# THE TRUE QUEBEC AS REVEALED TO ENGLISH CANADA

## *Translated Novels, 1864-1950*

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"We of English speech turn naturally to French-Canadian literature for knowledge of the French-Canadian people."[1] Thus Charles G. D. Roberts, translator of *Les anciens canadiens*, defines literary translation in Canada as a vehicle for knowledge. But what kind of knowledge is it which English Canada expects from Quebec literature? According to Roberts it lies in the articulation of a "natural" link between the realms of the literary and the political, between the aesthetic object and the society it is supposed to represent. This confident assumption, based on what we would consider a naïve theory of representationalism in literature, has nevertheless become a persistent theme in the presentation of Quebec novels in English. Translators' prefaces, one after the other, establish the translation's doubly authentic nature as literature and as a revelation of socio-political reality.[2] Mobilized in the interest of the national cause, literary translations are charged with the task of making an alien reality less opaque, of offering the key to an otherwise dark society.

The conception of translation reflected in this tradition seems to contradict the traditional premise which equates translation much more readily with *deformation* and *betrayal* than with *knowledge*. In fact, though translated literary texts have been the object of study since at least the mid-nineteenth century, the epistemological status of translations has never been fixed. In what ways do translations — as translations — produce specific knowledge?

In proposing to render both the literary and the ethnographic truth of the novels they translate, Canadian translators seem to be proposing an explicit epistemological frame of reference for their work. Their translations, addressed to a specifically Canadian public, are grounded in a concern for authenticity. But how will this authenticity be materialized? It is a truism of translation analysis that translations inevitably either choose to conform with the writing standards and traditions of the receiving culture (in which case they will be "ethnocentric" and "hyper-

textual" in A. Berman's terms) or to declare themselves a product of an alien reality (and may choose what Berman calls "la traduction de la lettre").[3]

Obliged to choose between allegiance to the standards of literature or subservience to the demands of the ethnographic documentary, what is it that Canadian translators choose to define as knowledge? How do they convey to their public the truth about Quebec? An examination of Quebec novels translated between 1864 and 1950 allows us to determine how English-Canadian translations structure perceptions of literary reality by negotiating between seemingly contradictory constraints.

Although they are produced and consumed under the same aesthetic and market constraints which affect the productions of the receiving culture, translations are generally treated as individual efforts produced in isolation from these norms. In fact translated literature is part of the literary models and expectations. If translations often reflect the strongest literary models, they can of course work in an opposite direction by redirecting literary trends. (This was the case of the French translations of Hemingway, for instance.[4]) There are many other possible models of interaction, however. Galland's translation of the *Milles et une nuits* creates the possibility for the French prose fiction which will follow, while proposing a model for a written form of the Arabic tales;[5] the stylistic accomplishment of the *King James Bible* was derived through a series of revisions which profited from a host of influences.

The corpus of translations of Quebec novels is notable neither for its great volume (eighteen novels before 1960 according to Stratford[6]) nor for the impact which it has had upon English-Canadian literature. In fact comparatists have amply and ruefully proved the contrary: English- and French-Canadian literature in Canada have pursued radically parallel paths, until recently in relative ignorance one of the other.[7] Though these translated novels have rarely if ever been considered to be part of a tradition (even the translators seem largely unaware of the efforts of their predecessors), the translations published between 1864 and 1950 offer a number of common traits which make their consideration as a corpus pertinent and revealing.[8] These traits include (1) the type of novel which is translated; (2) the self-conscious insertion of the translation into a socio-political context (in the preface); and (3) the literary importance which is given the classics of French-Canadian literature (translations and prefaces by prominent men of letters).

The translated novels which constitute the corpus then are: *Les anciens canadiens* (trans. 1864, 1905, 1927); *Récits laurentiens* by Frère Marie-Victorin (1919; trans. 1925); *Chez Nous* by Adjutor Rivard (1914; trans. 1924); *Maria Chapdelaine* (1916; trans. 1921 twice); *Les demi-civilisés* by Jean Charles Harvey (1934; trans. 1938); *Menaud, maître-draveur* (1937; trans. 1947); *Trente arpents* (1938; trans. 1940); *Nipsya*, Georges Bugnet (1924; trans. 1929); *A l'oeuvre et à l'épreuve*, Laure Conan (1891; trans. 1909 U.S.A.); *Le survenant*

(1945; trans. 1950), and *Marie-Didace* (1947; trans. 1950). We will not consider the remaining published translations of the time — five novels by Maurice Constantin-Weyer translated and published in New York, Toronto, London; *Grand Louis l'innocent* by Marie Lefranc (1925; trans. 1928 U.S.A.); *A la hache*, Adolphe Nantel (1932; trans. 1937); *Le Centurion* by Adolphe-B Routhier (1909; trans. 1910 U.S.A.) — because they are either unavailable (published exclusively in the U.S.A.), or totally marginal to the literary production of the period.

