

Writing Quebec City in Andrée Maillet's *Les Remparts de Québec* and Nalini Warriar's *The Enemy Within*

This essay is part of my “Heartlands/Pays du cœur” project, which aims to look afresh at Quebec’s secondary cities and regions outside of Montreal. As is well known, Quebec’s Quiet Revolution sought to effect a break with the past, rejecting a pan-Canadian cultural nationalism bound up in the preservation of the French language, Catholicism, and an attachment to the land. In embracing the city—specifically Montreal—the rising francophone technocrat middle-classes mobilized a discourse of “catching up” with other (overly) industrialized nations (Biron et al. 277-78).¹ In cultural terms, whilst writers for the highly influential publishing house and its journal, *Parti pris*, tended to exaggerate the alienation of the city, they did so in a way that nevertheless situated the nationalist struggle within this space (Maheu 22). Montreal increasingly became the preferred setting for fiction, as highlighted in Pierre Nepveu’s and Gilles Marcotte’s 1992 assertion, “il est évident que, sans Montréal, la littérature québécoise n’existe pas” (7).² The already nostalgic novel of the land, which had dominated Québécois literature since Confederation, was consigned to an even more distant past that had little, if anything, to say to a resolutely urban present. With the exception of a small handful of works,³ critical analyses of literary representations of spaces and places outside of Quebec’s metropolitan centre were largely relegated to the occasional article or book chapter.

The “Heartlands/Pays du cœur” project has a number of motivations. One of these is to reflect on affective attachments to, and imaginings of, space and place. It draws on work in emotional geography (see Thien; Thrift), with the aim of arriving at what Liz Bondi describes as “a relational

approach to research” (n. pag.). A second motivation connects with debates concerning national identity in the wake of the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (2007-2008) and, more recently, Quebec’s now defunct Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Watching some of the television coverage in Montreal at the time of the Bouchard-Taylor hearings, I was struck by the degree of apparent ethnic diversity of places outside of the city, historically, the economic and cultural centre of Quebec and home to the majority of immigrants to the province. The Commission report predicts that this diversity is likely to grow (Bouchard and Taylor 10). Consequently, the project aims to challenge dominant “cognitive mapping[s]” (Jameson 347) of Quebec, which contrast Montreal with the supposedly homogeneous white francophone communities along the St. Lawrence River.

A third motivation is the attraction of *hors-Montréal* for authors of recent fiction in Quebec. This attraction is underlined in an issue of the journal *Liberté* entitled “Les régions à nos portes.” Here, Samuel Archibald identifies three trends with respect to what he refers to as “le néoterroir en littérature”; one of these being “une *démontréalisation* [sic] marquée de la littérature québécoise” (17). However, the “heartlands” project is concerned not only with “le Canada [le Québec] profond,” as a conference chair once translated the title. Rather, it focuses on representations and understandings of *québécoité* in rural, semi-rural, exurban and urban spaces and places outside of the province’s largest city. This focus is not to suggest that these spaces and places are all the same; just that they have in common a contrast, distance, or marginalization to or from Montreal, which, as Rosemary Chapman points out, “is quite unlike the rest of Quebec” (83). Retaining a sense of spatial specificity, the “heartlands” project aims to think about fictional representations outside of the fetish-city and consider what these might suggest about Québécois identity.

Focusing on two novels by female authors set in Quebec City, this article considers how they participate in a tendency in women’s writing to subvert some of the conventions of Quebec’s urban novel. At the same time, it aims to undercut popular imaginary geographies that cast Montreal as the sole ethnically diverse city in the province. Although a key example of the urban turn in Québécois fiction is set in Quebec City, namely Roger Lemelin’s *Au pied de la pente douce* (1944), this genre soon came to be identified with Montreal (Morgan, *Mindscapes* 1). *Le roman montréalais* takes a variety of forms, from the nationalist texts of the Quiet Revolution to the novels

mediating ethnic diversity and cultural *métissage* of the 1980s, and the lyrical, more personal works of the post-referenda era (see *Mindscales*). However, some common trends exist, such as the naming of spaces and places within Montreal which would be familiar to domestic audiences, themes of walking or otherwise traversing the city space, and representing Montreal as a metonym for Quebec. Clashes, collisions, and encounters between French and English and in more recent decades especially, other languages and by extension, ethnicities, are frequent features of Montreal novels in both French and English.

