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The common struggle: locating the international connections of national spaces of conflict in the Francophone world

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THE COMMON STRUGGLE:
LOCATING THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS OF NATIONAL SPACES OF CONFLICT IN THE
FRANCOPHONE WORLD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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in

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by

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ABSTRACT

In their 2007 manifesto, *Quand les murs tombent: l'identité nationale hors-la-loi*, Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau propose that the nation-state is a stumbling block to global solidarity as it emphasizes cultural division. In order to achieve international community across borders, people must find common bonds that link them across traditional lines of conflict. My thesis applies this notion within the context of *la Francophonie*, an organization that has struggled with its goal of cultural rapprochement as its member nations continue to perceive each other as foreign entities rather than as like components of a larger community. I assert that *la Francophonie* is connected by a series of historical and literary experiences that go beyond the organization's stated unities of language and humanistic values, and that these experiences are rooted in conflict. To understand what is common across nations, one need first look at what is uncommon within them. In examining lines of division that disrupt national unities, I uncover international ones, highlighting trans-historical and transnational trends in the types of conflict that revolve around specific contentious subjects, as well as the similarities of conditions, motivations, and actions that mark these battles.

My first chapter addresses the issue of language, detailing the ways in which multilingual societies struggle to cope with coexistence. I show that speakers of various languages are confronted with consistent social imbalances, attempts to regulate language usage, and questions of national affiliation. In my second chapter, I analyze religious divides that have plagued numerous civilizations, positing that religions become embroiled in two archetypal relationships: an uneasy relationship with the state marked by interference, and a paradigm in which minority religions are transformed into archivals. My third chapter brings a

different perspective to the notion of national conflict, using literature to highlight tensions between individuals and the urban environments they call home. I establish a common antagonistic relationship with the city as diverse authors struggle against the psychological strains of losing their emotional connections, their freedom, and their moral fiber. I conclude by demonstrating the contemporary relevance of establishing new *imaginaires* in light of evolving conceptions of global connections.

INTRODUCTION

L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (la Francophonie) was created to be a community founded on an international solidarity rooted in a mutual identity, yet it has struggled to achieve these goals, in part because there has been an inadequate demonstration of the points of unity and commonality that link people of diverse nations.¹ In detailing the theory of the *tout-monde*, Édouard Glissant proposes that in order to overcome the walls of the nation-state, individuals must draw upon *lieux communs* based not in territory, but rather in *imaginaires* that allow them to connect with each other across nontraditional lines, shirking conventional constraints such as differences in language and religion by providing alternative bridges that offer bonds based on personal sentiment and common historical « *traces* » (Glissant 16-18; Glissant and Chamoiseau 15-17).² If the possibilities for the connections proposed by Glissant are seemingly infinite, one can nevertheless find concrete examples of such potential *lieux communs* that not only offer bridges across traditional lines of division, but actually depend upon these lines in order to make such connections. Even as they call into question the solidarity of the nation-state, conflicts within a nation provide the groundwork for an international solidarity by highlighting a common historical experience that transcends national borders. While a given point of conflict may foster mentalities, ideologies, actions,

¹ Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon (196, 208) note the need to provide evidence of unities that link francophone nations. Phan and Guillou (267-269) suggest that in order to develop a spirit of community, nations must be convinced of their shared traits and values. Albert Salon (131) states that *la Francophonie* is in need of a more solid understanding of its underlying unities. Charles Durand (68) recognizes that common points of reference are necessary in order to draw francophones together. Nadim Mourad (231-233) asserts that differences within *la Francophonie* stem from the lack of a shared culture.

² I use this term (*imaginaires*) as Glissant uses it, to describe an understanding of the world based on constructed ideas. *Imaginaires* are interpretations of reality that rely on the projection of imagined values, traits, and meanings onto phenomena such as people, objects, events, and relationships. They are visions of the world typically shared by groups of people (such as members of a particular culture).

legislation, and lived experiences that split certain groups of individuals, the possibility exists for these groups to connect through the sharing of these very same traits with people from other nations.

In the first chapter I examine the conflict that arises due to the concurrence of different languages within a national space. In beginning with an examination of affected values that people tend to ascribe to languages, I attempt to address one of the most contentious points of schism surrounding language, demonstrating how linguistic difference tears a nation apart on a social level. At the same time, one finds a remarkable similarity in the nature of linguistic stigma and their effect on society. In progressing to a discussion on language as it relates to writing and authorship, the social component is compounded by a deeply personal one, as lines of schism run so deep as to affect conceptions of identity. However, many authors make similar choices regarding their relationship with and application of language. When it comes to orthographic form in particular, parallel motivations lead to international trends of reform and conservatism. Finally, the chapter addresses how linguistic difference can divide a nation politically, even to the point that some citizens are treated as though they exist outside the national fabric. As people from across *la Francophonie* align themselves with ideologies that either promote the evolution and interconnectedness of a language or, conversely, its protection and isolation, nations find themselves facing the same legislative and political issues. Throughout the chapter I show that the rift between languages is not insurmountable, as the likenesses in linguistic divisions that do not coincide with divisions in the particular language spoken—those such as progressivism versus conservatism, or majority versus minority language status—provide a shared experience between both French and non-French speakers.

In the second chapter I address another time-tested area of conflict: religion. When it comes to the tensions that arise due to the presence of religion within a nation, traditional divisions have tended to run along two primary fault lines: those that divide religious and non-religious entities, especially the governments of church and state, and those that divide individual religions. This chapter addresses both of these domains, showing how each creates strife between citizens of the same nation. The first portion posits the existence of a similar paradox that binds the nations of *la Francophonie*, one in which church and state can neither entirely separate themselves from each other nor fully unify in a way that fosters harmony, creating a state of perpetual conflict. In a number of different cultures, people of diverse faiths have attempted to exert religious influence over the affairs of state in much the same way, just as different governments have attempted to mitigate and regulate religion time and time again, even when the two forces are supposed to be functioning independently. Ironically, the perpetuation of the myth of incompatibility between church and state provides a point of common reference between the two sides, as in different nations and at different times in history, it has been in the best interest of both religious and secular officials to sustain such a belief. In addition, the chapter addresses tensions that foment between different religions and the similarity of techniques and circumstances surrounding them. As with language, proponents of individual religions equate them so succinctly with national identity that members of other religions, although residents of the same nation-state, in essence become foreigners. There is a tendency that transcends national borders to marginalize certain religions by creating an oppositional worldview in which members of a given religion must inherently fall on one side or the other of a given binary (national versus foreign, moral versus

immoral). Those who have suffered under such binaries have been subject to parallel sets of lies and accusations, and made to withstand similar attempts at controlling their lives. As with the chapter on language, I have attempted to demonstrate that shared international experience does not necessarily conform to division between religions: Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam have all been, at varying times and in varying places, the aggressor and the victim in various archetypal conflicts.

The third and final chapter represents a significant departure from the first two, both in terms of form and content, drawing upon literature rather than history to highlight a shared international experience. Utilizing a limited number of texts in which the relationship between the author and his or her urban environment is examined from a variety of angles, I show the existence of a common rapport between human and city. While the complexity of the city offers an infinite number of interpretations of such an association, there is an uncanny similarity to the way in which certain francophone authors from otherwise diverse cultures have experienced an antagonistic, combative relationship with their urban surroundings. For this chapter, one must re-conceptualize the nature of intra-national conflict, as battles are not waged between human actors of a common citizenry, but rather between human and place itself. If nation is a concept rooted in connection with territory, then one must consider a rupture of such a connection to be a challenge to national affinity in its own right. There is a profound alienation that repels these authors from the environments in which they must exist on a daily basis, one that sees individuals of different nations suffer common assaults stemming from a hostile urban environment; not only do these authors hold similar conceptions of the city as an adversary, they also engage in similar struggles against it, and find themselves

affected by it in similar ways. Beginning with the simultaneous and paradoxical assault of overstimulation and isolation, and progressing to the hopelessness of incarceration and insidious power of sin, this chapter examines the common techniques by which the city alienates its residents, and the common means by which they react to such forces.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

It was in 1896 that French geographer Onésime Réclus first coined the term *francophone* to refer to a worldwide population of French speakers. However, it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that *la Francophonie* as we know it today, as an organized affiliation of nations, began to take shape. Interest in international alliances focalizing on the French language began to flourish in the 1950s and 1960s, which saw the creation of several non-governmental entities including the *Association internationale des journalistes de langue française* (1952), the *Association des Universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française* (1961), and the *Association international des sociologies de langue française* (1963), all of which served to « rendre visible le rassemblement “francophone” dans plusieurs secteurs d’activité plus ou moins liés à la politique » (Provenzano 15). The governmental institutionalization of *la Francophonie*, however, was the brainchild of then Senegalese president Léopold Senghor who, in the wake of decolonization, began to envision an international political community of French-speaking nations, an idea that he would spend the 1960s developing with fellow African national presidents, most notably Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia and Hamani Diori of Niger. Senghor frequently expressed his vision in terms of a *Commonwealth à la française*, yet whereas the British Commonwealth was primarily an economic vehicle, *la Francophonie* also hinged upon the notion of a common culture based on shared humanistic values. By 1970, Senghor « a élargi la notion de communauté culturelle à celle d’ensemble culturelle... [un] lieu d’échange et de dialogue des cultures » (Phan and Guillou 185-186). That same year Senghor and his allies founded the first multilateral francophone organization, known as the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* (ACCT). ACCT

remained the face of *la Francophonie* for the next two decades, and while it did succeed in establishing some programs of international cooperation to assist in educational and financial development, for the most part it remained politically insignificant (Phan and Guillou 202). In 1986, however, the first of what would become a biannual series of summits was convened in Versailles, offering a context in which heads of state began seriously to discuss large-scale efforts at international and cultural development. This summit inaugurated « la Charte de lignée de ces grandes messes médiatiques qui...sont censées déterminer les choix prioritaires de coopération entre partenaires “francophones”: développement économique, agriculture, éducation, industries culturelles, langue scientifique, etc. » (Provenzano 18). Formalization of the organization continued over the next decade, culminating in the establishment of the post of Secretary-General and the development of an official charter in 1997, as well as the induction of an official name for the collective ensemble of committees dedicated to development, the *Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie*, a name that in 2005 would be changed to the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (O.I.F.). From the initial membership of 25 nations at the formation of ACCT, *la Francophonie* has grown to include participation from 75 nations today, and remains dedicated to cultural and economic development by means of a wide variety of projects, including the *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie* and the international television station TV5.

Solidarité:³ Open virtually any text on *la Francophonie*, and this word is almost certain to appear before the end of the first chapter, if not in the first few pages. Readers can even make

³ Beyond the definition of a « Rapport existant entre des personnes qui, ayant une communauté d'intérêts, sont liées les unes aux autres » (Larousse), I use this term to convey a degree of mutual identity. It is an emotional connection towards an individual or group based on recognition of a fundamental similarity.

a bizarre sort of game out of seeing how many pages they can conquer before encountering a term that appears so fundamental to any conceptualization of function, purpose, or goals concerning the institutional organization of nations who (at least theoretically) share the common bond of the French language. *La Francophonie* is « un creuset de solidarité » (Boutros-Ghali 12) as well as an « espace de solidarité au nouveau monde » (Phan and Guillou 15), founded on «une fraternité et une solidarité qui se nourrissent du plus puissant lien qui soit: celui de la langue que nous avons en partage et qui nous donne notre identité réelle » (Boutros-Ghali 21), forged with the intention of reinforcing « la solidarité et la coopération multilatérale » (Ellenbogen 11) between its member nations. If it is to succeed at making a lasting international impact, it is imperative that *la Francophonie* foster « une vie réelle à la solidarité entre le Nord et le Sud et au dialogue des religions et civilisations » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 14), just as it must « apporter une véritable solidarité entre ses membres dans les secteurs économique, éducatif et en politique internationale » (Durand 28). It has even been suggested that « la solidarité francophone, qui se manifeste par la coopération multilatérale, est la principale caractéristique de *la Francophonie*. C'est sa grande spécificité. C'est ainsi qu'on se différencie des autres grandes organisations internationales » (Valantin 56).

Former Senegalese presidential representative Christian Valantin's statement above causes one to reflect upon the true significance of solidarity, to seek out the essential component of the meaning behind a word that serves as a philosophical keystone to such a grandiose project. For indeed, in examining some of the goals and principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations ("Charter"), one cannot help but be struck by the similarity of purpose they share with the aims of the O.I.F. that has developed over the last half century.

Just as the U.N. seeks “to maintain international peace and security” as well as “to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (Charter), so too does the O.I.F. devote itself to economic and cultural cooperation while promoting peace, liberty and humanitarian rights:

[L’O.I.F.] a pour objectifs d’aider . . . à la prévention, à la gestion et au règlement des conflits, et au soutien à l’État de droit et aux droits de l’Homme; à l’intensification du dialogue des cultures et des civilisations . . . au renforcement de leur solidarité par des actions de coopération multilatérale en vue de favoriser l’essor de leurs économies.
(*Charte de la Francophonie*)

Both organizations, then, work towards economic and cultural cooperation, and many of the « valeurs humaines universelles » (Ellenbogen 10) considered to be commonly held by all francophone nations—notably peace and human rights (see Boutros-Ghali 28; Ellenbogen 83; Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 200)—would seem just as applicable within the framework of the United Nations. If solidarity were merely a matter of cooperation and mutual interests, then the U.N. would certainly have to be viewed as equally confraternal to the O.I.F. Yet, Christian Valantin is not wrong in suggesting that there is, or rather is supposed to be, something different about the relationship between francophone nations when compared with other intergovernmental assemblies. If *la solidarité* is a « rapport existant entre des personnes qui, ayant une communauté d’intérêts, sont liées les unes aux autres » (Larousse), then it is in the notion of the *lien* that one finds the most crucial connotations of this word. At the heart of solidarity lies the implication of commonality, the idea that individual components are drawn together by a bond that is fastened by some degree of mutual identity. To feel solidarity, one

must somehow recognize oneself, even if not fully, in the face of the “Other.” Therein lies a key notion that, from a conceptual standpoint, distinguishes *la Francophonie* from a mere assembly of nations working towards ends that happen to benefit others as well as themselves. Even within the Charter of the United Nations, one finds subtle linguistic indices that reveal that, while the purposes of the organization may be common, its components are not. If the states of the U.N. are supposed to “practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours” (Charter), francophone nations are supposed to be more than congenial co-inhabitants of the same planet. While the language of this charter confirms a fundamental alterity at the national level, in theory *la Francophonie* is a larger space of mutual belonging wherein « le Francophone n’est pas un étranger comme les autres » (Phan and Guillou 271). If the U.N. seeks to “develop friendly relations among nations,” (Charter), then the O.I.F. quests for something deeper and more intimate, wishing to achieve a « rapprochement des peuples par leur connaissance mutuelle » (*Charte de la Francophonie*).

Since its foundation in Niamey, Niger, in 1970, the O.I.F. has been predicated on the idea of citizenship in a larger, singular community. While individual states have never been expected to abandon their national identities, there has always been the underlying assumption that the exclusive barriers that separate national self-conceptions would be transgressed by a unifying thread that bonds nations to each other through a sense of kinship forged in a shared international identity. The founding fathers of *la Francophonie*—figures such as Léopold Senghor of Senegal, Hamani Diori of Niger, Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia and Norodom Shanouk of Cambodia (Phan and Guillou 14)—envisioned a synthetic community that was both fraternal and organic, « une communauté culturelle partageant des valeurs communes, un idéal

d’humanisme et de métissage » (Phan and Guillou 14). Intercultural dialogue would be a vehicle towards solidifying ties between otherwise disparate nations, using a common language as the fundamentals of a common sense of belonging. In the same year as the foundation of the organization, one of its primary engines of political action—the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique*—was established as a means of achieving these ends, as an « expression d’une nouvelle solidarité et un facteur supplémentaire de rapprochement des peuples par le dialogue permanent des civilisations » (Provenzano 15). The impetus for such dialogue and connection would be the bond between nations that existed from a sense of mutual identification based on shared traits and values, the most significant of which being the French language. Such a bond was undeniably palpable for people such as the president of Niger Hamani Diori, who at the 1970 summit in his nation proclaimed:

N’est-il pas remarquable de voir également siéger côté à côté aujourd’hui, les représentants des pays les plus riches et les plus démunis? Leur solidarité ne serait qu’apparence ou même hypocrisie si elle ne se traduisait par une véritable entraide....Ainsi l’Agence [ACCT]...sera-t-elle véritablement au service du rapprochement et du développement des peuples, au moyen de la langue française qui nous unit malgré notre diversité. Ce sera la première tentative dans l’Histoire pour fonder la fraternité humaine sur la communauté de langue, fraternité d’ailleurs ouverte sur le reste du monde. (Provenzano 24, citing Diori)

While the nature of the O.I.F. is ever changing—evolving from a small community based on linguistic unity to a large, multilingual entity devoted to economic, educational, and political development—the *raison d’être* of the organization remains rooted in the myth of a unified, if diverse, community where national interests take a backseat to a mutual, international sentiment of a shared identity. The solidarity between nations stems from being a part of a larger whole, « [qui] transcende les religions, les races [et qui] “ponte” les principales

civilisations de notre monde » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 96-97), where « dépassant le principe des identités nationales ou locales, il s'agit d'une interaction, d'une rencontre entre les cultures, d'un échange et des objectifs à réaliser ensemble » (Ellenbogen 82). If solidarity is indeed the *grande spécificité* of *la Francophonie*, it is dependent on the notion of an imbued sense of commonality between its constituents, anchored in the principle that

On peut...attribuer un sens spirituel à la francophonie car elle engendre un sentiment d'appartenance à une même communauté, créant ainsi une solidarité venant du partage de valeurs communes à l'ensemble des francophones. Georges Pompidou y décelait le principe même de la francophonie: « ...des peuples d'expression française se sentent, par-delà les intérêts économiques ou même politiques, unis par un lien spécial qui est intellectuel et aussi sentimental...Ainsi, les clivages géographiques et politiques s'effacent au profit d'une plus grande compréhension qui n'exclut pas le respect des différences. (Phan and Guillou 16)

Theoretically *la Francophonie* is a realm in which people feel bonded because they see each other as compatriots of something greater than the nation. However, more than forty years after the foundation of the O.I.F., history paints a very different picture of the rapport between francophones of different nations. It is clear that, for all of the rhetoric of community and multilateral projects launched by members of the O.I.F., francophones have never developed a sense of confraternity with each other in the way that they have for members of their own nations. Far more than unity, alterity is what characterizes *la Francophonie*, as the past few decades have been rife with division and self-interest that conspicuously conform to national boundaries. The « clivages géographiques et politiques » of which Pompidou speaks have never been truly erased « au profit d'une plus grande compréhension, » as neither the French language nor shared humanitarian values have succeeded in eradicating the foreignness of individuals from other nations.

From its very inception, the O.I.F. has been witness to a virtually constant stream of actions that challenge the idea that *la Francophonie* is truly a « communauté d'égaux » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 14), and that confirm the presence of a distance between nations that supersedes the sense of overall community. In fact, the better part of the first two decades of its existence is generally characterized as a dark period marked by institutional inefficiency and mistrust. During its initial phases, many states were reticent even to support the idea of an institutionalized community based on the French language for fear that it would weaken their national interests. France itself was not only wary of financial commitment, but was extremely concerned that support for *la Francophonie* would lead to approbation in the eyes of the international public for engaging in a sort of neo-colonialism of a cultural nature (Provenzano 12; Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 148; Phan and Guillou 192). Conversely, several countries perceived neocolonial intentions within the project, even seeing such an international community as a threat to national sovereignty: despite the efforts of numerous African leaders spearheading the project, Sékou Touré of Guinea nevertheless felt that *la Francophonie* was « une tentative de trahison des intérêts africains...vieille volonté de maintenir la colonisation des pays qui veulent se libérer de l'exploitation...procédure qui consiste à accorder l'indépendance d'une main pour mieux l'enlever de l'autre », while North African nations such as Morocco and Algeria (which is still not a member of the O.I.F.) publicly rejected « toute idée ou toute tentative qui serait de nature à porter atteinte à la solidarité qui doit régir les rapports entre les pays nouvellement indépendants » (Phan and Guillou 193). Perhaps no single issue highlighted the resilience of national self-interest in the context of the international stage, nor its divisive power, more than the Quebec « blocage » (see Valantin 9-11; Arnaud, Guillou, and

Salon 148; Phan and Guillou 194). In short, fresh on the heels of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec desired its own representation at francophone summits, while Canada saw this as an affront to its national cohesion, threatening to boycott any event at which Quebec was independently represented; alternatively, Canada insisted only heads of sovereign nations should sit at the table of francophone summits, and that it would provide fair representation accorded to “provinces” within its delegation, which was entirely unacceptable to the Quebecois. This contentious stalemate continued until 1985, when treaties were struck that appeased both parties, but not before greatly hindering the effective progress of an organization dependent on diplomacy to advance multilateral initiatives. The incident underscores the perceptual chasm between national citizenries not only by accentuating the pride of those fighting to preserve the interest of those they see as their compatriots, but also by demonstrating the utter lack of the *connaissance mutuelle* that is so integral to the idea of *la Francophonie* as a community, for this issue presented a « grand problème qui, à l’époque, n’était pas perçu comme tel par de nombreuses délégations, africaines notamment...Le nationalisme québécois restait inexpliqué pour nombre de participants à Niamey II » (Valantin 9). Evidence of the gulf between popular Quebecois nationalist sentiment and the ideals of the francophone leadership is embodied by incidents such as the one in which Léopold Senghor, while on a diplomatic visit to Quebec, gave a speech in favor of multiculturalism after which he proposed a toast to Queen Elizabeth II, Reine du Canada (Valantin 9).

The early years of the O.I.F. were representative of a « profonde crise institutionnelle » for which massive organizational reforms were needed « pour mettre fin à une collégialité paralysante » (Valantin iv) that severely undermined the entire purpose of *la Francophonie*,

subverting the solidarity that nations were supposed to be demonstrating. If these reforms took so long, it is simply because « en droit, une organisation multilatérale est indépendante des Etats qui la composent. Elle a une personnalité propre, une autonomie financière . . . En fait, l'égoïsme des Etats s'accommode mal de ces règles. Les intérêts particuliers l'emportent bien souvent sur l'intérêt de tous symbolisé par l'organisation commune » (Valantin 18). The reluctance of states to put aside national issues for the betterment of the collective need meant that the O.I.F. had to attempt to function while appeasing its member nations. Even today, « son action consiste à aider, soutenir, suggérer, inciter, sans rien n'imposer qui soit contraire à la volonté des Etats membres . . . » (Valantin 13). If the organizational restructuring of the 1980s facilitated political dialogue and action, it did little to create a true, tight-knit community out of the O.I.F. The nation-state remains its fundamental building block, and national and regional affiliations prove time and again to be far more solid and relevant than any bonds based on the idea of an international linguistic or cultural community. As it was primarily African leaders who spearheaded the idea of an international fraternity based on solidarity, it is somewhat disheartening that election of the Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the post of secretary general of the OIF in 1997 was not without « quelques difficultés émanant de pays de l'Afrique sub-saharienne, qui estimaient que leur tour était venu d'occuper un poste de première importance », as more than a decade had passed since they had last held such a post (Valantin 54-55). Multiple authors have expressed concern over the obvious persistence of barriers of cultural identity that plague relations between Western nations (especially France) and African ones within the context of *la Francophonie*. Today's changing political climate has created a sort of « nouvelle autisme de l'Occident centré sur lui-même et

sur la mondialisation de ses techniques et de ses marchés », while deception over failure to make good on promises to improve economic and social conditions has left Africa feeling a « désaffection » towards France and other Western nations (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 12). Complicating matters is the fact that the specter of colonialism continues to haunt the francophone project. It seems undeniable that those who, long before its formal institutionalization, first conceived of an international linguistic community to promote the French language did so with gallocentric aims, principally the expansion of French influence in the face of rival colonial powers (see Provenzano 93-96). Onésime Reclus himself expressed a desire to « faire en Afrique ce que Rome fit dans le monde ancien », serving in the military in Algeria with the abject goal of « . . . franciser l’Afrique du Nord, la civiliser, y susciter une vaste renaissance française . . . » (Provenzano 96). Yet even after the O.I.F. found its footing under the initiative of third world leaders, *la Francophonie* has historically “been more closely assimilated to imperialism than to any form of universalist culture. For some, Francophonie is nothing more than the last battle being waged by the French using African ‘troops’ to protect their own language. For others, French is a device serving to cut African nations in two” (Ager 61); in many African nations, French is considered the language of the social elite, such that projects that favor its promotion may be seen as worsening socioeconomic divides. French-African relations within Francophonie are plagued with enduring colonial stereotypes, creating a perception of the “Other” with little basis in reality: France still has a constructed vision of Africa based on fundamental differences (e.g., the rational European versus the emotional African), while African nations remain distrustful of those nations it perceives to be “white” (Ager 132-133). African nations have been amongst the most resistant to the O.I.F.’s recent

expansion as well, feeling that it needs to deepen and strengthen its current agenda before including new members (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 145-146). Yet this expansion has been met with skepticism from nations from all over the francophone world, who feel that many of these new citizenries have no real connection to the French language (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 143), resulting in an entire group of nations marginalized as outsiders.

Solidarity has failed from an economic perspective as well. Not only do current economic policies make it clear that individual nations act in their own self interest, but also that they perceive other francophone citizens to be no different than other foreigners. If a true sentiment of solidarity were present—one in which nations felt that francophones were at least partially of their own ilk—then we would see a more privileged system of trade in place, as a benefit to other nations would be a benefit to the community at large. Author Charles Durand explains what he feels should be happening, if *la Francophonie* is to be the solidary community it depicts itself to be:

Les adhérents ne peuvent recourir à des plans d'action qui s'accompliraient au détriment des intérêts des autres pays membres. L'ensemble des pays membres doit être considéré, en priorité, chaque fois que cela est possible, pour bénéficier des actions économiques et politiques entreprises par d'autres pays membres. Par exemple . . . une entreprise française désireuse de construire une unité de fabrication desservant l'Amérique du Nord devrait considérer en priorité le Québec. Cela signifie qu'une entreprise québécoise voulant établir un comptoir de distribution pour ses produits en Asie du Sud-Est devrait considérer le Vietnam, ou un autre pays membre de la région, en priorité. (Durand 28-29)

The reality of the situation is something different entirely. While there has been much discussion of multilateral action to benefit developing nations, « la coopération économique francophone est restée jusqu'à ce jour balbutiante. Rien de réellement significatif n'a vraiment

été fait » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 177). Many of the richer francophone states have rival economic interests, and many are subject to regional trade agreements such as the *Accord de Libre-Échange Nord-Américain* (ALENA, also known as the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] in English) or the European Union (E.U.) that can be seen to be in direct competition with the other (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 177-178). When it comes to the O.I.F.'s primary financial vehicle—the *Fonds Multilatéral Unique* (F.M.U.)—both contributions and returns have been incredibly unbalanced. While the F.M.U. is meant to represent the whole of *la Francophonie*, it is hardly an egalitarian institution: ninety-four percent of its budget is provided by France and Canada, and its membership is primarily composed of Western nations, creating tensions between those who feel that they disproportionately support others, and those who feel that their interests are not adequately represented when it comes to budgetary decision-making (Valantin 95-96). « Il ne faut pas donc s'étonner que le multilatéral soit manipulé au gré des intérêts de ceux qui apportent le plus et que le bilatéral sous la forme de fonds liés lui soit préféré, d'autant qu'il permet un retour sur investissement profitable » (Valantin 96). Funds that are supposed to be multilateral are often accused of being used bilaterally to the direct benefit of those nations that provide them (Valantin 90); even former Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has acknowledged the O.I.F.'s difficulties in this area, admitting « Nous connaissons aussi la préférence des Etats du Nord bilatérales, plus valorisantes pour eux que les actions multilatérales, pourtant souvent plus vastes et plus utiles aux Etats qui les reçoivent » (Boutros-Ghali 18). When it comes to overall international trade, francophone nations, historically speaking, have seemed barely cognizant of each other: in the 1990s, trade between francophone countries could be characterized as “relatively

insignificant,” as France’s trade with francophone nations accounted for less than fifteen percent of its total, and within the African franc zone trade was “small” (Ager 113). According to 2009 data from the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, France and Algeria are the only francophone countries amongst Quebec’s top ten trading partners, and the latter only in the category of imports (“Quebec Overall Trading Patterns”). Both the United States and the United Kingdom rank higher than France on this list, which in the case of the former may be justified by geographic proximity, and in the case of the latter, by Canada’s affiliation with the British Commonwealth. However, the fact that France lags behind Germany should be cause for alarm for the O.I.F. Clearly, when it comes to economic issues, one’s national brethren are the only people with whom bonds of solidarity are strong enough to deserve consideration.

While the nation-state may be the fundamental building block of the O.I.F., it is clear that it is also the biggest obstacle to its success. Even if the nation-state is in reality a constructed idea laden with ideals of unity that fail to reflect its truly diverse nature, people buy into this myth of solidarity to a degree that has yet to be achieved within *la Francophonie* as a whole. The geographic and cultural borders that divide nations in the actual world continue to do so within the context of the francophone community, as individual mentalities are entrenched with the idea that members of a given nation share a common identity while those from other nations are fundamentally different. It speaks volumes that there have been a multitude of calls for the facilitation of mobility within the francophone world—either through the elimination of visas (Boutros-Ghali 16) or through the accordance of privileged visa statuses (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 165; Phan and Guillou 271)—yet no efforts have been made towards instituting such a policy, as current fears concerning immigration ensure that such a dream « n’est pas [encore]

politiquement envisageable » (Phan and Guillou 271). If such a program were to succeed, francophones would need to believe that francophones from other nations « ne sont pas des étrangers comme les autres », yet the task of effectively demonstrating this remains yet to be accomplished (Phan and Guillou 271). To some, this lack of mutual identification stems primarily from a lack of familiarity: others are considered as foreign because we do not know them well enough to recognize our common bond, because there has not yet been enough of a « rapprochement des peuples par leur connaissance mutuelle » (*Charte de la Francophonie*). Part of the problem is that, in France, « il apparaît que nombre des institutionnels et qu’une vraie majorité de l’opinion publique française ne connaissent pas la F/francophonie, ou se méprennent totalement à son sujet, la considérant comme une institution de plus sur l’échiquier international » (Ellenbogen 79). According to Algerian author Slimane Benaïssa, « le drame de la Francophonie c’est qu’en France on ne sait même pas ce qu’est la Francophonie . . . On a trop tendance à penser qu’un francophone c’est un étranger qui parle mal le français » (Benaïssa 37). Whether through lack of education or lack of opportunity, there seems to be a general ignorance in Western nations concerning francophones on other continents.

Dans beaucoup de pays de la Francophonie, particulièrement en France, au Québec, ou en Wallonie, une trop petite proportion de gens est actuellement en mesure de désigner, avec précision, en dehors de l’Europe, les pays dans lesquels le français est largement utilisé ou a un statut officiel. . . . Dans les pays francophones industrialisés, il est aujourd’hui difficile sinon impossible de trouver les œuvres littéraires africaines ou de voir un film camerounais ou sénégalais. En France, même les livres québécois sont difficiles à trouver. Il est naturel pour une majorité de Français, de Belges, de Suisses ou de Canadiens d’ignorer la Francophonie car, pour une majorité de citoyens de pays francophones industrialisés, peu de chose leur rappellent qu’elle existe. (Durand 31, 46)

Still, it is not only among Western nations that a *meilleure connaissance* of other cultures is needed to foster a stronger sense of community, but rather all throughout *la Francophonie* (Mourad 233; Boutros-Ghali 71). « [Les francophones] ont besoin aussi de se connaître. Il s'agit, par exemple, de faire découvrir la civilisation khmère aux Sénégalais, le Vanouatou aux Bulgares, la Roumanie aux Vietnamiens » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 196). However, a better knowledge and understanding of other nations is only a step towards establishing bonds of solidarity with them:

Le défi est donc de trouver les moyens, les processus et les institutions capables d'intégrer partiellement les cultures nationales et de les forger pour en extraire une culture aussi vaste que possible qui définit la collectivité francophone en tant que société globale. Pour arriver au terme désiré, le devoir impérieux serait, momentanément, de rapprocher les peuples qui appartiennent à la communauté francophone. (Mourad 233)

In order to succeed at fostering a collective solidarity to rival that felt towards members of one's own nation, *la Francophonie* must become a sort of inter-nation.⁴ Other authors have also recognized the need to establish a sense of belonging, of a citizenship driven by a collective conscience based on a common identity. « Il apparaît donc important, en premier lieu, de renforcer la « conscience francophone » (Durand 32), because, quite simply, « la Francophonie ne peut gagner que si, présente dans les esprits, elle suscite un sentiment d'appartenance ainsi que la prise de conscience . . . d'une identité partagée » (Phan and Guillou 267).

⁴ It has even been suggested that the O.I.F. utilize techniques that have been successful in nation-building. For example, "*pour que se conforte ce sentiment d'appartenance et émerge une véritable identité francophone, les symboles sont essentiels. Il s'agit de faire partager une 'idée neuve', d'installer le rêve francophone dans les esprits. La force des symboles peut effectivement faire toute la différence :...symbole du drapeau et de l'hymne francophones, symbole des décorations francophones ou encore symbole de la célébration du 20 mars, date anniversaire de la fondation de la Francophonie inter-gouvernementale.*" (Phan, 267)

If it is true that « les peuples francophones ont besoin de développer entre eux une conscience citoyenne et un sentiment commun d'appartenance », then it is also true that « cela ne va pas de soi. *Il faut mettre en évidence les solidarités, les valeurs, les comportements partagés* » (emphasis added; Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 196). It is along these lines that nations are able to engender a sense of common identity. « Le fondement principal des indépendances nationales est partout le même et bien connu: elles reposent sur les solidarités humaines naturelles et la convivialité » (Landry 10). People feel that they belong together when they see likeness in those around them, and nations are glued together by a web of traits, values, and history that is perceived to be commonly shared. « Toute collectivité, tout groupe, toute société se définit non seulement comme un ensemble d'hommes en interactions, mais aussi comme un ensemble de valeurs, de normes, d'habitudes, de techniques . . . la solidarité entre les membres de l'ensemble humain dépend beaucoup de leur communauté de culture » (Mourad 231). In order truly to feel solidarity, members of an inter-nation, just as those of a nation, need « un ancrage à des valeurs et points de référence communs » (Durand 68).

This is not to say that attempts have not been made to establish such an *ancrage*. On the contrary, those who have guided and developed the project of an institutionalized Francophonie have been well aware of the fact that commonality lies at the heart of solidarity, and have in fact posited two distinct, seemingly solid points of common reference around which a sense of community could flourish, each of which has ultimately proven to be fatally flawed in its own way. The first of these is the French language. It is the very notion of a common linguistic heritage that sparked the creation of the O.I.F, yet French has never been an entirely common property among the individuals who constitute its membership. In an

organization built around nation-states as units of collective representation, perhaps the most telling statistic is that in only two of them (France and Monaco) is French the first language of the majority of citizens, and in only three (adding Luxembourg) is it even spoken by the majority of the populace (Ager 45). In fact, “the use of any form of French has spread very little into the general population in most countries of Francophonie. In the full list of 71 countries and regions specifically mentioned in the 1990 *Etat de la Francophonie* report, 38 (54%) have less than 5% ‘real’ francophones” (Ager 45).⁵ However, the belief that *la Francophonie* is a collection of countries where French is official or used by a significant population is “by no means unusual, and the belief that the only valid motive for Francophonie is that the countries concerned should have French as their common possession has only just changed” within the past two decades (Ager 55). It was at the 1993 Summit in Mauritius that the definition of Francophonie was changed from countries « ayant l’usage du français en commun » to « ayant le français en partage », a decision “reflecting a less proprietorial and more egalitarian approach, but also indicating that French is only one of the strands of unity” that binds *la Francophonie* (Ager 55). The recent expansion of the O.I.F. that has characterized the twenty-first century (see Valantin 99) has only served to eradicate the notion that French is the primary characteristic of *la Francophonie* in its modern form, as all of the recent additions have been states that have been roundly condemned as « très peu francophone » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 143), such as Macedonia, Greece, Armenia, and Ghana.

⁵ Ager defines a “real francophone” as one who has a proficiency in the language, either through organic acquisition or in learning it as a secondary language by means such as education.

Given these recent trends, it is not surprising that the focus has shifted away from language in recent years, and towards the notion of “universal” values. According to contemporary thinking, « la Francophonie est donc une organisation au sein de laquelle les institutions et les individus partagent des valeurs et des objectifs communs. Outre la langue, il convient de souligner l’importance donnée à la paix et la démocratie, qui deviennent dans le sens international: la bonne gouvernance » (Ellenbogen 83). At francophone summits in Hanoi and Moncton, the heads of state of the nations of the O.I.F. reaffirmed that « la paix, la démocratie, et le développement sont non seulement des objectifs interdépendants, mais aussi des valeurs que nous partageons » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 2000). It has even been posited that these ideals represent a shared « patrimoine » among francophone nations (Boutros-Ghali 28). Yet this notion is problematic for a multitude of reasons, and has sparked discord and even tension because of them. First of all, the roots of these ideas seem suspiciously rooted in post-revolutionary French republicanism, which not only clouds the idea of a shared francophone property but also adds fuel to the accusations that Francophonie is a neo-colonial project:

La démocratie, le multipartisme, l’Etat de droit, les droits de l’Homme sont des concepts et des réalités indissociés en Occident. Cependant, de plus en plus de voix s’élèvent pour le contester . . . L’universalité des droits de l’Homme est, de même, contestée, compte tenu de sa source dans la pensée occidentale libérale du XVIIIe siècle. (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 170-171)

Secondly, to impose a singular moral code on an international scale constitutes a gross violation of the O.I.F.’s commitment to offer an antipodal form of globalization to the “anglo-American” approach, one that is respectful of diversity and a polycultural approach to systems of thought (see, for example, Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 93; Ellenbogen 52-55; de Charette 53-54). If bonds of community are to be formed, they should center on organic, pre-existing points

of experiential commonality (as this thesis hopes to offer), rather than on an introduced set of philosophical constraints—and make no mistake about it, the aforementioned values have been instituted in the francophone agenda much against the will of a number of state officials. When the resolution to officialize these values was passed in 2000 in Bamako, it was not without a considerable deal of dissent and objection (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 172); in fact, the resolution to include democracy as a value of the O.I.F. could not be instituted until it was agreed upon to acknowledge that multipartism is not the only means of achieving a democracy (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 172). Finally, these values cannot be considered a point of solidarity as they do not reflect the reality of the francophone world. Boutros Boutros-Ghali lists numerous examples of francophone nations that have suffered governmental or humanitarian crises within the past two decades—specifically Togo, both Congos, Burundi, Comoros, and Haiti (Boutros-Ghali 32)—demonstrating the presence of an opposition to these ideals. However beneficial support of democracy and human rights may be towards achieving greater ends, they are nevertheless exclusionary, and likely prevent bonds of solidarity from forming between certain nations in the francophone world. Algeria’s embrace of an uncompromising brand of Islam—one inherently opposed to democracy and certain individual rights—is more than likely the primary reason it has refused to join the O.I.F. Similarly, the desire of the second most populous francophone nation on earth—the Democratic Republic of the Congo (at the time known as Zaïre)—to host a francophone summit in 1991 caused an uproar, with several nations threatening to boycott over human rights abuses, forcing the conference to be moved to Paris (Valantin 37). The O.I.F. has officially suspended membership of Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, and Mali (*Charte de la Francophonie*)—undoubtedly because

each is undergoing or has recently undergone violent and non-democratic civil unrest. Yet even among fully sanctioned members, one is drawn to names such as Rwanda, a member since 1970, and Mauritania, the subject of a 2012 CNN exposé revealing that both government and citizenry are complicit in perpetuating a thriving slave trade (see Sutter).

It is clear that, while strong enough to engender degrees of subscription and mutual recognition from many constituents, neither the French language nor values based in humanitarianism have individually been enough to create a sense of kinship that transcends national borders. Not only have the actions of officials within the O.I.F. reaffirmed the lack of solidarity between francophone cultures, popular sentiment, at least in France, would seem to echo this rapport. At first glance, reading that fifty-two percent of French citizens feel closer to a francophone overseas than to a non-francophone European (Gallet 97) may seem encouraging to supporters of *la Francophonie*. However, a more meticulous understanding of this statistic unearths some unsettling revelations about the current state of a project whose aims have largely been to foster cohesiveness and solidarity on an international scale, to create a “unity in diversity” (Ager 5). The most salient of these revelations is that nearly half of the interviewed French do not feel a kinship based on language, asserting they have less in common with, for example, a Quebecois than a German. It is clear that many French do not feel a connection at all to citizens of other nations, such as the “ethnic French who complain about being lumped together” with citizens of third-world francophone nations when controversial issues are discussed (Weinstein 493). As important, one must be suspicious of a poll that implies an international solidarity, yet bases its conclusion solely on the opinion of those who live in France. Even in other nations, it seems evident that, at best, feelings of

solidarity are vectorially uneven: former Quebecois minister of foreign relations Louise Beaudoin expressed her desire at a 2002 conference in Beirut that the Quebecois gain a better rapport with the Lebanese, as she believed that her citizenry felt a far stronger connection with France than Lebanon (Beaudoin 25, 31). Throughout *la Francophonie*, there is an undeniably present sentiment best summed up by a Quebecois journalist in regards to Africans belonging to member-states of the O.I.F.: “They have nothing in common with us, and do not wish to have any[thing in common with us]” (Weinstein 493).

This thesis will be, in essence, a rebuttal of the aforementioned statement. While there may never be one solitary characteristic that singlehandedly links every single individual across the totality of nations in the vast international conglomerate of *la Francophonie*, what there is in its stead is a complex and interconnected web of transnational connections that span numerous cultural domains, of which the French language and a set of generally accepted governmental values are but individual strands. As a means of understanding currents of global connectedness, Deleuze and Guattari propose the model of the rhizome: like the stem for which it is named, a single root with multiple offshoots and nodes, the rhizomic model is a means of expressing a totality marked by an internal heterogeneity and multiplicity (13-15). It is a stronger connection than an individual root, for if a strand of the rhizome breaks, the system is still held in tact by its other points of connections; furthermore, the broken strand will reform along different lines (Deleuze and Guattari 16-17). In this way, nations are rhizomic: they are not held together by individual traits or ideals, but rather by nets of common histories and experiences that foster solidarity by offering a multitude of possible points of common

reference. An inter-nation must be held together by a similarly complex system of interconnectedness, with the added challenge of bridging preconceived national divides.

It is unequivocally clear that *la Francophonie* in its current state is riddled with conflict, and that the dreams of a *civilisation universelle* possessed by so many of the progenitors of the francophone movement is far from being realized, as members of different nations do not necessarily identify with each other, failing to find common threads between themselves and the proverbial “Other.” However, this is not the same thing as suggesting that these threads do not exist, nor does it imply that the situation is irreparable. In fact, I propose that, from both a contemporary and historic perspective, conflict itself is the ultimate shared experience, affecting the lives of citizens of different nations in remarkably similar ways. By discovering empathy for an otherwise foreign individual over common empirical or emotional realities resulting from one’s position vis-à-vis historic, linguistic, religious, residential, or numerous other cultural divides, the potential to strengthen notions of solidarity and/or kinship increases greatly. Please note the word “potential,” for this thesis does not suggest that discovering any particular cultural commonality is the panacea which will mend all of the tears in the socio-cultural fabric of *la Francophonie*; it merely suggests that, as the original conception of *la Francophonie* has not resulted in its intended goals, providing a building block of universality that extends beyond a common language offers a means of potentially diminishing the problematic sense of otherness.

Ironically, however, highlighting alterity on a national scale may be the most effective way of highlighting similarity on an international one. As authors from Benedict Anderson to

Ernest Renan to Homi Bhabha have illustrated, community is the great myth of the nation-state, and political boundaries offer a convenient means of distinction from the outside world. However, no nation is homogeneous, and in fact most of the lived conflict in the world transpires between people who share a common space. More effective at creating international solidarity than simply convincing an individual that they have something in common with an unknown foreigner is convincing him or her that he or she has more in common with said foreigner than with a given compatriot. In *Quand les murs tombent*, Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau (2-8) have recognized the problems of a nation-state that imposes its own parameters of belonging and in doing so helps to divide people along traditional lines such as language, religion, and race. To build a sense of community successfully that transcends such restrictions, one must bridge these gaps by offering an alternate system of interconnected *lieux*, a new globalism forged along diverse *imaginaires* to bridge people across national borders.

La mondialité nous exalte aujourd'hui et nous lancine, nous suggère une diversité plus complexe que ne peuvent le signifier ces marqueurs archaïques que sont la couleur de la peau, la langue que l'on parle, le dieu que l'on honore ou celui que l'on craint, le sol où l'on est né . . . La vraie diversité ne se trouve aujourd'hui que dans les imaginaires... Dans la mondialité (qui est là tout autant que nous avons à la fonder) nous n'appartenons pas en exclusivité à des « patries », à des « nations », et pas du tout à des « territoires », mais désormais à des « lieux » . . . ces géographies tissées de matières et de visions que nous aurons forgées. Et ces « lieux », devenus incontournables. . . entrent en relation avec tous les lieux du monde. (Glissant and Chamoiseau 15-17)

It is in focusing on these traditional divides themselves that we can identify the *lieux* that transgress them. The first two chapters of this thesis address two of Glissant and Chamoiseau's « marqueurs archaïques »—namely *la langue que l'on parle* and *le dieu que l'on honore*—to

show how solidarity may be forged by common experiences and histories that offer alternative points of reference that transcend traditional lines of exclusivity (linguistic and religious diversity) while simultaneously linking otherwise disparate nations. The third chapter shows a different approach to conceptualizing these *lieux*, using literature rather than history to highlight a transnational *imaginaire* that demonstrates a common rapport with the urban environment. While language and religion are primarily interpersonal conflicts, this chapter shows that intra-national rupture need not always transpire between human actors, as the city itself offers a common adversary. If the notion of nation revolves around the notion of a connection to territory as well as humanity, then this shared battle against the city challenges assumed solidarities between citizen and place as well.

CHAPTER ONE: LANGUAGE

1.1 Introduction

Forte d'une population de plus de 890 millions d'habitants et de 220 millions de locuteurs de français de par le monde, l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) a pour mission de donner corps à une solidarité active entre les 75 États et gouvernements qui la composent (56 membres et 19 observateurs) - soit plus du tiers des États membres des Nations unies. (<http://www.francophonie.org/Qui-sommes-nous.html>)

Highlighted in bold on its website is the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie's* definitive one-sentence definition of its purpose as of 2011, an encapsulating response to the self-imposed question « Qui sommes-nous? » While it is no surprise that the promotion of solidarity has been the primary goal of the O.I.F., the phrasing of that mission statement reveals an important and perhaps less superficially evident truth concerning the organization's conception of its role in the diplomatic process: rather than viewing itself as responsible for the creation and formation of a kinship between its member states, it sees itself as a mere developmental vehicle for an active solidarity that already exists. Such an assertive underlying presumption prompts one to seek evidence of this solidarity, to ask on what basis the organization believes such bonds to have formed naturally. The answer is exposed in a tenet of an elaborated, multi-pronged credo of the O.I.F.'s institutional objectives that claims that the « rapprochement des peuples » is achieved « par leur connaissance mutuelle », a familiarity based on the notion of nations « ayant en partage l'usage de la langue française et le respect des valeurs universelles » (*Charte de la Francophonie*).

Putting aside the question of whether such universal values exist, one is forced to take issue with the idea of an inherent solidarity over a supposedly shared language. Maximilien

Robespierre and Louis XVI spoke the same language, as did Napoleon and Toussaint L'Ouverture, yet there was little solidarity between them; to speak the same language as another often may simply give one the ability to understand more clearly and precisely just how diametrically opposed their viewpoints truly are. Yet the sociolinguistic assumptions asserted by the O.I.F. are more profoundly flawed than they even appear, as the French language may not only fail to prevent tension and conflict between segments of its constituency, it is often the very cause of such conflict.

As language is “arguably the most important component of culture” (“Learning Language”), as well as a cornerstone of both individual and collective identities, it represents one of the most intensely personal and emotionally evocative (and provocative) topics to people throughout the world. Inherently entwined in human self-conception, maintaining the « invulnérable bastion de [la] langue » can serve as a barricade against external influence (Hoffmann 57), while at the same time language can be a weapon that holds the key to exerting such influence over others. It is no surprise, then, that people are ready and willing to fight in order to achieve a set of linguistic conditions that privilege their own ideals. To share a common language is not necessarily to share a common interpretation of that language. A survey of the francophone world reveals a wide variety of contentious issues examined in this chapter—from the influence of foreign borrowings to the relationship between language and literary values—that highlight how divergent understandings of the form and function of French within a given society undermine any cultural rapprochement gained from a mutual knowledge of the language. Whether represented by conflicting opinions over the acceptability of alternative grammatical or lexical structures or by different visions about what the usage of

language says about one's place in society, French undeniably means different things to different people.

