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Hybrid Identities: Sociolinguistic Travels Between the Margins and the Centre in Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion* and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*

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RÉSUMÉ

Ma thèse explore les représentations hybrides de l'identité pour illustrer les formes d'habilitation que les marges peuvent exercer par rapport au centre dominant dans *Avril ou l'anti-passion* d'Antonio D'Alfonso et *Chorus of Mushrooms* de Hiromi Goto. Les protagonistes dans ces romans prennent une position de puissance en présentant leurs langues non traduites de minorité italiennes et japonaises, à côté des langues dominantes, le français et l'anglais. La co-présence des langues défie des notions de l'authenticité basées sur la pureté culturelle. En outre, y compris les passages non traduits dans la minorité les langues constitue un acte implicite de résistance à l'hégémonie d'une langue. Cette thèse utilise des idées de James Clifford au sujet du déplacement culturel pour illustrer du fait que la culture, comme la langue et l'identité, n'est pas statique. D'ailleurs, la théorie de Mikhail Bakhtin de heterologie fournit un modèle qui défie des notions négatives de la hybridité, pluralité, et remet en cause la valeur de construire l'identité de soi sans perspective de l'autrui. Dans *Avril ou l'anti-passion*, le récit de Fabrizio fournit au lecteur une vue d'ensemble réduite en fragments de sa vie à Montréal, son raccordement à la famille, aux amis et aux amoureux. Son discours trilingue établit qu'il voyage parmi trois langues différentes : français, Italien et anglais. Fabrizio rejette des notions établies ou stéréotypées des identités authentiques et pures. Dans *Chorus of Mushrooms*, les protagonistes Murasaki Tonkatsu et son grand-mère Naoe partagent également leurs histoires par le déplacement entre différents codes sociolinguistiques. Les femmes contestent les pressions de l'assimilation en disant leurs histoires dans un mélange de japonais et d'anglais. Le

dialogue non traduit en les deux romans signale un mouvement liquide entre les langues, une mobilité transculturel entre les mots et les mondes.

MOTS CLEFS: transculturel, autrui, co-présence des langues, passages non-traduit, déplacement culturel

ABSTRACT

My thesis explores hybrid representations of identity to illustrate the forms of empowerment that the marginsÉ may exercise in relation to the dominant centre in Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion* and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*. These protagonists take up a position of power by introducing their untranslated minority languages Italian and Japanese, alongside the dominant languages, French and English. The co-presence of languages challenges notions of authenticity based on cultural purity. Furthermore, including untranslated passages in minority languages constitutes an implicit act of resistance to the hegemony of one language. This thesis employs James Clifford's ideas about traveling between cultures to argue that culture, like language and identity, is not static. Moreover, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heterology provides a model that challenges negative notions of hybridity, plurality, and questions the value of constructing the Self without the perspective of the Other's outsider position. In *Avril ou l'anti-passion,* Fabrizio's narrative provides the reader with a fragmented overview of his life in Montreal, his connection to family, friends and lovers. His trilingual discourse establishes that he travels among three different languages: French, Italian and English. Fabrizio rejects established or stereotypical notions of authentic and pure identities. In *Chorus of Mushrooms*, Hiromi Goto's protagonists Murasaki Tonkatsu and her grandmother Naoe also share their stories by traveling between different sociolinguistic codes. Both women contest the pressures of assimilation by telling their stories in a mixture of Japanese and

English. The untranslated dialogue in both novels signals a fluid movement between languages, a transcultural mobility between words and worlds.

KEY WORDS: transcultural, other, co-presence of languages, untranslated dialogue, cultural traveler.

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> If you're a Canadian, and write as honestly as you can about what you know–here or anywhere else–and the result doesn't sound Canadian–well, no conscious attitude you strike will ever make it sound so. If you're a Canadian and [you] want to write a distinctly Canadian novel, I'd say just trust your natural processes. Mac, just trust your natural processes. Don't try to write *like* anything–except yourself.
>
> Ernest Buckler, *Ernest Buckler*

INTRODUCTION – Hybrid Representations of Identity

In this thesis, I will be exploring hybrid representations of identity in Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion*[1] and Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*[2]. According to Sherry Simon, "il n'existe pas de vie culturelle qui n'est pas adultère par le contact, par le mélange, qui n'est pas influencé par l'étranger" (Simon, *Hybridité culturelle* 35). Thus, hybrid representations of identity illustrate the forms of empowerment that "l'étranger" may exercise in relation to the dominant centre. The protagonists in D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels speak from the margins of a dominant culture. However, they take up a position of power by introducing their untranslated minority languages, Italian and Japanese, alongside the dominant languages, French and English. The narrators' use of untranslated words and phrases from their minority languages creates a hybrid dialogue. Moreover, this hybrid dialogue reflects each narrator's refusal to be identified through only one language. While the juxtaposition of languages delineates each protagonist's in-between hybrid space, other markers of identity such as family relationships, cultural traditions, food, and names are also important. A hybrid identity accords these protagonists a transcultural perspective as they "look back to their ancestral country of origin and also ahead to the

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[1] Hereafter *Avril*
[2] Hereafter *Mushrooms*

possibilities of their actual homeland" (Beautell 31). The presence of the minority language alongside the majority language creates a fluid movement between different linguistic references, a fluidity that fluctuates in relation to the center and the margin.

As transcultural citizens, D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists reveal their multiple subjectivities as they travel between the margins of their ethnic periphery and the dominant centre. The co-presence of languages in each writer's text "not only acts to signify differences between cultures, but also illustrates the importance of [a plural] discourse in interpreting cultural concepts" (Ashcroft *et al.* 63). This co-presence of languages also challenges notions of authenticity based on cultural purity. D'Alfonso and Goto also illustrate that "language variances" can be enriching ambiguities (51). Untranslated words inscribe difference and cultural experience differently than translated ones and "difference is validated by the new situation" (53). The untranslated dialogue in both novels signals a fluid movement between languages, a "transculturel"[3] mobility between words and worlds. In his article, "Between Canada and the Carribean: transcultural contact zones in the works of Dionne Brand," Roland Walter states that "tranculturation denotes the idea of inclusion – the reconciliatory integration of elements from different cultures…the movement from the part to the whole…namely the discourse of hybridity" (25). Moreover, Walter believes that

[3] In this thesis, I am employing Clement Moisan's and Renata Hildebrand's term "transculturel" to define D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists. It is "[la] traversée des cultures en présence, les deux à la fois une altérité culturelle vécue comme un passage dans et à travers l'autre" (17). However, it is the South American scholar, Fernando Ortiz, who originally defined the term transculturalism in1940. Within a Canadian context, it is Lamberto Tassinari who first adopted the term "transcultural." In fact, he is the co-founder and producer of the magazine "Vice-Versa" published between 1983 and 1996. It is a multidisciplinary and multilingual magazine reflecting the cultural diversity of Quebec.

"cultural formations do not disappear into others…but are juggled with by subjects whose stable identities make way for identities-in-process characterized by shifting identifications" (26). The co-presence of languages in D'Alfonso's and Goto's texts maps out the "shifting identifications" that Walter refers to. This form of linguistic hybridity or "transculturation" is an unstable representation of identity since it is "an always open process of becoming…a dialogue which discriminates between diverse categories: imposed or willed assimilation and multiple forms of resistance…[an] interplay of difference and sameness" (26). The co-presence of languages also illustrates each writer's refusal to be defined in binary or homogeneous linguistic terms. Each protagonist's sociolinguistic space may be defined as a fluid movement between the margins and the dominant centre, his or her inside/outside space.

To clarify the meaning of this inside/outside position, I refer to the following quotation from Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical text *Being and Nothingness*:

> How are we to define the lacked? [i.e. what is missing] To answer this question, we must return to the idea of lack and determine more exactly the bond which unites the existence to the lacking [i.e. what is there to what is missing]. This bond cannot be one of simple contiguity. If what is lacking is in its very absence still profoundly present at the heart of the existing, it is because the existing and the lacking are at the same moment apprehended and surpassed in the unity of a single totality (137).

Sartre's notion of presence and absence can be related to the transcultural hybrid. The absence is the "ancestral country of origin" while the existing presence is the "actual homeland". The "single totality" of which Sartre speaks, the transcendent moment of apprehension, neatly describes the "multiple subjectivities"

experienced by the cultural hybrid uniquely positioned neither wholly inside nor wholly outside the centre and the margins.

In order to extrapolate D'Alfonso's and Goto's co-presence of languages in their texts into a critical methodology, I will develop a model of critical enquiry with theory postulated by Mikhail Bakhtin. In Bakhtin's concept of Self and Other, neither can be understood in isolation because each is a necessary component for signifying and measuring the presence of the other. As Bakhtin explains:

> What do I gain by having the other fuse with me? He will know and see but what I know and see....Let him rather stay on the outside because from there he can know and see what I cannot see or know from my vantage point, and he can thus enrich essentially the event of my life (in Todorov 108).

I am employing Bakhtin's celebration of the Other's different perspective to suggest that the voice of the Other embodied within transcultural representations of the Self – i.e. within the hybrid citizen – stands apart from the *others* that are created in a "uniculturel" or monocultural society[4]. Monocultural representations of identity are defined by one dominant cultural centre while transcultural representations of identity are determined by the interplay of a dominant centre and one or more peripheries. The presence of the peripheries influences the socio-cultural codes of the centre as much as the peripheries are influenced by socio-cultural codes of the centre. Thus, this thesis rejects monocultural models of self-representation. Moreover, Bakhtin's "heterological opinion on the world" where "every world smells of the context and contexts in which it has lived its intense

[4] I am borrowing the term "uniculturel" from Moisan and Hildebrand. «L'uniculturel est le regne de la culture dominante et de son emprise celles qui viennent d'ailleurs sont à l'unision» (14-15).

social life" (Todorov on Bakhtin 56) complement the ideas of hybridity this thesis explores. Unfortunately, the hybrid Self risks becoming an outsider in the eyes of the dominant cultural centre as well as the peripheral ethnic culture. This means that hybrid representations of identity must be defined as mutable positions – sometimes outside the centre and other times outside the margins(s).

Two important studies mark the advent of criticism on hybrid constructions of identity in minority literature published in Quebec. The first study, Clement Moisan's and Renata Hildebrand's *Ces Etrangers du dedans* (2001), provides a historical perspective on immigrant literature in Quebec between 1937 and 1997. Moisan and Hildebrand conclude that Quebec literature can no longer be represented as conveying a homogeneous French-Canadian voice. Their study suggests that immigrant literature from 1937 onwards affects "la vie littéraire québécoise" and that after 1986 the transcultural writer becomes "une voix où s'engagent à la fois les auteurs néo-québécois et québécois dans une sorte de traversée de leurs cultures" (315-316). In their opinion, cultural identity results from a fluid juxtaposition of culturally diverse discourses:

> L'identité culturelle bouge sans cesse, ce qui fait qu'on ne peut jamais dire qu'une d'elles est intrinsèquement "meilleure" qu'une autre, d'autant plus qu'ainsi considérée, elle devient une construction plutôt qu'un donné, une façon de voir la réalité des groupes en interaction plutôt que la propriété d'une communauté (318).

In their concluding comments, Mosian and Hildebrand refer to the interaction between cultures as the difference between dancing and walking. On its own, one culture walks forward, but when it is confronted with another culture the interaction between them may be approached as a dance:

> La danse, elle exige au moins un partenaire et dépend de l'action combiné de l'autre ou des autres pour sa mise en œuvre. En ce sens, la danse suppose un accord fondamental entre les danseurs qui exécutent leur pas selon un modèle préétabli, la valse, la samba, ou selon des figures improvisées ou spontanées qui créent de nouvelles formes (331).

Moisan's and Hildebrand's reference to new forms of dance resembles Janet Paterson's ideas about alterity as "les désirs cachés" and [les] rêves non réalisés" of the Self (Paterson 169). Paterson's study entitled *Figures de l'Autre dans le roman québécois* (2004), traces the voice of the Other[5] in Quebec literature from 1846 to 1999. She concludes that the presence of the Other as a representation of the Self is important because it is

> [une] figure révélatrice de sens au sein de la fiction, elle met également en lumières les préoccupations sociohistoriques et culturelles d'une époque…l'Autre a toujours une fonction symbolique…son altérité lui confère un immense potentiel signifiant, car être Autre, c'est fréquemment être libre des pressions uniformisantes d'une société ou d'un groupe…aussi l'altérité peut-elle valorisée, même désirée dans la mesure ou elle incarne un autre moi, c'est-à-dire une identité mobile changeante qui nous interpelle. Voila pourquoi, sans doute, la figure de l'Autre représente si souvent la liberté des conventions sociales, l'attrait pour l'aventure et la puissance de la déraison. Séduisant, différent de la norme, l'Autre l'est dans la mesure où il répond à nos désirs cachés et fait écho à nos rêves non réalisés (167-168).

The above quotation suggests that the Other, perceived as society's outsider, "séduisant, différent de la norme" can have a positive influence on the centre (168). Thus, this thesis positions itself between Moisan's and Hildebrand's notion of cultural juxtaposition and Paterson's point of view of alterity as a gateway that unlocks hidden desires.

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[5] As a note of interest, Paterson finds three hundred and twenty different representations of the Other during this period.

There are other studies that discuss ethnicity and otherness in Canadian literature outside Quebec. A collection edited by Winfried Siemerling entitled *Writing Ethnicity: Cross Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Quebecois Literature* (1996), examines the state of ethnic writing and topics such as migration, exile, belonging and authenticity. Siemerling refers to ethnicity as a "construction of cross-cultural identification…marked by hybridity and invention" (2). Although this collection of essays does not offer a history of ethnic writing, it does serve as a useful starting point for this thesis's exploration of transcultural identity. For example, in her essay, "States of Belonging: Pluralism, Migrancy, Literature," Ranu Samantria refers to Charles Taylor's and Jurgen Habermas's ideas about pluralism to suggest that we need to shift our focus of study from "Other literatures in Canada" to "a more adequate study of our own heterogeneous culture" (42).

Another study that focuses on issues of transcultural identity in Canada is published in a special issue of *Canadian Ethnic Studies* entitled "Ethnic Themes in Canadian Literature" (1996), edited by Anthony Rasporich and James Frideres. One essayist, Natalia Aponiuk[6], questions the exclusion of ethnic (or minority) writers from the nation's canon. She believes that "ethnic minority authors are, or should be, important sources of our understanding of the dynamics of ethnicity itself….The language they use, the attitudes they hold on matters of communal concern, these hold significance in terms of ethnic issues" (4). I believe that "the dynamics of ethnicity" Aponiuk refers to cannot be understood outside the

[6] In her essay entitled, "Ethnic Literature," "Minority Writing," "Literature in Other Languages," "Hyphenated-Canadian Literature – Will It Ever be "Canadian"?

dynamics of the dominant centre. The inside/outside relationship between minority literature and canonical literature needs to be studied. Another collection entitled *Tricks with a Glass: Writing Ethnicity in Canada* (2000), edited by Rocio G. Davis and Rosalia Baena, takes a look at ways identity is negotiated and how pluralism is expressed in ethnic Canadian literature. More recently, a collection of essays entitled *Adjacencies: Minority Writing in Canada* (2004), addresses the shifting focus of "literary debate" from Canada's mainstream writers to their ethnically peripheral counterparts (7)[7]. One of the contributers to this collection, Sherry Simon, discusses "the ways in which [heterogeneous] identity issues are stimulating the invention of new forms" (10). In this thesis, the invention of new forms emerges primarily through the juxtaposition of untranslated minority languages to majority languages.

All of the above studies provide pertinent commentary on transcultural writing in Canada. Since I am particularly interested in examining individual voices of the Other in transcultural writing, I have chosen to focus on only two writers, D'Alfonso and Goto. An exploration of these writers' transcultural constructions of identity will serve, I believe, as a means for uncovering the invention of the new forms to which Simon refers. D'Alfonso's and Goto's French and English novels also permit me to explore representations of Self and Other from two linguistically and culturally different regions in Canada.

I have also selected these particular novels because each one is a distinct yet complementary representation of cultural duality and difference. The

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[7] Other notable writers who focus on language issues include: Harel, Lequin, Simon et al. and Vautier.

protagonists in these novels construct their identities in hybrid terms. They stand between a culture on the margins and a culture dominating and defining the centre. This position creates a cross-cultural in-between space. Intersecting the language of the dominant culture, i.e. French and/or English, with their minority language of cultural origin (Italian and Japanese respectively) permits each writer to insist on his or her particular association with these languages. D'Alfonso's use of French, English and Italian reflects his own connection to all three languages. Similarly, Goto's text, written in English and Japanese, reveals that her connection with her language of cultural origin is just as strong as her attachment to the dominant language, especially since there is a substantially greater interaction between languages in her novel than in D'Alfonso's.

I am also personally interested in these particular writers because of their unique methods of intersecting languages. Although I consider English my first language and French my second, I nevertheless feel the loss of my mother's language, Urdu (origin: Arabic and Persian), which I can still understand but can no longer speak. I have become particularly conscious of this loss ever since my move seven years ago to Quebec, where language politics remain at the forefront of the province's public policy. My status as an English-speaking minority citizen in a society where French is the first language has, in a sense, led to my own linguistic, transcultural Othering. This is perhaps why I find D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels so fascinating. Each one demonstrates, in its own particular manner, the importance of the preservation of marginalized languages and the beauty to be found in the juxtaposition of dominant and Other (othered)

languages.This study celebrates my own experiences of linguistic difference as a bilingual and transcultural citizen.

Caribbean writer Wilson Harris describes linguistic interactions as critical examples of shifting patterns of cultural heterogeneity in literature. He believes that "language must be altered…fixed beliefs and attitudes must be exposed, with words and concepts "freed" to associate in new ways" (in Ashcroft *et al.* 151). Furthermore, Harris introduces what he terms "the paradox of cultural heterogeneity", describing it as an "evolutionary thrust [that] restores to orders of imagination the ceaseless dialogue it inserts between hardened conventions and eclipsed or half-eclipsed otherness" (152). In their novels, D'Alfonso and Goto explore cultural heterogeneity by including untranslated words and passages of Italian and Japanese in their texts.

The central protagonist in *Avril*, Fabrizio Notte, Montreal-born to first generation Italian immigrants, travels between French, Italian and English-speaking cultures. He constructs his identity in divided, contradictory ways. His hybrid self-representation resembles D'Alfonso's ideas about heterogeneous identities:

> Certains brandissent un peu facilement leur drapeau canadien ; d'autres demeurent plus discrets, mais aussi vagues ; certain se disent Québécois, alors que d'autres encore maintiennent que nous restons totalement Italiens. J'assume les quatre positions, incapable que je suis de me contenter d'une seule (*En Italiques* 48).