In contrast, Quebec City is often represented as a repository of *québécoité*. Its importance within the province's past and status as administrative capital in the present mean that it has a particular symbolic presence in francophone and, to a lesser extent, anglophone cultural production. Quebec City evokes contradictory connotations, despite popularly being seen and describing itself on its tourist information site as "the cradle of French civilization in North America" (Quebec City n. pag.). Its role as "founding city" is a significant part of its domestic and international touristic appeal, with traces of its architectural heritage—some of which have been carefully restored for the purpose (Morisset 147-50)—attracting large crowds every year. The apparent conservatism of the seat of provincial power is nevertheless challenged in cultural practices such as Robert Lepage's self-described "multidisciplinary company," Ex Machina ("Ex Machina" n. pag.), and strong graffiti and *bande-dessinée* cultures. Daniel Laforest describes how the city tried to present itself as both historical and modern in its 400th anniversary celebrations: "Quebec showed on every level its desire to be perceived as an encapsulation of the European legacy on American soil while being on par with the dominant North American images and narratives corresponding to the present stage of globalisation" ("Blurry Outlines" 200). These contradictions feed into what some critics describe as the dual nature of Quebec City (Lintvelt; Marshall), which they connect with its topography. This duality doubtless informs the plays around appearance and reality; secrets, lies, and truth associated with the literary genre best identified with Quebec City, namely the murder thriller, or *polar*.⁴ However, it is at odds with the ethnic and linguistic homogeneity that informs most fictional representations of the city (Marshall 140).⁵

Written at a time of cultural ebullition, increased publication of francophone Québécois women's writing, and growing national assertion, Andrée Maillet's *Les Remparts de Québec* (1965) is structured around a key moment, which is underlined in the opening: "hier, dans la nuit du vingt-

six au vingt-sept juillet, je me suis promenée toute nue dans les Plaines d'Abraham" (13). This night scene is repeated with variations at the start of each chapter, so that we have "hier, dans la nuit, je quittai la Grande-Allée pour venir dans les Plaines d'Abraham où personne ne remarqua ma présence" (31, chap. 2) and "hier, j'ai reçu des arbres la pluie nocturne" (91, chap. 3). The rest of each chapter then flashes back to the female narrator's life, her difficult relationship with her parents and her rebellion against the rules of behaviour expected of a girl and young woman from a so-called "respectable" family. Some of these flashbacks take the form of recollected sessions between Arabelle and her psychiatrist; others are conversations that she has with an older American tourist. The latter enable the recounting of Arabelle's losing her virginity at the age of fifteen: gradually, in fragments, we learn of her encountering a married, middle-aged man in Strasbourg during a trip to Europe which was supposed to improve her social and educational development. Wishing to avoid another admirer, she accepts a ride with the older man and the two drive to an hotel in Baden Baden where they eventually have intercourse. The end of the novel sees her part company with the tourist; farmer from Idaho who resists her attempts to seduce him, and later that evening she takes up with an American-Polish soldier she had first seen on the ramparts of the title.

For its part, Nalini Warriar's *The Enemy Within* (2005) is structured around a more explicitly politically significant moment. Opening the day after the 1995 referendum on sovereignty-association, the title makes a play on the xenophobia of Jacques Parizeau's infamous comments following the result, in which he blamed "money and the ethnic vote" for the extremely narrow margin of votes against the proposal (50.58% against as opposed to 49.4% in favour). In this way, the protagonist, Sita Verma, who moves to Quebec following her arranged marriage, comments on the attitudes of a local resident: "after more than twenty years in Quebec City as neighbours, Sylvie still thought of her as a colour" (4). At the same time, "the enemy" is also Sita's husband, Anup, who, in the course of their marriage, goes from being indifferent to abusive, raping his wife on the day of the referendum.

