inter-provincial borders due to the shared federal and provincial jurisdictions that govern all Canadian provinces united in confederation, and, a strictly black-and-white identity divide between French- and English-speaking communities in Québec cannot be established, it must also be noted that the cultural and educational domains in Canada are housed under provincial sovereignty. For the purposes at hand, it therefore cannot be denied that the English-speaking populations in Québec occupy a minority position alongside a commanding French-speaking majority.

Given that the ground on which the French and English cultural camps face one another can be subject to situational shifts and swings, a strictly binary translation model cannot be justified. Furthermore, since these two linguistically disparate communities do also share political, social, legal and geographical spaces within the same society, even the battlefield metaphor cannot answer to each and every translation issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures based on the 2006 Census.

In ethno-cultural terms, the language fault lines do not separate two armies that are each homogeneous entities in themselves. In view of the increasingly pluralist composition of Québec's population—on both sides of the language divide—translation models can therefore also not be based on presumptions of cultural homogeneity. Instead, the translator of texts for use in History and Citizenship Education needs to establish a space in which a common ground shared by all of Québec's diverse communities can be established, a space that can accommodate Québec's values consistently and make them relevant to all its citizens. This must be a space where facts and issues as well as their judicious representation do not cater to single-minded objectives, but reach out to all Quebecers, adequately reflecting all of their pertinent realities. In an increasingly pluralist society, the binary French-English paradigm, a reflection of Québec's perceived ethno-cultural duality, can therefore not live up to current realities. A binary translation model is also inadequate, as it tends to reduce translation decisions to superficial either-or choices that reflect simplified, reductionist and potentially polarized realities.

The translator's task is highly complex; it requires careful and far-reaching analysis and considerations, negotiation and judgments that are relevant to all stakeholders and their situations. By discarding one-sided victories in favour of win-win solutions that serve the collective effort of sustaining Québec society, respecting its complex history, and offering appropriate guidance to its young generations, the resulting history textbooks can live up to their educational purposes and shine as

commendable examples of harmonious intercultural practices that sustain and further the society they serve.

## **2 Textbooks and the politics of knowledge**

A rich body of research exists on the politics of the textbook. In order to provide some context to the translation tasks analyzed in this thesis, I would like to offer an overview of some relevant aspects in relation to textbooks. The following paragraphs will thus explore some key cultural, political and historical aspects as they relate to textbooks and their translations in the province of Québec.

According to Bernard Shapiro, the primary ethical role of education and textbooks is to educate morally, ethically and intellectually independent citizens and, to this end, to foster a critical spirit in young people [Shapiro: 84]. The role of textbooks is thus not to provide a set range of specific knowledge but to supply a range of learning situations that can guide learners to deal with similar situations in their own lives, identify and develop their values and use these to deliberate and make decisions in their own lives. Apple and Christian-Smith define the objective of “cultural literacy” as dependent on the “conditions necessary for all people to participate in the creation and recreation of meanings and values” [Apple & Christian-Smith: 15].

Apart from such objectives, there has been much debate on the question whether textbooks actually represent a core resource in the classroom. Squire quotes research

that claims 75 to 90 percent of classroom decisions are connected to textbooks, and particularly so when “specific skills” are taught [Squire: 326]. With reference to Québec in particular, Aubin claims that textbooks today are subject to a strong emotional attachment and therefore continue to be a core part of the school ritual. He places the origins of this quasi-worship practice to earlier times when textbooks had a religious character and were often produced, selected and used by religious figures and authorities [Aubin 2006:137].

Be that as it may, given the focus in Québec’s Education Program on subject-specific as well as cross-curricular competencies, in particular in social science subjects, it would be reasonable to assume that these educational objectives are indeed being addressed, and furthermore that history lessons in Québec are closely structured on textbook prescriptions and thus give a high degree of prominence to textbook content. A further reason to conclude that textbooks are highly relevant tools in Québec’s classrooms is the fact that subject evaluations are based on the learning and evaluation situations contained in the texts.

Moreover, among the objectives of the Québec education reform initiated in 1997, which, among other things, inspired the translation of existing French-language history textbooks into English, is the aim to standardize not only the learning materials used in French-language and English-language school boards, but also to subject students in both language communities to the same standardized learning assessments. This is designed to end the variety of learning resources in use prior to

the reforms and so seeks to establish a degree of equality between learners in both language communities. In view of their connections to evaluation, the importance of the respective textbook language versions as key tools in the teaching of history should therefore not be doubted.

Standardization and equality beg another question: does the textbook production process adequately address the realities and concerns of both language communities at issue in all their complexities? Squire points to the practice of “pre-censorship” among textbook publishers that involves extensive market research with the aim to identify what is and what is not acceptable to the target audience [Squire: 327]. It would be of interest to note whether the publishers of the French-language textbooks (who also produce their English translations) focus any such research on both French-speaking and English-speaking target groups. If so, it would also be relevant to note what factors determined the representative samples of either group. Did they take into consideration particular segments of society that do not easily fit into mainstream patterns, in many cases straddling the borders between French-speaking and English-speaking groups, such as Aboriginal communities or groups whose ethnic background fits neither into the French or English equation?

While I cannot offer answers to these questions, the variety of material and contexts included in the history textbooks under study suggests that some consideration was indeed given to the reception of pertinent information in both French-language and English-language target markets. As such, the presentation and portrayal of content

with a more “French-friendly” focus occasionally is tempered by the inclusion of information with a greater emphasis on the realities of English-speaking groups. In one such instance, the main theme of one textbook section addressing the historical threats to the survival of the French language and culture through assimilation into the economic and demographic dominance of English is contrasted with a “curiosité” sidebar feature highlighting that the opposite also occurred: in some areas of Québec, where the francophone population was unchallenged by a significant demographic and economic anglophone presence, English-speaking immigrants assimilated into the French culture to a point where their children lost their ability to speak English [F3ME: 144].

This would point to a degree of balance in the representations of English-centred and French-centred narratives. However, the frequent omission or invisibility of Aboriginal populations (for example, in graphs featuring historical population developments in Québec) also suggests that this balance is limited to a dimorphic perception of the existence of just two principal stakeholders in the competing narratives that inform Québec history. Such a binary structure can readily be founded on the premise that there are essentially two languages, two cultures, two texts and two textbook purchasing bodies (the linguistically-defined school boards) at issue in the translation equation. However, this structural limitation risks clouding over the multilateral realities and relationships that underpin the complexities of Québec history.

And what about the importance of the translator as a player in the translation process and, by extension, in the production of translated textbooks? Is his agency as a co-creator of textbooks for a specific language community fully exploited and valued? Can his role support objectives to create relevant and “acceptable” texts for the audiences the translations target? While some observers note that textbook production is a highly bureaucratic, formalized, and routine process [Apple: 30], which may fly in the face of the meticulous, careful and thoughtful work of individual participants in the process, there appears to be broad agreement that the chain from textbook inception, approval, production, selection, purchase and use involves a great number of stakeholders and players [Aubin 2006:139]. Nevertheless, little, if any, mention is made of the specific role of the translator. This would suggest that the translation process is viewed as little more than a minor technical function in the production of textbook translations, and therefore fails to capitalize fully on the reflections, concerns and decisions of the translator as an agent of co-creation of textbook content.

The literature on the history of the textbook in Québec is rich in information about the import, re-publication, adaptation and translation of textbooks (including foreign materials, especially in the early periods of Québec). But it is comparatively more silent on the dynamics of textbook translation in more recent times.

Throughout Québec’s history there have been “exchanges” of textbooks, gradually evolving from foreign imports to local re-publications, to adaptations and



translations. Adaptations and translations produced in Québec's early history appear to have been complex and multidimensional undertakings, as the linguistic aspects of translation shared relevance with religious, political, geographical and biological elements that also called for pertinent transformations between the source and target texts.

In 19th-century Québec, for example, source texts often originated abroad, however not all such books came from France or Great Britain, as may be assumed, but also from the republican United States and Catholic Ireland [Aubin 2007:38]. Books from Ireland, in spite of that country's strong identification with Catholic values, were often highly prized in English-language school environments on account of their "perfectly religion-neutral content" [Aubin 2007: 42]. Nevertheless, the content of foreign-sourced texts, when unmitigated in their application to the prevailing circumstances in Québec, also gave rise to ethical and ideological problems. In a critique of an "advanced English reading book in use in many [English] schools of Lower Canada" [Aubin 1997:17], John William Dawson in 1864 had this to say:

"In its literary extracts it selects, even from Protestant authors, passages in favour of the Romish [sic] Church. It avoids the history and glorious traditions of our motherland, but includes fulsome eulogies of the American constitution and its heroes, and refers to the persecutions supposed to have been suffered by the Catholic Irish." [Dawson: 10]

In more modern times, concerns such as the right shade of religious content or the potential offence caused by republican content in a monarchy-respecting society

have of course made way for a broader spectrum of social and political realities and challenges.

The *Rapport du comité des manuels d'histoire du Canada* in 1946 called for history textbooks that “showcase the heritage shared by the diverse groups in the Canadian nation” (my translation) [Aubin 1997: 30]. This new focus concurred with similar policy goals in most Western countries in the second half of the 20th century, which sought to “encourage a critical approach in readers by presenting a variety of opinions and points of view” (my translation) [Aubin 2006: 137].

While there is comparatively little information available on textbook translation in Québec from French to English, the complexities inherent in earlier textbook translation, adaptation and production efforts show that translation issues and challenges were by no means less complicated in the past. In this light, the relatively fresh problematic of translating French-language history textbooks into English in Québec can draw on a chequered history already familiar with complex production and translation challenges.

The fact that one of the earliest textbooks to be published in Québec—preceding even the first such English-language publication—was an alphabet primer published in Innu in 1767 [Aubin 2006: 58] on the one hand may simply reflect the particular demographics in Québec at the time; more significantly, however, it shows that Aboriginal peoples were present as a target audience for pedagogical materials from

the earliest days in Québec's publishing history. The prevailing binary focus around which Québec's school text histories frequently revolve, whether these be linguistic, religious, political or ideological, risk sidelining other pertinent players and realities, such as this long-established Aboriginal presence. In light of the fact that Aboriginal populations today represent majority populations in the regions covering the northern half of Québec's territory [Barsh: 8], where much of the resources underpinning the province's economy and wealth originate, adds a geographic as well as financial argument to this historical entitlement. This could be reason as well as opportunity to loosen the binary paradigm restrictions, broaden horizons and make more room for Québec's first inhabitants at the dining table where the content and ideas prepared in the translation kitchen are served.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

So where does one start when faced with the topsy-turvy situation of a book written by and for a (within North America) minority French-speaking population that needs to be translated for a (global) majority English-speaking population that nevertheless functions as a linguistic minority in the Québec context and is subject to the dominance of French as the common public language?