Although there is an English translation of the novel entitled *Fabrizio's Passion*, I am working with the original French version in this thesis because Fabrizio's

implicit acknowledgement of his identity as a French-Canadian is more apparent in it.

In *Mushrooms*, the central protagonist, Murasaki Tonkatsu, is an Albertan-born Canadian citizen of Japanese cultural origins and her grandmother Naoe is a Canadian immigrant who was born in Japan. Murasaki symbolizes the transcultural citizen who connects with the lost elements of her Japanese culture and language without forsaking her Canadian ties. Naoe is a symbol of the Japanese community. She negotiates her identity as a hybrid Japanese Canadian immigrant on *her* terms. An eighty-five-year-old woman, she rejects barriers of exclusion based on age, gender and ethnicity. An exchange of stories also allows Naoe and Murasaki to (re)construct their identities by reviving and celebrating their Japanese culture.

The selected novels illustrate the dichotomy of hybrid identities, providing the reader with corresponding insights into representations of Self and Other. By placing each character's country of cultural origin *after* his or her country of birth, thereby reversing the accepted order of national and cultural designations, I am suggesting that these characters, especially Fabrizio and Murasaki, are Canadian first, ethnic second. I make this distinction primarily because they were both born in Canada, therefore their perspectives differ from those of their parents who were born in Italy and Japan. This is not a negation or diminution of each character's attachment to his or her country of ethnic origin; rather, it recognizes each one's right to national citizenship without any "hierarchy of cultures" (Ashcroft *et al.* 155). Since individuals are, to a large degree, products of their environments, a

person born in Italy, for instance, will construct identity differently than someone with Italian origins born in Canada. Bearing this in mind, I believe that the person born in Canada should be recognized as Canadian first, their ethnic origins second. Therefore, I am placing the weight of citizenship in ascending order: Fabrizio is a French-Canadian Italian citizen, Murasaki is an English-Canadian Japanese citizen and her grandmother Naoe is a Japanese Canadian immigrant.

D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists share historical information about their respective countries of cultural origin and provide details about their countries of birth, thus asserting their connection to both. In their novels, D'Alfonso and Goto suggest that cultural difference is not always about alienation or marginalization. These novels allow the reader to explore cultural difference in terms that "resist ideas of a pure culture", and do not erase or refute the "traditions from which [they] spring" (Ashcroft *et al.* 183-184). Linda Hutcheon states that the postmodern individual is someone who "negotiate[s] the space between centers and margins in ways that acknowledge difference…[and] challenge…any supposedly monolithic culture" (209).

This thesis explores this negotiation between the "centers and margins" that Hutcheon refers to through an application of some of James Clifford's and Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas. Chapter One provides a brief introduction to Clifford's and Bakhtin's theoretical positions that support the analysis of the selected novels along with short explanations of some of the key terms that will be employed in this thesis. Clifford's writing about traveling between cultures argues that culture, like language and identity, is not static; Bakhtin's theory of heterology provides a

model that challenges negative notions of hybridity, plurality, and, as previously stated, questions the value of constructing the Self without the perspective of the Other's outsider position. Bakhtin asks: "In what way will the event be enriched if I succeed in fusing with the other? If instead of two, there is just one?" (in Todorov 108). The presence of the Other plays a significant role in how the Self negotiates and constructs his or her identity. Thus, the transcultural othered voice also asserts the importance of "cultural interaction" by "construct[ing] more than one social and linguistic discourse (Beautell 30-31). Chapter Two focuses on Fabrizio Notte in *Avril*. I will explore Fabrizio's transcultural identity through his use of French, Italian, English and Hungarian to identify his ambiguities as he negotiates an identity as a French-Canadian Italian. In addition, his ideas about love, his relationships, his connection to his family, his cultural history and his career as a film-maker, along with references to food allow the reader to gain insights into his contradictory and often fragmented position as a hybrid citizen. Chapter Three provides an examination of the two protagonists, Murasaki and her grandmother Naoe, in *Mushrooms*. Sharing stories in English and untranslated Japanese allows them to (re)negotiate a hybrid Canadian and Japanese identity. Furthermore, Murasaki's relationship with her parents and her grandmother Naoe, as well as Naoe's connection to her daughter and her granddaughter, reveals the importance of family in Murasaki's and Naoe's construction of identity. Food and names are also critical markers of each woman's cultural voice. This thesis concludes with a resume of the different ways in which each novel's use of untranslated languages privileges a hybrid definition of identity.

> Some poststructuralist theory has argued that the margin is the ultimate place of subversion and transgression, another branch has shown how the margin is both created by and part of the center, that the 'different' can be made into the other.
>
> Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodern*

CHAPTER ONE – Theoretical Framework

This chapter explores how D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists construct hybrid identities, in particular, how voices on the margins, the ethnic peripheries, empower themselves by juxtaposing untranslated Italian and Japanese with French and English. This thesis will draw upon James Clifford's ideas about traveling cultures, Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of heterology and heteroglossia, and his ideas about the Other's position of outsideness in order to analyze the central characters in D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels. This thesis defines culture using James Boon's observation about Balinese culture as "a shifting paradox, an ongoing translation" and as "a non-consensual negotiation of contrastive identity" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 100). Clifford questions references to culture as "a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, etc." drawing particular attention instead to issues of "displacement, interference, and interaction" (101). This means that culture cannot be represented as a fixed or absolute concept. In D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels, the protagonists reconstruct their particular cultural historicity primarily through an interaction of languages. The untranslated Italian and Japanese passages also emphasize each protagonist's hybrid subjectivity.

This thesis will rely on Mikhail Bakhtin's term heteroglossia to explore the relationship between languages in D'Alfonso's and Goto's plurilingual texts

as expressions that "mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and [are] interrelated dialogically" (Bakhtin qtd in Smith and Watson 34). In the Introduction to Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* Wayne Booth refers to Bakhtin as a "vague" thinker (xxvii). However, he suggests that what is vague in Bakhtin's thinking is also "wonderfully suggestive" (xxvii). I believe that it is the power of suggestion, in any form of writing or discourse, which pushes readers to explore meaning as a multidimensional concept. Thus, I am linking the juxtaposition of dialogue in D'Alfonso's and Goto's texts to Bakhtin's notion of the polyphonic novel and heteroglossia.

Although extrapolating meaning through translation can be a somewhat subjective exercise, this subjectivity results in (as stated earlier) what Boon refers to as a "non-consensual negotiation of identity" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures 101). It is this negotiation of identity that is similar to some of Bakhtin's ideas about the polyphonic novel. As he states, Dostoevsky's character is not "an object of authorial discourse, but rather a fully valid, autonomous carrier of his own individual word" (Bakhtin 5). This suggests that the character is not contained or ruled by a "single authorial consciousness" (6). The character's voice dominates, even supersedes, the plot in a polyphonic novel and everything is, as Bakhtin states, "profoundly personalized" (9). The notion of plurilingualism in this thesis leans heavily on this idea of a personalized character point of view where plot is relatively insignificant. Moreover, D'Alfonso's and Goto's use of a plurilingual discourse in their texts embodies the principles of Bakhtin's term heteroglossia – a multivoiced discourse.

Similarly, the notion of culture in these texts is both an abstract and absolute term of unmerged words and worlds. It includes such cultural practices as "attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power" and all "the contradictory forms of 'common sense' which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life" (Nelson, Treichler, Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction" 5). Culture is also time and space specific; therefore, its meaning is both mutable and multiple. For instance, cultural identity in Quebec cannot be defined in the same terms as it existed fifty years ago, prior to the Quiet Revolution when religious values dominated social discourse.

D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists travel between cultures, defining cultural experience as a "specific dynamics of dwelling/traveling" between a centre and its margins (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 101). These characters resist homogeneous representations of identity. Like culture, they "constantly writ[e] and rewrite[e]…t[their] history…to make sense of [it]…constructing and reconstructing…[it] in response to new challenges[,]…discarding old assumptions and appropriating new positions" (Nelson, Treichler, Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction" 10). Their references to historical events and lived experiences depend on a process of reinvention and reconstruction. In *Writing Ethnicity*, Winfried Siemerling points to ethnicity not as "a function of return but of reinvention, not of recuperating a single Self but of maintaining a series of selves in transit" (22). This thesis therefore explores hybridity or the transcultural self as a position of empowerment.

i) The Other

In most post-colonial literatures, the voice on the margins of a dominant society, the Other, is created by the oppression, exclusion, or silencing of a certain class of people. The Other does not fit accepted or dominant societal norms because of such differences as race, gender, sexual orientation, cultural origin and religion. The Other is also a reflection of what the Self rejects in himself or herself, thus what individuals do not like in themselves, they refer to as Other. This thesis employs the Other outside this pejorative context of a colonizer/colonized polarity[8] and "any one privileging norm" (Ashcroft *et al.*, 3). It examines the Other through Bakhtin's theory of outsideness which states that it is better to be "located outside the object of [a person's] creative understanding – in time, in space, [and] in culture" (7). According to Bakhtin, nobody can ever really see his or her "exterior or comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people because they are located outside us in space and they are *others*" (7). Thus, the hybrid Other occupies this exterior space, a position that is sometimes outside the dominant culture and sometimes outside the margins. Within this context, I am suggesting that D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists transform negative perceptions of otherness by asserting their in-between hybrid voices as sources of empowerment.

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[8] Abdul R. JanMohamed states that colonizers "motivated by [their] desire to conquer and dominate" will assume a "moral superiority" that "rarely question[s] the validity of his or his society's formation and that he will not be inclined to expend any energy in understanding the…colonized" (Ashcroft *et al.* 18). Frantz Fanon characterizes the term "colonizer-colonized" as a product of [what he refers to as] 'Manichaeism delirium,' the result of this condition is a radical division into paired oppositions such as good-evil; true-false, white-black, in which the primary sign is axiomatically privileged in the discourse of the colonial relationship" (124-125).

D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists step outside the dominant French and English languages by including untranslated words and passages in Italian and Japanese. This writing strategy implicitly others the dominant language reader and forces him or her to interpret meaning from an outside position. As Bakhtin states, "it is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly (but not maximally fully, because there will [always] be [other] cultures that see and understand even more)" (7). In a paper entitled "Nostalgic Narratives and the Otherness Industry," Mridula Nath Chakraborty examines issues of "representation and difference that lie at the heart of contemporary postcolonial studies" (128). She states that texts written in English offer us only a small range in which to explore…cultural formations" (139). Further to this, transcultural writing, especially writing that intersects minority and majority languages, offers us another perspective from which to explore cultural diversity, difference and Otherness. Such texts can motivate literary scholars to explore cultural meaning outside their dominant language.

In an essay entitled, "Writing Back and Beyond: Postcoloniality, Multiculturalism and Ethnicity in the Canadian Context," Eva Darias Beautell argues that "writing produced in contemporary Canada often rejects oppositional representations, positing instead a concept of literature as containment" (29). Beautell believes that "the elements of contamination and heterogeneity in Canadian writing involving a positive cultural and linguistic exchange…can provide a transcultural focus on specific instances of writing as an alternative to the somewhat abstract multicultural model of Canadian identity" (29-30).

D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels provide an assertive representation of hybridity by demonstrating the interconnected relationship between different social and linguistic discourses as a privilege rather than a disturbance. They juxtapose the dominant language with untranslated passages from the language of their cultural origins to reveal their need to be heard in plural terms. Furthermore, including untranslated passages in minority languages constitutes an implicit act of resistance to the hegemony of one language. This act of resistance empowers the voice on the margins.

ii) The Margins

The concept of margins originated as an oppositional term to contest the homogenizing position of an "imperial centre" (Ashcroft *et al.* 2). While the margins signify marginalization, alienation, discrimination and division, in the Introduction to *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest that the margins also represent a "source of creative energy" (12). The voices who speak from the margins locate their power through their ability to effect cultural change both from "within and between societies" (32). Himani Bannerji suggests that labels such as "visible minority" create these margins and emphasize "both the features of being non-white and therefore visible in ways whites are not, and of being politically minor players" (30).

It may be, however, that another reading of the voices on the margins is possible. Speaking from the margins in a language that is not one's own, from the outside looking in, offers both visible and non-visible minorities a unique perspective. As Moisan and Hildebrand note, it is found in "[leur] pouvoir

d'exprimer le réel dans toute son extension, sur ses facultés de dévoilement de ce qui se cache derrière les stéréotypes, les clichés et les images toutes faites" (11). Transcultural writers also demonstrate the ways in which these minority groups negotiate their dualities and cultural contradictions. In her essay, "Old World Traditions, New World Inventions: Bilingualism, Multiculturalism, and the Transformation of Ethnicity," Mary Kirtz describes the negotiation process minority groups face when they seek group representation as

> belonging to neither group yet having characteristics of both (like the conquerors, they chose to leave a homeland; like the conquered, they are considered economically and socially inferior) places, they [transcultural citizens] live in a no-man's land which is neither the center nor the margin, yet [it is an environment in which] they must seek an accommodation with both…[in order] to be [part of] any kind of place at all (Kirtz 19).

This accommodation between the centre and the margin is not without its challenges because the transcultural Self validates its presence by insisting on hybrid, shifting notions of identity. Minority literature and its narrative reflect, as Mary Klages suggests, "stories that explain small practices, local events, rather than large-scale universal or global concepts" otherwise known as grand narratives (4). Thus, the voices on the margins reveal to what extent their presence affects the central culture and how they are in turn affected by that centre.

Bakhtin proposes that "a meaning only reveals its depth once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures" (7). The incorporation of foreign language

dialogue allows writers who speak from the peripheries of a dominant society to contest their marginalized position. They do so by privileging those readers who speak and understand the marginalized language and othering, to a certain degree, the unilingual reader who speaks only the dominant language by forcing him or her to seek out the translation of the untranslated marginalized language. Thus, a heterological linguistic dialogue allows transcultural writers to insist on meaning in plural terms.

iii) Hybridity

How can plurality or multiple representations of subjectivity be constructive? And to whom? In *The Empire Writes Back Again*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin posit "that the strength of post-colonial theory" rests within its "comparative methodology and the hybridized and syncretic view of the modern world" (35). Within this context, the search for "difference on equal terms" becomes an important aspect of hybridity (35). Hybridity, in its original form, is a pejorative concept because it prevents the construction of belonging and community along a common and fixed grid of reference. However, critics such as Wilson Harris offer literary scholars a new perspective. In his model, "hybridity in the present is constantly struggling to free itself from a past which stressed ancestry, and which valued the 'pure' over its threatening opposite, the 'composite'" (34). Harris views the concept of a Canadian mosaic as an empty concept unless it is substantiated through "corresponding theories of literary hybridity to replace the [existing] nationalist approach" (36). He evaluates hybridity as a source of strength. He believes that "cultures must be liberated from

the destructive dialectic of history" and that "imagination is the key" (36). Imagination is, however, dictated by history (past experience or ancestral connections) as much as it is by geography (space) and environment (culture). All three elements have a particular impact on constructions of hybridity and on what Harris labels as imagination. In order to challenge or "disrupt European notions of 'history,' writers like Harris affirm the importance of identity narratives that "focus on the 'Other'" thus removing privilege from the colonizer and granting it to the colonized (33).

iv) Language Variance

Transcultural writers who include their minority languages in texts create a forum in which to privilege marginalized voices. Literary scholars who focus on minority writing that speaks only through the dominant voice of the centre or only through a marginal voice limit their research. Given that "language appropriation convey[s] in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (Ashcroft *et al.* 38), writers who incorporate marginal languages, especially untranslated passages, may be said to be (re)claiming their particular subjectivity as hybrid individuals. D'Alfonso and Goto intersect French and English, the dominant languages, with the languages of their cultural origins, Italian and Japanese, acknowledging not only their own hybridity but also conveying their protagonists' particular hybrid identity. Through an identification with their ancestral voices, these characters also affirm their cultural difference in relation to the dominant Canadian centre. They characterize their differences through

language variance. In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest that

> The 'overlap' of language which occurs when texture, sound, rhythm, and words are carried over from the mother tongue to the adopted literary form, or when the appropriated [E]nglish is adapted to a new situation, is something which the writer may take as evidence of his ethnographic or differentiating function – an insertion of the 'truth' of culture into the text (sometimes conceived as an insertion of its essential cultural 'purity') (52).

In a postcolonial context, the hegemony of one language has negative connotations because it represents the oppressive influences of the colonizer upon the colonized. This is commonly known as diglossia. Language variance, however, or untranslated dialogue carries the "power and presence of the culture they signify….[They become] metaphoric in their 'inference of identity and totality'" (51).

For instance, Dionne Brand's poetry in *No Language is Neutral* includes both standard English and Caribbean "nation language" (24). Her poetry suggests that language variance is a marker of subjectivity for the transcultural writer:

> I have come to know something simple. Each sentence realized or dreamed jumps like a pulse with history and takes a side. What I say in any language is told in faultless knowledge of skin, in drunkenness and weeping, told as a woman without matches and tinder, not in words and in words and in words learned by heart, told in secret and not in secret, and listen, does not burn out or waste and is plenty and pitiless and loves (31).

This excerpt expresses the relationship between language and the Self as a very personal one that cannot be restricted to a single language or, in Bakhtinian terms, a monological voice. In her essay, "I am Blackening in My Way: Identity and Place in Dionne Brand's *No Language is Neutral*," Teresa Zackodnik also speaks

of Brand's poetry through Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia: "Brand's creation of a heteroglossia in the co-presence of nation language and standard English is an appropriation of both languages…[because] both languages…affirm those branches of her identity that…[have been] denied" to her (201). The title chosen for this poetry collection also reveals that Brand views language as a subjective communication tool. Like Brand, writers such as D'Alfonso and Goto employ more than one language in their novels to assert their *particular* connection to languages.

v) James Clifford's Traveler: In-Between Spaces

A plural dialogue contests unilingual representations of cultural identity. D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists travel between languages and assert their identities in hybrid terms. Within this context of traveling between languages, I am also using the term traveler in reference to James Clifford's concept of culture as travel. Essentially, Clifford's traveler and the ethnographer occupy the same role. In his essay, "Traveling Cultures," he defines ethnographers as "travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time) [They are travelers] who like to make a second/home/workplace" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 99). For Clifford, culture and language are not singular concepts. He cites Bakhtin's ideas about language as a "diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no 'native' – let alone visitor – can ever learn" (99). The use of intersecting languages by D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists turns them into travelers and/or ethnographers of sorts. These travelers, like D'Alfonso's and Goto's subjects, do not want to

> replace the cultural figure "native" with the [trans]cultural figure "traveler." Rather the[ir] task is to focus on concrete mediations of the two, in specific cases of…tension and relationship. In varying degrees, both are constitutive of what will count [for them] as cultural experience (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 101).

