

SPEAKING WHITE

Literary Translation as a Vehicle of Assimilation in Quebec

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LIN GILLES ARCHAMBAULT'S 1970 novel, *Parlons de moi* (Le Cercle du Livre de France), the disaffected narrator says:

Puisque depuis que j'ai des opinions politiques définies, je me refuse à parler cette langue [anglais] à moins d'y être obligé. (13)

How ironic then that this poor narrator is forced twelve years later to speak entirely in English when the novel is translated (betrayed?).¹

In her November 9, 1985, *Le Devoir* article, "Speak White: de l'accusation à la nécessité," Natalie Petrowski describes how speaking white — English — has become both chic for young people, and a financial necessity for rock and other art groups. To speak English, to speak white, "parlez avec l'accent de Milton et Byron et Shelley et Keats," as Michèle Lalonde wrote in her famous 1968 *poème-affiche*, has long been a sensitive issue in Quebec: a sign of the contamination of racial purity in the 1920's and 1930's, of Quebec's awareness of her colonized status in the 1960's and 1970's, a marker of the ambitions and economic realities of the 1980's.² Note the difference in Roch Carrier's use of English in the title of his 1968 satire of French-English relations during World War II, *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* and in René-Daniel Dubois's contemporary play, *Being at Home with Claude* (1985). In the above *Le Devoir* article, Dubois is quoted as saying:

Je sais que le *nec plus ultra* jeunesse outremontoise, c'est de parler anglais et de refuser tout ce qui est français. Ce n'est pas mon cas. Mon titre joue sur l'ambiguïté d'une situation, celle d'être québécois et d'être poigné dans une vue américaine. (28)

For this reason, language as sign, reflector of culture is a recurring subject in Quebec literature, as well as on the political front.³ As Ferdinand de Saussure pointed out:

The culture of a nation exerts an influence on its language, and language, on the other hand, is largely responsible for the nation.⁴

How, in the light of Quebec's sensitivity to the presence and infiltration of English into its language and culture, have literary translators dealt with this problem?

On one level, are they betraying Quebec literature merely by translating it into the oppressor's language, and on another level, how are they resolving linguistic allusions and word-plays, in particular the significance of English as sign in the source text? Are they, through the act of translating, diminishing or even erasing the cultural difference between Quebec and English-Canada?

There appeared in 1977 in *Ellipse* (21), an understated but significant article by Ben-Zion Shek ("Quelques réflexions sur la traduction dans le contexte socio-culturel Canado-québécois") in which he comments on the role of translation, where official documents were always translated from English *into* French, in reproducing the political relationship of dominator and dominated. Shek uses the term *diglossia* to describe this hazardous linguistic (and cultural) situation, in which one language and linguistic group dominates and attempts to assimilate the other language and group. In the collection of essays, *Diglossie et littérature*, to which Shek refers, Alain Ricard defines diglossia:

La diglossie est à l'origine une situation linguistique dans laquelle les fonctions de communication linguistique sont réparties d'une manière binaire entre une langue ancienne culturellement prestigieuse, dotée d'une tradition écrite, nommée variété haute (H), et une autre langue sans tradition écrite, largement diffusée et dénuée de prestige ou variété (B) . . . Cette distribution différentielle est d'abord ce qui fait la diglossie. . . La diglossie est une situation sociale. . . Il nous paraît cependant nécessaire d'insister . . . sur la dimension conflictuelle du terme de diglossie et les implications de ce conflit sur les conditions de production, de fonctionnement et de réception des textes littéraires. ("Introduction" 13, 14, 15)⁵

Then in 1983, another perceptive article investigating the notion of translation as betrayal in the Canadian context appeared. This was E. D. Blodgett's "How do you say 'Gabrielle Roy'?" (*Translation in Canada, Reappraisals: Canadian Writers*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1983). Blodgett quickly noted the importance of Shek's warning, but, in examining the concept of diglossia and the role of literary translation, took their implications one step further. He suggested that the otherness, alienation, difference that concerned Shek are immensely significant and should therefore be *preserved* through translation. "Through interlinearity," he asserted, "the foreign character of the text, the text as Other" should be underlined. "By avoiding similarity," the target text "avoids assimilation. . . . Difference would be preserved through dialectical exchange" (25). In other words, while, like Shek, Blodgett would like translation to avoid the stigma of being branded as a vehicle of assimilation, he sees translation thriving precisely on differences, by rejecting or (subversively) foregrounding assimilation.