Translation can be considered as a form of writing, and so translators often deal with the same challenges and fulfill similar functions as those assumed by writers, including subject-specific reflection, the consideration of appropriate ways to

formulate specific messages, and the critical assessment of what should and what should not appear on the page, to name just a few. We may thus elaborate a translator-writer framework that takes its inspiration from the functions inherent in writing.

Edward Said, for example, associates writers with a socio-political function of civic leadership:

“the importance of writers and intellectuals is eminently, indeed overwhelmingly, true in part because many people still feel the need to look at the writer-intellectual as someone who ought to be listened to as a guide to the confusing present, and also as a leader of a faction, tendency, or group vying for more power and influence...” [Said:16]

If writers can be viewed as authorities, then translators, too, should realize the scope of their significance and responsibilities towards society at large. If they command the status of a critical authority, they can use their power to help tackle the “confusions” society grapples with when faced with competing cultural realities and order them, within an ethically coherent framework, into an intelligible and inclusive whole. And so, rather than stay in the shadows, where they quietly and uncritically perform their tasks with a view to satisfying comparatively narrow concerns for linguistic equivalence or simply to please their employers (such as a publisher of textbooks, whose objectives may primarily depend on sales targets), translators can assume a critically active and productive role that serves the needs of a population seeking history book translations that are comprehensive in their social relevance.

Said goes on to contextualize the relative importance of the function of writers. Claiming that traditional governments and political authorities—as evidenced in the United States, but increasingly a globalized phenomenon—are seeing the public’s trust and confidence in them erode, as governments increasingly abandon their service to civil society in order to support big business and market interests instead [Said:19]. Whether this trend is in fact as dramatic as claimed may be debatable, but evidence of rising occurrences of political scandals, favouritism and opportunism, along with mounting accusations of corruption and calls for public inquiries into collusion and conflict-of-interest practices can lead to widespread cynicism and disillusionment. The fact that similar reports of reprehensible behaviour and actions by public officials regularly crop up in the media in Québec and Canada, show that our own societies are not immune to such trends. And so as the public’s confidence in political and civic leadership erodes, a void is created that can be filled by others willing to assume civic leadership functions, such as intellectuals and writers, or by extension, translators. Well-reasoned, ethically sound translation decisions, by strengthening the public’s trust and confidence, can then serve as a stopgap in an increasingly rudderless and deceptive political world.

The translator as a political actor will require theoretical constructs to frame his translation approaches. A number of theorists have addressed questions dealing with the promotion of and representation of minority cultures in translation, among them Lawrence Venuti. He is associated with a dichotomous approach that pits source and target cultures against each other in terms of their respective status as majority or

minority cultures. Venuti seeks to confer on “minority cultures” a degree of empowerment they have traditionally been denied and aims to help ensure their survival and thereby preserve the rich diversity of cultures in the world.

The problem with the translation tasks at hand, as Venuti would agree, is that cultural majorities and minorities are never absolutes but can shift from one to the other, depending on specific contexts. It would be difficult to argue that English-speaking cultures suffer the tribulations of minorities or are on the verge of being over-run and absorbed into other dominant cultures. By virtue of the legally-sanctioned dominance of French in Québec, however, Québec’s English-speaking populations are indeed familiar with the disadvantages that accompany minority situations (comparatively lesser population growth due to lower levels of anglophone immigration, geographical mobility restrictions due to the uneven distribution of anglophone communities and the relative restrictions on health, education and cultural resource services offered across Québec’s territory, to name just a few).

Venuti also acknowledges the political dimensions of translation. One of his principal aims appears to be to challenge the global domination of US English by foreignizing the English language through translation. However, while his observation of the asymmetrical nature of any translation project is fundamentally sound in terms of the majority-minority binary, he fails to recognize the importance of the agency of the translator, who he claims “remains entirely unaware of the potential cultural and political effects of his translation” [Venuti 2005: 183]. This

alleged unawareness may be an observable phenomenon in the world of translation, however, if translators can be empowered to assume an active role of harmonizing and mediating the realities portrayed in and between texts, then this apparent translator flaw must be redressed. By failing to acknowledge a translator's ability and scope to critically assess texts and consider judicious translations, including the possible effects and impacts these will have on their readership, Venuti's argument reduces the possibilities for interplay between source and target texts to one of static rigidity, and therefore erroneously presumes that situationally-determined majority and minority roles cannot possibly be mediated by the translator's considerations, assessments and reflections.

Removing the translator variable from this equation then makes it plausible to claim that "translation can never simply be communication between equals because it is fundamentally ethnocentric" [Venuti 1996: 93]. However, if the communication between texts is moderated by a translator who has set himself well-reasoned objectives that give due consideration to all sides, within an inclusive and comprehensive framework, then translation can indeed be free of its ethnocentric attributes.

If the definition of a translator's political and ethical stance is to be relevant to the communities he serves, he must be able to ground his reasoning in the values framework embraced by these communities. In response to the growing public debate surrounding intercultural harmonization practices in Québec in recent times,

the government of Québec set up a public commission to observe, listen to and report on the prevalent sentiments and ideas on cultural harmonization among the population. Known as the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices and headed by Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, two eminent Québec intellectuals (one of whom is primarily associated with the francophone community, the other with the anglophone community), the commission's findings were published in 2007 (referred to here as the Bouchard-Taylor Report). They provide useful insights into the possibilities for cultural harmonization and how they can serve as a referential framework for successful intercultural relations, including for translators who can access pathways and solutions in order to foster harmony within a culturally pluralist reality. Although the Commission was not specifically mandated to include Québec's anglophone or Aboriginal minorities in its analysis, the fact that these minorities fill into a common territorial and civic space, should justify their inclusion in the translation analysis at hand. The cultural harmonization debate is of particular importance in view of the fact that History and Citizenship Education materials used in the province's public schools serve as tools to preserve and maintain a degree of cohesion within society.

The Bouchard-Taylor Report specifies two main approaches to accommodate cultural differences. On the one hand, issues can be dealt with in a legal framework, implying the need for a formalized structure with rules and guidelines codified into law. This formal approach regulates specific cultural conflicts in the courts, leading



to the establishment of set rules that cannot, however, always adequately address each and every conflict situation.

Furthermore, official language minority communities already enjoy legal guarantees in Canada. Judicial approaches to conflict resolutions often involve a taking of sides and therefore may encourage confrontation (a cultural minority seeking specialized access to public facilities, such as swimming pools, to keep its young women isolated from the prying eyes of the general male public, for example, may incite opposition among other citizens). A legal solution establishes a winning and a losing party, and as such may accomplish little to fuse both parties' aspirations under a common roof. On the other hand, Bouchard and Taylor's second approach

“is less formal and relies on negotiation and the search for a compromise. Its objective is to find a solution that satisfies both [parties] and it corresponds to concerted adjustment.” [Bouchard & Taylor: 19]

Since the work of a translator is generally not channelled through the courts, negotiation built on thorough reflection, imagination and creativity, which can aim for fair and comprehensive conflict resolutions offers up a comparatively productive translational avenue.

In situations of competing realities and aspirations, made more complex by the shifting position of francophone Québec as either a threatened minority or an empowered majority, conflicts may arise that call for a careful and balanced analysis with a view to proposing inclusive solutions.

In June 2009, a controversy erupted in Montréal concerning the planned participation of two anglophone musical groups in a festival marking the *Fête nationale*, Québec's national holiday. The debate that ensued saw various cultural and political groups, as well as public figures and prominent individuals, present their arguments in favour or against the planned English-language musical offerings. A spirit of openness and inclusiveness won the day. Guy A. Lepage, the host of the Sunday evening talk show "Tout le monde en parle," one of Québec's most watched television programs, endorsed the issue's harmonious conclusion while also showing an appreciation for the concerns of those who had opposed the inclusion of non-French musical entertainment:

"je trouve ça réjouissant qu'on puisse écouter des gens chanter dans une autre langue que le français sans se sentir menacés, ... Ce n'est pas parce que tu chantes en italien que tu ne te feras pas servir en français dans un magasin. Il ne faut pas être fermé dans la vie." (I am delighted that we can listen to people sing in a language other than French without feeling threatened... Singing in Italian does not mean that you will refuse to be served in French in a shop. We shouldn't be so closed-minded in life." (my translation) [Radio Canada 2009])

This situation highlights the scope of available possibilities that could resolve issues in ways other than through a binary confrontation that would have simply lost or won the conflict for the anglophone musical group. An awareness of Québec's pluralist nature seems to have nourished this debate, as in the end it was declared that while French-language programming would dominate, there would also be space for other languages, including, but not limited to, English. This is proof that cultural conflicts,

even apparently two-sided ones can be resolved in a way that can make space for Québec's pluralist realities in a harmonious framework that nonetheless respects French as the dominant public language. Since Québec's laws declare the pre-eminence of French as the common public language and make the promotion of French a key factor in the survival of the Québec nation, any negotiations in the social as in the translational realm should take this fact into account.

This may at first seem irrelevant when we consider the translation of French-language history texts into English, seeing how the target text by virtue of its existence already flouts the pre-eminence of French. However, when the preservation of French itself becomes a topic addressed in the history books, the probing translator will carefully assess whether the cultural realities of others are given fair consideration and representation, such as when a textbook section on the need to protect the French language threatens to reduce extraneous elements to overly simplified socio-cultural representations that then may have an adverse impact on the realities of other groups.

Since the authors of history books, and by extension their translators, can be seen to participate in the construction of social and political realities, any translation analysis must be based on a theoretical framework that includes carefully balanced ethical considerations.

Narrative theory, as advocated by Mona Baker, offers advantages over conventional translation approaches in this regard. Baker defines “narrative” as follows:

“Narratives are stories we tell ourselves and each other about the world we live in, and it is our belief in these stories that guides our actions in the real world.” [Baker 2009: 189]

This would assume that the stories and representations of reality, as we see them, represent a strong and legitimate foundation of our place in and relationship to the wider world. However, narratives can also differ within otherwise cohesive groups and so their validity should be subject to critical evaluation, and, where necessary, be mediated and negotiated to conform to the shared values and laws that govern society.