The translators, as I have noted, explicitly founded their activity on two assumptions: that they were translating faithful *representations* of Quebec society which were at the same time *literary* works. Both elements of this balance present some difficulties. The first audiences of these novels would have hardly agreed with the translators' assertions that they were "faithful representations" of Quebec and its people. De Gaspé's vision of acquiescence to the British victory, Savard's version of the folly of Menaud, Harvey's critique of the Quebec bourgeoisie were surely not immediately accepted collectively as authentic representations of French-Canadian reality. *Maria Chapdelaine* is perhaps the most controversial case. Blake's preface to the original 1921 edition mentions nothing of the issue, but the subsequent 1938 preface by Hugh Eayrs and the 1948 preface by Blake (posthumously; Blake died in 1924) discuss the general view that the novel is not a "complete picture" of French-Canadian reality. Blake's reservations, however, are almost exclusively ethnological. Except for the brief mention of "haunting melancholy," which might have been touched with "a lighter hand," he reviews the aspects of the work which are inaccurate: the transcription of the vernacular, the description of customs, the naming of vegetation.

We could suppose, therefore, that what English-Canadian translators were most interested in revealing was the documentary nature of the works, their revelations of customs and character. They would have been in some ways justified in this impulse by the weak concept of "literature" which held in the Quebec novel in general. The Quebec novel emerged out of a long tradition of didactic fiction; prefaces to many Quebec novels of the nineteenth century include not entirely ritual disclaimers in which the "author" declares himself unworthy of being called a real author. This is the case in *Les anciens canadiens*. De Gaspé begins by insisting that "j'ai nullement l'intention de composer un ouvrage *secundum artem*, encore moins de me poser en auteur classique." Roberts argues in his first preface (1890) that this disclaimer is not to be taken seriously and that "From the literary point of view" the work is "the best historical romance so far produced in French Canada." But the problem seems to persist as Roberts claims in his second preface (1905) that the choice of a new title for the work *Cameron of Lochiel* (at the suggestion of his publisher) is justified on the grounds that this title will better promote the book's claim to being a work of fiction rather than a volume of memoirs and folklore. Is this explanation simply a ploy to try to justify a clearly misleading

title? He concludes by reiterating, however, that what drew him to the book were precisely the "riches of Canadian tradition, folklore and perished customs" that it contains.

Roberts's preoccupation with the question of the "true nature" of de Gaspé's work reveals the hybrid nature of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Quebec novel and the socio-literary intention which underlies it. Its ambiguity is directly tied to the question of authorship. The fact that two of the important novels of the period under consideration (*Les demi-civilisés* and *Menaud, maître-draveur*) were subject to important revisions by their own authors seems to be a further confirmation of the difficult relationship between authors and their work. This question has a direct impact on translation. How is the translator to react to a text whose authority is radically put into question by its own author? John O'Connor notes in his preface to John Glassco's retranslation of *Les demi-civilisés* that many of the changes that Lukin Barette made in his much-derided translation *Sackcloth for banner* were in fact the same ones that Harvey would later make to the original. It becomes apparent that the confident equation between translation and knowledge which was at the heart of Canadian translating enterprise rests on somewhat dubious assumptions. Both "literature" and "representation" turn out to be problematic notions. To understand what knowledge means to translators within this very specific historical, political, and literary context, we must look at the strategies adopted by the translations themselves.

Historically, little attention has been given to the theory and analysis of translation of novels. With its origins in the Renaissance and its concern with classical culture, translation theory has dealt almost exclusively with texts carrying a strong sense of authoritative authorship — especially poetry and sacred texts. While translation theorists since du Bellay have recognized the importance of *elocutio* in poetry, for example, the signifying structures of the novel, as they relate to translation, have remained largely unexamined.