However, for the reader, movement between languages manifests itself both as "location and displacement" since the untranslated passages necessitate either a direct translation or a contextual reading giving perhaps a partial, even missed understanding (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 97). The reader must inevitably question how each protagonist is "local [and] in whose terms?" (97). In addition, the reader must also ask: "Who determines where (and when) a community draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders?" (97). This means that being othered can occur either from the centre and/or on the margins. Thus, the hybrid traveler moves between a culture's insiders (at the centre) and its outsiders (on the margins).

Each protagonist asks, and in many ways also responds to, the following question posed by Clifford: "How do groups [or individuals] negotiate themselves in [an] external relationship and how is a culture also a site of travel for others?" (101). The external relationship represents the traveler's negotiation between a dominant culture and his or her own ethnic periphery. The traveler continually (re)negotiates his or her position between these points, and the traveler who *voluntarily* moves between these axes becomes the transcultural or hybrid citizen.

In Clifford's model, delineated in *The Predicament of Culture*, culture is always being renegotiated because ethnological travelers are

> constantly moving between cultures….Perpetually displaced, both regionally focused and broadly comparative, [these ethnological

> travelers represent] a form both of dwelling [in one place] and of travel [between places], in a world where the two experiences are less and less distinct (9).

As an ethnographer, Clifford finds it "increasingly hard to conceive of human diversity as inscribed in bounded, independent cultures"(23). Ethnographers aim to translate "experience into textual form" (25). They observe "culture as an assemblage of texts to be interpreted" (38). Clifford's term *traveler* is therefore a useful tool for explaining and interpreting hybrid experiences in transcultural writing. These travelers employ language as a tool that "expresses and oppresses, educates and manipulates" their construction of identity (Hutcheon 210). The traveler's position as the Other shifts between the centre and its ethnic peripheries. Moving between cultures means that the traveler cannot identify with only one culture or language. Thus, the traveler occupies an in-between space of contradictions and connections of colliding cultures.

Clifford's "traveler" also endeavours to answer the question "Where are you between?" rather than the standard "Where are you from?" (109). This in-between space reveals how "everyone is more or less permanently in [cultural] transit" (109). The traveler's movement between cultures emphasizes the importance of knowing "where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 96). In the preceding quotation, rate does not suggest speed; rather, it emphasizes how successfully a traveler constructs his or her hybrid identity while moving between cultures.

vi) Mikhail Bakhtin: Heterology, Heteroglossia, and the Other

Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas about heterology and heteroglossia reveal how

identity, culture, and language cannot be defined in homogeneous terms. His concept of the Other and its outside position contextualize an exploration of hybridity. As previously stated in the Introduction, Bakhtin values the outside position that the Other holds. This notion of "the heterogeneous composition of [self] image" relies on a relational but distinct position of self-definition where the "the nature of one's idea of one self, of one's I…is principally distinguished from [the] idea of the *other"* (Bakhtin 146). In addition, his ideas about heterology suggest that hybridity (of some sort) is inevitable in defining identity and culture. Tzevetan Todorov defines Bakhtin's heterology as a system of dialogue and meaning. Todorov views heterology as a term that "inserts itself between...heteroglossia or diversity of languages and...heterophony or diversity of (individual) voices" (56). He also suggests that heterology "is, in a way, natural to society; [because] it arises spontaneously from social diversity" (57). Thus, the co-presence of languages in novels requires the reader to engage in a multiple reading of meaning.

The term "meaning" refers to "individual, unique and unrepeatable language system[s]" (Bakhtin 105) that incorporate Bakhtin's notion of the polyphonic novel as an "unfinalized and infinite system of dialogues", words and languages (Bakhtin 152). According to Bakhtin,

> in language, there is no word or form left that would be neutral or would belong to no one: all of language turns out to be scattered, permeated with intentions, accented....[L]anguage is not an abstract system of normative forms but a concrete heterological opinion on the world....[E]very word smells of the context and contexts in which it has lived its intense social life; all words and all forms are inhabited by intentions. In the word, contextual harmonies (of the genre, of the current, the individual) are

unavoidable (qtd. in Todorov 56-57).

Similarly, Bakhtin refers to dialogue as a "multiplicity of focuses" (Bakhtin 155), defining it as "an unstable, changing and renewable set of past meanings" (Bakhtin 170). He contests the concept of unification, a centripetal force or one common language, referring instead to the notion of centrifugal or heterological forces (Todorov 58). Thus, his ideas about heterology assert the importance of "the diversity of languages and the diversity of individuals (language gives expression to the national spirit, and the utterance to individual spirit)" (Todorov 59). Moreover, Craig Brandist's reference to Bakhtin's views about the novel as a representation of "all the ideological voices of its era...all the era's languages that have any claim to being significant" asserts the notion of difference in affirmative rather than negative terms (10). In his paper entitled "The Bakhtin Circle", Brandist quotes Bakhtin to explain his idea further:

> Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other, each of which in its own way reflects a little piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess at and grasp behind their inter-reflecting aspects for a world that is broader, more multi-leveled and multi-horizoned than would be available to one language, one mirror (11).

D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists construct their hybridity by demonstrating the "inter-reflecting" and inter-relational dynamics possible between languages. Although Bakhtin recognizes the benefits of experiencing "a foreign culture...through its eyes", he believes that true understanding comes from a position "located outside [that culture]...in time, in space, in [the eyes of another] culture" (Bakhtin xiii). The representations of the Other in D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels provide "a [Bakhtinian] multiplicity of focuses"

and bring "distant things closer without [necessarily] indicating the intermediate links" (Bakhtin 155). With these ideas, I am thus able to argue in this thesis that hybrid identities affirm difference and empower the voices which speak from the margins.

> It is possible to form and repeat those parts of ourselves which are repeatable in order to begin to recognize the sound of the self forming as different world views meet to negotiate experience...each language still speaks me differently, because it must, but each speaks me more fully.
>
> Dore Michelut, *Coming to Terms with the Mother Tongue*

CHAPTER TWO – Antonio D'Alfonso's *Avril ou l'anti-passion*

This chapter explores the construction of hybrid identity as an empowered position through an analysis of Antonio D'Alfonso's protagonist, Fabrizio Notte, in *Avril.* As a transcultural citizen, Fabrizio's ability to travel between languages also reveals his inability, or his refusal, to communicate in one language. Through his linguistic travels, he also challenges the Anglo-Franco dichotomy and validates Beautell's "cross-cultural approach" which evades "the imperial/colonial confrontation, and its counterpart opposition of original/copy…moving forward towards a decentred concept of culture [transculturalism]" (24). In *Avril,* Fabrizio's narrative also provides the reader with a fragmented overview of his life in Montreal, his connection to family, friends and lovers. Nonlinear references to his lived experience suggest that Fabrizio has difficulty defining his subjectivity. It is ultimately a story of one man's process of understanding and his fragmented reconciliation of his hybrid identity.

Fabrizio's trilingual discourse establishes that he travels among three different languages: French, Italian and English. He identifies himself using French, Quebec's dominant language, as well as Italian, his linguistic heritage. His use of English affirms its influence in his life. Since Fabrizio does not define himself by way of one language, he resembles Clifford's ethnographer or cultural

traveler. Like Clifford's ethnographer, he defines home as a place "away from home where [he] speaks the language and has a kind of vernacular competence" of other linguistic and cultural contexts ("Traveling Cultures" 100). As a hybrid intermediary," [Fabrizio acts as] a sort of "participant" observer who circles 'inside and outside [different] social situations" (100). A hybrid traveler, he is "always crossing borders between languages" and it is this movement that allows him to articulate his hybrid experience (Keefer 86).

The interaction among languages also obliges the reader to seek meaning beyond one language. Fabrizio's refusal to communicate in just one language forces the reader to negotiate with several. The reader from the dominant French linguistic culture must translate the untranslated English and Italian in the text if she or he wishes to have an accurate understanding of the meaning resulting from this interaction of languages. The writer's decision not to translate may be viewed as a strategy to encourage translation by the reader. This process of linguistic negotiation may be valuable for the reader because it allows the reader to seek linguistic meaning in hybrid terms. Moreover, seeking out translation increases a reader's awareness of the othered language(s) in his or her community. While this may discourage some readers from such texts, those who seek out translation will broaden their linguistic horizons. These readers travel in other linguistic and cultural worlds, albeit temporarily, by exploring words and meaning in another language.

As a writer, D'Alfonso also travels among languages. He translates his own novels from French to English and into Italian. His poetry collections, such

as *Queror* (1979), translated as *Black Tongue* (1983), and *The Other Shore* (1986, 1988), translated as *L'Autre Rivage* (1987) reflect D'Alfonso's personal and rather bittersweet relationship with language(s), identity, and self-definition. In his collection of essays, *In Italics: In Defense of Ethnicity* (1996), translated as *En Italiques* (2000), D'Alfonso reveals his personal views about ethnicity. He expresses his deep-rooted sense of exile: "Enfant, j'ai vite compris que je ne possédais aucun pays d'origine, aucun pays d'appartenance et que, paradoxalement, je n'avais que des origines, que des appartenances mais pas de pays" (*En Italiques* 17). He also translated his novel *Avril ou l'anti-passion* (1990) into English as *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995) and, more recently, into Italian as *La passione de Fabrizio* (2002), demonstrating his love of, and his need to be understood in, all three languages. D'Alfonso's connection to Italian, French and English is evident in his French-language novel *Avril* which includes many English and Italian words and phrases. This linguistic juxtaposition is a "multiple, adjacent, and overlapping [space of] cultures and languages," (Moyes 6). D'Alfonso's use of three languages also demonstrates the way in which he symbolically travels between Italy and Quebec, and Quebec and the rest of Canada.

i) Canadian Italian Literature

Other writers of Italian origin in Canada preceded D'Alfonso, and it is useful to examine, albeit briefly, the roots of their literature. Tracing their origins allows us to better appreciate D'Alfonso's hybrid literary style. Susan Ianucci defines Canadian Italian writing as "a body of literature in English, French, and

Italian produced by writers who have at least one parent of Italian origin…[it is] a literature which touches both Italy and Canada" (224). Like its English language counterpart, it begins in the bush (204). Mario Duliani's text *La ville sans femmes* (1945)[9] is a fictionalized account of the time he spent in an internment camp "in the wilderness" (Iannucci 211). Iannucci suggests that there are parallels between Duliani's writing and Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush.*[10] Subsequent literature by writers of Italian origin focuses on immigration issues.[11] Such writers as Frank Paci, Marco Micone and Filippo Salvatore address themes of conflict between generations and the "exploitation of Italian immigrants and workers" in cities like Montreal (Iannucci 218). Death is also a recurring theme, representing both the actual death of family members (who often die in Italy), and the symbolic death of a culture.

D'Alfonso's writing, especially his poetry, also reflects themes of the symbolic death of culture. He also demonstrates his wish to be acknowledged in three languages. He cannot, as Iannucci affirms, "remain fixated on his origins for very long, especially when those origins are in a country far away and a culture very different from the one he is living and working in" (225). This may explain why his protagonist Fabrizio validates the influences of the French, Italian and

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[9] Italian poems appeared in Montreal in the 1920s and the 1930s. In 1928, in Toronto, a text about Italian ethnic history was written by Francesco Gualtieri entitled *We Italians: A Study of Italian Immigration in Canada.* However, according to Joseph Pivato, it is only Duliani's novel that seems to have survived from this early period.
Source: http://www.albertasource.ca/abitalian/illcongresso/articles/ilcongresso88b.htm.

[10] Ianucci states that the protagonist in both novels "find themselves in a forest which they try to turn into a garden; both are cut off from a culture where they had a place and thrust into one where they do not feel at home; both talk frequently about disease and feel like they have vanished into the grave; finally, both are imprisoned" (211).

[11] See, for example the anthology of poems *Roman Candles* (1978) written by seventeen different Italo-Canadian poets and edited by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco.

English languages in his life. Fabrizio's usage of and attachment to different languages suggests that he embodies Bakhtin's notion of "exotopy", where one culture can only be understood when it encounters another (Todorov 109). Bakhtin describes exotopy as the "most powerful level of understanding" that can only be understood through others and their "external aspect" as the Other (qtd. in Todorov 109). Thus, Fabrizio reveals his alien [Italian] language through the "eyes of [his] ...*other"* languages – French and English (Todorov 109).

ii) Italian Immigration to Quebec

What does it mean to be a French-Canadian Italian for citizens like Fabrizio? While Italians began arriving in Canada as early as the 1900s, I am focusing on the period between 1959 and 1988 in which Fabrizio's experiences are set. According to a study conducted by Paul-André Linteau, in 1961 Italians accounted for the highest percentage of immigrants in Montreal.[12] Until the 1960s and the beginning of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, Italians lived in Quebec as a "separate ethnic institution" that promoted an "intense community life (of the Italians) (Linteau 188). More than 70% of Italian children in Quebec attended English schools. In D'Alfonso's text, Fabrizio explains that he and his sister attend an English school even though "il y a une école [française] à deux pas de notre maison" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 55). Fabrizio's father understands that l'Amérique est anglaise" and he wants his chiidren to speak *"correctamente* la langue de cette majorité" (55). Like other immigrants, Fabrizio's parents have "left their country to improve their standard of living... [and] English seemed to be

[12] The Italian population increased from 34, 165 in 1951 to 108,552 in 1961, making it the largest ethnic group neither French nor British in origin [in Montreal]....They are now estimated to number more than 160,000 in Greater Montreal (as of the mid 1990s)" (Linteau 184).

necessary for economic advancement and for mobility towards other areas of Canada and North America" (Linteau 191). Tensions and conflicts inevitably arise when the Italian communities become "pawns" in a power struggle between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians over language laws (Linteau 196). The "majority of Italians remained in favour of the status quo – free choice – which in practice meant the right to educate their chiidren in English" (Linteau 200). Quebec's language laws (Bill 63 in 1969, Bill 22 in 1974, and Bill 101 in 1977) strengthened rather than weakened their Italian "sense of identity" (Painchaud and Poulin qtd. in Linteau 203). In Montreal, "Italian is used much more for family and neighbourhood communication than it is in Toronto" (Painchaud and Poulin qtd. in Linteau 203).[13] In fact, Claude Painchaud and Richard Poulin suggest that "ethnic and language tensions of [past] years allowed a new Italian-Quebec bourgeoisie to establish power within the community" (qtd. in Linteau 203).

By writing in Canada's two official languages, D'Alfonso enlarges his reading audience and by writing in Italian, he establishes an important link with the Italian community in Canada and elsewhere. He expresses this connection to different languages through the recurring motif of duality. This is evident in his poem, "Je suis duel" where he describes his identity as a double image:

> Je suis de deux nations, de deux imaginaires [...] Je suis duel: 1.

[13] Bill 63 in 1968 "sanctioned the existing principle of free choice but sought to promote the teaching of French in the English school system and to ensure that all the peoples of Quebec, whatever their origin, be able to speak French" (Linteau 197). Bill 22 in 1974 went further: "The English school system was to remain intact for the population of British origin, but immigrant children were to enter the French school system" (197). Finally, Bill 101 in 1977 "considerably" restricted access to English-language schools. Only children with at least one parent who had studied in an English-language primary school in Quebec were allowed to attend" and other points were added to ensure an "entire society" of "French" speakers (198).

> Québécois, avec tout ce que cette notion comprend: 2. Italien, avec tout ce que cette notion comprend. Je vis de certitudes imparfaites et de mes contradictions (D'Alfonso, *L'Autre Rivage* 143).

Here, D'Alfonso does not refer to himself as a hybrid or transcultural person; in fact, he avoids these terms. Nevertheless, I am suggesting that such terms are useful for understanding his protagonist's hybrid identity since focusing on Fabrizio's cultural plurality requires an acknowledgment of his connection to different cultural contexts.

iii) Fabrizio Notte – Québécois, Italian or Both?

This connection to different cultures represents both liberty and entrapment for Fabrizio. His cultural origins are Italian, but he was born in Quebec. Even so, he must still deal with labels such as immigrant and outsider. He occupies an outside position as the Other, as a hybrid Italian Québécois. In an essay entitled "The Other As Double: Italo-Québécois Writers," Joseph Pivato explains that "the risk with this doubleness is duplicity, deception, self-deception, madness and [perhaps even] death" (227). Pivato's observations about doubleness imply, perhaps unwittingly, that cultural dualities (like racial dualities) can be problematic since they result in contradictory affinities with cultural markers of religion, traditions, and languages.

Therefore, Fabrizio's process of defining his hybrid identity involves the understanding and assertion of his duality and the creation of his shifting in-between space. While he does not explicitly define himself as a hybrid citizen, Fabrizio reveals the contradictory and diverging cultural, social, and even political influences that determine his identity. As a result, he continually (re)negotiates how he represents himself on his own terms. As Winfried Siemerling states, "ethnicity is...a relational identification that requires more than one identity in

order to exist" (2). As Fabrizio's subjectivity shifts among French-speaking, English-speaking and Italian-speaking identities, his outsider's position as Other also shifts between these linguistic sites. He implicitly reveals his positioning as the outsider through his feelings of angst and an unspoken sense of exile.

> Pourquoi chercher [une réponse existentielle au sens de la vie] quand la recherche est condamnée d'avance? Chercher quoi ? On revient au point de départ. Donc, à l'Eros. Et mon Eros est mort. Je ne vois plus, je suis dans le noir des regards de l'autre (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 81).

Here, Fabrizio suggests that the quest for meaning, in this case through the search for identity, can become futile when there is no fixed point of reference. Moreover, meaning as articulated through identity becomes corrupt when someone else dictates its definition. Similarly, the creation of his in-between space is an indeterminate act since the location of culture is affected by "the presence of other possible locations and cultures, and nothing can claim the status of authenticity" (Samantrai 34). Since power relations between a minority culture and a dominant cultural centre determine how each transforms and influences the other, the creation of an authentic identity for someone like Fabrizio remains elusive. "[I]ntervening in an interconnected world, [he]...is to varying degrees, `inauthentic': caught between cultures, implicated in others" (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 11). Fabrizio must accept this inauthentic status or risk, as Pivato states, "madness and death" (227). Thus, the reader, much like Clifford's ethnographer, explores Fabrizio's subjectivity as something "mixed, relational, and inventive" (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 10). Fabrizio's metaphoric travels through the Italian, French and English languages suggest he rejects the concept of a pure country: "Il n'y pas de pays `pur', nous sommes tous *d'ailleurs"* (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 88). By discounting the notion of a pure nation, he

affirms, in a positive way, his inauthentic state and validates his hybrid identity. Rather than viewing Fabrizio's hybridity as a negative and conflicted condition, I choose to define it as a privileged state that engages the reader in a plurality of meanings about language and identity.

iv) Title

Fabrizio does not explicitly celebrate or deny his position as outsider. In fact, the title *Avril ou l'anti-passion* and many of the chapter sub-headings bespeak his culturally divided identity. In Chapter Six, entitled "Bête noire", he cites a passage from T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland". In an analysis of the poem, Lesley Cody explains that it parallels "the fractured nature of society" (1). In addition, Cody reveals that "the short broken nature of the lines is synonymous with the broken nature of society" (1).