Both *Les Remparts de Québec* and *The Enemy Within* play with what is known and what is suppressed, appearance and reality. In this, they take up a common trope within Quebec City fiction that critics connect with the duality of the urban landscape. Mapped over divisions between the city's Upper Town (*Haute-Ville*) and Lower Town (*Basse-Ville*) have been various social distinctions, notably those of class and economic mobility. As Bill

Marshall highlights, with some of it enclosed within city walls, the Upper Town, situated on the promontory of Cap Diamant was, and remains to a certain extent, the centre of political, economic, and religious power (135-36). Partly located on the shore of the St. Lawrence River, the Lower Town is the site of Samuel de Champlain's first settlement in the early seventeenth century. Marshall reminds us how, in the eighteenth century, the Lower Town was inhabited by artisans and workers. It became linked with finance and warehouse trade in the nineteenth century and culture industries at the end of the twentieth (Marshall 135). According to Jaap Lintvelt, although it was nineteenth-century industrialization that cemented the association of the Upper Town with the bourgeoisie and the Lower with the working classes, the spatial organization of Quebec City already determined the distribution of social hierarchies (78).

At various points in its history, Quebec City has been a fortress: both at the time of Champlain and, most famously, during the war against the British, who easily overcame the city's defences (Marshall 139-40). In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the British built the large star-shaped garrison, the Citadelle, which incorporates elements of the protective walls built by the French, but its functions are now primarily ceremonial. Marshall argues that "Quebec City's dual function as port and fortress, of openness and enclosure, forms the deep structure of all its representations" (137). For his part, Lintvelt points to the way in which the walls appear to be experienced as oppressive or liberating depending on the author's gender (309). He argues that the ramparts of Quebec City function symbolically as prison walls in Maillet's novel (84). It is the case that Arabelle makes a comparison between "ces murailles dérisoires qu'on appelle les remparts de Québec" (24) and "les remparts de [son] enfance" (24). She is figured as rejecting her native city, asserting that as soon as she has sufficient money to do so, she will leave once more (83). This attitude contrasts, however, to her lyrical descriptions of the natural landscape; notably the St. Lawrence River (56 and elsewhere). Social class is a key preoccupation in *Les Remparts de Québec*, with the confines against which Arabelle is rebelling partly connected with the urban space and the supposed narrowness of vision of its inhabitants. Arabelle begins seeing a psychiatrist after being arrested for vagrancy on rue Notre-Dame-des-Anges. This prompts her to underline cynically the rigid fixity of much of the city, with mobility only permitted in certain areas (124). The narrator rejects many of the social conventions expected of her social background; numerous rules governing female

comportment haunting the narrative in the form of the voices of Arabelle's mother, grandmother, teachers, and doctors. Class is mapped out over the city, with Arabelle receiving the following reproach in response to a perceived misconduct, "*tu n'ès pas née à Saint-Roch*" (sic; Maillet 85), Saint-Roch being at that time a working-class neighbourhood in the Lower Town.

Maillet's novel takes up a theme that is frequently found in francophone Québécois fiction leading up to and including the Quiet Revolution, namely an inadequate relationship between parents and child. Arabelle's surgeon father is represented as entirely absorbed in his work, wife, and the trappings of his upper bourgeois lifestyle, with his daughter complaining, "je ne suis rien pour mon père" (57). This relationship is an extension of the trope of the unloving heterosexual couple found in much of this literature. In his well-known 1964 essay, "L'Amour dans la littérature canadienne-française," Michel van Schendel makes a connection between the near-complete lack of romantic novels in Quebec and what is figured as the province's colonized position (158). Women writers of the time, like Marie-Claire Blais and Anne Hébert, often represent heterosexual relations as abusive so as to undercut the idealization of the mother and her large Catholic family that informed the so-called "revenge of the cradle": a high birth rate in Quebec associated with political clout. In *Les Remparts de Québec*, the parents are figured as loving one another; indeed, Arabelle's father is represented as placing his wife at the centre of his life (21). His comfortable class background might account for this relatively positive portrayal of heterosexual coupledom, although the latter is seen as less enjoyable for his wife. Sophie, a Polish immigrant to Quebec who is scarred by the War, spends much of her time nervously monitoring her behaviour so she is not found wanting in her host environment. In this way, the constitution of the family in Maillet's novel complicates what appears, in many respects, to be a narrative of teenage revolt at a time when Quebec's baby-boom generation was coming of age. It is not only Arabelle's body that is policed by her grandmother, but also that of her mother. Sophie is repeatedly reminded of her outsider status by her mother-in-law's arch comments as to her choice of outfits (20-21) and exclamations as to how little resemblance there is between her and Arabelle: "il faut avouer, Sophie, que votre fille ne vous ressemble en rien" (20).