The polylingualism of the novel, as defined by Bakhtin, means that any approach to translation must involve various registers and strategies.[9] These different levels of textual material can be particularly important in revealing the constraints of translation. In their thorough and illuminating study of the successive French translations of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, José Lambert and Katrin Van Bragt show how the clear presence of two very different "textual models" (the poems inserted into the prose work) indicates translation strategies. The translations, they found, were commanded by literary norms quite independent of the novel itself.[10] The fact that the French eighteenth-century novel had no tradition of the mixture of genres which the German and English novel had already adopted created special diffi-

culties for the translators. The hesitations and uncertainties of translation result from the inexistence in a specific tradition of the particular "sub-genre" to be translated.[11]

In the case of the translation of Québécois novels, the question of dialect constitutes the overwhelming point of tension. It would be incorrect, however, to say that the difficulty of translation resides in the absence of similar textual traditions in French (-Canadian) and English (-Canadian) literature. In fact, *Les anciens canadiens* is explicitly modelled on Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* and the use of dialect in these novels has parallel functions. When de Gaspé's book is "re-translated" back to English, however, the specific functions of regional and idiolectal dialect can no longer be retained. What differs, then, in the two textual traditions is not the presence or absence of dialect but its specific historical, social, and literary functions. In the following analysis of English-Canadian translations of Quebec novels, the question of dialect becomes the focus through which translation strategy is examined. Because dialect is defined at the same time by social and by literary norms, its translation will define in an especially appropriate way what it is that English Canada wants to know about French Canada and its literature.

THERE ARE A NUMBER of factors which make G. D. Roberts's translation of *Les anciens canadiens* a particularly important text. First, it's a retranslation in 1890 following a first version by Georgiana Pennée in 1864. Retranslations carry an extra weight of significance[12] — both because they inevitably progress through historical stages, and because they offer the opportunity for stylistic revision which often gives them the status of literary works (the obvious example is the King James's Version of the Bible, but the successive translations of Rabelais by Urquhart, Motteux, and Ozell also show a progression towards stylistic unity and refinement). Retranslations also testify to the ongoing and, therefore, increasing historical importance attributed to the original work. This importance is shown in Roberts's case by the work having been issued several times, each time with important prefatory material, and its eventually being integrated into the New Canadian Library in 1964. This edition even indicates on the cover page that Roberts, and not de Gaspé, is the author. For the author's name to be forgotten in favour of the translator's is a rare occurrence indeed. Roberts's translation was chosen as the definitive translation over two rival versions — the Pennée version, and the Marquis version (another revision of Pennée's text published in 1929 by the popular history writer T. G. Marquis). What kind of a version does Roberts give us?

Roberts's translation could be categorized as a classic "hypertextual" translation; it is also to a great degree "ethnocentric." The hypertextuality (that is, Roberts's striving everywhere for aesthetic effect, and his concern for sentence rhythm and euphony) seems to be the result of a process of "rewriting" of the Pennée translation; the ethnocentricity is revealed in the use of the 1905 title *Cameron of Lochiel* as well as in the systematic transposition of the French songs and poems into an Anglo-Saxon literary register and form. Roberts eliminates the abundant appended material following de Gaspé's novel; he acknowledges this cut in his first preface, referring the interested reader to the whereabouts of the material. In addition, names are anglicized (François becomes Francis) and idiomatic expressions are often drawn from the banter of Victorian England, especially when Jules and Archy exchange the jokes and taunts of British schoolboys: "Oh, why don't you let me help you out of the scrape?" "The devil you say"; "Tut, if you talk of those ha'pennies, there's an end to the business" or "My dear fellow." Roberts's concern, however, for keeping some of the local colour of the original leads him to incongruities such as speaking of borrowing 50 francs in one paragraph and mentioning ha'pennies in the next.

Aubert de Gaspé uses dialect only in the speech of one character, the servant José. Roberts chooses to ignore this use of dialect entirely, transforming the source of this character's humour from comic malapropisms and quaint expression "doutance adons orogane, guvalle, esquellette, rhinoféroce," simply to obsessive obsequiousness. This elimination of dialect markers is a surprising decision on Roberts's part if we consider the literary models from which both the original and the translation derive. De Gaspé refers explicitly in his novel to Sir Walter Scott's character Caleb Balderstone in *The Bride of Lammermoor* as a model for José. There are in fact great similarities between Scott's novel and de Gaspé's, which suggest that Scott's novel was a model for de Gaspé. These similarities include the narrator's presence in the preface, a marked resemblance in the plot structure, and, most important, the use of footnotes and internal translation in the form of parenthetical explanations for difficult, local terms. We know also that de Gaspé translated several of Scott's novels, although the texts have never been found.