> April is the cruelest month, breeding/
> Lilacs out of the dead land... mixing/
> memory and desire, stirring/
> Dull roots with spring rain (in D'Alfonso, *Avril* 72).

The lines quoted by D'Alfonso above describe the point between death and rebirth as a liminal state – a momentary point in time when neither exists. Moreover, the absence of something (dead land or a dead society) becomes a memory and exists only as an unfulfilled longing. Fabrizio's fragmented discourse suggests that there are moments when he finds himself in this liminal position. For him, they reflect what Susan Iannucci

describes as "a sense of wandering between two worlds, one dead/the other powerless to be born [at least immediately]" (224). Expressing himself through language or writing permits him to escape this wandering state and temporarily

and symbolically reconcile his various dualities. As he states :

> il est faux de penser que l'écriture est une absurdité. Elle facilite la concentration et met de l'ordre là ou règne la confusion. Aller à la dérive comme si cet égarement rendait l'existence plus conciliante. Entrez en contact avec soi-même et veiller à son propre accouchement (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 179-180).

He also reveals his fragmented state by sharing some of his parents' experiences in Italy. First, he translates his parents' journal entries from Italian to French. They represent a "written trace" of his Italian heritage, and they permit Fabrizio to understand his Italian past (Moyes 2). The entries that his mother Lina exchanges with his father Guido before they are married suggest that Lina views liberation and entrapment as ambiguous experiences. The following quotation from the first chapter in the novel reveals her sense of ambiguity. She writes, "Nous sommes libérés. Je me demande pourtant si c'est mieux maintenant que sous le régime fasciste" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 18). Lina questions the terms of freedom, wondering what they really represent. Although Italy is freed from Mussolini's control, she realizes that her country will never be the same again because now it is overrun by Americans, whose presence is negative. She writes that "les filles des paysans se plaignent du comportement des Américains" suggesting mistreatment and/or abuse (18). Furthermore, every dated passage in the novel, except the last, is a particular day in April, a significant detail since Italy was liberated from the Germans in April 1945.[14] Similarly, by focusing on events in his life that take place in April, Fabrizio's discourse implicitly questions the distinction between liberty and entrapment in Quebec which Fabrizio

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[14] Date reference: www.encyclopedia.com.html/section/Mussolin_FatefulAlliancewith Germany.asp

specifically expresses by revealing his experiences as a linguistic insider and outsider.

As a citizen who travels among three languages, he is forced to make difficult choices. For example, in Montreal he lives as "trois personnes en une seule" (180). He embraces the city with all its defects and advantages, its "regards divers...plein de larmes, au sourire arrogant, ville prétentieuse" (180). As Lianne Moyes explains, "the text emphasizes the set of choices Fabrizio confronts each time he speaks or writes and concretizes the way in which languages cohabit the space of Montreal" (5). His identity is Italian "as much as...Québécois and Canadian," thus it is "plural and deterritorialized" (5). Montreal is Fabrizio's playground and his prison. While it allows him to define himself as a hybrid citizen, it also denies him entry into the dominant Québécois culture as a so-called pure citizen. He will never be *Québécois de souche,* a purebred citizen, or a native Italian; therefore he is an outsider in the dominant Québécois and marginalized Italian-immigrant cultures.

In addition, the prefix "anti" in the title is also suggestive of Fabrizio's oppositional stance as a film maker, another important activity that he engages in to reconcile his various dualities. Fabrizio does not choose to produce films that interest the mainstream public. Thus, the prefix "anti" illustrates his oppositional ideas. For instance, his desire to produce a film version of Sophocles' *Antigone* on his terms reveals his need to create "un monde qui respire l'air que je respire : voilà l'unique rêve que j'accomplis (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 198). Fabrizio dedicates his production of *Antigone* to his sister Lucia, stating that

> ces images de toi dans la peau d'Antigone sont un chant de goélands qui tels les serpents, muent, et changent le nom des choses. Les clous que nous plantons dans les murs pour fixer une photo de notre grand-mère, la toile d'un ami, le poème d'un poète, ce sont les piliers de notre histoire défaite, à refaire (170).

Like Fabrizio, Lucia does not wish to be categorized as an immigrant or outsider in Quebec and she views, perhaps as does Fabrizio, Antigone as "le symbole de l'unification universelle" (173). Fabrizio also believes that visual images translate meaning differently than textual ones. Thus, his wish to interpret *Antigone's* story from about twenty different written versions illustrates the importance he attributes to multiple perspectives. He believes that the camera has a unique vantage point because a visual image does more than simply translate "la phrase telle qu'elle a été écrite" (164). Similarly, Fabrizio's use of intersecting languages asserts his hybrid identity differently than it would be asserted through a unilingual dialogue. The prefix anti also suggests that Fabrizio seeks self-identification through opposition – he rejects established or stereotypical notions of passion in the same manner that he rejects notions of authentic and pure identities. For instance, he describes his identity as "trois visions différentes sur la même ville" (180).

v) Hybridity and the Other

Fabrizio's plurality develops from his ambiguous sense of cultural identity. As a child, he remembers his parents' words, ones that insinuate that he and his sister are outsiders in Quebec. "Je ne comprends pas lorsque père et mère nous répètent à ma soeur et moi que les 'autres' peuvent faire ce qu'ils veulent ici puisqu'ils sont chez eux. Tandis que nous faisons tout notre possible qui parfois ne

suffit même pas" (56). *Les autres* in this quotation represent the dominant French-speaking Quebec culture while Fabrizio and his family, nominally from the peripheral Italian culture, represent in Guido's world view, the centre. Guido therefore reverses the traditional designation of the Other as someone from the cultural margins. This reversal suggests that Guido views his Italian culture as the dominant one.

While Guido draws a distinct line between the Italians and the Québécois, Fabrizio does not. As a child, he describes his experiences with the children in his neighbourhood as unfolding in a place without cultural barriers. Here he is free to "sortir et pénétrer dans le vrai monde, en tout cas celui que nous nous inventons sans nos parents. Un monde qui transforme nos contradictions en complexités. Notre identité est un jeu, un divertissement, et pas encore une confrontation" (50-51). Fabrizio's playground with his friends becomes a place where he can creatively construct a hybrid identity. In Fabrizio's childhood memories with his friends, racial and cultural barriers do not exist. Since he experiences no cultural division or conflict, it resembles the dwelling that Clifford's ethnographer occupies – that in-between place that becomes

> a home away from home where... [the ethnographer or cultural traveler] speaks the language [of the other] and has a kind of vernacular competence…[As a]...participant observe[r], the ethnographer or cultural traveler has], a kind of hermeneutic freedom to circle inside and outside social situations (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 100).

Moreover, Fabrizio's godparents' environment reflects the hybrid lifestyle that Fabrizio longs for. He describes his godfather as "un Notte québécois...tout ce que je désir devenir" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 63). His Montreal-born, Italian godfather,

his father's cousin, marries a Québécois, and Fabrizio cannot believe that she speaks his family's Italian dialect as fluently as his parents. He describes her ability to speak Italian as "la modernité, de l'ouverture québécoise" (62). His godparents have three children, and as a child, Fabrizio believes that "en imitant [ses] cousins, [il se] prépare à un meilleur avenir" (63). His wish to duplicate his cousins' lifestyle demonstrates his aspiration to travel between cultures. Fabrizio's godparents provide him with a successful working model of hybridity. His desire to live their reality reflects his need to be identified as a Quebecker and an Italian, beginning at a very young age.

Furthermore, Fabrizio's need to connect with the French language stems from his ignorance of his Italian roots. As he explains, "c'est une façon comme une autre de fuir une réalité qu'on ne maîtrise pas" (63). Consequently, as a child, he also overvalues his connection to Quebec, describing a Québécois as "un héros à aduler" (63). His story or mini-narrative reflects his outside position on the periphery of two different linguistic cultures — the French-speaking and the Italian-speaking. Dino Minni describes this presence as outsider as a "particular position, standing outside looking in and seeing reality from a different angle" (Salvatore 118). As a hybrid Quebecker, Fabrizio observes and understands his Italian linguistic origins from an inside/outside position and his daily encounters with the French and English languages reflect his negotiation of an in-between position since he does not fully belong to or identify with one language.

In her essay entitled "Writing Back and Beyond: Postcoloniality, Multiculturalism and Ethnicity in the Canadian Context", Eva Darias Beautell

shares her ideas on "ethnicities, identities and marginalities" (19). According to Beautell, too much focus "on the periphery/center opposition position…ignores the many contradictions, discontinuities and inequalities that constitute Canadian space" (24). As stated in Chapter One, Goto's and D'Alfonso's protagonists explore cultural identity as a continual position of travel between the centre and its peripheries. Beautell also asserts this form of cultural interaction. She believes that cross-cultural encounters and the "possibility of internal and multiple peripheries and centres within" the broader Canadian space need to be explored (24). She also suggests that "transculturalism is based on the process of constant cultural interaction" (30). The use of untranslated languages in D'Alfonso's text supports Beautell's ideas on cross-cultural exchanges. As D'Alfonso states, "une communauté [qui] s'enferme dans son propre dialecte ou son nationalisme linguistique…ne pourra jamais construire les ponts qui la reliéront à d'autres centres" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 72).

In *Avril*, Fabrizio's closest friend, Mario Berger, a Québécois, offers the reader a similar viewpoint by stating that "un pays ne peut plus se limiter au pouvoir d'une seule tribu, ni la culture à une seule langue, ni une civilisation à une seule idéologie. L'histoire est en marche et nous marchons avec elle" (88). In this passage, Mario suggests that the definition of one's national identity should not be homogeneous or static because "il n'y a pas de pays 'pur', nous sommes tous d'ailleurs" (88). He equates homogeneity with confinement referring to it as: "Un amour 'clos', produit inconscient, mais réel, de la recherché d'une pureté de la nation" (89). Fabrizio's close relationship with Mario implies that his vision

resembles Mario's. He confirms this in the following quotation: "Je parlerai d'où je viens une fois que j'aurai parlé d'où je suis. Je peux rester toute ma vie une apatride, un éternel pèlerin, si je plante un arbre dans chacun des lieux où je m'arrête. J'ai un devoir de créer la vie avant de la critiquer. Je ne peux tuer ce qui n'existe pas encore" (181). Furthermore, Fabrizio does not limit the notion of planting roots to *one* place. The above quotation also refers to his in-between hybrid status since he speaks about being a "stateless" citizen. Thus, his complex outsider's position is in fact constructive. He also validates his hybridity through two personal relationships: his French-Canadian friend Mario Berger and Mario's wife Léah, a woman of Hungarian origins. In contrast, he establishes his connection with his Italian heritage through his relationship with his family.

vi) Love

Fabrizio expresses love as he does his relationship with language, as a fragmented experience. Indeed, love becomes a form of linguistic intertwining. He has his first sexual encounter with Léah when he is only seventeen years old. She expresses her attraction to him through her desire to press "[ses] lèvres hongroises sur celles d'un Italien" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 74). He explains that he is attracted to her because of her ability to love, as she says "sans frontières, sans loi, sans raison" (82). Her words reflect his ideas about nations or identities without borders. Fabrizio seeks out difference as a means of connecting, thus ascribing a value to his hybrid identity (101). Through their intimacy, he symbolically creates something new. "[Leurs] langues cherchent un nouveau langage

dans le fond de [leurs] bouches et finalement c'est, une fois de plus, le silence qui parle le plus fort" (103). By literally and metaphorically engaging with Leah's tongue, Fabrizo forges a temporary connection in his otherwise fragmented world. Furthermore, Léah's ability to sing in Italian, for example (Puccini's "O mio babbino caro") and in Hungarian (with lines such as"mar en is majdnem Veled vagyok, szerelmem"), both during and after their lovemaking, signals her own connection to different languages (104, 141).

Although Fabrizio and Léah share a passionate relationship, her marriage to his childhood friend Mario Berger marginalizes Fabrizio's relationship with her. Consequently, in Chapter Twenty-Three entitled "Désincarnation," he describes their union as "une relation morte", thereby exposing his rather ambivalent relationship with Léah (175). This ambivalence is also evident in Chapter Eleven, entitled "Lasagna in Brodo", in which the first person narrative switches from Fabrizio to Léah. Her indifferent and melancholy tone reveals her presence as an observer of, not as a participant in, their relationship.[15] "Il attend, j'attends. Je suis à l'extérieur, dans l'escalier qui ne mène nulle part" (99). She also describes herself as

> une femme avec une tête pleine de colère....Comment taire ce qui hurle si violemment en moi? Je préfère la petite faille de cette triste vie de famille à la grande liberté de l'isolement. Ici tout s'arrête. Le fleuve en moi gèle et ma terre sèche craque, bourrée de morts (100).

Léah's reference to her marriage as "une petite faille" illustrates the contradictions in her life that she cannot come to terms with (100)). Through her

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[15] The first person narrative voice also switches in Chapter Fourteen from Fabrizio to his sister Lucia, however this switch is not addressed in this thesis).

discourse, she implies that leaving her husband will not mean that she can be with Fabrizio. It will only result in her being alone. Her inability to participate fully in a relationship with either her husband Mario or with Fabrizio reveals her ambivalent connection to these two men and perhaps it also symbolizes her in-between identity between their different worlds. Her fragmented state symbolically also illustrates the complexity of her different cultural spaces and Léah's inability to identify with one space.

In the chapter, ironically entitled, "Romance," Fabrizio describes Léah as "endurcie comme la carapace d'un crustacé, et elle regénère les parties de son corps qu'on arrache" (101). He also refers to her presence in his life as addictive, stating "[J]e suis malade, autant que le toxicomane et l'alcoolique : comment me libérer de cette amie" (105). However his inability to be liberated from her illustrates his innate need for her. Léah embodies another unresolved fragment in Fabrizio's life. His views about love, summed up in Chapter Seven entitled "Désamour", reveal his personal insecurities: "Et moi je ne rime avec rien. Ne rime avec rien: Voilà le poème le plus laid au monde. Ne plus pouvoir rimer avec celle que j'aime, voilà ma laideur, ma prison. Ce suicide de si mauvais goût je te l'offre, *amore" (82).* The only Italian word, amore, appears in italics, accentuating Fabrizio's bittersweet state. He cannot come to terms with his relationship with Léah anymore than he can let her go.

Fabrizio's struggles with his hybrid identity parallel those he has in his relationship with Léah. Pierre Nepveu remarks that "l'un des passages les plus révélateurs du roman est celui où Fabrizio se retrouve une fois de plus

avec son amante d'origine hongroise, avec laquelle il trompe son meilleur ami québécois, Mario, triangle dont la dimension symbolique interculturelle est assez savoureuse" (Nepveu 113). Fabrizio's feelings for Mario and Léah metaphorically imprison him between different cultures and different loves. He cannot choose one person over the other anymore than he can identify himself through one cultural or linguistic context. Thus, he must negotiate a place between these different boundaries. It is this in-between negotiation that Fabrizio struggles to come to terms with.

vii) Defining Family

Fabrizio's closeness to his family and his Italian culture do not interfere with his negotiation as a hybrid citizen. Rather, they represent a positive presence in his otherwise ambiguous identity negotiations. Although he describes his connection to the Italian language as "un analphabétisme de second degré, c'est-à-dire un désapprentissage," his home environment is a nurturing one. (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 125). His parents represent

> un amour omniprésent et solidaire. Le mensonge et l'hystérie n'ont jamais pénétré... [leur] maison. Tout conflit a toujours été réglé à table, pendant le dîner....[L]e moindre malaise était discuté jusqu'à ce...[qu'ils trouvent] une solution (148).

For Fabrizio, home means love and an attachment to home equals an attachment to his Italian linguistic and cultural space. Fabrizio explains that "les espaces vitaux [de la maison] jouent certainement un rôle fondamental dans la formation de notre personnalité" (48). He describes the bathroom as "un lieu de repos où chacun trouve refuge pour lire un magazine ou son livre favori" (46). In this space, he also begins writing his "journal intime" and "découvre ce que [il]

possède du sexe mâle" (46). These two discoveries, writing and sexual impulse, dominate Fabrizio's actual experiences. In addition, Fabrizio's relationship with his sister Lucia is characterized as "[une] complicité fraternelle [qu'il]...nourri[t] à tout moment" (48). He describes his ability to communicate with her as a communication without inhibitions "sans tabou, nulle réaction n'est camouflée par aucun jeu de mots. Notre mot d'ordre : la sincerité" (48).

However, Fabrizio describes his domestic Italian space ambivalently when he broaches the subject of language use. He feels "une coupure partielle avec l'univers italien" within the home (125). For instance, there are no Italian equivalents for English words like microwave. This means that he needs both languages to express himself. Thus, he views his (linguistic) home as "tactile, [une]...langue impure, souillée comme la nappe après un repas (126). He confronts his linguistic inadequacies as an "immigrant et fils d'immigrant nés dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Monde, [quelqu'un qui] ne possédant plus les matériaux nécessaires au beau parler" (125). These untranslatable words not only reveal the untransferable nature of languages and demonstrate the need for a plural dialogue, they also demonstrate the linguistic adaptation that immigrants from the Old World face in the New World, changes that cannot be avoided.

viii) Food

Food functions as another connective in Fabrizio's pluralistic world. He describes the kitchen as " le coeur de la famille...[,] la pièce maîtresse du foyeritalien," a place that encourages "dialogue" and "discordance," where "tout se clarifie, tout s'effondre" (46). As a child, Fabrizio learns that his mother's pasta

is "[le] meilleur du monde" (59). He also understands that certain foods represent important holidays. His family eats "lasagne in brodo" a traditional dish prepared every Easter and Christmas. Fabrizio methodically explains the details of how to prepare this dish in Chapter Eleven entitled "lasagne in brodo," revealing the importance he places on this family ritual (98).