If Maillet's novel highlights several differences between the narcissistic and privileged Arabelle, and Sophie, who, at the same age, "pensai[t] à sauver [sa] Patrie" (41), it also underlines some key similarities. To a degree, the episode in which Arabelle loses her virginity echoes her mother's

rape by a prison guard in a concentration camp. Sophie uses the rape as a warning so as to police the appropriate gender mores of her husband's class whenever her daughter appears to contravene these, thereby both exploiting and squandering the privileges of her social position: "si quelqu'un a le droit d'être tragique, ici, c'est moi, faut-il toujours que je le répète?" (87). At a metatextual level, these incidents of quasi-consensual and forced sex reinscribe the trauma of the Holocaust, which surfaces now and again, as in the instances when Arabelle's mother drinks too much alcohol and reveals her prison camp tattoos (134-35). Another recurrent historical trauma and a fairly obvious one, given the importance accorded to the setting of a large part of the novel, is the Battle of Quebec (1759). The decisive moment on the Plains of Abraham, in which the generals of both Britain and New France were killed, saw France lose control of much of North America. The Plains function as a "*lieu de mémoire*" (Nora xvii) in Maillet's novel; explicitly identified with francophone Québec's understanding of itself: "situées à la périphérie des vieux Remparts de Québec . . . ces Plaines pelucheuses nous conservent la mémoire" (159). The incantatory "hier" which begins each chapter and which then triggers a series of other memories underlines this connection to historical trauma.

In his preface to the 1989 edition of *Les Remparts de Québec*, François Ricard compares it with what have come to be some of the classic nationalist texts of the period, such as Jacques Renaud's *Le Cassé* (1964) and Marie-Claire Blais' *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* (1965) (8-9). Nevertheless, the narrative is remarkable in that, unlike the majority of 1960s texts by women that engage with nationalism, it does not take place in a rural environment. Novels such as Blais' *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* and Hébert's *Kamouraska* (1970) use their non-urban settings in order to rework the novel of the land and to problematize the oppressive roles for women in this genre's celebration of *l'agriculturalisme* and the large Catholic family. In contrast, male nationalist authors of the period choose to set their work in Montreal, where tensions between francophones and anglophones are symbolic of the national struggle. As highlighted earlier, what adds to the interest of *Les Remparts de Québec* is that it is set in Quebec City rather than Montreal and, unusually for nationalist fiction of the period, also gives a sense of an ethnically heterogeneous urban space. Most nationalist literature of this time suppresses ethnic diversity within the Montreal setting despite this city's importance within histories of immigration to North America. This suppression serves to highlight tensions between Quebec's majority ethno-linguistic groups (Morgan *Mindscapes* 18).

As well as references to American and Chinese tourists (45), Maillet's novel contains allusions to a Hungarian hairdresser (49) and a Chinese restaurant (231). As we have seen, the protagonist's family background is mixed Québécois-Polish (50-51). Crucially, Arabelle describes having positive relations with anglophones, telling the man she meets in Strasbourg about one of her friends: "elle est anglaise. *She is my very best friend*" (sic; Maillet 71). This narrative does not accord with what has come to be known as "le texte national" (Jacques Godbout qtd. in Smith 7), which has dominated literary studies of the Quiet Revolution. Some examples of *le roman montréalais* outside of the nationalist canon contain representations of positive interactions between francophones and anglophones.⁶ For example, Lucile Vallières' *La Fragilité des idoles* (1964) which is set primarily in a downtown office building, anticipates the more relaxed informal linguistic politics of very contemporary Montreal identified by Sherry Simon (10) and that are familiar to many living in the city. Its description of the Christmas office party points to the exchanges between French and English that are a common occurrence there: "un étranger entrant inopinément se serait cru à un Cocktail de la Société des Nations-Unies. On parlait l'anglais et répondait en français" (Vallières 69).