However, an even greater fallacy may be the assumption that a common language exists at all. The preponderance and diversity of forms of speech within the French language leads one to question the degree to which different nations can claim to have one language *en partage*. Different language registers separate young from old, blue collar from white collar, friends from strangers; so great are the nuances of language that each individual can be said to possess his or her own language that aids to distinguish him or her from others (Moï 16). While most human beings possess the capacity to overlook idiolect, the same cannot be said for dialect. *La Francophonie* remains divided by dozens of different national forms of the French language, serving more often to estrange one people from another than to unite them. Certainly the lexical and grammatical differences between dialects create rifts based on perceived incomprehensibility. Two salient examples of this are James Domengeaux's insistence that, unlike regular French, Cajun French "could not be written" (Ancelet 350), as well as the numerous foreigners who claim to speak French yet are allegedly unable to understand Canadian "patois" detailed throughout Chantal Bouchard's history of Quebecois French. Tension also foments between those who champion local variants and those who would, ironically in the name of unity, force a homogeneous, monolithic French on all people, feeling as twentieth century Canadian journalist Gérard Dagenais did when he wrote "I refuse to allow anyone who claims to express themselves in French the right to use 'poêle' instead of 'cuisinière' . . . No harm meant to our supporters of canadianisms [*sic*], but there cannot be ten French languages, or even two" (Bouchard 262, citing Dagenais).

Yet an even more bitter schism results from the inherent value judgments that accompany dialecticism, creating barriers of resentment that are territorially realized not only on an international scale, but on an intra-national one as well, for when it comes to regional variants of French, « s'ils se situent sur des plans différents, le provincial et l'étranger ne partagent pas moins une même forme d'illégitimité » (Maggetti 50). Few militant proponents of an international standard French would see themselves as sharing a common language with speakers of dialectal variants, such as Cajun or Haitian French, as these variants do not represent "real" forms of language in their eyes ("Languages and Labels;" Schieffelin and Doucet 182). What Chantal Bouchard observes with regards to Canada can be extended to the whole of *la Francophonie*: "In the minds of those discussing joual in 1960-62, it was clearly no longer French, or in danger of no longer being French" (221).

Furthermore, even if the O.I.F. had the ability to eliminate the perception of the non-standard speaker as "Other," creating a paradigm in which all of its members felt that they did indeed share one language, it would be as likely to stir resentment in some individuals as it would be to create solidarity amongst others. The assumption that unity equals solidarity fails to take into account the acute human desire for distinction, a trait that is especially present in post-colonial nations that wish to escape the cultural shadow of the *métropole*. In contrast to (and in defiance of) those who would eliminate regional language markers in an attempt to consolidate the French spoken all over the world, many authors make a concerted effort to modify the French language in ways that distance themselves from France and its desire for linguistic universality. In Africa and the Americas, it is commonplace for writers to feel the need to appropriate the French language through lexical-grammatical manipulation as a means of

making what was once a foreign imposition into a product of their own cultures (see Ntonfo 61-65). From Aimé Césaire's revolutionary stylistics to Patrick Chamoiseau's incorporation of creolisms, Antillean authors in particular have achieved cultural empowerment through linguistic distinction, finding ways to « coloniser la langue [française] » (Kesteloot 45), turning the tables on historic hierarchies and regaining the self-determination and cultural control that had previously been hampered by colonization.

The deep and tense divides caused by the presence of multiple languages enter nearly every facet of society, influencing the cultural fabric of a nation on many different levels. Socially, many linguistic groups find themselves shut out of various domains, as inroads to a more desirable life are closed to those unwilling or unable to adopt the language of those outside their group. This forces communities to choose between cultural preservation and cultural authority, as I will highlight with examples such as the Quebecois who are afforded better job opportunities by learning English (Loh 218). Institutionally, executive policy inevitably favors one language over another, acting to suppress the rights of linguistic minorities by denying them forms of public expression, such as Flemish laws that invalidate city council meetings conducted in French (Traynor). Politically, multiple languages confuse national identity, creating oppositional affiliations that threaten to tear apart geopolitical structures. Disassociation between linguistic groups and the erosion of a common national self-conception creates an internal xenophobia, as I will highlight through examples such as Theodore Roosevelt's insistence that there was no place in America for speakers of Cajun French, and the classification of Alsatian as a "foreign" language in France due to its similarity to German in the wake of World War II (Sexton 36; "Histoire de la langue"). Even on a personal

and individual level, the presence of multiple languages within a national space creates a cleavage that splits the larger entity: many authors, from Fernando Pessoa to Jean Arceneaux, adopt multiple personae—each associated with a particular language—in order to navigate a multilingual space.

Despite the number of cultural and temporal singularities that should mark each battle as unique, a set of recurrent conditions and actions leave one feeling as though the same scene is being played out again and again, if only with different actors on different stages. Conflicts are motivated by similar circumstances (for example, economic imbalance or the need to formalize an orthography) and enforced using similar tactics and strategies (such as the rejection of bilingualism or the fear employed by separatist organizations). Certain emotional stressors are prone to spark animous feelings between groups. Members of multilingual francophone nations must frequently contend with the presence of bias and judgment. Unfounded stereotypes and generalizations lead to harmful assumptions about individuals, such as the notion that individuals are lazy because they speak Antillean Creole (Schnepel 135), the belief that Cajun French fosters illiteracy (Ancelet 346-347), and the idea that speaking Breton makes one unpatriotic (Kuter 19). Likewise, people on both sides of a given conflict are apt to be burdened by a sense of pressure to act in a given manner. Many individuals feel compelled to modify their speech habits in order to achieve an end, from those who wish to climb the social ladder, such as Louisiana's Genteel Acadians (Sexton 38), to authors such as Samuel Beckett, who wish to liberate themselves from the national identity with which they are saddled (Fletcher and Spurling 68), to Alsatians wishing to be accepted as French citizens ("Histoire de la langue"). Confronted by a demand for change, individuals across the

francophone world tend to employ tactics of self-preservation, namely surrender (those who conform to these pressures) or resistance. At the same time, those who exert pressure on others often feel under attack themselves. Actions that others may view as aggressive are often perceived to be defensive by those who commit them, feeling that other languages pose a threat to an institutional integrity that they must protect, be it their own language (Albert 1167), the quality of their educational institutions (Ancelet 346-347), or their national security (Miles 71).

Whatever the apparent nature of a given linguistic action—be it an article of governmental or institutional policy, a personal language choice, or even the perpetuation of an incendiary rhetoric—it represents a struggle for control. For speakers of persecuted languages, francophone authors struggling to understand themselves, and cultural autonomists alike, it represents a need to control one's own life. Personal liberty and self-determination are themes that run throughout multiple linguistic narratives in *la Francophonie*. For speakers of dominant languages throughout history, as well as militant speakers of minority languages, the battle is for control of others—their actions, their emotions, and their destinies. Tension fomented around any situation involving one group's will to dominate another, as I will show through examples such as the creation of language charters that attempt to control the practices of businesses and public expression, and the suppression of regional languages in schools where teachers tried to regulate the language students were allowed to speak (see, for example, Albert 1171; Eriksen 225).

La Francophonie's common narrative of conflict depends as much on its mutual human component as it does on the battles themselves. While conflict damages certain relationships and severs certain bonds, it solidifies others by offering a group of like-minded people with which one can identify, as people from throughout a multitude of nations and eras have been striving for largely the same goals, spurred on by similar mindsets and belief systems while facing similar oppositions. Although conflict within a nation may divide people into different “camps,” all camps pertaining to a given struggle extend beyond their immediate circumstances and cultural specificities into more general sides of what could be considered universal linguistic issues. As we will see in this chapter, battles over a variety of linguistic proposals, from the spelling of a language to the admissible use of language in institutions and social domains, represent a wider struggle of progressives versus conservatives. Similarly, when it comes to linguistic values, the francophone world is populated with numerous individuals who seek forms of liberty—the freedom to express themselves, the freedom of social and financial mobility, the freedom of being unsaddled by cultural expectations—as well as many others who instead endorse security, feeling (often ironically) that a homogeneous language standard is necessary to maintain tradition, prevent disruption, and ensure stability of a sociolinguistic/cultural structure that they hold in high regard.

1.2 Societal Inequality

It would seem as though no matter where two languages share a national space, there never exists a truly equal partnership between the languages. Inevitably, one language will find itself in a position of greater power and influence than the other. This fundamental imbalance results in social tensions as speakers of various languages feel a loss of control of their own

lives, pressured to adapt their own speech and behavior in order to adjust to social realities. Much of the root of this problem lies in the fact that, at various points in recent history, the primary spheres of political and social influence have been dominated by one language. Prior to the Official Languages Act of 1969, in which English and French were accorded equal status as official languages of the Parliament and Government of Canada, English speakers dominated Canadian governmental bodies. Yet, even after passage of that Act, a sense of imbalance remained because the government had not “created the conditions in which French-speaking Canadians have felt fully equal or could fully develop the richness of the culture they had inherited,” according to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1977 (cited in Cartwright and Williams 474). Even if French and English were legally on an equal footing in Parliament, English dominated there and in the public service (Thomson, “Language” 74). Social tensions today are complicated by the fact that English speakers in Quebec now have to conform to a primarily francophone environment, evidenced by fines levied on businesses that do not put French first (see Ossipov 201). When the government of Louisiana became the domain of English speakers following the Louisiana Purchase in the nineteenth century, it helped fuel the decline of the French language in the state. It is not coincidental that efforts to promote and revitalize the language in the 1960s coincided with the rise in prominence of such Cajun politicians as Dudley LeBlanc and James Domageaux.

In another example, a francophone elite dominated Belgium’s political spectrum until the second half of the twentieth century, when momentum shifted decidedly in favor of the Flemish. Modern Belgian history has been “a struggle for equality of language and power between the French-speaking south and the [Flemish] speaking north” (Van de Craen 32). As

Flanders grew both in terms of population (from 1947-1965, Flanders saw an increase of 618,000 people, compared to only 156,000 in Wallonia [Stephenson 507]) and in terms of economy, which surpassed that of Wallonia in the 1960s, Flemings began to assert increasing influence over the linguistic policies of the nation, shifting towards a regional autonomy that has all but exorcised the presence of French in positions of influence. Laws were passed that required Flemish businesses to conduct themselves in the language of the region, while universities in Flanders abandoned French in favor of an exclusively Flemish platform of instruction, such as the University of Ghent, which in 1930 became the first monolingual Flemish institution (although today select graduate classes are also taught in English) (Stephenson 504-507; “Education and Study”). Today, even French-speaking towns within Flanders are forbidden to conduct their own affairs in their native language (see Traynor). In Martinique, the elites remain francophone and the Creoles remain excluded from positions of political power (Murray 87-88). In all of these places, dominant linguistic groups have shifted resources to their own members, mobilizing members of minority languages to become politically active in defense of their language rights (see Paulston 81).

One of the fundamental principles of modern linguistics is that the evaluation and analysis of any language, no matter its nature or social circumstances, must be descriptive rather than prescriptive. That is, one should not compare languages in terms of right and wrong, or search for “proper” usages of language because, scientifically speaking, language is inherently devoid of moral components; no one language is “better” or more correct than another (see Halpern). While this may be obvious to members of the scholarly community, it runs counter to popular opinion in the francophone world. In fact, historically speaking, there

does not appear to be a single nation in which two coexisting languages have been imbued with equal prestige. Inevitably, one language is perceived as carrying more intrinsic value than another, leading to unequal treatment of speakers of different languages in a number of diverse social circumstances. Positive or negative attitudes towards a given language or dialect beget corresponding stereotypes of the speakers themselves, creating an arena of scrutiny in which tensions unavoidably arise between the judges and the judged.

Much of the judgment focuses on the aesthetics of the languages themselves. Speakers of high prestige parlances believe their language or dialect is

superior to [the low prestige language] in a number of ways. [The high prestige language] is regarded as 'some-how more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts'...Such attitudes are reinforced by the association of [the high prestige language] with antiquity, literary heritage, an established norm of 'correct' usage, etc." (Winford 347)

Such beliefs have long been prevalent in France, where authors have been extolling the superiority of the French language for centuries, believing, as Voltaire did, that « la langue française est de toutes les langues celle qui exprime avec le plus de facilité, de netteté, de délicatesse tous les objets de la conversation des honnêtes gens » (cited in Battye, Hintze, and Rowlett 34). These francophilic authors perpetuated a belief that France's success as a nation was at least partially due to the inherent superiority of its language, an idea "founded on a series of self-justificatory myths" (Battye, Hintze, and Rowlett 34) that the language was lexically, syntactically, and structurally superior to others. It was not only more beautiful than rival tongues, it was clearer, more logical, and more natural. When Antoine de Rivarol famously proclaimed « Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français » in *De l'universalité de la langue française*,

he was not simply praising the French language, but denigrating others as well, following this famous phrase with « ce qui n' est pas clair est encore anglais, italien, grec ou latin » (de Rivarol 49). He believed that these languages lacked the simplicity and « géométrie toute élémentaire » of French, which he (falsely) thought to be the only language in Europe to remain true to the “natural” subject-verb-object syntactic order (de Rivarol 48, 50). French was not simply good; it was the best language in existence, pure and simple.

If such beliefs have persisted in numerous countries in which French is the prestige language, it is largely because they have evangelically disseminated as part of the colonization process. While the French may no longer be present in these nations, their linguistic ideals remain strong, perpetuated by native citizens in positions of influence. For example, “Ideas of the clarity, exactness, logic, rationality, natural order, and richness of the French language as contributing to the greatness of French civilization have been defended by many Haitian writers. Schools in Haiti . . . played an important role in keeping these ideas strong” (Schieffelin and Doucet 188). It is not just in Haiti where these age-of-enlightenment-era French ideals have fueled modern imbalances in language prestige, for the persistent notions of French superiority to Creoles are remarkably similar in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Mauritius, and the Seychelles. In these nations, “particular ideas about the superiority of the French language [that] originated in France” (Schieffelin and Doucet 180) were an integral part of a common colonial experience that

. . . provided not only the medium in which similar linguistic structures and vocabularies evolved, but also the socioeconomic foundation for the development of a set of attitudes and ideologies about the languages and their speakers. In all of these countries, Haiti included, a small group of French speakers occupied positions of authority over a large

dominated population. French was the prestige language, and the creoles were assigned a range of lower social values. (Schieffelin and Doucet 180)

In numerous francophone countries the prestige gap is characterized by a dual set of value reinforcements, as the self-aggrandizing rhetoric that lauds high prestige languages as superior is counterbalanced by a derogatory rhetoric surrounding low prestige languages. Problems surrounding social inequalities are compounded by the fact that low prestige varieties are not simply viewed as “less good” than their counterparts, but are actively portrayed as fundamentally flawed and deficient forms of speech. In the cases of languages with primarily oral histories, it is not uncommon for non-linguists to believe mistakenly that these languages have no inherent grammatical structure, in contrast with high prestige varieties which, “because their rules are codified by reference grammars and their vocabulary is inventoried periodically by dictionaries, and because their grammar and orthography are taught explicitly in school... give the misleading impression of being more rule-governed than vernaculars” (Auger and Valdman 406). Thus, in Haiti “creole is said to have no grammar . . .” (Wardhaugh 80), an accusation similar to those made against Cajun French in Louisiana (Ancelet 347). From Quebec to Lorraine, speakers of regional dialects often believe that their parlanges lack any grammatical form (Auger and Valdman 406), and that non-standard varieties of standardized languages represent “a horrible baragouin devoid of rule or structure” (Salien 99).

Languages are further stigmatized throughout the francophone world through a similar derogatory process that calls into question their linguistic legitimacy. In diglossic situations, it is common that “negative evaluation of [a low prestige language] may extend even to denial of its existence” (Winford 347). A language loses its identity as a language when it loses the ability to

call itself such, yet the perception persists that Haitian Creole is a “patois” and a “broken French”“. . . a “diminished,” “reduced,” “deformed,” “impoverished,” “vitiated,” “bastard” form of a European standard language (Schieffelin and Doucet 182). Mauritian Creole “is not a language; it's a jargon, right; it's just a patois” (Eriksen 325); the French spoken in Louisiana is “not the real French, just broken Cajun French” (Ancelet 346). In each case, the language has its authority as a fully legitimate language brought into question, being accused of being either an inferior version of an existing language, or not being a language at all but a mere *patois*, a term still used in France today to describe regional languages such as Breton and Alsatian (Eriksen 318). Although the word has no real meaning scientifically speaking, *patois* is an effective way of deriding a language as insufficiently developed and socially regressive. The impact of the word can be felt, for example, on a website promoting tourism in Lorraine, which defends the regional language known as le Platt as « plus qu'un patois », noting that it is a language unto itself, rather than merely « un reliquat mal dégrossi de germain » (“Le Platt”). When used in post-colonial contexts it can be particularly derogatory, as it evokes images of primitiveness and inherent ignorance on the part of its speakers. Consider a 1931 article in *American Speech* that proclaims, “In English, as used by the Negro, there is something decidedly indigenous. His patois is rustic . . . Emotions flow in a crystal stream through its simple forms” (Meredith 318). The term “patois” evokes a time during which post-revolutionary France underwent a process similar to an internal colonization with respect to regional languages, as speakers were persecuted and regional dialects were targeted for eradication, having been deemed detrimental to social progress. It is during this era that “patois”—a term designating all languages in France other than French—developed its implications of being a manner of

speech that is “reactionary, backward or primitive,” a “crude parler . . . deemed inadequate as means of advanced communication in a modern society” (Eriksen 318). Even today, and even in nations across various oceans, the word retains the contentiousness of a term that once represented an enemy of the state, imbued with values that ran counter to those of a self-proclaimed “progressive” society.

Perhaps it is because of these stigmas surrounding low prestige languages themselves that throughout the francophone world their speakers find themselves unfairly portrayed as somehow anti-modern in their personal values and behaviors. For example, in Brittany, speakers are growing less inclined to speak Breton with each generation, as “French is depicted (by the French) as the national, urban language of progress, sharply contrasted with Breton as the regional, rural language of the past” (Kuter 76). In order to avoid stereotyping, speakers feel immense social pressure to curb their usage of their native tongues. When one’s inherent tendencies conflict with one’s cultivated social image, it is usually the former that must cede its place in order to quell the tension. In Louisiana, “many upwardly mobile Cajuns as well as those simply striving for conformity were less inclined to teach French to their children even as a second language because it was associated with backwardness” (Sexton 38). Louisiana’s “Genteel Acadians”—upper middle-class Cajuns of the nineteenth century whose goals were to be viewed in the same public regard as the circles of the wealthy elite (Sexton 25)—were amongst the worst offenders in this regard, as the English language became a trend to be followed by anyone who wished to be viewed as in tune with the changing tides of a modern society. Similarly, even though Brussels is geographically located in Flemish territory, it is primarily a francophone city, stemming back to a period in which the French vogue determined

all things cosmopolitan. Throughout the nineteenth century, the city underwent an intense process of becoming more French, not only in its architecture but in the speech patterns of its citizenry as well, who felt socially compelled to learn the French language (Stephenson 513). This francophilia was part of a vogue, evidenced by the fact that Paris and not Wallonia was the primary pole of cultural influence, such that even today, despite linguistic similarities between the regions, French-speaking Walloons see Brussels as aloof and detached from their own culture (Stephenson 517). Even when speakers do not abandon a language on the whole, social tensions remain aggravated by an implicit pressure that limits the acceptable domains for use of that language. Thus, even if trendy Martinicans of the mid-twentieth century did not fully abandon the use of Creole, they made sure never to speak it in public under the scrutinizing eyes of their peers, packaging “good” French as part of a set of social behaviors including dressing in fashionable European attire and educating their children in classical musical forms such as piano and ballet (Cyrille, “Popular Music” 69). If modern Creole is still plagued with a “subordinated status,” it is largely because it continues to be marginalized as a “language of folkloristic and recreational pursuits,” appropriate only in specific contexts and social relations (Murray 87-88). Thus, even if recognized as structurally equal to French, Creole still bears the burden of an implicit inferiority because it is not “good” enough to be spoken by the elite. Even if the general populace accepts languages as legitimate forms of communication, the problem of a prestige imbalance will persist until multiple languages manage to achieve true social equality in all contexts.

Just as the desire for social status can affect the linguistic behavior of speakers of certain languages, so can the desire for wealth. As much of a stigma as it is to be perceived as

backwards socially, it is equally upsetting to be associated with poverty, yet there is often a very real correlation between disparities in wealth and disparities in language. Although theoretically the amount of money people possess should be independent of their speech choices, demographic statistics allow these two factors to be fused quite easily in the minds of the populace. Historically, Belgium “was divided into a poor . . . stagnant Flemish-speaking region dominated by a French-speaking elite and a prosperous, dynamic French-speaking region” (Stephenson 503). The Flemish were stereotyped as belonging to an “undemanding working class,” in fact, because so many of them did hold unskilled positions. They did so, however, not by choice, but due to the pressure of a society that allowed no linguistic leeway for those wishing to advance themselves. Particularly in Brussels, a Flemish worker, “As an employee in a store, an office, or an industry . . . was forced to communicate with his fellow workers in French unless he was content to remain at a low level of menial work” (Stephenson 513). Conformity was expected in order to achieve self-betterment. However, with changes in economic patterns came changes in social conceptions. In modern day Belgium, where the per capita GNP of the Flemish region has been higher than that of Wallonia for almost half a century (Loh 219), there has been a growing nationalism that has accompanied newfound wealth. Much modern nationalist rhetoric focuses on ideals of self-sufficiency: whereas at one time resentment towards French speakers revolved around their looking down on others as low-class, ironically it now focuses on their position of economic dependence.

In modern day Quebec, the economic imbalance accompanying linguistic cleavage is twofold. On the one hand, because the regional dialect of French “is more likely to be found among working-class speakers than among upper-class speakers” (Auger and Valdman 407), its

speakers face their own prejudices of being low-class. On the other hand, even speakers of standard French face inequalities within the job market, as “those who speak and write English, particularly those who switch languages, generally do better financially” (Thomson, “Quebec” 28). In fact, French Quebecois earn less than the English even when education and occupation are equal (Loh 218). The fact that a French Quebecker must “sacrifice part of his linguistic and cultural identity” for career advancement in his own country creates a sense of “profound alienation” (Loh 218), similar to what a Flemish-speaking Bruxellois or a French-speaking Louisianian must have felt in the previous century. However, as we have seen in nineteenth century Brussels, fluency in particular languages can pave the way to numerous employment possibilities. When financial tides began to turn in Louisiana, so did the *lingua franca* of the middle and upper classes. Families began educating their children in English as a way to better prepare them for an increasingly American capitalist environment. “Upper-class Creoles and Genteel Acadians often made conscious efforts to conform to the ideals of the new Anglo-American elite as a way of ‘adapting to new socioeconomic realities’” (Sexton 28).

1.3 Orthography and the Francophone Author

1.3.1 The Choice of French

Few francophone societal figures are as consciously aware of the importance of language to cultural self-definition as are multilingual writers. One such example is Anna Moï, who speaks Vietnamese, French, English, Thai, and Japanese. Born in Saigon in 1955, Moï moved to France to study journalism, yet instead began to work in the fashion industry, eventually exploring a career as a writer. Her début novel, *L'écho des rizières*, garnered much acclaim upon its release in 2002. In her 2006 work, *Esperanto, désesperanto: la francophonie*

sans les français, Moï reminds us that language can function as both a tool of personal creative expression and as an incomplete and imperfect vehicle to personal emotions and perceptions (16). Language choice thus becomes crucial to writers' presentations of themselves. The francophone author is daunted by questions of cultural affiliation that challenge notions of nationhood because language forces one to choose between pre-set intra-national identities. Choosing between national languages (e.g., English and French in Louisiana or Canada, French and Flemish in Belgium, French and Creole in Haiti or the French Antilles) inevitably imbues a set of stereotypes upon the author that reflect public perception of speakers of these languages. Is the author seen as lower class because he or she writes in French? Does French imply learnedness and education? Does the choice to write in French make the author into a pariah? Marianne Bessy, in *Vasillis Alexakis: exorciser l'exil. Déplacements autofictionnels, linguistiques et spatiaux*, shows how the author confounds those who feel that literary identity must be tied to a nation-state; a Greek native who chooses to write in a language that is not his native tongue, Alexakis embodies a national « *non-appartenance* » that cannot be fully claimed by Greece or France (Bessy 20). This non-belonging, while awkward in a world of nation-states, finds an international place of belonging within *la Francophonie*, linking Alexakis with numerous other authors who have consciously chosen to write in French despite being offered a linguistic alternative.

While authors are often influenced by cultures other than their own, sometimes even spending large portions of their lives living in adopted societies, seldom are we tempted to attribute a "nationality" to writing that strays from the obvious birthplace of its author. Exphonic authors such as Alexakis or Samuel Beckett, however, give us legitimate cause to call

such facile assumptions into question. Born in Ireland in 1901, Beckett studied languages at Trinity College in Dublin before accepting a post as lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. After spending time in England and Ireland in the 1930s, Beckett would permanently settle in France in 1939, fighting as part of the French resistance during World War II. A postmodernist writer, he is noted for his black comedy and is considered a key figure in the Theater of the Absurd. He wrote both novels, such as the 1951 *Molloy*, and plays, most famously *En attendant Godot* in 1953.

Beckett has given classificatory nightmares to librarians for decades, who must decide where to house his multilingual materials and whether to keep them together or divide them depending on such factors as whether the language they are in represents original writing or translation. There is a sort of contained chaos in a system that produces different manifestations in different locations, with individual libraries making situation-specific choices such as shelving some French-language releases with other French material while retaining others in the English section (Chamberlain 17). One gets the sense that if indeed “our classification systems, at their most literal levels, do not know what to do with Samuel Beckett” (Chamberlain 18), it is because we do not know what to do with him ourselves. We are tempted to call him Irish; yet doing so would be quarantining Beckett to a national space he himself sought to escape. Famously preferring “France in war to Ireland at peace” to the point of volunteering for the French resistance (Fletcher and Spurling 7), the degree to which Beckett injected himself into French culture reveals how he viewed his own sense of cultural belonging, suggesting that his literary choices with respect to French were more than a mere case of a foreigner with a near-native lexical and stylistic grasp of an external language. Beckett clearly

felt himself to be partially French—or, at least, more French than Irish. Just as physically living in France had been a method of distancing himself from a culture he neither felt a part of nor enjoyed being surrounded by (hating everything from the Irish theocracy to censorship of books [Fletcher and Spurling 68]), so was his decision to express himself in French a means of separating himself from an English he found restrictive and burdensome.

Nearly a decade before he began to formally write in French, it is clear Beckett was already feeling trapped by English. In a 1937 letter to his friend Axel Kaun, Beckett famously wrote:

It is becoming more and more difficult, even senseless, for me to write in official English. And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothing-ness) behind it. Grammar and Style. To me they seem to have become as irrelevant as a Victorian bathing suit or the imperturbability of a true gentleman. (cited in McGuire 36)

The awkward formality of literary English, paralleled beautifully by the awkward formality of cultural images (i.e., the Victorian bathing suit), encapsulates Beckett's unease with the constraints of a monochromatic nationalism to which he was reluctantly tied through blood rather than desire. French, on the other hand, was much more like Beckett in nature: unpretentious and adaptable. For all the formality of an English in which "you couldn't help writing poetry . . .," French was accessible and comforting, with the right "weakening effect" to offset the writer's anxieties and help him compose his works in their purest forms, "without style" or other artificial frills (Perloff 37). In other words, French let Samuel Beckett be himself, a cultural "adulterant" that permitted the writer to tap into the most unadulterated core of his essence. Beckett's "desire to fashion 'something closest to what one really is,' with just a few

grains of sand, is undoubtedly why this Irish writer preferred French to English as the language of his plays, novels, and poetry” (Brustein). In English, where one was expected to write “with style,” the influence of canonical authors was too omnipresent and restrictive (see Perloff 36-37). French gave Beckett a voice to call his own, rather than forcing him to channel such figures as James Joyce.

Beckett’s internal linguistic struggle is echoed in exphonic writers from all over the world who have made the conscious choice to express themselves in French rather than (or in addition to) the language in which one would expect them to write. As Beckett’s adoption was a process of self-discovery with the ultimate goal of obtaining a crucial—perhaps essential—personal liberty on numerous levels, *liberté* seems to be the key concept for numerous self-styled francophone authors, and a word that keeps permeating the discourse of authors who have been asked to reflect upon their preference of French to their native tongues, from the Afghani Atiq Rahimi, who muses « Il m’était difficile - je ne sais pas pourquoi - d’aborder [les] sujets importants, tabous, dans ma langue maternelle. La langue française m’a donné la possibilité de m’exprimer avec une certaine liberté », to the Slovene Brena Svit, who finds in French « le sentiment d’une émancipation...de ne devoir rien à personne. Le français m’a apporté une liberté, une franchise . . . » (both cited in Dargent). Both of these authors allude to a linguistic oppression in the language of their birth that is reminiscent of Beckett’s struggles with the formality of English. If an author is to avoid a constant internal combat, he or she must find a stylistic means of expression that does not perpetually thwart the words and sentiments that form the basis of storytelling. After clashing with the mandatory “poetry” he saw in English, the Zen-like mental tranquility that Beckett found in the simplicity and unassuming

style of French was much the same for Léopold Senghor, who notes that in Wolof “to seek is translated by eleven words and to sing by twenty. But what, on first view, constitutes the strength of black African languages at the same time constitutes their weakness. They are “poetic languages” (cited in Kellman 37). In addition to the lexical and syntactic freedoms of a language, stylistic freedom is also achieved by liberating one’s self from influence, whether Beckett from canonical English writers or Eduardo Manet from Lorca, whom he felt unwantingly dominated his own Spanish prose (Dargent).

Hindrance of style is often brought on by an inability to separate culture and language, as internal frustration and anger at the nation behind a language can thwart the creative process and launch an uncomfortable writer’s block. French provides the possibility of a literary escapism that allows one to shed the yoke of cultural expectations that have been forcibly indoctrinated to the point of resentment during the most formative years of one’s existence. It allows an author to engage in a dialogue more in line with his or her own personality than with the zeitgeist of his or her birth nation. The Japanese Aki Shimazaki, for example, found in French « la clarté et la précision, ce qui est à l'opposé de la mentalité japonaise », while the Danish Pia Petersen admits « Je ne me suis jamais accordée à l'esprit du Nord. J'aime le débat, j'aime discourir. Je me suis sentie d'emblée à l'aise avec le français. Avant même de la parler, j'avais cette image d'une langue avec laquelle on peut développer ses idées. On peut toujours plier un mot dans un sens ou un autre » (both cited in Dargent).

Languages are inherently connotative, and words can be laden with cultural specificities that are not always desirable. In Arabic, for example, one automatically refers to religion when

expressing the hope that an event occur in the future (“In Shah Allah”), while people wishing to describe a roughshod construction in English seemingly can choose among several words that reveal historic prejudices against various ethnic groups. “Jerry-rig,” for example, was an epithet against Germans; “jimmy-rig” was directed at the Japanese; an alternative version also slanders African-Americans. Escaping the cultural constraints that burden languages is paramount to authors who search for a means of expressing themselves in a manner that allows their individuality and creativity to blossom. Although the nation, language, and religion all differ, it is striking how clearly one can hear Beckett’s complaints of hegemonic theocracy and censorship in the words of modern Lebanese author Amin Malouf when he proclaims « Je n’ai donc pas en arabe la liberté nécessaire au romancier. Quand j’écris en arabe, qui n’est pas encore une langue totalement sécularisée, je sens comme un poids sur ma main. Je perçois comme le contrôle d’une autorité présente et qui n’a rien à voir avec l’imaginaire » (cited in Solon 73).

In the case of Maryse Condé, the author is socially “expected” to write in Creole, yet she herself conceives of her Caribbean identity differently. Born in Guadeloupe in 1937, Conde is one of the most notable French Antillean authors, whose works include *Ségu* (1987) and *Traversée de la Mangrove* (1995). While denying the proposition of fellow Antillais Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant suggesting that she began to question her relationship with French in *Traversée de la Mangrove*, she explains her relationship to French as being one of veracity—she writes in the language she and her community grew up speaking—and of social perception, noting that the debate on whether writing in French makes one less West Indian is “endless” (Pfaff 76).

Condé is far from the only author who feels ostracized for choosing to write in a language other than the one in which she is socially expected to write. Anna Moï stresses how being a francophone writer implies a certain liberty, empowering the author to forge her own image rather than succumb to those prescribed by national and regional identities. French is a reflection of the complexity of this hexilingual author, who claims « Les strates de ma langue invisible sont multiples. On décomptera: les langues que je connais, les cultures qui ont dessiné le paysage, les aléas de mon destin. Des couches légères et d'autres plus pesants que je mis des années à décaper et à polir » (Moï 49). Moï chooses French because it allows her the flexibility to show the world a painting of the way she conceives of herself. Vietnamese, by contrast, she feels is linguistically pre-inscribed with oppressive restriction, both grammatically and culturally. Citing the concept of the *nom de lait* in which a couple chooses a name for a child who has not yet been conceived far in advance of said child's birth, French offers Moï an identity more in tune with her personal values than does an identity bound up in the nation-state (Moï 44). The inherent linguistic conflict within francophone nations has created an international prototype for the francophone author: the rebel. Whether it is Moï using French to unleash her « sauvage » side (Moï 43) or the uninhibited and instinctual behavior of Cajun author Jean Arceneaux's francophone "wolf" in *Suite du loup*, language allows francophone authors a means of acting out against an immutably rigid society.

1.3.2 Pseudonymy as a Tool of Linguistic and Cultural Navigation

Perhaps no linguistic choice has helped such francophone authors as Moï and Arceneaux to realize their rebellious personal expression as much as the usage of pseudonyms.

Historically, authors and other public figures throughout the world have used pseudonyms for a

variety of reasons, from maintaining anonymity to creating a moniker that is easier to pronounce than one's given name. In analyzing examples from the francophone world, one sees a distinct trend of authors attempting to gain ownership of their linguistic and cultural identities—that is to say, to control the identities they choose for themselves—as a means of combatting identities with which they have been saddled. At its most basic, this phenomenon is reflected in the sound or look of the chosen name itself, made relevant within the context of a given linguistic or cultural backdrop. In the case of Jean Arceneaux, the choice of pseudonym is a reaffirmation of Cajun-ness amidst a diverse American population. It may seem curious that an author whose given name (Barry Jean Ancelet) alludes to a francophone heritage would feel the need to choose a supplementary identity, but there is little doubt that the *nom de plume* conveys much more astutely the identity that Ancelet is hoping to forge: by dropping the English “Barry,” he is making a statement about his linguistic affiliation, while the “-eaux,” a spelling perceived to be quintessentially Cajun, reinforces the idea that the author is not merely francophone, but inherently rooted in the Louisiana about which he writes.⁶ Not surprisingly, while numerous English-language academic papers have been published under the name Barry Jean Ancelet, Jean Arceneaux writes exclusively in French. According to Becky Brown (84), Arceneaux is but one example among many, as in Louisiana “many creative writers have American names, but by the use of French pen names they assume a more francophone identity under which to write. Not surprisingly, writers who assume pen names unanimously choose full French names.” It allows them to connect with a side of themselves that they have

⁶ Use of the “eaux” spelling for the phonetic sound “o” is a common technique among people and organizations who wish to highlight their ties to the state of Louisiana, from Louisiana State University paraphernalia that reads “Geaux Tigers,” to bumper stickers displayed by individuals who claim to be “Preaux-life.”

historically been encouraged to hide, particularly in a social climate in which « la generation modernisée exprime un desir d'avoir des noms américains pour leurs enfants qui n'auront pas honte quand ils vont se présenter a l'école » (Reed 31).

Arceneaux, then, is the type of name that asserts narrative authority through presumed authenticity, an assurance to the reader that the author is a cultural insider, even—perhaps especially—in cases where he or she is not. Such could be said of the Lithuanian Roman Kacew, who immigrated to France in 1928 at age 14 with dreams of becoming a writer. It was his mother who suggested the need for narrative authority, informing him: “A great French writer cannot have a Russian name. If you were a virtuoso violinist, it would be great, but, for a titan of French literature, it just won’t do” (Schwartz). Thus was born Romain Gary, a Gallicized creation born of a perceived need to conform to national stereotypes, yet in an odd and ironic way rebelling against the same structure that created these stereotypes. While working as consul general of France in Los Angeles he would go on to become one of France’s most prolific authors. He remains the only figure to win the Prix Goncourt twice, once under the name Romain Gary for *Les racines du ciel* (1956), and once under the pseudonym Émile Ajar for *La vie devant soi* (1975). Gary died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1980.

For a foreigner to become a national paragon as Gary did is nothing short of remarkable, particularly in a nation that is as protective of its linguistic and cultural identity as France is. Gary’s name helped him essentially storm his way through a seemingly impenetrable barrier of the French literary pantheon, usurping a spot for which he had no birthright. Ironically, Gary would use the same technique with another pseudonym, Emile Ajar, in order to escape the

claustrophobic confines of the stagnant and judgmental literary arena he had forced his way into. Feeling pigeonholed by the French elite, Gary found liberation in Ajar, a Semitic name that was “neither definitely Jewish nor definitely Arab” (Schwartz); yet remained definitively exotic, adding mystery and excitement to both his personal identity and the work he would create.

Gary’s Gallicized name serves the double function of trying to blend into one cultural paradigm while simultaneously freeing itself of another. In a conflicted and biased world, the disassociation can be just as important as the association. As an example, one can turn to Guillaume Apollinaire, who gladly shed his given name of Kostrowitzki as a means of shedding his past as he intentionally continued to keep his origins publicly clouded throughout his life (Merriam-Webster 60). While Apollinaire had more than one reason to shroud his past—his father was unknown to him, leaving him with the stigma of illegitimacy—one cannot help but remark that the name he chose, which was that of his paternal grandfather, sounded much more French than the name with which he grew up. Yet this phenomenon does not always unfold in the direction of Gallicization; on the contrary, it is important to realize that in the francophone world, the kindred spirits of such authors as Arceneaux, Gary, and Apollinaire are also those who use pseudonyms to seem less French. Perhaps no ground is more fertile in this respect than the Martinican music industry, in which numerous poets-cum-musicians adopted monikers that emphasized their *créolité* by de-emphasizing their *francité*. Examining the names in Brenda Berrian’s *Awakening Spaces: French Caribbean Popular Song, Music, and Culture*, one sees this trend occur over and over. Vénus Nilècame became Mona (114); Eric Lugiery became Pôglo (127); Jean-Marc Monnerville became Kali (131). These pseudonyms all look and sound much less French than their birth name counterparts, drawing instead on an

African-inspired aesthetic that serves both to cement the poets within the Afro-Caribbean community while drawing a border between themselves and Europe, a clue that these names are more than mere stage names for performing artists. They are true pseudonyms that reflect the poets' self-conception, devices that contribute to a larger literary portrait that emphasizes a kind of linguistic and cultural Creole zeitgeist. Just as these artists draw upon the Creole language in their writing to "establish a distance between them (insiders) and the French recording industry (outsiders)" (Berrian 145), so do they draw upon names imbued with personal meaning and cultural reference to achieve the same effect, even when some of the names ironically have foreign origins. Pôglo is not a Creole word but an Ethiopian one, chosen after the artist's conversion to Rastafarianism, and yet draws upon a sentiment that the predominantly Jamaican religion shares with the people of the French Antilles—that of the importance of African roots in a Caribbean context. Pôglo clearly saw the values of his adopted religion as embedded in the nation in which he was born, and the shaping of his identity as an author revolved around finding a Creole expression of his Rastafarian ideals, creating a style and a sound centered around the notion of *Pa Moli*, a popular Creole phrase meaning "Don't give up the fight" (Berrian 127). This Marley-esque literary philosophy was like Pôglo's name itself, which in turn is like the whole of the Antilles—forged from disparate raw materials to become distinctly Creole.

The same could be said of Kali, the aesthetic creation of Jean-Marc Monnerville, who drew his inspiration from the Italian cartoon *Calimero* ("Kali"). While the distinctly non-European orthography is one indication of Kali's desire to create a markedly Martinican identity, it becomes even more clear upon analysis of the original cartoon. In its run as an

animated series, Calimero's identity revolves around being the only black chicken in a family of yellow ones, an outcast and yet, at the same time, a beautifully unique individual—a seemingly ideal representation of the *départements d'outre-mer*. Even more telling was Calimero's conception prior to the animated series, as an advertisement for an Italian Soap manufacturer. The original ad depicted Calimero being treated as, if you will, the black sheep of the family due to his coloration after falling in a pile of mud; he wanders around scaring mice with his appearance and is rejected by his own mother because he is not white like her other children.⁷ It is only after being washed with soap that Calimero becomes white again, thus regaining social acceptance. By choosing this pariah as the inspiration for his own literary/musical identity, Kali is making a statement worthy of the *négritude* poets that came before him. He is, in essence, refusing to be whitewashed by French culture, refusing to be complacent at the hands of a nation that is to Kali, as it is to Pôglo, the Babylon of lore (Berrian 131, 145).

Ultimately, if the language one uses is fundamental in defining who one is, and names are the cornerstone of identity, then the language of one's name becomes exceptionally important. This is especially true of authors, as their voices represent a collective. By extension, to a certain degree at least, in a conflicted sociolinguistic space their name becomes the name of the group for whom they speak. Of the Martinican musician-poets, it was Eugène Mona who perhaps best understood this. Obsessed with Creole identity (Cyrille, "Popular Music" 77-79), he saw himself as an extension of Martinique itself, a sort of "monanation" (Berrian 114), a sentiment with which the populace largely agreed. As Dominique Cyrille puts it, borrowing a turn of phrase from Édouard Glissant's *Discours Antillais*, Mona's songs were a

⁷ Available for viewing as *Calimero pulcino discriminato* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlM--m-AELY>.

space where people could “name themselves Martinican” (Cyrille, “Popular Music” 80), because “Martinicans of all classes felt that Mona's songs echoed their own lives.” The author’s words were the people’s words in more ways than one: as Cyrille explains, not only did Mona help them shed European values and discover their own sense of what it is to be Afro-Caribbean (Cyrille, “Imagining” 148), but the words themselves belonged to everyone, for “in the Martinican tradition, once performed, songs are no longer considered their owner's exclusive property. Rather, they become new addends in the pool of available melodies, rhythms, and popular expressions” (Cyrille, “Imagining” 157).

As the appointed individual incarnation of this collective *créolité*, Mona’s language needed to be the language of the people, not only in terms of the language he used to express ideas (like the island, a syncretic blend of French and Creole), but even the language of what he was to be called by himself and others. To be stuck with the name *Vénus*, a goddess of ancient Rome, is to be unwillingly affiliated with a culture that is not merely foreign, but could even be seen to represent European imperialism. That Mona’s name was chosen rather than bestowed is what empowered and liberated him, helping him rise above the burdens that beleaguered so many others of African descent. He alludes to this notion in “*Bois brillé*.” “I hear and wait for what history bequeaths us in the archives . . ./Otis was burnt wood/He had a white name/Louis was burnt wood/He had a white name/Luther King was burnt wood/He had a white name” (translation by Berrian 118). The figures to which he refers—Otis Redding, Louis Armstrong, Martin Luther King—were all African-Americans who struggled with discrimination in the decades prior to Mona’s ascent, each having to scrap and scrape for their place in history.

Mona would etch his own place possessing something those artists did not: a name that was entirely his own.

Eugène Mona provides an excellent launching point for an examination of another way in which pseudonyms allow francophone authors to negotiate spaces of sociolinguistic conflict. While authors across borders find themselves actively forced to choose sides with respect to linguistic and cultural expectations (whether to meet or to defy them), this process can prove restrictive and limiting. Particularly when faced with a polydimensional linguistic and cultural environment, authors across the francophone world find in themselves a certain internal multiplicity. Pseudonyms, then, become a tool that helps quench the universal desire to gain control over this multiplicity. In the case of Mona, being the voice of a nation instilled in him a fractured sense of self: on the one hand, he was an individual human being with a personal consciousness, while on the other he was all Martinican people, even an extension of “the cosmic universe” (Berrian 114), and in many ways simply a vessel for the voice of others. As a result, the name Mona became almost an abstract that, while a part of him as a person, was also separate from him. In private quarters with familiar individuals, for example, Mona would refer to himself in the first person; yet in public interviews, he would always insist on referring to himself in the third person singular (Berrian 115). It was almost as if there was a Vénus Nilècame still trapped in the same container that housed Eugène Mona, an out-of-the-spotlight personality to counterbalance the in-the-spotlight one.

Keeping one’s multiple components in check can be especially difficult for multilingual individuals. Having more than one set of vocabulary by which to express oneself means being

in touch with more than one conception of the world (and, potentially, of self). Add to that the inherent cultural implications of separate languages—that, unless one is willing to forgo a part of oneself, one must maintain connections to multiple sets of roots, values, and cultural mindsets—and one could easily become internally torn. Pseudonymy becomes a means of managing these components in a way that allows the author to maintain control of all of his or her voices. In the case of Anna Moï, who sees her components as layers of a unified whole (Moï 44, 49), one name manages to encompass tremendous complexity of identity: « Utilisant à la fois la sémantique du français et celle du vietnamien, elle a reconstruit une symbolique personnelle à travers son pseudonyme: Anna Moï, qui marque à la fois l’individualité en français “Moi” et qui signifie en vietnamien “tranquillité – sud – sauvage” » (Spiropoulou). However, such a harmonious linguistic blend is the exception rather than the rule. In other cases, the pseudonym mitigates the divided individual by providing an entirely new, parallel canvas on which to imprint a portion of him/herself. The new name becomes a supplementary person, complete with its own language, as well as its own cultural viewpoint. Thus, Jean Arceneaux is not merely another name for Barry Jean Ancelet, but like Eugène Mona, is his own entity, albeit one that shares a common vessel. Unlike Ancelet, Arceneaux does not write in English because he *cannot* write in English. He underwent his own birth, and his distinct personality is seen in his manner of dress; unlike Ancelet, Arceneaux traditionally reads his poetry adorned in a beret and sunglasses.⁸ The decision to dress differently is meant to reinforce the distinct identities of the authors: the more conservative and professional Ancelet

⁸ Arceneaux was born in Canada in 1978, according to the biographic information of *Je Suis Cadien*. It happened at a convention at which, not so coincidentally, Ancelet began truly to reflect on the underrepresentation of the Cajun voice as part of the established francophone literary world.

leads one life, while the wild and mysterious Arceneaux leads another. By giving Arceneaux his own wardrobe, Ancelet is able both temporarily to shroud his own presence as well as to reinforce the tangible existence of his alter ego.

In this sense, many of the pseudonyms used by francophone authors could be considered heteronyms. The literary sense of this term, in which a pseudonym is not simply a false name for the author, but rather a literary invention, a character complete with its own biography, personality, and narrative style, is typically deemed an invention of the Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa. Born in Lisbon in 1888, Pessoa spent his childhood in Durban, South Africa, only to return to Lisbon at age seventeen, where he eventually became a commercial translator and a writer of avant-garde reviews. He was an active contributor to literary journals (notably *Orpheu* and *Athena*), publishing most of his poetry in them. His first book, a collection of English poems entitled *Antonius*, was published in 1918, yet he would not publish a collection of Portuguese poems, *Mensagem*, until 1933, two years before his death.

Pessoa had more than seventy distinct heteronyms for which he crafted fictitious biographies, created scenarios in which they interacted with each other, and even went so far as to forge astrological data for them all (Zenith, "Pessoa's Heteronyms"). Pessoa famously used the device as a means of opening himself to a diversity of literary philosophies; thus, heteronym Alvaro de Campos was seen as an "avant garde" poet, whereas heteronym Ricardo Reis was a more "traditional" and "conservative" thinker who drew upon the classics (Queiroz). However, from a very early age Pessoa also felt the need to create heteronyms as a means of accessing other languages and cultures. When in adolescence he began writing in English, he

did so under a self-created alter ego, while other created identities provided a means of expressing himself in French as well (Sadlier 16). In fact, his first heteronym, created at the age of six to be a pen pal who wrote letters to Pessoa, had the very French name of “Chevalier de Pas” and quite possibly wrote in French. His most famous francophone creation, the essayist and poet Jean Seul de Méluret, had emerged by age eighteen (Zenith, “Fernando Pessoa & Co” 4). Pessoa would even create a persona, Claude Pasteur, to serve as a French “translator” of his Portuguese works (“Arquivo Pessoa”), a technique that others in the francophone world would later employ. For example, English-born Canadian author Robin Skelton, who in addition to publishing prolific volumes of poetry also founded the creative writing department at the University of Victoria, created his own alter ego in the form of a French surrealist named Georges Zuk, whose works he allegedly “translated” into English. Zuk was “everything in life Skelton was not...He was indolent where Skelton was industrious, sad where Skelton was merry: he was also lecherous with a lechery that bordered on legend” (Fraser 320).

Ultimately the relationship between Pessoa and his francophone heteronyms, just like that of Ancelet and Arceneaux, demonstrate how truly deeply linguistic conflict abides. Though from a non-francophone country, Pessoa should certainly be considered a native francophone author, having learned the language directly from his mother while still a young child (Zenith, “Fernando Pessoa & Co” 4). However, despite the fundamental presence of multiple first languages in his body and mind, there remained an internal frontier between them, one that needed “pen pals” and “translators” to be traversed. Just as in linguistically conflicted nations, there was a splintered cohabitation rather than a harmonious blending inside Pessoa. His languages, though part of the same physical entity, had different ethereal roots, tapping into

multiple mental essences that reflected entirely separate points of view. Like Arceneaux's cool, proud, liberated poet to Ancelet's conservative, professional scholar, Pessoa's different languages came from such fundamentally different places that heteronymy became the only conceivable way that they could coexist in the same vessel, the only way that one single writer could control all of them. It is a situation similar to that which Raymundus Joannes de Kremer faced. Born in Ghent in 1887, he would publish more than 1500 short stories and novels, beginning with a collection of short stories entitled *Les Contes du Whisky* in 1925. He is celebrated for fantastic and dark tales that emphasize the supernatural, and is most famous for his 1943 novel *Malpertuis*, the story of an ancient house in which a warlock has entrapped the spirits of the Greek gods inside the bodies of ordinary Belgian citizens.