Recently, a Quebec writer, Chantal de Grandpré, expressed alarm over the tendency of English-Canadian critics to engulf Quebec literature into the mass of Canadian literature as the latter gropes towards its own national identity.⁶ De Grandpré points out that, through critical articles and translation, a revolutionary

writer like Hubert Aquin is depoliticized, decontextualized, removed from the specificity of his Quebec context, transformed into a figure of bland universality, and normalized within the English-Canadian scene:

L'occultation du politique, remisé dans un au-delà du réel anglo-saxon, donne aussi l'illusion qu'on fait monter Aquin d'un cran, qu'on le place dans la constellation prestigieuse de l'universalité. (55)

According to de Grandpré, the translation of the titles of Aquin's novels demonstrates this assimilation. The situation, she claims, has deteriorated from Penny Williams's *Prochain épisode*, which respects the original title to the point of not translating it, to Alan Brown's "accurate" rendition of *Trou de mémoire* by *Black-out* and *L'Antiphonaire* by *The Antiphonary*, to Sheila Fischman's translation of *Neige noire* as *Hamlet's Twin*, which is a deliberate and inappropriate anglicization of Aquin and ignores the signification of "snow," a dominant image in Quebec literature.

Given that assimilation of Quebec by English-Canada and America is a political issue, and given that translators (as Shek, Blodgett, and de Grandpré have emphasized) may contribute to this assimilation through the act of translating, and more precisely, through how they translate, what can be said about the special case of the recurring non-translation, or mis-translation of English from the original French-language texts? Is this slippage a vehicle for assimilation? Are translators speaking white, not only by the mere act of engaging in translation, but further, by how they translate or do not translate specific speech acts?

I would like to approach this problem from two directions — the first subjective and pragmatic, and the second, objective and theoretical.

FIRST, IN UNDERTAKING two different translation projects over the last few years — the annual "Letters in Canada" review of translations in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* — and an enumerative bibliography on literary translation in Canada, I have noticed that many of the English translations I read participate in a subtle subversion of Quebec culture in that the use of English in speech acts, phrases, words, dialogue in the French-language poem, play, or novel is rarely acknowledged in the target or receptor text. Yet for the author of the original text, this English usage was intended as a highly symbolic signifier.

The pragmatic approach would be to note the frequency and examples of this particular case of assimilation and to chastise the translators accordingly. But since literary translators in Canada now are, on the whole, skilful, dedicated translators, familiar with Quebec culture, often living in Quebec, we need to understand the complex factors behind this tendency. I do not believe that most translators wish

to participate in the assimilation of Quebec culture. This brings me to my second, more theoretical and objective perspective: what do we understand by translation and translation studies? Can this understanding help us to comprehend this specific, recurring translation act? In the early days (1950's and 1960's) of critical reflection on literary translation in Canada, reviewers were often unilingual. They discussed translations as if they were original English texts, ignoring the translator and the fact that translation was a dialectical process, that the text they were reading was a metatext composed of a source text and target text, and what Blodgett calls an inter-text⁷ — the play/relationship between the two. Then, due perhaps to federal bilingual policies, critics in the 1970's, conscious of the origins of the text they were reading, concentrated on pointing out inaccurate equivalences, betrayals of meaning, lack of fidelity to the original on the one hand, or listing examples of too literal substitutions on the other. Now I see critics⁸ concerned not so much with translation as interpretation (or with the question of meaning in translation in the shift from source to target text) as they are with translation *as* meaning, and with how a translation means in relation to how a source text means:

Translation can hardly solve the problem of meaning if any question remains about that meaning of terms that define translation itself.⁹

This shift of course corresponds to current critical theory's "slow movement away from interpretation, in the sense of 'finding out the meaning of a literary work' as the central problem to be solved in literary theory"¹⁰ and to the dispute over the nature of meaning:

Derrida's rearticulation of philosophy and translation is obviously not designed to evacuate meaning entirely. But his concept of textuality displaces the very notion of *how* a text means. . . . Derrida's own ingenious translations . . . are attempts to render all the often contradictory meanings of a term in such a way that crucial logical complexities are not oversimplified.¹¹

We are back to Blodgett's insistence that translation incorporate difference and not similarity in order to avoid assimilation. The significant questions facing translation studies are no longer equivalence, or the conventional triad of *fidelity vs. faithful vs. literal* in translating texts, questions which all centre on the extraction and recreation of meaning in the sense that the translator-interpretor has perceived a meaning in a word or phrase or paragraph or title and recreated it in the target text. As George Steiner commented, the translation process, moving from source language to receptor language, resembles the linguistic and semiotic model of sender-to-receiver, since "in both schemes there is 'in the middle' an operation of interpretative decipherment, an encoding-decoding function of synapse."¹² But there is more to the translation process than the hermeneutic encoding and decoding Steiner speaks of; we must consider as well the factors which influence the production of meaning in the source text and target text; we must consider the

function of both source and target texts. That is, the translator must consider *three* referential systems — the particular system of the text, the system of the culture out of which the text has sprung, and the cultural system in which the metatext will be created.¹³ The translation that ensues is the result “of a complex system of decoding and encoding on the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels” (Bassnett-McGuire 38).

As *reader* of the source text, the translator is a producer of meaning of the source text since the translator has a personal history and is herself as culture-bound as the source and subsequent target text. The translator-reader-enscriber is also conscious of her audience, the readers of the target text, who again will be producers of meaning. Both of these determine the production of the translation. As Jirí Levý suggests, translation is a “realization of a work in a new language,” and like the author, the reader is historically determined. “It is the historical determination of the translator’s conception that establishes the link between the translation and the translator’s cultural milieu.”¹⁴

While discussing the shift in emphasis of meaning from source text to the translation, the target text, André Lefevère defines certain translations (and critical interpretations) as *refractions* — texts produced on the basis of another text, with the intention of adapting them to a certain ideology or a certain poetics (89). He suggests that “theoretical reflection on translation should, therefore, move away from old questions of fidelity and freedom” towards explicating the ideological and poetological constraints under which translations are produced, and describing the strategies devised by translators to deal with those constraints (98).

Equivalence, fidelity, freedom and the like will then be seen as functions of a strategy adopted under certain constraints, not as absolute requirements that should or should not be imposed or respected. (98)

If Lefevère is correct that translators “make mistakes only on the linguistic level” and “The rest is strategy” (99), and that the foreign writer is introduced via a number of misunderstandings and misrepresentations, which are, “for the most part, a function of the relationship of need, superiority, relative equality between literatures at a given moment in time” (99), where does this place English-Canadian translators of Quebec literature? Indeed, what is the function of a translator in a bilingual country such as Canada? Is he or she in the situation of diglossia, where the translator may see himself or herself as “absolved from all responsibility to the [so-called] inferior culture of the SL text” and contributing to the growth of a form of “colonial imperialism” (Bassnett-McGuire 4)?

BY EXAMINING the three different modes of either the non-translation or mis-translation of English in the French source text, we may be able

to see these dilemmas in perspective. We can then return to the question of translation as assimilation, to the reasons why good translators commit these acts of non- or mis-translation. Note that many translators simply do not indicate that certain words were in English in the source text (non-translation): omission and absence have as strong ideological consequences as alterations, additions, and other forms of textual interference.