Food also serves as a symbol that unites people. When Fabrizio's sister Lucia brings home a Québécois named Peter, his father does not hide his initial dislike for him, explaining that he does not respect "un Québécois qui ne parle plus sa langue maternelle" (128). He views Peter's inability to speak French as an aberration, stating that "il ne veut pas ce genre de problème à la maison" (128). The family dinner with Peter lasts three hours with Fabrizio's father saying not one word to Peter during the entire meal. However, sharing the lengthy meal implicitly represents the father's negotiation with and acceptance of Peter's presence. At the end of the meal, Mr. Notte declares "ma fille est assez grande pour savoir ce qu'elle veut dans la vie. Si elle veut vous épouser, je ne l'en empêcherai pas. Je compte sur votre honnêteté, un point c'est tout" (133).

Fabrizio describes his sister's wedding as another occasion where food brings people together. Fabrizio comments that "après tant d'années de critiques impitoyables envers notre culture, nous revoilà réunis et attablés devant *l'antipasto, il brodo di polio, i cannelloni, la bistecca, l'insalata, il gelato"* (194). As a distinctive Italian marker, Italian food symbolically unifies five hundred people from various backgrounds. These guests are portrayed as caricatures, exaggerated representations of difference :

> Il y a Tina l'Irlandaise devenue italienne, Gino le philosophe devenu cordonnier, Carmine l'ornithologiste communiste, Marta la mère-poule, Michel l'Arabe juif et son épouse Mimi la musulmane anti-islamique, Paolo le peintre naïf accompagné de Maria son épouse séparatiste avec ses jumeaux, Frank la télévision-poème, Pipo le jardinier humaniste, soeur Fernanda pas du tout puritaine, Hélène a l'accueil chaleureux, Nadia la dame aux doigts mystérieux, les inséparables Marco et Gina, Gian Carlo le Don Giovanni misogyne, Piero le Don Juan héroïnomane impuissant, Berto le séducteur mafioso tout cru, Perina la secrétaire syndicaliste et sa petite amie, l'insatiable Anna avec ses trois petites filles qui sont toutes plus belle l'une que l'autre. Et j'en passe (194).

This lengthy description of some of the guests provides a satirical representation of Fabrizio's hybrid world. It also illustrates the family's hybrid circle of friends. Moreover, this gathering of people illustrates Montreal's ethnic diversity, suggesting that there are many others who negotiate their identities between different cultural and linguistic

spaces.

ix) The Co-Presence of Languages

The strongest marker of plurality in this novel is provided by Fabrizio's linguistically hybrid and fragmented discourse. His use of English, randomly inserted throughout the French text, reveals his ambiguous connection with this particular language. As he states: "I do not belong here [in this Anglophone space], and yet there is no place in which I would rather be" (73). Since this quotation appears in English and not in French or Italian, it suggests that his connection to English both attracts and repels him. His views as a cinematographer also reflect his ambivalence towards English:

> Je termine le scénario d'un film. Je ne veux pas utiliser la langue anglaise comme moyen d'expression....[C]ette langue pourtant est celle que je maîtrise le plus ! Mais ma vision cinématographique

> reposerait-elle exclusivement sur un fond latin, italien ou français ? (159)

Although Fabrizio does not want to produce a film in English, he wonders about relying simply on his Latin roots (French and Italian) to make a film. This questioning reveals his contradictory views of English. The following excerpt from D'Alfonso's poem "Babel" illuminates Fabrizio's shifting connection to French, Italian, and English. Although this poem does not appear in *Avril,* it is included here because it parallels Fabrizio's experiences in the novel:

> Nativo di Montréal
> Elévé comme Québécois
> Forced to learn the tongue of power
> Vivi en México como alternative [...]
> Figlio de sole e della campagna
> Finding thousands like me suffering
> Me case y divorcie en tierra fria
> Nipote di Guglionesi
> Parlant politique malgré moi [...]
> Dio where shall I be demain (D'Alfonso, *The Other Shore 57).*

The first English line, "forced to learn the tongue of power", acknowledges the influence of English in Quebec. The second line, "finding thousands like me suffering" suggests that the choices an immigrant faces can be painful.

Other references in this poem parallel Fabrizio's experiences. His parents come from Guglionesi, a village in Italy, and he was born in Montreal. In the novel, Fabrizio also spends time in Mexico, shooting a film. In addition, he illustrates his feelings about power relations and the hegemony of one language by speaking out against nationalist ideas:

> Enfant tripartite, j'aligne mes trois visions différentes sur la même ville. Que dire du fantasme nationaliste qui prétend que tous et chacun dans une région sont issus d'une même race *(sic),*

> détentrice d'une même et unique vision de la réalité sociale, culturelle et politique? (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 180)

Fabrizio's connection to the French, Italian and English languages reflects "the way in which one language encounters another, reporting and modifying the utterance by re-accentuating it" (Brandist 8). Moreover, his use of untranslated Italian discourse illustrates that "the rediscovery of one's inner self is directly linked to the rediscovery of one's mother tongue" (Salvatore 105). Although Fabrizio has a real sense of security and love in his family environment, his inability to speak Italian as well as English and French prevents him from experiencing a profound connection to his Italian roots. This may be one reason why his references in Italian are arbitrary and lack any particular direction. They illustrate his rather ambiguous and somewhat nostalgic connection to Italian, what D'Alfonso describes "as the marriage of memories" (qtd. in Salvatore105). Fabrizio's use of sporadic untranslated Italian also expresses his fragmented identification with Italian. Although Italian is Fabrizio's first language, it is clear that he and his sister master English over Italian.

However, he reveals his attachment to both languages. The following excerpt taken from the back cover of the novel illustrates this connection and affirms how one memory evokes others: "Déjeuner de pain rassis trempé dans de l'huile et frotté à l'ail. Castellare, Italie....Déjeuner d'un *hot dog all dressed.* Montréal, Québec". Two types of lunch are used to juxtapose two cultures. Nostalgia for bread from Italy parallels similar sentiments for a hotdog on a bun baked in Canada, without any suggestion of one being better than the other. However, the italics on “hot dog all dressed” act as a subtle reminder of

the English presence in the French-Canadian culture, reinforced all the more since Fabrizio does not contrast the Italian bread with a traditional food choice from Quebec. On the novel's back cover, the editor's reference to Fabrizio as a Néo-Québécois reflects the emergence of a new native, perhaps a hybrid one. Indeed, the most compelling statement on the back cover appears in Italian and French:

> *Che brutta gente senza cuore ... Un* homme sans amour est un homme sans sexe. *Léah, amore mio.* Dire qu'une nation ne se limite pas à ses frontières géographiques.

The Italian words translate as "what ugly people without hearts". By speaking about love and borderless nations together in this manner, in French and Italian, Fabrizio not only insists on a hybrid discourse, he also connects these two concepts together–love and borderless nations. This connection allows him to embrace his in-between position between worlds and languages. Although the non-Italian reader would understand the gist of the message, its critical tone, the Italian reference to the railing against heartless people would remain lost without the translation. In addition, the poetic aspect of the Italian words would be limited to words on paper, rather than words that touch the reader's emotions.

Regardless of whether D'Alfonso or his editor selected these phrases for the back cover, they reflect Fabrizio's heterogeneous identity and reinforce Bakhtin's concept of a dialogical and heterological relationship. The "extreme *heterogeneity* of speech genres (oral and written)" without any "single common level at which [each one]...can be studied" parallels Fabrizio's trilingual narration (Bakhtin 60-61). Fabrizio's use of three languages to communicate his

ideas "requires [the reader to engage in a] deeper study of both the nature of the utterance and the diversity of speech genres" (Bakhtin 64). Fabrizio's trilingual world also embodies Bakhtin's ideas on heterology because meaning is conveyed in plural terms.

Fabrizio represents this plurality through the incorporation of untranslated Italian, particularly in Chapter Thirteen, "La messe des morts," which at first glance appears indecipherable because the untranslated Italian is interspersed with a French text that is difficult to interpret. For instance, Fabrizio speaks about religion as "une pénombre de porte monnaie," (D'Alfonso, Avril 110). He combats these negative references to religion by affirming his parents' love as his saving grace. "Un seul regard volé entre elle [mère] et mon père suffit pour m'aider à affronter la chute" (110). I believe that the co-presence of languages in this section heightens the sense of ambiguity Fabrizio has about the motives of the church. However, one language works to camouflage meaning through the other to hide a direct assault against the church. For Fabrizio, his parents' presence represents the unifying force between these ambiguous meanings. Perhaps their presence allows him to look past the corruption of the church and focus on its spiritual strength. Similarly, the juxtaposition of languages in this section represents the uncomfortable, yet necessary, negotiation he faces by traveling between languages.

x) Career

Similarly, Fabrizio describes his career as a film producer as one fraught with contradictions. His reluctance to shoot films about issues that interest

producers such as immigration impedes him from having a successful film career. Chapter Twenty-One entitled "Journal d'un film inachevé," reflects this failure. Fabrizio's reluctance to film in English reflects his closer attachment to Italian and French. However, choosing between these two languages is no simple task. He wonders: "Moi, Québécois, dois-je me dire Italien ? Moi, Italien, dois-je me dire Québécois? " Fabrizio explains that the answers to these questions cannot be found within the concept of "[un] pays…un territoire, une nation, ou pire, une mythologie d'enracinement" (157). This is perhaps why Fabrizio refuses to produce films in English.

He does not want to allow the power of the dominant English centre to dictate his artistic choices. He simply wants to produce "une œuvre anti-réaliste, anti-documentaire, peut-être pas toujours onirique – du grand art – mais tout au moins 'factice,' artificielle" (166). In his "anti-réaliste" art world, Fabrizio struggles to capture a sense of universality through concepts he believes interest people worldwide. For example, when producers reject his film about religion because it is not about immigration, he loses interest in it. As he explains, "subitement, le film n'a plus d'attrait pour moi. Tout parait insignifiant, superficial" (160). He refuses to allow others to dictate his artistic visions:

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

Refusing immigration as a subject for his film allows Fabrizio to reject being

othered as an immigrant, especially (as stated previously) since he was born in Montreal. However, he does not necessarily reject the process, or value, of immigration. He views his differences as a natural aspect of his identity. This vision allows him to look beyond "l'homme à la valise" and examine" "les éléments qui entourent cet homme…[V]oilà où naît la fiction" (163). Fabrizio believes that one should focus more on the content of the suitcase rather than its outer shell. As a film topic, immigration does not interest him. He would rather understand where the immigrant comes from and where he is headed. "Sans ces composantes géographiques, il ne reste que le stéréotype" (163). Writer and poet, Fulvio Caccia explains the negative connotation immigration carries :

> [It] is a [negative] form of otherness [because] it is an otherness aware of its own becoming, and this makes it different from the otherness of the colonized mind which discovers itself as being colonized before it can be transformed into an affirmation, into a positive concept (qtd. in Salvatore 109).

Concluding Remarks

Fabrizio's attachment to three languages reveals his linguistic hybridity. Furthermore, his ideas about a nation without borders assert his implicit contestation of a homogeneous national identity. His romantic relationship with Léah and his friendship with Mario illustrate a meeting of different cultural worlds and linguistic words. Although Léah's presence symbolically connects Mario's French world with Fabrizio's Italian world, she also simultaneously divides their worlds. This division is exploited in the novel through the affair between Fabrizio and Léah. Through her relationship with Mario and Fabrizio, Léah illustrates her own in-between space between different linguistic and

cultural worlds. During her lovemaking with Fabrizio, she reveals her inner self through her discourse in Hungarian and her singing in Italian. However, her general dialogue in French demonstrates her ties to her outer self, Mario and her cultural world in Quebec. I view Léah's presence in this text as a symbolic reconciliation of cultural and linguistic divisions. It is however a difficult reconciliation since Léah's relationships are fraught with tensions and deceit. She is the symbol of "disorder" the transcultural individual faces, a disorder "characterized by noise, lack, fragmentation, inbetweenness and chaos" (Walter 25).

Jurgen Habermas notes "that as cultures encounter one another, they [also] change one another," (qtd. in Samantrai 44). Lucia's wedding to a Québécois, Fabrizio's godfather's marriage to a Québécoise and Fabrizio's fragmented relationship with Léah and Mario demonstrate the enriching and ambiguous encounters that cultural exchange elicits. Fabrizio's trilingual discourse shifts focus from ethnicity and negative forms of otherness to "learning to communicate in a different language, using a different language, and extending that language beyond the boundaries of its nationalisms" (D'Alfonso, *En Italiques* 99). His narrative in different languages also reinforces Bakhtin's notion of dialogue as unstable, changing, and always renewable. In addition, the incorporation of untranslated Italian privileges his peripheral ethnic language readers and excludes the unilingual French reader from Fabrizio's narrative in English and Italian. As he travels among languages, Fabrizio also personifies what Clifford describes as a "shifting paradox, an ongoing translation, an

emblem, a trademark, a nonconsensual negotiation of contrastive identity, and more" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 100). Through untranslated Italian words and phrases, Fabrizio valorizes his hybrid voice and undermines the "planned authenticity" that encourages "marginality" when dominant and marginal cultures encounter each other (Kamboureli 214). This reading is substantiated in the last portion of the novel, which shifts the focus away from the month of April, the last entry in the novel is dated December 1988 and Fabrizio's tone seems hopeful: "La soirée ne fait que commencer" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 198).

> The author must begin by luring us into the closed precinct that is his novel then keep us there cut off from any possible retreat to the real space we left behind....The author must build around us a wall without chinks or loopholes through which we might catch, from within the novel, a glimpse of the outside world....No writer can be called a novelist unless he possesses the gift of forgetting, and thereby making us forget, the reality beyond the walls of his novel.
>
> Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art*

CHAPTER THREE – Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*

In this Chapter I will explore the concept of a hybrid identity as a position of power through an analysis of Hiromi Goto's protagonists Murasaki Tonkatsu and her grandmother Naoe in *Mushrooms.* This is a story about one family's experiences with the collision between two cultures; however, it is also a celebration of cultural difference as privilege. Naoe was born in Japan and she finds it difficult to accept her daughter Keiko's complete assimiliation into a Canadian lifestyle. Although Murasaki was born in Canada she also questions the reasons her parents reject their Japanese language and cultural heritage. Both women contest the pressures of assimilation by telling their stories in a mixture of Japanese and English. Thus, a co-presence of languages plays a critical role in how each woman negotiates her particular hybrid identity and refutes notions of authenticity; as Clifford states, "if authenticity is relational, there can be no essence except as a political, cultural invention, a local tactic" *(Predicament of Culture* 12). The concept of invention or storytelling is another strong factor in

how Naoe and Murasaki negotiate a hybrid identity. Names and food also contextualize the importance of preserving language and cultural traditions.

As discussed in Chapter One, the shifting perspective of the cultural traveler is based on the multi-subjectivity of the individual who can identify herself or himself with various positions within the spaces of the center(s) and the margin(s). This form is manifested in the character of Murasaki who moves between her grandmother's Japanese cultural world and her mother's Canadian one to develop her own hybrid identity. Murasaki explores this hybridity as a fluid position that challenges the authority of pure-culture identities. Telling stories in a mixture of untranslated Japanese and English is perhaps her greatest marker of resistance against the authority of a pure-culture identity.

i) **Japanese Immigration** to **Western Canada**

Murasaki's need to assert a hybrid identity may be understood through some historical references to early Japanese immigration. These historical references exemplify the shifting nature of cultural identities as well as the power of, and harm caused by, pure-culture perspectives of the Other. The ill-treatment Japanese immigrants encounter in Canada is a consequence of social and political policy. The following overview provides a better understanding of the importance I place on Murasaki's multi-subjectivity as a Canadian and Japanese citizen:

> We are all of the opinion that this province must be a white man's country.... We do not wish to look forward to a day when our descendants will be dominated by Japanese, or Chinese, or any color but their own.... We are an out-post of the Empire, and that outpost we have to hold against all corners.
>
> Vancouver *Daily Province* September 9, 1907

The above quotation illustrates the reception Asian immigrants suffered upon their arrival in western Canada. In *The Enemy That Never Was,* Ken Adachi explains that integration was not an option for early Japanese immigrants because of a national policy of "racial prejudice" aimed at excluding and rejecting "the influx of the yellow horde" (Adachi 63).

Despite their growing numbers, Japanese immigrants were treated as unassimilable. The Japanese remained a visibly different reminder of an "alien, non-voting population" (Adachi 109). Adachi suggests that the Japanese had no quarrel with this exclusion because "like most insular peoples, they regarded themselves as a race apart, unique in origin and achievement" (Adachi 109). Despite their exclusion by the Canadian majority and their own insular attitudes to integration, The Canadian Japanese Association (CJA established in 1897) "encouraged immigrants to become naturalized Canadians" (Adachi 12).

However, things changed drastically for Japanese immigrants in Canada after the attack on Pearl Harbour and Japan's subsequent victories in the Far East (Adachi 199). The loyalty of the Japanese became an immediate point of concern. An editorial (with no supporting proof) appeared in the *Montreal Star* in 1944: "We know now that the Japanese in British Columbia have from the very beginning been secret agents of Tokyo....We believe the future interests of Canada will be served by rooting out entirely from the Canadian scene this definite and dangerous menace" (Adachi 206). According to Adachi, such editorials reflect "an artificially created and manipulated situation" (208). During this war and post-war period, Japanese Canadians faced internment, deportation

and head taxes. Even after the war, they were not allowed to return to their homes. By 1962 this form of "racial discrimination, for the most part, was eliminated" and "education, skill and training" became "the major criteria for admissibility" into Canada (Adachi 351).

Although this did not substantially increase Japanese immigration to Canada, Adachi believes that the Japanese who remained in Canada have done surprisingly well. He attributes their success to the following characteristics the Japanese possess: "*Enryo* (reserve, restraint), *gaman* (patience, perseverance)" and "the *shikata-ga-nai* syndrome (it can't be helped), along with an innate respect for authority" (Adachi 355). Naoe's character embodies the description of *gaman* or perseverance because she relentlessly pursues her objectives to nurture and promote her Japanese identity as she renegotiates her place as a Japanese Canadian. Since Murasaki was born in Canada, as noted in the Introduction, this thesis labels her as a Canadian Japanese. Murasaki resists self-identification through Naoe's Japanese perspective and her mother's white-washed Canadian outlook. She chooses instead to travel between their worlds, asserting her particular hybrid specificity without denying her particularity as an ethnic woman. Through bilingual discourse – by traveling between languages and cultures – Murasaki respositions the pure-culture perspective of the Other and privileges her voice as Clifford's traveler.

ii) Murasaki Tonkatsu – On being Canadian and Japanese

Murasaki embodies the notion of Clifford's traveler as she moves between her grandmother's homeland Japanese space and her mother's "actual

homeland" space (Beautell 31). She negotiates a new space for herself, one that connects her ancestral and actual worlds together. Goto's novel *Mushrooms*, in many respects a follow-up to Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan*, reopens the voice of the collective group. Kogawa demonstrates the negative effects of internment and dispersal which affects the Japanese in Canada, erasing their sense of belonging and community. Kogawa provides an account of how families were "permanently destroyed" and how "the choice to go east of the Rockies or to Japan was presented without time for consultation with separated parents and children" and how a "failure to choose was labeled non-cooperation" (201). The two principal voices that speak against this oppression in the novel are Emily and Naomi. Naomi is the novel's protagonist and narrator and with the encouragement of her Aunt Emily, she confronts her silenced past as well as the silenced past of her Japanese community. Together, through the retelling of this past, Naomi also voices her Obasan's "language of... grief" and her "silence" with all "its idioms" and "its nuances" (14). Through Emily and Naomi, "the stone bursts with telling" and the "speech that frees comes forth" (1). Kogawa's story vocalizes the silent Japanese suffering and asserts their right to Canadian citizenship while Goto's text emphasizes the preservation and continuity of the Japanese language and its traditions.