Like Pessoa, de Kremer would write under an enormous variety of names, yet a few in particular rose above the rest, remaining fundamental to his core being. Though born Flemish, he first found literary expression in French, deeming it necessary to adopt a moniker that was more appropriate to his newfound voice: Jean Ray. In an interview for the 1964 Belgian film, *Jean Ray le ténébreux*, Ray proclaimed « le diable . . . essaye d'oublier son passé . . . » and so it was that his newfound persona provided a form of escapism, allowing him to leave behind the realm of his birth and cross into alternate ones, both in his life (the francophone literary world) and his work (the realm of macabre fantasy). However, while these changes might have seemed like an out-and-out transformation, there remained in fact a multiplicity within him, as his connection to his Flemish childhood proved unshakeable. At the age of 40, he found himself

imprisoned for two years under charges of embezzlement, and it was here that he first adopted the moniker of John Flanders.⁹

Although the word heteronym is not typically used in conjunction with de Kremer, it is clear that John Flanders was a different person than Jean Ray. Much as Moï and Arceneaux used their pseudonyms to unleash their *sauvage* sides, Jean Ray allowed de Kremer to tap into his inner sense of darkness and danger. On the other hand, Flanders possessed none of Ray's Edgar Allen Poe-like qualities. His literature would primarily be, in the words of Fulbright scholar and award-winning translator Edward Gauvin, "yarn after yarn of high adventure," tinged with science fiction, often written with children as a target audience (E. Gauvin). Furthermore, not only did his surname harken back to the author's origins, but he wrote exclusively in Flemish. It was as though he was looking to undo what he had strived for in becoming Jean Ray: he had sought a dark, dangerous world, a mental prison filled with corrupted innocence, yet upon being placed in the physical incarnation of his mental construction, he yearned for a return to the light, freedom, and purity of his youth. Flanders was the part of de Kremer that he would not or could not forget, no matter how much his « *ange fraternel* » the Devil wanted him to (*Jean Ray le ténébreux*). Perhaps it was out of fear of being wholly consumed by one persona that he felt the need to protect the other, for while he willingly translated his own Flemish works into French, he adamantly refused to translate Ray's books into Flemish himself, as though shielding John Flanders from the taint that might destroy all traces of him (E. Gauvin). Throughout his life, de Kremer kept Jean Ray and John

⁹ I have been unable to uncover the precise details of these charges.

Flanders securely compartmentalized within himself, retaining a mastery of both while keeping each entrenched on his own side of de Kremer's internal frontier.

The "birth" of John Flanders is proof of Antoine Volodine's claim that « Même en prison, on continue . . . à reconstruire le passé, un présent, inventer un futur . . . » (Leménager). Born in Chalon-en-Saône in 1950, Volodine studied Russian at the University of Lyon, eventually securing a post as a professor of Russian in Orléans in 1973. After fourteen years of unsuccessful attempts at publication, his first work, *La biographie de Jorian Murgrave*, was printed in 1985. His third novel, the 1987 *Rituel du mépris*, would earn him the Grand Prix de l'imaginaire, annually awarded to the best French work of science fiction. He would diverge from this genre, however, inventing his own style known as *post-exotisme*. Bleak and violent, the post-exotic world is embodied in his most celebrated work, *Des anges mineurs* (1999), which is composed of forty-nine different intersecting stories. It is the use of multiple narrators for which Volodine is most famous, as he develops numerous reoccurring heteronymic personalities throughout his stories.

Just as de Kremer kept his heteronyms compartmentalized, so does Volodine keep his various personae locked away in their own, solitary cells—literally, as they are all confined to a fictitious prison. However, like Pessoa's, they interact with each other, speaking through the walls as though Volodine were trying to get to know his entire self from all possible perspectives. And yet, that Volodine knew relatively little of Pessoa—and from a referential rather than an empirical lens before embarking on his literary adventures (Wagneur and

Lapidus 24-25) —further reinforces the notion that, for our francophone authors, heteronymy is not primarily a stylistic crutch, but a psychological one intended to navigate internal divides.

All of Volodine's heteronyms serve as narrators for various fictitious histories, all of them imaginary authors of texts belonging to the genre of *post-exotisme*. Although Volodine attempted to illustrate the tenets of this genre, marked by traumatic situations and an emphasis on the failure of revolutionary ideals, in the form of a manifesto entitled *Le post-exotisme en dix leçons, leçon onze*, it remains difficult to define. It is not a theory unto itself, yet it contains « des affirmations pseudo-théoriques » (Viart 35). *Post-exotisme* originated as a term Volodine created to categorize his own writing as a means of rejecting the categories by which the literary world wished to define his writing. Ultimately, such a motivation for creation—the refusal to acknowledge singularly bounded identities—acts as a driving force behind *post-exotisme*, which intermixes the foreign and the familiar in ways that expose the porosity of boundaries traditionally established between conceptual spaces. On the one hand, in resituating historical trends in imaginary worlds, it suggests a certain fiction to the notion of cultural specificities. Volodine's texts address « un certain nombre de motifs historiques, idéologiques, et politiques bien connus du XXe siècle, mais en les déconnectant de leur inscription géographique et politique précise » (Viart 36). Issues such as genocide and racial discrimination become instantly recognizable despite occurring in other universes: in this way, we are simultaneously estranged from the world with which we identify, while forced to admit our connections to a world outside of our own.

On the other hand, the multiplicity of narrative voices suggests an alterity within us. Volodine's heteronyms each bring a unique perspective and a unique history to the genre of *post-exotisme*, yet as individuals they are unable to garner a full understanding of truth. Locked in their cells, with no contact from the exterior world, these post-exotic writers « finissent par perdre la claire perception du monde, de son devenir et aussi d'eux-mêmes » (Majdalani, "Illusions" 104). It is only through the accumulation of voices, each one subjective, that full and rich stories begin to take shape. "In short, post-exotic texts are millions of fragments of memory harvested by the surviving prisoners from the recitals and narrations of other, dead prisoners. The survivors retain the first-person of the narrations, superimposing their own first person on them, which gives this dizzying effect of meandering narrative voices" (Majdalani, "Post-Exotic" 65). In this way, Volodine reveals the complexity of the authorial mind while denying its true internality; stories pass through the individually biased filters through which one hears or experiences them, then pass through other filters upon being told. Human experience overlaps, which leads to identities that are never truly isolated, nor truly singular. Within each person lies a range of perspectives that may even seem paradoxical or incompatible. The notion of a single narrator becomes impossible: « la problématisation de l'identité a pour conséquence, entre autres, que chaque personnage contient en lui-même son contraire, ou son autre » (Roche 12). At the same time, one's various Others are not entirely internal manifests, but are made real and distinct by the diversity of human interaction and experience: they may be divided amongst themselves yet share connections with other humans. In this way, the use of heteronymy « invite le lecteur à accepter une anomalie énonciative: Je=nous=il » (Gleize 75). It has been postulated that *post-exotisme* is a reality in

which « l'extérieur aurait cessé d'exister » (Majdalani, "Illusions" 103), a « monde qui n'a plus d'ailleurs » (Viart 54). Yet such a perspective on the exterior must change our interpretation of the interior. In the *post-exotique* mindset, what makes alterity exist nowhere is precisely because it exists everywhere: when the foreign is internalized, it is no longer foreign. At the same time, the interior is no longer a monolithic space, but must be open to multiple expressions.

Antoine Volodine (the name itself being a pseudonym for a secretive author) insists that the clandestineness in which he shrouds his life, living publicly through the lives of his characters, is not a *tactique commerciale*, but rather an expression of the utmost honesty about his relationship with his internal "community" of writers (Van Troyen), who are an inseparable part of him and yet very much their own selves. Volodine's tactic for managing his internal multiplicity was the creation of an almost "shamanic" space in which "'others' and 'self' are not necessarily different entities," and in which the author's created self-perception blends with reality (Wagneur and Lapidus 14). The simultaneous release of three books in 2010, each one written by a different heteronym, was intended to demonstrate the reality of just how distinct each persona truly is (Leménager) —to show, in essence, that there really does exist more than one writer living in Volodine's prison. In an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Volodine's heteronym Manuela Draeger emphatically asserted that the simultaneous release was absolutely not « un truc publicitaire, un gag, ou un happening. C'est une étape pour affirmer une bonne fois que plusieurs auteurs post-exotiques coexistent, et s'entendent bien »

(Leménager).¹⁰ It was—as heteronyms were for Ancelet, Pessoa, and de Kremer—an « affirmation nécessaire » (Leménager) of the need for multiple, distinct voices to express themselves through their own outlets.

However, as it is obvious that the aforementioned authors' internal divides are byproducts of the socio-linguistic dichotomies of the cultures around them, be it fractured landscapes of Louisiana and Belgium or the multilingual home environment responsible for Pessoa's first heteronymic creations, one is tempted to question whether Volodine, who though fluent in Russian does not use his heteronyms to write in it, truly belongs in this group. Do his multiple personalities actually represent an identity-based divide that is linguistic and cultural in nature? While not as superficially obvious as some other authors, there is strong evidence to suggest so. Culturally speaking, it is important to remember that Volodine has a multicultural background. While his characters may not, as he claims, reveal the events of his life, they are nevertheless fairly autobiographical (Wagneur and Lapidus 14), and in looking at their personal histories, from the well-traveled Frenchman, Elli Kronauer, to the strong-willed product of Soviet Latvia, Lutz Bassmann, one sees pieces of a single, complex ethnic identity scattered across multiple entities. Volodine refuses to publicly discuss his ethnic background because he dislikes the racist associations that accompany public perception of various ethnic terms (Wagneur and Lapidus 19). He thus uses his heteronyms to avoid being constrained by a specific, all-encompassing ethnic or national label; whereas our other authors achieve this by openly celebrating multiple national affiliations, Volodine does so by refusing to ascribe to any.

¹⁰ Each of Volodine's heteronyms gave separate interviews to the journalist, likely as a means of emphasizing their distinctness from each other.

As for the linguistic component, while Volodine may not use his personae as voices for different languages in the scientific sense of the word, they nevertheless help him navigate a fractured linguistic space inside him, transgressing borders that separate realms of distinct forms of language and expression. When he claims that he wants the world to recognize the voices behind the works of his various heteronyms, that he expects people to unequivocally understand why any given book is clearly « un Bassmann, un Draeger ou un Volodine » (Van Troyen), he is not simply referring to distinct themes or, as with Pessoa, literary philosophies behind the works. While all may write in French, all of his heteronyms have their own, nuanced language in which they express themselves using different vocabulary, different syntax, and different stylistic choices. Manuela Draeger says she expresses herself « de façon plus sensuelle, plus sentimentale, donc plus féminine que ce que fait Lutz Bassmann » (Leménager), while Bassmann, when asked what distinguishes his work from Volodine's, responds:

Peut-être suis-je plus abrupt, plus dur. Il y a plus de violence chez moi. On peut parfois voir chez Volodine la recherche de la belle page, mais pas dans mes livres ! Par ailleurs, la première scène des « Aigles puent » est reproduite à la fin. Le personnage va mourir irradié dans une ville détruite: c'est la même chose, mais décrit autrement. Voilà une technique qui m'est propre, je crois, pour éveiller chez le lecteur quelque chose de familier dans un univers qui lui est - heureusement- étranger. J'ai aussi fait un livre avec des haïkus, ce qui est complètement inhabituel dans le post-exotisme, n'a d'ailleurs pas été repris, et certainement pas par Volodine. (Leménager)

Anna Moï claims that languages such as French or Vietnamese are simply poor translations of each author's own, unique "inner" language (Moï 16). If every author possesses his/her own idiolect, then it is clear that multiple authors do indeed reside within Volodine's mental prison, and that any given body may house a plethora of voices (each with its own

language and each in need of a corresponding self-conceptualization that will enable it to be expressed).

1.3.3 Orthographic Battles

The way authors feel about a given language certainly influences the linguistic choices they make when writing, which is especially important when the language in question has a primarily oral background. The birth of an orthography is never without the pains of labor, and authors in diverse nations find themselves drawn into the same international battle: forced to pick sides and thus stand opposed to others who would steer the language they love in a direction they do not, yet often with no less desire to see the language flourish than they themselves possess. The battle is inevitable because the stakes are so high. Benedict Anderson has shown how nothing less than national self-conception is on the line, as literature can unify people through both linguistic processes (dialect-leveling) and social ones (the creation of unified thoughts as well as “national” characters) (25-26, 43-44). Consequently, an author’s use of a given word generates a powerful influence, and his or her choices entice us to call into question the relationship between this literary language and the language of the people. As Becky Brown asks of Louisiana French, “Is there a local norm? If so, what is this perceived norm? Are the poets creating a norm? Are these norms shared by the creative writers and local educators who are attempting to write grammars?” (81). The answers to these questions are not self-evident, but these same questions must be asked of the French Caribbean with respect to the Creoles spoken there. Haitian Creole, like Cajun French, is a language with only a very recent literary tradition (Schieffelin and Doucet 184; Brown 80). Like most diglossic situations, this contributes to its perception as the “low” language when compared to French

(Winford 347). Literature is a form of legitimacy, which is why debates were so intense in mid-twentieth century Haiti over whether Creole or French would be the language of literacy, and if it were to be Creole, how one should write it. Perhaps despite themselves, authors thus become voices of the promulgation of not simply a language, but an ideology, and the choices they make set the stage for contestation at the hands of their own countrymen.

Ideas and expressions aside, authors inevitably (if occasionally unwittingly) find themselves entrenched in a particular philosophical camp simply by the ways in which they approach grammar and spelling. In Haiti, for example, “the development of an orthography for vernacular literacy has been neither a neutral activity nor simply about how to mechanically reduce a spoken language to written form” (Schieffelin and Doucet 176). When literature means legitimacy, one of the principal questions becomes what kind of legitimacy are you after, and in whose eyes? The classic linguistic conflict with respect to Creoles pits etymologists against phonemicists (a term that Schieffelin and Doucet use to describe those who seek a systematic and logical spelling based on phonemes [186]), the former searching for a “historical connection to the prestige of the colonizing language” and the latter promoting an independence on the basis of “wider access to literacy and help[ing] establish the language in its own right” (Woolard, Schieffelin, and Doucet 65).

Asserting that Haitian Creole has its origins in the French language, etymologists “argue that kreyol must stay as close as possible to the French orthographic system. The reasoning that underlies this position is that French and kreyol will always coexist in Haiti . . .” (Schieffelin and Doucet 187). On the other hand, phonemicists insist on their internal grammatical and

orthographic logic, yet also demand that spelling be “easy to learn as well as completely independent from the French orthographic system” (Schieffelin and Doucet 186). For all would-be authors, a literary conflict becomes a post-colonial one, implicitly asking “Are you for or against a relationship with a past that has not always been kind to you and/or us?”

Ironically, even some of those who advocate maintaining ties to French orthography have justified their reasoning by suggesting that alternatives imply an imperialist agenda. To phonemicists who advocate the spelling *kreyol* to designate their language, usage of such letters as “k,” which does not occur in French except in borrowed words, is completely innocuous. Yet zealous etymologists look at the letter *k* and see a foreign contaminant that can only serve to undermine an independent Haitian culture. “According to the most fervent pro-etymologists, the use of [the letters k, w, and y] . . . will prevent the easy learning of French for both bilinguals and monolinguals. The most zealous pro-etymologists, who also present themselves as zealous nationalists, think that the Anglo-Saxon orthography has been imposed upon the Haitian people by imperialist powers” (Schieffelin and Doucet 190). The letter *k* has not only been accused of being part of an American plot to eliminate French in Haiti, but also, for unspecified reasons, of being a subversive tool of “disguised communists” within the Haitian community (Schieffelin and Doucet 190).

While the dialectic of etymologists and phonemicists is typically associated with Creoles, *la Francophonie* provides ample evidence that it is certainly not limited to them. Just like their Haitian counterparts, “Cajun” phonemicists are associated with American English—hence the “j”—while “Cadien” etymologists try to maintain close ties with their francophone roots,

preferring a spelling that is not only orthographically French, but alludes to their ethnic origins in Eastern Canada (*Acadie*). Those advocating the spelling “Cadjin” attempt to strike a balance between the two sides. David Barry talks of word choice in Louisiana French as “a commitment, a risk, a conflict,” in which one must choose between varieties of French (standard, Cajun, Creole) and subsequent expressions which reflect them (« je vais, je vas, mo va ») (57-58). If *je vais* is seen as the etymological choice, one that helps Cajun French maintain its ties to standard French, it should be noted that the more phonemic *je vas*—already a compromise between schools of thought (Brown 95)—can trace its origins back to a sixteenth century French in which it was considered a feature of educated speech (Mougeon 69). It is not unique to Louisiana, but present in Canadian French as well. Thus, while *je vas* may be seen as preferable for phonemic reasons, it may also offer an alternate etymological tie to that of *je vais*. Of course, Cajun French is different from Haitian Creole in that it is unquestionably a dialect of standard French and, lacking an African component, suffers no internal struggle between competing etymological forces. Nevertheless, the politics of language affiliation remain highly charged, as reasons to align the language with or dissociate it from standard French are numerous in each case. On the one hand, in a culture where for the majority of its existence the word *américain* meant “foreigner,” many people take great pride in their French origins. Because of this, many feel that “in the context of the Louisiana French community that it is most important for the orthography to be recognizable as French” (Brown 95). On the other hand, after decades of derision at the hands of speakers of standard French, francophilia is far from universal. Some people feel that the prescriptive judgments levied by some French speakers impinge on their own ability to express themselves, such as a woman who found herself “tired of being

corrected by [her] grandchildren” when she called a window a *chassis* instead of a *fenêtre* (Brown 77).

The orthographic debate is a strong rebuttal to the basic principle of *la Francophonie*, that a common French language should unite people globally. The war between phonemicists and etymologists is not one between francophones and non-francophones, but one that pits reformists against conservatives worldwide. Woolard and Schieffelin (65) remind us that even in a nation as linguistically and politically well established as France, orthographic battles rage. Based on the North American cases we have examined, one might expect citizens of France sweepingly to support the etymological cause, but this would be an unequivocally fallacious assumption. Articles from around the turn of the twentieth century illustrate that the debates between those who advocated phonetic spellings for French and those who supported the maintenance of the status quo were every bit as rancorous and ideologically saturated as those in the New World. To Albert Schinz, this “bitter and long” struggle reflected a more general conflict of two of the most fundamental values of the French republic: freedom and centralization (Schinz, “Reform” 225). “Progressivists” were not so much lashing out at the inconsistencies of the French language as at the hegemony of the *Académie française*. Journals of the late 1800s featured editorial battles between the academy on one side and figures such as Paul Meyer on the other. Meyer, who was head of the manuscript department at the Bibliothèque Nationale and founder of the *Revue Critique*, as well as being considered the leading authority on the French language of his day (“[Marie] Paul Hyacinthe Meyer”), was an example of the many activists who advocated linguistic reforms—such as the elimination of silent consonants, the streamlining of vowel spellings, the reduction of double consonants, and

the elimination of the circumflex accent—that can only be described in modern terms as distinctly phonemic (Schinz, “Simplification” 114-116). These phonemicists were by no means a simple vocal minority, as populist waves of reform gained traction in France at various points throughout the nineteenth century, and extended as far as Belgium, Switzerland, and Algeria (Schinz, “Reform” 226-227). In a language where *ai*, *ei*, *é*, *er*, *o*, *au*, *ault*, and *eaux* combine to make only two distinct vowel sounds, a battle for phonemic reform is bound to be both historic and resilient; in France it seems to be perpetual. As recently as 2009, French linguists “have produced a series of booklets calling for hundreds of everyday words to be brought closer to phonetic spelling, with double letters and silent endings excised” (“Battle Lines”). French phonemicists succeeded in convincing the *Académie* to reform the spelling of more than 2000 words in 1990, yet the opposition of etymologists is so immutable that even as late as 2010 the new orthography is « largement ignorée...Et pour cause, elle n'est quasiment pas enseignée à l'école » (Daussy).

In many ways Quebec provides a similar backdrop to France when it comes to the zeal and clout of conservative orthographers, though with a distinctly post-colonial twist. As with so many post-colonial nations, there exists a historic inferiority complex with respect to the colonizing language. One can hear in the words of the nineteenth century Quebecois poet Octave Crémazie an expression of desperation to be anything other than cheap, imitation French:

Ce qui manque au Canada, c'est d'avoir une langue à lui. Si nous parlions iroquois ou huron, notre littérature vivrait. Malheureusement, nous parlons et écrivons, d'une assez piteuse façon il est vrai, la langue de Racine et de Bossuet . . . Nous avons beau dire et

beau faire, nous ne serons toujours, du point de vue littéraire, qu'une simple colonie. (Jack 94, citing Crémazie)

Considered the father of French Canadian poetry, Crémazie spent his career extolling his Canadian identity, so much so that he became nationally revered as “the sonorous echo of his people” (“Crémazie, Octave”). Writing in Quebec has always been a struggle between those who, like Crémazie, are seeking their own laudable voice and those who, like the famous monk and Canadian author of the Quiet Revolution, Jean-Paul Desbiens (better known as Frère Untel), are desperate to prove to the world that they can master *le bon usage*. Desbiens’s most famous book, *Les Insolences du Frère Untel*, waged war against the dialectal French he so deplored in his students, lashing out against the « décomposition » of a language, perceiving in its syntax a « vice profond », and reaffirming his desire for Frenchness by admonishing his students for being proud of inventing « une nouvelle langue » (Coates 73). It was he who popularized the modern name for this dialect: *joual*. Ironically, what began as a purely pejorative term meant to mock the non-Parisian pronunciation of *cheval* soon became a mark of pride for literary authors who glorified the non-standard qualities of *joual* as a means of local expression. In essence, had Crémazie lived to spar with Untel, he would have found his *Iroquois* to wield in battle, just as Michel Tremblay did when he published *Les belles-sœurs* in 1969. This play launched a massive vogue of *joual* in theater and books, challenging the Québécois orthodoxy just as Paul Meyer had challenged the French. To be fair, “mis”-spellings were less of an offense to Untel than were the rampant “mis”-pronunciations (Coates 73), but as in Haiti, Louisiana, and France, the “Frenchness” of the orthography clearly proves a sticking point to many Canadians, as is underscored by Jacques Godbout’s decision to “frenchify” English loan

words in *D'amour, P.Q.* While Godbout generally leaves brand names such as “Kleenex” and “Chrysler” untouched, Carrol Coates, in *Le Joual comme revendication québécoise: D'Amour, P.Q. de Jacques Godbout*, alludes to a certain level of subterfuge in Godbout’s exhibition of *joual* vocabulary, citing numerous « locutions américaines orthographiées à la française » including « chaud pour 'spectacle' . . . chotte pour un 'coup' (de gin ou d'autre boisson alcoolique) . . . choute pour 'zut' ou une autre exclamation de dépit » (75). Godbout’s orthographic choice is insidiously clever: for an audience with a contingent that fears the influence of English on their speech patterns, these words belie their ethnic origins, with the real possibility of being dismissed as regional French terms by francophones in other nations. This cloaking gesture may appear to some to be one of shame, but in the context of a novel about an author’s self-discovery through language, it seems unlikely. The gesture, rather, is one of usurpation: by appropriating the words to the point of asserting the confidence and authority to change longstanding spellings, Godbout has claimed them as francophone property, displaying them as they cease to be English terms and do, in fact, become “regional French.” As Coates puts it, « C'est s'emparer de la langue du colonisateur anglo-américain et la déformer à sa guise . . . » (78)

1.4 Language Policy

1.4.1 Protectionism and National Language Charters

From the “K” in *Kreyol* to the Quebecois *choppes*, the contention over Americanized orthography alludes to a much broader issue dividing numerous francophone nations: that of linguistic protectionism. Both majority and minority languages throughout *la Francophonie* succumb to legislation and social pressure initiated by people who, perceiving a threat to their

language, encourage restrictive policies that alienate many of their fellow nationals. Purists make similar arguments worldwide while attempting to control the same sectors of public life. Fear-inducing metaphors construct an external menace to the language, putting linguistic borrowings in league with disease—the word “contamination” is used in discourses on France and Belgium (Fleischmann 841; Carbonneau 393, 398)—and military assault, as measures of “linguistic security” (Thomson, “Language” 76) are needed to help a language maintain its “defense” against lexical-grammatical attack (Carbonneau 405; Albert 1167). The latter is an easy metaphor to make to those who confound monolingualism with nationalism. It is certainly a problem that persists today, casting its shadow over administrative offices in Martinique, where David Murray holds it responsible for keeping Creole from gaining any sort of official status, proposing that “a region within French national boundaries that accepts and promotes a distinct language would create too great a crack in the wall of a house undivided” (Murray 88). However, the notion that language is synonymous with nation is an age-old philosophy, and was fundamental during the French Revolution, when Abbé Grégoire made France’s first *enquête* into its dialectal polyvalence. Grégoire, feeling the need to « anéantir [*sic*] les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française » (Higonnet 42) in the name of nationalism, led a massive linguistic purge of languages in France that he considered to be patois—around 30 in all, including Alsatian, Corsican, Basque, and Breton (Higonnet 49). Under Grégoire’s direction, speakers of patois were even declared counter-revolutionaries, and laws were enacted decreeing that “all acts, public or private, be drawn up in French” (Higonnet 42).

Grégoire’s laws read like a template for modern examples on both sides of the Atlantic. The famous Toubon law of 1994 is often held responsible for setting the stage for the modern

French protectionist atmosphere in which English is vilified and equated with tainting and/or destroying the French language (Albert 1166-1171). The economic and commercial “protections” offered under the umbrella of Toubon, however, are only one branch of a much larger “protective” arc that encompassed multiple sectors of society, a fact reflected in a series of legislative moves made in the 1960s and 1970s not only in France, but in Belgium and Quebec as well. Commissions to invent French terminology in lieu of foreign borrowings led to more aggressive laws in France, including a particularly restrictive set enacted in 1975, aimed at limiting the use of foreign languages on consumer goods, in government services, in employment contracts, and even in certain types of public discourse (Carbonneau 398-399). In 1977, Quebec drafted a language charter that, while admittedly making exceptions for semi-sovereign indigenous nations, nevertheless mandated the use of French in these same areas for the majority of its citizens. Commercial packages were to be labeled in French, clinical and social agencies were obliged to keep French records, employers were to issue instructions to employees in French, and all persons had the right to speak French in deliberative assemblies (“Charte de la langue française”). A year later, the French community in Belgium enacted a “Decree On The Defense Of the French Language” which “requires the use of French not only in documents issued and acts taken by public administrative agencies . . . but also in certain commercial areas,” as well as in employment contracts (Carbonneau 405).

It is not surprising that francophones of different nations find themselves legislated in these same fields; if linguistic inequalities reflect social and financial inequalities, then language laws would naturally seek to tighten or expand individual rights concerning money and interpersonal interactions. More remarkably, while all of these laws immediately impinge upon

the liberty of linguistic choice, their proponents feel that, in the long run, they are actually promoting liberty and equality. By requiring commercial communication to be in French, they are making public language intelligible, thus freeing the consumer to be fully informed about foreign and domestic products. In social contexts, French allegedly gives a branch of equal access to all of its citizens, working to “guarantee social solidarity while countering individualism and communitarianism” (Albert 1171) by creating a common social milieu. As Jacques Toubon himself argued, « Qui met en cause la liberté de l'expression? Pas ceux qui veulent que chacun puisse comprendre les discours tenus dans la cité et garantissent ainsi la cohésion d'une société démocratique et solidaire » (Albert 1171 citing Toubon). When, as in the case of Quebec's Official Languages Act, businesses are required to undergo “francization” programs and hire as many French speakers as possible (Thomson, “Quebec” 34), it is not seen as discriminating against speakers of foreign languages so much as creating opportunity for the general citizenry.

What protectionists do not necessarily take into account is that their stance presupposes certain conditions about who qualifies as general citizenry. In a nation like France, one can claim that native speakers of English are typically foreigners, but can the same be said for Quebec? Even if one were to dismiss the notion of Canada as a bilingual nation (as Québécois separatists often do), there are still English speakers who were born in and remain living in Quebec, yet are in essence treated as foreigners as they are not given the same privileges as francophones. English speakers who own businesses, for example, are not allowed to advertise or post signs exclusively in their own language (“Charte de la langue française”). In Belgium, any argument for the citizenry's belief in a single, unitary state is severely undermined

by the relegation of the language of primary instruction to that of the “mother tongue” of various geographic regions. In a bitterly polarized climate, some would see this as beneficial to the greater society in that it encourages assimilation of cultural identities within the region. Ethnic isolationism can certainly be divisive, and Flemish schools in the North and West assert that “no longer are the ‘Francophiles’ able to maintain a French cultural identity by sending their children to French schools in Flanders” (Stephenson 506). However, in addition to ranking individuals who speak languages other than the majority tongue of the region they live in, the overall effect is a deterioration of interregional solidarity. Rather than being seen as complementary in any way, Flemish is viewed as a “foreign” language in Wallonia, just as French is in Flanders (Van de Craen 31). This viewpoint frees the learner from any feelings of obligation towards the other state languages, a fact highlighted by challenges to the traditional system of learning Belgian languages before others. Students in both regions now see limited utility in the language of the other, and many now look at language learning in terms of global possibilities by opting for English over French/Dutch (Stephenson 507-508).

1.4.2 Monolingualism in Schools

While the most obvious schism in the aforementioned case is the one which divides the French and the Flemish, the more insidious one is the one which affects *la Francophonie* as a whole—the chasm of opinion and emotion between those who champion language policy and those who revile it. As in the Belgian case, no sector of society is more polemic than education, which has been the battleground of some of the most vicious, “Gregoirian” linguistic purges in history. Gregoire’s ideals of *anéantissement* certainly persisted well into the twentieth century, as teachers were instructed to “destroy” the Breton language (Eriksen 225). Whereas in

Belgium it is the schools that are punished for violating language laws (Carbonneau 406), in France it has historically been the students who have suffered. In Guadeloupe, schools enforced their monolingualism by creating a device called a *planchette*, which was a « losange de bois où était inscrit: "il est interdit de parler créole." On l'accrochait au cou de l'enfant qui avait enfreint le règlement » (Bebel-Gisler). The Breton and Alsatian version of the *planchette* was the « symbole » (Polard). Typically carved of wood, the *symbole* was to be passed between students who caught others speaking their maternal tongue, such that at the end of the day the student holding it was punished somehow be it with extra labor, by general mockery, or some other humiliation. The actual punishment paled in comparison to the shame instilled in generations of children, as most faced a double punishment for their schoolyard actions, aware that « une seconde punition attendait les enfants coupables de bretonner, à leur retour à la maison » (Hélias 213). Children learned to equate speaking their language with moral depravity, something that is shockingly evident in one particular list of School Rules where speaking Breton is collectively grouped with spitting on the ground (Image A, following page). The most telling sentence on this poster, however, is the final one, which reads « Souvenez-vous enfin que vous ne devez pas seulement obéir vous-mêmes à ces prescriptions, mais que vous avez encore le devoir de les faire connaître à tout le monde. » When students are instructed to police offenders, a polarized atmosphere seems inevitable, and there is supplemental social pressure on students to reject their maternal language.

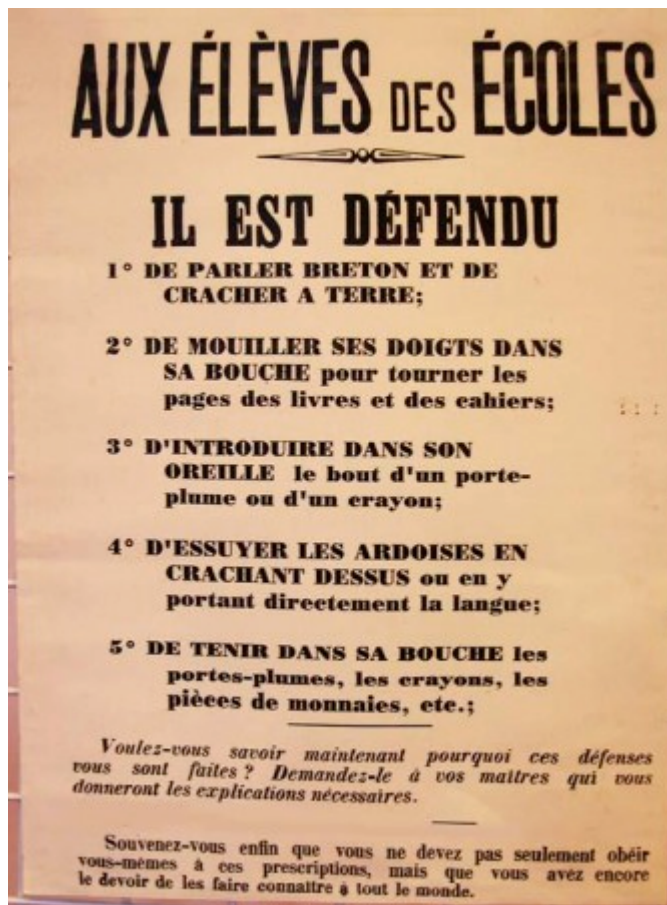


Image A. "Défense de cracher par terre et de parler breton."

While the collective trauma suffered by speakers of regional languages in France may give reason to resent the French language at home, it may also serve as a potential point of empathy with French speakers in a different country. Louisiana's francophone population faced its own Abbé Grégoire in Theodore Roosevelt, who like the post-revolutionary French believed that national unity and linguistic unity were synonymous, famously proclaiming that there was "room for but one language in this country and this is the English language, for we must assure that the crucible produces Americans and not some random dwellers in a polyglot boarding house" (Sexton 36, citing Roosevelt). Roosevelt's xenophobic message resonated with an isolationist nation, and speaking French was painted as un-American until well into the

1950s, such that generations of Cajuns and generations of Bretons, Alsatians, and other French citizens were simultaneously subjected to the same types of humiliation, shame, and punishment.

As in France, the schoolyard proved to be the most notorious battleground. Former students who lived through this experience have shared numerous tales of being mocked, beaten, and even denied bathroom privileges because they struggled to speak in English (see Sexton 37). Perhaps the most famous lines of Jean Arceneaux's "Je suis Cadien"—a simple repetition of "I will not speak French on the school grounds"—are intended to mimic a child being detained and forced to write on the chalkboard as punishment. As with the French *symbole* and Antillean *planchette*, the shame that accompanies this type of policy penetrates beyond the milieu of the school and the individual, and etches itself firmly and violently into the collective social psyche. Arceneaux's speaker missing recess is akin to a society that feels an immense sense of exclusion and sees learning English as a way to facilitate the lives of its members by assimilating to nationalist pressures. Arceneaux shows just how effective such indoctrination can be as he muses "Don't fight it, it's much easier anyway/No bilingual bills, no bilingual publicity . . . /Enseignez l'anglais aux enfants./Rendez-les toute le long,/Tout le long jusqu'aux discos,/ Jusqu'au Million Dollar Man" (Arceneaux). To shame a society into wanting to learn English effectively nullifies the need for external language legislation, and insidiously brings the society closer to cultural assimilation as well, as language is inherently accompanied by cultural values¹¹.

¹¹ In this poem, written in the 1980s, discos and the Million Dollar Man represent the American pop culture of the day. The author is trying to emphasize the totalizing manner in which an English education disrupts traditional Cajun culture.

When language instruction and cultural indoctrination are perceived to be tied inextricably, it is no wonder that resentment builds towards educational systems, or that a sense of alienation accompanies those who reject the educational mantle thrust upon them. Raphaël Confiant was educated in an era when, « dans certaines écoles [martiniquaises], on pouvait lire sur les murs “Interdit de parler créole,” on pouvait être puni par les enseignants pour usage du créole. Il y avait donc d’un côté une certaine forme de répression à l’égard du créole, et de l’autre une valorisation du français » (Confiant, cited in Desroses). Confiant highlights an important notion that feeds social division: educational language policy is never solely about one language. Battle lines are drawn as a given language is never exalted or deprecated on its own, but always done so in opposition to another one. When Antillean students were beaten, humiliated, or otherwise punished for speaking Creole in school, French seemed the natural target for their vitriol—not simply because it was the language of the institution, but because the same educators who devalued their language valued French in its place, creating a paradigmatic yin-yang imbued with moral values. French was the good to Creole’s bad; the intelligence, to Creole’s idiocy; the progress, to its primitiveness; and the ambition, to its laziness. To reject French was thus to reject everything for which education stands, even to reject the system itself, as well as the foreign ideology that created it.

There is a cultural disconnect between French and the colonial education systems in which it embedded itself that can leave children confused, deceived, disappointed, and estranged, as highlighted by Pondicherry native K. Madavane, who writes « La langue française m’a enseigné qu’il y avait quatre saisons: l’hiver, le printemps, l’été, et l’automne. En décembre j’ai toujours voulu voir et toucher les flocons de neige à travers les fenêtres de ma maison.

Quelle a été ma déception de ne voir tomber, saison après saison, que des cordes de pluie à longueur de journées » (Madavane 507). If Jean Arceneaux felt alienated by the language of the Million Dollar Man, one can only imagine the identity complexes that colonial children formed when their lesson plans taught them about « nos ancêtres les gaulois » (see, for example, Giraud, Gani, and Manesse 44). This snippet of a phrase is often cited for the ludicrous usage of the word *nos* (i.e., the ridiculousness in assuming that colonial children should identify with Gallic ancestry).

Yet, while it aptly highlights the potential for cultural disconnect from the French language (as the phrase was not only part of a history lesson, but also found « dans des endroits aussi inattendus que le résumé de leur leçon de grammaire » [Alden 835]), it is only in reading the phrase in its entirety that one can fully grasp the holier-than-thou implications that cemented the sense of ostracization that a French education engendered in so many Creole students. Consider the title character of Michel LaCrosil's *Sapotille et le Serin d'argile*, who is happy to miscarry because « [elle] ne voulai[t] pas de petite fille qui lirait dans son livre d'histoire: "Nos aïeux les Gaulois portaient 'la braie et la saie" . . . » (Cottenet-Hage and Meehan 75, citing LaCrosil). Although the author may have considered this sentence innocuous, a child of a colonial regime in which the figures of ages past had their own means of dress is bound to read “pants and skirts ARE civilization ARE French ARE NOT Creole.” Submitting to the French language in school meant submitting to the French worldview, seeing propriety and impropriety as metropolitan French people did rather than those around whom one was raised. As Cynthia Mesh puts it, “to speak French was to be French and to be French was to be human,” a notion that is expressed disturbingly literally on the cover of a textbook “still found

on the island” of Guadeloupe as of 1997, which reads “School of my country, I’m bringing my soul to you. Make this frail soul, which is weaker than the body it inhabits, a French soul, a human soul” (Mesh 25). The implications of such a phrase—that Guadeloupeans are not human without their mother nation, and must be “made” French through education—are unsettling, to say the least.

There is perhaps no more severe form of invalidation than dehumanization, and it is little wonder that such an inherent insult would spark a rebellion against a French education. To denigrate students’ language is to denigrate their culture, and to deprive them of it by authoritarian means is to forcibly rob them of the very essence of who they are. It is, in more ways than one, to rob them of their voice. With respect to the situation in Haiti, political activist Yanique Guiteau Dandin explains:

It was during school that my will to change the country took off. I felt there must be a battle . . . The issue of Creole was really taboo at the time. In school we weren’t allowed to speak Creole; we were forced to speak only French. When they told us not to speak Creole in school, it was like saying to the people: do not speak. French was only spoken by a small elite. And the whole school system perpetuated the power of that elite.

We built students’ organizations to really launch the fight. It was an act of resistance to say you weren’t going to speak French in school. Struggling inside school to incorporate Creole was a resistance against the whole social structure. (Bell 201, citing Dandin)

In the international language war, guerilla groups like Dandin’s student organizations are a natural consequence of monolingual policy. The image of the resistance fighter is never far from the minds of those who independently oppose a language backed by an educational system with a monopoly on authority. From those on the front lines like Dandin, to the underground resistance of clandestine agreements between teachers and local administration

in pre-1980s Guadeloupe—the « enseignement non-reconnu » of « expériences sauvages d’enseignants qui proposaient des cours de créole avec la tolérance des chefs d’établissement », as Confiant puts it (Desroses)—the Antilles in particular begat a generation of freedom fighters. Even after the teaching of Creole was legalized and officially sanctioned in Guadeloupe in 1982, staff who struggled to receive resources and/or legitimate pedagogical status (as many classes were relegated to extracurricular time) began to evoke images of racial and national resistance, referring to themselves as *nèg mawon*, identifying with the historic groups of runaway slaves who formed armed enclaves against the colonial government (Schnepel 124). Against a system that robs Creole speakers of their personal identity by delegitimizing the accompanying culture, groups such as the Maroons can offer a valid counter-identity to replace what was stolen.¹²

However, not all Creolophones were ready to rise up against the French educational hierarchy. As a key notion of this dissertation is that intra-national disputes may provide people across borders with common viewpoints, it would be remiss to insinuate that the battle over monolingual education boiled down to a struggle purely between colonial subjects and colonists, between Antilleans and French. On the contrary, when schools in the heavily Creolophone region of Capesterre, Guadeloupe, began discussing possible instruction in Creole as a means to school success in the 1970s, many citizens sided with the French institutions (Schnepel 123). After the French government approved the teaching of Creole, many parents were outraged; losing support from the institutions, they began to form resistance groups of

¹² Maroons were fugitive black slaves of the West Indies and Guiana in the 17th and 18th centuries and their descendants.

their own (Schnepel 128). Increasing acceptance of Creole as a legitimate language of instruction only fueled the zeal of these groups, who initiated door-to-door efforts to reinstitute French-only policies and launched media campaigns with the support of francophone newspapers, painting pro-Creolists in an extremely negative light and suggesting they wished to do away with French altogether, rather than supplement it, as was actually the case (Schnepel 142).

So why would speakers of Creole be so adamantly opposed to its promotion in schools? There are numerous answers to this question, all of which are echoed in societies across the francophone world. The first is that, while foreign minds may have instigated the myth that high prestige languages are inherently superior to low prestige varieties, domestic minds have bought into and cultivated said myth, such that social inequalities and biases are able to flourish independently of foreign opinion. Let us not forget it was a Quebecois, not a Frenchman, who wrote *Les Insolences du Frère Untel*, in which prevalent use of the regional dialect is portrayed as “an insular, anti-intellectual form of discourse” (LaCombe). Similarly, it was a man who grew up in a Cajun family, James Domangeaux, who most famously crusaded against teaching the local dialect of French in schools, arguing that Cajun French was “worse than redneck English,” calling the first attempt at a Cajun textbook a “bunch of chicken scratches,” and defending his decision to hire foreign French instructors because they spoke French “better than any damn Louisianian” (Bernard 126-127). Domangeaux’s view of Cajun French as “backwards” was shared by many speakers of the language who viewed the desire to institute it in schools as “ignorant” (Natsis 328).

It was Cajuns themselves who tenaciously held on to stereotypes about the language, such that initial support for the teaching of French in schools was actually greater in Anglophone North Louisiana than it was in Acadiana, “where the cultural and social stigma attached to the language had to be eliminated before any form of French would be welcomed in the elementary classroom” (Ancelet 349). Domangeaux was able to use the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), an organization ironically developed to support Cajun heritage and to promote French in education, as a means of combating popular desire to teach regional French. Just as many Capesterrian parents opposed the teaching of Creole because they believed that it was a degenerate form of French or an ungrammatical patois and therefore had no place in an institution designed to teach literacy and proper grammar (Schnepel 132-136), so did CODOFIL initially fuel these same stereotypes amongst Cajuns. The grammatical chastisement that occurred at the hands of so many of CODOFIL’s foreign instructors forced dialectal activists into the shadows, leaving Cajuns “apologizing that their language was ‘not the real French, just broken Cajun French,’” while “questions concerning the possibility of teaching Cajun French brought a standard response from CODOFIL spokespersons: ‘Why should we perpetuate illiteracy in the classroom by teaching Cajun French? It’s an oral language. It doesn’t have a grammar’” (Ancelet 346-347).

While the newspapers in Guadeloupe had aided the conservationists, in Louisiana the media were decidedly pro-dialect and proved an invaluable tool in helping independent activists ultimately win the educational battle. Headlines, such as “Attempt to Save Cajun Culture May Be Killing It,” brought the ironies of CODOFIL’s efforts to public light, while Domangeaux’s aforementioned remarks concerning the first attempt at a Cajun textbook gave

the media ample opportunity to depict a David- versus-Goliath struggle in which the anti-Cajun Domangeaux was the brutal repressor of Cajun culture, launching a public relations disaster (Bernard 127; Ancelet 349). Many Cajuns had grown distrustful of CODOFIL due to its stance on regional French (Brown 77), and Domangeaux felt that he could commission academic panels that would show a lack of support for the teaching of French in schools. These panels, however, ultimately concluded that CODOFIL's biggest impediment was its imposition of Parisian French (Bernard 128), revealing that—for all of the Cajuns who adhered to negative stereotypes about their language—there was also a sizeable group who believed it should be celebrated and promoted. In yet another twist of irony, CODOFIL ended up playing a major role in unifying Cajuns with respect to linguistic promotion, as its new pro-regional stance during the 1980s created a popular support base by dispelling a number of the traditional stereotypes while fostering the teaching of regional French in schools (Trépanier 163-165).

As we have seen, stereotypes about a language itself are often accompanied by stereotypes about speakers of that language, providing another reason why speakers of a language may be opposed to its instruction in school while some people feel that being denied the opportunity to learn in their native language robs them of their identity, others are all too eager to shed unwanted identities that have been thrust upon them. For Cajuns and Guadeloupeans alike, the idea persisted that speakers of their respective low-prestige languages were stupid, lazy, and revelled in ignorance and lack of education; many looked to schools to help prove that they were to be taken seriously in a world that valued intellect and ambition. Eager to be rid of the mantle of the insalubrious and unmotivated « vye neg » (Schnepel 135), and the lazy Cajun squatter sitting on the edge of progress (Hebert), many

people were simply ready to subscribe to the values of the outside world.¹³ Many Alsatians, too, used the school system to aid their desire to ascribe to mainstream French values, yet did so in order to be rid of a different sort of negative stereotype which questioned their moral character: that of Nazi sympathizer. In the years following World War II,

L'alsacien devient l'objet d'une connotation négative. Le loyalisme envers la France s'accompagne du renoncement à [*sic*] la langue maternelle. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Alsace, l'allemand standard est exclu de l'école primaire et sa place fortement limitée dans la presse. Il est enseigné au titre de langue étrangère dans les lycées. L'alsacien est proscrit de l'école, les enfants sont punis quand ils le parlent dans l'enceinte de l'école. L'alsacien est alors considéré comme un handicap scolaire et présenté comme un signe d'arriération et d'inculture. Mais il est surtout vécu comme une honte nationale à cause de son lien avec la langue allemande. ("Histoire de la Langue")

In a region that had historically caromed between two political powers that had been at war with each other off and on for over a century, belonging to the “correct” national identity was paramount to the well being of Alsatian citizens. Thus, there was a double reason to enforce a monolingual educational policy: because the French language was an integral part of the French identity, and because Alsatian happened to belong to the same linguistic family as the language of the enemy. Even the labeling of standard German as a foreign language—despite the fact that many Alsatians speak it from birth due to sheer proximity with Germany—illustrates the degree to which schoolchildren were forced to construct their public linguistic identity around their national one.

The educational system is a fantastic environment for observing the extent to which, in spite of the diversity of the specific situations of francophone nations, language policy will

¹³ The feelings of ethnohistorian James Dorman are particularly telling with respect to the stereotypes of Cajun work ethic, especially the phrase “the Acadian who overworks is indeed a rare avis.” (Dorman 61)

aggravate social divisions even if it is intended to diminish them. In an act of conciliation to English speakers, Quebec's language charter provides conditions under which certain children may be schooled in English, most of which revolve around the choice of language used in family and social contexts. As part of a charter of which the principal goal is the promotion of the French language, it is implicit that children with no ties to English-speaking or indigenous communities are intended to be schooled in French as a means of fundamentally instilling the language in them and providing students a means of social cohesion. However, as Calvin Veltman points out, "the impact of the language of instruction . . . is not the only effect of Law 101 [the Quebecois language charter] which we can measure nor is it the most important one" (Veltman 315). Veltman's study delves into the patterns of language usage in a variety of contexts among Greek and Portuguese children receiving French-only instruction in Quebec. While the Portuguese children incorporate French into their interpersonal communication (perhaps because of the Romance language connection), the Greek children speak English to each other both in and outside of school. In defiance of the intentions of the language charter, French is never more than a vehicle of communication with the teacher and does not aid the children in assimilating to francophone society. Rather, it has the opposite effect, reinforcing the English-speaking presence as individuals begin to lose their Greek language and replace it with English (see Veltman 316).