With that in mind, *Les Remparts de Québec* does not offer a complacent or unambiguous celebration of diversity. Whilst the comparison between Sophie's rape and the Battle of Quebec is rather uneasy, another distress narrative lurks in the novel. We learn of Sophie's sexual attack quite early on, but the details of her story during and immediately after the war are revealed in fragments in a way that is similar to the account of Arabelle's first intercourse and which, in representing a struggle between remembering and forgetting, signal trauma (Caruth 4-11). In Maillet's novel, sexual violation then becomes a signifier for Sophie's wider trauma as a Holocaust survivor and displaced migrant. In common with many other Polish people, she had moved to Belgium after the war, where she had been treated as a heroine for her bravery. When Arabelle visits some of her mother's Belgian friends, their comments regarding Sophie's welfare and their assumption that "on la traitait sûrement comme une reine" (Maillet 150) are in ironic contrast to the actual treatment she receives from her husband's female relatives. Arabelle sees her mother as torn between cultures: "je viens de comprendre ceci: lorsqu'elle me frappe, elle frappe Québec; lorsqu'elle m'embrasse, elle embrasse la Pologne" (171-72). Within the social class in which she finds herself, Sophie's bond with her daughter is repeatedly interrupted: her mother-in-law's

insistence on the physical differences between her and Arabelle; Arabelle's recollection of her delight at the Meccano set her mother bought her one Christmas turning; and her unease when the gift was deemed unfeminine and unsuitable by her aunts and grandmother (184-85). Sophie's repeated frustration with her daughter is consequently also an expression of anger at her host society in which she is ill at ease and where "on [lui] enlève [la] fille" (87). If, at the end of the novel, Arabelle's new relationship with the American-Polish soldier can be seen as pointing to the promise of a more multicultural future, Sophie remains out of place, trapped between the trauma of her past and the discomfort of her present.

Published forty years after *Les Remparts de Québec*, Warriar's *The Enemy Within* comes out of a context that saw the territorial nationalism of the Quiet Revolution called into question for appearing to identify the national subject with whites of French descent. Warriar's semi-autobiographical account of immigrant female development shares with Maillet's novel a rather surprising choice of setting in that it does not take place in Montreal; historically, the key immigrant pole within the province and backdrop to numerous famous novels of migrant dislocation.⁷ These novels include Dany Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* (1985), Régine Robin's *La Québécoise* (1983) and, more recently, Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* (2008). Unlike Hage and other writers who have published in English since the turn of the century, such as Heather O'Neill and Neil Smith, Warriar is not typically seen as part of the province's anglophone literary renaissance, despite having won a Quebec Writers' Federation prize for her collection of short stories, *Blues from the Malabar Coast* (2002). *The Enemy Within* can be compared with Robin's *La Québécoise* and British author Monica Ali's postcolonial novel of feminine development, *Brick Lane* (2003). If Robin's heroines struggle to make themselves at home in various neighbourhoods in Montreal and Ali's lead character is transported into the run-down high-rise flats of East London, Warriar's protagonist finds herself in the cold climes first of Montreal and then the suburbs of Quebec City. Sita's third-floor apartment near Laval University is in what is represented as an overly clean, overly quiet neighbourhood, which is very much at odds with what she knew in India: "sunlight reflected from the spotless cars and lorries. . . . It was quiet too. At this time of the morning in Kerala, the streets would be teeming: factory workers, labourers, vendors, students, dogs and cows" (Warriar 41). Although it is not unusual to represent suburbs negatively, as can be seen in examples of Quebec fiction from the

1980s and 1990s like Louis Hamelin's *La Rage* (1989) and H el ene Monette's *Unless* (1995), the nearby city does not fare much better: "in contrast to Montreal, Quebec City was quiet. . . . The wide streets were empty. Clean. No cardboard huts on the pavements. No beggars" (39). Quebec City and its surroundings are represented as very white and francophone, barely concealing an endemic racism beneath their rather antiseptic facades. These places become ciphers for the whole of Quebec, with the possible exception of Montreal, which with its "towering skyscrapers," "mirrored facades," and "monotonous grey freeway ramps" (39) more closely resembles urban centres elsewhere in the world. As in other examples of women's fiction, the city's walls become a metaphor for Sita's social isolation: "with the passing of the years, the wall around her grew higher and higher" (50-51). Employment practices highlight and reinforce the ethnocentrism that Warriar figures as being a part of francophone Qu eb cois culture: "French would never fill her soul as English did. There was a coldness in the hearts of the people that made Sita shudder" (118).