Although there is a noteworthy list of Canadian fiction by writers of Chinese origin[16], aside from Kogawa, there are few other well-known writers

[16] This list includes such writers as Wayson Choy, Evelyn Lau, S.K.Y. Lee, Ying Chen, Fred Wah and Paul Yee.

of Japanese origin in Canada.[17] For this reason, Goto's novel marks an important movement in Canadian literature especially because Goto addresses issues of cultural difference. She won the 1995 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book in the Caribbean and Canadian Region and she was co-winner of the Canada-Japan Book Award.

In both Kogawa's and Goto's novels, the old woman is a key element of the story, symbolizing the group's strength and perseverance. However Obasan's silence in Kogawa's novel also illustrates the fragmented state of this group's identity while Naoe's speech in Goto's text, her incessant need to speak in Japanese, along with her narrative in untranslated Japanese, (re)affirms its presence. "Words, words, words, WORDS....My body folds over itself under the *weight....akiramete* ...the words seep from my nostrils, my ears, even leak from my paper dry eyes" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 21). Naoe's insistence on speaking Japanese without translating her words represents a tool of resistance against assimilation. As the old woman figure, Naoe's presence insists on the origins of the "ancestral homeland" referred to in Beautell's essay (31).

In addition, she acts as her granddaughter Murasaki's mentor. She educates Murasaki about Japanese language and culture through stories. Under Naoe's guidance, Murasaki (re)negotiates her Canadian identity as a hybrid product of the English and Japanese languages, reinventing herself from a Canadian citizen into a Canadian Japanese one. The use of untranslated Japanese phrases in this novel empowers both women's peripheral ethnic voices. Their Japanese dialogue privileges their marginal

[17] With the exception of Roy Miki.

language, primarily because it excludes the unilingual English reader from an intimate understanding of certain parts of the text. For instance, when Murasaki asks Naoe: "Why do you call me Murasaki?" Naoe replies in Japanese: "*Anta ga jibun de imi o sagashite chyodai.*" This phrase roughly translates as: "You go ahead and find what it means yourself." There is however nothing following or preceding this Japanese phrase which translates this meaning for the English reader.

Like Fabrizio, Murasaki's dialogue with Naoe defines her as a linguistic traveler. She moves between languages to define hybridity on her terms. Naoe's eventual entry in the white Albertan world redefines her previously homogeneous Japanese identity. She begins her own travels between her Japanese world and the white Albertan world she encounters through her adventures with a white Albertan man. Her movement towards a hybrid Japanese and Canadian identity begins at this point in the novel. This shift is particularly significant in the novel because it manifests her latent interest in cultural exchange. Both Naoe and Murasaki, to different degrees, adopt the role of Clifford's traveler by questioning "the essential elements and boundaries of a culture" and illustrating "how self and other clash and converse in the encounters of…modern interethnic relations" *(Predicament of Culture* 8). In particular, Murasaki's world signals a breakdown of boundaries. As she moves between her ancestral Japanese linguistic and cultural ties and her homeland Canadian ones, she creates a fluid connection between these worlds.

iii) **Hybridity and the Other**

Murasaki's journey begins as a white-washed Canadian, a perfectly assimilated Canadian citizen. This, at any rate, reflects her mother Keiko's (or as she refers to herself, Kay) wish for her. Kay rejects her Japanese customs and language and works hard to assimilate her family into a Canadian lifestyle. Her legal name is Keiko and Murasaki's legal name is Muriel. The English names Kay and Muriel reflect Keiko's (Kay's) desire to assimilate her daughter and herself as Canadians. (In this thesis, I refer to Muriel as Murasaki to contest the negative othered position that Kay inadvertently assigns to her. I also refer to Keiko as Kay to emphasize her assimilated identity.)

Kay's assimilated lifestyle reflects her fears about being othered because of the colour of her skin. For instance, when Murasaki eats too many oranges (as a child) and her skin begins to turn yellow, her mother panics and dumps "sunlight on [her] hands and [starts] scrubbing [them] with an SOS pad" (Loto, *Mushrooms* 92). Growing up in Nanton, Alberta, Murasaki understands the hardships of living in a small white prairie town, being "the only Japanese-Canadians for miles around" (121). She voices her mother's fears, explaining how her visibly different features affected the way "people treated" her and when she "finally noticed [these differences], [how] the measure of [her] discontent knew no boundaries" (175). Another example of Kay's desire to fit in is evident when Murasaki at twelve is "given the lead in [her] school operetta" (175). As Alice in Wonderland, she is expected to have 'blond' hair" and Murasaki is horrified when her mother agrees to dye her

beautiful black hair blond (177). Kay succumbs to the pressures of assimilation by doing *whatever* she feels is necessary to fit in.

She explains why she chooses to reject all aspects of her Japanese culture:

> I've lived in Alberta for twenty years....When I decided to immigrate, I decided to be at home in my new country. You can't be everything at once. It is too confusing for a child to juggle two cultures [and] two sets of ideals....This has nothing to do with shame in one's own culture....If you live in Canada, you should live like a Canadian and that's how I raised my own daughter. It's very simple, really (189).

Cultural integration means different things to Kay and Murasaki. Their opinions reflect the crux of many multicultural versus nationalist debates. Should immigrants preserve their own language and culture within a dominant mainstream culture? And, to what extent should their differences be accepted by the dominant majority? While it is not my intention to enter into a discussion of multiculturalism, I will address these questions through Murasaki's and her mother's perspectives.

Kay's need to assimilate need not be viewed as a betrayal but rather as a survival strategy to avoid a negative othered position. However, Murasaki's need to learn the Japanese language, eat Japanese food, and have a sexual relationship with a Japanese immigrant reflects her ultimate resistance to her mother's fears. However, she asserts her connection to her Japanese heritage without giving up her identification as a Canadian, thus doing what her mother believes causes confusion: juggling two cultures, promoting her multi-subjectivity. As a woman of colour, Murasaki transforms her otherwise marginalized ethnic status by

empowering herself as a hybrid citizen and learning to move between languages and different cultural contexts.

Ethnicity, like race, can divide people by alienating those who are perceived as marginal or different. In her essay,"Ms. Edge Innate," published in an anthology entitled *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*, Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar refers to her "Canadian"status as an "indefinable term" (4). She recognizes the ambiguities she faces as a woman of mixed (black and white) race. She understands that the terms "wholeness" and "completeness" do not apply to her (6). Yet her experiences teach her to "fight for [her] culture" and she understands her identity as "wholly internal…a calling" that comes from "her soul" (7). Hernandez-Ramdwar refers to herself as "Ms. Edge Innate" because she understands that, while she may be on the "periphery of [someone else's] world" she must come to terms with the concept that "what is [hers] is wholly and soul(ly) [her] own" (7).

Growing up in rural, white Alberta, Murasaki discovers that her visibly different features isolate her from white children. As early as six years of age, she faces this reality. Taunted by young children who refer to her as "a slanty-eye Chinaman," Murasaki, like Hernandez-Ramdwar, becomes aware of what being different means: it excludes her from securing a solid sense of belonging with others (Goto, *Mushrooms* 53). At eleven, she realizes "that the shape of [her] face, [her] eyes, the colour of [her] hair affected how people treated [her]" (175). However, as an adult, Murasaki understands how "easy" it was "when [she] was innocent" because she could "swallow everything [she] was told" (190). Now she

must learn to shed her negative otherness by "asking questions" and recognize that she will never be finished asking them (190). She also renegotiates her position as outsider by questioning the meaning of home. In principle, "it should be a safe place" but she recognizes that home, like her identity, requires continual re-evaluation since "there are times when [she doesn't] feel safe at all. And [she has] to wonder where [she lives]" just as she has to continually evaluate who she is (190). Murasaki locates home by defining her identity through the Japanese and Canadian linguistic cultures.

Murasaki's process of multi-subjectivity begins because of Naoe's presence in her life. In *Mushrooms,* Naoe is the symbol of the Japanese community and a feminist hero. Feeling subjugated and othered for wanting to celebrate her Japanese ethnicity and old age, she leaves her daughter's home to reinvent her "destructured, decentered, dehumanized subject[ivity]" (Klages 2). This move allows her to validate her Japanese cultural identity and negotiate her position as a Canadian citizen and promote her evolving hybrid identity. Through her personal and sexual adventures with an English-Albertan cowboy she names Tengu, Naoe also asserts her Japanese specificity. First, by conversing with Tengu in Japanese only, she negotiates *his* entry into her peripheral Japanese space. Second, her sexual exchange with Tengu represents her metaphoric entry to an English-Canadian space. Tengu also symbolically connects Naoe's insular Japanese world with the unknown Albertan world she sets out to explore because, as she states, she's "not too old to change" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 113). She also metaphorically enters the English-Canadian

space by participating in a male-dominated sport, the rodeo, a sport that defines one aspect of Albertan-Canadian specificity. Through this symbolic entry, she simultaneously challenges gender and ethnic restrictions.

However, Naoe's strongest role in this text is as Murasaki's mentor and guide. She educates Murasaki about the importance of the Japanese language, Japanese food, and Japanese myths. Goto explains in the acknowledgements section of her book that "this novel is a departure from historical fact into the realms of contemporary folk legend." Thus, Naoe is the symbolic emblem of Japanese folk legend. She affirms her outside position by sharing stories with her granddaughter. Naoe acts as the bridge between Murasaki's Canadian and Japanese worlds. Her presence (both physically and psychologically) allows Murasaki to reinvent her identity and reconstruct the broken threads of her family's Japanese heritage. A linguistic dialogue in untranslated Japanese permits Naoe and Murasaki to join "those areas…[of themselves] that have never met, that don't speak or listen to each other" (Michelut 153). Murasaki learns Japanese and learns that communicating in English and Japanese allows her to travel between languages and construct a hybrid linguistic identity. Naoe's refusal to speak English does not prevent her from participating in activities outside the parameters of her Japanese identity. At the end of the novel, she describes herself as a "quietly Oriental [woman]…carrying a *furoshiki* packed with cowboy equipment…[wearing] calfskin boots…bat wing chaps, [carrying a]…bull rope with two cow bells" (215-16). While this description of Naoe conjures up a rather comical image, it also illustrates her

participation in a cultural context outside her Japanese one. Thus, it signals Naoe's desire to invent herself as a hybrid citizen.

iv) Food

Food is a significant marker of cultural identity in this novel. Since Naoe is the symbol of the ancestral cultural reference point in this novel, her constant cravings for Japanese food exemplifies her cultural longing. For instance, her detailed description of how to eat squid illustrates this connection. "There are two ways of eating squid. To chew and chew and chomp and chew and wring out the juices from the leather flesh, or to hold the squid in your cheek and let it soak up the saliva slowly until it swells and softens" (17-18). As a child, Murasaki recalls eating squid and drinking sake "in [her] Obachan's bed of feasts" (18). Sharing Japanese food and drink with her grandmother allows Murasaki to connect with her grandmother outside the world of words and language. During such moments, Murasaki "snuggled [her]…head in Obachan's bony lap…to listen" to stories in Japanese she did not understand. Naoe's connection to Japanese food represents her deep attachment to her cultural origins. She disagrees with people who believe that "eating is only a superficial means of understanding a different culture" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 201).

Naoe views eating and food as symbols of a "place where growth begins" a place where "you eat, you drink and you laugh out loud" and "you tell a story, maybe two, with words of pain and desire" (201). In his article, "Lost in Translation: Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms*," Mark Libin suggests that language and food are interrelated markers of identity in this text where "food

mends divisions in the family [and] that the taste of food ameliorates a fragmented sense of community" (130). Moreover, Naoe's juxtaposition of storytelling with pain and desire may be linked to what Libin refers to as "the language of smell-taste that allows [the reader] to examine the poetics of translation operative in the narrative" (131). At the same time Libin points out that Goto does not uniquely "privilege Japanese food or Asian cuisine as a site for community, narrative, and meaning" (133). In fact, he suggests that through Naoe's lover Tengu and his childhood memories of food, the reader is offered "a positive reading of white Canadian comestibles" (133):

> And I went to wash up and I could smell coffee perking on the gas stove all hot and brown-smelling and the blue eggs cracked and the yolks so yellow all stirred up and scrambled...the smell of Janet burning toast, Dad stirring the eggs (Goto, *Mushrooms* 193-194).

Unlike Naoe, Kay completely stops eating Japanese food. It is only when her mother Naoe leaves her home that Kay feels the burden of this rupture. She becomes despondent and stops speaking. I view Naoe as Kay's last remaining link to her identifying (Japanese) and emotional (mother-daughter bond) noise.[18] Thus, her mother's absence deprives her of both noises. The absence of noise may be understood as an indicator of cultural proximity. Kay loses contact with her identifying and emotional noise

[18] The significance of this noise appears in Michael Ondaatje's novel, *Coming Through Slaughter*. The central character, Buddy Bolden, has the ability, through his music, to simultaneously make emotional and identifying noises. Music symbolizes his emotional noise and his identifying noise represents his contact with the rest of the world. When Bolden loses his connection to his identifying noise he spirals into a world of madness. In many respects, this novel is a postmodern parody of the detective novel. Through different narrative voices, Ondaatje reels the reader into the text and the chase, the chase being the story about Buddy Bolden. The complexity of his character is juxtaposed through his music, jazz. The character is, like his music, structured and at the same time open to many variations and interpretations. Through his music, he cements the different parts of his identity together.

when Naoe leaves her home. Kay experiences, for the first time, a sense of loss, she is longing (à la Sartre) for the cultural absence, in need of cultural nourishment which she now finds through food. Until this point, Kay has refused to eat Japanese food, viewing it as another impediment to her successful assimilation as a Canadian citizen. Therefore, her reconciliation with Japanese food is a symbolic reconciliation with her buried Japanese culture and her lost connection with her mother.

It is Murasaki who reconnects Kay to her identifying noise. She nurses her mother back to a world of words by reintroducing her to Japanese food. In this text, food represents a strong marker of cultural specificity. In his article "Responding to the Threat of Writing in *Chorus of Mushrooms",* Steve McCullough suggests that "naming and consuming food takes on aspects of possibility similar to linguistic translation" (166). Murasaki discovers that her family's surname Tonkatsu is also a Japanese dish. According to McCullough, "the family name is perhaps the most intimate space of negotiation between the personal and the social, as it situates its bearer in both linguistic space and the genealogical structures of family relationship" (166). Thus, eating Tonkatsu represents a symbolic awareness and consumption of cultural specificity. In addition, this is a key moment in the text since it signals a shared cultural perspective between Murasaki and her parents. Murasaki reunites her mother and her father with their Japanese cultural specificity by cooking them a traditional Japanese meal, Tonkatsu. The woman in the Oriental Food Store (where Naoe sends her) describes Tonkatsu as a "type of breaded deep fried

pork cutlet...very unique and interesting...it fills you up and everyone [who] eats [it]...lickety-split" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 137). The family shares their first Japanese meal together, savouring every moment. This is a moment of family communion, one that unites, through food, each member with their culture.

> There were no hugs or kisses or mea culpas. [...] We sat and ate [n]o one saying a word, just the smack of lips and tongues. We passed around the *Tonkatsu* sauce whenever it looked like someone was running out. [...] It was a chrysalis time for Mom and me. [...] Mom's words slowly coming back, or maybe me beginning to hear them (153).

Kay's speech signals her recovery from her ruptured cultural state. Furthermore, Murasaki's discovery that her father regularly buys "salted seaweed paste" reveals her father's secret indulgences and contrasts his implicit attachment to his Japanese culture with her mother's (past) rejection of all aspects of her Japanese cultural heritage (135). She refers to her mother Kay as a woman with a "vegetable blind spot" because she never bought *"shitake,* or *daikon* or *satoimo* or *moyashi* or *nira" (91).* Kay prepares meals that reflect the family's white-washed Canadian lifestyle. Naoe attributes Kay's unhealthy inner and outer appearance to her Western diet, declaring that she has "grown opaque with a brittle heart" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 13). Kay prepares typically Canadian dishes such as "wieners and beans, roast chicken, honey smoked ham and rump roast" (13). She only buys Canadian groceries, with the exception of mandarin oranges at Christmas (91). Here, her mother's willingness to compromise puzzles Murasaki because Mandarin is not even a place but "a Chinese language" (91).

Murasaki does not reject these Canadian dishes, however eating

Tonkatsu represents her formal initiation into Japanese food and the new cultural bond she establishes with her parents. Moreover, by eating Japanese food she nourishes her Japanese cultural growth. She shares her

> bitterness about how [she] was raised, how [she] was taught to behave[how] the place where [she] lived didn't foster cultural difference. It only had room for cultural integration [in her mother's case: complete assimilation]. If you didn't abide by the unwritten rules of conduct, you were alienated *as* an *[other],* subject to suspicion and mistrust (189).

Consuming her first Japanese meal symbolically erases Murasaki's past shame and metaphorically fills her Japanese cultural void.

v) Title

In this text, mushrooms are more than simply a food item. Their presence allows the reader to interpret important aspects of Naoe's and Murasaki's personalities. The title of the novel *Chorus of Mushrooms* implies a musicality whose tone is felt differently by Murasaki and Naoe. This is indicative of the different cultural perspectives they occupy at that moment. More than a family business, Murasaki views the family mushroom farm as a negative identifier of cultural difference. When her white friend Patricia asks her about the funny smell in her home, Murasaki links the smell to

> The clamour [without harmony] of mushrooms growing…something…insidious tattoed into the walls of [her] home….For all that [her] mom had done to cover up [their] Oriental tracks, she'd overlooked the one thing that people always unconsciously register in any encounter…what [they] smelled like. [They] had been betrayed by what [they] grew (62).