1.4.3 Cultural Saliency

One of the principal reasons that nary a francophone nation-state seems to escape the bitter polarization that accompanies language legislation is that, whether this legislation is aimed at promoting a majority language or preserving a minority one, by nature it calls

attention to the existence of a social cleavage. The attempt to regulate any language within a nation is an implicit admission of a tension between itself and another parlance, be it a language, dialect, or register of speech. The notion of protectionism is inherent in the message of any language bill. While linguistic legislation can unquestionably be beneficial in providing cultures the means to resist assimilation, it can also impede the acculturative (or even assimilative) efforts of those who wish to be truly integrated into a given society, running the risk that it might “alter community harmony and generate conflict rather than maximize cooperation” (Cartwright 490). Donald Cartwright recounts how the government’s creation of bilingual English/French districts that were meant to support minority languages were not enthusiastically received by francophones living in such Western English-speaking provinces as Manitoba. One of the primary issues concerned the perception of the group by their non-francophone neighbors; having suffered backlash for unfounded affiliation with Quebec’s separatist movement, they worried that governmental support would be “looked upon as special treatment by the federal government for an ethnic group that was neither as numerous nor more concentrated than people of Ukrainian, German or Scandinavian origin” (Cartwright 476, 490). Cultural saliency can easily be viewed negatively, particularly in light of the prejudices that revolve around sociolinguistic issues. Especially in post-colonial situations, mastery of a dominant language can be used as a method of legitimizing oneself in the eyes of the other, and masterful linguistic performance begets power and respect. Perhaps this is why David Murray’s innocent attempts to practice his “fractured Creole” with Martinican vendors were ill-received, prompting one vendor to remark “Why are you speaking to me in this way? I can speak French” (Murray 87). The desire of a social or ethnic group to control its own place in

the larger society outweighs any externally imposed conditions, even those aimed at cultural promotion or preservation.

1.5 Nations Divided

1.5.1 Language as a Marker of National Identity

The nation-state is in many ways a tenuous concept to begin with, but one of the most serious ramifications of linguistic conflict is that it has the very dangerous potential to call national solidarity into question, a potential that is inevitably realized in the case of the nations of *la Francophonie*. One of the great ironies of the O.I.F. is that while it embodies internationality in its cultural, social, and economic goals, the nation-state remains a fundamental unit of identity and an organizational keystone. Participation in the international playing field requires representation by a national voice, which may be difficult for many individuals to accept when they neither recognize the authority of the nation nor feel any personal connection to it. Cultural divides spill over into the domain of language to the point where language becomes inherently intertwined with the fundamental identity of members of other cultural groups. To Canadian author Roch Carrier's character of Vieux-Thomas in *Il n'y a pas de pays sans grandpères*, the people who are jailing his son and oppressing his own life in numerous ways are not *les Ontariens*, but rather *les Anglais*. This is because to Vieux-Thomas, as to so many Quebecois, linguistic identity and cultural identity are inseparable. The English language implies oppression at work, protestant influence, and tyrannical colonialism (Carrier, "Il n'y a pas de pays" 13, 50, 74). Vieux-Thomas's disassociation with *les Anglais* is so strong, in fact, that they may as well be a different species; the English language does not even sound

human to him (Carrier, “Il n’y a pas de pays” 66, 84). Such a deep sentiment of divisiveness creates an atmosphere of true xenophobia, for even if Vieux-Thomas is officially considered a Canadian by means of geographic inhabitance, he cannot ever accept such a designation because he cannot share an identity with English speakers. He avows as much when he refuses to acknowledge the authority of the Queen Mother, and muses, « Elle est peut-être aussi la Reine du Canada, parce qu’il y a beaucoup d’Anglais dans ce pays-là, mais elle n’est pas la Reine du pays de Québec » (Carrier, “Il n’y a pas de pays” 61).

Vieux Thomas’s separatist rhetoric is indicative of a more global sentiment felt by language groups cast in multicultural societies. Although Louisiana has officially been a part of the United States since 1804, in Cajun French the word *américain* has historically been imbued with distinct connotations of foreignness. *Les Cadiens* and *Les Américains* were fundamental opposites and mutually exclusive. Cajun poets have expressed their disconnectedness with the national cultural vein in different ways. In Cajun musician Zachary Richard’s song, “No French, No More,” the foreign invasion is felt at home, as centuries of cultural imposition at the hands of English speakers have finally taken root in South Louisiana’s culture, where “nowadays it’s getting so you can’t/Tell the Cajuns from Americans.” To Bruce Daigrepoint, however, the invisible border between French Louisiana and the United States is perceived most deeply when he is on the other side of it. In “Disco et Fais Do Do,” staying in California leaves the poet realizing « Je manque la langue Cadjin/C’est juste en anglais parmi les américains. » The title reference reinforces the parallel yet separate cultural universes in both states, as traditions and trends in music and dance show little kinship between California and Louisiana, resulting in a homesickness that many only feel when separated from a national homeland. It is similar to

what many Belgians feel when outside of their language community. Even in officially bilingual Brussels, a Flemish individual surrounded by a francophone majority still feels like “a stranger in his own capital” (Stephenson 513). While Quebecois and Cajuns who reject national affiliation represent linguistic minorities within their nations, in Belgium it is a case of “oppressed majorities” (Van de Craen 25)—groups who, despite a large degree of political, cultural, and linguistic autonomy, still feel imposed upon. Even in situations where relative self-determination can be administered, the cultural chasm felt with respect to other groups in the nation-state is so massive that adherence to a collective national model is impossible. To many Quebecois and Cajuns, *les Anglais* and *les Américains* implied the identity of an alternate group; yet, to many Walloons and Flemings, *les Belges* simply don’t exist. The sentiment that inspired the Walloon politician Jules Destrée to write in a 1912 letter to King Albert, « Il y a en Belgique, des Wallons et des Flamands; il n'y a pas de Belges » (Destrée 8), still rings true today when a the mayor of the Flemish town of Lennik asserts “I’m Flemish, not Belgian . . . There’s no loyalty to a country called Belgium. There has never been a country that has lasted so long in conditions like this” (Traynor).

“Conditions like this” implies a fervent territorialism that accompanies a linguistic segregation so profound that it has been called “apartheid” (Traynor; Stephenson 507). Much like the O.I.F. itself, the lifeblood of Belgium as a geographic entity depends on the perception of some level of multicultural unity between its constituents. However, a lack of multilingualism undermines the construction of multiculturalism, and language remains the “fundamental flaw at the core of [Belgium’s] existential crisis” (Traynor). The nation remains divided by an internal linguistic frontier that acts as a very real and tangible cultural border, not

to mention a historically entrenched one that was established around the beginning of the Middle Ages (Van de Craen 27). The existence of a de facto internal frontier is socially divisive enough, but in combination with the disruptive effects we have seen language policy to have, it is truly devastating. The combination of linguistic and cultural traits that the internal frontier divides provides justification for a system that caters to regional identity, while irreversibly fusing language policy with territoriality. This in essence creates nations within nations and redefines the rights and responsibilities of majority and minority language speakers on both sides of the border.

The Flemish even went so far as to demand that the border be fixed, as though Flanders were a nation, staging emotional protests against the 1947 language census that would have ceded some territorial control to the majority francophones in certain areas (Stephenson 505). Under Walloon language policy, Flemish speakers in the new region would lose their linguistic rights and subsequently all of the social advantages that accompany them. While Belgium was officially a trilingual country, in reality language policy and internal frontiers rendered it a mosaic of monolingual nations, and within those nations only one voice mattered. The regions-cum-nations of Belgium began to act as “collective individual[s]” (see Murray 80), depriving the minority to enrich the majority, with the idea that the health of the majority leads to the benefit of the nation. However, this fallacy assumes that territory and nation are linked. Because territory is merely a guise for linguistic affiliation and historical tradition, minority speakers across the border simply represent a portion of the nation under “foreign” control; thus, despite surface regionalization, Flanders and Wallonia are still paradoxically two nations occupying the same space. Conflict is inevitable because competing monolingual policies leave

no group unafflicted. The majority bears the scars of the minority and feels it has a right to intervene in the territorial decisions of the rival group. As Van de Craen (29) explains, "Though Flanders has adopted a territorial approach and made Dutch the official language on Flemish soil, Wallonia finds this both unjust and imperialistic because it means that French-speaking citizens living in a Dutch-speaking territory do not get any official service in their language."

Of course, if the Flemish are playing the role of withholders now, in centuries prior it was the French who suppressed the Flemish language in Flanders, going so far as to ban the presence of Dutch literature in the eighteenth century (Stephenson 503). However, even if the Walloons and Flemish were to resolve their issues towards one and other entirely, the monolingual regional policies would still exist to the detriment of the regions' German speakers. The voices of the Germanic community are lost in the decisions shaping language policies and inter-ethnic conflict. They feel that, as community president Karl Heinz-Lambert put it in 2007, "In this perpetual musical performance . . . which is the institutional evolution of Belgium, the German-speaking community is not the composer, nor conductor, nor the first violinist . . . if you want you could compare us to those who play the triangles or an instrument of that kind of importance" (Ponthus and Hass, citing Lambert). If Belgium's social reality corresponded to the multilingual, multicultural nation that it presents to the world, we would not see an entire nation-state struggling to avoid playing second (or third) fiddle.

The coexistence of multiple languages within the same administrative space is a stark and complex reality that faces not simply Belgium and individual states like it, but *la Francophonie* as a cohesive whole. In recent years the term *francopolyphonie* has been a popular way of expressing the need to embrace the linguistic diversity found within the

geographic territory of *la Francophonie*. For example, there are international colloquia to celebrate la francopolyphonie, such as a 2006 conference in Limoges, France, entitled "La francopolyphonie culturelle" (see <http://pnr.crdp-limousin.fr/Conference-La-francopolyphonie.html>); numerous authors who use the term, such as Pierre Laurette and Hans-George Ruprecht in *Poétiques et imaginaires: Francopolyphonie littéraire des Amériques*; and a blog spot (<http://self-translation.blogspot.com/2011/09/la-francopolyphonie.html>).

Belgium, however, superficially appears to conform to the *francopolyphone* philosophy in its recognition of multiple language groups and officially bilingual capital; yet, it actually undermines the concept of *francopolyphonie* by refuting implications of a solidarity that accompanies coexistence. Because the cultural universal is key to the existence of *la Francophonie*, there must be elements of interaction, harmony, and some sort of shared reality between languages. *Francopolyphonie* is not just about multiplicity, but also about mutual enrichment, where French and other languages are not just awkward bedfellows, but « langues partenaires » (Farandjis, "Philosophie" 102), and where multiple voices represent « des chansons [qui] mêlent désormais les tonalités des deux rives et des deux rêves ... pour exprimer des vérités psychologiques ou sociales complémentaires » (Farandjis, "Philosophie" 128).

Francopolyphonie is meant to be, as Bernard Cerquiglini says in *Francopolyphonie du Tout-Monde: Penser la francophonie avec Édouard Glissant*, an « ouverture aux autres langues...[C'est] valoriser, d'une part, son plurilinguisme intrinsèque » (Cerquiglini). The Belgian case would seem to call into question, however, whether multilingualism truly is intrinsic to the francophone experience. In an ideal world, Cerquiglini's assertion that « être francophone, c'est être au moins bilingue » would be true, for there is not a single francophone state that is

entirely monolingual. Cerquiglini recognizes the fact that, even in France, the presence of regional minority languages provides a fertile foundation for a polyphonic existence. However, even if all states are technically polyphonic, individuals continue to resist bilingualism by constructing internal frontiers. The actualization of *la Francophonie* would seem rather to reinforce the idea that coexistence is not necessarily connectivity, and that connectivity implies neither uniformity nor harmony—or, as Édouard Glissant asserts in juxtaposition with the unique, miscible traits of *créolité*—« La totalité n'est pas ce qu'on a dit être universel » (190).

Ironically, if Belgium were the only nation-state to challenge the francopolyphonic model, there would be one fewer potential axis of solidarity between citizens of diverse francophone nations. However, “multilingual” nation-states that promote fractured mosaics of monolingualism are clearly the rule rather than the exception when it comes to *la Francophonie*. While the “English only” histories of Canada and the United States are well documented, Albert Breton (662) also notes:

For the francophones of North America - whether living in Quebec, on the banks of the Red River in Manitoba, in the New England States, or on the Bayous of Louisiana - language policies have been policies designed to promote the use of the French language in an environment which has been hostile to that language and is growing increasingly so. They have been policies tending to insist on French monolingualism.

In spite of good intentions (and many feel, significantly positive societal effects), tactics of cultural promotion such as immersion schools, the exclusive hiring of native francophone educators (such as CODOFIL does), or laws that fine businesses for not prioritizing French in the workplace (see Ossipov 201), advertently and inadvertently seek to exclude English and deny it the privileges that come with linguistic status. The same nation-as-collective-individual

phenomenon that we have examined in Belgium can apply with equal validity to regional promotions of minority languages; the ever-present spirit of protectionism confronts a perceived external menace to the language, and individual rights of members of the majority group “become a threat to the common good” (Paulston 80).

Monolingual policies, in turn, breed societies in which linguistic barriers help to distance groups of people inhabiting the same space. French monolingualism was rampant in nineteenth century Southwestern Louisiana (Sexton 24), yet it was the fervent monolingualism of English speakers that forced francophones eventually to abandon their own monolingualism in hopes of social and financial betterment. Had English speakers felt any sort of shared national identity with francophones, they would undoubtedly have exerted greater effort to facilitate the lives of Cajuns and Creoles for the betterment of the community as a whole. However, the vitriolic English-only policies enforced well into the twentieth century made abundantly clear that they were their own, monolingual nation. Meanwhile, it is evident that francophones felt no more national solidarity towards English speakers than had been extended to them, and that, just as with the English-speaking Americans, linguistic and national identities were inextricably tied as well. Faced with the prospect of the influence of English slowly rendering Louisiana French obsolete in “*La langue française en Louisiane*,” poet Charles Testut issues a call to arms to the francophone population that sings like a national anthem, crying “*Luttons!*” Throughout the poem, Testut links the language to the most fundamental building blocks of a nation: family (« Verbe sacré de nos familles/Elle chante aux petits enfants »), civilization (« Car elle est le tocsin des peuples qu’on opprime/De la science le flambeau »), and history (« Legs sacré de la vieille France/Tu fus le chant de nos berceaux »).

Whether or not there continues to exist a place called Louisiana in the United States, Testut makes it clear that his nation will cease to exist when his language ceases to exist in Louisiana, proclaiming “La Patrie, en danger . . .” (Testut).

Similarly, in Canada, linguistic issues have been underscoring national issues for centuries, and threats to language are seen as threats to the country. To many Quebecois, the mere presence of English is a national imposition that harkens back to a war between nations in which the French loss to the English signified the loss of the ability to choose a national identity for francophones in what is now Eastern Canada. To Roch Carrier, « Chaque mot français que tu trouves dans la langue anglaise et chaque mot anglais que tu trouves dans la langue française, c’est la cicatrice d’un combat » (Carrier, “Il n’y a pas de pays” 54). His novels are rife with contemporary anglophone-francophone conflicts that allude to the military actions of a bygone era. For example, in *La Guerre, Yes Sir!*, the Quebecois townspeople are reluctant to quarter a band of disruptive and boisterous English-speaking soldiers. In *Il n’y a pas de pays sans grand-pères*, English speakers come and “steal the lake” at which the protagonist Vieux-Thomas had fished since childhood, shooting at his canoe to prevent his “trespassing” (Carrier, “Il n’y a pas de pays” 46-49). Symbolic of a linguistically divided society, these impositions with authority are inevitably accompanied by a situational thwarting of bilingualism: the English-speaking soldiers’ pathetic attempts to speak French underscore the lack of importance this language carries for them (Carrier, “La guerre” 27-28), while Vieux Thomas fondly recalls a time in Europe when the pressure to speak a language other than your own was tilted in favor of francophones, rather than against them—then it was the English speakers who « ont dû passer

une loi special pour rendre leur langue obligatoire dans l'île [de l'Angleterre] et sur les bateaux » (Carrier, "Il n'y a pas de pays" 54).

Carrier's examples mirror a reality in which strides toward bilingualism are often sabotaged by feelings of national resentment. Despite the fact that the official, governmental bilingualism which prevailed in Canada's Northwest in the nineteenth century appears to have been supported by speakers of both languages in the area (Aunger 460), the national government in Ottawa felt compelled to meddle in provincial policy by repealing the rights of francophone citizens to linguistic representation and support in government, and thus imposing an end to official bilingualism in 1893. While those who demanded to know what harm the presence of French presented were offered tales of fiscal inefficiency in the printing of unused French language documents (Aunger 467-472), it was clear that nationalism was a driving force in the vote. Representatives felt that French was a "foreign language" in "an English country" (Aunger 454) and that there would never be "a true patriotic feeling in the country until there was one language" (Aunger 477). Institutional bilingualism was seen as "a system which prevents national unity, encourages [ethnic] strife, promotes national disintegration and is a standing menace to the integrity of British institutions and the permanence of British power" in North America (Aunger 480). To conservative politicians of the day such as D'Alton McCarthy, nothing less than total assimilation of the French-speaking populace was acceptable; the sooner French Canadians were turned into British ones, the fewer problems would linger to disrupt the state and society (Romney 247). As a member of parliament, McCarthy worked tirelessly to enact legislation that removed the status of French as an official language of Manitoba, abolishing the language in all publicly funded capacities.

1.5.2 Language as a Tool of Separatism

Although modern Canadian parliaments may have discarded most of the xenophobia of the late nineteenth century, there remains a reticence among English speakers to sacrifice linguistic influence on a national level; although politicians may support bilingualism, they are nevertheless hesitant to collaborate with francophones in ways that unconditionally promote the “yield” of spoken French (Breton 667). While no official restrictions limit the role or influence of French or francophones in executive government, there remains a de facto linguistic imbalance, as legal equality has not prevented English from dominating parliament and public service, effectively “discourag[ing] many French Canadians from identifying with Canada as a whole” (Thomson, “Language” 73). If the “one nation, one language” rhetoric of the 1890s has largely disappeared from the Anglophone political discourse, it has ostensibly resurfaced in the francophone one. At the same time that Ontario was enacting measures to promote bilingualism in the latter half of the twentieth century, Quebec was passing a multitude of monolingually-motivated legislation meant to diminish anglicizing elements within the province. Even before the victory of the separatist Parti Québécois, “many federalists in Ottawa, English speakers and francophones, who had dedicated their efforts to the policy of two official languages for Canada felt betrayed by the move toward one official language in Quebec” (Cartwright 483). With the Parti Québécois in power, however, it was not simply the promotion of French but the end of bilingualism that became platform for a group of individuals who espoused sentiments remarkably reminiscent of those that the Anglophone politicians had exuded in the Northwest generations ago: Québécois national identity could only be fully realized through a completely monolingual Quebec in which French was “a

fundamental part of daily life, the official language and the common language of Quebecers," a goal with which "'the federal government's form of bilingualism' is incompatible . . . and must be rejected" (Thomson, "Language" 77).

With language as a focal point of national inclusion and/or exclusion, one's linguistic attitudes and choices may—fairly or unfairly—reflect one's patriotic allegiance in the eyes of others. As much as language has historically been used as a determiner of mainstream national identity, it has been equally adept as a rallying point for counternationalisms. Depending on one's perspective, language can be viewed as a tool of nation-destroying as easily as one of nation-building. The threat of separatism varies in degree according to nation, yet remains present on both sides of the Atlantic, energizing its followers by appealing to linguistic identity, and championing linguistic disparity as a justificatory means of exacerbating political divergence. While these movements may differ in terms of their relative degrees of public activism, political influence, social disruption, and ideological doctrines, they mirror each other in their incorporation of linguistic agendas into their overall mission.

While Martinique is home to a variety of divergent political groups in favor of political autonomy, the common thread is a general insistence upon an "antilleanization" of numerous aspects of the island's culture, including language. Groups like the *Mouvement Indépendantiste Martiniquais* (M.I.M.) feel that France "dominates" the Antilles culturally (Miles 73), and the most salient way to demonstrate an independent will is to reject what the dominator embraces (veneration of the French language), and embrace what it rejects (a preference for Creole as the vehicular language of all aspects of society). When it comes to widening social cleavage, Martinican separatists redouble the efforts of French conservatives who fear that promotion of

local culture and language is a gateway to secession. If the metropolitan French socialists of the 1980s worked hard to placate social tension by seeking to squelch the predominant notion that “preferring to speak Creole smacked of unpatriotic, i.e. anti-French, behavior” (Miles 71), separatists ensure that the tension continues by reaffirming and perpetuating the idea with their own unique twist: the belief that being “unpatriotic” is not shameful, but rather admirable. There is a surprising convergence linking both extremes of the nationalist spectrum; to be a moderate in support of multilingualism and national cooperation means facing assault from both sides, ironically being viewed as traitorous in much the same manner from French advocates as from those who defend Creole despite their extreme positions vis-à-vis each other.

A similar dynamic has existed in Brittany, where historically “the Breton language has been viewed by French nationalists as a thorn in the side of the French state's unity, and Breton nationalists, in turn, view their lack of a unified linguistic front as a stumbling block in efforts to fight what they sometimes call ‘cultural genocide’ by the French state” (Kuter 19). Although there has been much awareness and promotion of language rights in recent years, there has been a historic mistrust between the nationalist extremes of both languages in the province. French and Breton protectionists alike have pitted the languages in competition: French nationalists have viewed Breton as a threat to the core of a federalist culture, and Breton nationalists are counting on exactly that. In the extremes of each community there is an antagonism that provokes an atmosphere of linguistic survival of the fittest, widening an already precipitous cultural rift by portraying each language as a direct threat to the other. The decades of quasi-draconian efforts by the French to suppress the Breton language have instilled

a fear in a segment of Bretons that outright war has been declared on their language, so much so that “some have even suggested that an emphasis on division within the Breton language, and between [French] and Breton speakers in particular, has been encouraged by infiltrators within language organizations in Brittany” (Kuter 19).

Fear is a looming threat that seems to accompany every secessionist movement, no matter its intention or realization; it is a tactic of societal division to which people throughout *la Francophonie* can relate. In addition to general fear of national unity, people across *la Francophonie* confront the specter of violence that accompanies separatism. In Brittany, nationalist bombings have been frequent during the twentieth century, from groups like Gwenn Ha Du in the 1930s to the McDonald’s bombings of recent decades. These acts are often said to be motivated by a cultural protectionism that includes defense of the Breton language (see Lichfield). Throughout the French Caribbean, a similar backdrop of separatist bombings have instilled fear in the people:

Bombings, shootings and kidnappings have long been endemic to the Guadeloupean political scene, no matter how much condemned by the general populace. Since 1983 alone, Guadeloupe has been the site of over 50 bomb explosions or attempts, which resulted in at least 25 wounded and one fatality. The Caribbean Revolutionary Army (ARC), successor to the GLA or Armed Liberation Group, claimed responsibility for these actions. What is significant is the recent escalation of bombings in Martinique, which hitherto had suffered mostly from an excess of verbal violence. In May 1983 a series of explosions took place simultaneously in Guadeloupe, Guiana, and Paris, and was accompanied by 5 similar blasts in Martinique, which included offices of Air France and Renault. Later that year, in October 1983, following the Grenadian invasion, the ARC bombed the United States Consulate in Fort-de- France, and, in December, a television relay station and the Court of Appeals. In April 1984 the ARC also took responsibility for bombing a shopping center, golf course, and gendarmerie post. (Miles 74)

In Martinique, the M.I.M. gained notoriety for receiving funding from communist nations such as Cuba and the U.S.S.R. in the 1980s (Schmid and Jongman 616). Throughout the decades that followed, violent separatist activism remained strong in not only the island territories, but in French Guiana as well (Werane 408). Even the so-called silent revolution was interrupted by the shrieks and explosions of separatist terrorism, with the Front de Libération du Québec alone accounting for more than 200 bomb attacks between 1964-1969. These attacks were not only directed at human targets, but at linguistic ones as well, as the group sought “an end to English-language colonial domination” (Schmid and Jongman 518).

The threat of nationalist violence lingers in the Belgian consciousness as well, although it is of a slightly different ilk, as recent attacks have not targeted Walloons, but rather focused on immigrants, especially Muslims. In 2006, for example, a Belgian gunman killed a woman from Mali and wounded a Turkish woman in an act of racially motivated violence (“Killing Leaves Belgium Concerned about Rise of Racist Violence”). More recently, three members of the Vlaams Belang assaulted a group of Muslim middle school students at a halal barbecue, shoving pork sausages down their throats (“Vlaams Belangers . . .”). While mainstream conservatives may openly condemn such violence, the presence of the extremist threat nevertheless breeds social division and mistrust as the political motivation of the extremists become linked to the aspirations of a separatist and avowedly nationalist party. The Manifesto of the right-wing Vlaams Belang is as unequivocal in its protectionist support of the Flemish language as it is in its rejection of multiculturalism and its staunch attitudes towards immigration, stating in no uncertain terms that “It must be made clear to aliens and immigrants in Flanders that they are expected to comply with our laws, and also to adapt to our values and

morality, to our habits and to important traditional principles of European civilization . . . ”

(“Mission Statement”). Social tensions have been aggravated by a political move within the party away from pure Flemish nationalism and toward “racism and right-wing extremism” in the mold of such French nationalists as Jean Marie Le Pen (Betz 669), with socially divisive rhetoric aimed at Muslims and other immigrants. Ironically, the rhetoric espoused by party leaders and echoed by its members reveals that it is a fear of violence that motivates their actions as well—violence at the hands of anti-Western Islamic fanatics as well as violence from Arab immigrant “hooligans.” The far right is gaining momentum “largely on the strength of anti-immigration feelings sharpened to a fear of Islam. That fear is fed by threats of terrorism, rising crime rates among Muslim youth and mounting cultural clashes” with Islamic communities (C. Smith). Although the attention may be focused away from Walloons, the driving force behind the party remains a precise form of divisive and exclusive nationalism, one bent on retaining a purist image of an ethnically motivated nation, unwilling to share cultural space, and citing fears of violence of their own, prompting party leader Filip Dewinter to remark:

Given that all of these immigrants have a dual nationality, it is perfectly possible to revoke their Belgian nationality and expel them A minority of Muslim immigrants benefits from the situation of lighting the fuse to the powder keg here as well. We must dare to show who the boss is on the street, not the Osama Bin Laden nominees, but our own government. The Islamic immigrant hooligans of today are the terrorists of tomorrow. (Bodissey)

CHAPTER TWO: RELIGION

2.1 Introduction

Religion has been a point of schism both between and within nations for far longer than *la Francophonie* has been around, yet it remains a pertinent issue within the francophone context even today. Mass confrontation between Islam and Christianity affects the national current of francophone societies on multiple continents, while religious doctrine puts certain Arab nations at odds with francophone universals. « Dans divers pays musulmans, l'intégrisme dresse toujours un barrage devant toute manifestation de la différence culturelle et linguistique, rejette l'Etat laïque, ferme la porte à La Francophonie » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 146). Fractures along traditional religious lines can easily run counter to nationalist sentiment, just as they can run concurrently with it, yet it is along these breaks that we encounter a chance at synthesis between nations. In the face of a francophone need for inter-religious connection and dialogue (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 14; Phan and Guillou 21), the lines of rupture that weaken the nation (dividing both the national consciousness through religious intolerance as well as the national government through power struggle) can also offer bridges between nations, providing a common heritage of battles between religious systems rather than mere individual religions. *Imaginaires* can be formed that do not focus on common bonds of specific religions or histories, but rather draw solidarity from common tensions arising from systems of oppression or control that seek to challenge or guide religion. There is a common international history—ties that bind Islam in twelfth-century Morocco with Protestantism in sixteenth-century France; with Catholicism in eighteenth-century Canada and in nineteenth and twentieth-century Louisiana; and with Vodoun in twentieth-century Haiti—as

well as ties to Islam in contemporary Algeria and Morocco. These diachronic points of reference can be just as important as modern ones in bonding contemporary nations, for common histories resonate with contemporary civilizations. Édouard Glissant speaks of the importance of finding common *traces* in linking people across nations in the framework of the « tout-monde » (Glissant 18-19). Likewise, shared historical experience can link people across nations in *la Francophonie*.

2.2 Incompatible Interdependence: The Church-State Dialectic

2.2.1 Religious Influence at the Polls

One trait that all francophone nations share is a distinct lack of balance in the diffusion of religious voters across the political spectrum. While, as a mixture of behavioral restrictions and socially philanthropic encouragement, religious doctrine tends to offer a wide enough array of social viewpoints potentially to enable voters to interpret their faith in a manner allowing them to select a spot anywhere along the political spectrum, the reality is that from country to country religion produces a voting bloc that favors a given political party/philosophy. The division between believers and non-believers is exacerbated as religious voters present a fairly unified front, tipping the political scales by adding weight to social forces deemed to be supportive of religious values, and reinforcing a contentiousness that already serves as a primary marker in the political arena.

Ever since the French Revolution gave birth to a republican system, religion has been one of the main lines of separation between the left and the right, so much so that "The clerical question . . . is not only a main source of political conflict in France but is also the only generally accepted concrete referent of the major symbols of political conflict . . ." (McHale, citing Roy

Pierce 294-295). One might assume that ethnic or economic factors would play a greater role than religion in determining the party lines that shape an increasingly scientific and secular world. However, even in the late twentieth century there is evidence to the contrary. In fact, in a 1969 study frequently cited by contemporary scholars (see, for example, Madeley 30; Knutsen, "Party Choice" 463), British political scientists Richard Rose and Derrick Urwin discovered that, contrary to conventional wisdom, "religious divisions, not class, are the main social basis of parties in the Western world . . ." (12). While this assertion may not be true for certain non-francophone nations such as Sweden and the United Kingdom (Knutsen, "Religious Denomination" 99), it has certainly been the historic case for France.¹⁴ In "Religious and Socioeconomic Factors in the French Vote, 1946-56," a 1958 study by political scientist Duncan MacRae that examined rural voting patterns based on numerous factors including urbanization and agricultural wealth, the cleavage between the clerical and the anti-clerical was far and away the most significant, revealing a remarkable degree of correlation between religious and political choice (294). While there has certainly been a "historical association of the church with the conservative politics of the French right" (McHale 297), this affiliation has remained tangible and measurable fact even to the present-day. Both of the main non-socialist parties in France receive much stronger support from Catholics than those unaffiliated with the church, while socialist and environmental parties get stronger support from the unaffiliated, with Catholic support decreasing substantially the further left the party places itself, according to data gathered by Norwegian scholar Oddbjorn Knutsen in his 2004 article "Religious

¹⁴ Religion divided Great Britain politically in the sixteenth century, as Protestants and Catholics each vied for control of the throne. As Elizabeth I sought to unify national religious practice under the Church of England, she faced constant resistance from Catholic forces who attempted to unseat her and install her half-sister Mary as regent. In the twentieth century, however, Knutsen's work demonstrates that Catholics and Protestants tend to support various political parties in relatively equal numbers. (113-114)

Denomination and Party Choice in Western Europe” (114). The social divide caused by such a distribution is further compounded by an overwhelming public perception of the steadfastness of this alignment: in a 1969 survey, more than half of French citizens polled considered “the political behaviour and ideological preference of *all* French Catholics to be right-oriented” (emphasis added; McHale 298), while a mere fourteen percent could so much as envision Catholics as being “persons of the left” (McHale 298). Knutsen’s more contemporary findings suggest that the demographic patterns that prompted such beliefs persist even in the current millennium. This suggests a difficult bridge to gap, as those Catholics who do vote progressively not only find themselves at ideological odds with members of their own faith, but also run the risk of remaining alienated from their potential political allies on the sheer basis of stereotype.

The case of Quebec mirrors that of France in many ways, most notably in that religious cleavage continues to be the single most important of the multitude of social divisions in affecting the voting habits of the electorate. Although we have previously observed that class tensions exert an enormous influence on linguistic attitudes and conflicts in Quebec, the same cannot be said for their place in the parliamentary arena. A 1963 study found that class had far less bearing on Canadian politics than on those of the United States, Britain, or Australia. In fact, in Canada, “regional and religious cleavages superseded class almost entirely as factors differentiating the support for national parties” (Alford x-xi). In Canada, these latter two are largely one and the same, as the religious duality between Catholicism and Protestantism has, for the most part, historically paralleled the linguistic and territorial divide between the francophone and English-speaking regions (Beyer, “From far and wide” 12). As in France, Canadian Catholics have overwhelmingly tipped the scales of political balance in favor of a

particular philosophy; however, in the Canadian case it is the left that has traditionally received the backing of the Catholic electorate, who throughout the twentieth century remained remarkably consistent in their voting habits even as religious roles and mores underwent drastic change, defying conventional wisdom and surprising scholars. As political scientist Elisabeth Gidengil (227-228) notes, the continuing presence of a religious cleavage

is a puzzle that has become "curiouser and curiouser" with study. The facts of the religious cleavage are simple to state: between 1965 and 1979, the sharpest group difference in major party preference was between Catholics and Protestants. While Protestants divided their support more or less evenly between the two major parties, Catholics disproportionately favoured the Liberals. Even in 1984, a full 15 percentage points separated members of the two denominations in their vote for the Liberal party. Yet, the religious disputes-over schooling, over property-that once divided the major parties have long been settled, at least at the federal level. How could a socio-demographic characteristic with so little apparent relevance to contemporary policy choices have remained so long a predictor of party choice?

While Canadian Catholics' loyalty to the Liberal Party remained a stalwart and dependable reality throughout the course of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, recent elections show cracks in what was once a solid foundation. Within the past decade, an increased emphasis on contemporary issues such as abortion and gay marriage have prompted Catholics to flee the party "in droves," tipping majority support in favor of the conservatives within the past five years (Lunau; Weatherbe). In Quebec even more so than the rest of the nation, the overwhelming rate of crossover has been just as staggering as the immutability of political position had previously been.

[2010] results confirm the trend: outside Quebec, 49 per cent of Catholics who attend church weekly voted Conservative, compared to just 38 per cent in 2004. Within Quebec, where upwards of 80 per cent of the population identifies as Catholic, the switch away

from the Liberals is even more striking. In 2008, just 22 per cent of Quebec Catholics voted Liberal, compared to 56 per cent in 2004. (Lunau)

Coupled with an overwhelming increase in support for conservative politics among Catholic youth—in 2000, 55% of Catholics aged 18-34 voted Liberal, but by 2008, that figure had dropped to a mere 16% (Gyapong)—these data suggest that, rather than fracturing, the religious bloc may simply be wholly shifting, rendering it more in line with the philosophical stances of its kindred in other francophone nations. In 2011, Catholics, along with ethnic minorities, were deemed the key demographic that swung national elections in favor of the Tories, leaving Liberals scrambling to re-engage faith groups that feel actively abandoned by the party and underscoring the impact that religion exerts on the political cleavage of an already contentious nation.

Although overshadowed in recent years by ethnic and linguistic divides, religion-based tensions have historically been more than a mere predicator of party choice in Belgium; they have been the axis around which Belgian politics has turned. From questions of favoritism in redistricting in the 1840s, to disputes over civil burials in the 1890s, to concerns over militancy in the 1920s, to issues of school secularization in the 1950s, to debates over abortion and euthanasia in the 1990s, religious values have been a focal point of the Belgian political discourse throughout most of the nation's history, such that clerical/anti-clerical schisms have often perfectly coincided with political ones.¹⁵ In fact, the ethical-religious cleavage was the first social division to be politically institutionalized (Frognier 109), as Catholics created a confessional political party in 1869 as a means of influencing a democracy that it felt was

¹⁵ For details on these specific issues, see Witte, Craeybeckx, and Meynen 41-44, 83-89, 266-268; Conway 126-137; "Down with Collard!"

slipping away from Christian values. While one cannot unconditionally refer to a unified Catholic electorate in an era when 99.8% of Belgians identified as being Catholic (Dobbelaere and Voy S2), the Catholic party nevertheless garnered the overwhelming support of the devout while serving as the official political platform of the Church. Belgium's entire existence as an independent nation was, in fact, predicated on Catholic identity, as its secession from the Netherlands was instigated by a desire for political autonomy amongst the Catholic contingent of a nation governed by Protestants. The Church, therefore, retained a strong influence in the affairs of the country created specifically for its benefit.

The religiously active electorate was such a formidable force in the nineteenth century that it created a diametric opposition within a multiparty system, enticing adversaries whose views were seemingly incompatible with one another to band together in defiance of clericalism. Proponents of free trade clashed with a Church "rooted in land ownership and the cottage industries," democrats and secularists struggled with religious authoritarianism, and the "bourgeois quest for independence of the individual" could not be reconciled with the power structure of the Church (Witte, Craeybeckx, and Meynen 47). Even the two major oppositional political parties, the Liberals and the Socialists, although "divided by diametrically opposed economic and social views," still managed to collude due to how strongly they agreed "in their opposition to a pervasive role for the church in public affairs" (Heisler 36). What should have been a platform for a multiplicity of ideologies became overshadowed by a dualist juxtaposition pitting religious voters against all other philosophies, as anti-clericalism became an inherent part of non-Catholic party principles, even though theoretically religious practice is not incompatible with the more economically-driven philosophies of Liberalism and Socialism.

It is thus important to understand that it was not only Catholics who helped to sustain this contentious dichotomy, but the conflict was due to the longtime reticence of other parties to accept religious members, so much so that the controversial 1961 decision of the Liberal party to “tempe[r] its anti-clericalism and ope[n] its ranks to Catholics” upset its base of free-thinkers (Witte, Craeybeckx, and Meynen 256). While the attempt was somewhat successful in recruiting practicing Catholics, similar Socialist appeals to left-leaning believers fell on deaf ears and even caused “great strife” among Walloon Catholics (Witte, Craeybeckx, and Meynen 257). As in France, the division between the left and the religious voting bloc remains sharply defined.

While clerical/anti-clerical tensions are no longer at the boiling point they have sustained for more than one hundred years, the religious electorate has largely remained faithful to a set of principles that make it a distinct political entity. The Catholic Party itself has undergone multiple surface level fractures that would suggest a rupture with its traditional religious base, from a steady distancing from the Church (beginning with an attempt at an appeal to a broader Christianity with the party’s rechristening as the Christian Socialist Party following World War II) to a schism in 1968 (resulting in the creation of the Flemish Christelijke Volkspartij [CVP] and the Walloon Parti Social Chrétien [PSC]) that placed ethnicity before faith. As in other European nations, the use of the word “Christian” as a party denomination seems almost irrelevant when one considers that “it is now perfectly possible to be simultaneously a Christian democrat and an agnostic, atheist, Muslim, or Hindu—and this is not even perceived as a contradiction” (Kalyvas and van Kersbergen 189). However, the religious electorate has remained loyal throughout all this fragmenting, “as the CVP and the PSC, like their

predecessors, [we]re still predominantly parties of church-attending Catholics” (Lucardie and Napel 57), as are their respective successors, the Flemish *Christen Democratische en Vlaams* (CDV) and Walloon *Centre Démocrate Humaniste* (CDH).

Despite separating from the Catholic Church and opening doors to all faiths, the Christian Democratic parties remain overwhelmingly Christian—Catholic, specifically—so much so that a 2007 analysis by party reveals that, more so than political and social viewpoints, “the religious variable remains the first variable in predicting a Christian democratic vote, with a high level of correlation” (Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 12). In Wallonia, the CDH remains the only political party with a higher percentage of practicing Catholics (59.1) than all other religious statuses (40.9), with an astounding 39.2% of its membership attending church regularly, more than double that of the next highest party (Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 11).¹⁶ Such data is astounding when one considers the rapid decline of religiosity throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By the 1960s, around 50% of the Flemish and 30% of Walloons attended church regularly (Dobbelaere and Voy 53); by 1970, the whole of the Belgian population consistently attending mass had dropped to 21.3% (Lucardie and Napel 57). Meanwhile, “the CD&V has almost no member declaring to be non-Catholic and 97,2% of all its members are Catholics. The party that decided to keep its Christian label remains anchored in a strong Catholic substratum” (Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 21).

Regardless of ethnicity or other potential ideological tensions, the unique blend of center-right moral conservatism and social action that represents the nation’s religious mindset

¹⁶ Ironically, this is the Parti Socialiste at 18.4%, which “presents itself as the party of the non Catholics” (Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 10).

has for the most part preserved the political cohesiveness of the Catholic electorate, and while the success of the liberal party in siphoning some of the right-wing religious vote has admittedly put a small dent in the former monopoly of the Catholic party, the overall loyalty of the religious bloc to traditional and consistent values and behaviors is noteworthy—not only in the context of an increasingly secular, rapidly modernizing nation about which scholars have incorrectly hypothesized the anachronistic nature and contemporary irrelevance of historic religious cleavage (see Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 5, 9), but also in comparison to other nations, specifically the Netherlands which, although founded as a state based on a strong Protestant majority, has seen its own socio-religious pillar structure crumble and the Christian vote diffused among numerous political parties, according to Belgian scholars Karel Dobbelaere and Liliane Voy (S5).

The aforementioned cases aptly demonstrate that, at the very least, members of historically Christian nations within *la Francophonie* share a common experience with respect to the presence of a strong religious electorate whose cohesiveness and resilience have threatened a larger unity, as they exacerbate both the divide between political parties by disproportionately favoring, and subsequently providing power and support to, a particular ideological institution, as well as the divide between voters by maintaining the relevance of historical religious cleavage at the polls, prioritizing religion as a determining factor of political decision-making. However, the sheer authoritarian nature of government in several of the predominantly Islamic nations of *la Francophonie* leaves one wondering about the degree to which the Muslim citizenry can relate to tensions that revolve around an unmitigated democratic electoral process. How can one discuss the strength of the religious electorate in a

nation where elections are controlled by the powers-that-be, as they are in Algeria where a corrupt government has rigged election results for decades? (see Ahmed). How can one analyze the divisive effect of religion on political parties in countries where religious influence over the political process is illegal, as it is in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia (see Entelis 43, 50)?

Ultimately, while far from identical situations, there is nevertheless a basic current of universalism connecting the politico-religious experiences of Christian and Muslim nations within *la Francophonie*. Just as Western political parties with the backing of the religious electorate menace oppositional ideologies and the parties that embrace them, so too do they threaten the secular parties of North African nations, for even members of monolithic and/or authoritarian governments represent a collection of ideological platforms that constitute political parties, even when they are the only parties allowed to govern at the highest level, as was the case until 1989 with the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* and until 2011 with the Tunisian *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique*.¹⁷ It is a testament to the perceived strength of the religious electorate that while the despotic executives that govern each of the nations of the Maghreb do, in fact, allow the existence of multiple parliamentary parties (albeit parties that are ultimately subservient to said executives), religious-based political parties are illegal in all three nations (see Entelis 43, 50). In Algeria, where the military is known as *le pouvoir*, a “group of 10 to 15 generals is the real power behind the scenes” (Kimball). In Tunisia, the authoritarian figure until the revolution of 2011 was Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who banned political parties that opposed his government, causing the legitimacy of parliamentary

¹⁷ Constitutional reforms in Algeria allowed for a multiparty system, while the Tunisian revolution dissolved this ruling party.

elections to be roundly condemned by such organizations as Amnesty International (see “Tunisia: Routine Muzzling”). In 2011, Moroccan King Mohammed VI promised constitutional reforms to become more democratic, but for now still holds absolute executive power and the ability to dissolve congress (“King declares;” “Morocco government”).

Undoubtedly the leaders of these three nations are aware of the fervor that can accompany politicized religion and hope to quell the potential for political division that such parties represent by banning them altogether. However, while such efforts may circumvent tension at the polls, it only serves to heighten animosity in the streets, as the continued, illicit existence of Islamist political parties has instigated a violent attempt to enforce the law on the part of the governments in the Maghreb. If the resilience of the Western religious electorate is demonstrated through its ability to remain a conservative political force in the face of changing political climates and an upheaval of traditional social values, then the resilience of the North African religious electorate is demonstrated in its ability to do the same in the face of tremendous, brutal persecution. The systematic exile of Islamist political leaders and the basic, riot-style street skirmishes with religious groups, such as those in Morocco (Entelis 55), seem mild in comparison to the government-sponsored death squads in Algeria whose purpose is to intimidate and kill members of such groups as the *Front Islamique du Salut* (F.I.S.), or the treatment of prominent figures of Tunisia’s principal Islamist party, al-Nahdah, who have drawn the attention of Amnesty International as they have been imprisoned, denied trials and clandestinely tortured (Entelis 62; Waltz 84-87). However, despite the best efforts of the respective governments at eliminating, or at least containing, Islamist parties, the brutal crackdowns have proven ineffective at eroding their support base (Entelis 43). These parties

have only grown stronger over recent decades and likely will continue to do so unless the governments address the social and political issues that draw people to them (Tessler 107, 120).

As to the role of Islamist parties in the Maghreb as a reflection of the ideological unity and political cohesiveness of the Muslim electorate as a whole, their illicit status means that we do not have access to the type of survey and poll data that have proven useful in analyzing these trends in France, Canada, and Belgium, such as the data used earlier in this thesis. While it is admittedly unclear if religiously active Muslims would be split between the secular government and the political parties if given free reign, or whether, like in Western francophone nations, they would overwhelmingly support one side over the other, there are certain indications that would suggest the latter. For one thing, at the present time Islamist parties are far and away the preferred form of political challenge to the status quo due to a combination of factors, including the social services such parties offer, such as clinics, schools, day care, welfare distribution centers, and in certain cases, the absence of alternative political parties with a credible platform (Tessler 112-113). Furthermore, while it is only one case in one nation, the events of 1992 in Algeria—in which the F.I.S. was briefly legalized as a political party, then proceeded to win the vote for the presidency in every single major municipality in the country before the military invalidated the elections—demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt the overwhelming support for a religious platform in the population as a whole.

2.2.2 The Impossibility of Autonomy

The notion of religious principles influencing the vote of modern nations may strike some as surprising, controversial, or even unsettling, particularly in the context of a *francophonie* that, in attempting to promote a sense of *humanisme intégral*, claims to « oppose radicalement aux deux tendances extrêmes qui prétendent régenter la civilisation planétaire dont nous participons . . . ». One of these tendencies is for nations to succumb to « la tentation de la revendication identitaire agressive, de l'enfermement dans la forteresse d'une singularité mythique . . . » that Stélio Farandjis has famously coined as civilization « tout Ayatollah » (Farandjis, “Entre le tout Coca-Cola”).¹⁸ The complication comes in blurring the line between two domains that are expected to remain distinct and separate, lest a cross-pollination of ideas and influences lead to corruption of intent, potentially jeopardizing the independence and liberties of a given nation's (and/or religion's) constituency. On the one hand, modern religions expect the ability to practice their beliefs and customs freely. On the other hand, while France may be the archetype of *laïcité*¹⁹ in the minds of most people, in reality nearly all francophone nations examined in this thesis are supposed to be *laïque* to a certain degree, from the long-standing secular governments of Algeria and Tunisia; to first amendment rights in Louisiana; to diverse guarantees of religious equality, freedom and accommodation in the constitutions of Belgium, Canada, and Haiti.²⁰ Only Morocco has a state-sponsored religion, and even then,

¹⁸ The other of these being global cultural uniformity, or *la civilization “tout Coca-Cola.”*

¹⁹ *Laïcité* is the official separation of church and state. It is a mutual pact of non-interference: not only must religious influence be absent from government institutions, but the state must theoretically remain impartial towards all religions.

²⁰ In light of recent government overthrow in Tunisia, it has yet to be seen the direction the country will take. Specific constitutional rights of various nations may be found at http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/be00000_.html (*“Charter of Rights and Freedoms”*), and <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/haiti/haiti1987.html>, respectively.

freedom of worship is a constitutional right (see “Constitution”). Boundaries between religion and government constitute a functional necessity in order to accommodate the complexity of a diverse population and ensure the spiritual health of a nation. Even in eras before official acts of separation were ratified, even at times with unequivocal allegiances between individual governments and religions, church and state were never fully synonymous (save perhaps in rare cases such as Vatican City): clerical and governmental administrations were separate bodies charged with separate duties, each supposedly sovereign over the masses in different ways, charged with guiding different facets of the lives of the citizenry.

In reality, however, history has oriented church and state on a practical and philosophical collision course that has rendered the maintenance of autonomous spheres of influence impossible. The diverse nations of *la Francophonie* have been witness to a common conflict arising from a struggle of will between national and religious authorities, a tension that is the byproduct of a tautological narrative of undermining, coercion and pandering resulting from an aim to control the domain of the other. The story of church and state is one of constant interference and mutual (if reluctant) dependence that belies any pretense of total self-determination on the part of either party, fueling resentment on both sides.