The Enemy Within displays little patience for the language politics of Quebec; Sita contrasts them with what is represented as an easy and depoliticized language use in her country of origin: "when she was growing up, she had used three languages and at one time even five because one of the cooks in her home had been from Uttar Pradesh" (120). The novel nevertheless points to the existence of more than one language in Quebec City in that, assumed to be a tourist, Sita repeatedly finds that those working in related industries automatically switch from French to English when addressing her (48). The character's acute awareness of her ethnic difference prompts her to dress in Western clothes, although the critique that goes along with this decision is somewhat tempered by a comment on her physical attractiveness: "she'd stopped wearing her Indian clothes because she resented the stares she got when she wore them. She didn't realize they stared because she was beautiful" (48-49). All the same, *The Enemy Within* is highly critical of francophone Quebec society, locating racism firmly with a group that, rather ironically in a text so concerned with ethnic difference, is identified solely with white *francophones de souche*. Indeed, the only positive representation of a francophone is of Sita's colleague, Michel. However, he almost does not count, as although his parents are Qu eb cois, he grew up in Vancouver. In some ways then, it is curious that Warriar's protagonist is represented as coming to love the province that is represented as so guilty of racist prejudice: "Canada was home. Quebec was in her heart" (90).

This affection is bound up in her building a cottage near Lake Marie, thirty minutes outside Quebec City, with money left to her by her mother. It is quite common for writers of the Montreal novel to contrast the city with a more positive elsewhere.⁸ Interestingly, like many examples of the province's second-city fiction, *The Enemy Within* figures the alternative to Quebec City and its sprawl as a spiritual or emotional haven. The beauty of the natural landscape is evoked as one explanatory factor, with the novel taking up the pastoral sublime in a similar way to Maillet's text: "each day, she discovered a new view to fill her heart. From the stone balustrade, the St Lawrence floated lazily towards the gulf and the Atlantic" (51).

It is only near Lake Marie that Sita finds genuine friendship and, through this, love and sexual fulfillment. As in Robin's *La Québécoise*, Sita's romantic life parallels, to a degree, Quebec's national situation, although the added dimension to Robin's novel is that the failure of the female protagonists to achieve a long-lasting relationship is also attributed to the pain and trauma of the Holocaust. A number of now-canonical francophone Québécois novels that engage with questions around diversity can be seen as subversions of the national romance. This is a genre identified by Doris Sommer in her study of Latin American fiction. She describes how novels written prior to the 1960s attempted to resolve social and political conflict by mobilizing a romance narrative that naturalized the coming together of male and female protagonists from different racial, political, economic, and regional backgrounds (76-90). In the Quebec context, 1980s classics like *La Québécoise* and Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* take up the long-standing narrative in francophone Québécois fiction of the impossibility of successful heterosexual romances described by van Schendel. They map this failure of heterosexual relations over the failed inter-ethnic relationships of their immigrant protagonists with Quebec's anglophones, francophones or, in the occasional instance, allophones. Warriar's novel differs from this in that both Sita and Anup are originally from the same area of India, but the latter is represented as effectively Canadianized by the time of their marriage. Anup rejects much of the chaos and disorder of his homeland and adopts a blend of North American and Indian mores that see him accept a life of wife and children without really wanting to relinquish the independence he had as a younger man in his early years as an immigrant. Anup is contrasted in a number of ways with Sita's second partner, Kiran, a friend of neighbours on Lake Marie whose family is also originally from the subcontinent. In contrast to the cold and sexually

selfish Anup, Kiran is a loving, attentive partner. Whilst he is from Quebec City, Kiran's skin colour and use of English as his first language mark him out for a racist attack towards the end of the novel, as the province prepares for the 1995 referendum (269). In this way, ethnocentrism is revealed as exhibited towards men as well as women, although as far as professional practices are concerned, Sita's gender certainly also appears to play a role in her being exploited at work. In this context, Anup's rape of his wife is a somewhat muddled and a rather heavy-handed metaphor for the potential destructiveness of the debates around the referendum. Sita reflects on the exclusionary nature of the latter:

What they said boiled down to one thing: Quebec for the francophones.

Or as Sita saw it, white Quebecers.

They should come to Quebec City, she thought.

No place could be more Québécois. Hell, she had never been to the home of a real pure laine Québécois. (218)

Consequently, Sita remains sceptical about the possibility of true integration to Québécois society, and encourages her children to move abroad, saying "there is no future for you here" (232).