Baker takes a critical stance towards comparatively more restrictive, predictable and norm-focused conventional translation theories, which tend to limit any translation analysis to the repeated, the abstract and the systematic. Narrative theory, on the other hand, recognizes the “varied, ongoing, shifting, negotiable position of individual translators in relation to their texts, authors, societies and dominant ideologies” [Baker 2009, 191], and thereby not only transcends the normative and the systematic, but also legitimizes the role of translators by making visible their reflections and reasoning. The complex range of their translation actions, however, cannot be presumed to take place in some vaguely neutral space but is performed within a framework of the various realities and narratives of which translators also

form part. Since they, too, are thus “embedded” participants in the narratives they encounter, they must couch their translation decisions and actions in an ethical framework that can reconcile the plurality of the source narratives with that of the target audience they serve. As such, translators engage in critical assessments and evaluations that lead them to formulate appropriate translation decisions that conform to the ethical principles they have set for themselves (such as honouring the laws and values that govern the land). The translator can be seen as a mediator or diplomat acting on behalf of multiple stakeholders so that broadly inclusive translation solutions can be accepted by all parties concerned.

Not surprisingly, Baker deems translation theories focused on binary structures, such as Venuti’s dichotomous approaches (revolving alternately around the twin poles of “foreignizing” and “domesticating” or “majoritizing” and “minoritizing”), as too rigid and limiting, among other things, because they fail to adequately consider the translation actors and their reflections and motivations, favouring instead just one of the stakeholders in the translation equation.

Because narrative theory allows us to explain translation choices in relation to wider socio-political contexts, favouring dynamic rather than static translation behaviour, without losing sight of the individual text and event, it enables us to respect and honour the spirit of the source text while allowing the translator’s deliberations and decisions a degree of latitude as he negotiates an appropriate target text. His decisions may nevertheless also identify source text elements that are inconsistent

with the ethos of a shared values framework. For the purposes at hand, such instances will be noted and communicated to the source text guardians (the authors and the publisher), not in a spirit of disrespect, but to signal possible improvements so that the source text may also fully conform to its ethical mandate. This way, the narrative framework can provide a space in which the translator operates thoughtfully and flexibly on both sides of the translation equation without having to challenge the source text's integrity without good reason.

It must also be pointed out that narrative theory, as it relates to translation, does not privilege essentialist or reductive categories, such as race, gender, ethnicity and religion, but instead acknowledges the ongoing negotiable nature of translators' positions in relation to social and political reality and, thereby allows us to move beyond a narrow focus on allegedly fixed, inherent cultural differences that underpin the types of identity politics that traditionally inform the work on translation to date [Baker 2009: 191]. Conventional identity politics tend to group together individuals based on a specific attribute (for example, women or gays or specific ethno-racial groups). The process of determining the identities of individuals based on just one commanding attribute tends to overlook or sideline other attributes, that make them the complex individuals they are (for no one is *just* Aboriginal or *just* gay) and thereby stifles the representation of fuller and more complex realities. For the translation at hand, we must therefore abstain from identifying the source and target entities in terms of their primary language affiliation alone.

Given the context of translating history textbooks, it would of course be possible to delineate groups simply by their primary language affiliation (English speakers versus French speakers), but this would presume that individuals are only either one or the other or that a specific primary language must necessarily also determine an individual's sense of belonging to or identification with a specific human community. This would then exclude a horizon of possibilities that could, for example, feature language-identified Québec anglophones that are simultaneously also Québec sovereignists or language-identified Québec francophones that are also fluent speakers of English, are fond of the Queen and appreciate Canada's British-inspired parliamentary system of democracy (individuals of both types are personally known to me).

By focusing on a horizon that expands and transcends individual perspectives, it will be possible to move beyond specific markers of difference, and so rather than dwell on problems and conflicts, we can cast aside the "timid practices" often associated with the prevalence of error-focused and "demoralizing" translation pedagogy [Robinson 1998: 93] and consider instead the translation challenges before us as opportunities and possibilities. Expanded horizons, however, will also have implications that reach beyond the immediate Québec and Canadian contexts. The translation of history textbooks, although circumscribed by a specifically delimited target audience (students studying history in English in Québec) nonetheless represents a productive effort at the harmonization of competing narratives that exist elsewhere in the world, and therefore can and should be of interest to audiences

elsewhere. The widespread availability of the Internet has of course made localized contexts available to a global audience, and so has launched regional narratives onto the global stage:

“Translation is central to the ability of all parties to legitimize their version of events, especially in view of the fact that political and other kinds of conflict today are played out in the international arena and can no longer be resolved by appealing to local constituencies alone.” [Baker 2006: 1]

At the same time, any successfully mediated harmonization of pluralities existing in a circumscribed context, such as the translation of history textbooks in Québec, by virtue of its visibility to external observers, can therefore serve as a model to emulate elsewhere in the world.

#### **4 Source text structure and organization**

All three textbooks studied in this thesis are very similarly structured. The two books in the *Fresques* series, however, also include a review of the program studied in the preceding year.

Each chapter covers one social phenomenon and at least one concept and is subdivided into several sections. It generally begins with an introduction or exploration of historical information or a social phenomenon and concept and then shifts to comparison activities focused on one or more comparison societies (or “Elsewhere” sections), where the knowledge acquired in the earlier sections can be



applied and deepened through specific performance tasks. The final sections focus on reviewing and integrating knowledge learned and call on students to perform projects, group work, reflections, and, in the *Fresques* series, debates.

All three books contain a rich variety of illustrations and sidebar features that introduce additional, often surprising, information about historical sites, figures, events or phenomena.

Each of the textbooks includes a reference section featuring an atlas, tools and techniques, timelines and a glossary.

## **5 Methodology**

In the following pages, I will undertake to present 14 text excerpts from the history books I was assigned to translate. Before doing so, I would like to define the scope of the task. The ethical framework I set for myself was to produce translations based on comprehensive, inclusive considerations of the inherent complexity of Québec's pluralist English-speaking target readership. I aimed to respect the source text as an expression of the equally complex and diversified realities inherent in Québec's French-speaking population, so a space of convergence could emerge where the individual narratives of all relevant participants could cohabitate. By more specifically considering the potential impact the realities presented would have in an

educational environment, I could thus also consider the narratives of comparatively marginal but not less relevant groups.

The history textbooks before me showed evidence of diverse points of view in relation to the presentation of social phenomena in history, including a range of perspectives from a variety of angles (French; English/British; Aboriginal; and in the context of world history, contemporary African- or Asian-centred perspectives, for example) that transcended conventional, “traditional” European-centred views. This would suggest that the source text authors gave thought and consideration to the eventual scope the books would have, namely that they would serve diverse French-speaking as well as English-speaking student populations in Québec. By virtue of the comparative latitude both languages enjoy elsewhere in the world, the translations could (and should) be able to stand up to a probing assessment beyond Québec’s and Canada’s borders.

The source text excerpts presented here already embrace a range of different narratives. However, the various issues raised in the history texts frequently revolve around topics or themes that highlight two principal historical actors, events, ideas or dimensions (e.g. French-English, Catholic Church-Aboriginal peoples, White-Black, etc.). This is a useful model to present in an educational setting, as it offers students opportunities to compare and contrast between two alternatives, which in turn serves to facilitate reflection, analysis and the formation of opinions. However, this essentially binary mode of subject presentation may limit the scope of realities and

*possibilities* it portrays, and thereby risks sidelining other narratives and realities not directly connected to the topic at issue, but which are nonetheless significant for constructing and maintaining a multi-dimensional, comprehensive degree of socio-cultural inclusion.

Several of the selected text excerpts offer examples, in which two-sided themes and topics reach into less immediately apparent additional realities and perspectives. If these other realities are showcased as well, we need to reflect on and analyze the purposes and possible implications and effects the visibility of multiple narratives will have in the History and Citizenship Education classroom and consider what losses the suppression or omission of specific narrative angles would entail.

My familiarity with switching in and out of various language and culture spaces facilitates processes of imagination, reflection and analysis as they relate to a range of possible conflict situations that could occur in connection with the realities and phenomena portrayed. The advantage of being able to shift perspectives not just between two options but in and out of three cultural or language spaces is that one is less readily prone to a tug-of-war competition for dominance between two perspectives. Consequently, it is more difficult to fall prey to a binary hierarchy structure between dominant or dominated entities, as is often the case when we have just two options available. Since three elements are less likely to group into a contest than are two, a space of negotiation can fill in where otherwise a battle for supremacy may occur. This space makes it possible to slip into one narrative

identity, or in other words, to adopt a specific linguistic or cultural perspective, without denying either or both of the other two. This approach should be followed in the analysis of the 14 source text excerpts. Unwilling to quash any of the legitimate cultural narratives at play, I favoured this space of negotiation, where analysis can peacefully feed off all available perspectives and thereby foster the coexistence of plural realities in harmony with one another. This approach does not require its user to be proficient in three languages or cultures, but the task may be easier for those with real-life experience exploring options beyond rigidly dualistic patterns.

Each source text excerpt's topic or focus is summarized in a phrase in square brackets preceding the excerpt. Identifying the excerpt's relative contextual relevance helps anchor the information presented into the respective source and target culture realities. My critical translational reflections focused not only on the possibilities for semantic equivalence but also how the text content could be mediated to fit into the realities of the target culture without sacrificing the respect due to the source text. However, since my assessment focused on how the translation might affect young readers in an educational context, whenever my negotiated translation decisions showed the source text to fall short of respecting the pluralist realities in play, I added comments into the translation that recommended similar adjustments be made to the source text. My comments passed through the hands of the various other project participants and were presumably weighed against the considerations each participant associated with his or her mandate. If deemed relevant, the recommended modifications would either be adapted to the source text,

or if the source text was already in print, they would be retained in order to make these adjustments to subsequent print editions.

The discussion and analysis of the translation decisions presented in this thesis focus on the processes and on my justifications for these in particular. I do not intend to extend my analysis to a discussion of why my translation decisions and proposals were accepted or not. On the one hand, I did not receive any official answers or feedback in reply to translation issues I had raised (the relevant members in the production team were often “very busy”). As a rule, I only found out what had happened to my suggestions once the English texts appeared in print. Moreover, the relevance or legitimacy of my translation proposals were not the only guiding principle in the project’s decision-making processes. Furthermore, the scope of this particular thesis does not seek to discuss the limits of a translator’s reach. However, given that translators are probably the closest readers of a text and therefore astute analysts and critics within the textbook production chain, the problems associated with the limitations imposed on the translator’s role and functions would certainly warrant discussion elsewhere.