In order to achieve certain desired ends, members of both governments and religions have been forced to rely upon obtaining services and/or public legitimacy at each other’s hands. In Morocco, for example, as far back as the fourteenth century, members of the Islamic community sought to obtain government-issued genealogical decrees “proving” they were directly descended from the prophet Mohammed, as this was a surefire means of increasing their prestige and social status among the faithful (Munson 21). This led to exploitation at the

hands of those issuing such documents, who would grant such decrees to those from whom they believed they could benefit—economically, of course, but also in terms of legitimacy in the eyes of the worshipful masses, such that “Sultans would often grant patrilineal descendants of saints such decrees in return for their political support” (Munson 21). While political and religious figures found that such arrangements could be mutually beneficial in terms of both power and wealth, the exceptional value of these documents also caused much strife, leading to strained relationships on both ends. Increasingly irked by the plethora of requests, governments became more and more reticent to issue them as a proliferation of such decrees eroded their tax base, for one of the perks of direct lineage from the Prophet was an exemption from paying taxes (Munson 22). At the same time, the corruption associated with the process was no doubt an insult to those who possessed the parentage to deserve the certificates, but lacked the clout to obtain them. To some, justified force represented the ideal means of seizing one’s birthright, as exemplified by a popular myth in which a holy man named Al Yusi, through divine grace and power, extorts submission from an unjust king, and upon hearing the king plead for forgiveness and promise his heart’s desire, requests only a royal decree avowing that he is indeed a *sherif* and thus worthy of proper respect (Munson 8).²¹

An even more contentious dialectic can be found in the relationship between Sultans and their *ulama*. Religious scholars specializing in law and religious doctrine, the *ulama* were key figures in the Moroccan political machine, in charge of both choosing the leader and ensuring that his actions were consistent with the tenets of Islam. Designed to be a means of checks and balances against corruption and abuse of power, independence and philosophical

²¹ A *sherif* is a descendant of the prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.

autonomy were supposed to be an inherent part of a properly functioning body of scholars; those considered to be the greatest *ulama* were individuals who maintained such a distance as to reject even the smallest of personal gifts or favors from the king (Munson 44). Alas, to hope that a political leader would abstain from meddling in the affairs of those given legal power over him may have been too much to ask. Scholars who could not be bought were to be controlled through other means. While *ulama* were charged with scouring the land in search of the noblest candidates for king, a figure ultimately to be elected by a council vote, in reality they were often forced to pledge allegiance to the candidate “with the strongest and closest army” (Munson 38-39). As recently as the early twentieth century, a leader of a popular revolt named Abd al-Hafidh managed to obtain signatures declaring himself Sultan through a series of mass intimidations, employing tactics such as publicly accusing one scholar of being a Christian, then taking out a pistol and threatening to shoot this same man when he refused to sign the document. At the same time, the reigning leader Abd al-Aziz was able “to force twenty-seven prominent *ulama* of Fez to issue a *fatwa* reaffirming the legitimacy of his rule and the illegitimacy of Abd al-Hafidh’s revolt” (Munson 68). While many of these scholars (as well as many Moroccan citizens) felt that Aziz was compromising Islam through his support of the French colonists, they were not allowed to present the argument that in theory they were contractually obligated to make, and in fact were forced to declare the opposite. “Locked in the sultan’s palace and bullied by his soldiers, the *ulama* . . . echoed the official position of the French and Moroccan governments that the French had not really invaded Muslim territory at all,” but were simply protecting the nation from other foreigners, and those who would

question such a decision (i.e., potential revolutionaries) were not so subtly reminded of a Koranic verse imploring total obedience to one's imam (Munson 69).

Morocco was far from the only instance in which government officials pressured religious ones to advance their own agenda. Frustrated at their own inability to garner any sort of national loyalty from their francophone subjects, British executives in eighteenth-century Canada took it upon themselves to employ the Catholic clergy—who were far more respected within the francophone communities than themselves—as their political mouthpieces. Bishops and priests were obligated to take public oaths of loyalty to the British government (just as all citizens were), yet were also required to remind the faithful of their duties to behave as good citizens and to “preserve, cultivate, and promote” British political interests (see Codignola 127). Just as with the Moroccan *ulama* who cited the Koran, threatening language against dissuasion effectively passed the intimidation felt by religious officials on to their constituency, as was the case in 1763 when Quebecois bishop Jean-Olivier Briand “reminded” his diocese that failure to show the proper respect to the crown could result in “being stripped of all the privileges” that the king “was so good to grant” (Codignola 746).

Yet, it may well have been their own privileges that the clergy most feared losing. Although Catholics were legally guaranteed the right to practice their own religion, the government was constantly impinging on their ability to do so freely. Convinced that Catholic priests were “foreign agents working on behalf of France” (Young 131) who were sowing seeds of disloyalty among the francophone populace, the British strived for control over their affairs. In Acadia, efforts were made to prevent priests from coming to the province unless they had

the prior approval of the British council (Young 136). An even greater affront to the autonomy of the clergy was the usurpation of the powers of excommunication, which, being seen as a means of intimidating the populace into carrying out the will of the priests, “was to be carried out only with British acquiescence” (Young 145). Some British officials would have gone so far as to deny Catholics all rights and independence had they gotten their way: Lieutenant Governor William Shirley argued in 1747 that Acadians were greatly under the influence of their priests who took orders from Bishop of Quebec, and should not be allowed free exercise of religion because it made them loyal to France (Young 123). However, as much as the clergy may have seen the government as meddling in affairs that were not its business, the government felt the same way about the clergy, irked by perceived interference in economic affairs—accusing priests of “an untoward interest in the fur trade” (Young 107)—as well as judicial ones, namely the role of priests as community arbiters and mediators, which was felt to be undermining the legal process as well as hindering Acadians with “developing a familiarity with and a fondness for the British system of government” (Young 129).

Francophone bishops felt constant pressure and stress from the political maneuverings to which they were subjected. Even in times of greater autonomy and less coercive interference, the clergy lived in fear, realizing they could take nothing for granted and wondered “Would the next secretary of State be as well-disposed as the current? Would a challenged lieutenant-governor switch to a less generous attitude? How far should a bishop go with his requests? Should he support or quash his faithful's demands for change?” (Codignola 746). However, it is important to point out that it was not just the British who sought to manipulate the French-Canadian clergy. Everything that the British feared the church hierarchy

to be in terms of treasonous influence, the French government strived to make them become. Both the British and the French thought religion could be a key to strengthening France politically and militarily, and the latter hoped to manipulate faith into political and military advantage by using it as an excuse to get Acadians to move to Ile Royale en masse, actively recruiting those under British control with the promise of being among individuals “like themselves” (Young 119, 124). Frustrated by the lack of political support from the existing priests in the province, the French began to regulate the flow of particular orders, sending Recollects (much to the annoyance of the Acadian people), selecting them because it was believed they could convince colonists to sacrifice their own interests for that of France (Young 108).²² They were never able to do so, nor were the French successful in convincing the people to take up arms on their behalf during the French-Indian war.

Coercion of priests for political ends is a phenomenon that has endured well into the twentieth century, notably in Haiti, where religious control was a key component of François Duvalier’s dictatorial stranglehold over the nation. Even prior to his reign, in a poly-religious environment Catholicism proved to be a preferred instrument of the political elite, in part because “its clergy could be persuaded to operate along the lines of national policy” (Bastien 50), but Duvalier took notions of institutional domination to entirely new levels. While the church supported Duvalier during his campaign, they quickly soured on him as it became clear that he had little intention of letting the institution manage its own affairs, and certainly no intention of allowing any moral dissent from its clergy. Shortly after his election, the dictator

²² The Acadians resented these particular members of the clergy because “they only said low mass on Sundays and never said vespers.” (Young 108)

turned on the church entirely, killing and exiling numerous priests and bishops who spoke negatively of him or his policies in any way (Bastien 59). Any actions or philosophies of the church were acceptable only if they perfectly mirrored those of the government. Ultimately:

In a despotic state organization, an autonomous church is bound to chart a hazardous course; and this has been the fate of the Catholic clergy in Haiti. Even where the church has been obliged to make generous concessions to the state, and to operate under strict overt and covert state surveillance, its authority over its own church personnel is constantly challenged by the state and its role has been drastically curtailed by Duvalier to the point where it provides a hollow echo for state ceremonialism. (Schaedel xiv)

Catholicism was not the only religion whose officials Duvalier felt it necessary to manipulate. In a nation where Vodoun holds far more popular sway than any Christian denomination, keeping influential religious leaders in check was seen as the most effective way of doing the same to the people. Even if the religion as a whole was embraced for not posing a challenge to the authority of the state in the same way that Christianity inherently did (Schaedel xiv), the threat of popular dissent still loomed large in a brutal regime, and any influence over the minds of the people could only be beneficial. Thus, *houngans*, who are essentially the equivalent of priests in the Vodoun religion, are faced with the double promise of personal gain in exchange for cooperation, as well as retribution in the case of dissent. The reach of Duvalier's political tentacles made him, in effect, the de facto "head of a socio-religious institution that rarely has had a single nerve center . . . Houngans who cooperate are in good standing. Those who do not are in jeopardy, and there have been reports that some who have not played the game by his rules have been jailed or assassinated, or have simply disappeared" (Courlander 20).

However, this game of influence is not as one-sided as it may superficially appear. Just as in Morocco, this uneasy dependence is mutual in nature, with politicians ensnared by a dire need of public religious approval in order to maintain their popular legitimacy. Threats and intimidation are effective only to a certain point, and more often than not executives find themselves pandering to the religious base. Whether or not they have any genuine belief in Vodoun, politicians have no choice but to cultivate friendships with *houngans*, donate to temples, make gaudy displays of sponsoring ceremonies, and even go to mass (Bastien 56). While *houngans* seek public recognition with prestigious state patrons for their own social gain, it is equally important to the state officials to be seen with the *houngans*, as even the most disinterested pay lip service to the religion “for the obvious gain in popular support that results” (Schaedel xiv). Politicians are quick to protect the religion they attempt to manipulate, as the element of fear that they impose upon community figures is secretly reciprocated deep in their own hearts, as every local leader would seek religious alliances knowing that “a chief who was not credited with supernatural power was lacking ‘something’. Worse, [anyone who did not seek such alliances] was depriving himself of a sure source of intelligence, since his opponents eventually would have to court some prestigious houngan when the time for a coup came” (Bastien 51).

2.2.3 The Myth of Incompatibility

The competition between church and state for a single space of authority and control has propagated a direct philosophical confrontation between the two, aimed at extracting an uncompromising and total loyalty by mandating a choice between potential systems of conduct. The road to dominion becomes much smoother when all alternative routes have

proven insufficient, as there is ostensibly less pressure to justify one's own authority if it is viewed as the sole option with any influence. Just as there are those who believe that the coexistence of multiple languages within a national space is socially detrimental, or even downright impossible, so too has a similar train of thought concerning religion persisted throughout centuries, stunting the potential harmony of coexistence by asserting that there is an inherent mutual exclusivity between belief systems that must be recognized and enforced. The notion that either religion or the state must suffer for its toleration of the other offers a heavy dose of irony when one considers that its central proposition is essentially the avoidance of tension through the elimination of conflicting philosophies, yet the proposal itself serves to exacerbate tension by means of its uncompromising position and zealous totalitarianism that inherently subjugates one or the other (either religion or the state, for the mere rejection of coexistence demands a favoritism, yet leaves the choice of which side to favor up to the subject). Such irony seems lost on the numerous advocates of this position, representing both church and state, who have advanced variations of the same argument from nation to nation, generation to generation. From caveats against Protestantism in sixteenth-century France to modern suggestions of the immiscibility of religion and democracy, the propagation of a cross-cultural myth about the incompatibility of religion and national government has continuously wreaked strife and division on the states of *la Francophonie*.

History focuses heavily on the Edict of Nantes as an instrument of social and religious reform, yet it was only one of several French edicts to be enacted during the latter half of the

sixteenth century.²³ Every edict not only sparked controversy by making allowances for various forms of freedom of worship, but also failed in its goals of increasing national solidarity and fellowship which were expressed in explicit provisions, ranging from legal protections for those involved in previous conflicts to outright laws demanding forgetting of past grievances, intended to enforce a peaceable coexistence between members of different religions (see Diefendorf 21). In fact, one could argue that in their attempts to mandate tolerance of religious pluralism, the edicts themselves were responsible for much of the social strife and violence that plagued France during this era. The 1562 *Edit de Saint-Germain* ended up “leading to the civil war it was designed to avoid” as it prompted a direct response from François II in the form of the slaughter of unarmed Protestants (Crouzet 1-2), while the 1572 *Massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy* would seem an obvious response to earlier edicts as it intentionally violated the Protestant safe havens known as *places de sûreté* established in these treaties (Diefendorf 26). However, the instigators of this direct violence would undoubtedly have argued that they were acting to ensure a greater harmony in the long run, and that the edicts themselves were the real threat to national solidarity as they promoted a situation that would evoke a cosmic discord. It had long been believed that the State and its king, as instruments of God, were responsible for carrying out His will (i.e., the doctrine of the Catholic Church), and that the well-being of the nation was directly tied to God’s approval of the actions of the people and their executives. Certainly, there was no surer way to incur God’s wrath than the promotion of heresy—*ergo*, a unified religion and a unified state were part and parcel of one another. Thus, it is no surprise that the enactment of a decree of peaceful coexistence was an inherent

²³ For example, there was the *Edit de Saint-Germain* (1562), the *Edit d’Amboise* (1563), the *Edit de Boulogne* (1573) and the *Edit de Beaulieu* (1576).

oxymoron that “seemed to contradict the idea that a state in which several religions would be tolerated would incur the curse of God and would only be destined for destruction,” prompting the *Parlement de Paris* to reprimand the king with “prophecies of the inevitable desolation of the kingdom” (Crouzet 2). In essence, Catholic hard-liners sought to eradicate the Calvinist religion as a direct means of preserving the state, for it was obvious to them that only one of the two could survive.

The church retained both its stronghold over the affairs of the French state as well as its dogmatic platform of one nation, one church throughout the seventeenth century. For example, the church reiterated the argument for mutual exclusivity and the duty of the state to defend this arrangement in the 1640s by citing St. Augustine (Garrioch 57), presumably his philosophy of the church and state as two complementary “swords” of moral enforcement. However, the Age of Reason, which flourished in the latter half of the eighteenth century, brought about a massive shift in the politico-religious paradigm not only in France, but all over the Western world, as philosophies of humanism posed new challenges to both church and state. While Catholics were forced to come to terms with the crumbling of an age-old hegemony and an unmitigated rise of alternative religions, traditional state leadership underwent a process of upheaval as monarchies were contested by emerging forms of democratic government. In light of this instability and philosophical shift, the suggestion that tolerance of Protestantism would usurp divine right acquired somewhat of an archaic character. Yet, while these new circumstances would change the parameters of the argument that religion and state are incompatible, they did little to dispel the overall myth.

Whereas Catholicism had historically been the lifeblood of the state, the late eighteenth century saw a turning of the tables, not merely leaving the religion without government endorsement, but actually making it a target of the same type of accusations it had once launched at other religions. The faith that had once been considered crucial to the survival of the state was now being called into question as people began to assert that its value system made it incompatible with the principles of democracy (a notion the church itself had tried to use in its own defense in the waning decades of the *ancien régime*, as French Catholic zealots repeatedly insisted “that Calvinism was ‘democratic’ and a threat to the monarchy” [Garrioch 70]). If the church represented an Old World order on a collision course with the new vanguard of democratic republicanism, then it seems apt that these tensions would be felt so acutely as they were in the New World in the late eighteenth century, where the frontier between New England and Quebec was more than a border between two cultures, but also a dividing line between a young, budding republic and the autocratic system from which it broke away. The belief in the inherent opposition of church and state meant that the Catholic faith of the Quebecois would prove detrimental to international relations, and not because of any civil reservations on the part of the citizenry of Quebec as to the ability of the two to coexist (as there had been with respect to Calvinism in France). Rather, it was the rhetoric of the rationalist-yet-Protestant-inspired American government that cast doubt on a potential alliance between the nations, placing Catholic values squarely in the spotlight of a prejudiced inquisition of foreign intentions. Catholicism was accused of being more than a mere threat to the primacy of Protestantism: it represented a devious adversary of the liberal democratic values that marked the American revolutionary spirit.

Despite the fact that the American government itself preached sermons of religious tolerance, the Quebec Act of 1774—guaranteeing the Quebecois citizenry the right to practice Catholicism, while other Canadians were still subject to the religious laws of the British Crown—provoked a massive and fearful outcry from those who saw it as a threat to American principles, perhaps best expressed in the Boston Gazette headline on August 22, 1774, proclaiming the act an attempt “TO CUT OFF ALL THE LIBERTIES OF THE REST OF AMERICA by means of Quebec” (Fenton 35, citing Cogliano). Even the Continental Congress put forth a resolution that same year declaring the act “dangerous in the extreme degree, to the Protestant religion, and to the civil rights and liberties of all America” (J. Smith 86). It seemed evident to many that, by the very nature of their religion, the Quebecois must be enemies of a state that championed freedom and individualism, as the devotional nature of the Catholic hierarchy made them pawns subservient to the whims of Rome. The fear of invasion and usurpation of government was widespread, reflected in the writings of Alexander Hamilton, who believed the support of Catholicism in Quebec would lead to a time when “the province will be settled and inhabited by none but Papists . . . These colonies, in time, will find themselves encompassed by numerous hosts of neighbors, disaffected to them, both because of difference in religion and government,” presenting a clear and present danger to the welfare of America as the Quebec Bill would leave Protestants so dependent and disadvantaged as to “have no subjects . . . other than Roman Catholics, who, by reason of their implicit devotion to their priests, and the superlative reverence they bear those who countenance and favor their religion, will be the voluntary instruments of ambition and will be ready, at all times, to second the oppressive designs of the administration against other parts of the empire” (Hamilton 760-770). Edmund

Burke went so far as to suggest the bill to be a flimsy excuse to raise “a Popish army” bent on making Quebecois the “taskmasters” of their neighbors and their eventual “executioners” (J. Smith 73). Catholicism was seen as a direct affront to religious pluralism, even though ironically it was a necessary component of this same pluralism in the United States. Essentially, it was believed that a Protestant-inspired government could accept personal difference and individualism in ways that Catholicism could not, making Catholicism acceptable only on the condition that it was kept in the minority and out of power. Catholicism was in direct conflict with American values not only because it was “antithetical to equitable government” (Fenton 40), but also because it was antithetical to privacy and personal freedom, as American colonists believed the Catholic experience to be “perpetually mediated by church hierarchy, so there is no room for subjective, private personhood. The Catholic sees as the Church sees, tastes as the Church tastes, and thinks as the Church thinks, or it ceases to be ‘Catholic’” (Fenton 45). Catholicism could not coincide with Liberalism because Catholicism was Autocracy: the Quebec Bill was a means of establishing “despotism,” and “meant to be both an instrument of tyranny to Canadians and an example to others of what to expect” (Smith 73-74). A powerful Catholic church and a powerful democracy could not coexist within a single nation, and spurred on by a Continental Congress whose logic created “a national space in which religious liberty and ‘Protestantism’ are synonymous,” the Quebecois were urged to reject their religion for the good of “the welfare of their country” (and, implicitly, that of the United States as well [Fenton 41]).

It was not only proponents of the state who perpetuated the myth of mutual exclusivity between religion and government, however. An examination of events in nineteenth-century

Belgium, both pre- and post-independence, reveals a Church that sees itself as unable to accept the liberalist principles that were shaping the nation (and the continent) at the time. As was so often the case, religious pluralism was the crux of the matter when, shortly after Napoleon had been defeated at Waterloo in 1815, and control of Belgium had been handed over to the Netherlands, the bishops of Belgium composed a letter to their new sovereign King William in an attempt to convince their country's leader to re-establish the dominion of the Church. The letter itself appears to be a thinly veiled ultimatum, in which it is clear that conflicting values make alliances without compromise impossible, suggesting the king acquiesce to a law greater than his own. The language of the letter is uncompromising and unequivocal:²⁴

Sire, The existence and the privileges of the Catholic Church, in this part of your Kingdom, are inconsistent with an article of the plan of the new Constitution, by which equal favour and protection are promised to all Religions. Since the conversion of the Belgians to Christianity, such a dangerous innovation has never been introduced into these Provinces, unless by force . . . Sire, We do not hesitate to declare to your Majesty, that the Canonical Law which are sanctioned by the ancient Constitutions of the Country, are incompatible with the projected Constitution, which would give in Belgium equal favour and protection to all Religions . . . The Council of Trent, all whose resolutions were published in these Provinces, and have there the force of Ecclesiastical Law, after confirming all the old Laws of the Church, which fix the jurisdictions, the rights of the Bishops, of the Chapters, of the Universities, and in general of the regular and secular Clergy, commanded the Bishops to see the execution of them, and carefully watch, not only over the maintenance of the sacred pledge of the faith, but also that of the Laws which concern the essential discipline of the Catholic Church, and secure the consistency and the inviolability of its Government . . . We are bound, Sire, incessantly to preserve the people entrusted to our care, from the doctrines which are in opposition to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. We could not release ourselves from this obligation without violating our most sacred duties; and if your Majesty, by virtue of a fundamental Law, protected in these Provinces the public profession and spreading of these doctrines, the progress of which we are bound to oppose with all the care and energy which the Catholic Church expects from our office, we should be in formal opposition to the Laws of the State, to the measures which your Majesty might adopt to maintain, them amongst us, and in spite of all our endeavours

²⁴ The letter was cited in an 1815 issue of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and the author fails to identify the bishops or detail the letter's original language of publication. I have been unable to locate the original letter.

to maintain union and peace, the public tranquillity [*sic*] might still be disturbed.
(Excerpted from Fisher 422-423)

While falling just short of an outright demand for abdication, it is clear that the bishops feel there is no room in Belgium for two competing forms of administration, so much so that the threat of insurrection is implicit. Not only are Catholicism and secular, liberal government “inconsistent,” “incompatible,” and “in opposition” to each other, the continued coexistence of the two would potentially create a situation so volatile as to dissolve national cohesion violently. The designation of the constitution as a “dangerous” innovation harkens to the language used to describe the Quebec Act, save that in the Belgian case it is the state that menaces the church. In both instances, potential harmony between the sides is marred by an omnipresent deleteriousness that accompanies merely being in a coetaneous state. The tenets of both church and state being inherently legislative, each presents a direct affront to the gubernatorial authority of the other, rendering decrees from the challenger as a “violation” of the executive power of whichever side can succeed at being perceived as uniquely legitimate. Ultimately, the bishops feel that if the church cannot completely dictate the tide of national governance, then it loses all ability to govern.

Decades after the aforementioned letter, church officials and militant Catholics in Belgium continued to insist that the Church must be the state, lest conflicting administrations create an executive paradox. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, as the agenda of the Belgian government became increasingly anticlerical, Catholics became divided between those who felt their religion was applicable within the framework of a secular state and those who outright rejected the laws of an authority other than that of the Church (Kalyvas 383). The latter had

the support of the lower clergy and controlled nearly all of the Catholic press, such that "a whole army of publicists emerged, pretending that there existed a radical incompatibility between the Belgian constitution and Catholicism, between the country's religion and its political organization" (Kalyvas 383, citing Alphonse Bellemans). These zealots asserted "that the principles which flow from the Belgian Constitution are false and subversive, that the separation of Church and State is bad, and that the Constitution, in itself, is bad" (Kalyvas 383, citing Arthur Verhaegen). Conflicting values meant that church and state could not work together and maintain their own integrities, such that even when the Catholic party gained a victory in the polls in 1884 by offering a moderate platform that complemented and worked with Belgium's liberal institutions, it undoubtedly did little to disprove the notion of mutual exclusivity in the eyes of those who felt that Catholicism is defined by its principles, such that in compromising politically, the Catholic ceases to be Catholic. One cannot follow two conflicting sets of laws, and so the ideology of the incompatible church and state forces one to prioritize, and ultimately, to abandon one such set.

As modern societies tend to believe themselves to be more knowledgeable and enlightened than generations past, were the myth not still being perpetuated today it would be easy to dismiss all of the aforementioned cases as the by-product of an ignorant and troubled religious world history. The same logic that had been applied to Protestantism, then Catholicism, is now being applied to Islam, which faces a double challenge: whereas in the past tensions surrounding the philosophical conflict of religious and secular authority tended to be disproportionately fueled by either proponents of the church or of the state, modern Islam must contend with both in order to prove itself adaptable to a democratic context. Despite not

only the clear volition of a large number of Muslims for the implementation of democracy, as demonstrated by protests in both francophone nations (Morocco, Tunisia) and non-francophone nations (Jordan, Egypt), but also the actual existence of democratic Islamic states (Malaysia, the Maldives), both Muslim and non-Muslim authors and spokesmen continue to perpetuate the idea that Islamic and democratic value systems are inherently oppositional to the point that a mutual national stasis is impossible. On the one hand, Western authors often oversimplify temporally and ideologically variant civilizing traditions (see Eickelman 18), creating artificial monolithic philosophical systems that are supposed to represent Islam in its entirety, then pitting these creations against Western ideals. Totality of perceived ideology is absolute, leaving no room for nuance, variation, or compromise, as these people “assume that Muslims, more than the followers of other religions, are guided by religious doctrines that inhibit their participation in democratic rule” (Eickelman 19). The mere titles of works such as Amos Perlmutter’s “Islam and Democracy Simply Aren’t Compatible,” or oft-recited catch phrases like Daniel Lerner’s “Mecca or Mechanization” (Lerner 405), illustrate the reductionism that allows one to assert that a choice must be made between religion and democratic government. The nature of each, according to this mindset, makes conflict not merely probable, but inevitable and irresolvable as long as both entities remain. Even to allow Muslims to participate in the democratic process is to ensure its demise, as suggested by a political cartoon by right-wing Belgian illustrator Steph Bergol, created in response to a 2004 law that bestowed voting rights on Belgium’s population of resident aliens (Image B, following page). Not only are Islam and democracy a threat to each other within a given country, but some would argue that harmony is impossible even between nations, as does political scientist

Samuel Huntington in his piece for the *New York Times*, “The Coming Clash of Civilizations: the West versus the Rest,” in which he asserts that “As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity and Islam has re-emerged. Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years. This centuries-old military interaction is unlikely to decline.” In the minds of so many Westerners, this unbridgeable and perennially tremulous fault line runs deep enough so as to separate not only civilizations, but entire sets of beliefs, ethics, and ideals that are seen



Image B. “La Belgique adopte la loi pour le vote des étrangers.”

as appertaining exclusively to each side, such that democracy cannot be a part of Muslim societies because there is nothing “Muslim” about it, as it “belongs to” and naturally “fits with” a different set of traditions.

However, the majority of Muslims, particularly those in the francophone world, feel quite differently about the matter. The notion of Islamic democracy does not seem at all

paradoxical to Muslims representing ten countries surveyed in a 2006 Gallup poll, who by and large “do not believe they must choose between Islam and democracy, but rather, that the two can co-exist inside one functional government” (Mogahed). While most nations responded favorably to questions of incorporating certain “Western” values into Islamic societies, the two francophone nations surveyed (Morocco and Lebanon) were consistently pro-democratic, even within the context of the survey. An overwhelming 99% of Lebanese and 91% of Moroccans believed that free speech should be guaranteed in their constitution, while a full 73% of Moroccans and 85% of Lebanese felt that religious leaders should have no role whatsoever in shaping the national constitution (Mogahed). While nearly half the nations surveyed contained a majority of citizens who believed that Islamic law based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet, or *Sharia*, should be the only source of legislation in the nation, it was not so for the francophone nations, where less than one-third of Moroccans and less than one-tenth of Lebanese felt this should be the case (Mogahed). The results of this poll leave no doubt that Western notions of an unaccommodating, uncompromising Islam have little basis in reality.

If the only obstacle preventing the harmonious coexistence of church and state were the words of foreign authors, one might expect an internal resolution eventually to dispel the age-old myth, or at least to assist it in largely fading from public discourse the way it eventually did in the cases of Protestantism and Catholicism. Yet, however a given Muslim may respond to a question about free speech or constitutional law, the notion that Islam and democracy are inherently antipodal remains rampant not just in the West, but in Muslim nations themselves, perpetuated by religious officials and dogmatists whose linear view of Islam would seem to

conform to the stereotypes proposed by Western authors. Feeling that God's law is set in stone, these fundamentalists oppose not only specific "foreign" beliefs, but also the entire structure that would give any political voice to the unauthorized. The crux of the problem with democracy is that it represents administration by negotiation, yet in the words of former Algerian military officer Said Mekhloufi, "the point of view of the majority cannot be taken into account when preparing for an Islamic state" (cited in Entelis 63). In recent decades in the Maghreb, there has been a marked increase in literature reaffirming this view, asserting that democracy "is incompatible with Islam—because while Islam offers governance by the Creator (*al-khaliq*), as understood by a properly instructed religious elite, democracy, a non-Arabic term, necessarily implies rule by the created (*al-makhlūqin*), in which unbelievers and the ignorant have an equal say in governance and usurp God's rule" (Eickelman 25). Even though the majority of residents in the Maghreb may support certain democratic principles, the oppositional ideal continues to have substantial traction. Those who attempt to appeal to the masses through the promise of strong, determined government, such as the *Front Islamique du Salut* (F.I.S.) in Algeria, succeed at garnering legitimacy by pitting Islam and democracy as fundamental opposites (Eickelman 21).

2.3 Dualism as a Tool of Religious Distinction

2.3.1 Religion as Nation

If one were to view religion as a mere philosophy or a simple set of moral guidelines, it would be tempting to call into question why states have had such difficulty incorporating it into the national framework. After all, neither the functional aspects of government nor its ability to engender loyalty seem to be impeded by the ideological cross-pollination of the myriad of

instructive philosophical systems that permeate society, from self-improvement and health regimens to private education. If the umbrella of the state is large enough to shelter a mosaic of belief systems, including in many cases those that run counter to accepted mores (provided they adhere to the constraints of the written law), then why has religion had such historic trouble fitting under its protection? The answer, in essence, is that religion is its own umbrella. When Dan Quayle drew a parallel between the rise of fundamentalist Islam to that of Nazism and communism in 1990 (Gerges 70), he exhibited a flawed understanding of the nature of the faith, ignoring its complexity and social makeup by assuming it to be a simple ideology. A religion is more than the dogma in which it professes belief, more even than the daily practices and decisions that stem from such belief. It is a network of people, unified by a sense of common purpose, offering loyalty and support to each other in a variety of incarnations. This idea is exemplified in the nations of the Maghreb, where “equally significant, by its very nature, as a culture and legal system as well as a religion, Islam presents Muslims with a complete and coherent blueprint for the construction of a just political community,” as well as offering social services such as clinics, schools, day care, and welfare distribution centers, in part to compensate for the government’s failure in these areas (Tessler 112, 115). The totality of the religious network is perhaps even more evident in Belgium, where by the 1950s, a comprehensive Catholic pillar was consolidated that embraced “not only the majority of schools (from kindergarten to university), sick funds, a union, cooperatives and a political party, but also banks, insurances, hospitals, old people's homes, youth movements, cultural associations, sport clubs, newspapers, magazines, book clubs, libraries, and the like” (Dobbelaere and Voy S2). Historically, the pillar penetrated one’s life from the cradle to the

grave; being a member of the Catholic pillar meant that “you were born in a Catholic nursery, were educated in Catholic school and later in a Catholic university. You were member of the Catholic scouts and were playing sport in a Catholic club,” and later in life became “a member of the Catholic trade union or of the Catholic employer’s organization. You were also most probably voting for the Catholic party and were reading a Catholic newspaper” (Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri 6). Even in an increasingly secularized society, the general pillar structure, though perhaps not as iron clad as it once was, has generally remained intact (see Dobbelaere and Voy; Van Haute, Pilet, and Sandri). In short, any given religion is, as religious scholar Ben Hardman says of Islam, “a way, but it is also a community” (Hardman 1).

This, in a nutshell, is what a nation is as well: a way and a community. It is a collective set of mythologies and imaginings replete with implicit and explicit instructions and guidelines for living, yet also the collective actions and interactions of the people who adhere to these ideas. A nation, like a religion, is “a spiritual principle, the outcome of the profound complications of history,” as well as “a large-scale solidarity” bound in part by “the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories” (Renan 18-19), all of which engender a sense of loyalty, devotion, and belonging within its constituency. It is also the material manifestation of these ethereal concepts: group participation and ritual, executive orders to enforce codes, and the creation of institutions of social support. From education, to health care, to financial and social assistance, the state offers services that parallel those of churches, as a means of bettering the health and strength of the nation. Nationalism, for its part, is also more than a mere ideology; while it is tempting to see notions such as “fascism” or “liberalism” as types of nationalisms, they are only components of a larger force that draws an even greater part of its

meaning from its human component, and, like religion, must be treated not as an ideology but as a cultural system (Anderson 5, 12). Professions of patriotism and professions of faith both say the same thing: that an individual identifies with, and pledges heart and mind to, “a way and a community.”

In light of the symmetry between nation and religion, it becomes clear why church and state have been so magnetically drawn to each other, yet insistent upon their mutual incompatibility. Providing similar services, demanding similar moral authority, offering similar bonds of solidarity and exacting similar exhibitions of allegiance and commitment, they are in many ways functional duplicates of each other. They refuse to share the public space over which they compete because it is a space built for one, yet are forced to contend with the other’s existence as each makes a play for control over multiple aspects of people’s lives. In such a situation, where parallel and competing entities seek to define themselves in terms of a single population—to be integral to that population’s understanding of itself in terms of identity and authority—there are two self-evident solutions to the problem of unstable overlap: either both entities proclaim their own unique legitimacy to the contested domain, declaring the other to be an opposite and external force, or they merge into a solitary identity, implicitly declaring themselves not merely parallel, but for all intents and purposes, identical. In the context of *la Francophonie*, a single historical idea has simultaneously done both. While the state has always portrayed itself as synonymous with, and defined by, nation (even when heterogeneous realities would seem to challenge this assertion [see Bhabha 177]), it is the conflation of religion and nation that has concomitantly served to reinforce certain solidarities while inhibiting or destroying others. As the peoples of diverse francophone states have

defined their nationality through religion—both affiliation with it and rejection of it—they have advertently or inadvertently created binaries by which a person's faith determines his or her inclusion or exclusion in the national collective. The affiliation of a particular, typically dominant, religion with patriotic self-conception may serve to construct a point of common identification to the majority, but in inherently excluding citizens of other faiths, any cohesion it fosters is negated by the divisive borders it creates between members of the same state. While the nature of such alignments creates an implicit exclusivity, schisms have been worsened, even when a dominant religion is not directly involved, by an explicit perception of members of minority religions as foreigners, despite their participation and residency in a joint state.

From the advent of Protestantism until well into the eighteenth century, French Catholics exploited their alignment with the monarchy as a means of reinforcing their religious legitimacy, ostracizing those who did not adhere to the faith by leaving them no place in the larger society. When Catholicism and Frenchness are made to be synonymous, then heresy equates to sedition, such that to devote oneself to an alternate religion is to commit an act of treason. Especially when tensions were at their highest, the Church took advantage of individual fanatical acts, such as the assassination of the Duc de Guise in 1563, as a chance to portray all Protestants as traitors to the crown (Crouzet 2). However, their treason was not that of a betrayal by citizens who had lost their way, nor were the wars of religion a civil struggle in the eyes of the Church: Protestants were foreign agents who had viciously attacked the fiber of the French nation, hoping to conquer the people and corrupt their values with their foreign ideals. In civil wars, one prays for a peaceful end to conflict in the hopes of reconciling grievances, repairing and eventually rebuilding a strong nation that has re-incorporated all of its

people under a common banner, yet those who saw France's religious strife this way were condemned by Catholic zealots as naïve or even disloyal themselves. Edicts of tolerance, and their self-contained demands for reconciliation, were seen as a tacit approval of a "state within a state" (Diefendorf 29). Not only were Huguenots not French, in the eyes of conservative Catholics, but they showed no desire to be French, flaunting their independence and cultural distinction at every turn. "Fighting for the very right to exist as a separate church in a Catholic state, the Huguenots demanded not just to continue to worship separately but also to maintain the host of practices that, deriving from doctrinal differences, had come to separate them socially and culturally from their Catholic neighbors" (Diefendorf 33). In striving to gain religious freedoms, they were in fact making an even bigger statement: « En effet, les Huguenots sont une minorité qui lutte non seulement pour le droit de suivre ce qu'elle considère comme la vraie religion, mais aussi une minorité qui lutte pour une reconnaissance civile, voire nationale » (Yardeni 21). No matter whether Huguenots were born within France's borders and spoke the same language, they were not French because they did not think or act like French people were expected to think and act. If this logic relies on the faulty assumption that cultural assimilation is a primary measure of patriotism, it is an assumption that many people in numerous societies throughout history have viewed as integral to the maintenance of the national *imaginaire*, and one that continues to be made today.

The tables were turned on French Catholicism, however, at the turn of the nineteenth century, as the after effects of the revolution drastically altered the public conception of nation and nationality. Because the church had worked so diligently to assert publicly its perfect synonymy with the royal state, it is no surprise that when the monarchy found itself portrayed

as the antithesis of the national ideal, the proverbial baby was thrown out with the apothegmatic bathwater. Suddenly, not only was there no longer an adamant tie between Catholicism and Frenchness, but there was also an unmistakable barrier between the two. As the post-revolutionary government closed churches and seized Catholic property, the state made it unmistakably clear that there was no room for Catholicism in the new conception of France. By the end of 1793, about 20,000 of France's clergy had fled the country, while between 3,000 and 5,000 were executed among the general terror of that year (Hardman 30). While the clergy were exiled en masse, the government tried hard to erase all traces of Catholic identity from the national narrative, going so far as to assure that no French city could self-identify in a Catholic manner by rechristening them with secular names, and even turning churches into "temples of reason," thus implying that the French nation still exclusively embraced one religion—only this time, it was the church of the Enlightenment.²⁵ For all that the revolutionaries preached liberty, equality, and fraternity, none of these—especially not the latter—were extended to those who remained loyal to Catholicism.

Even if exclusive Catholic identity as part of Frenchness was gone by the 1770s (Garrioch 68), this did not mean that French national identity was open or extended to members of any and all religions. In particular, there has been a trans-historic tendency in France to disavow compatriotism with those who practiced Judaism. While Napoleon is sometimes lauded for ameliorating the Jewish situation in France through measures seen as steps towards equalizing their status, such as granting them official citizenship and recognizing Judaism as an official religion on par with Christianity (see Berkovitz 57-64), his own views towards Jews were hostile

²⁵ For example, St. Tropez became known as Héraclée and St. Antonin as merely Antonin.

(Berkovitz 62), and these measures were taken precisely because Jews were perceived as foreign residents whose lack of integration into French society threatened the nationalist myth. In passing laws that attempted to accord a place for Jews alongside the other peoples of France, Napoleon was not trying to equalize disparities among French citizens—he was trying to forge new French citizens. Their distinct set of laws and traditions made Jews “a nation within a nation” in Napoleon’s eyes (K. Long xxv) and thus in dire need of cultural assimilation, which came in the form of what essentially amounted to the *mission civilisatrice* on the home front. Laws granting equal status only went so far—for example, Jewish clergy were still denied status as salaried employees of the state (such as was accorded to Christian priests [Berkovitz 62])—and were accompanied by economic restrictions and forcibly dispersed residency in an attempt to further the process of “melt[ing] them into the national body” (Trigano 79). Whether they agreed with his steps towards assimilation in the hopes that Jews could eventually be made to “see France as their fatherland,” or whether they feared that the newfound recognition would lead to a Jewish “invasion” of France (Trigano 80), it is clear that Napoleon’s contemporaries perceived all Jews to be foreign, even those who had spent their entire lives within the *métropole*. And while Napoleon may have legally declared Jews to be French citizens, the inability to be perceived as such persisted for well over a century after such official status was granted. Nineteenth-century Paris proved a hostile environment for the devout: in order to be accepted as a member of French society, Jews had to essentially sever all religious ties and practices that highlighted them as different (K. Long xxvi). Barriers between the Jewish community and the rest of France remained intact in part because, as seen in the case of the Huguenots, religious difference manifested in habits and ritual implicitly marks the Other,

creating a natural segregation, but also in part because of explicit laws and acts that, in singling out Jews, sent a message to the French nation that they did not belong. In times of particular hostility, laws like the 1940 Statute for the Jews, which excluded them from public office and imposed quotas on them in other professions, reinforced the separation between cultures, hammering home the idea that, whatever they were, Jews in France were most definitely “not French” (Bernand 213).

Today, it is Islam that bears the burden of searching for its rightful place in the French national framework while fighting the stigma of being a foreign religion. As practicing Muslims gradually shift their practices from the private realm to the public, the desire for visibility, status, and acceptance in mainstream society are mistakenly perceived to be the exact opposite of what they are: instead of being understood as a desire to see a lifestyle based in Islam gain recognition as a legitimately French way to live, actions that highlight cultural saliency are seen as an immigrant population growing “more religious,” which is to say unwilling to integrate and strengthening ties to the foreign elements highlighted in the media (such as jihadist groups and North African activism) that feed into anti-Islamic stereotypes (Césari 221-223). The omnipresent foreign influence on matters of religious administration only exacerbates the cultural divide. If the fact that the Paris Mosque is “openly bankrolled” by the Algerian government (“French struggle”) or that the vast majority of French Imams are foreign born and educated (Césari 221) create cultural fault lines among Muslims, such realities are lost on a French populace that sees this as further proof that Islam is inherently “un-French.”²⁶ One

²⁶ Congregations seeking to run things their own way have trouble reconciling the notion of a homegrown Islam with the express wishes of foreign benefactors (“French struggle”), while French youth finds a cultural disconnect with a clergy unable to identify with their problems and challenges. (Césari 221)

need look no further than the famous headscarf controversy, or *l'affaire du voile*, as evidence that the idea of a French Islam is an impossibility in the eyes of many who hold French and Islamic values to be antithetical. What began in 1989 (Killian 567; Judge 8) as the expulsion of three middle school girls for wearing *hijabs* (the head covering that many Muslim women wear in order to comply with their religion's requirement of modest dress) evolved into one of the most high profile and controversial issues in France over the next two decades. Throughout the 1990s, schools continued to take a firm stance against such dress, and girls continued to challenge these decisions in court. In 1994 alone, more than one hundred girls were expelled from their schools for refusing to remove their headscarves (Killian 567). As decision after decision from the French courts upheld the idea that the wearing of headscarves in French schools was a violation of the code against ostentatious religious display, it sent the message that what Islam asked of its followers directly undermined what France asked of its citizens, that *laïcité* was as "un-Islamic" as head-covering was "un-French." Yet, one cannot help but remark that, if France had suddenly decided that a general crackdown on issues of *laïcité* was in order, such fervor was never pursued with members of other religions. Not once during the peak of the international media spectacle that accompanied the scandal did one hear about students being sent home for sporting *payot*, the two distinctive braids that Orthodox Jewish men wear for religious reasons, namely the interdiction in Leviticus 19:27 from shaving the corners of one's head. In fact, before the Muslim controversy, schools had been party to a longstanding, tacit accord that accommodated "Catholic students who chose to wear an unobtrusive crucifix, as with the smaller number of Jews who chose to adopt distinctive but discreet forms of dress, notably the skullcap . . ." (Judge 9). The laws involving *laïcité* only

expressly banned “ostentatious” forms of religious display, and many saw the hypocrisy in that, “although the veil was deemed ostentatious, often a yarmulke (Jewish skullcap) was not” (Killian 572). Although lawmakers were careful to include large crosses and skullcaps as “ostentatious” in a 2004 law meant to reaffirm the state’s position against religious displays in public schools (Judge 14), this decision has seemed to have had little impact on the practical implementation of the law. While it is difficult to find any examples of Christian or Jewish students expelled under this new policy, one continues to read about the enforcement of the law against Muslims and Sikhs (Ganley). To many French, “Muslim” has become as much an ethnic or cultural term as a religious one.

As it did in pre-revolutionary France, the Catholic Church played an integral role in defining nationality during the formative years of francophone Canada, creating an alliance that would last for centuries; unlike France, however, the duality of an intertwined patriotic and religious identity would last well into the twentieth century unfazed by Jacobin ideals or bloody revolution. Such a fact is crucial to the understanding of French-Canadian self-conception as it highlights the fact that, while Catholicism was an import from France, its role in the creation of a national identity was entirely independent from any ties to Europe, an idea that never quite resonated with the British Protestant majority in their dealings with their francophone colonial subjects. Both English speakers and francophones recognized that Catholicism created a barrier that stymied the development of a unified sense of national belonging, yet each side had a different understanding of the role of religion in determining one’s patriotic loyalties. The British were constantly frustrated by the Acadians’ inability or refusal to integrate culturally and to develop a sense of loyalty to the crown (see Young), yet greatly undermined their own

desires by consistently highlighting the externality of Catholicism. How could Acadians feel to be a part of an empire whose government officials were always levying accusations that their religion made them enemies of the state? Priests were “foreign agents” spreading seditious and “wicked” messages against the crown, bishops encouraged disobedience and defiance, and free Catholic worship only cemented existing loyalties to France (Young 121-130; Rothbard 737-740). In the imagination of the Protestant majority, the Papacy was playing out its European vendetta against the Church of England in the colonies, and the clergy were the primary instruments in an active effort to remind the francophone colonists that they were, and would always be, French.

The Acadians, however, never actually saw it that way. Catholicism was a keystone of their understanding of who they were, and the constant degradation of their religion definitely solidified the notion that they did not share a common nationality with the Protestant majority, but they were not French, nor were the messages and actions of the clergy the primary agents in their use of religion as a vehicle of nationalism. Instead, the nation was born from the sense of community that accompanied membership of a religion that became a lynchpin of stability to a people presented with constant upheaval. If the roots of the nation-state are founded in territory and government, then how could one expect national affinities to grow from a situation such as that which faced French Canadians? Even before the Acadian exile, both Acadians and Quebecois lived in a world of transition, both governmental and territorial (migration not only of a trans-Atlantic nature, but also in the lives of the *coureurs de bois* and farmers and fishermen seeking more fertile grounds). The rituals, credos, and ideas of Catholicism represented a constant in an ever-changing world, while the network of the Church

obfuscated its headquarters in Rome by acting on a local level through community involvement. While rival colonial governments vied for the allegiance of the settlers through affected approaches laden with punitive measures and incentives, it was to the Church that the people felt the most connected, for although European monarchs and their immediate subjects had no empirical knowledge of what life was like across the ocean, the priests and fraternities that offered counsel and services were a constant presence in the lives of the colonists.²⁷ To Acadians, if Catholicism had always been “an important component of the understanding of themselves as *une nation*” (Young 98), it became increasingly so the more that their religion came under fire from forces outside the community. Seemingly every confrontation with the British served as a reminder of religious difference, just as “Acadian anxiety about their freedom to practice Roman Catholicism always surfaced in any negotiation regarding their status” (Young 116). As priests became restricted in the functions they were legally allowed to perform, lay people rushed to their aid (see Young 102). Constantly having to defend their religion served as a communal rallying point for Acadians, who defined themselves through their faith as they found that others defined them through it wherever they were. If Catholicism prevented them from feeling like British citizens, then it also prevented them from feeling like American ones while in exile. In the eighteenth-century United States, Acadians never felt that they truly enjoyed the freedom of religion that they were guaranteed by law (Young 234), as they suffered from an immense sense of alienation due to being generally viewed as “enemies because of their national origin and their religious allegiance” (Young 214).

²⁷ It was the British who tried the punitive approach, as they restricted travel, threatened military violence (Rothbard 737), and disrupted the fishing industry (Laxer 100) for those who would not swear an oath of allegiance. The French, however, hoped to entice Acadians with promises of land and appeals to a sense of common culture. (Young 111)

While their faith marked them as foreigners in whatever territory they found themselves, it concurrently gave Acadians a nation of their own that was not bound by soil or flags.

Yet if a unitary religion offers the advantage of a concrete and precise definition of nation, it also greatly restricts the scope of that definition. The possibilities of nationality are greatly limited when belonging is predicated on the myth of a homogeneous society, which is precisely the assumption that accompanied the development of the idea of nationhood in Quebec. For much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, religious duality served as the focal point of questions revolving around Canadian national identity, as

throughout this period, elite French Canadians developed and institutionalized a separate and explicitly national identity centered on an ultramontane and devotional Catholicism, the French language, and a kind of messianic vision of themselves as the defenders of the true religion in a religiously, culturally, and linguistically threatening sea of Anglo-Protestant apostasy. (Beyer, "From far and wide" 12)

While language remains at the core of this division today, it might not be evident to current generations that until recently, language and religion were, if perhaps not literally identical, then at the very least inextricably woven, inherent and fundamental traits of *Québécoisité* that were inseparable in the national imagining. « Pendant longtemps même, la cause de la langue et celle de la foi furent confondues. Le leitmotiv: 'La langue est la gardienne de la foi', que l'on inversait souvent en celui de: 'La foi est la gardienne de la langue', a longtemps eu ici [au Québec] valeur d'absolu » (Dion 56). In the minds of the citizenry, the Catholic religion was no less a part of being Québécois than being issued a birth certificate or residing within the borders of the province.