The importance of dialect in Sir Walter Scott is both literal and historical. In his preface to *The Bride of Lammermoor* the author-narrator explains how important dialogue is for character: "The ancient philosopher, said I in reply, was wont to say 'Speak that I may know thee'; and how is it possible for an author to introduce his personae dramatis to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?"

The use of dialect in *Les anciens canadiens* can therefore be considered as the expression of a literary imperative as much as of a social one. The use of dialect

signals the Romantic infatuation with language as the reflection of the soul of the people (and points to the political significance which this language will acquire in the modern Quebec novel), and dialect is also clearly still part of the comic tradition present in literature as far back as Molière and Shakespeare. Considering the multiple connotations of the use of marked dialect in de Gaspé's novel, the literary acceptability of dialect, and the massive influence that Scott exercised over nineteenth-century writers of historical fiction, it might have been "logical" — if logic operates in such matters — for Roberts to have looked to Scott and his successors for ideas as to how French-Canadians might be shown as speaking a characteristic dialect (French-Canadian) in English. How would Scott, or any of his successors, have made French-Canadians speak in English? It is interesting to note that none of the writers of historical fiction who used French Canada as a setting (William Kirby in *The Golden Dog*, Gilbert Parker or Mrs. Leprohon) seems to have used a particular kind of language to indicate the specific expressions and intonations of French Canadians. In his own fiction, Roberts himself used marked language (rural dialect, for English-speaking characters) but clearly hesitated to introduce such forms in his translations.

One major exception to the absence of the representation of French-Canadian speech in English is the poetry of William Henry Drummond. It was first published a few years *after* Roberts's translation, and its representation of French-Canadian speech is not an equivalent of their language but an imitation of the accents and cadences of the French-Canadian as he or she spoke in "broken" English. These poems were wildly popular in English Canada, and endorsed by Louis Fréchette himself.

Of the three possibilities theoretically before the translator as he confronted marked dialect in French (using an equivalent dialect, using some sort of fabricated one, or using none at all), Roberts chose the last solution. His choice paralleled the model adopted by the contemporary historical novel. The marked dialect of French-Canadian speech would not be reproduced. What seems important here is that there was nothing inevitable about Roberts's choice of solution. This becomes apparent in the 1929 resuscitation of the original Georgiana Pennée version by Thomas Marquis. Marquis's 1929 version, entitled *Seigneur d'Haberville* (this is the third title given to the book) and carrying no translator's name on the cover pages, shows some interesting contrasts with Roberts's version and resulting in a text which is certainly the "literary" inferior of Roberts's. Why then would a writer of popular history have chosen to rehabilitate a version which could clearly not compete with Roberts on literary grounds and whose variations might well be dismissed as defects? We find the answer to this question in the indications that Marquis is less interested in the literary aspects of the novel than in its value as a historical document.

The Marquis version is hardly a scholarly attempt to recover the pristine totality of the original. There are numerous cuts in the narrative (not acknowledged by the editor) eliminating discursive passages, some footnotes, and most of the appendix. But the fact that Marquis added footnotes which de Gaspé had not included indicates that Marquis was particularly concerned with demonstrating the value of the work as a historical document. (This concern is also shown in Marquis's preface, which warns the reader not to take the portrait of the diabolical General Murray seriously.) Marquis's translation of José's dialogue (which he retains from the Pennée version) retains the characteristic diglossia of the French by using internal translation: "a-dons" (occasional extra glasses), "rhinosferos" (rhinoceros), "feux-follets" (will-o'-the-wisps). José's comic mispronunciations are noted. This explicitness of the text is characteristic of the literalness of the whole: "Ma foi" becomes "my faith" and not "Lord." Marquis's version also contains bits of dialogue like "But why on earth did you not have recourse to me?" or "Your family sends you many messages." Clearly, Marquis is seeking above all to present *Les anciens canadiens* as a historical document. Roberts's novel on the other hand is a romance which seeks acceptance as a work of literature.

A comparison of these two versions of *Les anciens canadiens* provides us with a paradigm of novel translation in the Canadian context. We have two models of textual generation which result in a hypertextual translation (the highly written and reworked text) and in a translation which allows the foreign signifier to pierce the surface of the text. That the former, with its clear measure of "extra rewriting work," was chosen as the standard translation is evidence of the premium placed on aesthetic standards. The translation has been accredited on the grounds of its acceptability within the literary canons of the receiving culture.