It is interesting that both *Les Remparts de Québec* and *The Enemy Within* use rape as a metaphor for a lack of social cohesion. The criminal act of sexual violation slides into the crime of racism, although racism is a rather suppressed subtext in Maillet's novel. In nationalist fiction by male authors of the Quiet Revolution, violence against women functions as an act of national assertion which, in overcoming the frequently anglophone representative of the colonizing oppressor, promotes a (francophone) collective. This metaphor has been rightly critiqued by feminist scholars—for example, Lori Saint-Martin (116-17). The politics of female authors using the same act to highlight national disunity seems at the very least troubling, as it risks identifying femininity with being a victim. The novels by Maillet and Warriar certainly represent women—or certain women—as being out of place in Quebec City and, by extension, Quebec as a whole. However, there is a suggestion in *Les Remparts de Québec* that this might change, as represented by the rebellious actions of its lead character, whose walks around the city and the Plains of Abraham constitute so many "parcours" which, in Michel de Certeau's famous analysis, challenge the fixity of the map associated with the dominant workings of power (91-110). Two later works of fiction for which Maillet's novel is an important intertext aim to restore some of the breaches within it and reposition women more firmly within the

urban space. The most famous example of literary fiction set in Quebec City written by a woman, namely, Anne Hébert's *Le Premier Jardin* (1988), along with Nicole Brossard's more recent *Hier* (2001), take up the narrative of the fractured mother-daughter relationship and offer some healing alternatives. In so doing, they uncover and recover individual and national feminine memories, thereby casting Quebec City as a site of women's desire. Both novels situate Quebec City within an historic transatlantic network, but neither really engages with the question of multiculturalism (Morgan, "Writing" 206).

For its part, *Les Remparts de Québec* acknowledges Quebec City's ethnic diversity and shows some optimism regarding the future accommodation of cultural difference within the province. This is not unmitigated, however. Even though Arabelle's meeting with the Polish-American soldier is represented positively as a spontaneous celebration of youth and desire, an underlying tension remains because the young man has lost his heritage language: "je lui parle polonais. Il me dit: j'ai oublié" (233). Maillet's novel sounds a warning about the dangers of English; a language no longer identified with the province's historic British colonizers and their descendants, but with the United States. In common with other examples of cultural production of the period, it offers a critique of the embracing of mass consumerism that occurred during the Quiet Revolution, associating this with a further erosion of Québécois identity (Maillet 165). In contrast, French is identified as the threat in *The Enemy Within* for its association with what is identified as ethnic essentialism. The novel offers a largely pessimistic view of diversity outside of the Montreal context: the conclusion sees Sita murdered by her ex-husband, a crime that underlines the impossibility of future integration for this often well-disposed immigrant.

Despite the differences in the authors' ethnic and linguistic identities, period of publication and language choice, *Remparts* and *The Enemy Within* share a number of interesting points of crossover. Indeed, they take up many of the themes often found in feminine fiction, including reflections on women's place within Quebec City and the mapping of sexual desire. Although the narratives of ethnic and racial tensions contained within *Les Remparts de Québec* and *The Enemy Within* offer uncomfortable reading, the very fact that diversity is treated within these texts makes them worthy of note. Whilst they may not announce a new literary trend, they signal the possibility that Montreal need not retain its monopoly as the sole multicultural place—at least, as represented culturally—in an otherwise homogeneous Quebec.

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NOTES

- 1 Of course, as many historians have pointed out, signs of Quebec's modernization can be seen much earlier than 1960, the date popularly seen as marking the beginning of the Quiet Revolution (Simard 3-14).
- 2 As Daniel Laforest highlights, this symbolic embracing of the urban marginalized the rural and did not take account of the growing suburbanization of Quebec's population centres ("La Banlieue" n. pag.). A recent special issue of *Liberté*, which focuses on suburbs, goes some way to addressing this lack; see Lefebvre and Parent.
- 3 See, for example, Laforest's *L'Archipel de Caïn* and Pamela Sing's *Villages imaginaires*.
- 4 Chrystine Brouillet is one author associated with this literature, and there is a walking tour on the thriller or *polar* which takes place on weekends in the city.
- 5 An interesting exception is Louise Penny's *Bury Your Dead*, which is concerned with the long-standing anglophone community in Quebec City.
- 6 In making this assertion, I do not wish to carry out the kind of forgetting of the very real social and political tensions between anglophones and francophones during this period. David Leahy warns against this kind of cultural amnesia (unpublished manuscript).
- 7 Of course, Quebec City has also been an historic pole of immigration within the province due to its being a port city.
- 8 Shelley Boyd, private conversation, December 2007.

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