Of course, this was not the case in reality. Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus have all been present since the first Canadian census (Beaman and Beyer 3). During the ultramontane eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, no group was more ostracized and made to feel less a part of the national collective than Quebecois Protestants. The black-and-white duality of the national myth inflexibly equated Protestantism with *les Anglais*; it was therefore an inherently external and hostile force, in all ways “the opposite of what Quebec society was to be” (Beyer, “Mission” 47). Yet, even if one were to indulge in the notion that all Anglophone Protestants born and raised in Quebec still constitute “foreigners” (which, of course, they do not), this mindset allows no possibility of accounting for the francophone Protestants who even prior to the twentieth century numbered in the tens of thousands, growing steadily over the course of the century “to more than twenty thousand” by 1898 (Balmer and Randall 66). The idea of a native Protestantism represented “a religious and cultural oxymoron” in a mentality where “French speakers are assumed to be Catholic, while English speakers are ‘always’ Protestant . . .” (Balmer and Randall 68). It is no surprise, then, that because of their religion, francophone Protestants were historically no more able to feel kinship to Quebecois society than francophone Catholics had been able to with Canadian society as a whole. Frustrations constantly simmered as government policies treated Protestants as though their religion did not exist, while officials either ignored or shunned the needs of the community. Requests for non-Catholic educational support were met with hostility, as “attempts to promote a school system not completely and directly dependent on the clergy were treated as attempts to de-Catholicize and denationalize the French Canadians” (Beyer, “Mission” 47). Archbishop of Quebec, Louis-Nazaire Béguin, even went so far as to

suggest to Catholics that "there are two dangers against which you must warn your people: mixed marriages and Protestant schools" (cited in Balmer and Randall 67). However, as late as the 1960s, "if a French Protestant wanted to attend an excellent French speaking school, the government would not allow him or her free tuition, although that was granted to all Catholics" (Balmer and Randall 68). Taxes were levied to build not only Catholic schools but also churches, while public funds were used to finance donations to religious orders (Sellar 88-100). Those who protested such policies were vilified as seeking to undermine religious and national values, leaving one frustrated author to muse:

It is not intolerant to propose that a church be supported by voluntary contributions; a man can be a devout believer in its teaching and yet consistently contend that every bond between it and the state be cut. Are American Catholics not the equal of Quebec Catholics? Yet they pay no tithes, they build their churches by voluntary contributions, they send their children to the same school as their neighbors, when a candidate for public office solicits their vote they do not ask whether he is approved by their bishop, no mandements are proclaimed from the altar telling what books and newspapers they must not read, what meetings they must not attend, there is no interference with freedom of speech and press. Because American Catholics profess their faith under such different conditions from those of Quebec, who dare call them bad Catholics? What is orthodox south of 45, cannot be reprehensible north of it. (Sellar 104)

Many Protestants left Quebec as a result of this treatment, aptly feeling that they were being denied a place among their fellow Quebecois. Those who did not naturally segregate themselves from their Catholic neighbors were often compelled to do so, particularly during the 1930s through the 1950s, when *la loi du Cadenas*, which was designed to allow police the authority to arrest suspected communists and "padlock" their houses, began being enforced against Protestant missionaries, most notably Jehovah's witnesses (see Lalonde 269). With societal integration seemingly an impossibility for those who would hold on to their religious

beliefs, francophone Protestants found themselves with few options, all of which compromised their integrity in one form or another by denying them the ability to be what they naturally were: Quebecois citizens of an alternate faith. Reversion to Catholicism meant abandoning one's religious beliefs at the cost of national acceptance, while developing an auto-centric "fortress mentality" meant reinforcing one's outsider status while facing the crushing alienation of a lack of community support. To many, the most desirable choice was to embrace the label of foreigner with which they had been saddled. While this entailed "a loss of their distinctive characteristics to a larger, anglophone community" (Balmer and Randall 66), it left participants a chance to maintain their faith and still find cultural acceptance within a national community, even if it was not the one into which they were born. Even those who managed to retain their first language found themselves adopting a second, becoming "one in heart and purpose with their English neighbors" (Sellar 103). It was not until the 1950s that « les Protestants de langue française ont eu assez d'être poussés à l'anglicisation . . . » (Lalonde 15) and began fighting to "find their voice and claim their rightful place in history and contemporary society" (Balmer and Randall 51).

Conventional wisdom says that Catholicism is no longer engrained in the national identity of Quebec—that during the Quiet Revolution religious nationalism was replaced with a secular one (Beyer, "From far and wide" 17) —and increasing secularization means that no longer do people claim « la foi est la gardienne de la langue » (Dion 56). In light of recent public backlash against official policies of "reasonable accommodation" for members of minority religions, however, it is clear that to be "Quebecois" still limits one's potential religious affiliation. In theory, the laws and rights written into the constitution of a given state reflect

the national values of its people. By this token, religious diversity and tolerance for it should be an inherent part of “Canadianness,” as dictated by Section Fifteen of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which prohibits religious discrimination and is the foundation of the decision of Canadian courts that it is the duty of the government and its people to provide “reasonable accommodation” for members of minority faiths in order to comply with their codified needs. In practice, however, old habits die hard, as the public continues to adhere to a national self-conception that refuses to incorporate specific religions, rejecting them as inherently and immutably foreign. While Islam is certainly not the only religion to fall under this umbrella, as Sikhs and Jehovah’s witnesses have also been the object of confrontation (Lefebvre 177; Cowan 81), it is without a doubt the primary one. Just as high-profile legal battles over proper school attire have underscored a fundamental clash of values between the national mainstream and the Islamic contingent in France, so too have frequent judiciary challenges to Section Fifteen rights highlighted a public rejection of religious difference on the grounds that it is incompatible with national norms. Between 2004-2006, numerous cases have appeared before Canadian high courts demonstrating a fundamental opposition of value systems, ranging from the right to build a *succah* on a condominium balcony with no-build laws, to the creation of free space for Muslim prayer rituals at universities (Lefebvre 177). While unlike France, the courts have decided in favor of the religious practices in these instances, the mere implementation and relative success of the challenge to these practices, which have earned the deliberation of the high courts, is an indication of the strong presence of an undeniable sentiment that there is something that “should be” illegal about them.

If these court decisions are supposed to be reaffirming the idea that religious tolerance is a building block of Canadian values, the response instead has been an overwhelming feeling by the citizenry that this is not who “we” are. For the past five years, the backlash has been especially fervent in Quebec. Beginning in 2007, massive public uproar has made religious accommodation a primary topic of debate in the province (see Côté 41; Cowan 81; Lefebvre 181). During that year, there was a call for an amendment to the “Charter of Rights and Freedoms” that prevents religious practices from “entering into conflict with citizens’ fundamental values, especially as concerns the equality between men and women . . .” During this nearly successful effort, the use of words like *nous* and *chez nous* were a tool by which “Quebec’s homogeneous core of French and, above all, Catholic origin was being reaffirmed . . .” (Lefebvre 180).²⁸ The idea that Islam is a fundamentally non-Quebecois trait is especially clear in the “immigrant code of conduct” published that same year in Hérouxville, Québec, intended for new immigrants who might wish to move to the community, a portion of which reads as follows:

Our immense territory is patrolled by police men and women of the ‘Sûreté du Québec’. They have always been allowed to question or to advise or lecture or to give out an infraction ticket to either a man or a woman. You may not hide your face as to be able to identify you while you are in public. The only time you may mask or cover your face is during Halloween, this is a religious traditional custom at the end of October celebrating All Saints Day . . . (Beaman and Beyer 1)

Clearly, the notion that the longstanding religious nationalism was replaced by a secular one during the Quiet Revolution does not hold true for the entire province—not when small towns such as Hérouxville base their legal code around an expected communal religious

²⁸ This is an obvious targeting of Islam, which has a reputation in the West for gender inequalities.

observance. Even more telling than the implications that Islamic facial covering is a threat to community security is the fact that these directives were not issued to Muslims *per se*, but rather to “immigrants,” indicating that to the general public, Islam has stronger affiliations on a national level than on a purely religious one. Such a sentiment was palpable in Premier Jean Charest’s response to the 2010 passage of the “niqab bill,” which prohibits the wearing of religious face coverings not only for those who work in the public sector, but also those who would “do business” with government officials (see “Reasonable Accommodation;” “Quebec will require”). Charest went on record by stating “This is not about making our home less welcoming, but about stressing the values that unite us. . . . An accommodation cannot be granted unless it respects the principle of equality between men and women, and the religious neutrality of the state” (“Quebec will require”). Clearly, the values to which Charest refers do not unite everyone, or there would be no controversy in the first place. Muslims, even those born in Quebec, are obviously not intended to be a part of “us,” nor to share a place in “our home.” The idea that such coverings are unequivocally and in all cases an oppression of women is clearly an imposed value, as many of those who wear *niqabs* and other such religious attire are women who do so by choice, rejecting the freely offered alternative out of devotion to a personal value system. Yet, it is the claim to religious neutrality that may demonstrate the greatest delusion of all of Charest’s statements. By targeting facial coverings while ignoring other indicators of religious expression, the government is singling out a specific religion. As opponents to the bill have pointed out, Sikhs who serve as judges are not required to remove their turbans in order to go on the bench (“Reasonable Accommodation”), nor are Jewish hospitals denied government funding because of their religious affiliation (“Quebec will

require”). Lack of endorsement of a religion is only a part of *laïcité*—lack of discrimination is just as fundamental to the concept. Yet, one wonders if actions targeting Muslims are even seen as a violation of guarantees against religious discrimination by those who perform them, as constitutional guarantees are aimed at securing the rights of a given country’s own people, and in that respect, not everyone qualifies in the minds of some.

The myth of national religious homogeneity is also one that plagued Louisiana during its early years. While Southern Louisiana is often portrayed as a historic bastion of Catholicism in a sea of Southern Protestantism, in reality the Church was one voice—albeit a prominent one—among many. Like all colonies wishing to reflect the values of the fatherland, eighteenth-century Louisiana saw itself as a good Catholic state populated by devout believers. According to “official fiction,” there were no Protestants in the colony, nor was there any mention of Jansenism, yet the monolithic portrait veiled a far more diverse reality (O’Neill 81). Although it has been purported that no Protestants were allowed to immigrate to Louisiana during French rule, evidence shows them living in New Orleans as early as 1724 (Greene 156), while throngs of American Indians and African-Americans remained unconverted. Although waves of Irish and Sicilians augmented the Catholic presence of French Creoles, the constant influx of American immigration meant that the time by which New Orleans could no longer be classified as a “Catholic” city arrived much earlier than many people realize: by 1850, “Protestant hegemony was an established fact, and the city’s Roman Catholic population was outnumbered two to one” (Reilly 176). Throughout this time, however, the cultural image of both the city and the region remained anchored in the idea of an entrenched and fortified Catholicism that differentiated it from the nation as a whole. Protestant clergy from other regions of America,

as well as missionaries who made their way to Louisiana, felt evangelization was “as much needed in New Orleans as in any other spot in the whole world,” as despite the flourishing Catholic Church they believed the “pure faith of the New Testament was unknown and untaught” in Louisiana (Clapp 203). One Massachusetts pastor even went so far as to confide in his friend that he could “hardly conceive of a greater calamity than for a pious and enlightened minister to be compelled to spend his days in Louisiana, where Christianity was encumbered by the corruption of the Roman Catholic church [*sic*]” (Clapp 209).

Even more so than in New Orleans, cultural self-conception centered on a unified Catholicism dominated the Cajun community. Just as it had with their Acadian ancestors, the Catholic religion played a vital role in the Cajuns’ understanding of themselves as a distinct people (Young 270), as the Church was one of the foundational pillars of society (Ancelet, Edwards, and Pitre 43) and central to community cohesiveness. Along with language, it was a fundamental element used to create a national barrier between Cajuns and *les Américains*, for while an American could possess the possibility of being Catholic, a Cajun *was* Catholic. In her 1985 study of Henderson, Louisiana, former anthropological scholar and current executive director of the Louisiana chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union Marjorie Esman explains the scope and depth of the infusion of religion into the fabric of Cajun society:

All children in the Henderson area are baptized and sent to religion classes, and most are confirmed. Even parents who do not attend church have their children baptized. As a result, religion is an integral part of the upbringing of area children, and it remains with most adults throughout their lives. The doctrines taught in religion class are internalized and become part of the general morality of the people. . . . Not all adults attend church regularly. However, many of those who do not still insist that they are religious. In Henderson it is assumed that most people are Catholic no matter how regularly they attend church. . . . Catholicism is so important, even in secular life, that the presence of the

church is felt at all times. Virtually all homes in the Henderson area have small religious icons scattered throughout: prayers affixed to bathroom mirrors and kitchen walls, crucifixes hanging over doorways, reproductions of Leonardo da Vinci's famous Last Supper fresco. Many homes have statues of the Virgin Mary in the front yard These emblems of Catholicism are so prevalent that, although they are frequently taken for granted, they provide people with a sense of order. They become part of the general background, not noticed until they are missing. (61-62)

As was the case in Quebec, this mentality denies the existence of heterogeneity, allowing no room for the possibility of an alternative religion within the national framework. The presence of Protestantism in the community has always been seen as a sort of external invasion, attempting to lure innocent Cajuns away from their true nature. To convert from Catholicism to another religion was akin to treason. Openly proselytizing within the Cajun community in 1919 caused great strife among hard-line Catholics, prompting one bishop to proclaim "It makes one sick at heart to learn now and then of the defection of the children of families whose names are almost synonymous with that of Catholic, whose every tradition is intimately connected with the Church, descendants, some of them, of those Acadian confessors of the Faith who preferred exile with all its miseries rather than betray their Church" (Young 289). That a family name could be "synonymous" with a religion is a statement that, simply by virtue of nationality, one can be born into a given religion. Yet while Protestantism can no longer be considered a "foreign" element in Southwestern Louisiana by any stretch of the objective imagination, those who practice it are somehow still viewed as outsiders, or even defectors. In the town of Henderson, for example, the existence of an evangelical "Bible church" has created rifts within the community that, while by no means dangerously acrimonious, nevertheless entrench the presence of certain individuals firmly at the fringe of society.

Bible church members from the Henderson area still have Catholic relatives, and in some families there is tension concerning the subject of religion. Family relations sometimes suffer as a result of conversion. Catholic relatives may feel betrayed, insulted, or may consider their converted kin to be strange. Bible church members claim that their friends and relatives do not understand them and that some were offended when they chose to change their religion. . . . The Catholics consider the Bible group to be slightly eccentric but harmless fanatics, and the Bible group consider the Catholics to be unsaved, misguided, and therefore pitiable. Henderson Catholics maintain that Cajuns raised as Catholics would join the Bible church only if they were somewhat strange to begin with or if they had been rejected by the Catholic church and needed an alternative. . . . (Esman 64-65)

Notions of national inclusion/exclusion among South Louisiana's Catholics have traditionally functioned as double-edged sword. While the monolithic religious identity of Cajuns excludes others from full membership in the community, Louisiana's Catholics have an equally long history of struggling to fit into the larger national picture. Despite its long and storied history in Louisiana, adversaries of the Catholic Church during the nineteenth century seemed unable to accept the idea that, after so many generations, it constituted a religion that was just as American as Protestantism. Successive waves of Catholic immigrants from diverse nations provided a perpetual foreign face by which Protestant opponents could justify their personal bias, injecting their anti-Catholic dialogue with a distinctly xenophobic bent. Theodore Clapp, a Methodist parson expelled from his own conservative congregation in the 1830s for expressing Catholic sympathies (Reilly 277), remarked upon the public sentiment of his time in noting that "a great deal has been said of late about the danger to this country in consequence of the immigration to our shores of Catholics from foreign lands," in particular the Irish, who "will exert a most deleterious influence, putting in jeopardy our civil liberties, and sowing broadcast over the land the seeds of moral contagion and death" (Clapp 209). Catholicism was therefore not only foreign; it was anti-American, both in its moral constitution and in its

sedition intent. Jesuits in particular were vilified as a secret and dangerous sect who, according to one Baton Rouge journalist, represented “a secret oath bound clan hourly striking death blows at the very foundation of our republic” (Carriere 365). The mere presence of the papal headquarters in Rome meant that even those Catholics who were not immigrants could never escape suspicion of divided national loyalties. During the xenophobic fervor of the 1850s and 1860s, when the anti-foreigner/anti-Catholic platform of the upstart Know Nothing political party was gaining traction throughout the United States, Gallican Catholics in Louisiana went to great lengths to distance themselves from the new wave of immigrants, insisting that they were different (and, implicitly, more American) because they did not believe in clerical interference in the lives of the people or the affairs of state (Carriere 366). Such a claim mattered little to the Know Nothing party, which had a sizeable following in Louisiana and severely worsened Catholic-Protestant relations in New Orleans during its heyday (Reilly 276). Know Nothings made no distinction between liberal, native-born Catholics and foreign ones. The party seized the opportunity to exploit such a palpable connection, because so many immigrants were Catholic, but ultimately Catholicism in any form was considered a threat to republicanism, and therefore un-American (Carriere 362).

Today, as is the case in France and Quebec, Islam is the religion that bears the stigma of seditious foreign import. Although in the year 2000 Muslims represented a mere .3% of Louisiana’s population (Lindsey and Silk 44), fallout from the events of 9/11 have placed them in the forefront of state consciousness, resulting in a disproportionate hostility that reflects popular anger towards values perceived as external and antithetical to American ones, making confrontations such as the 2011 vandalizing of a mosque in Bossier City—in which an assailant

rubbed pork on the door handles “so people would have to touch it to go inside” (Pieper)—perhaps more symbolic than they were intended to be. While Muslims across the United States have found themselves the victims of prejudice over the course of the past decade, Louisiana’s particular history has provided unique ways by which ideas of home and community are called into question. Stories such as that of Abdulrahman Zeitoun—a Syrian-born New Orleans resident who stayed in the city during Katrina in order to assist other citizens in need, only to be arrested for suspicion of terrorist intent to exploit a natural disaster (Harman)—show a pre-determined label of foreignness that prompts an automatic societal exclusion that completely ignores the Muslim’s personal sense of belonging and citizenship. As in the other nations we have seen, Louisianans have felt the need to reach out to the legal system (in this case, the executive rather than judiciary branch) in order to affirm their own assertions about what—and who—is an acceptable part of society. In passing a bill introduced by Representative Ernest Wooten, which provides that no foreign law shall be applied in the state if it violates a right guaranteed by the American Constitution, lawmakers were making an undeniable statement about national values. Aimed at those who would potentially attempt to invoke *Sharia* on the witness stand, the law was “by any rational measure superfluous,” as cases in the United States are settled by and subject only to American law (Gill). Such a decree serves no other purpose than as a reminder that Islam is an alien element that must be assimilated to the larger national narrative if it is to have a place in society.

As contemporary Islam struggles with marginalization in historically Christian francophone nations, it plays the opposite role in its home territory of the Maghreb, acting as a fulcrum of national self-definition while refusing to incorporate “foreign” religious alternatives

or acknowledge the possibility of heterogeneous citizenship. Ironically, it was the act of being labeled as foreigners on their own soil that greatly aided Muslims in exalting Islam to the status it enjoys in Algeria today. Being an import itself, in pre-colonial times Islam actually found itself at odds with notions of national identity, as Berbers were willing to subscribe to the tenets of the faith but refused to appoint an imam because they refused to submit to anyone outside their own tribes (Hardman 3). Tribal factionalism was still rampant upon the arrival of the French colonists, causing Charles Richard, a captain in the French military who served in Algeria in the 1840s, to observe that North Africans were a “dis-unified bunch,” and that “the only thread that sometimes unites this motley tableau afflicted with disorder and savagery is the religious idea” (Hardman, 81, citing Richard). Still, Islam did not become a national rallying point until the French made it so through constant affirmation of the religion as an obstacle that stood in the way of Frenchness. A prime example of this is the passage of the *Décret Crémieux* in 1870, which in granting automatic citizenship to Algerian Jews, was an especially painful admonishment to Muslims that their faith was a cultural albatross. According to the decree, Jews were not only granted full and automatic status, but were granted such privileges without being obliged to renounce *halakah* law. Muslims, on the other hand, were required to apply formally for citizenship and were forced to swear off *Sharia* in the process (Hardman 104). Those who objected to French society’s willing incorporation of Judaism even employed the alien character of Muslims as justification for their argument, such as Charles du Bouzet, who argued that “indigenous Israelites [we]re not Frenchmen, but Arabs of the Jewish faith,” who despite their recent naturalization were “strangers to the traditions of the French

nationality,” and “remain[ed] outside of Western civilization” (Schreier 8).²⁹ Long after the sting of the *décret*, the separate laws for separate ethnicities that defined the *code de l’indigénat* required Muslims to amend their faith in order to gain citizenship, distinguishing them from all other Algerians and leaving those who appealed against discrimination on the basis of the alleged *laïcité* of the French state flabbergasted at the hypocrisy of its people (Hardman 105). In general, “The sustained colonial attack on Islam was effectively an attack on the Algerian *Urbild*,” for “if the colonial authorities had hoped to reduce Islam to an ideology that would wither away, their unrelenting political oppression of Muslims helped to create a physical as well as a spiritual wedge between them and the colons and thus reinforce a sense of Muslim ethnicity in opposition to European ethnicity” (Hardman xiv). Ultimately, if the goal of the *mission civilisatrice* was to erase national difference through assimilation, then it failed miserably: by constantly reminding Muslims of what they were and were not in the eyes of the French nation, it provided a framework for national values that would later come to define the Algerian people.

In contemporary Algeria, nationalism and religion are inseparably intertwined. Like Quebec in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, post-colonial Algeria has wrapped itself up in a tripartite patriotic identity, as its revolution was injected with the spirit of the popular slogan coined by the nation’s *ulama* a few decades prior. “Arabic is my language, Algeria is my country, Islam is my religion” reverberated with the people, and “became the nationalist catechism” to citizens of all classes and backgrounds (Knauss 39). Such a credo implies that amalgamation creates legitimacy, insinuating that all three elements depend upon one another

²⁹ Charles du Bouzet was the former prefect of Oran and special commissioner in Algeria.

in order to achieve national authenticity. As in other nations, such a narrow-sighted vision of citizenship has caused constant strife to those who find themselves unable to fit into such a rigid and constricting matrix. Although the state constitution theoretically guarantees freedom of religion, restrictions against certain religious practices have justified what amounts to a government campaign against evangelical Protestantism. Crackdown efforts have led to the closure of dozens of churches since 2008 (“Algerian Christian Converts Fined”) and placed Christians on trial for a variety of offenses, as reported by news outlets such as the BBC, Reuters, and France 24. In 2007, in the town of Tissemsilt, two men were tried for “trying to spread Christian faith among Muslims.” In 2008, four men were given suspended jail terms for “worshipping illegally,” in violation of a national law that states that all religious ceremonies must be performed in state-sponsored churches (“Algerian Christian Converts Fined”). Also in 2008, a woman was arrested for carrying multiple bibles on a public bus (“Algeria: crackdown on Christians?”). In 2010, four men from the region of Kabylia were convicted of operating a Protestant church without a license (“Four arrested”).

Most court cases such as these are tied to a 2006 law against proselytizing which, although it technically applies to all religions, has been used to single out Christians, and Protestants in particular (“Algeria cracks down”). Even those trials in which the defendants are found not to have violated any specific laws, such as one in the town of Ain El-Hammam in 2010, in which two Christians had been charged with “offending public morals” by eating during daylight hours of Ramadan (“Two Christian men”), are evidence of a general antagonism towards religious values that would seem to contradict national ones. The fact that the defendants at these trials are overwhelmingly native Algerians seems entirely lost on the

numerous officials who, in commenting on the nature of the crackdown, repeatedly insist that problems associated with Christianity in Algeria are the work of foreign culprits. Evangelism is never admitted to be the work of an internal populace, but always a device of visiting “Americans, Thailanders, or Koreans” (“Algeria: crackdown on Christians?”), not to mention Europeans. Consider the remarks of President Bouteflika, who during a 2006 visit to Constantine warned, “We will not accept our children being turned away from their religion to Christianity under the pretext of democracy,” and that “Algerians will not accept a religion other than Islam” (“Algeria cracks down...”), or those of Algerian M.P. Abdelaziz Mansour who in 2010, insisting “Islam unites Algerians,” praised the government’s efforts to restrict foreign entry to the country, preventing both international missionaries and converted Algerian expatriates (themselves victims of European religious assault) from tainting the populace through evangelization (“Algerian minister warns...”).³⁰ Christianity is depicted as not merely foreign, but seditiously so, intentionally seeking to poison morals and undermine the philosophical pillars of a strong and independent nation. Evangelists seek to divide the nation, according to the head of the government-appointed Islamic Higher Council, Bouamrane Cheikh, who according to a 2008 article from BBC Worldwide monitoring, feels that they “want to sow discord” because their “distant political goal is to create a Christian minority linked to foreign institutions. This is a new form of colonization that is hidden behind freedom of worship” (“Algeria Cracks Down...”). In a convenient mirroring of Western reaction towards Islam, Religious Affairs Minister Bouabdallah Ghlamallah went on record in 2008 as saying “I equate

³⁰ “We are not saying Algerian expatriates and members of the Algerian community abroad are the ones who are seeking to convert people to Christianity. In fact, they are victims of European associations, especially in France.” (“Algerian minister warns”)

evangelism with terrorism,” while noting he has “asked the imams to remind the people that pastors do not come to Algeria because they love the country, or because they love Christianity. They come here to create minorities, which would give foreign countries a pretext to interfere in our internal affairs” (“Algeria Cracks Down...”). By equating Christianity with a colonial memory in which oppression of national identity was a primary goal of the foreign occupation, Algerian officials have transformed it into the very antithesis of what the modern nation represents.

Ultimately, despite legal protections and official guarantees of tolerance, no francophone nation that we have examined possesses a national consciousness that has been willing to accept all religions into its fold. Throughout history, a diverse array of religions have been saddled with the stigma and public acrimony that accompany the label of foreign invader, their stalwart philosophies and practical actualizations seeming less important than their minority status and the zeitgeist of a given era. Unwilling to cede national space to the alien forces, subscribers to the mainstream national image declare war on the enemy, winnable only by repulsion of these forces or by forcibly obtaining their acknowledged submission. With the former a daunting if not impossible task, history provides us with a trend that illustrates a repeated attempt on the part of national governments at achieving the latter. Religion was a primary motivation in attempting to coerce all Acadians to swear a loyalty oath to the British Crown, while special attention was paid to clergy in Quebec, not only demanding such an oath from themselves, but requiring them to proselytize such demands of obedience to their congregations (Rothbard 737; Laxer 100; Codignola 127). As a condition of passage of edicts of tolerance, the French monarchy demanded an oath of loyalty from Protestant ministers, just as

French republicans would exert a similar oath of allegiance to the state from the Catholic clergy who were allowed to escape the terror un-banished and unharmed (Crouzet 9; Hardman 29). For decades before they were granted citizenship, children attending Jewish schools in Algeria were required to swear a loyalty oath as part of their schooling, while rabbis were instructed to teach obedience to France as part of their curriculum (Schreier 53-54). The issue remains a contemporary one for Louisianians who during the primaries of the 2012 national presidential elections were presented with the option of being represented by a candidate (Herman Cain) who claimed he would require any Muslim to take an oath of loyalty to the United States prior to appointment to a cabinet position—a service he would not require of Catholics or Mormons (Cain). No matter the country or era, in demanding such oaths, nations coerce minority religions into a simultaneous avowal of subservience and externality, attempting to force them to admit to being exactly that which the major populace believes them to be.

2.3.2 Constructing Evil

In labeling certain religions as foreign, people have created a binary “us versus them” lens through which a complex heterogeneous reality is reduced to a simple, black and white dualism. Whether in contexts that are colonial (such as eighteenth-century Canada), post-colonial (contemporary Algeria), or independent of colonialism (Huguenot era France), the forces that create this binary are in fact enacting a practice that has served as a cornerstone of colonial thought, according to Edward Said. It was not merely the construction of two conflicting forces that fueled the practice of Orientalism, for example, but the fabrication of a symmetry between the forces which, relying on a categorical balance divided by a moral imbalance, created a set of perfect opposites. If, for example, Westerners saw themselves as

ordered, logical, and rational, then Orientals were chaotic, illogical, and driven by emotion (Said 38). When it came to any given subject matter, foreign and colonial civilizations were always symmetrical to, and yet diametrically inferior to, a European equivalent (Said 71-72). The same strategy has been employed by religious forces throughout the francophone world as a means of vilifying their competition. Whenever a particular sect has grown popular enough to menace the hegemony of the dominant religion, the response has been to attempt to neutralize the threat by discrediting it as a viable theological alternative through the assignment of misleading or false characteristics that in effect dismantle its status as a religion. If the purpose of a religion is to point the way to salvation and spiritual enlightenment through the use of a moral compass, then by spinning the compass needles of its rivals one hundred eighty degrees, hegemonic faiths have transformed alternative religions into anti-religions whose sole goal is to lead their followers (and more importantly, their potential followers) into spiritual and moral ruin. Although in reality the minority religions in question share numerous traits and beliefs with the majority ones, creating a tremendous amount of philosophical overlap between rivals, they have unflinchingly been portrayed as the complete and utter antithesis of the dominant religion—the opposite, in effect, of all that is good and holy.

The realm of religious practice is inherently multifaceted, with many denominations of many religions providing a multitude of options for personal affiliation, as well as the choice of not belonging at all. However, rather than simply portray minority religions as insufficient and inauthentic spiritual paths, followers of Christianity throughout *la Francophonie* have repeatedly chosen to single out particular religions, converting them into direct and unchallenged rivals, thus raising them to the level of equals. By elevating a given religion to the

status of archenemy, Christians created a dualist battlefield in which said religion became the Anti-Church—not merely flawed, but supremely and immaculately flawed; not simply the “wrong” religious choice, but the representation of wrong itself. However, in attempting to cast its personal conflicts with minority religions as a battle between good and evil, Christianity was presented with a problem, as there was no void at the opposite end of the moral spectrum in which to place the rival of the day. The Church already had an arch-enemy, as the role of ultimate evil had long been, and must perpetually be, filled by Satan. The only feasible solution was to merge the identities of its rivals, which is exactly what transpired across multiple ages and in multiple nations, creating a paradigm that transformed members of other faiths into Satanists and elevated mere heresy to outright devil-worship.

In France, as far back as the Middle Ages, “the devil was cast as the master of the Jews, directing them in a diabolical plot to destroy Christendom” (McAlister 70). In *Huguenots et Juifs*, Myriam Yardeni, Israeli historian and founder of the University of Haifa’s Institute for Research of French History, explores how the despicable character possessed by members of the Jewish religion (according to widely disseminated stereotypes) was portrayed as diabolical at the core. Jews were « échauffés par une haine satanique » (Yardeni 34, citing Drelincourt) that caused them to hate all that was good. Even figures such as Jean Calvin, who saw the sins of Jews as more tragic and pitiable than despicable (see Yardeni 39), regarded Jews’ stubbornness as proof of their unavoidable damnation, as « Satan besognant finement envers eux, leur présentait de nouvelles espérances qui les éloignoyent encore plus fort de Dieu » (Yardeni 34, citing Calvin). In latter centuries, however, Protestantism posed a far greater threat to Catholicism than Judaism did, and popular discourse shifted its focus accordingly. In

the pamphlets of French author Léo Taxil, Lutherans were really “Luciferians” (Hause 186), and Satan was always to be found at the top level of any Protestant society, especially freemasons. Yet Taxil was not alone in this polarizing view, as in 1884 Pope Leo XIII published an encyclical that divided the human race into two diverse and adverse classes, one being “the true church of Jesus Christ” and the other being the “Kingdom of Satan” (“Humanum Genus”).

Across the Atlantic, the prevalence of African-based religions offered ample opportunity to exploit the societies that were rife with racial tensions. The ritualism and secrecy of Vodoun made it easy to depict as diabolical, while its pantheon of loa provided an image that reaffirmed Christians’ fears, as the deity Legba’s trickster personality and occupation as gatekeeper convinced missionaries that his veneration was nothing more than thinly veiled devil-worship (see Hogan 69). In Haiti, Catholics were constantly reminded that practitioners of Vodoun were “acting in consort with the devil,” such that rejection of the religion was even infused into certain catechisms (McAlister 71, 73).³¹ Vodoun was similarly associated with “idolatry” and “devil worship” in Louisiana (C. Long 265, 279). Journalists in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seized upon imagery of the snake in Vodoun ceremonies, describing priests possessed by snake deities and artifacts such as a statue of a half-woman, half-serpent (C. Long 279, 283). While snakes have often had positive representations in non-Christian pantheons, to a Catholic audience, an association with the serpent of Eden is inevitable.

³¹ An excerpt from a 1940s catechism reads as follows (McAlister 73, citing Laënnec Hurbon):

Q: Who is the principle [*sic*] slave of Satan?

A: The principle slave of Satan is the oungan [Vodoun priest].

Q: Why do the oungan take the names of the angels, the saints and the dead for Satan?

A: The oungan give the names of the angels, the saints and the dead to Satan to deceive us more easily.

Other forms of religious syncretism received the same treatment in Louisiana, as their African roots and mystical nature made them indistinguishable from Vodoun in the eyes of outsiders. Although Spiritualism is technically a form of Christianity, to followers of more mainstream sects its emphasis on spirit possession was proof of its diabolical nature. Because “spirit communication resembled practices that fell into the category of divination and sorcery in the Bible,” mainstream Christians insisted that if spirits were present at Spiritualist seances, this was actually the work of the devil rather than God (as Spiritualists believed), and the “satanic influence of evil spirits” was rife among followers of the religion (Bell 334). Spiritualists were accused of being the “avant-garde of the army of evil” (Bell 329), and the Catholic Church even went so far as to issue a decree in 1856 admonishing local bishops to “suppress the ‘evocation of departed spirits and other superstitious practices of spiritism’ in order that ‘the flock of the Lord may be protected against the enemy, the deposit of faith safeguarded, and the faithful preserved from moral corruption’” (Bell 335). Even Mormonism received no better treatment in Louisiana than its African-based counterparts, as missionaries were accused of being “priests of Baal and servants of the devil” (Buice 349).

The mere accusations of affiliation with Satan seem baseless without tangible proof of evil, however. In creating a dynamic religious opposite to mainstream worship, it was of great importance to mirror noble actions and behaviors with heinous ones. One of the primary functions of religion is as a regulator of personal morality, and both Christianity and Islam place a great deal of emphasis on sin as an obstacle to salvation: those who conduct themselves in a pious manner are model representatives of God’s volition, while those who succumb to their bestial cravings are condemned for straying from the intent of the divine. Amidst the ethereal

uncertainties of the spiritual mysteries that encompass religion, sin acts as an especially tangible marker of success (or lack thereof) at maintaining a path of righteousness. While the mere adherence to an alternative religion may be sinful enough to the most zealous followers of a given faith (as it represents a willful rejection of a set of ideas that allegedly come directly from God), it is unlikely to trigger any sort of visceral disdain towards the offenders, for who cannot sympathize with the difficulties of trying to find one's way through an enigmatic existence? On the other hand, those sins which recall our inherent and undesirable corporeality—that sabotage our struggle to overcome or deny our base instincts and limitations, serving as a constant reminder that we are fundamentally flawed—these are the offenses that resonate with people who toil to conduct themselves as they are told they should. By fabricating a paradigm in which membership to an alternative faith equates to repugnancy of both action and character, members of certain religions have been able to accomplish a dual purpose. Not only are they able to create an antipode to juxtapose with their own virtue, but they also succeed in discrediting the structural validity of the rival religion by refusing to acknowledge that, like themselves, its followers anchor themselves in a moral code.

When it comes to proper personal conduct, few subjects are as emotionally charged as sexuality. Unchecked sexual instinct is an affront to numerous religions, resulting in an attempted regulation of sexual behavior that establishes contrived norms, the violation of which can constitute some of the most odious trespasses in the eyes of the devout. Through the suggestion that their constituents frequently engage in licentious acts of vice and debauchery, numerous religions throughout the francophone world have been cast as perversions themselves. In the minds of Christian authors in France, Judaism represented an

amalgamation of a diverse range of sexual offenses. According to seventeenth-century Protestant theologian Jean Claude, who believed that « personne ne peut les égaler en méchanceté, ni en vices », as « il n’y a pas de crime qu’ils aient manqué de commettre », adultery and fornication numbered among the most fundamental and heinous traits of Jews, noting:

L’Apostre eût bien pû sans doute faire un plus grand assemblage de vices particuliers qui regnoient parmy les juifs, car il y en avoit peu ausquels cette Nation ne fut sujette. Mais il s’est contenté de les envelopper tous dans ces expressions générales qu’ils ne l’enseignoient point eux-mêmes, qu’ils deshonorioient Dieu par la transgression de la loy, et il en a choisi seulement trois, savoir le larcin, l’adultère et le sacrilège, afin de les remettre devant les yeux pour deux raisons. La première, parce que c’étoit les trois pour lesquels Dieu sembloit avoir eu le plus d’horreur dans sa loy...la seconde raison est que ces trois pêchez étoient ordinaires et communs parmy les juifs...Il ne faut que lire leurs prophètes et leurs historiens pour reconnoistre combien ils étoient accoutumés aux vols, aux usures, aux fraudes, et aux injustices. Ils ne l’étoient moins aux fornications et aux adultères. (cited in Yardeni 82)

In the eyes of Pierre Bayle, carnal delinquency was so fundamental to the religion that it was present even in familial circumstances. As circumcision represented a key difference between Judaism and Christianity—a practice Christians abandoned en route to following Christ’s reformed path—it is no surprise that such an occasion should be transformed into an orgiastic, vice-addled ritual, as Bayle insists that although circumcisions are dangerous to children « cela n’empêche ni le père, ni la mère . . . de faire l’amour, de s’enivrer, si le cœur leur en dit » (cited in Yardeni 105).³² In adding drunkenness to copulation, he succeeds in creating a general portrait of excess that furthers the notions of an insatiable and uncontrolled wildness

³² Bayle compounds this animalistic portrait by adding an element of force and corruption, transforming it into a veritable initiation into evil, as he continues: « Et s’ils avoient la hardiesse de ne pas observer la cérémonie de la circoncision, ils se feroient excommunier, et seroient regardez comme des monstres par les autres juifs. » (Yardeni 105)

to be contrasted with the supposed temperance and restraint of Christians. While the idea of such a ritual comes off as ridiculous to a contemporary reader, sensationalism was a trait that saturated the characterizations of religions throughout *la Francophonie*: consider the suggestions of French Journalist Édouard Drumont, who accused Protestants of "buying little girls of six years in order to defile them, then going to sing some heretical psalms" (Hause 185).

The stereotype of an unquenchable sexual appetite plagued Jews outside of metropolitan France as well. In Algeria, even those who practiced the religion themselves were willing to further these ideas as a means of distinguishing themselves from the colonial masses. In 1845, government-appointed rabbis in the consistory of Oran were practically begging colonial officials to impose moral legislation on the Jewish populace by suggesting that the entire population of the city's prostitutes were housed in the Jewish quarter, such that respectable people refused to frequent the neighborhood due to the "odious interchanges they must face at each instant" (Schreier 62). In the context of this accusation, sexual depravity ceases to be the sin of the individual, becoming instead a wholly communitarian feature. Ironically, as popular opinion shifted to a state that was more sympathetic towards Judaism a few decades later, the sexual morality of the Jewish community would be transformed into an asset, employed to demonstrate their similarity with the Christian population where once it had marked their difference; while the sexual practices of Algerian Jews had undoubtedly changed very little, the mythology surrounding them most certainly did. "To present an image of Jews as closer to the French, reformers juxtaposed an array of stereotypes about the status and sexual morality of Muslim and Jewish women. These stereotypes drew upon images of Muslim

women and family life that featured prominently in French popular and scientific literature in the nineteenth century” (Schreier 147).

In particular, the seemingly cloistered existence of Muslim women turned them into a perpetual sexual object: from the veils with which they covered their faces to their confinement to the private sectors of the home, they were the eternally forbidden fruit just waiting to be peeled (see Schreier 89). Their religiously mandated subservience was romanticized in a way that painted them as slaves subject to the perversions of their masters, illustrating the “putative immorality and sexual perversity of Muslim society” that provided a foil for advocates of Jewish emancipation (Schreier 151). Not only did the unveiled and uncloistered existence of Jewish women render Jews superior to Muslims according to popular discourse, but a new myth was propagated in which Jewish women were incorruptible. It was said they maintained “the purest virtues” despite being surrounded by vice, as advocates for emancipation went to great length to prove such claims with studies of prostitution demographics that “proved” they represented a miniscule portion of the sex trade when in reality, they did not (Schreier 150-151). Beyond mere carnal instinct, the social practices of Algerian society were seen as evidence of sexual deviance, as “the existence of prostitution, polygamy, and divorce among Algerian Muslims not only supposedly distinguished them from the French, but many French observers used them as indices of Muslim intellectual, cultural, and moral degeneracy” (Schreier 88). Of course, Muslims were no less apt to levy their own charges of sexual impropriety—in chronicling Napoleon’s expeditions in Egypt, Muslim historian Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti condemned the foreign infidels with a portrait of vice and impurity, claiming that in

houses soiled with the stench of alcohol and excrement, the French “have intercourse with any woman who pleases them and vice versa” (cited in Hardman 35).

Circumstances were hardly different across the Atlantic. Nearly every sectarian religion in the francophone nations of the New World has found itself in the crosshairs of mainstream scorn as a result of perceived sexual immorality, mimicking the cultural fault lines that divided Europe and North Africa. Mirroring Bayle’s fictitious circumcision rites, the “orgiastic” depiction of Vodoun in Haiti and Louisiana created a literary sensationalism that saturated journals with scandalous “accounts” of ritualistic sex acts (Bastien 39; Fabre 14). If widespread polygamy was cause to condemn Muslims in Algeria, then aberrational polygamy and pedophilia among Mormons in Canada has been enough to saddle the entire religion with the stigma of sexual perversion in ways that have not been applied to Catholics for sexual abuse scandals (Cowan 77-78).³³ Even Catholicism has not escaped the ire of slanderous judgment in Louisiana, where nineteenth-century Protestants accused nuns of being “women of easy virtue” and priests of practicing “certain immoralities, not only with impunity, but with the entire approbation of their parishioners” (Carriere 366; Clapp, 206).³⁴

In convincing themselves of the uncontrolled sexuality of practitioners of other religions, Christians forged a dichotomy in which each side was balanced in moving away from the simple status of human being. By practicing the tenets of their faith, Christians were becoming increasingly like God, with the ultimate end being to transcend the mortal realm after death; meanwhile, the instinct-driven behavior of those of other faiths brought them closer to the

³³ The Mormon Church officially banned polygamy in 1890.

³⁴ An accusation levied by Know Nothing activist Reverend Dr R.M. Stell against the Sisters of Charity, as part of a tirade in which he accused Charity hospital in New Orleans of refusing to treat Protestants (Carriere 366).

animal world, where reason and intellectual morality are conspicuously absent. However, sexuality was not the only trait that people drew upon in order to highlight the primal and savage nature of those they would consider heathens. To reinforce the inferiority of their adversaries, Christians dwelled upon the inherent violence of other religions: if Christ was the lamb of peace, then it would follow that those who represented his opposite would be warlike and murderous.

The predominant stigma with which Jews had been saddled since the Middle Ages made it easy to label them as hateful and violent: if one believed that an entire community could bear the sins of a handful of its members, then the murder of Jesus Christ represented the ultimate act of violence. No matter the era or the nation, to those who saw no separation between religion and individual character, every Jew was a Christ-killer, filled with the same rage and maliciousness possessed by those who actually committed the deed. The link between the two was, in fact, somewhat of a chicken-egg scenario, for while it was believed that Christ's death at the hands of the Jews transformed them into a cursed and maligned people forever prone to incite wrath from God and other nations, it was also felt that the act of Christ's death was « solidement lié à leurs traits de caractère exécrables et à leur comportement barbare et cruel » (Yardeni 29-31, 71). In French Protestant communities as well as in Catholic ones, « l'utilisation sans remords du juif corrompu, méchant et sanguinaire, qui a mis Jésus à mort et qui a torturé les apôtres, aide à un enracinement encore plus profond du stéréotype juif médiéval » (Yardeni 63). The violence that Jews allegedly exhibited was bilateral; it was simultaneously an intellectual and emotional trait that was concomitantly the fault of the philosophical ideals of the religion itself and the inner character of its followers. On the one

hand, the Old Testament was « la quintessence de l'esprit vindicatif, de la cruauté, de la tromperie, et de la ruse » (Yardeni 100), while the people's adherence to a set of barbaric laws turned them all into Pharisees in the eyes of Pierre Bayle (Yardeni 105).³⁵ On the other hand, Jews were inherently « un peuple assez primitif . . . [qui] perpétuaient une série de crimes qui allaient de l'escroquerie au meurtre, sans se préoccuper de la morale ni de la raison » marked by a « fanatisme » and a « haine à l'égard des autres » (and towards Christians in particular) (Yardeni 102, 105, 130). In Algeria as well as in France, the same confrontational characteristics dominated public discourse, as the natural ignorance of Jews was said to be responsible for their "hatred of civilization," as well as making them more "prone to fanaticism" than their Christian counterparts (Schreier 78, 93). As with issues of sexuality, the animalistic nature of the subject was indicated not only by the mere possession of the instinct for violence, but by the lack of control over it, as synagogues were sometimes portrayed as unruly places where temple-goers were prone to drunkenness and fistfights (Schreier 93).

Rabid fanaticism was seen as a defining characteristic of Islam as well. The fear of the potential emergence of a blindly devoted, rabidly crazed mass of Muslims was employed by colonists in Algeria as a justification for everything from forcible suppression of the general populace to state control of the school system (Hardman 64-65; Schreier 120-122). Islamic schools known as *medersas* were often considered the hotbed of potential rebellion precisely because they were thought to teach a violent and dangerous religion, leading to the state opening its own, alternative Koranic schools which was hoped could teach "religion without

³⁵ Bayle dismissed the virtuous Jews of the Bible as the exception rather than the rule, while the zeal of the Pharisees was more indicative, « depuis le temps de Jésus », of « le principal courant du juadïsme » (Yardeni 105).

fanaticism” (see Schreier 120-122). To those concerned, the fault lay not merely with the teachers, but with the subject matter, as the teachings of Islam made it an inherently violent religion. French authors had a longstanding tradition of condemning the brutishness of the very roots of the religion, which they saw as imbued with the spirit of domination.

Montesquieu did not perceive Islam to be a theological system, but rather a sort of tyrannical despotism that was a product of its hot climate that:

encourages an indolence that inspires a sense of immutability in social mores that seeps as well into religious perception, engendering a sense of fatalism. Owing to this dynamic and the fact that it was spread through conquest, the ‘Mohammedan’ religion, he opines, is conducive to an overly conservative despotism which fails to soften the tendencies of its followers and, if anything, coarsens them.” (Hardman 24)

Count Volney saw the hawkishness of Islam as a byproduct of its Prophet, suggesting of the Koran: “If any general spirit pierces through the disorder of the perpetual delirium, it is that of an ardent and opinionated fanaticism,” as inspiring blind devotion “was Mahomet’s goal; he did not want to enlighten, but to reign. He did not seek disciples, but subjects. Even in his disciples he did not want reasoning, but obedience” (cited in Hardman 27). Like Judaism, however, only part of the violent tendencies of Muslims was blamed on their religious doctrine, as the other part was intrinsic. French general Thomas Bugeaud was quick to refute the suggestions of some of his pacifist St. Simonian contemporaries, suggesting that military suppression of Algeria was entirely necessary to control a people who were inherently “warlike, fanatical and quick to reason with arms” (Hardman 65). Little has changed in Western perception of Islam since Bugeaud’s time, as the actions of extremist groups skew perspective

on the religion as a whole, which continues to be perceived as inherently violent and fanatical (Césari 222-223).

Compared to the hawkish portrait of Islam, images of the violence of Vodoun tend to emphasize the sheer criminality and brutal sadism of its practitioners. According to scholar Elizabeth McAlister, the depiction of followers of Vodoun in Haiti closely mirrors that of followers of Judaism from prior centuries:

Jews were accused of a range of magical crimes, from superstition, sorcery, and desecration of the host all the way to ritual murder, the drinking of Christian blood, the eating of human flesh, and poisonings. It is striking that this list was replicated in the colony, targeting Africans and Creoles of Saint Domingue . . . [who were accused of] stealing and desecrating the host, drinking blood, and cannibalism, thus rounding out and replicating the litany of Christian charges against Jews. (McAlister 71-72)

As early as 1888, scholars found themselves attempting to dispel myths about the brutality of a much maligned religion, hoping to disprove popular impressions such as the idea that Vodoun ceremonies involved slaughtering newborn children before bringing them back to life, only to roast them alive and eat them (see Newell 16, 20-22). In Louisiana, despite “little proof” that human sacrifice had ever occurred, “for many years Orleanians believed that every small child that vanished had become a Voodoo sacrifice” (Tallant 15). Even in contemporary times, there has been a particular tendency, reinforced by media coverage of aberrational incidents, to affiliate the Vodoun religion with ritual murder and human sacrifice (see Bartkowski 669-670).³⁶ In Haiti, practitioners of Vodoun are frequently accused of poisoning

³⁶ For example, a grisly cult incident in Matamoros, Mexico, in 1989 caused the international press to affiliate the violence of the sociopathic cult leader with the religion itself (Bartkowski 670), demonstrating a clear double standard when one considers that incidents such as the 2007 slaying of the fellow parishioners of a former missionary-in-training (“Colorado Church Gunman”) never result in the scrutinizing of Christian doctrine.

their enemies, a notion compounded by the fact that not all who practice the religion are willing to deny it (see Wilentz 123).

The great irony of these grisly portraits of Judaism, Islam, and Vodoun is that those who painted them were far from peace loving, such that members of minority religions were far more likely to be the victims of faith-based violence than the perpetrators of it. The mention of violent crusades against religion is likely to bring to mind a few high-profile incidents from French history—namely the *dragonnades* in which Huguenots were massacred and their temples destroyed, as well as the famous persecution of Jews during the Second World War—but citizens in other francophone nations were just as likely to suffer at the hands of both spontaneous and premeditated attacks. Waves of mob violence as a result of public discontent have plagued Jews in the Maghreb both prior to and during French occupation, as Jewish neighborhoods were ransacked in Algeria in 1805 and throughout the 1930s (Schreier 11; Hardman 150), as well as in Morocco in 1904, when angry mobs “would harass and threaten Jewish merchants in markets, forcing them to flee to the Jewish quarter” (Munson 63). Muslims in the region suffered similar brutality and destruction at the hands of the French, who ransacked Koranic schools in the 1840s, inflicting “scorched-earth policies [that] resulted in their sacking and the burning of any texts they may have had on hand” (Hardman 90). Louisiana was equally intolerant of any minority religion during the mid-nineteenth century, as Mormons were apt to have their evangelical efforts disrupted by irate, grassroots mobs (see Buice 349), while the leaders of spiritualist churches, mistakenly believed to be practicing Vodoun, found themselves involved in confrontations with local police (see C. Bell 321). Practitioners of Vodoun in Haiti have been subject to numerous dragonnadesque campaigns in which temples were sacked, ritual paraphernalia confiscated or burned, believers forced to

renounce their faith, and cult leaders subjected to intimidation and ridicule before being “at least temporarily driven from their communities” (Courlander 6; Bastien 65).³⁷

Even today, Jews in Haiti are condemned through symbolic violence, as carnival season brings about an annual tradition that is still widely practiced despite being officially banned in the 1970s: the burning of a Jew in effigy. As part of the celebration of the Haitian carnival celebration known as *rara*, families create caricaturist straw effigies of Jewish figures for the event known as the *bwile jwif*, which they then light on fire “as a ritual retaliation against those who ‘killed Jesus’” (McAlister 67). The figure is sometimes labeled as Judas Iscariot, implicitly making “all Jews into Judases” (McAlister 69) by conflating an individual act of betrayal with the collective moral character of an entire religion.