The thematic categorization of the following text excerpts under specific sub-headings is primarily meant as an ordering device to allow for better readability. It also highlights the diverse range of issues that can affect any harmonization project, since the selected passages show that particular translation challenges can expose complexities affecting a range of thematic spaces (a religion-themed representation,

for example, may simultaneously also impact a gender-themed representation). As such, the apparent identification of individual excerpts with specific themes must not be construed as an attempt to limit their scope and reduce them to a static and narrow essentialism.

## 6 Analysis of text excerpts

The 14 text excerpts are presented under sub-headings according to a primary theme associated with the relevant representational conflict. The analysis of the excerpts will be presented in the following manner:

1. Excerpt X (key sections underlined)
2. Analysis
3. Proposed translation X (key sections underlined)

### 6.1 Toponymy-themed representations

#### Excerpt 1:

[The founding of the first permanent trading post in New France]

La fondation de Tadoussac  
 Situé à un endroit stratégique sur le fleuve Saint-Laurent, à l'embouchure de la rivière Saguenay, Tadoussac est déjà, au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, un lieu saisonnier de traite très important avec les Innus, que les Français nomment

« Montagnais ». [F3GE: 25]

The project management established certain guidelines for translating Québec geographical names. In an effort to retain the integrity of French-language designations that relate specifically to Québec's territory, all such proper names were to be kept in French. Consequently, city names like Montréal and Québec, for example, were to retain their accents. I did not consider the retention of these French elements in the English textbook to be problematic in view of the fact that Québec's cities and other geographical elements are unquestionably under the jurisdiction of the province of Québec. In view of the legal basis of the French language primacy, these names should therefore keep their French identities, as that is what they represent, even to English-speaking residents of Québec. While the province of Québec's membership in the Canadian federation (in which English and French share an equal official status) could be seen as a reason to anglicize its spelling in English, this route was not followed in this translation project. As a majority-francophone province, its appellation should also reflect this in the name used to describe the province of Québec, and so the accent was retained here as well.

Furthermore, since French language structures can more readily differentiate between the city and the province of Québec by virtue of the different prepositions that precede each ("à Québec" for the city and "au Québec" for the province) and the retention of just the accent on "Québec" in English, whenever designating the city, might cause confusion in an educational context by failing to adequately distinguish

the meanings of city and province, (the city of ) “Québec” would have to be made more explicit, by translating it as “Québec City.”

The excerpt above illustrates how less frequently occurring geographical names could be translated in order to preserve the rightful sovereignty of French but also to make such elements relevant to the English-speaking target audience. Like city names, the names of rivers situated entirely within Québec (such as the “Rivière Saguenay”) can be justified to retain their French appellations in an English text. The names of rivers whose geographical reach extends beyond Québec’s territory, however, should be translated into English. This is the case with the “fleuve Saint-Laurent,” for example. Within the same sentence, we therefore end up with one river in French and the other in English. Lawrence Venuti would consider this an instance of “introducing variations that alienate the domestic language [English], [Venuti 2005: 93]. And while such alienation may be true in strictly linguistic terms and will serve to emphasize the text passage concerned, it also reflects the realistic and legitimate relations between provincial and federal jurisdictions, in which Québec’s and Canada’s realities are grounded, and thereby provides an astute example of how both jurisdictions can co-exist. Such a seemingly foreignized element in an English text therefore not only represents a reality-based enrichment, but in this case the image painted of two culturally distinct rivers merging and fusing into each other (including the symbolic “mouth,” used to speak or perhaps even kiss), is one of convergence, harmony and beauty.



Powerful images can play a decisive role in suggesting models of behaviour to young learners and can thus produce positive results in how they see and construct their world. And so what may at first appear to be a sign of source-text dominance, can actually enrich the target text in terms of its accuracy of information, educational content and aesthetics.

**Proposed translation 1:**

The founding of Tadoussac

Strategically situated on the St. Lawrence River at the mouth of the Rivière Saguenay, Tadoussac, as early as the 16th century, was already a very important centre of trade with the Innus, whom the French called “Montagnais.”

## 6.2 Gender-themed representations

**Excerpt 2:**

[Missionary presence in New France]

Des religieux chez les Amérindiens

Dans la première moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, l’Église se donne comme objectif de convertir les Amérindiens. Les Jésuites séjournent d’abord en Acadie, de 1611 à 1613. Puis, les Récollets débarquent dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent, en 1615. En 1625, ils sont rejoints par les Jésuites et jusqu’en 1629, les deux ordres sont présents dans la colonie. Finalement, en 1632 (année de leur retour en Nouvelle-France), les Jésuites obtiennent le monopole des missions auprès des Amérindiens. [F4ME: 21]

The title of this section refers to “des religieux,” which may either mean “monks” (which concurs with the information about exclusively male religious orders that follows) or it can designate religious orders generally. This question is not unimportant.

If we are to aim for inclusive references, and in consideration of the fact that female religious orders also came to New France to support the colonial efforts (they are covered in more detail elsewhere in the textbook), then we need to adequately reflect this by choosing the more inclusive term “religious orders” (which, although no specific references to nuns are made in this section, leaves open the *possibility* of their presence, abilities and activities in New France).

On the one hand, orders of monks and of nuns provided valuable services (education, healthcare services, charity services, pastoral care, etc.), and in this light it would be unbalanced to suggest these contributions were made by men only. We need also consider, however, that the Church’s mission was to convert Aboriginal peoples. To some readers, this will imply a further level of positive contribution, in other words, they will see these religious orders as the providers of religion to a heathen population. Others will view the conversion efforts in a more negative light, rooted in the disregard for the existing culture and religious beliefs of Aboriginal peoples, and intent on subjecting them to the dominant forms of European culture and religion at the expense of their own cultural integrity and survival. Whether the missionary

projects are judged in a positive or in a negative light, in the spirit of maintaining a realistic gender balance, they must be associated with both male and female missionaries.

The learning tasks the student readership is asked to perform includes reflection, analysis and opinion formation on a range of topics. If they are to evaluate the problems suffered by Aboriginal populations in Québec today, for example, they may determine that the early Catholic missions in New France were a first step in destabilizing Aboriginal cultures and thereby represent one of the root causes of these communities' problems today. If religious orders then are judged to bear responsibility for these issues, the inclusive terminology used will imply that any blame must likewise be shared equally by the men and women involved in the missionary projects.

Since the term “des religieux” in the source text may accommodate the singular male as well as the collective male-female meanings (even though recent trends in Québec French seem to favour more specific terminology, for example former Parti Québécois leader André Bloisclair's habit of referring to Quebecers collectively as “les Québécoises et les Québécois” and not just as les “Québécois”), the reason for adapting the source text is less compelling, and so it may remain unchanged.

**Proposed translation 2:**

Religious orders among the Aboriginal peoples

In the first half of the 17th century, the objective of the Church was to convert the Aboriginal peoples. The Jesuits were first maintained a presence in Acadia, from 1611 to 1613. Then, in 1611, the Récollets arrived in the St. Lawrence Valley. The Jesuits joined them in 1625, and the two orders remained in the colony until 1629. Finally, in 1632 (the year they returned to New France), the Jesuits were granted a monopoly for missions among Aboriginal peoples.

**Excerpt 3:**

[Students are asked to identify the countries represented in an illustration]

Réponse : De gauche à droite : la Grande-Bretagne (sous les traits de la reine Victoria), l'Allemagne (sous les traits de Guillaume II), la Russie (sous les traits de Nicolas II), la France et le Japon. [DDGE: 179]

In this section, the crowned heads of the major imperial powers of the day are named. The French text nativizes the names of two of the monarchs (possibly also the third, Victoria, whose name would be the same in her native English and French at any rate).

The tendency to nativize the proper names of public figures appears to be less widespread in the English language (King Beaudouin of Belgium is not usually translated as 'King Baldwin,' for example). Prevailing customs alone will not, however, suffice to determine whether these historical figures should have their names appear in their own languages. Since Québec professes to be an inclusive society that values individualism, among other things, it is not really conceivable that we should subject a public figure's name (whether foreign or not) to a nativization

process that would appear to suggest these Russian and German monarchs had French (or in a corresponding translation, English) first names! Proper names are important labels that are directly associated with a person's identity, and in a spirit of valuing the diverse and pluralist cultural attributes that are increasingly becoming the norm in societies such as Québec, these individuals should be referred to by their proper names, as they are known in their own societies. Even if most French and English information available about these historical figures refers to them by their nativized appellations, we should honour their quintessential "foreign" identity first, and if desired, can include, in parentheses, the other name variant(s) by which they are known.

A second issue is one of asymmetry: whereas the British monarch is referred to by her royal title ("la reine Victoria"), the same is not true of the crowned heads of Germany and Russia. This would appear to connote a higher degree of reverence for the British monarch, while relegating the other two European aristocrats to a lesser status. There appears to be no specific reason for this, other than the fact that Queen Victoria is perhaps a more familiar historical figure than the other two.

Since gender equality must also be of concern to us, it would be unwise to tolerate any titular discrepancies along gender lines. It makes no difference that in this instance it is a woman who appears to have a privileged status. If gender equality is a concern, it must be applied consistently, wherever and whenever there is a perceived gender imbalance. Furthermore, students are apt to glean a greater variety of

historical information if they also learn that Wilhelm II was an emperor (rather than a king, as might otherwise be assumed) and Nikolay II a tsar (emperor). In terms of educational content, not only would this section be more balanced, it would also offer comprehensive information.

**Proposed translation 3:**

Answer: Left to right: Great Britain (represented by Queen Victoria), Germany (represented by Emperor Wilhelm II), Russia (represented by Tsar Nicolay II), France and Japan.

**6.3 Aboriginal-themed representations**

**Excerpt 4:**

[The caption for a graph showing population figures increasing from ca. 500 to ca. 3000]

La population du Canada de 1636 à 1663. [F3ME: 79]

The low population figures shown in this graph make it clear that they refer to the colonial population of newcomers (almost exclusively from France) to the territory, and therefore do not include the Aboriginal populations that were also present. As a historical statistic, there is no problem with the enumeration of the colonial population as such, especially as it is unlikely that accurate records were kept of the numbers of Aboriginals living in the territory at the time. The comparatively rapid growth of the French-descended population also serves as historical proof that early

immigration from France was sustained and homogeneous, which in turn serves to legitimize the French-descended presence in Québec as more long-standing than that of other Europeans, notably the British. This underscores current narratives that legitimize the continuing dominance of francophone culture in Québec. However, since these figures refer only to a specific population, namely that answerable to the colonial administration, and exclude the presence of Aboriginal peoples, it would be misleading and inadequate to translate “la population du Canada” as “the population of Canada,” as this would omit the existence of Aboriginal peoples and render invisible the fact they represent an even more long-standing human presence in the territory of Québec.