MARIA CHAPDELAINE WAS GIVEN two translations, both in 1921.[13] W. H. Blake's translation, which has become the standard version, is, even more than Roberts's *Canadians of Old*, intensely hypertextual. One passage from the work, a passage of dialogue by Samuel Chapdelaine, will reveal the mechanisms at work in this work as compared to that of Andrew Macphail:[14]

> Alors je prenais ma hache et je me'en allais dans le bois, et je fessais si fort sur les bouleaux que je faisais sauter des morceaux gros comme le poignet, en me disant que c'était une femme dépareillée que j'avais la, et que si le bon Dieu me gardait ma santé lui ferais une belle terre. . . .
>
> Then I took my ax, and I went into the woods and I struck so hard on the birches that I made chips fly the size of my fist, whilst I said to myself, that it was a matchless woman I had there, and if the good God should guard my health I would make a fine farm for her.

> Well, I caught up my ax and was off to the woods; and I laid into the birches so lustily that chips flew as thick as your wrist, all the time saying to myself that the wife I had was like no other, and that if the good God only kept me in health I would make her the best farm in the countryside.

A comparison of the key terms in the three passages show how Blake continually uses a process of lexical and syntactical *intensification* to obtain a highly poetic effect:

prenais: took/caught up
m'en allais: went/was off
fessais: struck/laid into
si fort: so hard/so lustily
le poignet: my fist/your wrist
belle terre: fine farm/the best farm in the countryside
dépareillée: matchless/like no other

While Macphail remains quite literal, Blake always seeks the most precise and descriptive term, adding strength to what was simply suggested in the original. "Toute cette blancheur froide" becomes "The chill and universal white"; "une succession de descentes et de montées guere plus profondes que le profil d'une houle de mer haute" becomes "a succession of ups and downs scarcely more considerable than the slopes of an ocean swell, from trough to crest, from crest to trough"; "sur le sol canadien" becomes "under the Canadian skies."

Despite the very sharp differences in the two translations, however, both versions are remarkably similar in their approach to dialect. Macphail writes expressions like: "It is beautiful, the mass"; "not worse, not worse" (for "pas pire, pas pire"); "This is luck meeting you — your place being far up the river and I so seldom coming here"; and "Your daughter, that is different, she has changed." Blake produced such phrases as: "Well Mr. Larouche, do things go pretty well across the water?"; "since then I have been nearly all the time in the woods"; "Our well must needs dry up"; "Beyond question it will rain again"; and "All the summer I am to be working."

The ultimate effect of this literal approach to dialect differs in each case, however, because the passages in dialect are given different contexts. In Blake's version the hypertextuality of the narrative passages gives to the literal dialogue a literary acceptability which does not exist in a completely literal version like Macphail's. We understand from this example, then, that the value of the translation of dialect will vary according to the literary context in which it is placed. Blake's translation is very satisfactory, blending the elegance of a highly reworked prose with the very obvious "strangeness" of dialect. Blake has found a way of divorcing the hypertextual from the ethnocentric, of denying the mutual exclusivity of literary and ethnographic desires.

LIKE *Les anciens canadiens* and *Maria Chapdelaine*, *Menaud, maître-draveur* was translated by an English-Canadian writer, the successful and prolific Alan Sullivan. Though his translation is marred by gross errors owing quite obviously to his lack of comprehension of the French, Sullivan's version of *Menaud, maître-draveur* follows a strategy similar to Blake's. (Sullivan notes in his preface that it is the "poetic imagery" of the work which interests him above all.) Sullivan modifies the terse and dramatic qualities of the original by combining paragraphs, lengthening sentences, and everywhere softening the harshness of Savard's text. There is little dialogue and almost no dialect in the novel. Savard tends to remain in a poetic register and Sullivan uses "thou" for "tu" to accentuate the romantic and timeless nature of the work.

The first novel to use dialect systematically in French and to receive a dialectic equivalent in English is *Thirty Acres*. The very title of the novel indicates the translators' anglicizing bent (arpents and acres are not equivalent measures, as is emphasized in the preface). The dialogue is given a vaguely rural, often Western twang: "There wasn't nothing but stones"; "We work a sight too hard for what it gets us"; "So you're aiming to do some sugaring"; and "We was just about buried alive." The translations of *Marie-Didace* and *Le survenant* by Germaine Guèvremont under the title *The Outlander* are given a similar treatment and are even more clearly culturally transformed. Place-names and titles are anglicized and the dialect is unspecifically rural. In all these cases the narrative is given a close translation.