2.4 Communal Domination and Restriction of Liberties

In casting minority religions as foreign, satanic, or immoral, the national and religious majorities appear to be doing their best to separate themselves from their adversaries. Highlighting the perpetual difference in essence, mentality, and character, the dominant forces would seem to be acknowledging the existence of two separate worlds while avowing the need to maintain a distinction between them. Were such boundaries fully respected, such that practitioners of minority religions were allowed to function entirely independently of those communities that have served them with constant reminders that they are unwanted, there would undoubtedly be significantly less religious tension speckling the national canvas. As it is, however, those who have chosen to worship outside of the borders of mainstream

³⁷ Waves of persecution sanctioned by the church occurred in 1896, 1913, 1939, and throughout the early 1940s. (Courlander 5)

acceptability have historically been laden with the unjust and paradoxical burden of being designated as “the Other” without being permitted to function as such. Few things being as profoundly meaningful or unflappable as one’s religious convictions, the persistence of divergent belief systems in the face of immense pressure has proven a resilient thorn in the sides of those who strive for a homogeneous society. Unable to eradicate or assimilate anomalous believers, mainstream forces have sought to dominate them; if the historic failure of forced conversions has proven that one cannot be forced to think as someone else does, then efforts can certainly be made to ensure that one acts as others do. While the temporal and social contexts may be different, the methods through which hegemonic forces have sought to control the lives and religious practices of members of minority faiths has been remarkably similar from faith to faith and country to country. Although the diversity of their philosophical outlooks and belief systems may seem reason for estrangement, members of a variety of faiths may take comfort in the knowledge that the invasive trials that their ancestors underwent in order to maintain their convictions were shared by other religions in other nations across *la Francophonie*.

While the Edict of Nantes and other such decrees of religious toleration are generally celebrated for providing Protestants with a guaranteed legal status, they are almost as notable for the freedoms they restricted as those they offered. If true liberty is unachievable in the absence of equality, then in many ways the edicts merely reinforced the bondage that fastened Huguenots to a life of stifled religious expression. For every guaranteed freedom in the January edict, for example, there seemed to be a caveat to ensure that it was not really a freedom after all. Protestants were allowed to worship publicly, yet were denied the right to build churches,

while general assemblies and meetings of synods could only transpire in the presence of a royal representative (see Crouzet 6, 8). They were permitted to preach, but only under the condition that they “promise not to preach a doctrine that contravened the pure word of God, according to the manner in which it is contained in the symbol of the Nicene Creed . . .” (Crouzet 8), and were forbidden to move “from one place to another, from village to village, to preach by force, contrary to the liking and consent of the lords, priests, vicars, and the churchwardens of the parishes” (Crouzet 9). Though allegedly independent from the Catholic Church, Protestants were not given the right to exact their own taxes and were required to submit to Catholic laws “regarding celebrations and days of inactivity” (Crouzet 9). In short, Protestants were allowed to be Protestant provided that they behaved like Catholics and submitted to the authority of the Catholic Church, leaving one to wonder if a religion can truly still be a religion when denied the independence of assembly, philosophy, speech, and method of worship.

Not content merely to hamper religious practices themselves, the Church found it necessary to exert control over the individual, dominating the most fundamental and the most intimate aspects of the lives of those affiliated with other religions. Extending its reach into the secular realm, Catholicism punished those who refused to pledge their allegiance to it by limiting them economically and socially, while simultaneously placing its stamp on all of life’s major milestones. During the reign of Louis XIV, the Catholic monarchy “introduced draconian legislation intended to make it impossible for Protestants to live and work in France”

(Garrioch 57).³⁸ Most occupations were closed to non-Catholics; children “were to be [forcibly] baptized in the Catholic Church and attend catechism. . . . Even the dead were to be punished for refusing the Catholic last rites: their bodies were to be dragged through the streets and refused burial, and their property was to be confiscated” (Garrioch 57). Perhaps no restriction constituted as outrageous or as personally offensive a violation of individual self-determination as the church’s insistence upon maintaining control over the rites of marriage, nor did any other inter-religious issue of its time provoke tensions as volatile and as emotionally charged (see Garrioch 58). To have the most meaningful expression of one’s love sullied by the presence of what often constituted the most profound object of one’s hate might be the ultimate act of psychological domination. From the 1724 enactment of a royal decree requiring all marriages to be performed by a Catholic priest until its repeal in 1787, both Protestants and Jews fought tooth and nail to be able to celebrate their most sacred act of self-expression on their own terms. In order to escape the yoke of Catholic restriction, non-Catholics employed a range of strategies, from engaging in clandestine weddings, to forging official-looking marriage certificates at the risk of imprisonment, to sneaking across international borders in order to perform legal ceremonies elsewhere (McCloy 65; Garrioch 64). Such blatant and widespread flouting of the law was seen as a slap in the face to the Church and the monarchy, who responded with retaliatory measures that only deepened schisms, such as declaring all children of non-Catholic marriages to be illegitimate and thus unable to claim their parents’ inheritance

³⁸ These laws applied to all non-Catholics, meaning Jews were subject to their oppressive effects as well. While Protestants would eventually be able to rid themselves of this burden, the economic and social restriction would continue to interfere in the lives of Jews even in the twentieth century, as the 1940s brought about legislation that made it similarly difficult to live and work in France, excluding them from public office and imposing quotas on their numbers “in other professions.” (Bernand 213)

(Yardeni 94). In some cases the government even “sent the young husbands to the army after giving them the choice between military service and re-marriage by a curé” (McCloy 65).

The more time passed, the more polemical and destructive the policy became. Offshooting from the great chasm that separated religions were hairline fractures that threatened the structural integrity of a number of social units of solidarity. Families were torn apart amidst a legal nightmare revolving around disputes over guardianship rights of children as well as inheritance issues that had Catholics contesting the wills of their Protestant family members (Garrioch 64). Meanwhile, the Catholic Church itself became deeply divided over the question of marriage as many Catholics (correctly) perceived that such a rigid policy not only failed to gain converts, but actually drove people further from the Church by fueling animosity. From the 1760s through the 1780s, a “selective repression” became the norm, as bishops and priests alike were split over how to approach the issue, with hard-liners becoming increasingly entrenched in their views while progressives began to advocate for civil marriage in the hopes of implementing a “potential step towards a ‘return’ to the church fold” (Garrioch 66).³⁹ The need to resolve such a contentious issue became so dire, in fact, that the legalization of civil marriage was a concession that was made before the legalization of non-Catholic religions, such that paradoxically one had the right to marry outside the Church before one had the right to live outside it.⁴⁰

³⁹ This would ultimately complicate the legalization process when it finally occurred, as conservatives were so unwilling to accept the change that they launched a grassroots refusal to implement the edict of legalization. Especially notable is the case of the Parisian chief of police who, despite repeated reminders, kept delaying the necessary paperwork that allowed civil marriages to be recognized. (Garrioch 72)

⁴⁰ The edict in 1788 that finally allowed both priests and magistrates to preside over weddings still insisted “the Catholic, apostolic and Roman religion alone will continue to enjoy the right of public worship in our Kingdom.” (Garrioch 72)

Control over marriage was wrested from the hands of religious authorities in colonial Algeria as well, though not by a rival monastic body but by a secular one. While the Catholic Church may no longer have had any official place in the post-revolutionary French government, it is clear that Christian mores continued to shape the colonial mentality when it came to certain traditions. Polygamy and divorce, both entirely acceptable matrimonial practices according to Muslim and Jewish custom, served as proof to government officials that the French conception of marriage was the only “moral” one and must therefore be imposed on the native populace regardless of their own religious convictions (Schreier 72). As polygamists were put on trial for their offenses, many colonials argued for the criminalization of divorce as well, as it was not only a profanation of a sacred institution in and of itself, but also the “frequent cause” of other forms of immorality (presumably fornication and other lascivious acts [Schreier 141, 157-158]). Ultimately, “France affirmed family law as central to civilization” by stripping Algerian Jews and Muslims of their right to marry and divorce “solely in conformity to local customs and religious authority, and requiring them to contract civil marriages” (Schreier 146), thus forging a weapon of oppression out of an institution that only a century prior had been one of resistance. The key to enforcing these ideals lay in exerting control over local religious authorities: rabbis were forbidden to perform marriages without obtaining prior authorization, while those who performed divorces without the approval of the local consistory had their charitable funds cut off (Schreier 72, 158).⁴¹ As in France, issues of parental legitimacy and family inheritance were perpetual monkey wrenches employed to sabotage

⁴¹ Rabbis appointed to their positions by the French government also did its bidding, aiding in the crackdown of marriages by complicating the logistics of the ceremony (e.g., banning musicians in their congregations from playing at ceremonies). (Schreier 153)

clandestine marriages, putting undue stress on families as well as on the French court system (Schreier 156). However, the faith-driven willpower of Algerian Jews and Muslims striving to maintain control over their own sacred ceremonies was just as steadfast and motivated as it had been for French Protestants and Jews, leading them to employ similar tactics of resistance. Local couples “contracted marriages beyond the gaze of French administrative authorities, frustrating local officials and forcing them to call upon their superiors in Paris or Algiers for clearer legislation” (Schreier 3). Even when the law was unequivocally clear, Jews and Muslims continued to perform marriages clandestinely or in another country (Schreier 160-161). Ultimately, colonial attempts to regulate marriage amounted in a colossal failure, as resistance to imposed marriages became the norm rather than the exception.⁴²

Attempts to regulate marriages were a means of exerting personal domination over individuals practicing other religions, but total control over religions meant manipulation of a complex system, eradicating the power of autonomy in multiple domains of the lives of worshippers. As was the case in France, institutional interference on a personal level was balanced by interference on an economic and social level, attacking both the individual and the collective ability to function. Whereas early in Algeria’s history it had been Islam attempting to control the lives of practitioners of minority religions through manipulation of these domains (pre-colonial Jews and Christians paid additional taxes, and were subject to sumptuary laws and restrictions on building or expanding non-Muslim places of worship [Schreier 11]), throughout the colonial era Muslims, like their Jewish brethren, found themselves on the receiving end of

⁴² While he makes no reference to the overall degree of resistance in the Muslim community, Schreier does note that “so many Jews were avoiding civil marriages that official rabbis . . . could conduct only a small percentage of Jewish weddings in Oran.” (Schreier 160)

such efforts. While Muslims felt the yoke of an unjust tax burden, Algerian consistories were given control over Jewish community's budget, including alms distribution, under the guise of uplifting them economically (Hardman 110; Schreier 24).⁴³ Meanwhile, control over sacred space again proved a crucial means of stunting the communal dynamic, as Jews and Muslims were denied the liberty of setting their own terms of worship, from construction of temples to the activities inside them. A moratorium was placed on the construction of private synagogues, as it was thought that a government sponsored, centralized synagogue could help reign in the "rebellious spirit" of the community; mosques remained under state control despite French laws of *laïcité* (Schreier 86; Hardman 110). Consistories were responsible for maintaining order in synagogues and for suppressing unauthorized religious assemblies, as the colonial government thought it imperative to "retain a direct control over the functions of worship . . . [that is] manifest notably in the nomination of personnel" (Schreier 24; Hardman 110). Religious assembly was to be monitored and reigned in even when not confined to interior spaces, while religious observance was forced to conform to the whims of a society that adhered to a different set of values. Just as the mobility of Protestant evangelists had been curtailed and their holiday privileges denied, so too were Muslims forced to modify their means of celebrating their most sacred events. Although Christians did not need a permit to gather, pilgrimages and other Muslim festivals were strictly regulated and could be cancelled or forbidden with no further explanation. The code de l'indigénat required internal passports for Muslims, so visits to qubba or other shrines could be controlled with ease. Perhaps the most odious aspect of travel restrictions was the near impossibility of obtaining a passport in order to effect the hajj.^{44,45} The authorities held that the pilgrimage to Mecca

⁴³ In 1912, Muslims controlled thirty-eight percent of land but paid more than seventy-one percent of taxes.

⁴⁴ A qubba is a tomb or mausoleum.

⁴⁵ The hajj is a journey to Mecca that every Muslim is expected to make once during his life. Preventing the obtaining of passports made embarking on this quest impossible, as potential pilgrims could not leave the country.

exacerbated 'fanaticism and disobedience' and so was outright forbidden at times.
(Hardman 111)

Across the Atlantic, similar tactics of dominance were employed by a Catholic Church eager to establish its hegemony. When it came to marriage, it was important to regulate not only those belonging to other religions, but the behavior of its own parishioners. By monopolizing matrimonial participation, the Church felt it could better regulate the personal morality of its membership. Early missionaries in Louisiana fought against state policies forbidding interracial marriage, as they felt that the institution was inherently tied with religious practice itself, and that men's failure to "bind themselves to any woman through legitimate marriage" led them to profligate lives of "concubinage with young Indian women," which in turn caused their "public and habitual lack of religion" (Spear 85). Conversely, American Indian marriage to settlers was thought to be a means of converting non-believers and teaching them Catholic values (Spear 86). While Louisianians failed to convince an American government to allow them control of this institutional practice, the Church had more success in the Caribbean. The Code Noir of St. Domingue encouraged those involved in interracial relationships to legitimize them, "exempting the unmarried free man from punishment if he married 'in forms observed by the Church,'" for in this French territory "the *métropole* was apparently more concerned with imposing Roman Catholic mores on . . . the colony's inhabitants, slave and free, African and European, and with suppressing illicit relationships" than it was with maintaining racial segregation (Spear 97).

The Church found ways in which to dominate the religious practice of some of its own, not for being members of a minority religion, but for being minority members of the religion.

African-Americans in Louisiana were treated as though their own worship practices fell outside the church. In particular, the right to free assembly was curtailed, succeeding in establishing African-Americans as outsiders. Initially, exclusively non-white assembly was perceived as dangerous and potentially seditious.

As racial tensions heightened in antebellum Louisiana, an increasing number of wary whites looked askance on congregations of free nonwhites gathered for religious or other purposes. Many felt that such meetings provided too convenient a cover for the planning of slave insurrections . . . A law was ultimately passed that restricted the congregation of nonwhites, slave or free, for religious purposes. Only if whites were included in their assemblies were the gens de couleur libres allowed freedom of worship after that time. (Mills 182)

As the dawn of the nineteenth century approached, however, exclusive non-white worship suddenly became the only acceptable form of religious assembly. Racial segregation within the church progressed from separate seating to separate churches; Creoles of color as well as blacks were forcibly expelled from their historic buildings of worship (Bennett 187-190), and were expected to maintain an independent existence after having been expressly forbidden to do so. Adding to the burden and alienation was the economic power play on the part of the Catholic administration, which refused financial support to those who were allegedly still part of an affiliated Catholic network. As the Church hierarchy monopolized communal resources, distributing all of them to the new all-white congregations, they dictated a scenario in which only religious orders and outsiders could be responsible for financing mandated black churches (Bennett 197). With no self-determination of finances or worshipful assembly, African-American Catholics were subject to the same treatment as those who had never followed Catholicism in the first place.

These African-American Catholics suffered because of a paradox of identity: their spiritual inclination fell squarely within the realm of Catholicism, but their skin color represented an impediment to the full realization of this status. Throughout this chapter we have seen numerous examples of such clashing forces that pull an individual in opposite directions: clergy torn between serving the interests of their congregation and those of their government, citizens pressured to choose between national and religious value systems, members of minority religions whose faith denies them acceptance within their national communities. These incompatibilities typify religious conflict. Religion offers a system of governance, a set of philosophies dictating the way that one should live; however, this system is never allowed total control over an individual or a society, but rather must share space with competing ideologies, be they national ones or those of other religions. Tension is inevitable, as the shared space cannot be unified: the ideologies do not integrate, nor does one eliminate the other. Instead, religions are subject to polarizing forces. On the one hand, they undergo exclusionary tactics, whether it is facing accusations of incompatibility with democracy or vilification by members of another religion. On the other hand, this exclusion is offset by a continued engagement in their affairs, in particular attempts to control them, including government manipulation of priests and major religions that restrict the liberties of minor ones.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CITY IN FRANCOPHONE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Choice of Texts

When it comes to the historical sagas of national language and religion, conflict is not merely woven into the primary narratives; it is etched quite noticeably on their surfaces. One can hardly open a book without encountering stories of ideological clashes, as even the most cursory examinations of these subjects readily identify battles that they proceed to discuss openly and directly. Yet in order to emphasize the breadth of connections that link citizens of disparate national and cultural backgrounds, one should look for stories of conflict that may not instantly come to mind when examining the backgrounds in which they occur, marked by battles that are not always acknowledged as such on the surface. In this regard, there are numerous cultural loci around which one could construct a detailed analysis, such as art (the word calls many aesthetic and philosophical ideas to mind before one thinks of the societal controversies, inner torments, or even clashes between artist and patron) or science (a realm littered with contention, from Galileo's well-known story to modern-day rejection of vaccines), yet it seems perhaps most apropos for a thesis focused on a geographic notion to seek out conflict inherently rooted in the space of habitation. If nation-states are the driving force behind *la Francophonie*, then they in turn are piloted by the cities within them. As an international project, *la Francophonie* is motivated by politics, economics, and culture; in the post-industrial world, all of these revolve around urban centers.

It might be tempting to analyze the city in much the same way as I have done with language and religion; that is to say, create a sociological or historic backdrop focusing on rifts in national fabric along obvious urban fault lines such as ethnic division, class segregation, or geographic boundaries. Indeed, such analysis should ideally be done in the future, but for this essay I have chosen to instead use the lens of literature to examine a common cultural narrative across multiple francophone nations. Many have written on the power of literature in unifying nations (see Brennan 52; Sommer 77), yet literature offers just as many opportunities for connections across national borders. Beyond any sort of global cosmopolitanism, there is a common transnational, transcultural experience based on common battle against environment. Literature allows us to understand these *lieux de rencontre* through the experiences of various characters, as this chapter attempts to do by examining novels, and in the case of the works of Emile Verhaeren, poems, from seven different cultures spread across five regions of *la Francophonie*. By comparing a range of nations and eras—Louisiana, in the nineteenth century; Belgium, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the latter from the perspective of a Senegalese immigrant); Quebec, in the 1940s; Martinique, in the 1990s; and the suburbs of Paris, in the 2000s through the eyes of a first-generation French girl of Moroccan descent—I hope to show insight into the facets of the conflictual urban experience that demonstrate universal qualities.

Although generally addressed as one overarching work, Sidonie de la Houssaye's *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orléans* is technically a serial comprised of four novels that, while written and submitted for publication in the 1880s, remained unpublished until 1894. Two of these sub-volumes, *Octavia la quarteronne* and *Violetta la quarteronne*, have been

consolidated online at Centenary University's *Bibliothèque Tintamarre*, and it is these two works that I address in this thesis. Both focus on quadroons, women of mixed race who were privy to a higher social status than full-blooded African-Americans in nineteenth century Louisiana, and the ruinous effect that they have on the men who fall for them. *Octavia la quarteronne* opens with the tale of Charles Rennes, the son of a rural plantation owner who, during a trip to New Orleans to settle his father's accounts, falls for a quadroon named Adoréah. In passing by a jewelry store on Royal Street, Adoréah lets it be known that she will give herself to whomever procures for her a necklace prominently displayed in the store window. Because the merchant is charging an exorbitant amount for this piece of jewelry, which he claims belonged to Marie Antoinette, Charles resorts to forging his father's name in order to obtain a bank loan, only to be rejected and taunted by Adoréah as soon as she is in possession of the necklace. Shamed by the ruin he has brought his family, Charles kills himself in his hotel room, and the news of his death so shocks his mother that it causes her to die as well. With Adoréah's tale complete, the focus of the novel shifts to her friend and fellow quadroon Octavia. When Octavia's longtime lover, Alfred, is offered a judgeship, he vows to live his life respectably, which means abandoning his illicit relationship with Octavia and marrying his cousin, Angèle. After a two-year hiatus in Europe, during which time they give birth to a son, Léonce, Alfred and Angèle return to New Orleans to find that Octavia has taken up with a rich Cuban immigrant and has allegedly become pregnant with his child. In reality, however, the pregnancy is part of an elaborate ruse by which Octavia intends to exact her revenge. When Angèle gives birth to a daughter, Octavia bribes a doctor into switching the child with that of an Irish woman, then absconds with Alfred's daughter. Eventually it is

discovered that the child in Alfred's possession is not his own, and Angèle dies from grief.

Octavia raises "Mary" as her own, and upon her return to New Orleans more than a decade later, Léonce falls in love with her, unaware that she is his sister. Octavia eventually reveals her plot to the judge, who rushes to discover his two children in the thralls of passion, which prompts him to kill his daughter and himself, leaving his son to live with the shame of what has transpired.

The story of *Violetta la quarteronne* is no less scandalous, following the moral downfall of a suburban shopkeeper named Pierre Saulvé. When a client of his, Monsieur Nelson, invites him to a quadroon ball, Pierre is initially reticent. Once at the ball, however, Pierre becomes so obsessed with an adolescent girl nicknamed Miette (short for Violetta) that he devotes himself to pleasing her at the expense of his relationship with his family, whom he eventually abandons to poverty as Miette drains him of every last cent he owns. Miette convinces him to engage in a legal contract of *plaçage* with her, making her his official mistress according to Louisiana's customs, and gradually takes control of his estate, where she repeatedly hosts orgies and partakes in debaucheries. Upon the death of his son, which Pierre realizes has come about in part due to his own neglect, he abandons Violetta, only to return to her eventually despite the fact that she now has another lover, Louis Pain. Pierre threatens to kill Violetta if he finds that she has been unfaithful, and Louis leaps to his death to prevent his discovery. However, it is not long before she seduces another man, this time in the form of Pierre's daughter's fiancé, Georges. Georges challenges Pierre to a duel, and although Pierre apologizes and refuses to engage him, Georges kills him anyway. As Pierre's daughter joins a convent out of shame, Violetta flees to Cuba to live with Octavia.

Compared to other nations, the existing body of francophone literature from Louisiana is small and remains drastically understudied. Even so, de la Houssaye remains an instrumental figure within the corpus, as she was “the only widely published woman among nineteenth-century Louisiana authors who wrote in French” (White), receiving a literary commendation in the form of the gold medal from the *Athénée Louisianais*, a society founded to preserve French in Louisiana. She enjoyed a friendship with George Washington Cable, who went so far as to buy the rights to her grandmother’s diary and included some of its contents in his *Strange True Stories of Louisiana* (White). Although most of her work was published under her own name, for *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orléans* she used the pseudonym of Louise Raymond (the name I have used in my parenthetical references), presumably because of the controversial nature of a work that dealt with such issues as incest and *plaçage*. Her work is essential to this thesis because it represents a rare example of francophone literature from Louisiana that takes advantage of an urban backdrop. While it is not uncommon to find poems, such as Emilie Evershed’s “Le Laurier Rose,” and novels, such as Adrien Rouquette’s *La Nouvelle Atala*, that extol the virtues of their rural settings, it is rare indeed to find a figure such as de la Houssaye for whom the big city plays such an integral role in advancing literary themes. The quadroons about whom she writes are embodiments of the city itself: beautiful, alluring, extravagant and exotic, seemingly made to provide unimaginable entertainment and bliss—yet also merciless, full of dangerous temptations, with the potential to ruin a man who is not careful.

Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren began publishing his works in the 1880s; however, “it was only in 1893, with the cycle *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, followed in 1895 with *Les Villes tentaculaires*, that Verhaeren became known, perhaps even notorious, to a sizable audience”

(Thum 217). In these two collections, Verhaeren depicts an urban milieu that is every bit as dangerous as de la Houssaye's New Orleans, but for different reasons. If de la Houssaye's landscape is seductive, then Verhaeren's is powerful and brutal, constantly growing and effectively consuming the world around it. The fact that Emile Verhaeren fails to name the city that he develops in these collections leaves one to speculate as to whether his carefully constructed world of factories, cathedrals, banks, and bazaars is actually Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, or perhaps some other metropolis. Such speculation may ultimately be irrelevant, however, as Verhaeren's city is all cities: a symbol of industrialization whose physical traits and overall effects on humanity are typical of trends that were occurring all over the Western world.

In "La Ville," the opening poem of *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, Verhaeren unveils a city that sprawls in all directions, both bright from the glow of factories and dark from their smoke. The author compares the city to an octopus, a metaphor by which we can see that, to Verhaeren, the city is truly « un être vivant » (Prion 13), an idea that he continues to develop in this collection and in *Les Villes tentaculaires*. The principal theme of *Les Campagnes hallucinées* is « l'abandon de la terre par les ruraux qu'attire le mirage de la grande ville » (Prion 12). Incentives abound in a variety of forms, enumerated in "Le donneur de mauvais conseils," where a mysterious and evil figure convinces *les paysans* to leave their homes through such actions as setting fire to their fields and assuring the greedy that they will find fortune in the city. The mass migration culminates in the final poem of the collection, "Le Départ," in which flocks of people mindlessly march towards the menacing yet irresistible metropolis. Interspersing the primary poems of the collection is a « poésie de non-sens » in the form of

several « chansons de fou » (Prion 12). Although these poems may be nothing more than wild hallucinations by a morbid figure who enjoys killing rats and breaking their bones (see Verhaeren, "Les Campagnes hallucinées" 40-41), they nevertheless embody the desperate atmosphere of a countryside stricken with misfortune. In *Les Villes tentaculaires*, Verhaeren shifts his attention to the inner workings of the city. In this collection, the city is fueled by raw human emotion, from the violence that overtakes the streets in "La Révolte" to the carnal desires that abound in the red light district in "L'Étal." Verhaeren uses various landmarks of the city to represent the changing societal values ushered in with the industrial era. Thus, the idolization of money is represented by the stock exchange in "La Bourse;" the new consumerism of the masses finds its embodiment in the department store described in "Le Bazar" (Thum 266). The multiculturalism of the age is reflected in "Le Port," the mouth of a city that is becoming increasingly connected to a newly globalized world. Although most of the poems of *Les Villes tentaculaires* paint a sinister picture of the urban landscape, the collection ends on a more positive note, as poems such as "Les idées" and "Le futur" reinforce the notion that the power of the city has as much potential to be used for the benefit of humanity as it does to bring about woe and despair.

The inclusion of Verhaeren in this thesis serves a double purpose. First, his use of lyric poetry helps to broaden the literary representation within this comparative venture, as it represents a distinct stylistic departure from the plot-driven novels and first-person analyses represented by the other works I have examined. In addition, it offers a critical interpretation of urbanization at a time when this phenomenon was one of the most important happenings in

the world. Feeling that Verhaeren was one of the only poets to have been “conscious of what is poetical in contemporary feeling,” Austrian author Stefan Zweig wrote in 1914:

In Verhaeren's work our age is mirrored. The new landscapes are in it; the sinister silhouettes of the great cities; the seething masses of a militant democracy; the subterranean shafts of mines; the last heavy shadows of silent, dying cloisters. All the intellectual forces of our time, our time's ideology, have here become a poem; the new social ideas, the struggle of industrialism with agrarianism, the vampire force which lures the rural population from the health-giving fields to the burning quarries of the great city, the tragic fate of emigrants, financial crises, the dazzling conquests of science, the syntheses of philosophy, the triumphs of engineering, the new colours of the impressionists. (9)

Although Verhaeren may not be the figure most studied by contemporary scholars, there can be no denying his role as one of the most important francophone Belgian poets of his day.

Among the “best known and most deservedly honored” Belgian poets (Vanwelkenhuyzen 295), the writings of his contemporaries give insight as to the prominence Verhaeren had within literary circles. In a 1913 article for *The North American Review*, O.F. Theis writes that Verhaeren “has introduced a new modality into poetry not in France alone, but in other countries. In Germany, writers like Stefan Zweig and Johannes Schlaf, themselves poets of distinction, have translated his work . . . in Scandinavia, Ellen Key has devoted essays to him, and George Brandes, one of the greatest of living critics, has praised him with enthusiastic acclaim” (354). In 1917, not long after Verhaeren’s death, American poet Ezra Pound wrote “I think I am right in saying that Verhaeren carried more weight with the better young poets of Paris, five years ago, than did most, or perhaps any, of his contemporaries” (256).

Like Verhaeren, Canadian author Gabrielle Roy uses the city as a lens through which to examine the values of her day. Published in 1945 and set during the early years of the Second

World War, Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion* contains a dual plot line that examines the challenges and dilemmas faced by a working-class family in the Montreal neighborhood of Saint-Henri. On the one hand, the book follows the romantic endeavors of Florentine Lacasse, a waitress who is desperate to escape the poverty into which she was born. After much persistence, she agrees to go out on a date with a brash young man named Jean Lévesque, during which she falls in love with him, while he simultaneously decides that she is beneath him. Frustrated by his sudden lack of interest, Florentine attempts to exact revenge on Jean by publicly flirting with his friend Emmanuel, a flirtation that causes the latter to fall for Florentine. Even as Florentine engages in a courtship with Emmanuel, she continues desperately to pursue Jean despite his mistreatment of her. After she becomes pregnant with Jean's child, however, he abandons her once and for all. Realizing that Emmanuel represents the potential for security, she exploits his *naïveté* by convincing him to marry her before he heads off to war. At the same time, the novel focuses on Florentine's mother, Rose-Anna, as she struggles to manage her family. In addition to Florentine's capricious behavior, Rose-Anna must contend with a husband, Azarius, who cannot keep a job and who spends most of his time at the local bar/restaurant known as *Les Deux Records*, as well as two sons who leave her constantly concerned for their lives: Eugène, because he has decided to enlist in the army, and the young Daniel, who eventually succumbs to a battle with leukemia. Rose-Anna must address all of this while simultaneously facing challenges such as unwanted pregnancy and eviction from her house.

Gabrielle Roy is not merely one of one of the most important Canadian writers of the post-war period (Ricard), she is one of Canada's most important women writers of the entire twentieth century (Benedict). *Bonheur d'occasion* helped Roy win some of the most prestigious

literary prizes of multiple countries, including France's *Prix Femina* and Canada's Governor General Award. The novel helped shape the course of an entire generation; it is "a pioneering work of urban realism and of feminist fiction [that is] widely credited with laying the groundwork for the quiet revolution" by forcing the Quebecois to examine the unpleasant aspects of their society (Robbins 14). With respect to this thesis, not only does the urban environment play a crucial role in Roy's book, it is much of what made the work so groundbreaking in its day. Within Quebecois literature, *Bonheur d'occasion* is "considered the seminal urban novel and substantially raised public awareness of this genre" (Eibl 250). Representing a marked departure from the rural nostalgia that had previously embodied the Quebecois literary voice, with the publication of *Bonheur d'occasion*, "the French-Canadian novel had suddenly become caught up with its time, becoming urban, involving itself in ideas and the realities of modern life. No longer colonial or rural, it had become analytical and critical" (Allard 215). As a 1946 book review in the *Modern Language Journal* put it,

. . . even in the face of a steadily declining rural population, such gifted novelists as Savard, Ringuet, Desrosiers and Grignan have rejected the city as an area of French-Canadian life worthy of observation... [But Roy's] story of a French-Canadian family's bitter struggle for survival in Canada's metropolis has a universal appeal in its realistic portrayal of humble people hoping and striving for economic and physical security in a world which can guarantee neither. (Jobin 234-235)

Ken Bugul's 1982 novel *Le Baobab fou* brings a new dimension to the analysis of the conflictual space of the city in that it is wholly autobiographical, so much so that the author did not even consider it to be a truly literary endeavor ("Unwanted one"). Although Bugul is the name by which the author is best known, it is actually a pseudonym for Mariétou M'baye Biléoma, whose publishers demanded—initially against her wishes—that she adopt a pen name

in light of the controversial subject matter, as the author admits to behavior generally deemed unacceptable in Muslim societies such as her home nation of Senegal (D'Almeida 44). The name she chose means "unwanted one" in the Wolof language, and is reflective of the constant rejection that Bugul faces throughout the book, from the neglect by her largely absent parents, to her inability to integrate fully into a foreign society, to her gradual estrangement from the values of the society in which she was raised. Although the story begins before her birth, with the brief story of the village baobab tree whose "survival of fire, destruction, and decay through the passage of time depict the community's rootedness and will to preserve their traditions that survive calamities" (Edwin 77), the majority of the novel recounts Bugul's turbulent life in Brussels in the 1970s, where what is meant to be a journey of self-discovery becomes a journey of self-loss.

Having received a scholarship to study at the university, she feels alienated from her host society from the very moment of her arrival. The ensuing series of events simultaneously reflect an abandonment of traditional moral values and a post-colonial awakening, both of which serve to imbue Bugul with senses of self-loathing and uncertainty of identity. After losing her virginity to a man she has no intention of marrying, her subsequent abortion provides her first taste of blatant racism at the hands of a doctor who chides her for being involved with a white man. While her friend Léonora helps her recover from the trauma of this incident, she drops out of school and begins frequenting cafes and nightclubs in an attempt to exercise her freedom, only to find herself feeling confined by her race as she struggles to conform to the conceptions that her associates have of her. Every relationship that she makes is tinged with promise, yet becomes somehow tainted. She befriends a flamboyant bisexual man named Jean

Wermer but eventually decides that she is no more than an exotic object that he wishes to possess. Finding a fellow Senegalese immigrant named Souleymane only frustrates her when she realizes that in his eyes, as an African, she is supposed to embrace a pan-Africanism to which she feels no connection. Even when she finds friends to whom her race seems to bear no importance, in the form of the sweet and nurturing couple Paul and Hélène Denoël, her status as a woman in a Western society interferes with the relationship, as the intensity of her entirely platonic feelings towards Paul are misinterpreted by Hélène.

As her relationships fall apart, so does her self-respect; she turns to drugs and, eventually, prostitution, prompting a series of emotional crises during which she longs for the safety of the baobab, yet realizes that she is drifting further and further away from the ideals of the community of her birth. Bugul reaches an emotional low point after agreeing to a sexual encounter with a man who desires her only because of her race, seeing her as merely a conquest that can be bought for the price of a coat. Suicidal, she begins to reflect on where her life went wrong and realizes that she began to pull away from her community while still living in Senegal; beginning at the moment she was introduced to Western society in the form of French schooling. It was not in leaving her country, but rather in leaving her village for the contemporary global city—first in the form of a vacation to her brother's house in Dakar, then subsequently to live in Saint Louis for high school—that she truly abandoned the person who she was. As she leaves Belgium in the hopes of recovering by returning to Senegal, she discovers that, like herself, although the baobab is still standing, the life inside of it is gone.

Although it was for a later work, the 1999 novel *Riwan ou le chemin de sable*, that Bugul would win the *Grand Prix de l'Afrique Noire*, *Le Baobab fou* remains not only her seminal work, but the one by which she rose to literary prominence among contemporary African authors. Profiled in Erica Baumeister's *500 Great Books by Women* and chosen by *QBR Black Book Review* as one of Africa's 100 best books of the twentieth century, the book was considered revolutionary when it was published, as no Senegalese woman had ever written such a courageous and controversial autobiography (D'Almeida 44; "The Abandoned Baobab"). It is largely because of this book that Bugul, who would go on to be knighted by the French government as a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres*, has come to be recognized as "one of the most important figures in African sub-Saharan literature written in French" (Etoke 192). Because the book focuses so heavily on Bugul's developing consciousness of her sociocultural identity within the context of living in a foreign nation, critical analyses of *Le Baobab fou* have tended to examine the book from a post-colonial perspective. In this thesis, however, discussions of post-colonial themes are secondary to an analysis of Ken's relationship to her metropolitan environment. I attempt to show that much of the Ken's internal conflict, as well as her hostility towards her environment, is attributable to more than simply being an African living in Europe: it is also the product of being immersed in the city.

Published in 1992, the story in Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco* spans more than 150 years as it chronicles the lives of a freed slave and his daughter in Martinique as they attempt to carve a place for themselves in an unstable and often tumultuous environment. From a narrative perspective, it is a difficult book to categorize; plot threads are interrupted by philosophical musings and analytical "journal entries." As expressed in a 1993 book review for

World Literature Today, “Nominally a novel, *Texaco* expands the traditional notions of the genre. It could qualify as an oral history of epic proportions” (Silenieks 877). It is a series of stories “both true and fabulous . . . [that] constitute a personal and communal record of black experience on the island from the early days of slavery through its abolition and beyond” (Michaels). The novel begins in 1985, as an urban planner sent to assess a neighborhood slated for demolition is knocked unconscious by a stone and taken before Marie-Sophie, an old woman who functions as a sort of tribal leader for the community. In an attempt to persuade the urban planner that the neighborhood merits preservation, she unfurls a tale that begins in the early nineteenth century and progresses through multiple generations of her family, highlighting a number of major events, both historical and personal, that demonstrate the deep connection between people and the land they inhabit.

Much of the early portion of the novel focuses on Marie-Sophie’s father, Esternome, who after being granted freedom from slavery in exchange for having healed a plantation owner, becomes a mason and helps build the city of Saint Pierre. He falls in love with a capricious woman named Ninon, who convinces him to begin a colony in the hills only to see it fail as the island becomes increasingly industrialized. Although he and Ninon survive the violence of a slave revolt and the hardships of famine, Ninon is killed when Mont Pelée erupts, destroying Saint Pierre and forcing Esternome to flee to Fort-de-France. In this city’s destitute Quarter of the Wretched, he takes up residence with a witch named Adrienne and her blind sister, Indoménée, who would eventually become Marie-Sophie’s mother. After her parents’ deaths, Marie-Sophie’s life begins to parallel that of her father in many ways. She too falls for a capricious lover, a musician named Basile; survives violence in the form of a rape by her

employer, Monsieur Alcibiade; and feels compelled to pour her labor into modifying the city by creating a community of her own. Discovering an unwanted plot of land polluted by oil drilling at the edge of the city, Marie-Sophie begins the task of building the neighborhood she would call Texaco, which would grow to function as an autonomous settlement until the arrival of the urban planner. Reflecting upon the nature of city and community in a series of journal entries throughout the novel, the urban planner concludes that Texaco represents a necessary counterbalance to the all-consuming city, and by virtue its history and the spirit of community within it, merits salvation.

Although the book is generally lauded for its creative use of language and its re-imagining of Martinican history, it is Chamoiseau's striking perspective on urbanity that makes the novel of exceptional interest to this thesis. While some might argue that Marie-Sophie's narrative voice is the thread that binds the chaotic smattering of characters, histories, and ideas contained in this novel, I believe that the true cohesive thread is the ever-present city, which infiltrates every aspect of the book. Urban forces govern even the book's chronology; the building materials representative of the architectural infrastructure of the time mark sections representing distinct historical time periods. The section representing the years 1823-1902, for example, is labeled *Temps de paille*, while 1946-1960 is entitled *Temps de fibrocement*. Given a proper name (the always-capitalized "*En-ville*") and imbued with a distinct sense of agency, the city is every bit as much of a central character as human beings such as Esternome and Marie-Sophie. Each character's actions are motivated by a desire to shape the environment around him/her, and the interaction between human and city becomes the defining motif that links otherwise disparate eras and people.

To state, as Janice Morgan did in an article for *The French Review*, that « Patrick Chamoiseau figure parmi les écrivains antillais qui ont gagné une réputation internationale » (186), is a profound understatement; Chamoiseau is without a doubt one of the most iconic literary figures in the entire French Antillean pantheon. With the publication of *Eloge de la créolité* in 1988, which he co-authored with Jean Bernabé and Raphaël Confiant, Chamoiseau helped launch an entire literary movement within Antillean writing known as *créolité*. Influencing Caribbean authors and “making waves” in France and in American universities alike, *créolité* was born out of a rejection of the confines both of Eurocentric universalism and of the Afrocentric approach of *négritude*, celebrating in their wakes the blending of cultures and ideas that characterizes Antillean life (Taylor 126-130). In the 1990s, “Almost overnight, Chamoiseau [became] one of the most illustrious names in our literary firmament: a ‘Gabriel Garcia Marquez of the Antilles,’ as the *New York Times* pronounced on the translation of *Texaco* in 1997” (Taylor 125). Chamoiseau’s unique writing style is much of what has contributed to his reputation amongst critics and fellow authors, earning him comparisons to such diverse figures as Joyce, Rushdie, Kafka, Céline, and, on more than one occasion, Rabelais (see Michaels; Knepper 26-27; Taylor 127). He exhibits a prose that is “concerned with the creative spaces between languages and the interplay between linguistic registers,” infusing French with Creole in “great polyphonic rushes of words and ideas” (Knepper 26). The style is remarkable in that, in the words of Milan Kundera, Chamoiseau “grafts many Creole turns of phrase onto French . . . [and] takes liberties in bringing into French unaccustomed, unconventional, ‘impossible’ expressions and neologisms” (Kundera, cited in Réjouis 213-214). His novels have been “a vital source for fellow Caribbean authors in the francophone, hispanic, and anglophone

Caribbean,” with *Texaco* in particular influencing such works as Austin Clarke’s *The Polished Hoe* and Junot Diaz’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Knepper 26).

Texaco represents the most celebrated work of a much-celebrated author, winning France’s most coveted literary award, the *Prix Goncourt*, in 1992. The novel made an immediate impact in the international community, earning Chamoiseau the admiration of such authors as Derek Walcott, who wrote for the *New York Review of Books*:

I would press your book into the hands of every West Indian as if it were a lost heirloom, even on those who cannot read. I would run through the markets with vendors in the shade of huge umbrellas, past abandoned fountains, stopping traffic with an uplifted hand, entering dark retail stores selling fading ledgers and disintegrated chalks, preaching, "You have to read this book, it is yours. It has come to reclaim you!" (Walcott)

Published in 2004, Faiza Guène’s *Kiffe kiffe demain* lies somewhere in between Bugul’s autobiography and Chamoiseau’s chaotic musings, stylistically speaking. Reading more like a diary than a novel, Guène focuses less on establishing a linear plot than she does on using descriptive language and emotionally-charged opinions to create an over-arching portrait of life in the impoverished Parisian suburb of Livry-Gargan, as seen through the eyes of a perpetually frustrated high school girl, Doria, who functions as the novel’s narrator. The daughter of Moroccan immigrants, she is resentful of her father, who abandoned the family while she was still young in order to find a younger wife back in Morocco, while she is protective of her mother, who works as a chambermaid at a cheap motel where she must contend with terrible wages and a racist boss. Doria has few friends, spending her time virtually exclusively with the much older yet emotionally juvenile Hamoudi, a relationship that becomes strained throughout

the course of the novel as Hamoudi develops romantic ties with Lila, a woman for whom Doria babysits. Her own romantic life disappoints her as well, as her only prospect is an unattractive social pariah named Nabil. More than any acute events, it is the burden of day-to-day living that instills a marked sense of pessimism in Doria, who struggles in school, gets passed from social worker to social worker, and feels constantly judged by those outside of her socio-economic milieu. Although growth is slow and painful, the progression of the novel parallels a developing maturity and optimism on the part of the narrator. After having been convinced of life's pre-destined cycles of hopeless monotony, she begins to observe fundamental changes in her own existence, such as performing better at a hairdressing school than traditional high school, as well as in those around her, including Hamoudi's personal growth through Lila and her mother's change in attitude as she develops new friendships. In light of these events, Doria reevaluates her own perspective on many things (including Nabil), and concludes that life may be worth looking forward to after all.

Kiffe kiffe demain has been referred to as "semi-autobiographical," as Doria can be seen to be Guène's "alter ego" (Chrisafis; Anover 488). While certain events and characters may not represent Guène's own story (Guène was raised by both parents, for example), issues such as single-parenthood, racism, and failed social systems embody realities for many individuals who grow up in the suburbs of French cities. The presence of a particular urban environment is perhaps the most definitive characteristic of the book, crucial both to character development and to the social commentary that has earned the praise of critics, who admire the critical eye with which Guène examines contemporary French society (Chrisafis; Anover 489). It is also much of what gives the novel literary relevance. While it could be argued that overwhelmingly

positive critical reception and widespread popularity alone are indicators of the novel's importance—as of April, 2012, it has been translated into 26 foreign languages and has sold more than 400,000 copies worldwide (Henni-Moulai)—its true value may lie in its role in giving a literary voice to a previously marginalized sector of French society. One year after the novel's publication, France was rocked by a series of riots in the suburbs of its major cities, the product of a disenfranchised population that felt economically oppressed and culturally alienated by mainstream French society. Because the question of social opportunity lay at the heart of these events, the question of underrepresentation of the suburban element in various societal domains, including literature, gained a particular significance. Following the 2005 *quinzaine littéraire*—the annual two-week period during which France awards its major literary prizes—journalist Thomas Lunderquist posed the question to his literary colleagues: *où sont les banlieues dans la littérature française?* Unsatisfied with the suggestion by François Vitoux, director of the *Académie Française*, that Louis-Ferdinand Celine's 1932 novel *Voyage au bout de la nuit* constituted a suburban novel with contemporary relevance, Lunderquist wrote an article for the *Courrier International* entitled « Des écrivains déconnectés de la réalité » in which he noted:

La littérature française persiste en effet à ignorer l'existence des banlieues défavorisées . . . Non seulement la littérature française donne une image déformée de la composition ethnique et sociale de la société française, mais les hommes et femmes de lettres semblent ne même plus voir cette lacune. Pour eux, la question [où sont les banlieues dans la littérature française?] ne se pose pas. . . Si la banlieue est présente dans la littérature, c'est donc en périphérie, loin des volumes franco-français qui garnissent les élégants rayonnages des bibliothèques. Bien sûr, il existe en France des écrivains issus de l'immigration : Milan Kundera, Andreï Makine, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Shan Sa . . . Mais ils n'ont été reconnus qu'après avoir adopté le "bon" style et s'être inclinés, comme il se doit, devant la culture majoritaire. Ou alors ils se trouvent relégués dans des collections

spécialisées, comme la collection Continents noirs, de Gallimard, dédiée à la littérature franco-africaine. (Lunderquist)

Faïza Guène's work represented a departure from her predecessors in that it was both popular and acclaimed while remaining "authentic" by not conforming to literary convention. Not only did it fail to adopt « le bon style, » it was actually lauded for its slang-filled, conversational language (Anover 489). *Kiffe kiffe demain* helped solidify the idea of a *littérature de banlieue*, prompting academics to attempt to put definitive parameters on what qualifications a work must have to be included in the genre (as Christiane Achour did in his article "*Littérature et banlieue*"), and initiating a dialogue as to whether such literature should be taught in schools (Achour 2). If today the genre is growing by leaps and bounds, it is due in large part to the success of *Kiffe kiffe demain*. Simply put, « Depuis le succès retentissant de "Kiffe kiffe demain". . . la banlieue et ses plumes intéressent » (Henni-Moulaï). Because of the broad appeal of the novel, major publishers such as Hachette and Flammarion began to seek out other authors to give their perspectives on the *banlieue*, and it is because of Guène that many young writers have been able to make their voices heard (Henni-Moulaï).

After a brief comparative introduction in which I establish the city as an antagonistic force, I address each author sequentially in the body of this chapter. For the most part, my analysis represents a chronological progression of authors within each given theme, with a few notable exceptions. Because the nation-state has represented the base unit of comparison for the other chapters of this thesis, I have chosen to keep my Belgian texts together: thus, in sections where both Verhaeren and Bugul are addressed, I offer an analysis of the latter immediately after the former. In transitioning between an analysis of the chaotic side of the

city and its alienating characteristics, for purposes of fluidity I have addressed Chamoiseau's work all at once, before returning to previous texts. Finally, although *Texaco* was published in 1992 and *Kiffe kiffe demain* in 2004, in sections that include both texts, I have addressed them in reverse order. This is for multiple reasons, all of which revolve around the idea of keeping similar texts together. This tactic allows me not only to address female writers in one block, but also emphasizes the similarities between *Bonheur d'occasion* and *Kiffe kiffe demain* that offer complementary perspectives on such issues as the effects of poverty, problems of family, and escapism. Furthermore, *Texaco* is the most different of all of the texts in this chapter, and thus serves as an appropriate analytical coda to a comparative analysis, particularly in the context of the themes I have chosen to examine. From Chamoiseau's decision to emphasize community over alienation to his lack of idealization of the natural world, he imbues the text with a complexity that is best addressed only after analyzing the other works in this chapter.

3.1.2 The City as Adversary

For all of its complexity, there can be no doubt that in the eyes of authors from around the francophone world, the city represents a singular, aggressive force that actively challenges the emotional and psychological mettle of the human beings who find themselves within its borders. The life that teems in the city's streets seems to power some unified whole that is greater than its components; some have turned to the natural world to explain this interaction—Gabrielle Roy's character of Emmanuel gazes down at Montreal and sees a termite mound (Roy 349), reinforcing the view of Patrick Chamoiseau's urban planner that the city is « un écosystème » (Chamoiseau 328)—yet it could be just as apt to suggest that humanity is the cellular structure of a bigger, living entity. Such a notion would be keeping in line with the

anthropomorphization and zoomorphization employed by some of the authors analyzed in this chapter to describe their characters' urban adversaries. Chamoiseau's city is a « bête-à-sept-têtes » (Chamoiseau 182) of biblical proportions, a being so legendary that its name is worthy of capitalization (throughout the novel it is never "the city," but merely "City" ["*En-ville*"]), a vicious predator driven by consumption who "swallows" the land that it has "petrified" into submission (Chamoiseau 243, 455).