One possibility would be to translate “population” as “colonial population.” Students would then be able to understand that these population statistics are not comprehensive. The term “colonial,” however, also carries ideological connotations and makes visible that these settlers came from elsewhere and “colonized” a territory already inhabited by other civilizations, and thus threatens to undermine the legitimacy advantage French-speaking immigrants enjoy when compared to the later arrival of English-speaking British immigrants, for example. By emphasizing the colonial character of the early French settlers, the temporal difference between ethnic French and ethnic British immigrants threatens to be subsumed by the notion that both were colonial in character and therefore neither has any legitimate historical claim on the territory.

Specifying the population as “French-descended” may also be problematic, as it highlights the population’s past rather than its future (and the future is comparatively more important, since these early settlers stayed in Canada, made the territory their own and grew to a population of several million today) and may be inaccurate: some of the earliest immigrants may have been from other European countries, or there may have been African slaves among them. But since these low figures evidently do not account for the Aboriginal peoples already living in the territory—and this must be pointed out in order to respect and honour Aboriginal peoples’ realities, their history and claims on the territory—the translation could state this omission in parentheses. Students would then be presented with the relevant information about early French settlement while also realizing that there were other, longer-established human civilizations in the territory. This information will likely be of relevance when students are asked to analyze and evaluate the interests and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in contemporary contexts.

Since the arguments for qualifying “la population du Canada” are of equal relevance to the French-speaking student population of Québec, I suggest the source text be modified accordingly.

**Proposed translation 4:**

The population of Canada (not including Aboriginal peoples) from 1636 to 1663.



**Excerpt 5:**

[The English presence at Hudson Bay]

Jusqu'à la baie d'Hudson

Dès 1610, le territoire de la baie d'Hudson intéresse les Anglais. Ils espèrent mettre la main sur ce territoire riche en fourrures. Les Anglais sont aussi les premiers à hiverner dans la région. Ils établissent des postes de traite et nouent des relations commerciales avec les Amérindiens. [F3ME: 98]

As in the previous excerpt, the issue here is one of denying the presence of Aboriginal peoples and their abilities to survive in inhospitable climates. On a strictly binary level, the source text thus seems to concede that among the newcomers, it was the English (rather than the French) that first took on, endured and survived the harsh climate in this region of the territory and thereby suggests a degree of legitimacy of the English presence. This is of significance in the context of this region, including its name, as the English went on to found the Hudson Bay Company, one of the largest and most profitable fur-trade companies in the history of Canada.

However, since Aboriginal peoples had adapted and developed the ability to survive the climate as well, their realities and abilities fail to be considered, included and represented. The translation should therefore be more specific and qualify the context in which the English were the first to spend the winter in the region. This will serve to render visible the presence of Aboriginal peoples as well as show that they, too, had developed effective survival skills in inhospitable climates. Since this

applies in equal measure to the source and target texts, I suggest that the source text be adjusted accordingly as well.

**Proposed translation 5:**

All the way to Hudson Bay

From 1610, the English took an interest in the Hudson Bay territory. They hoped to take possession of the territory, which was rich in furs. The English were also the first Europeans to spend the winter in this region. They established trading posts and built trade relations with Aboriginal peoples.

## 6.4 Anglophone-themed representations

**Excerpt 6:**

[Immigration to Québec in the late 19th century]

De **1871 à 1901**, environ 1,5 million d'immigrants viennent s'établir au Canada. Ils proviennent notamment des îles britanniques, d'Europe du Nord et des États-Unis. Les Écossais, les Irlandais et les Anglais arrivent en masse au Québec et forment une partie importante de la population. Bien que les Canadiens français soient majoritaires au Québec, les Britanniques se retrouvent souvent en très grand nombre dans les villes, de même que dans certaines régions, comme les Cantons de l'Est, l'Outaouais ou la Gaspésie. À la fin du xix<sup>e</sup> siècle, la population du Québec est constituée à 98 % de Canadiens d'origine française ou britannique, dont 80,2 % de Canadiens français et 17,6 % de Canadiens d'origine britannique (Irlandais, Anglais et Écossais) [F4ME: 64].

This text section describes immigration from the British Isles, along with the respective percentages of Québec's major population groups in the 19th century. The figures do not appear to take into account the numbers of Aboriginal peoples that

formed part of Québec's population (this significant concern is covered in more detail in Excerpt 4). Furthermore, les "îles britanniques" are directly associated with the adjective "britannique," which produces important imprecisions in how these individual immigrant groups are associated with their perceived origins.

The "Îles britanniques" or "British Isles" are principally a geographical term referring to the collection of islands off the coast of Europe that today make up the United Kingdom of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Northern Ireland, as well as the Republic of Ireland. The adjective "British" on the other hand does not refer to this same geographical entity but generally only pertains to the areas occupied by Great Britain: England, Scotland and Wales.

Since English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants all had the English language in common, it is therefore tempting to lump them in with each other and refer to them collectively as "British" immigrants (which in this source text example appears to be used as a quasi-synonym for "anglophone" immigrants). Not only were there significant cultural differences between these various national groups, such as the predominance of the Catholic faith among the Irish and the predominantly Protestant faith among the English and Scottish, but the Irish—although officially part of the British Empire at the time (who had been colonized as opposed to absorbed into the United Kingdom, as was and is the case with Wales and Scotland)—have always had a distinct national culture, including a vibrant literary and musical culture that did not

exist to the same extent among the constituent members of the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, the larger part of Ireland attained independence in 1922 and has since been a distinctively separate country from the United Kingdom.

While it may be possible to argue that during the period covered in this text section, Ireland was an official part of Britain, historical realities do change and therefore necessitate that earlier identity relationships be updated to reflect current realities. Just as Oscar Wilde, whose native Ireland was part of the British Empire during his life, is today considered to be an Irish writer, these Irish immigrants to Québec in the 19th century must have their legitimate national origins acknowledged. Many Quebecers are proud of their Irish ethnic origins and tend not to associate their roots with being British. As such, the sweeping references to the Irish as British should be modified so as to grant them and their ethnic identity histories a legitimate space of their own. I judge this of equal importance to the source text, and therefore recommend it also be adjusted accordingly.

**Proposed translation 6:**

From 1871 to 1901, about 1.5 million immigrants arrived in Canada. They mostly came from the British Isles, Northern Europe and the United States. The Scots, Irish and English arrived in great numbers in Québec and began to make up a significant share of the population. Although French Canadians were in the majority in Québec, immigrants from the British Isles were often very numerous in the cities, as well as in certain regions, such as the Eastern Townships, and the Outaouais and Gaspésie regions. At the end of the 19th century, Québec's population was composed of 98% Canadians of French, British or Irish origins, 80.2% of whom were French Canadians and 17.6% were Canadians of British (English, Scottish) or Irish origins.

**Excerpt 7:**

[Protecting the French language and culture]

Une langue et une culture menacées ?

La culture francophone au Québec est en effervescence. Il n'en demeure pas moins qu'elle se mesure à une culture anglophone qui est celle de la majorité de la population du Canada et de l'Amérique du Nord. C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire de la protéger. [F3ME: 57]

This section addresses a key concern associated with francophone culture in Québec: survival of its language and culture in the face of a clearly dominant presence of English-speaking populations on the continent. This significant reality in the context of History and Citizenship Education must be communicated to all students, regardless of their primary language affiliation. Nevertheless, the description of the external, potentially threatening, anglophone presence as a uniform entity, which “*une culture anglophone*” signals, poses certain problems that in turn threaten to ignore the variety of realities contained within the English-speaking communities in North America.

Bouchard and Taylor, by associating the Canadian multicultural model with the notion that there is “no official culture in Canada” argue “the existential anguish of the minority is not found in English Canada” [Bouchard & Taylor: 108]. While this may be true in terms of language, it is a problematic statement in relation to English

Canada's cultural situation. Cultural influences originating in the United States, for example, have a large impact on the everyday realities of Canada's English-speaking populations. Such influences can be substantial, in part by virtue of the fact that the language is the same and therefore enjoys easy access to an anglophone Canadian audience. As such, it can enter into, join and merge with existing Canadian narratives. US films, television and other media, for example can readily fill into Canadian media spaces and compete with local realities and values. Concerns about such influences are reflected, among other things, in the long-standing provision of federal programs to help support Canadian book, magazine and newspaper industries in order to guarantee "access to Canadian voices and Canadian stories"[Canadian Heritage 2009] within an English-language publishing market dominated by the United States. Furthermore, homegrown creative culture industries, such as film, music and book publishing, have a more difficult time emerging and surviving in English Canada; local financial resources are comparatively modest and the talent behind these industries are easily lured away. Writers, musicians, film directors and actors often move their careers *and cultural contributions* to the United States, where financial rewards and career advancement opportunities are much greater. We thus cannot assume that existential fears associated with the survival of English-Canadian culture are non-existent. It may even be argued that because English Canada shares the same language with the United States, any outside (English-language) cultural influences can occur comparatively surreptitiously with more far-reaching and insidious results than in the case of Québec, where the reality of a different language can also serve as a filtering device against any external English-language intrusions.

Specific contexts may differ, but English Canada faces its own threats to the integrity and survival of its culture, and since this problem sets it off against the United States, it would be inaccurate to lump Canada's English-speaking regions together with the United States and suggest they constitute a homogenous English-speaking universe at Québec's doorstep threatening to subsume, absorb and destroy the French language and culture.

While we cannot claim that concerns for the survival of language and culture are unique to the francophone population of Québec, language as a defining characteristic of identity reaches far back into the history of French Canadian experience. The fear of its obliteration has become central to the francophone narrative, and may impact the spaces occupied by other legitimate narratives of established—and increasingly—new cultural minority groups in Quebec. Baker reminds us that the retelling of past narratives can act as a means of control:

“It socializes individuals into an established social and political order and encourages them to interpret present events in terms of sanctioned narratives of the past. This restricts the scope of their present personal narratives, their sense of who they are, if these are to be considered legitimate. In other words, it circumscribes the stock of identities from which individuals may choose a social role for themselves.” [Baker 2006: 21]

If a dominant narrative, especially one that defines itself in terms of a binary model (the English threat faced by French speakers), can have a limiting effect on the social roles available to individual members of society, then we must wonder what effects it

can have on the changing nature of Québec's increasingly pluralist population, and in particular how this may affect the range of possibilities available to young people being shaped in an educational context.