The unpleasant smell of the mushrooms stamps an odour of cultural difference on Murasaki, another example of how Murasaki's cultural position is mapped out in

relation to the two positions delineated by the characterizations of Naoe and Kay. In addition, she views the Vietnamese workers on the mushroom farm as another negative marker of cultural difference. "The strange trickling sound of Vietnamese conversation" provokes the summer students her father hires to quit, sometimes within "two hours" after they begin working (104-105). As a result, Murasaki distances herself from the Vietnamese workers. After "working with them for so many years…[she] never learned a single word" because she kept her ears turned "inward" refusing to allow their words to penetrate her world (105).

Murasaki refers to them as boat people, demonstrating her biases, ones that originate from her mother Kay who explains how "they had to sneak away on boats [from Vietnam], because it is against the law to leave" (34). Although Kay encourages Murasaki to be "nice" to them because "they've suffered so much," she also demonstrates her prejudices and her need to help them assimilate into a Canadian lifestyle. She asks Murasaki to help her give them nicknames, ones that are easy to pronounce and remember (34). Murasaki feels "a thrill of pleasure" in "changing them" with these new names (34). This pleasure suggests that, as a child, she shares her mother's biased attitudes.

Murasaki reveals these biases when her friend Patricia refers to the manager, Joe, as "kinda cute" (96). Murasaki is taken aback. She responds by referring to him as "a boat person…like that would explain everything" (96). The reader never learns Joe's real name and this absence symbolizes a form of denial about his cultural specificity. Furthermore, Patricia's response: "you're Japanese, but I still think you're pretty too" leaves Murasaki feeling "confused…for what

[she] didn't know" (96). Patricia's comment, a subtle yet distinctly racial slur, affects Murasaki negatively even though she does not fully grasp the insult. She also remembers being told "you're pretty cute for a Nip…Most Nips are pretty damn ugly…[She] felt really funny inside, him saying Nip and everything because he was one too" (53). These examples of the racial slurs Murasaki experiences make her feel alienated and othered in a way that would lead her to look back to the ancestral homeland for self-validation.

Naoe has a more positive association with the mushrooms. Her explicitly sensual relationship with the mushrooms illustrates how the ancestral homeland has sated her and contrasts with Murasaki's hunger for it. Naoe's sensual experience with the mushrooms symbolizes her bond with her cultural origins. For instance, Naoe refers to her departure from her daughter's home as an adventure to "see some mushrooms" (82). The mushrooms, moist and warm, offer her temporary refuge from the cold, dry Albertan air. She removes her clothes and rests her body on the mushrooms. "For the first time in decades, moisture [filters] into her body…her skin, so dry, slowly filled, cell by cell, like a starving plant, the mushroom moisture filling her hollow body" (84). The mushrooms nourish her body and soul in a way that the environment in her daughter's home (with no trace of Japanese markers of identity) cannot. Her body transforms itself "filling with supple strength, her buttocks curving, swelling, with flesh and longing." (85) In what is perhaps a hallucinogenic state, she walks naked "between the long rows of beds, through puddles as warm as blood" and lies "down, [spreading] her arms, her legs wide…in puddles warm and glowing" (85). This experience amongst the

mushrooms symbolizes Naoe's vibrant sexuality and the transcendent moment of apprehension where the boundaries of present and past, self and other, dissolve in the rapturous moment of a single totality. She describes the effect of the mushrooms as "soft wet mud kisses on her cheek, inner arms, the skin beneath her knees, along her inner thigh," equating her orgasmic "pleasure…[to something] beyond the painful register of human sound," palpable only in "the unheard chorus of mushrooms" (86). Indeed, this language embodies the transcendent moment when the subjective self is outside the map of self and other, centre and margin. All that matters in this moment is the sense of complete belonging and fulfillment Naoe feels amongst the mushrooms. This experience symbolically affirms her connection to her Japanese ancestry.

vi) The Co-Presence of Languages

Tu n'as plus de masque
Tu avances forte et libre
Fière de ton corps multiple
Tu succombes à ce qui est au delà de toi
Tu t'engages dans le chemin qui vient vers moi
Danse masque danse
Fulvio Caccia

Naoe's longing to speak in Japanese and to be understood in Japanese reflects her initial refusal to travel between words and different linguistic contexts. She admits that she understands and speaks English. As she asks, "how can they think a body can live in this country for twenty years and not learn the language? But let them think this" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 4). "I can learn French (bonjour, je m'appelle Naoe) as well as the English people don't think I already know" (37). However, by refusing to speak English, she insists on being

identified through her Japanese voice. Moreover, her refusal to speak English stems from her disapproval of her daughter Kay's complete assimilation into a Canadian lifestyle. Naoe's constant mutterings in Japanese juxtapose her daughter's disengagement with the language. This is evident in Kay's accusatory tone: "You sit there and mutter and taunt me in Japanese just for spite" (21). Kay's refusal to speak Japanese demonstrates her alienation from her cultural origins and reinforces Naoe's resolve to colour Murasaki's world and her own with Japanese words.

Like Naoe, Muraskai speaks Japanese to assert her connection to her Japanese cultural origins; however, she also validates her ability to speak English, stating that one language complements the other.

> I'm glad I learned Japanese because now I can juggle two languages and when there isn't one word in English, it will be there in Japanese and if there is something lacking in your tongue, I reach for it in English. So I say to you in English. I love you Obachan (54).

Murasaki also reveals how closely she is connected to English and Japanese through her exchange with her nameless lover. She questions him about his "fluent" English knowing that he has never formally studied it (187). He responds by stating, "[W]hen I speak with you, I only speak in Japanese" (187). Murasaki's inability to distinguish between English and Japanese words may be interpreted as her refusal to choose one language over the other. For instance, even before she learns to speak Japanese, she has an innate connection to the language. Naoe explains that although Murasaki "cannot understand the words [she] speak[s]...[but] she can read the lines on [her] brow, [and] the creases beside [her] mouth" (15).

Speaking in Japanese and exchanging stories in Japanese also allows Naoe and Murasaki to recreate Japanese oral tradition. Moreover, Murasaki establishes her individual Japanese specificity by reinventing stories Naoe tells her. When her lover asks her how she "can be telling a true story" if she never understood her grandmother's words as a child, Murasaki responds by saying "I'm making up the truth as I go along" (12). This idea of selectivity demonstrates how memory is a subjective and constructed process of remembering and recalling information.

According to Neil Bissoondath, "it is possible only to preserve a memory of [the [past] and that memory, inevitably one of a variety of versions, is each true and each false [since it is based on recollection and interpretation] in its own way, personality and event filtered through the knowledge, ignorance, misconceptions, prejudices and selectiveness of the individual mind" (207). I am employing Bissoondath's concept of "selectiveness" to clarify how Murasaki and her grandmother Naoe tell their stories and (re)assemble their identity as Japanese *and* Canadian. Murasaki explains that "memory is so selective…imagination tags along and you don't know where something blurs beyond truth" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 98). Therefore truth becomes "anything [uttered] at that particular moment" (98).

In his article (previously noted), Mark Libin acknowledges that "meaning is neither comprehended nor rejected, but rather recognized as something both possible and alien" (126). This notion of meaning as a mutable concept resembles Eleanor Ty's observation about dialogue between two or more languages as a "constant crossing between two or more people in which both sides are respected"

(156). This is an ideal representation of communication, however it does not always occur. Ty also confirms that the discourse in *Mushrooms* functions in Bakhtinian terms, as "a special type of double-voiced discourse" that "serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author" (157). Naoe's communication with Tengu reflects a similar pattern of dialogue and intention.

She converses with him in Japanese, largely unaware that he responds to her in Japanese. She believes that he speaks to her in English. As she explains, "here I was listening to (him) with an accent in my ears, only there might not have been one on (his) lips...it makes me wonder what else we filter through our ears" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 119120). Naoe's comments suggest that she has trained her ear to subjectively hear based on how she perceives the other person. Since Tengu is white, she automatically receives his words in English. Thus, she cannot really "be sure if what" she hears "is what is said" (120). Naoe explains that language and its meaning have "limits" to how they are "understood" (170). Furthermore, through this concept of meaning, she "challenge[s] the hegemony of any single language's claim to totality" by blurring the sounds of the dominant language and the marginal one together (McCullough 165). This type of ambivalent exchange invites Naoe and Murasaki to (re)invent "everything that is missing or lost or caught between memory and make believe or forgotten or hidden or sliced from the body like an unwanted tumour...or a longing" (159).

In her article, "Translating the Self: Moving between Cultures", Goto

states that

> The text is also a place of colonization. And I wanted to highlight that difference exists, all cannot be understood, language could and can be a barrier. This is based on my assumption that most of my readers are English-speaking and do not understand Japanese. This is the audience the book is mainly speaking to, [these are] my assumptions while translating myself (12).

As I understand Goto, language difference should not be erased; rather, it needs to be articulated as a barrier, otherwise the language in question will disappear or be replaced by another language. Goto assumes that most of her readers are "English-speaking and [they] do not understand Japanese" (12). Mari Sasano suggests that Goto's refusal to translate Japanese words in her novel is her way of "marking out her liminal territory to her readers" (6). The presence of untranslated Japanese words and phrases also invites the reader to seek out translations and learn foreign words. Furthermore, the co-presence of languages defines the meaning-making process as a hybrid one. According to Caterina Sotiriadis, "languages [in the plural] become new worlds discovered by vibrations, where lips, mouth, jaw, tongue and lungs harmoniously create new sounds for the ear to capture and the heart to discover" (61). Moreover, suppressing a language may be equated with suppressing an important aspect of an individual's or a group's cultural identity. Thus, a hybrid dialogue in texts provides readers with the opportunity to "train [them]selves from the outside inward" by seeking translation (Goffman 35).

Murasaki's need to simultaneously claim her Japanese heritage and language and English affirms her hybrid identity and her ability to train herself, as Erving Goffman suggests, from the "outside inward" (35). Her longing to speak

Japanese, one that she fulfills, also reflects her refusal to homogenize her identity as her mother Kay does. According to Murasaki, her mother "[hides] behind an adopted language" and this confuses Murasaki (Goto, *Mushrooms* 98). Furthermore, her parents' inability to educate Murasaki about her Japanese heritage means that she must negotiate this heritage on her own terms. At an early age she begins to understand that she must "manipulate language like everyone else around her" (98). She explains how

> the home life stuff [culture and language] gets tattooed on to you something awful [o]r something good. Just depends. [...] Passed on from daughter to daughter to daughter to....The list is endless and the tattoo spreads. You're born and things stick to you. Some fall off, but most you carry around for the rest of your life (36-37).

For Murasaki, the notion of the tattoo, the legacy that is passed down from one generation to another, comes from her grandmother, not her mother. Naoe helps her fill in the missing home life stuff – linguistic and cultural markers of her Japanese heritage that her parents do not educate her about. Like Naoe, Murasaki symbolizes the emblematic banner of Japanese culture and its preservation. Both women assert the importance of the family list by focusing on "HOW seeing (or reading or perception itself) takes place rather than on WHAT is perceived" (Klages 1). In a sense, they reject "the idea of any stable or permanent reality" by suggesting that the home life education should include hybrid markers of identity – representations of *here* and *there* – an individual's present cultural space as well as the space of their cultural heritage, their past (Klages 4).

Moreover, untranslated Japanese makes the process of unravelling meaning and interpreting texts much more complex, by including some readers

while excluding others. Those who are excluded may be prompted to seek meaning through translation. Naoe's past experiences assert the importance of knowing different languages. Naoe tells Murasaki about the time she lived in Manshū and Shina (China) for ten years. Now in her eighties, in Canada, she expresses her ignorance about the political climate between Japan and China at the time and the power Japan has over the Chinese people:

> Ten years and I never learned to speak Mandarin or Cantonese or any other dialect. [...] I was the stupidest fool of all. I never questioned why the schools were made separate, why Chinese and Japanese were not taught together. Why Chinese children had to learn Japanese, but Japanese children were not taught the words of the land they lived in (Goto, *Mushrooms* 46).

This quotation implicitly reveals the importance Naoe places on a minority group's need to speak the language of the dominant majority as well as her opposition to any form of oppression or marginalization. She recognizes the "pain of not having spoken, of not bothering to ask questions" (46). As a member of the Japanese privileged, she questions the economic class disparity and voices her guilt for "their inland [Chinese] cousins," slaughtered by the Japanese (47). Through this revelation, Naoe reveals her acquired respect for other cultures and languages.

She also recognizes the importance of preserving her own language and culture, and thus her need to assert her own linguistic and cultural differences is critical. Her narrative can be compared to Eva Karpinski's reflections of "the immigrant autobiography" (127). She employs Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation: A Life in a new Language* to define "albeit sketchily, the conditions for the possibility of immigrant self-representation" (127). Her article, like the

novel, is divided into three sections: paradise, exile, and the new world. I am borrowing these titles to describe the different phases of Naoe's experiences in Goto's text (128).

For Naoe, paradise means preserving the Japanese language. Her period of exile occurs while she lives with her daughter, completely isolated by her daughter's refusal to communicate in Japanese. Her entry into the new world begins when she leaves her daughter's home and travels with Tengu, speaking to him in Japanese only. In her sketch about immigrant self-representation, Karpinski presents the "transformation of self-image" as a realignment of values, new character traits, or even the revision of the aesthetic criteria of beauty" (130). Similarly, Naoe recreates her self-image from that of a lonely old woman, who speaks in Japanese to herself, into a hybrid woman who engages in Japanese conversations and a sexual relationship with someone outside her culture.

Tengu's ability to speak Japanese demonstrates his own hybrid identification with language. He can speak Japanese because he lived in Japan where he did "a comparative study on the origins 'n developminta Japanese *enka* 'n if ther any parallels with the developminta country 'n western in North America" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 111). By accenting Tengu's words in this way, Goto emphasizes his linguistic particularity and in a sense others his voice by pointing out his differences. Although Tengu's words suggest that he speaks to Naoe in English, this is simply how Naoe chooses to hear his words. At one point, she tells Tengu that "he keeps changing...or how [she] translates [him]" keeps shifting and she asks him if he really knows how to speak Japanese. Surprised by her response,

he answers in Japanese *"Eigo hitotsu mo hanashitenal to omou kedo.* Haven't we been talking Japanese all along?" (197). Although Tengu converses with Naoe in Japanese, his accented English words are an important form of deception because they assert his cultural specificity and they demonstrate how subjectively Naoe filters what she hears.

vii) Storytelling

As a child, Murasaki discovers how to construct her own subjectivity and specificity through stories. She learns to tell stories, even embellished ones, to reconstruct herself and her lived experiences in hybrid terms. She realizes that stories describe life so "the story can be anything...the stranger, the more exotic, the better" (89). When her friends ask her if "her grandmother [bound] her feet when she was little", she begins to comprehend how word of mouth turns into accepted truth or stereotype (89). When Naoe leaves home and Murasaki's friends question her about Naoe's disappearance, she learns the art of invention. Comments such as "she went back to Japan" or "she started to grow fur all over her body" or "she was actually a *tanuki* who had assumed the form of a woman" allow Murasaki to develop her imaginative skills (88). Murasaki tells such tales to specify her individuality. By including untranslated Japanese words in her stories, words like *tanuki,* she adds an exotic touch to her tales. More importantly, she insists on the specificity of language and the untransferable nature of some words and expressions.

Storytelling also allows Murasaki to escape her parents' silence. For instance, she describes her father as a "voiceless man" whose "space inside [her]

thoughts [are] dim and unformed" (59). She equates his silence with his inability to "fill her ears with nonsense" or stories (59). Stories symbolize Japanese specificity and her father's inability to tell them illustrates his fractured Japanese identity. Similarly, conversations with her mother do not satisfy her. "Of course there were times when my Mom and I had conversations. But the things we spoke of never lingered in my heart or deep inside my head. She couldn't offer me words I craved, and I didn't know how to ask" (29). Fortunately, Naoe's presence and her influence in Murasaki's life provide Murasaki with an entry into the infinite world of stories.

She learns how to her reconstruct negative aspects of her position as a visibly different Canadian into something affirmative through storytelling. Stories also allow her to (re)negotiate her identity as a Canadian and Japanese woman, without sacrificing one for the other. Like Naoe, she challenges "false fronts" and tourist translations "of their home" and learns that the definition of home rests "in the cup of [her] palms" and that home is a concept that changes as it "travels from story to story" (203).

In addition, how Murasaki tells the story she originally hears from Naoe underscores the notion that *telling* a story cannot be separated from *hearing* it. She describes Naoe's words as "notes of music instead of symbols to decipher" (29). Murasaki adopts her own poetic style as she retells stories she hears from Naoe because she does not implicitly translate the words; rather she translates the feelings Naoe's words evoke. Like Naoe, she understands that "this is not the story [she] learned, but it's the story [she] tells" (29). According to Naoe, "it

is the nature of words to change with the telling" because "they are changing in the [listener's] mind even as [she] speak[s]" (29). This shifting relationship between the telling and listening of stories parallels the concept of moving through or between cultures because it can no longer be "experienced as naturally based upon tradition and ancestry; rather, it is experienced as a provisional and partial site of identity which must be (re)invented and (re)negotiated" (Ang 18). Thus, through their roles as storytellers, Naoe and Murasaki also assert their hybrid identities.

According to Naoe, "the words are different, but in translation, they come together" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 174). In other words, "everything" a person thinks, he or she eventually interprets "as story" because in the retelling, the ideas are constantly shifting (185). This notion of changing ideas also reflects the mutable composition of hybrid identities. Depending on which cultures and languages come together, the final product varies. Murasaki invents many of the stories she tells her unidentified lover because she does not speak Japanese as a child, therefore she cannot construct a literal translation of her grandmother's words. This process of invention allows Murasaki to affirm her individual voice through the stories that begin "inside her head" (192).

Stories permit Naoe and Murasaki to travel between their peripheral Japanese culture and the dominant Canadian centre. Through storytelling, they also blur the lines between fiction and reality, here and there, the centre and the margin. Murasaki recognizes the subjective quality of telling and "how [she]...can sift [her]...memories, braid them with other stories...come up with a

single strand and call it truth" (93). Like truth, hybridity becomes a mutable term. The notion of a hybrid identity parallels storytelling discourse, redefining the parameters of "where and when a community [like Murasaki's] draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders" (Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 97). In other words, Murasaki and Naoe construct their own in-between cultural space between the central Canadian and marginal Japanese cultures. They do not allow others to define this space for them. Naoe describes the journey into the world of storytelling as a place where "words tumble from (her) mouth and change shape and size. They grow arms and legs and crawl about...they grow bigger and stronger and walk out the door to wander the earth" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 44). As storytellers, Naoe and Murasaki do not wish to distinguish the space between where "one thing" ends "and another" begins (213). When they "travel from story to story" they define their identity as a fluid, yet changing and interconnected expression between cultures and languages (203).