The preceding analysis has suggested four possible ways of translating French-Canadian dialect into English:

1. Roberts: dialogue is *ignored* (just as Defauconpret ignored dialect in his French translations of Sir Walter Scott); the writing is hypertextual.
2. Marquis: dialect is rendered *lexically* within a text which does not carry marks of literary reworking.
3. Blake: dialect is rendered *syntactically*, but integrated into a hypertextual narrative.
4. Walters: dialect is given a dialectic *equivalent*, geographically unsituated. The narrative is given a close rendering.

There are, of course, other possibilities. Translatability is not an essentially technical question, but rather a historical one.[15] Each individual work imposes constraints which result from the way dialect has been represented. Dialect is very much a literary modelling of spoken language, a representation which can have its source as much in literary tradition as in the street. The study of the translation of vernacular turns out to be a multi-tiered process: it includes the study of the

historical significance of the representation of popular language, the availability of existing models for translation, and the socio-political context of translation.

The variety of responses in the treatment of literary dialect makes it difficult to speak of a unified tradition of Canadian translation. There is no consensus during the period under consideration or even now as to the representation of French-Canadian speech in English. The work of G. D. Roberts, W. H. Blake, and Alan Sullivan suggests, however, an interest in translations on the part of the established literary community which seems to be less strong today.[16] This primarily literary interest existed alongside the more ethnographically oriented approach represented by such writers as Andrew Macphail and T. G. Marquis.

The knowledge which English Canada expected and received from translations of French-Canadian literature is fragmented and various. Though explicitly motivated by the needs of national reconciliation, translations offer different versions of that "other society" and its people. Affirmations of essential identity (most clearly typified by Roberts's translation of *Les anciens canadiens*) coexist with declarations of fundamental difference (the examples of both W. H. Blake and T. G. Marquis).

This ambivalence in English-Canadian versions of French Canada throws an interesting light on the history of intra-Canadian literary relations. It indicates that Canadian English-language translations could be acceptable even if they did not conform to exclusively literary standards. Less normative in their approach to textuality than translations in the French tradition, English-Canadian translations were to a certain extent open to the intrusions of a culture at once close and very distant. In the essential indeterminacy of their attitude towards French Canada, English-Canadian translations are an accurate reflection of English Canada's difficulty in conceiving of the Other. Translation is the very materialization of this difficulty and a privileged terrain for its investigation.

## NOTES

[1] Charles G. D. Roberts, "Introduction," *Canadians of Old* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974). Other works and their translations referred to explicitly in this paper: Ph-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé, *Les anciens canadiens* (Montréal: Bibliothèque Canadienne française/Fidés, n.d.), trans. *Seigneur d'Haberville: A Romance of the Fall of New France*, ed. T. G. Marquis (Toronto: Musson, 1929); Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine* (Montréal, Fidès, 1953), trans. W. H. Blake (Toronto: Macmillan, 1923), trans. Andrew Macphail (Montreal: Chapman, 1921); Félix Antoine Savard, *Menaud, maître-draveur* (Montréal: Fidès, 1937), trans. Alan Sullivan, *Boss of the River* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1947); Louis Ringuet, *Trente arpents* (Montréal: Fidès, 1938), trans. Felix and Dorothea Walter, *Thirty Acres* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1940).

[2] For G. D. Roberts, *Les anciens canadiens* is "a faithful depiction of life and sentiment among the early French Canadians" with "a strong side-light upon the motives and aspirations of the race" (1894). Blake says of *Chez Nous* that "it lays bare for us the generous and kindly French-Canadian heart" (1924). Ferres says of Marie-Victorin's tales that they offer a "more intimate knowledge of the literature and

mental attitude of our French-speaking fellow citizens: leading to a more fully cordial entente" (1922); the Walters call *Thirty Acres* the "most authentic account of rural French Canada" since *Maria Chapdelaine*, and promise even greater authenticity because its author is no foreign Frenchman but a "genuine French-Canadian who has not a drop of any but French blood in his veins" (1940). Alan Sullivan claims that *Menaud* "may be taken as expressing the resilient, fanciful and spontaneous spirit of most of our French Canadian patriots" (1947). B. K. Sandwell's introduction to *Sackcloth for Banner* underlines the acuity of Harvey's critique of Quebec society (1938). Almost all of these prefaces include some formulation of the wish that the work will advance the cause of national unity. Though translators' prefaces (and the politico national context which they provide) are much rarer now than they seem to have been before 1950, some contemporary prefaces offer interesting variations on the repeated theme. Philip Stratford and Michael Thomas (*Voices of Quebec*) offer a much more cautious and tentative appeal post-1976; and Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood offers a rock version in *Neons in the Night*, her translation of Lucien Francoeur.