If present narratives are informed by a past characterized by the struggles between two groups vying for dominance of the continent (and over one another), the more diverse cultural fabric of present-day Québec will struggle to find a space in which to maintain social and cultural harmony. Bouchard and Taylor observe this dilemma, when they state that

“Quebecers of French-Canadian ancestry are still not at ease with their twofold status as a majority in Québec and a minority in Canada and North America” [Bouchard & Taylor: 18]

Since present-day challenges to social harmony in Québec are increasingly associated with contacts and conflict situations that go beyond the traditional British-French binary that is still central to current narratives, then a teaching resource preparing tomorrow's citizens will need to maximize the social roles imaginable for all of its citizens. Given the context of francophone Québec's quest to be acknowledged and recognized for its culture and language, both within Québec and within Canada, it would be advisable to apply the same standards of sensitivity and inclusion to everyone seated at the table: not only would this make room for equally valid narratives (such as the existentialist fears entertained by anglophone members of society) without the need to sacrifice important underlying concerns (the



protection of French) but it would lend a greater degree of credibility and balance to the “survival” discourse and thus serve to inject a positive energy into any cultural harmonization debate. This would no doubt enlarge the horizons of identity possibilities students could consider and so would encourage a truly pluralist learning environment, in which the essence and the utility of traditional narratives, such as the need for French-language pre-eminence, could continue to hold sway.

In this light, “une culture anglophone” should not be translated as the *one* anglophone culture versus francophone Québec. By pluralizing the term, we can respect the inherent heterogeneity of the outside English-speaking world (including the presence within it of other non-Québec French Canadians) without diminishing the significant fact that in terms of absolute numbers, the language equation is skewed in francophone Québec’s disfavour.

I judge it important to make this adjustment in the source text as well. It will be of benefit to students on both sides of the language divide to understand that while the survival of French may be threatened by the reality of a comparatively vast pool of English speakers in the rest of North America, this pool in turn is less than homogenous and, strictly speaking, must be broken down into smaller components, some of which can be seen to be grappling with similar existential challenges of their own. This would serve to highlight the issue of the survival of cultural minorities in general rather than reduce such issues to a binary context that establishes clear-cut

but superficially defined roles for the respective majority and minority actors concerned.

**Proposed translation 7:**

Francophone culture in Québec is thriving. The fact remains, however, that it must contend with the anglophone cultures embraced by a majority of the populations of Canada and the United States. This is why it needs to be protected.

**Excerpt 8:**

[Portrait of Montréal jazz musician Oscar Peterson]

Oscar Peterson est un pianiste et compositeur de jazz né dans une famille antillaise du quartier de la Petite-Bourgogne, à Montréal. Initié très tôt à ce style musical, il remporte un concours de musique amateur organisé par la CBC alors qu'il est âgé de 14 ans. Dès lors, il abandonne ses études et se produit comme pianiste professionnel dans les boîtes de nuit et à la radio. Sa renommée de pianiste et de compositeur atteint rapidement un statut international. [F4ME: 55]

The inclusion of a portrait of an accomplished Québec musician of colour is an important element of information that enriches the quality of the history textbook. It provides an example of how the efforts of individuals other than the largely European-descended majority population of Québec enhance the collective value and culture of society at large.

As a Montréal-born musician, Peterson's identity as a Quebecer and a Canadian is beyond any doubt. Since his ethnic background is not typical of the majority

population, his inclusion in society should be communicated in terms that leave no doubts as to his belonging.

The emphasis in this passage on his ethno-cultural roots are relevant in order to acknowledge the facts of his ethno-cultural background and any possible relationship it may have with his talent and art; however, the term “antillaise” is strangely vague, failing to identify and name the precise background Peterson descended from. It presents a comparatively superficial perspective that suggests the Caribbean area is a largely homogenous region from which equally homogeneous immigrants come to Québec and Canada. Such a generalization can of course not do justice to what in fact is a richly diverse region of the world, characterized by disparate histories, including colonial influences, languages, political ideologies, economic realities and cultures. A similar portrait on Ludwig van Beethoven, for example, would hardly describe the German composer’s background as simply “European.”

Since Peterson’s family is described as “antillaise,” his status as a person “from here,” along with the association that he is a Quebecer and Canadian, is obscured. By emphasizing his roots, this portrait of the artist may suggest that Oscar Peterson was “foreign,” and so not really “one of us.” The fact that Peterson was black adds an extra dimension of relevance; it may suggest that black people, even when they are born in Québec, do not really form part of Québec society. In order to ensure that the realities of belonging and citizenship are adequately and consistently represented and do not allow for differences on the basis of ethno-cultural or racial backgrounds, the

text element in question should be expanded to denote that while Peterson's family originated elsewhere, they had immigrated and made their home in Montréal.

Since there are significant numbers of racially diverse children in Québec's schools, many of them born of immigrant parents, a figure like Peterson can thus serve as a model for other Quebecers of similar backgrounds to see themselves reflected as part of society on the one hand, and to have an example to emulate in terms of what possible contributions they too can make to their adopted society. As such, a more carefully inclusive representation of Oscar Peterson's status can open up a space of convergence, in which his narrative can find common ground with the narratives of the many other immigrants and their descendants living in Québec. This would serve to signal a wider horizon of possibilities in terms of the futures each young person may envision and aspire to for him- or herself, and would therefore enrich the educational environment with further options, and indeed with further scope for new narratives, without reducing or excluding any others. Since these considerations are of equal importance to students studying history in French, I would advise the source text be revised in the same manner to reflect the same socio-political accuracy as the proposed translation below.

**Proposed translation 8:**

Oscar Peterson was a jazz pianist and composer, born into an immigrant family from the British West Indies and the Virgin Islands [Universal Music Canada 2008]<sup>2</sup> in the Little Burgundy (Petite-Bourgogne) district in

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<sup>2</sup> This reference is for the purpose of this thesis only and is not meant to feature in the final text translation.

Montréal. After being introduced to this style of music early in life, he won an amateur music competition organized by the CBC at the age of 14. From then on, he left school and performed as a professional pianist in night clubs and on the radio. He rapidly gained an international reputation as a pianist and composer.

## 6.5 Religion-themed representations

### Excerpt 9:

[Time reference in relation to portrait of Chinese Emperor Cheng Yang]

Cette représentation de l'empereur Chang Yang est tirée d'un album de portraits réalisé au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C. [DDME: 72]

Deciding what time reference system to use is of primary importance in a history textbook that frequently positions historic events in time. The system using the birth of Christ as its base year, as in this text excerpt, reflects a long-standing convention in use in the historically predominantly Christian cultures of the Western world. In recent times, however, the fact that this system highlights a significant event in Christian history, has gradually been replaced by a more secular, and therefore presumed to be more neutral and universal – denotation: “CE” or “Current Era” (also referred to as “Common Era”) to identify a date since the birth of Christ and “BCE” to identify a date preceding the birth of Christ. The removal of the traditional “AD” (“Anno Domini” or “Year of the Lord”) and “BC” (“Before Christ”) is thereby presumed to have been freed of its Christian association. In actual fact, however, the time reference system remains the same (meaning the year 1762 CE is equivalent to the year 1762 AD) and only its overt identification with a major event in Christian

history has been removed. It is debatable whether this now more covert denotation of the same traditional time reference system represents a more inclusive option suitable for users beyond the Christian-influenced world.

In cultures that celebrate different historical events in their time referencing systems, the base variable is usually clearly stated. In Thailand, and other Buddhist-influenced societies, the base reference year is the presumed birth of the Lord Buddha. In consideration of the fact that not everyone embraces Buddhism, the reference system is generally clearly identified. The year 2010, for example, is referred to in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, as “2553, Buddhist Era” and thus precisely denotes the basis for the reference system in use. In Japan, calendars refer to the years of the reign of a specific emperor. The period associated with the current ruler of Japan, Emperor Akihito, is referred to as “Heisei,” for example, and so the 21st year in the reign of Emperor Akihito is referred to as “Heisei 21.”

The advantage of such reference systems is that they clearly identify the basis of their reference system. On the other hand, while “CE” appears to address all communities in the Western world, including those for whom Christ’s birth is of less significance (such as atheists or Jews), the claim this denotation makes for being “common” implies universal validity, even though the actual counting system still uses the birth of Christ as its base year. In view of the pluralist values advocated as central to Québec society, the traditional referencing system (“BC” and “AD”) should be retained. They impose no claim of universal validity but simply—and

overtly—identify the reference system for what it is: one that uses the historic event of the birth of Christ as its base year.

Students will be better able to understand and anchor this referencing system and place it in the context of Western history generally, whereas the “CE”/”BCE” denotations would potentially shroud the system’s origins in mystery, which could produce a new generation of oblivious citizens using a supposedly secular and universal referencing system while unaware of its inherently Christ-centred nature.

**Proposed translation 9:**

This representation of Emperor Cheng Yang is from a book of portraits printed in the 18th century AD.

**Excerpt 10:**

[The history of Africa]

La majorité des informations sur l’Afrique dont les historiens disposent ont été compilées par les Européens. La tradition orale africaine ne permet pas de transmettre l’histoire aussi facilement que les documents écrits laissés par les Européens. Or, il est évident que l’histoire de l’Afrique n’a pas commencé avec l’arrivée des Européens et l’établissement des premiers comptoirs commerciaux. Elle n’a pas non plus commencé lors de la traite des esclaves par les musulmans dans le nord et l’est de l’Afrique. Les Africains avaient une histoire et une culture propres bien avant l’arrivée des Européens.  
[DDGE : 359]

This section contains a surprising juxtaposition that associates the slave trade with the Muslim religion. This throws open a problematic asymmetry, as elsewhere in the textbook, where slavery is associated with European slave traders, the perpetrators of the trade are identified in national rather than religious terms. If consistency were to be applied, Portuguese or British slave traders would have to be identified as Catholic or Protestant or Christian. Since there is no direct connection between religious affiliations and the practice of slavery, it would be more appropriate to refer to all slave traders by their ethnic or national identities. This means that the ‘musulmans’ in the source text would have to be adapted to ‘North Africans’ or ‘Arabs,’ or, in cases where their specific origins are known, would have to be associated with the countries in which they practised this trade.

In view of the presence of Muslim children in Québec’s schools and contemporary tensions involving specific harmonization issues related to Muslim religious practices (such as the wearing of veils by Muslim women and the often heated debates this provokes in the media), great care must be taken not to portray inaccurate and misleading information about supposedly ‘Muslim’ practices, such as slavery, that could unfairly demonize a group of citizens and lead to conflict. And this applies in particular to an educational context, where young people are in the process of learning and shaping their values, including those relating to acceptance, tolerance and plurality. Given the seriousness of any possible negative perceptions and repercussions, it would be well-advised to adapt this text element in the source text as well.