1. In many Quebec texts, the use of English is political. The author, through language — joul, English colloquialisms or expressions — is demonstrating the colonized, diglossic situation of Quebec, linguistically highlighting her degradation or simply the hard realities of the cultural context. The particular choice of words in English is also highly significant. Let us look at some examples of the political use of English.

i. Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs*, a 1960's play about neighbour women and stamp books, is the first play written entirely in joul. In one scene, Lisette de Courval, a housewife with pretensions, rages:

A Paris, toute le monde perle bien, c'est du vrai français partout. . . . C'est pas comme icitte. . . . J'les méprise toutes! Je ne remettrai jamais les pieds ici! Léopold avait raison, c'monde-là, c'est du monde *cheap*. . . . (Leméac, 1972, p. 59)

The English version reads:

In Paris, you know, everyone speaks so beautifully and there they talk *real* French. . . . Not like here. . . . I despise everyone of them. I'll never set foot in this place again! Léopold was right about these people. These people are *cheap*. (*Les Belles-soeurs*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974, trans. John Van Burek and Bill Glassco)

"Cheap" expresses the condition of these women and of Quebec through an imported term that is itself signified and signifier, a sign of the condition, of diglossia.¹⁵

ii. One solution is to italicize the English expressions in the target text so that the reader is aware of the context of the source text and acknowledges that he or she is reading a metatext. Penny Williams, the translator of Jacques Godbout's 1965 novel of the Quiet Revolution, *Knife on the Table*, with a revolutionary hero and his Westmount English girl-friend, has a translator's note to this effect. The novel, given its revolutionary context, is permeated with English expressions, bits of dialogue, and songs illustrating English domination of Quebec. References to wealth and money are usually referred to in English.

— Non, tu penses! Because my father left a few million dollars behind him, ces millions tu voudrais qu'elle les distribue aux petits orphelins? (*Le Couteau sur la table*, Paris: Seuil, 1965, p. 13)

“No, you idiot! *Because my father left a few million dollars behind him*, you want my mother to distribute it all to little orphans? (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968, p. 2)

iii. More problematic are parodic texts such as Jacques Ferron’s *Contes d’un pays incertain*, translated by Betty Bednarski as *Selected Tales of Jacques Ferron* (Toronto: Anansi, 1984). Bednarski also includes helpful notes to explain colloquialisms or historical facts. But a story like “The Dead Cow in the Canyon” (“La Vache morte du canyon”), which is set in Le Farouest, is filled with anglicismes, parodying the linguistic and cultural subordination of the Québécois, especially as he ventures far from his home province. For example, *Le Tchiffe* becomes the Chief; *Biouti Rose* (the prostitute), Beauty Rose; *le clergimane*, the clergyman; *la touristeroume*, the tourist room; *le Farouest* becomes the farwest.¹⁶ In this way, much of the parody at the semantic level is lost in the English version.

iv. Jacques Renaud’s *Le Cassé* (1964) was one of the first texts to be written in joul — others had used joul in dialogue but not as primary narrative discourse. David Homel, in his *Broke City* (Montreal: Guernica, 1984), which is an effective, skilful transposition, had the choice which Ray Ellenwood posed in the introduction: to create an equivalent street dialect in English or to continually remind the reader of the original text’s source in joul. Homel chose equivalence.¹⁷ In his choice as a translator, Homel has decided to emphasize the function of the target text and its accessibility to the English reader. His text becomes a refraction, catering to the street scene of English North America. This does, however, pose a problem in relation to the source text and its function which has consequently shifted and shrunk, since for the characters who live on the street,

Joul isn’t a style, it’s a way of thinking, a way of existing . . . the language of both revolution and submission, of anger and impotence. (Renaud, “Afterword” 95)