[3] Antoine Berman, "L'auberge du lointain" in *Les Tours de Babel*, ed. Granel Toulouse (Editions Trans-Europ Repress, 1985).

[4] Maurice Blanchot, "Traduit de," *La Part du feu* (Gallimard, 1965).

[5] Raymond Schwab, *L'Auteur des Milles et une nuits: Vie d'Antoine Galland* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1964).

[6] Philip Stratford, *Bibliography of Canadian books in Translation* (Ottawa: HRCC/CCRH, 1977).

[7] Stratford, "Canada's two literatures: a search for emblems," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, no. 6 (Spring 1975).

[8] Almost all of the important novels published in Quebec over the period we are considering (from the first translation by Georgiana Pennée of *Les anciens canadiens* by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, to the translations of Germaine Guèvremont's *Le survenant* and *Marie Didace* in 1950) were given contemporaneous translations. There are a few exceptions: *La Scouine* by Albert Laberge (1918; trans. 1976) and *Marie Calumet* (1904; trans. 1978) were both considered highly controversial in the Quebec of their time; *Un homme et son péché* (1933; trans. 1978); *Angeline de Montbrun* by Laure Conan (1884; trans. 1975); and *Jean Rivard, le défricheur*, by Antoine Gérin-Lajoie (1874; trans. 1977). These novels were translated as part of a systematic programme of retrieval during the 1970's.

[9] Mikhaïl Bakhtine, *Esthétique et théorie du roman* (Gallimard, 1978).

[10] José Lambert et Katrin Van Bragt, *The Vicar of Wakefield en langue française: Traditions et ruptures dans la littérature traduite*. Preprint Nr. 3 (Louvain: Dept. de Literatuurewetenschap, Université de Louvain), pp. 24, 32.

[11] Lambert and Van Bragt, p. 60.

[12] In addition to *Les anciens canadiens* and *Maria Chapdelaine*, at least two other Quebec novels have received more than one translation: *Menaud, maître-draveur* has been translated three times (one translation is unpublished); *Les demi-civilisés* has been translated twice.

[13] The mystery of this simultaneous apparition is explained by the fact that Andrew Macphail and W. H. Blake, both well-known men of letters, were to have collaborated on the translation. After disagreeing on stylistic matters, each went ahead with his own translation. This bit of biographical information is especially interesting because it seems to indicate that the differences between the two versions were a

result of a conscious choice on Blake's part to produce a "poetic" text and on Macphail's to be as literal as possible. Presumably aware of the rivalry between the versions, the publishers made a special effort with the books. Macphail's is accompanied by illustrations by Suzor-Côté; Blake's is accompanied by an unusual publisher's note: "We account it a high privilege to sponsor this very able translation by W. H. Blake."

[14] See note 1. Hémon, p. 183; Macphail, p. 199; Blake, 242.

[15] Henri Meschonnic, *Pour la poétique II* (Gallimard, 1973).

[16] An important exception to this statement: the extraordinary interest in translation on the part of feminist writers in both French and English Canada.

# MUTE (ANOTHER POEM OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION)

*Brian Pratt*

there is an appearance of innocence in deafness
the kids from Jericho Hill School
for the Deaf travel in packs of two or more
like most kids learn
their handicap not evident at the farebox
only at the back of a near empty echo chamber bus
does the inchoate sound that is laughter
cause me to check the rear-view mirror
seeing their hands work slang
take advantage of maladies like most humourists
tapping each other to tell another one
maybe pushing their knowledge of or luck with friends
dropping a firecracker as they leave
one they can feel if not hear
they've learned to run as its result
the vibration shaking me from asshole to cerebellum
so mad i can't hear my saner self
i want to quietly educate at least one kid
face to face
guards of inexperience fumbling up
to the dissonance of a single fist