**Proposed translation 10:**

Europeans compiled the majority of information on Africa available to historians. Africa's oral traditions did not as readily allow for the transmission of history as the written documents left behind by the Europeans. However, African history evidently did not begin with the arrival of the Europeans or the establishment of the first trading posts. Neither did it start with the slave trade conducted by Arabs in the north and east of Africa. Africans had a history and culture of their own well before the arrival of the Europeans.

**Excerpt 11:**

[Aboriginal belief systems]

Croyances et spiritualité:

Les Autochtones croient que c'est l'animal qui se donne à eux lorsqu'ils chassent et refusent d'utiliser des outils confectionnés à partir d'os d'animaux marins pour chasser les animaux terrestres. Ils cachent les poissons pêchés de la vue des poissons qu'ils souhaitent attraper, font des offrandes aux esprits, croient que la fumée leur permet d'entrer en relation avec les esprits et portent des bijoux comme des amulettes en forme d'animaux. [F4GE: 182]

This section summarizes key aspects of Aboriginal peoples' religious culture, detailing the importance of nature and the sophistication of practices in the Aboriginal spiritual world. Given this important cultural aspect, we must ensure that the details are presented as accurately as possible so that this significant cultural reality is adequately and fairly represented to the student readership, who will then be able to fully comprehend this culture's sophistication.

Amulets are of central importance in this belief system, and so their portrayal is also of great significance. The amulets themselves (“bijoux”) as well as their handling (“portent”) describe these objects in a specific light and assign a value to them.

Their denotation as “bijoux” would appear to highlight the great value associated with amulets, however, their identification as “jewelry” primarily suggests that they were of great material value and served as ornaments to adorn the person in whose possession they were. From this perspective, they would simply be objects worn for aesthetic or decorative purposes. As objects imbued with spiritual powers, however, this would not do their purpose justice but rather downgrades and belittles their spiritual significance.

The transformation of religious symbols into decorative objects will probably be familiar to students, as pop idols routinely use crucifix pendants as fashion accessories or to challenge perceived Catholic Church authority over sexual matters (as manifested, for example, in US pop star Madonna’s appearance in a music video while wearing a crucifix and suggestively writhing on the floor to the sounds of “Like a Virgin”). Such pop culture practices, however, must not detract from the underlying reality that to the practitioners of religion, such religious symbols have a deeper, spiritual meaning and value. As such, the portrayal of Aboriginal amulets as “jewelry” trivializes their status to one of decoration, failing to acknowledge their spiritual qualities and values, and therefore potentially reduces the spiritual depth and sophistication of this culture to a level of simple materialism and fashion. From this perspective, it would be impossible to simply translate this term as “jewelry.”

Likewise, the “wearing” of something signals that it has a primary purpose to clothe or adorn the wearer. Since neither of these purposes does the spiritual function of amulets justice, it would be more apt to think of Aboriginals “carrying” these spiritual objects with them so as to avoid any facile misconceptions of these objects.

In terms of the larger cultural implications, the reduction of a significant spiritual object to the status of “jewelry” would not only misrepresent the object in question, but it would serve to devalue the significance of all religious symbols and practices. As a key feature of the sophistication and complexity of any culture, religious conceptions and practices represent quintessential aspects of the cultural diversity. This text element will therefore need to be adjusted accordingly, in both the English and French versions of the text.

**Proposed translation 11:**

Beliefs and spirituality:

Aboriginal peoples believed that animals offered themselves to them when they hunted them and refused to use tools made of the bones of sea animals to hunt land animals. They hid the fish they had caught from the view of the fish they hoped to catch, made offerings to spirits, believed that smoke enabled them to enter into contact with spirits and carried with them objects, such as amulets, in the shape of animals.

## **6.6 Race-themed representations**

**Excerpt 12:**

[Questions to students based on a *Tintin* comic strip]

Convier les élèves à lire la capsule Info Plus Tintin et Le Lotus bleu, à la page 180 du manuel. Les élèves ont-ils déjà lu ce livre? Ont-ils lu d'autres épisodes des aventures de Tintin qui pourraient avoir un sujet similaire? (Les albums Au pays de l'or noir ou Tintin au Congo pourraient être mentionnés.) Ont-ils remarqué que les albums de Tintin portent sur de réels événements politiques? [DDGE: 180]

This text section does not contain any obvious translation challenges, however, one of the titles in the Tintin series named above, *Tintin au Congo* (or rather, its English-language version, *Tintin in the Congo*) recently became embroiled in a media controversy in the United Kingdom, where it was accused of containing “representations of African people as baboons or monkeys, bowing before a white teenager and speaking like retarded children” [Glendinning: 2007] and was subsequently removed from the children’s sections of two major bookstore chains.

While actual excerpts of this *Tintin* title do not feature in the history textbook, its mere reference may be problematic, especially in view of the fact that this text section explicitly states that the *Tintin* series “portent sur de réels événements politiques.” This would seem to suggest that they may serve as reliable secondary sources for the study of history.

In view of the racist attitudes the volume contains and how this might affect young

learners (who on the authority of their history book's suggestion that the *Tintin* series contain valid historical information may fail to become aware of or censor the racist elements they contain), the translation must be modified to reflect this situation.

Short of eliminating the reference to *Tintin au Congo* altogether, the most suitable solution may be to add a qualifying statement. For one, the association with actual historical events could be toned down to indicate just a "loose association."

Furthermore, the statement may be expanded to show that some of the *Tintin* volumes also reflect old colonial attitudes that are no longer appropriate. This would neutralize any suggestion that the historical content in the comic book series is beyond criticism and may even prompt educational activities whereby students can analyze a *Tintin* volume specifically in order to look for examples of out-of-date attitudes or other reprehensible content, while also identifying historically accurate content.

Whether a parallel controversy surrounding the French-language *Tintin au Congo* erupted or not, the seriousness of this issue with regard to intercultural harmony, calls for the source text to make similar amends to this text section.

**Proposed translation 12:**

Invite students to read the Info Plus capsule *Tintin and The Blue Lotus* on

page 180 of the Manual. Is this a book they have already read? Did they read any other episodes of Tintin's adventures that may have had a similar topic? (The titles *Land of Black Gold* or *Tintin in the Congo* could be mentioned) Did they notice that the Tintin comic strips are loosely based on actual political events but that they may also feature out-of-date colonial attitudes?

## 6.7 Ideology-themed representations

### Excerpt 13:

[Liberalism in the 18th century]

Le changement d'empire coïncide avec la montée du libéralisme dans la colonie. Les libéraux, qu'ils soient d'origine britannique ou canadienne, revendiquent la réforme du système politique colonial. Après 1791, les tensions linguistiques qui s'installent à l'Assemblée législative favorisent le développement d'une presse d'opinion. [F4ME: 90]

This text section refers to “presse d’opinion,” an important element in any balanced democratic system. Despite this importance, the English language does not seem to dispose of an equivalent term that captures the same essence of meaning. According to Le Grand Robert & Collins, this term can be paraphrased in English as “newspapers specializing in analysis and commentary.” This meaning underscores a relevant purpose of newspapers in that they encourage the analysis of issues, and in offering associated commentaries may encourage open reflection and debate among their readership. Since democratic systems call on their citizens to analyze and debate issues in order to adopt appropriately-informed positions, such newspapers

must be seen as a key feature in the support of democratic systems.

The period this excerpt refers to saw the first organized interest groups, the forerunners of our political parties. As such, we may be tempted to simply translate “presse d’opinion” as “partisan press.” This would relate the historical significance of the emergence of media as vehicles in support of democratic discourse. However, this would not only reduce the term in English to one that suggests the opinions presented in newspapers are necessarily associated with specific political parties (which historically and to the present day gravitate around just two polar extremes in most modern democracies), it would undermine the historical fact that at one time in history newspapers existed, whose role it was to encourage analysis, commentary and debate per se, or in other words, that they could be free from any pre-modelled party politics.

Contemporary newspapers in Québec and Canada (regrettably) tend to have set political party orientations or sympathies, and are often described as such (a “left-wing,” “conservative” or “separatist” paper). This prevalent current reality should not rule out the *possibility* that political analysis, debate and commentary in a democratic system can also be performed in a free spirit, without being compressed into the pre-set platforms of political parties. This is an important signal to give to students, who are learning to assume their roles as democratic citizens. Far from suggesting that democracy amounts to just a range of narrow package deal choices, prefabricated by “professional” democrats (political parties), each and every

individual can take the liberty to analyze, debate and comment on any social or political issue for its own merits.

Since this is a fundamental principle of a free and functioning democratic system, and students should have a wide range of choices, options and possibilities available to them in their formative years, I advise against translating “presse d’opinion” as “partisan press.” While it may be wordier and less elegant, the significance of the content communicated to students by a “press specializing in analysis and commentary” provides better educational value. It outlines a horizon of possibilities within the democratic system that can offer students the scope to discover democratic avenues of their own making, which may in turn prevent them from accepting comparatively uninspiring and potentially divisive pre-fabricated political platform packages (such as the notion that by supporting a specific political party, they should have to embrace all of its political positions). Instead, they could exploit their own ideas and potentially contribute fundamentally innovative ideas to the democratic process. Such contributions could enhance the existing range of political dialogue and democratic processes, and thereby serve to transcend the rigid confines of the prevalent binary structures that organize our democratic society.

The example cited above, where multiple actors within the francophone population in Québec debated whether or not to include English-speaking singers in festival centred on celebrating Québec, is evidence that debates can transcend the barriers imposed by specific interest groups (pro-French versus pro-English) by steering the



focus away from the rigid binary contextualization and opening it up to plural possibilities.

**Proposed translation 13:**

The change of empire coincided with the rise of liberalism in the colony. Liberals, whether of British or *Canadien* origins, called for the reform of the colony's political system. After 1791, the language tensions that arose in the legislative assembly encouraged the development of newspapers specializing in analysis and commentary.

**Excerpt 14:**

[The parliamentary motion recognizing the Québécois as a nation]

Avant même leur arrivée au pouvoir, les conservateurs fédéraux affirment vouloir instaurer un fédéralisme d'ouverture. À l'automne 2006, Stephen Harper présente une motion reconnaissant le statut de nation aux Québécois. Il déclare: «Les Québécois forment une nation au sein d'un Canada uni.» Le premier ministre Charest salue la motion, tout comme le chef de l'Action démocratique, Mario Dumont. Quant au Bloc et au Parti québécois, ils déplorent que le Québec soit reconnu comme une nation seulement s'il fait partie du Canada. [F4ME: 223]

This text section is of special interest, as it focuses on a contemporary issue involving the redefinition of Québec's status in relation to the rest of Canada.