Note that the following examples of joul and anglicismes are given not in the dialogue, which is more common, but in the narrative:

La jeune femme a stoppé la volk’s au coin de Bernard et Parc. Elle a retiré sa sacoche d’entre les deux sièges avant. Elle en a sorti un crayon et un carnet. Elle a griffonné quelque chose (23) . . . Philomène s’est trouvée une djobbe comme empaqueteuse dans une manufacture de cigares. Elle met
 cinq gros cigares dans une boîte,
 cinq gros cigares dans une boîte,
 cinq gros cigares dans une boîte,
 coffee break . . . dix minutes,
 cinq gros cigares dans une boîte. (25) . . . Il s’est agi, tout au plus, d’alcool,

d'excitants, de gouffebâles (ça jase, ça jase) (26) (Montréal: Parti Pris, 1964, 1968).

The English text reads:

The woman stopped the Veedub at the corner a [sic?] Bernard and Park. She got her bag from in between the two front seats. She got a pencil and paper and scribbled something down (28)... Philomena got herself a job packing cigars in a factory. She put

five fat cigars in a box,
 five fat cigars in a box,
 five fat cigars in a box,
 coffee break, ten minutes,

five fat cigars in a box (32)... But all isn't lost: on the menu was alcohol and uppers (talk, talk, talk). (32)

v. Carried to an extreme this kind of refracted text leads to the following comment by Brandon Conron in the introduction to Gabrielle Roy's *Street of Riches* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967):

Yet one of the achievements of this book is that most English-Canadian readers will scarcely be conscious that it deals primarily with French Canada (xi).¹⁸

vi. An even more extreme situation occurs in Ray Chamberlain's translation of Jean-Yves Collette's *La Mort d'André Breton*, where a passage in English in the original French is translated into another version of English with changes in words, punctuation, word order.

Very serious, yes. / We wish to publish your. / A success? / At least 500,000. / Yes, serious. / Well done yes. / To drop in on us. / Your country is small. / Very happy. / People are not interested enough in literature... / Is it not a pity? (Montréal: le biocreux, 1980, p. 29)

The English version reads:

Quite serious, yes. / We'd like to publish your. / A success? / At least 500,000. / Serious? Yes! / Well done, yes. / Drop in on us. / Your country is small. / Very happy. / People don't show enough interest in literature... / Pity, isn't it? (*The Death of André Breton*, Montreal: Guernica, 1984, p. 21)

This is a transformation from inter- to intralingual translation.¹⁹

2. A second mode, this time of mistranslating English, also has cultural consequences. What and how certain texts are translated, what is omitted, what is altered, and what is foregrounded can give us a biased and modified impression of Quebec culture. Quebec becomes not what it is, but what we wish it to be.

i. D. G. Jones gives an example of a poem by Pierre Nepveu called "Pepsi" ("Text and Context: Some Reflections on Translation with Examples from Quebec Poetry") with the reiteration of "pop" throughout. The *meaning* Jones

points out depends on the relation of French to English (the invasion of the English is obvious), the relation of the poem and its French to previous poems by Anne Hébert, Saint-Denys Garneau, Alain Grandbois, Emile Nelligan, and the relation of certain words or images to those in previous Quebec poems and the language of Quebec (2). Jones then continues, to say that translating this poem into English will change its meaning — the obvious intrusion of the English into the French will disappear. The *pepsi*, *pop*, *pop-si*, and *pop-corn* will serve primarily to reinforce an accepted part of the code, not to subvert it. Therefore one is inevitably creating and not just translating meaning (9). Jones joins Blodgett and theorists like Lefevère, Lévy, and Derrida in stressing the necessity of difference over equivalence and similarity in which lurks the spectre of assimilation.

ii. Another example, different in effect, is Linda Gaboriau's translation of Jovette Marchessault's *The Saga of the Wet Hens*. The French-language play closes with an invocation to a multitude of foremothers:

Gertrude Stein, Madeleine de Verchères, Natalie Barney, Georges [sic] Sand, Marguerite de Navarre, Sabine, Isadora Duncan, Violette Leduc. (*La Saga des poules mouillées*, Montréal: Editions de la pleine lune, 1981, pp. 177-78)

The English version gives:

Gertrude Stein, Madeline de Verchères, Emma Goldman, Natalie Barney, Georges [sic] Sand, Anne Boleyn, Isadora Duncan, Violette Leduc, Susannah Moody [sic]. (*Saga of the Wet Hens*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985, p. 134)

The alteration here may be subtle — the addition of Emma Goldman, Anne Boleyn, Susannah Moody [sic], the omission of Marguerite de Navarre, but Marchessault has listed the foremothers important to her and her characters, and the alteration changes this emphasis, creating cultural difference.

iii. Although my final example in this mode is not one of mistranslating English, it again indicates how translations can shape the false transmission of translated authors. To a large extent, English-Canadian readers form their impressions of Quebec literature and culture through what is translated. (For just such a general schema see Jeanette Urbas, *From Thirty Acres to Modern Times: The Story of French-Canadian Literature*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976, which describes a literary evolution based solely on translated novels.)

Ray Ellenwood, in "Some Notes on the Politics of Translation," gives the example of John Glassco's highly influential anthology, *Poetry of French Canada in Translation*, which includes very few poems from the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's. This is not entirely Glassco's fault, since the anthology was prepared some years before it was actually published (1970), but the English reader relying mainly on Glassco's text would know very little about the semantic and syntactic

experiments of the Parti Pris poets, the *formalistes*, or even earlier *automatistes* such as Claude Gauvreau.

3. Finally, the mis- or non-translation of English has another consequence, less momentous than the previous two, but nevertheless significant in terms of the French author's narrative strategies. Occasionally, English words and phrases are used as thematic markers in the French source text. For example, in Marie-Claire Blais's *Visions d'Anna ou le vertige* (*Anna's World*, translated by Sheila Fischman), "drifter" and "drift away" are purposefully iterative to indicate that the characters are adrift. Secondly, these words, along with "sexy," "gang," and "forbidden" mark the influx of American culture and commercialism, and are used in reference to Anna's father, formerly an American draft-dodger, now a bourgeois suburban father. Similarly, in Anne Hébert's *Les Fous de bassan*, translated by Sheila Fischman as *In the Shadow of the Wind*, Stephens Brown, in his letters to Old Mic, his American friend, tosses in English phrases to show Stephens's difference from the community of Griffin Creek (though, of course, the novel is about English protestant Loyalists) and to emphasize his years of exile in the States. This use of English is a semantic marker to distinguish Stephens's voice from the others.

WHAT THEN IS THE SIGNIFICANCE of this non- or mis-translation of English by so many skilled translators? I think there are two ways of answering this question. First, in several cases, translators like David Homel, Sheila Fischman, and Betty Bednarski are thinking of their readers. Their focus and desire is directed towards creating a readable pleasurable text for the English reader. Given their understanding of the Quebec milieu and authors, they are skillfully able to transpose the source text on a semantic and syntactic level into the target text. Their orientation (over the last few years) is primarily towards the production of meaning at the target text, though they themselves have "interpreted" the original text within its wide cultural context. Finding certain aspects (e.g., *joual*) culturally untranslatable, they have deferred to the target text and produced meaning for their readers. Furthermore, it is not always the translator, but sometimes the editor — the literary institution — who privileges the referential system of the target text. Unfortunately, one of the consequences of this kind of readability is the often subtle diglossia that results. The Quebec text becomes assimilated into English-Canadian literature.