Storytelling also acts as a tool of female empowerment in this text. Naoe emphasizes the Japanese woman's "differences, for lyric effect, and indeed for realistic effect" (Merivalc 76). According to Eleanor Ty, *Mushrooms* celebrates "women's voices, storytelling, and female creativity" (152). For instance, Naoe tells Murasaki about the legendary sister and brother "Izanami and Izanagi" who leave "their celestial home to create the world...Japan" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 45). Izanami asserts her role and guides her brother. "We are gods...we can create" (30). According to Naoe "Japan was the world, a long time ago when people called what they could see with their eyes: the mountains, the trees, lakes, and

stones" (45). Naoe tells another story about a mountain woman [a *yamanba*] who stays away from women and spends her time watching birds and picking mushrooms. One day she leaves her space and goes down the mountain only to discover that the land around her has completely dried up and has been taken over by maggots which have eaten all the other mountain women. Through her storytelling powers, she convinces the maggots to climb into her mouth where they become trapped in her body. As she pumps her breasts, they spurt out changing from maggots into "millions of soft-skinned people" (118). "Soon the earth was fresh again...as the maggot children danced with their new bodies...it began to rain" (119). Through her ability to "speak [her] words aloud" she shapes "the earth again" (116). Like Izanami, the mountain woman empowers the Japanese female – as – creator.

Ty suggests that the rewriting of folktales in this novel "attempt to rescript Japanese Canadian female subjectivity" (153). Naoe's own role in the novel may be read as a *yamanba* mountain woman who sets out to reshape her world. Like the Japanese mountain woman, she symbolizes the preservation of family and community. She leaves her daughter's home at the age of eighty-five because "no one hears (her) language" (Goto, Mushrooms 5) and because she realizes that if she stays she will "be trapped for eternity uttering hollow sounds, words without substance" (76). She also understands that her daughter and her granddaughter "need to grow without (her) noisy presence and (she) needs to live outside the habit of (her) words" (76). However, a physical separation does not prevent Naoe from exchanging stories with Murasaki. This telepathic

communication reflects a breakdown of barriers of time and space and it allows "one [woman to]...begin forming words... [while] the other listen[s], and if the one who speaks should tire, the other is there to finish" (20). This communication also illustrates each woman's ability to (re)write her identity as she sees fit. Murasaki explains that a story cannot be described as a linear equation.

> [It] starts in the middle and unfolds outward from there... It's like being inside a ball...made up of thousands and thousands of small panels. And on each panel, there is a mirror, but each mirror reflects something different. And from where you crouch, if you turn your head up or around or down or sideways, you can see something new, something old, or something you've forgotten (132).

This idea of differently mirrored panels reflects the way Murasaki reads her subjectivity and it can be linked to Bakhtin's notion of outsideness and heterology. Each panel represents a particular and unique perspective — or an outside view of the inside — always mutable. The idea of "mirrors that reflect something different" may be linked to the different ways languages interact with each other and how subjective and plural meaning becomes through these encounters. As Naoe explains,

> stories keep changing. But that's the nature of all matter, I suppose. [I cannot] expect the words to come out the same each time my tongue moves to speak. If my tongue were cut from my face, I would surely grow another. No, it is the nature of matter to change (73).

The lines between perception and reality, truth and fiction, just like the dialogical relationship between languages, remain open to various forms of interpretation and they determine how people represent themselves.

viii) **Names**

This notion of a multiplicity of representations affirms a

heterological construction of Naoe's and Murasaki's identities because it contests the idea of "universal validity" (Brandist 11). Moreover, by renaming her granddaughter and herself, Naoe refuses to attach a fixed meaning to their identities. The movement she creates through the reinvention of names exemplifies Murasaki's and her status as one of Clifford's travelers. Murasaki's Canadian name Muriel "does not suit her" so Naoe calls her "Murasaki" which means "purple" because she wants "so much for someone to hear, yet it must be in [her] own words" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 15). This name also empowers Murasaki as a storyteller since her name refers to a Japanese author born in the late tenth century. As Keiko explains, this author

> is the first person to write a novel [called Gengi Monogatari or in English The Tale of Gengi]...the first person to write a long piece of prose that was in fact a story and not just a diary thing or some sort of lesson. [...] she is considered to be the first person ever to create the antihero (165).

On the surface it appears to be about a nobleman named Genji,[19] his life at court, and his various adventures with ladies...It is however "an aching account of what life was like for women of court in the eleventh century" (165). By renaming Muriel as Murasaki, Naoe symbolically also transforms her granddaughter into a feminist hero. Similarly, Naoe adopts an English translation of Murasaki by calling herself Purple. She introduces herself to Tengu as Purple and to the rodeo world as "The Purple Mask" (216). This English translation not only defines Naoe's entry into a Canadian English space, it also affirms her symbolic presence as a Japanese

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[19] In medieval Japan, Lady Murasaki Shikibu, a lady-in-waiting to the empress, wrote the classic love story called, "The Tale of Genji." Love affairs are the dominant theme in the "Tale of Genji." http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Colleges/ARHU/Depts/CompLit/cmltgrad/JSchaub/CMLT270SU98/final projects/pin-fang/

storyteller and feminist hero. Masking her identity and becoming the "Purple Mask...a mystereeeerious bullrider" (160) allows Naoe to be "known, even renowned, but [since] no one knows who the Purple Mask is, [it represents] both an unmistakable sign of identity and a guarantor of anonymity" (McCullough 160). "Rather than hiding behind new names, [Murasaki and Naoe] adopt names to suit their identities, creating a movement between what each is born with and what each eventually chooses to become" (Sasano 4).

ix) Concluding Remarks

How is Murasaki's and Naoe's journey towards a hybrid identity valuable in this novel? First, the un-translated presence of Japanese words allows both women to assign value to their Othered language because it forces the English reader to either learn the significance of these words or risk an ambiguous interpretation of its meaning. Japanese words and phrases appear on almost every page, especially in the first part of the novel when the reader is first introduced to Murasaki and Naoe. Thus, the reader feels a persistent push to step outside a monolingual interpretation of the text. The novel's literary style "incorporates [Bakhtin's ideas of heteroglossia different kinds of languages and belief systems...within the limits of the literary written and conversational language" (Ty 154).

This Bakhtinian "incorporation of other people's languages, [allows Goto's protagonists] to distance themselves from that discourse, present...it objectively, yet…reveal its power, shortcomings, or consequences" (Ty 154). Grappling with meaning with all its nuances requires an understanding of two

languages. Murasaki and Naoe's un-translated words also embody Bakhtin's notion of "creative understanding" which does not "renounce itself, its own place in time, [or] its own culture" but asserts the importance of being *"located outside* the object of...creative understanding-in time, in space [and] in culture" (7). Murasaki's initial ignorance of the Japanese language and Naoe's refusal to speak English allows them to understand the importance of both languages through an outsider position.

This outside position empowers rather than undermines their renegotiation as hybrid women. Stepping outside the language and culture that each woman grows up with permits her to assert her voice as a transcultural traveler who invents her identity somewhere between the Canadian dominant centre and the Japanese margins – without specifying a static point of reference between the two. Within the context of Clifford's traveler, their awareness of, and negotiation between, two cultures may be defined "as a state of being in culture while looking at culture, a form of personal and collective self-fashioning" (Clifford, *Predicament of Culture* 9). Their "self-fashioning," largely created through an exchange of stories, provides both women an opportunity to question ethnic stereotypes.

Goto addresses this notion of self-fashioning in her poetry in *The Body Politic* where she challenges the stereotypes Asian women face. As she states, "If I don't address my colour, it is addressed for me in ways I find intolerable" (219). She also explains that "choice [about how she represents herself and how others view her] is a position of privilege that needs to be addressed" and

sometimes contested (220). In other words, self-representation or choice must be addressed and/or challenged by the people who fall victim to such stereotypes about their ethnic identities. Unaddressed, stereotypes develop into accepted norms. In *Mushrooms,* Murasaki's and Naoe's storytelling allows them to (re)position privilege on their terms. They dictate how their identities will be read rather than allowing others to translate their specificity. Their objectives may be compared to Goto's own ideas in the following excerpt from *The Body Politic.*

> I can never unzip my skin
> and step into another.
> I am happy with my colour until someone points
> out it clashes with my costume.
> I hold my culture in my hands and form it on my own,
> so that no one else can shape the way
> it lies upon my body (220).

Through its use of untranslated Japanese, *Mushrooms* may also be read as a novel that encourages the reader to step outside a monolingual interpretation. As Mark Libin points out, "encoded in Goto's text is that we learn by exploring our inability, by suspending our limitations and by *beginning* to understand the Other" (137). The substantial use of untranslated Japanese in this text shifts the position of the Other to the centre by forcing the unilingual English reader (who represents the centre) to the margins. Although the unilingual English reader can understand a substantial portion of the novel without seeking out translation, the reader is othered and excluded by his or her inability to decipher the untranslated Japanese words and phrases. These untranslated references empower Naoe's and Murasaki's peripheral ethnic

voices. The last two questions in the novel sum up the two women's construction of their in-between hybrid spaces. "When does one thing end and another begin?" and "Can you separate the two?" (Goto, *Mushrooms* 213). There are no stable or verifiable answers for either question.

CONCLUSION

D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists privilege and empower their hybrid identities in different ways. By engaging in a hybrid linguistic dialogue, they define their space between the dominant linguistic Canadian cultural centre and the margins of their linguistic cultural origins as a fluid one. Moreover, by including untranslated passages in foreign languages, these protagonists assert their voices as Other. As Sherry Simon notes, "le pouvoir transgressif du text plurilingue consiste dans sa contestation des frontières nationales et culturelles, dans sa tentative de mettre en cause le rapport à la communauté et aux identités collectives" (27). Each novel's linguistic writing strategy contests the hegemony of language, the power of the voice in the centre – the national linguistic voice.

In an effort to establish a deeper comprehension of the text, I randomly selected some phrases in *Mushrooms* and I had them translated. For instance, the words "mukashi, omukashi" mean "long, long time ago" and these words appear approximately ten times in the novel, six times in part one. These words emphasize the mythical tone of the story. In the acknowledgment section of the novel, Goto explains that her novel departs from historical "fact" into the "realm of contemporary folk legend…and should almost always be considered a work of fiction." Although she tells the reader that this story parallels her own grandmother's experiences, she obviously does not want the text to be read as a work of non-fiction.

Transcribing her grandmother's life story as a work of fiction allows Goto to conflate constructions of truth and fiction. Blurring these polarities also

illustrates the subjective process of defining identity. When Murasaki asks Naoe why she refers to her as Murasaki (previously quoted in Chapter Three), Naoe responds to her in Japanese: "Anta ga jibun de imi o sagashite chyodai" which roughly translates as "I think you should find meaning by yourself," asserting the importance of self-discovery and an individually formed specificity (Goto, *Mushrooms* 17). Here, the unilingual English reader is excluded from Naoe's revelation about the importance of self-definition, unless he or she finds meaning by his/herself. Moreover, Naoe's response in Japanese suggests that she wants Murasaki to seek meaning in and around this language. Thus, Murasaki seeks a literal translation of Naoe's words as well as an existential meaning for her own identity.

The two (aforementioned) untranslated Japanese references from Goto's text do not offer the unilingual English reader any clues to their meaning, either before they appear or afterward. Goto's refusal to translate Japanese words and phrases may be interpreted as a deliberate reconstructive (rather than a deconstructive) process of self-representation. Amaryll Chanady explains that the "deconstruction of ethnicity...poses certain problems, just as the deconstruction of the nation or gender does[;] in both cases, there is a fear of fragmentation and loss of identity as well as agency" (31-32). In Goto's text, agency and identity are negotiated through new forms of collectivity where language juxtaposition plays a critical role in constructing this new collectivity. Goto offers the unilingual reader an opportunity to bridge the linguistic gap she deliberately creates through the nontranslation writing strategy she employs.

Although the reader's overall comprehension of the story is not tainted, the reader who does not seek translation is implicitly excluded from an intimate hybrid linguistic exchange.

This writing strategy empowers the internal and external Other. The reader who represents the ethnic periphery is, in this instance, the reader who understands Japanese and English — the internal Other. This bilingual reader has immediate access to a more comprehensive and intimate understanding of the text while the unilingual English reader who represents the dominant centre, in this instance, the external Other, faces two choices: to remain othered as a result of his or her inability to understand the hidden nuances of the untranslated words or seek translation and participate in a stronger engagement with the text. Goto's novel engages the reader in a more complex and comprehensive search for meaning because she empowers her protagonists' voices as Other, both as visible minorities and as women. Moreover, her extensive use of untranslated Japanese in *Mushrooms* in comparison to D'Alfonso's untranslated Italian in *Avril,* acts as a barometer to measure the level of otherness Goto's protagonists, Murasaki and Naoe, experience in comparison to D'Alfonso's protagonist, Fabrizio.

Fabrizio's use of untranslated Italian and English references in the French text reveals a playful, at times satirical, interaction between languages. D'Alfonso randomly intersperses words and phrases in Italian and English to demonstrate Fabrizio's need to represent himself through all three languages. In addition, Fabrizio battles focus more on language issues, less on gender and racial ones. Thus, the level of exclusion the unilingual English reader faces in

Mushrooms is greater than the level of exclusion the unilingual French reader faces in *Avril,* suggesting that the act of resistance against the hegemony of one language is greater in *Mushrooms.*

Many Italian references in *Avril* offer the French reader an immediate interpretation. Moreover, the Francophone reader can decipher, relatively easily, the meaning of the Italian words. D'Alfonso also provides some direct translations for his French readers. For instance, the following quotation in Italian: "Rifuto di parlare in un'altra lingua" is followed by "Refuser de parler une autre langue" (D'Alfonso, *Avril* 94). Moreover, untranslated words in Italian such as "farniente" translate as "lazy bum" and "ah, porca miseria," similar to "oh, fuck" when translated, reveal Fabrizio's humourous tone. Other references, especially in Chapter Thirteen entitled "La Messe des Morts", do however reveal how Fabrizio manipulates language to contest established paradigms. In this chapter, he criticizes religion by juxtaposing prayers in Italian with a negative critique of religion (as previously mentioned in Chapter Two) as a "capitalist construction".

A comparison between D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists' use of untranslated words and phrases in Italian and Japanese suggests that they negotiate their voice as Other differently. While language juxtaposition allows the protagonists in both novels to establish an empowering image of their peripheral ethnic voice, Fabrizio's travel between languages represents a more subtle contestation of the hegemony of one language than that of Murasaki and Naoe. However, this juxtaposition (on any level) asserts a hybrid representation of identity, focusing on cultural difference and recognizing that not all "human

experience is...the same" (Gunew qtd. in Pivato, Echo: *Essays on Other Literatures* 21). Goto's novel pushes this point further because there is a greater amount of untranslated Japanese in her text. It is not the quantity of untranslated Japanese that is in and of itself significant. However Goto's need to include so many more untranslated references than D'Alfonso illustrates two important points. First, her protagonist Murasaki's desire to travel between languages without translation reflects her inability to identify herself through one language. Although Fabrizio also refuses to be identified through one language, his usage of untranslated English and Italian does not exclude the reader, not to the same degree, from a more intimate understanding of the text. Thus, there is a more polemical tone in Goto's text. Goto's English reader is excluded from an intimate understanding of many more passages in the novel than D'Alfonso's French reader. Second, the quantity of untranslated Japanese words and phrases illustrates Murasaki's longing to express herself in Japanese, a language she learns as a young adult while Fabrizio's ability to speak Italian exists since birth. Goto's text acts as a stronger tool of resistance since there is a sufficient amount of untranslated Japanese text in this novel to leave the unilingual reader doubtful about a clear comprehension of the story.

Her text is therefore an interesting starting point for further research in minority texts that intersect untranslated *other* languages with majority ones as a way to challenge traditional literary canons. In varying degrees, both D'Alfonso's and Goto's protagonists illustrate the importance of, as Linda Hutcheon points out, "mapping differences [of Otherness]" by speaking from the

margins of a linguistic and cultural centre (74). An untranslated co-presence of other languages in a dominant English or French text also allows the minority writer to challenge and reconstruct negative self-representations, "racial categorization and narratives created by white Europeans" that foster feelings of "shame and self-contempt" (Chanady 36-37).

Ethnic writers who challenge their readers, through a juxtaposition of untranslated *other* languages, to interpret meaning from the outside, as Other, invite readers and researchers who study their work to view difference as a valorizing and educative tool. In the introduction to a special issue of *Canadian Ethnic Studies* that focuses on "ethnic themes," Natalia Aponiuk rightly "appeals for inclusiveness and a broadening of the concept of Canadian literature" (5). Canadian Italian writer Joseph Pivato points out that the "relationship between ethnic literature and mainstream writing is very much in flux" because "the mainstream is increasingly defined in the light of Canada's ethnic diversity" (63). Lamberto Tassinari's phrase "le monde entier est un grand Canada" is particularly appropriate since Canada's population is increasingly multicultural (Siemerling 22). Furthermore, an exploration of texts that travel between languages and other cultural markers also invites a new process of negotiation and exploration of hybridity because it encourages researchers and readers to engage in a hybrid linguistic exchange. Hybrid representations of identity, hopefully, will also provide future scholars with a way to contest pejorative definitions of terms such as *ethnicity*. This word originates from the Greek root meaning "nation" and "heathen", a term that still carries an exclusionary

"patronizing and discrediting" context (Kadar 79). Similarly, the term "minority literature", which "was and [still] is synonymous with marginalization and with the exclusion from the mainstream of Canadian literature and the Canadian canon", needs to be re-evaluated (Aponiuk 2).

Writers like D'Alfonso and Goto who include untranslated *other* languages in their texts also reflect Canada's growing heterogeneous literary population. Such writers find it increasingly difficult to maintain any "constant or prevailing values...unadulterated inheritances, and...clear-cut lines of descent" (Lecker 7). These writers also represent the changes taking place in Canada's cross-cultural and transcultural writing in Canada since 1988. In her essay, "Neither Here nor There: Canadian Fiction by the Multicultural Generation," Carolyn Redl explains that "fiction by transcultural writers published prior to 1988, almost without exception" describes "the Canadian community in full detail...at least as it differs from the American and British identities" (23). Today's minority texts, like D'Alfonso's and Goto's, emphasize a latent sense of longing for hybrid community structures. Redl concludes her essay by stating that transcultural fiction "written since [1988] depicts characters who are physically present in Canada and physically absent from another country", suggesting that "they are neither here nor there" (34). I would like to conclude by suggesting instead that the characters in D'Alfonso's and Goto's novels identify their symbolic presence in both places as a fluid movement between here and there.

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