The translation problem relates to the fact that the historical content of this issue can be understood very differently in English and in French, and these differences can

have widely divergent political implications.

Whereas in English the population of Québec is generally referred to as “Quebecers” and that part of Québec’s population that is of French descent is more specifically referred to as “the Québécois,” the French language can employ one and the same term for both. This exposes a translation conflict at the very source of this policy initiative. Prime Minister Stephen Harper chose to use the term the “Québécois” when speaking in English, and therefore gave the impression to his listeners in English that the special status as a nation was only being conferred on Quebecers of French descent. This is not to say that he was granting a privilege to only one section of Québec’s population, but he was thus seen by his English-speaking audience not to grant the status of nation to the entire legal and territorial entity that is Québec but only to a specifically demarcated ethno-cultural group. This is corroborated by the fact that Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Michael Chong resigned in protest over the motion as it “implies the recognition of ethnicity” [CBC News 2006].

Across the language divide in francophone Québec, however, the absence of an equivalent distinction between “Quebecers” and “the Québécois” signals a more flexible message, namely that Quebecers in general have gained recognition as a national entity within Canada, or it may even obscure differences between Quebecers of French descent and those associated with other origins. This significant difference in the received meanings and divergent perceptions may lead English Canadians to see little more than a symbolic gesture in the accordance of nation status to the

“Québécois”, similar in nature to the nation status granted to Aboriginal peoples, for example, whereas francophone Quebecers may see it as a significant step towards legitimizing nationhood for the province of Québec, along with the repercussions this may have on Québec’s status within, or beyond, the Canadian confederation.

As such, the motion, touted by its political sponsors as an exercise in (Canadian) nation building can be seen as a smoke-and-mirrors tactic inspired by political expediency. It is based on a divergence of meanings across the language divide, allowing for entirely separate but contradictory interpretations that allow either side of the translation equation to accommodate the respective meaning into its own narrative. Each message appears designed to reassure the respective target audience that it is getting exactly what large numbers of its adherents wish for.

It is not my place to judge this confusing political episode, but it must be pointed out that such schemes do little to build harmony and understanding among groups with varying interests, and even set up problems for the future, when a related political issue of national harmony, for example, will expose the disparate national narratives and bring them into open conflict with one another.

However, this political narrative is a fact of contemporary history and so not only deserves inclusion in a history textbook, but can also be a valuable lesson on the nature of political discourse and the problematic repercussions it can entail when such discourse is less than clear. From an educational perspective, students might in

fact benefit if they can detect the disparate messages contained in this section of their history texts, as this would enable them to see political discourse not only as an essentially productive feature of democracy, but one that requires constant vigilance and a critical spirit so its role and value for the democratic process can be assessed. A translational challenge presents itself by virtue of the source text reflecting the message as received in francophone Québec, where the notion of “nation” is perhaps more readily associated with both the people and the province and territory of Québec. Since this association is less immediately warranted based on the English-language reception of the message, translating the phrase “que le Québec soit reconnu comme une nation” is not as readily justifiable or accurate, in English. On the other hand, astute students will likely perceive the mixed messages by virtue of the presence of the term “the Québécois.” Elsewhere in the textbook, “les Québécois” are consistently referred to as “Quebecers” and so a singular appearance of “the Québécois” will draw attention to itself, possibly prompting students with an inquiring mind to seek an explanation. We therefore should retain the references to “les Québécois” in the English text. As for the section detailing “que le Québec soit reconnu comme une nation”, any convergence between competing interpretations and, by extension, realities must be able to refer to the actual wording of the motion. Since the status of nation is clearly conferred onto a specific population (whereas the exact nature and composition of this population remains to be clarified), it would be wrong to suggest that for the purposes of recognition “Quebecers” and “Québec” can function as synonyms of one another.

**Proposed translation 14:**

Even before coming to power, the federal Conservatives asserted that they wanted to introduce an open federalism. In the autumn of 2006, Stephen Harper tabled a motion recognizing the Québécois' status as a nation. He declared: "The Québécois form a nation within a united Canada." Premier Charest welcomed the motion, as did the leader of the Action Démocratique, Mario Dumont. As for the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois, they lamented that the Québécois would only be recognized as a nation if they remained part of Canada.

## **7 Conclusion**

Based on an ethical approach intended to embrace as well as transcend the respective source and target texts, the foregoing pages explain the process that allowed me to analyze a selection of source text excerpts. Some of their elements point to conflict situations that may challenge the cultural harmonization objectives associated with Québec's history classrooms.

The source text materials, while reflecting an age-appropriate range of topics covering socio-cultural realities and narratives, nevertheless were found to contain some problematic sections (inaccuracies, omissions or content with connections to external problems) that risked distorting or trivializing social phenomena to the detriment of the textbooks' citizenship education mandate.

While certain aspects of binary translation models were found to be appropriate when negotiating translation solutions that respect Québec's cultural plurality, such

as the “foreignizing” juxtaposition of a river and a *rivière* within the same sentence (Excerpt 1), other text sections required a more multifaceted approach to determine the exact nature of the translation problem at hand (such as the interplay of gender, religion and Aboriginal issues in Excerpt 2, or the interrelationship between issues of race, national belonging and perceptions of opportunity in Excerpt 8). In other instances, such as in Excerpt 13, the translation challenge centred on the semantic range of language connected to the democratic process, along with implications for the pedagogical success of citizenship education. And in Excerpt 14, the translation issue was complicated by the fact that the historical content the text section contained was itself constructed around an unresolved translation problem with significant political, legal and ideological implications for the various stakeholders in Québec society.

My discussion of narrative conflicts, along with the negotiation of apt translation solutions, often sought to emphasize possibilities over restrictions. The focus on what “might be” rather than “what is,” can be seen as vague, speculative or idealistic in nature and may therefore be criticized as irrelevant to serious academic discourse. On the other hand, the comparatively narrow room for analysis offered by binary structures may stifle the imagination and fail to unlock doors into alternative spaces where two-dimensional conflicts can give way to multilateral convergences.

The inclusion of disparate narratives into a harmonious social space that I propose here will not necessarily resonate with all stakeholders in Québec society. While I

call on translators to assume a greater role of ethical and political leadership, their translational reflections and reasoning alone, however sound, will not necessarily be emulated or meet with a broad consensus among the various members of society. It is nonetheless my hope that the ideas discussed in this thesis may add to the debate on cultural harmonization in Québec and serve the democratic process in Québec society as it negotiates present realities into new narratives able to chart a common path forward.

All of the text selections showcased the need for a thorough process of reflection, analysis, deliberation and negotiation before an adequate translation solution could be proposed, and so warranted a process that would make the translator's thoughts and actions visible. While I sought to explain the importance of an inherently flexible approach to enable translators to slip into perspectives other than their own so they could produce culturally-inclusive translations, I could offer only few practical suggestions or directions that would allow translators to readily incorporate such flexible and culturally inclusive approaches to their work.

Several of the issues raised in this thesis point to further possible journeys of inquiry that could deepen the understanding we have of translation studies. The narrowly circumscribed mandate given to translators on this history textbook translation project, for example, appears to reflect not only the restrictions that impact on translators' professional, intellectual and ethical freedoms but also highlights the problem of underexploited professional potential and capacity. The close source text

reading and related reflections undertaken by the translator in pursuit of an appropriate translation make him a target text creator as well as a source text expert. As such, he is the only agent in the textbook translation chain straddling the border between both languages. This dual expertise is usually only exploited to produce a target text. As I showed in the text excerpts above, a thoughtful translation that goes beyond narrowly linguistic concerns will often expose weaknesses in the source text. In light of the diminished role assigned to the translator in this project, the identification of any source text weaknesses takes place only after the source text is already finalized and already in print. If the translator's role could be expanded to include a mandate to proof and revise the source text as an extra stage in the translation process (but before the source text goes to print), the publisher and the target public of both source and target texts would end up with products of higher quality. An inquiry into the reasons for the unwarranted belittlement of the translator's role, in addition to turning up some practical answers to explain this shortcoming would probably also point to pathways and measures that could help rectify this situation and thereby not only raise the status of the profession but also provide more enlightened and higher-quality textbook products to the multiple stakeholders involved. Such research could include a historical study of the role and status of the profession, compare the situation in Québec or in North America with that elsewhere, look into the role translation education programs play in determining the status of translators, or interview representative from the textbook publishing industry, to name just a few.



My analysis in this thesis touched on problems associated with essentially binary models, strategies and outlooks and how such patterns can limit the scope of translation. Translation itself, especially in Québec, where the dominant type of translation usually revolves around just English and French, represents another essentially binary-structured model. When translators negotiate the relationships between two languages and texts, the binary outlook probably has a limiting effect on the horizons of possibility available to them. Another promising area of research may be to investigate whether there are any observable reflective, procedural or productive differences between bilingual and tri- or multilingual translators working on the same text and whether any such differences are more pronounced when comparing not only the translators but the monolingual, bilingual or multilingual societies they live in. Some countries where more than two national languages are spoken by many of its inhabitants, such as Switzerland or Cameroon, could provide opportunities for such research.

And finally, the multi-faceted issues that emerged in the analysis of the text excerpts above underscore the multidisciplinary dimensions and aspects of translation. The field of translation studies is taking on an increasingly interdisciplinary character as it evolves. But is this evolution unidirectional, i.e. does and will translation studies keep feeding off other subject areas for its own enrichment and enhanced complexity? Or has it reached a turning point at which it now has something to give back and add to its erstwhile “foster parents”— social studies, history, gender studies, ethics, politics, literature, etc.—in order to enrich and nourish these fields of

knowledge? A research approach could look for compelling evidence whether translation studies is breathing new life and enhanced perspectives into other scientific disciplines. Such findings would establish further interdisciplinary convergence, showing that scientific horizons are broadening. It would also free translation studies from notions that as a “jack-of-all-trades” it is essentially master of none, and could elevate its role instead to being an active inserting partner in the act of interdisciplinary union. If the field of translation studies were then no longer perceived primarily as a receptive “target” entity, where the knowledge gathered from other fields finds application, but as a commanding “source” power with relevant knowledge to offer other fields, the undervalued and underexploited translator’s journey from relative obscurity to enlightenment would likely forge ahead as well.

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