The other way of answering the question is to pose an alternative in which the target text, instead of assimilating, absorbing the original Quebec text, effecting a form of closure as the English text firmly closes its jaws upon the French original, tries to and does create an open target text, open to differences, open to varieties

of meanings, open to both the original cultural referential system and the one in the process of being created. In order to effect this accomplishment, there seems to be no reason not to use textual devices such as italics, parentheses, translator's notes, additions, conscious alterations, and explanatory phrases. (See also Bassnett-McGuire, pp. 56-57.)

I will conclude with an example where the use of an addition, or a "conscious alteration," is effective. In his translation of Jacques Ferron's *Papa Boss*, Ray Ellenwood, through italics and the altered phrase, "even though angels always speak English," indicates that "How do you do?" and "very well, thank you" were in English in the source text. Here is the relevant passage:

... un ange . . . qui ne leur demandera pas d'argent, qui se contentera de leur serrer la main: "How do you do?" Un ange gentil, pas intimidant malgré son anglais, à qui il s'agira de répondre tout simplement: "Very well, thank you." (Montréal: Parti Pris, 1966, p. 20)

The English version reads:

... but still an angel, . . . who will only want to shake hands: '*How do you do?*' A gentle angel, not intimidating, even though angels always speak English, and you will reply simply, '*Very well, thank you.*' (*Quince Jam*, Toronto: Coach House, 1977, p. 20)

It is possible, therefore, to create translations sensitive both to the source text and culture, and to the new reader.²⁰

NOTES

¹ *One for the Road*, trans. David Lobdell (Ottawa: Oberon, 1982).

² Note the recent controversy over Premier Bourassa's handling of Bill 101 — his concessions to bilingual signs, and English schooling.

³ See William Francis Mackey, "Langue, dialecte et diglossie littéraire," *Diglossie et littérature*, édité par Henri Giordan et Alain Ricard (Bordeaux-Talence: Maisons des Sciences de l'homme, 1976), pp. 19-50.

Depuis quelques siècles, les Québécois avaient vécu une partie de cette réalité [une réalité bien nord-américaine] en anglais, et certains aspects n'avaient aucun équivalent exact en français — certains aspects du travail, de la vie urbaine, de la vie politique et des sports (p. 47). . . . L'écrivain québécois n'est pas borné aux thèmes d'exploitation économique: il a aussi tenté de décrire la confrontation politique entre francophone et anglophone, et le manque total de compréhension. On a également tenté de représenter de telles situations en intercallant des phrases anglaises dans le dialogue. . . . C'est ainsi que toute une génération de jeunes écrivains québécois ont inclus, sans toujours fournir de traduction, des mots et des phrases en anglais dans leur romans et dans leur pièces de théâtre. . . . il semble que plus son public se sent dans la nécessité d'utiliser l'anglais, plus le romancier québécois, reflétant cette situation, aura tendance à intercaler des expressions anglaises dans son texte. . . . [il veut] représenter avec fidélité une situation telle qu'il avait perçue, en restant toujours conscient de l'utilisation qu'il fait de l'anglais pour créer son effet littéraire (pp. 48-49).

- ⁴ In *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Buskin (London: Fontana, 1981), p. 20.
- ⁵ While Shek uses diglossia to refer to the English-French language situation, diglossia also describes the relation between international French and joul. See Pierre Chantefort, *Diglossie au Québec: Limites et Tendances* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1970).
- ⁶ "La canadianisation de la littérature québécoise: le cas Aquin," *Liberté*, 159 (juin 1984), 50-59.
- ⁷ "How do you say 'Gabrielle Roy,'" p. 24.
- ⁸ D. G. Jones, "Text and Context: Some Reflections on Translation with Examples from Quebec Poetry," unpublished paper, *Traduire la littérature du Québec/Translating Quebec Literature*, March 9, 1984, Concordia University; Ray Ellenwood, "Some Notes on the Politics of Translation," *Atkinson Review of Canadian Studies*, 2:1 (Fall/Winter 1984), 25-28; David Homel, *Transmission*, 4:2 (November 1985), 5.
- ⁹ Joseph E. Graham, "Introduction," *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), p. 20.
- ¹⁰ André Lefevère, "That structure in the dialect of men interpreted," *Comparative Criticism*, ed. E. S. Shaffer, 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), 88.
- ¹¹ Barbara Johnson, "Taking Fidelity Philosophically," *Difference in Translation*, p. 145.
- ¹² *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (London: Oxford, 1975), p. 47.
- ¹³ Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 22. However, she mentions only the first two referential systems.
- ¹⁴ "The Translation of Verbal Art," in *Semiotics of Art*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976), p. 222.
- ¹⁵ For comments on the problem of English in the source text and the translation of Tremblay's plays see Renate Usmiani, *Michel Tremblay* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1982), p. 27.
- ¹⁶ I understand from the translator, Betty Bednarski, that the editor was also involved in the final decision concerning the translation of these terms. This then raises interesting questions about an editor's role in enforcing assimilation. Editors may favour the target text's reception and its referential system in that they are pre-occupied with marketing and audience rather than with the source text and culture. Therefore, the literary institution (i.e., publishing house) is also a significant factor in this kind of assimilation; not only the individual translator is responsible.
- ¹⁷ An earlier version by Gérard Robitaille, *Flat, Broke and Beat* (Montréal: Editions du Bélier, 1964), is more literal but also fails to make the reader aware of the origins in joul.
- ¹⁸ Another example of this occurs in the change in title of the C. G. D. Roberts's translation of *Les anciens canadiens* from *Canadians of Old* (1890) to *Cameron of Lochiel* (1905), which takes the novel completely out of the Quebec and French realm and transforms it into a Scottish- or English-Canadian novel (I am grateful to Sherry Simon for drawing my attention to this.)
- ¹⁹ For similar problems in the non-translation of English, see Marie-Claire Blais, *St. Lawrence Blues*, trans. by Ralph Manheim; Pierre Turgeon, *Sweet Poison/Coming Soon*, trans. by David Lobdell; Marco Micone, *Voicelless People*, trans. by Maurizia

Binda. In Gratien Gélinas's *Hier Les Enfants dansaient* (Leméac, 1968), in dictating his speech at the end of the play, Pierre Gravel closes symbolically in English: "By now, you all know that my own house is divided . . ." (p. 120), and then switches to French; this is not indicated in the English version, *Yesterday the Children were Dancing* (1967), trans. by Mavor Moore.

- ²⁰ See also Anne Hébert's *Kamouraska*. Elisabeth is accused and tried in English, "L'acte d'accusation est écrit en anglais," and it is made clear that English is the language of privilege and power, from which Elisabeth is excluded. This is indicated in the 1973 translation by Norman Shapiro through the use of italics. I am grateful to Ben-Zion Shek for drawing my attention to this, and to the problems with the Gratien Gélinas translation (see footnote 19). In *Wild to Mild* (Saint-Lambert: Les Editions Héritage, 1980), his translation of Réjean Ducharme's *L'hiver de force* (1973), Robert Guy Scully has a note on the title page, "Asterisks denote words or expressions which are in English in the original text." This is significant because this text about a couple representing dispossessed, aimless contemporary Quebec society, is littered with English expressions related to drugs, swearing, jargon, material goods and products — *leatherette*, *cellophane*, *shopping centre*, *fuck*, "don't be so heavy," etc. For a good discussion of this problem, see Henry Schogt, "Pas lonely pantoute?" *Solitude rompue*, eds. Cécile Cloutier-Wojciechowska et Réjean Robidoux (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1986), pp. 340-50.

COMEDY OF NOSTALGIA

Alexandre L. Amprimoz

She
why do you still turn to *mater europa*

He
the empty union
is the empty set
and when we intersect
we remain what we always were

She
but this fever gives you no time
to return to the present

He
between the scent of cool carnations
and the mind of sleepy waiters
between cathedrals and cafés
the soul within was not absolute
absence