City's consciousness permeates the novel, whether it is actively deciding to shift its form as a means of impeding its residents (multiplying its dead ends, for example, or installing locked doors on its opportunities [Chamoiseau 131, 156]) or simply "ignoring" them in their time of need (Chamoiseau 405). With "eyes" in its factories and mechanical "arms" that reap grain (Verhaeren 88, 119), Emile Verhaeren's city is a predatory monster as well, one that not only eats the countryside (Verhaeren 87), but lures unsuspecting humans into its black *suçoir* as it expels menacing red breath (Verhaeren 78). The city represents the ultimate fusion of machine and animal; if it reflects the physical characteristics of those who built it, it is because they have become a part of it, for « Leurs yeux sont devenus les yeux de la machine ;/ Leur corps entier : front, col, torse, épaules, échine, / Se plie aux jeux réglés du fer et de l'acier » (Verhaeren, *Les Villes tentaculaires* 88). Such a fusion is equally characteristic of Montreal in *Bonheur d'occasion*, where after so many long days at work, « un homme sait plus s'il est encore en vie ou bien s'il est devenu machine » (Roy 221). Yet if human becomes environment, environment becomes human just as readily, as Roy injects conscious emotion into the very fabric of the city. Roy's Montreal is an antagonistic entity spurred by a volatility that permeates even its architecture (the *campanile* of a church is « à la fois haineux et puissant devant [la] montagne

qui le dominait » [Roy 44]), and whose neighborhoods exhibit a singularity of thought and feeling, such as on moving day when « une fois par année, il semblait bien que le quartier, parcouru des trains, énérvé par les sifflets des locomotives, s'adonnait à la folie du voyage et que, ne pouvant satisfaire autrement son désir d'évasion, il se livrait au déménagement avec une sorte d'abandon contagieux » (Roy 116).

The city is not merely an adversary, but a potentially deadly one. Whereas the natural world has classically been depicted as driven by a restorative power that proliferates life and growth, francophone authors have repeatedly painted a picture of a city fueled by an opposite force. Urban environments exude a sense of deleterious diminution of vitality, advanced through images of contamination—the social worker who comes to visit the HLMS⁴⁶ in *Kiffe kiffe demain* reeks of anti-lice shampoo (Guène 9), while Verhaeren's city sullies the nature around it, as « L'orde fumée et ses haillons de suie/Ont traversé le vent et l'ont sali :/Un soleil pauvre et avili/S'est comme usé en de la pluie » (Verhaeren 87)—and of rot, which not only exists within the city's spaces (such as the convenience store that sells spoiled goods to its consumers in *Kiffe kiffe demain* [Guène 83]) but seems to seep into its very fundamentals, from the earth on which it is built (the Quarter of the Wretched stands on “fermented” mud in *Texaco* [Chamoiseau 213]) to its masonry (Verhaeren's city is literally constructed out of filth: « Et des fumiers, toujours plus hauts, de résidus/- Ciments huileux, plâtras pourris, moellons fendus -/Au long de vieux fossés et de berges obscures/Lèvent, le soir, des monuments de pourriture » [Verhaeren 87]).

⁴⁶ That is to say, *habitation à loyer modéré*, French for “housing at moderated rents” or “rent-controlled housing.”

When Rose-Anna visits Workman Street in *Bonheur d'occasion*, she encounters an eerily similar landscape, as « Une nuée d'enfants dépenaillés jouaient sur les trottoirs au milieu de paquets de débris. Des femmes maigres et tristes apparaissaient sur les seuils malodorants, étonnées de ce soleil qui faisait des carrés de lumière devant chaque tonneau de déchets . . . Partout des carreaux bouchés de guenilles ou de papier gras » [Roy 118]). There is something dangerously tainted about the city, reflected in the decision of numerous authors to detail the putridity of its odors, which can be stifling (reeking like « la boue fade, » no one chooses to breathe air from the balconies of Chamoiseau's Quarter of the Wretched, where the buildings « sentaient fort l'entrepôt ou l'écurie guerrière » [Chamoiseau 214, 216]) and even aggressive (such as the smells that pass through Saint-Henri in *Bonheur d'occasion*, like the « odeur violente » of sickly sweet caramel or the dominant stench of tobacco that “violently assaults” the noses and mouths of those around it [Roy 3, 120]).

There seems to be a tacit understanding among authors that the city represents an ever-present danger, as the specter of one's potential demise lurks in the perpetual standoff between man and his urban environment: « La Mort balaie en un grand trou/La ville entière au cimetière » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 147). Death is an omnipresent piece of the urban backdrop, a menacing force that is terrifying in both its quantitative and qualitative potency, felling large numbers of city-dwellers both en masse (for example, the victims of war in Verhaeren's "La Révolte") and in succession (rarely a chapter goes by in *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle-Orléans* without death finding at least one individual), while exhibiting the potential to bide its time with the individual, traumatizing him/her in the process. Ken Bugul's entire existence in Brussels, for example, is a process of dying, symbolized by the eventual death of

the baobab that represents her soul and cultural identity. Death constantly pursues her (from her unborn child to the loss of her father) to the point that it dominates her thoughts, particularly as she becomes increasingly obsessed with suicide. The city can be seen as a graveyard of the living, whose buildings themselves are often depicted as tombs, as is the case in *Bonheur d'occasion*, in which poverty leads to streetscapes where « partout [il y a] des voix aigres, des pleurs d'enfants, des cris qui jaillissaient, douloureux, des profondeurs de quelque maison, portes et volets rabattus, morte, murée sous la lumière comme une tombe » (Roy 118). In *Kiffe kiffe demain*, a social worker wanders through Doria's house « comme si elle visitait les catacombes » (Guène 67). For the authors examined in this chapter, the city is a menace: malicious, aggressive, and deadly.

3.2 Undesired Anonymity

3.2.1 The Paradox of Claustrophobic Isolation

One of the common threads that bind the novels examined in this chapter is the ability of the cities within them to overwhelm psychologically those who enter its domain. Just as one may overwhelm a large group of enemies in war either by flooding the battlefield with a larger number of combatants or by isolating smaller groups/individuals in order to weaken them, so too does the literary francophone city present a backdrop in which its citizens feel both bombarded and alienated. What is paradoxical about this situation is that the two often occur in the same urban space, leaving its residents feeling alone despite being surrounded by throngs of people and a substantial amount of activity. As the examples in this chapter will demonstrate, from a psychological standpoint, the city represents both a surfeit and a void,

placing its residents and visitors in a state of emotional duress through aggressive overstimulation while also confronting them with the despair of loneliness and isolation.

Francophone authors from different cultures and generations have used the presence of the crowd (*la foule*) as an embodiment of the din and violence of the city. In novel after novel, characters find their intentions disrupted as *la foule* descends upon them like a predator, sweeping them up inside its internal chaos. Such is the case in *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orléans* when the romantic potential of the initial encounter between Léonce and Mary, the object of his affection and the daughter of the quadroon Octavia, is marred by the arrival of *la foule*. Léonce would like nothing more than to be alone with Mary, yet he is denied this initial intimacy by a crowd that has come to see her mother, a crowd that assaults multiple senses:

Au coin des rues, on voyait des groupes d'hommes parlant et gesticulant, des femmes, des enfants, marchant au plus vite et se dirigeant vers la rue Royale qui, vraiment, en cet instant, présentait un singulier aspect. La rue était remplie de monde, on se bousculait sur les trottoirs et les voitures étaient forcées de s'arrêter tant la foule était compacte. Et tout ce bruit, cette commotion, parce que la belle Octavia était arrivée » (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 13).

The crowd delivers a double physical impact—the jarring sensation of being bumped as well as the restriction of immobility—yet there is also a psychological stress that comes from being bombarded with noise.

The sheer density of urban living creates a claustrophobic environment that becomes a physical menace as it violates personal space. One cannot walk freely without being bumped or jostled by other people—in fact, the city that Verhaeren depicts in the various poems of *Les Villes tentaculaires* is so crowded that even ghosts and shadows bump into each other

(Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires 91”)! Swelling crowds dominate all parts of this city, assaulting people both outside and inside of themselves. In the poem “La Révolte,” which depicts the violent anarchy that fills the streets of a city during a time of revolution, individuals must be careful of the « foules, brassant leur houle avec leurs haines » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 136). In “Les Cathédrales,” the flocks who gather at the church represent a collective of human misery, creating a centralized nexus of suffering, as Verhaeren routinely repeats the phrase « Oh ces foules, ces foules/Et la détressent et la misère qui les foulent » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 99-101). From the anarchy of the floor of the stock exchange in “La Bourse,” to the store in “Le Bazar” where « La foule et ses flots noirs/S’y bousculent près des comptoirs/...Et s’érige folle et sauvage/En spirale vers les étages » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 128), it seems impossible not to be consumed by the ever-present crowd.

To be swept up in the crowd means a total loss of self-determination, to be forced to move as the crowd would have you move, submissive not only to direction but to pace. To Ken Bugul arriving for the first time in Brussels in *Le Baobab fou*, this represents a massive culture shock:

J’avais avancé dans les rues. Comme ils marchaient vite, ces gens-là. Et moi qui étais si habituée à plonger mes pieds dans le sable chaud et réconfortant. Ici tout le monde marchait trop vite. J’avançais aussi nonchalemment qu’un fauve rassasié en promenade dans la brousse. J’étais bousuclée, parfois projetée de tous les côtés. Je m’étais arrêtée à plusieurs reprises pour chercher à me faufiler entre ces personnes qui couraient presque dans tous les sens.

Et ils ne faisaient même pas attention à moi. « Qu’est-ce qui se passait donc ici ? » Un incendie s’était-il déclaré, propagé ? Etais-ce le fin du monde ou quoi ? . . .

Jamais je n'avais vu tant de monde tout d'un coup. Un monde comme poursuivi par un monstre.

Le long des rues et des avenues on ne marchait pas plus de cent mètres sans voir un bar, un salon de thé, un pub, un restaurant. Les gens y entraient en courant et il y en avait qui s'installaient, d'autres sortaient en courant ; ils n'avaient l'air de prendre que du répit dans un marathon perpétuel. . . .

Je devais absolument presser le pas, si je voulais sortir de cette foule qui n'allait pas à m'écraser par terre comme un ver. (Bugul 47)

Many of these same themes are echoed in Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion*. As is the case in *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orléans*, the crowd in *Bonheur d'occasion* represents an aural assault as well as a physical one. At the main intersections of the neighborhood of Saint-Henri, « la foule, matin et soir, piétinait et des rangs pressés d'automobiles y ronronnaient à l'étouffée. Souvent alors des coups de klaxons furieux animaient l'air comme si Saint-Henri eût brusquement exprimé son exaspération contre ces trains hurleurs qui, d'heure en heure, le découpent violemment en deux parties » (Roy 43). For Roy, the crowd is an unconquerable enemy, a force that regenerates constantly and cannot be dispersed or diminished, for « À mesure qu'un groupe se distribuait par les rues transversales ou s'immobilisait aux arrêts, un nouveau courant débouchait des portes battantes et fondait sur la place » (Roy 90). People are taken up by its force against their wills, as happens to Florentine who becomes « prise dans un remous de corps pressés les uns contre les autres et se trouva bientôt assise à l'intérieur du tram » (Roy 93), as well as to Emmanuel who in a later scene finds his plans to see Florentine thwarted by « la foule [qui] se pressait si dense autour de la table-comptoir qu'il ne put apercevoir la jeune fille » (Roy 350).

The pace and density of the big city can prove too difficult to handle for some. In Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, Esternome's dream of conquering the city is hindered by its development. A mason with a love of spatial layout and function, he sees his work being torn apart by overcrowding, as Saint-Pierre's squares begin "oozing" with people despite the fact that the streets offered "little room" for the influx of rural traffic the city receives (Chamoiseau 148). When the people began to pile up in an infrastructure that was unable to support them, « ils durent investir de force les interstices » (Chamoiseau 300). Yet more than the claustrophobia, it is the speed of the self-perpetuating urban engine that overwhelms Esternome and wrests the city from his control. He feels alienated as the developing city transforms him into an anachronism: « Dans l'En-ville, le temps allait trop vite. Il allait autrement » (Chamoiseau 119). Ironically, the more crowded and harried the city becomes, the more its citizens find themselves in the thralls of solitude. Traumatized by her recent rape, Marie-Sophie throws boiling water on her aggressor—a scene that should have attracted the attention of the neighborhood, yet the act is conveniently ignored. As both of them recover from their injuries, they shy away from visitors, causing her to remark « Sans le savoir, j'apprenais sur l'En-ville: cette solitude émietlée, ce repliement sur sa maison, ces chapes de silence sur les douleurs voisines, cette indifférence policée » (Chamoiseau 328).

This isolation among the masses characterizes the soul of the city, and the lack of isolation in *Texaco* is proof of the spirit of the countryside that characterizes the neighborhood, or as the urban planner puts it in one of his journal entries, « Texaco était ce que la ville conservait de l'humanité de la campagne » (Chamoiseau 360). Community—that sense of comfort and support that makes Ken Bugul miss her village in *Le Baobab fou* and makes Rose-

Anna eager to return to the country house where she grew up in *Bonheur d'occasion*—is a key component of the counterbalance that the neighborhood offers to the city in *Texaco* as well. It is thanks to the efforts of the quarter's residents that the potent force of urban isolation has been kept at bay. Because of them, anonymity was impossible, and « une vie sans regards comme celle du centre-ville était voeu difficile. On savait tout de tout. Les misères épaulaient les misères. La commisération intervenait pour accorer les désespoirs et nul ne vivait l'angoisse de l'extrême solitude » (Chamoiseau 31-32). At the same time, the quarter's residents worry that the more they are connected to the heart of the city, the less likely they will be to combat its culture. Even something as simple as a road implies the possibility that the community spirit will eventually be overwhelmed, for « les routes dépaillent la solitude et suggèrent d'autres vies. Elles font monter l'En-ville. Elles emportent toutes les cases dans une ronde anonyme et détruisent les Quartiers » (Chamoiseau 170-171).

Chamoiseau is not the only Antillean writer to remark on this phenomenon. In *La Rue Cases-Nègres*, Joseph Zobel underscores the difficulties that his largely autobiographical character of Joseph has in adapting to a large city after living in a small town. Used to intimate relationships with his classmates and attention from the community, Joseph cannot even fathom the way he is ignored in the city, remarking how in the town of Petit-Bourg, the schoolmasters saw to it that you learned your lessons and did your homework, lest you be punished, while in the big city high school, you did as little as you wanted (Zobel 129).

Not every impoverished neighborhood has been as successful as *Texaco* at warding off the trauma of urban solitude, however. The residents of Saint-Henri in *Bonheur d'occasion* are

just as likely to feel the psychological strain of isolation. At its best, the neighborhood resembles the “countryside-in-city” atmosphere of Texaco, as the activity of the neighborhood transpires adjacent to residences rather than within them, and everyone seems to know the affairs of everyone else. Such is the case when Emmanuel, arriving from the train station, takes notice of the wealth of community interaction:

[N]ul quartier de Montréal n’a conservé ses limites précises, sa vie de village, particulière, étroite, caractérisée, comme Saint-Henri. . . . Toutes les fenêtres étaient ouvertes, et les bruits de la vie humaine, de la vaisselle entrechoquée, des conversations, tous les bruits des ménages flottaient dans l’air comme si la vie humaine n’avait plus été à l’abri des cloisons mais étalée en commun avec tous ses secrets. . . . Il a, le soir, sa vie de village, alors, qu’assis au frais sur le pas de leur porte ou sur des chaises placées au bord du trottoir, ses gens s’entretiennent de seuil en seuil. . . . Il vit Saint-Henri comme il ne l’avait encore jamais vu, avec sa vie complexe et pourtant sans secret. (Roy 348-349)

Yet this state is fragile and ephemeral. At its worst, the neighborhood is as cold and distant as the rest of the city, capable of making one feel entirely alone. The hustle-bustle that characterizes the quarter’s streets and squares can evaporate in an instant, giving the impression of being surrounded by a ghost town. Certainly the evenings may propagate a « vie de village, » yet in a moment’s notice, all human presence may disappear from a street, such that « il n’y a plus dans la rue déserte, entre le feu pâle des lampes familiales d’un côté et les sombres murailles qui bordent le canal de l’autre, qu’une grande puissance nocturne » (Roy 36). These streetscapes may seem peaceful to some, but to others they are lonely, reminders of the desolation of their own lives. Roy describes a scene of Emmanuel and Florentine walking together thusly: « La rue, déserte et laide, retenait toute la mélancolie de ce jour souffrant. Il n’y avait qu’eux de vivants, qui faisaient une tache claire, murmurante, dans ce triste couloir » (Roy 176). This atmosphere even penetrates the walls of the home, as the security of the

bonds of family and home seem to dissipate with the noise. A simple undesirable arrangement of furniture unnerves Florentine: « Une indéfinissable mélancolie persistait dans la salle à manger, un silence lourd, quelque chose de vaguement insolite, comme si d'avoir déplacé quelques meubles dérangeait les rapports humains établis entre le foyer et les êtres » (Roy 244). For Jean, a similar experience recalls the alienation he felt growing up as an orphan: « Le silence pesait sur lui. L'humble arrangement domestique d'objets si nécessairement confondus avec les gestes de la vie le gênait » (Roy 251). To those who have learned not only to weather the assault of urban overstimulation but also to revel in it, such an environment can be psychologically devastating, as it is for Florentine's father. Azarius finds it necessary to rush to the liveliness of the bar known as les Deux Records after an uncomfortable run in with his wife, for « il pouvait endurer les reproches, mais pas le silence. Tout à coup, l'atmosphère de la maison lui était devenue insupportable » (Roy 180). Ultimately, there is no consistent asylum from the imposed isolation of the city, which makes a person feel alone while simultaneously serving as a mocking reminder of the bonds for which one so desperately yearns, as is the case when Florentine and her friends stroll down St Catherine Street, causing her to remark « La ville était pour le couple . . . ». Even in its noisiest, most industrial quarters, the city can strike suddenly, without mercy or warning, leaving one in the thralls of a loneliness that is both terrifying and crippling, as unrelenting as it is perpetual:

Sur la berge noircie par la fumée des cargos, mélancoliques et délaissés comme toutes ces bâtisses que le hasard des routes, des ponts, des canaux, et le besoin de server ce qui passé fixent en des endroits arides, s'élevaient la guérite du gardien et, presque toujours désert, un petit restaurant à toit plat, à demi enfoncé derrière le ciment du trottoir.

Alors Florentine s'aperçut qu'elle était seule au monde avec sa peur. Elle entrevit la solitude, non seulement sa solitude à elle, mais la solitude qui guette tout être vivant, qui

l'accompagne inlassablement, qui se jette soudain sur lui comme une ombre, comme un nuage. (Roy 306)

The loneliness of the cosmopolitan environment is a central theme in *Le Baobab fou*, one of the primary factors that contribute to Ken Bugul's mental torture. Coming from a culture in which the entire village will look after an individual, the shock of anonymity amidst a thriving population provides an almost immediate blow to her psyche upon her arrival in Brussels. Caught up in a dense crowd as she explores the city streets, her emotions fray as she becomes unnerved not only by the frantic physical chaos, but by the utter lack of human interaction. Unable to comprehend being surrounded by so many people yet remaining unacknowledged, she exclaims « . . . ils ne faisaient même pas attention à moi. . . 'Vous ne m'avez pas vue? Vous ne m'avez pas reconnue? Mais c'est moi'. . . Et pourquoi ne me saluaient-ils pas ? Même entre eux ils ne se saluaient pas ! Je ne comprenais vraiment pas » (Bugul 47). The feeling of being a perpetual stranger only intensifies with the time spent in the big city, where relationships are motivated by self-interest and there is little social support to guide one through personal problems. Bugul experiences life in Brussels as an endless cycle of abandonment: she is perpetually finding the interpersonal bonds she believes she has developed either false, such as those formed with the large groups of pseudo-intellectuals whom she frequents (see Bugul 76, 110), or stunted, such as her friendship with Jean Wermer (which becomes strained after he begins to act possessive of her) and with the Denoëls (which suffers from the wife's jealousy of Ken's close relationship with her husband) (see Bugul 78, 105).

As these relationships crumble, Bugul constantly relives the solitude she felt when her mother abandoned her family many years prior. When Jean Wermer and his lover François fight over her presence in the household, the former demonstrating a possessiveness that objectifies her and calls the nature of their friendship into question, she instantly recalls the scene of her mother waiting to board a train and leave her for good. « La solitude! Encore . . . Je m'en souviens comme si c'était aujourd'hui, » she remarks, recalling that in that moment, surrounded by the rest of her family, she found herself « avec des gens qui soudain m'étaient devenus étrangers » (Bugul 79, 82). It is this sentiment—such an anomalous event in her village life, yet the standard existence in this Belgian city—that is so distinctly paralleled during her fight with Jean. In that moment, it was as though she were the only human being in a space full of bodies, for seeing Jean and François resort to an unconscionable level of incivility, she goes so far as to say « J'avais envie de fuir loin de cette maison, loin de ces êtres qui n'avaient plus rien d'humain » (Bugul 78). In a way, the lack of ability to individually and empathetically connect with other people negates their presence. Shortly after an unsolicited romantic tension drives a wedge in her relationship with Paul and Hélène Denoël, she begins to understand that her emotional isolation is not situational, but rather a permanent condition of her life in Brussels, an inescapable force that spurs her to do self-destructive acts in a desperate attempt to rid her of it:

La solitude me suivait silencieusement partout. Je la fuyais et elle me poursuivait. Je fumais beaucoup de marijuana et prenais de plus en plus de sirop d'opium, pour chercher vraiment abri, comme sur le quai de la gare, au village, au départ de la mère. Cette solitude que j'avais retrouvée durement, avec le choc d'avoir perdu, ici, mes ancêtres les Gaulois. Le reflet dans le miroir, le visage, le regard, cette couleur qui me distinguait en me niant. Cette solitude jusque dans les draps des amants d'un soir ; ce besoin lancinant des autres, introuvables. (Bugul 110)

Ken Bugul often reflects on her race as an important factor in her alienation (see also Bugul 125-127). While it certainly impedes her ability to connect with much of the society around her, the totality of her solitude extends beyond mere skin color. Her social circles do not lack for other Africans, yet she admits to being just as alienated from Africans of other nations as she is from the rest of society (Bugul 107). Even friendship with another Senegalese man (Souleymane) does not assuage the torment of alienation. Clearly, the roots of this sentiment are deep and complex. Drowning in a sea of forced anonymity, Bugul is on a constant quest for recognition as an individual, yet her desperate attempts to find emotional intimacy only exacerbate her torment as she constantly fails to establish a permanent situation in which she is of any lasting importance to anyone in the city. The more she surrounds herself with the unidentified and unidentifiable masses of the city, the more desperately she desires not to be a part of them, and the greater the emotional toll of her failed actions becomes. In prostituting herself to a stranger in a hotel, she begins to question how, as a person whose life has always been a series of transitions, she could come to be so alone and invisible:

L'alienation? Moi qui n'avais jamais connu de milieu, de famille. . . comment pourrais-je m'aliéner ? Or l'ambiguïté *établie*, l'*impossibilité* de l'alienation en était peut-être déjà une . . . J'étais désirée, je plaisais, la prostitution m'offrait l'instant d'une attention, une reconnaissance autre que celle qui m'identifiait dans le quotidien à ce que je ne voulais pas être. (Bugul 124-125).

When this liaison leaves her as empty as ever, she succumbs to a sort of emotional defeat. Later, thinking of suicide as she sits in a crowded restaurant, she reflects on her alienation from the people around her. « Personne dans le restaurant n'aurait soupçonné la

détresse d'un être qui semblait avoir tout pour lui, alors qu'en réalité depuis vingt ans il cherchait désespérément 'le lien' à travers les désastres de l'aliénation . . . » (Bugul 172). Yet had they known, would it have mattered? The city is, as Chamoiseau put it, a tableau of "civilized indifference." An emotional chameleon in this moment, Bugul has come to fit in perfectly with the backdrop she despises, one in which the physical proximity of human beings belies the emotional distance inside them.

Although not as superficially evident as it is in the case of Ken Bugul, solitude haunts the protagonist of Faïza Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain* as well. Despite the abundance of residents in the HLMs of Livry-Gargan, Doria is subconsciously terrified by the isolation that she feels, so much so that she dreams that "almost no one" comes to her funeral (Guène 23). If the prospect of her best friend falling in love (and consequently spending less time with her) rattles her emotionally like little else in the novel is able, it is because she has been forced to bear witness to the constant abandonment that accompanies life in the projects: from her father, who left her mother as he left the country (Guène 9), to her cousin, whose arrest for drug-dealing and auto theft leaves her aunt alone (Guène 69), to the endless stream of social workers who never seem to stick around (see Guène 17-19). Residents of Livry-Gargan perpetuate the culture of "civilized indifference" that Chamoiseau details. Consider the case of Samra, a modern-day Rapunzel who is cut off from the world as her family keeps her imprisoned inside her apartment. The entire quarter is aware of her situation, yet no action is taken to aid her; ultimately, it is up to her to initiate her own escape, fleeing to a location where she manages to escape the neighborhood rumor mill. Not only does the community offer her no safety net upon her escape, the residents actually begin to speak ill of her. As

Doria puts it, « Quand Samra était enfermée chez elle, dans sa cage en béton, personne n'en parlait, comme si les gens trouvaient ça normal. Et maintenant qu'elle a réussi à se libérer de son dictateur de frère et son tortionnaire de père, les gens l'accusent » (Guène 92-93).

3.2.2 Homogeneity and the Repression of the Individual

Another way in which the city reinforces a sense of unwanted anonymity in its subjects is by immersing them in a world of hopelessly infinite sameness, where tautological backdrops of monotonous spaces and architecture are necessarily paralleled by masses of living beings whose similarity of appearance, action, and purpose force them to be conceived as a collective rather than as an agglomeration of individuals. As distinctions between theoretically separate components become blurred to the point of total loss of individuality, urban settings become spaces of conflict by means of an assault on self-identity. Just as efforts to limit or eradicate languages and religions inspire negative emotions because they threaten to take away irreplaceable loci of individual self-definition, so too do the bleak and depressed undertones of literary descriptions of urban homogeneity represent more than a mere emotional response to a boring and otherwise undesirable aesthetic. If reflections on urban sprawl tend to focus on its ugliness and vastness, these traits seem almost to be physical manifestations of the repugnant and harrowing nature of a far greater threat posed by such landscapes: the possibility of total self-loss. In the battle between the city and the individual, it is the former which is victorious, as throughout francophone literature, residents of cities are inevitably molded into reflections of the cities themselves.

As early as the nineteenth century, we see an image of a sprawling metropolis whose composition is simultaneously repetitive and collective, an outpouring of an infinite number of individual objects so similar and numerous that they cease to exist separately from each other or from the greater urban landscape. The fact that Emile Verhaeren fails to name the city he develops in his poetic cycles seems *a propos* of a setting in which no place or object bears a proper appellation and relatively few even exist in the singular. Indeed, to peruse the pages of *Les Villes tentaculaires* is to encounter the indefinite plural *ad infinitum*, not merely in describing objects (« . . . Et des balcons et des sous-sols béants/Et des tympanes monté sur des corniches/Et des drapeaux et des affiches . . . » [Verhaeren 127]) and people (« Moines, abbés, barons, serfs, et vilains . . . » [Verhaeren 92]), but also in portraying actions, experiences and emotions—the very things through which a person identifies as an individual. It is a city where « Mille désirs naissent, gonflés, pesants, goulus » (Verhaeren 113)—desires which, « . . . multipliés/Par centaines et par milliers, » belong only to the collective (Verhaeren 128). Nothing exists in Verhaeren’s city without existing in multitude, whether expressed through a large yet reliably imprecise number (from « des mille efforts qu’on le croit vains » [Verhaeren 155]) to « des millions de bras tendus . . . » [Verhaeren 125]), or through a claim of totality that encompasses all possibilities within a single given space while denying the possibility of existence outside of or separate from the urban collective (« Toute la mer », just like « tous les chemins, » inevitably « va vers la ville » [Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 21; “Les Villes tentaculaires” 106], where « l’espoir fou » resides in not some, but « toutes les cervelles » [Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 93]).

In this latter form of multiplicity especially, everything ceases to be an agglomeration of individual things and becomes one entity that is both inside the city and is the city itself. This includes all of the hostile sentiments that spur conflict, that come together as a powerful force; as Verhaeren expresses in “La Révolte,” throughout the various locales of the city:

Tous les joyaux du meurtre et des désastres
Etincellent ainsi, sous l’œil des astres
La ville entière éclate
En pays d’or coiffé de flammes écarlates;
La ville, au vent des soirs, vers les lointains houleux
Tend sa propre couronne énormément en feu;
Toute la rage et toute la folie
Brassent la vie avec leur lie,
Si fort que, par instants, le sol semble trembler,
Et l’espace brûler
Et la fumée et ses fureurs s’écheveler et s’envoler
Et balayer les grands cieux froids. (*Les Villes tentaculaires* 138)

It is not merely in repetitive enumeration that identities are lost, but in the monotony of form and function. In *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, Verhaeren’s city is a heap of raw materials, buildings, and transportation corridors haphazardly thrown together such that their theoretical function as distinct units of a larger system is lost as they become entangled and enmeshed. When citizens « jettent vers le hasard l’âpre semence/De leur labeur que l’heure emporte » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 23), they sow a metaphoric urban weed that not only devours its surroundings, but blankets them in malleable forms without crisp edges or endpoints (resulting, from an aesthetic point of view, in the *tentacularité* on which the author dotes), such as « . . . Des ponts musclés de fer/Lancés, par bonds, à travers l’air » and « . . . Des millions de toits/Dressant au ciel leurs angles droits » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 21). The author reinforces the notion of the city’s components melting together by bestowing a

certain liquidity upon objects that in reality are forged of solid, even rigid materials (lacking the possibility of conjunction, at least at room temperature), as « Des rails ramifiés y descendent sous terre/Comme en des puits et des cratères, » while « La rue—et ses remous comme des câbles/Noués autour des monuments/Fuit et revient en longs enlacements » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 22-23). In “L’Âme de la ville,” a poem in *Les Villes tentaculaires* in which, as eras of the past repeat the same story from generation to generation (highlighted in phrases such as “Haines de sceptre à sceptre et monarque faillis/Sur leur fausse monnaie ouvrant leurs fleurs de lys” [91-92]), the very soul of the city is predicated on a uniformity forged in the urban foundry as it melds not only time, but space. Just as diverse epochs collide, losing their uniqueness in a singular modern legacy built upon the repetition of historic figures and actions, so too do the numerous identical objects and spaces lose their distinction: « Les toits semblent perdus/Et les clochers et les pignons fondus » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 90).

Verhaeren’s sprawl is reminiscent of the unsightly, dreary, tautological urban developments that one finds in modern times—a world of identical commercial and residential developments where every street is filled with « . . . Les comptoirs mornes et noirs/Et les bureaux louches et faux, » and every waterway is lined with « . . . Les quais uniformes et mornes » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 23; “Les Villes tentaculaires” 90). When «Des lettres en cuivre inscrivent l’univers » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 22), individuality is a superficial rather than substantial state of being, as names and numbers replace form and function as indicators of separate existence. However, inanimate objects and geographic spaces are not the only examples that reflect this paradigm; Verhaeren’s citizenry is

no more composed of individuals than the environment that it inhabits. Homogeneity is prevalent in “Le Départ,” the final poem of *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, where the mass influx of rural laborers destined to become the urban workforce mimics both the repetition and the collectivity of the city towards which they trudge. Here, « Chacun porte au bout d’une gaule,/Dans un mouchoir à carreaux bleus,/Chacun porte dans un mouchoir,/Changeant de main, changeant d’épaule,/Chacun porte/Le linge usé de son espoir » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 74). The difference in hands and shoulders on which the identical blue, checkered handkerchiefs rest is equivalent to the *lettres en cuivre* on the buildings: a feeble hint of variation that belies the fundamental sameness that links all entities. Bound by a common past as well as a common future, no action is undertaken, no emotion is felt except by the entirety of the human throng, though perhaps “human” is the wrong word to describe a people that have lost every essence of who and what they are. One cannot be an individual without a personality, which one in turn cannot possess without a soul, yet the beings in “Le Départ” have in its stead « Deux tisons noirs, mais point de flamme.../Et leurs autels n’ont plus de cierge/Et leur encens n’a plus d’odeur » (Verhaeren, “Les Campagnes hallucinées” 75). With the phrase « Ainsi vont les bêtes et les gens d’ici, » Verhaeren underscores the idea that, like the animals that precede it, the living mass immigrating to the city is not an assemblage of persons, but rather a single flock devoid of humanity, mindless and bestial at best, empty or dead at worst.

Those already inside the city have fared no better at retaining either their identity or their humanity. As demonstrated in numerous poems in *Les Villes tentaculaires*, an urban citizen amounts to no more than the sum of his body parts. The streets of “La Révolte” are « un

remous de pas/De torse et de dos d'où sont tendus des bras » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 135); glancing across the crowd in "Le Spectacle" reveals « Jambes, hanches, gorges... » as well as « Les dents blanches.../Et des torsos offerts... » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 111-112), but never any faces, as these serve as one of the primary markers of individual human identity. The city is the great homogenizer, actively erasing markers of distinction in order to churn out a collective product, such that those who are fed into it lose all traces of what they were, be they rural migrants leaving one "infinity" for another (see Verhaeren, "Les Campagnes hallucinées" 78), or immigrants from diverse nations around the world who, like the rocks in the ocean upon which they arrived, « retombent et s'effacent, égalisées » as they become « cent peuples fondus dans la cité commune » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 107).

Nearly a century after Verhaeren, Ken Bugul encounters an urban Belgian landscape that, while having evolved technologically and socially from Verhaeren's factory-driven metropolis, nevertheless remains plagued by a hostile homogeneity that assaults the human spirit and causes individuals to lose their identities. Much of *Le Baobab fou* focuses on the author's loss of self, as the foreign society around her erodes her values and her happiness until, like Verhaeren's pilgrims, the quenched fire in her soul leaves her dead inside, a death that is paralleled by the that of the baobab back home in her village, suggesting an irreversible transformation in that she has severed all ties to what she was before her arrival in the city. While Bugul's corrupted identity is attributable to numerous cultural factors that have as much to do with immersion in a foreign world as an urban one, there is no doubt that her loss of soul was heavily fueled by a soulless, standardized environment in which emotional connections to

both people and objects become exceedingly difficult. It is, in fact, the very first psychological assault launched against her upon her arrival in her host city. Staying at a hotel on « une place plutôt carrée » (Bugul 40), lit by an eternally glowing neon that would come to reinforce the ubiquity of the city's homogeneous aesthetic by illuminating future bedrooms that the character would eventually occupy (Bugul 83), Bugul finds herself emotionally overwhelmed by the non-descript sterility of her surroundings:

C'était la que je devais passer la nuit. Le portail était massif, lourd à vue d'œil. Les poignées en cuivre se détachaient bien du vert sombre. Elles étaient glaciales et quand je franchis le seuil, il faisait plus tiède à l'intérieur...

Une permanence était assurée jour et nuit, c'était indiqué sur la porte ; à se demander si ces gens-là dormaient jamais. Et je fus reçue en des mains sûres. Une femme aussi quelconque que l'instant même, me mena au premier étage.

—Voici votre chambre, me dit-elle brusquement en s'arrêtant devant une porte plus quelconque encore.

« Merci » m'entendis-je dire, avec beaucoup de difficulté ; je sentais comme un nœud sec à la gorge. (Bugul 40-41)

Enveloped by an environment entirely devoid of character, there is nothing present—neither architectural nor human—to mark the singularity of what, by all accounts, should have been a unique and special evening (Bugul's first night in the *terre promise* as part of her exchange program). Yet this is the nature of the world into which she unwittingly delves: an endless sequence of identical streets and rooms, pleonastic realizations of the same cold surroundings that, rather than provide her with alternative skies in which to find a sense of locality, permit her only to dream of the old ones that marked and characterized her former home as she stares at (and “through”) a « plafond nu » (Bugul 58). There is nothing anomalous about Bugul's first hotel experience, in which the unfeeling indistinctness of person, place, and

time all seemed to converge in one focalized nexus of *quelconque*, for the city itself is such a nexus—one in which a multitude of internal loci reflect a larger sentiment. The archetypal places that repeat themselves in *Le Baobab fou* (restaurants, hotels, apartments, nightclubs) are filled with people who are just as repetitive in their appearances. Certainly, Bugul finds a handful of people as unique as herself with which to bond, such as Jean Wermer or the Denoëls, but for each such person she meets, she encounters throngs of assembly-line humans, from coffee-table intellectuals to sleazy johns to prototypical hippies, causing her at one point to reflect « Je connaissais énormément de gens et je ne connaissais personne » (Bugul 98). Everywhere she looks, the author is struck by categorical human similitude, which she reinforces through commentaries such as « Ces blancs, tous pareils » (Bugul 83), or « Les femmes . . . ignorent qu'il n'y a pas 'des femmes', il y a seulement la femme . . . Elles ont des choses à se dire puisqu'elles sont toutes semblables » (Bugul 100).

Even Bugul herself, while seeming to stand out individually by continually garnering the attention and the curiosity of her companions due to her race and foreign origins, is actually no more than an archetype in the eyes of others. People assume she is Congolese (because « le Belge ne connaît que le Congolais et tous les Noirs sont des Congolais » [Bugul 89]), suggest she should not be afraid of leopards due to her continental origin (Bugul 117-118), and are tantalized by the idea of her exotic sexuality in much the same manner (Bugul 125).⁴⁷ The personal connections that she believed herself to have had, and the instances in which she

⁴⁷ Ironically, it is in appealing to her sense of uniqueness that a potential seducer reveals the utter lack of idiosyncrasy in themselves and their entire situation: « Bonjour, vous êtes bien belle, vous venez d'Afrique? De quelle région? Vous vous appelez comment? C'est joli comme prénom. Vous savez, j'en vois des Africaines, mais une comme vous, jamais. Toujours la même chose, la même rengaine. Nous les femmes noires, nous sommes toutes pareilles. » (Bugul 125)

believed herself to be recognized as an individual, turn out to be illusory, as Bugul reveals in a retrospective analysis which, perhaps not so ironically, fuses the specific people, places, and instances that provided these moments into a generalized memory serving to bridge two more specific ones (of attending a Leonard Cohen concert and of taking LSD):

Chaque fois que je retrouvais ces endroits enfumés et toutes ces personnes traînantes, vagues, le cheveu hirsute, le regard las de n'avoir rien vu, j'avais l'impression de me retrouver, de me détendre en parlant avec eux, en jouant, à être avec eux, comme eux. Je vivais leur rêve d'un monde où tout marchait ensemble le jour et nuit, le rêve confondu, la conscience et l'inconscience, la trajectoire d'une idée conçue dans l'illusion, concrétisée dans le rêve . . . Eux ne me distinguait pas, ne me situaient pas. Le fait de croire que j'étais remarquée ou la seule remarquée, me poussa un soir à prendre un trip Yellow Sunshine. (110-111)

Two things are evident in examining the deleteriousness of homogeneity in *Le Baobab fou*. The first is that, while people may have physically constructed the monotonous and indistinct city, the city constructs them as well. Beginning the story as a wide-eyed, would-be conqueror of foreign lands and the knowledge within them, Bugul becomes a jaded by-product of a hedonistic, consumer culture who abandons her quest to better herself and ends up merely yearning for a means of not losing herself entirely. While she came to the city hoping it would teach her to become an independent woman, in the end she concedes a lesson she first began to learn in Dakar on the eve of Senegalese independence, avowing « Je croyais que l'indépendance allait me sauver. Je ne constatais aucune acquisition d'identité propre, aucun souffle. L'indépendance était comme la reconnaissance et l'officialisation de la dépendance » (Bugul 144). Desperate to fit in, she attempts to adapt—becoming a drug user around addicts and their havens, and a prostitute when she lives above a brothel. Around Souleymane and his friends (Africans who embraced the trends of their era by celebrating pride in their continental

heritage and Westerners who found it fashionable to seek out multicultural discovery in the form of dinner parties [Bugul 105-109]), Bugul becomes “ambassador” of a pan-Africanism in which she never truly believed, molding her “Africanness” to accommodate the superficial conceptions of others. Bugul states that she was never able to form a bond with Africans of other nationalities, and that the Africa she represented was « tourmentée » in a way that did not conform to the image of Africa her guests sought. Yet she shows herself to be a social chameleon by hosting soirées where she notes « Je jouais un défilé de mode africaine, me changeant tout le temps pendant que les gens mangeaient; de plus, je voulais assurer le service, mettre tout le monde à l’aise, sourire à chacun » (Bugul 109).

Stifled by her cold, anonymous environment, at times she nevertheless begins to crave becoming a part of it: from fearing and loathing the anonymity of the buildings and the crowd (see Bugul 40-46), she begins almost to relish it, taking a strange pride in her ability to disappear « *sans crier gare* » into the urban wilds of bars and nightclubs (Bugul 106). All the while, however, she remains internally conflicted, recognizing that her efforts to conform are betraying her own personal nature. Speaking of herself and of Jean Wermer, she confesses « Nous n’arrivions pas à trouver une formule propre pour nous affranchir. Nous suivions le même procédé que l’Europe alors que nous ne vivions pas les mêmes réalités . . . » (Bugul 89). However, she later comes to recognize that such awkward attempts at cultural adaptation are not the exclusive domain of foreigners; in an environment forged of homogeneity, the pressures to conform are so immense that most people find themselves transformed into something they are not. Long after her initial hotel stay, Bugul finds herself in the lobby of another hotel, different and yet no different than the previous one, where she comes to realize

that the carbon copy, *quelconque* people she meets have been molded to be that way, and that perhaps deep within them lie dormant spirits of individualism desperate to surface:

Cette femme . . . elle n'avait pas d'âge, pas de forme, pas de visage. Drapée dans une robe de la même couleur que ce qu'on pouvait appeler sa peau, elle paraissait encore plus anonyme. J'avais envie de lui dire qu'il fallait qu'elle vive à l'aire libre et de jour de préférence, mais y renonçai. Elle était vraiment celle que je n'aurais pas remarquée dans une épicerie ou dans une blanchisserie, mais dès qu'elle souriait, elle s'animait brusquement . . .

Je la regardai se diriger vers les ascenseurs, aussi anonyme. Les halls, les salons, les bars de tous les hôtels de grand luxe avaient la même couleur, la même allure, les mêmes odeurs, les mêmes gens y allaient et se ressemblaient. La même catégorie sociale. Les riches de la sueur des autres s'y pavanaient ; les hommes se curaient avec des cigares Davidoff. De l'autre côté, dans la rue, les mêmes passants : la petite femme, employée de bureau, la servante, la mère pressaient le pas en passant devant cette entrée qui menait vers des plaisirs obscurément imaginés, redoutés, convoités . . . pour l'ordinaire exorcisés, mais tout le monde au fond voulait la même chose : se sentir vivre. Le regard furtif ne trompait pas, jeté vers les autres, comme pour nier d'avoir un instant osé frémir, osé rêver. On filait dans le train-train de l'existence modèle, régulière, équilibrée, mais les cœurs parfois hurlaient la rage, le désespoir à goût d'envie tenaillément parfois. (Bugul 122-124)

In considering the environment that led to her loss of identity, it is apparent that much of what Ken Bugul blames on being immersed in "Western" civilization is actually a problem of contemporary urbanism, no longer exclusive to the West and certainly not representative of the totality of Belgian or Western culture. This is not to say that none of Bugul's problems are attributable to the West; on the contrary, she is constantly running into issues that stem from racial stereotypes to fundamental differences in cultural values. Such distinctions can be tricky, as globalization was largely born of the West and its introduction into nations like Senegal was at the hands of Western developers, but even at its origins globalization was a mere sub-culture in a much larger mosaic and has become a nationless culture of its own. In contrasting her old environment with her new one, and the person she was with the person she has become, Bugul

often dotes on differences between « les Occidentaux » and « l'Afrique. » Westerners, for example, « avaient tendance à avoir des idées bizarres » such as the need to have a cheetah present during a musical spectacle about Africa; in Africa people spoke frankly and with clarity about important matters (Bugul 118, 121). In reality, however, the borders are not quite so sharply defined. From sterile, mass produced architecture to core value differences, her primary culture shock stems more from a transition from village to city, rather than from Senegal to Belgium, as evidenced by experiences in both nations.

Long before Bugul found misery at the hands of an unfeeling Belgian populace, she experienced it in her own country after moving to the city for her education, presumably Saint Louis, as it was « pas très loin de la côte » and « les échanges avec le Mali étaient florissants » (see Bugul 132-140; 152-170). Long before her shock at the cold, characterless Belgian buildings, she had experienced it during her vacation in Dakar (see Bugul 139-142). During her entire stay in the city, Bugul reflects on how different it is than the village. Her brother's three-story, cubic apartment was « un endroit froid, avec des carreaux froids partout . . . » (Bugul 140) that left her fantasizing about the natural comforts of the sand and the trees back home, just as she would later come to do in similar surroundings in Belgium. In both places, people were a reflection of their environment, leading her to assert « Tout le temps que j'étais restée chez le frère, j'avais froid. Dans le cœur, dans l'âme, dans les rapports » (Bugul 140). In the city where she attends high school, we see individuality forsaken because of the pressures of social conformity, as Bugul observes, « Les femmes explosaient dans la journée et dès que l'homme rentrait, tous les personnages se repliaient . . . Là-bas, au village, ce n'était pas la même chose, ce n'était pas ainsi. Au village, chaque être humain s'assumait » (Bugul 133).

Even as she experiences them, Bugul sees these urban issues to be Western ones (see Bugul 140-145), yet her positive rapport with rural spaces in Belgium suggests that the West in and of itself is not the real problem. From her love of Volvoendal Park (see Bugul 83) to the inner tranquility that she found at the Denoëls' house outside the city, it is clear that there is a part of Belgium that speaks to her in the way that her home in Senegal did. As she describes not only the beauty of nature at the Denoëls, but also the nightly familial rituals of drinking homemade raspberry liqueur, sitting by the fire, and talking the night away (Bugul 104), it seems certain that she would not have to re-cross international borders in order to find that which is missing to and in her. If people are a product of their environment, then the warm and caring Denoëls—some of the few, true individuals in the entire novel—are a product of theirs as well. Each time Bugul bemoans her separation from her village—always doting on either the beauty of nature or the warmth of community—one wonders how different her perception of *l'Occident* would have been had her exchange program allowed her the luxury of living in a Belgian village instead of the bleak and conformist confines of the city.

Not unlike urban Belgium and urban Senegal, urban Quebec is littered with a cold and characterless sprawl that wears away at the souls of those who are surrounded by it. Like the cities in *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, *Les Villes tentaculaires*, and *Le Baobab fou*, the Montreal of *Bonheur d'occasion* is filled with a seemingly infinite repetition of bleak tones, uninspired geometry, and unadorned façades that serve to dampen the spirit of the city's residents. Roy's residential streetscapes exude a constant sense of hopelessness and depression; to walk the streets of the Saint-Henri neighborhood is to become burdened emotionally, leaving one with

the same impending sense of perpetual cold and isolation that plagued Bugul on her visit to Dakar. Describing a walk to church, Roy writes:

La neige molle formait comme des marais profonds et boueux. Les maisons restaient plongées dans l'obscurité. Du sous-sol au dernier étage, les fenêtres creusaient des trous noirs dans les façades froides. Au-dessus des toits planait une écharpe d'un bleu dilué qui tranchait sur la voûte encore sombre du ciel. Les étoiles reculaient. (Roy 169-170).

Such a passage instills a sense of over-arching totality, a reminder that homogeneity is a force the very definition of which is predicated on being all-encompassing. The effect of the city is so powerful that it is not confined to the *sous-sols* and the *derniers étages* of the buildings, but modifies its entire surroundings, transforming sky and snow—elements of nature often praised for their unique beauty—into messes as lifeless and nondescript as the buildings themselves. Like Bugul's hotels and apartments, Roy's buildings intensify a sense of alienation because they lack the defining character to radiate any warmth or welcome. For all of the hustle-bustle of the city's squares and ports, Montreal's side streets more often than not become « triste[s] couloir[s] », deserted, ugly, and devoid of nearly all life, not merely reflecting the melancholy of its citizens (Roy 176), but projecting it onto them as well.

As in Verhaeren's Belgium, repetition seems infinite and distinction entirely superficial. A visit to Workman Street reveals Roy's own world governed by « lettres en cuivre »—an ocean of fundamental similitude where street addresses mockingly allude to a nonexistent individuality:

Rose-Anna s'aventura au long des taudis de briques grises qui forment une longue muraille avec des fenêtres et des portes identiques, percées à intervalles réguliers . . .

Toutes les maisons—il ne faudrait pas dire les maisons, car comment distinguer les unes des autres ; c'est au numéro seul, au-dessus de la porte, qu'on reconnaît leur piteux appel à l'individualité—toutes les maisons de la rangée, non plus deux ou trois sur cinq, mais toutes, s'offraient à louer (Roy 119-120).

There is a threshold at which the repetitive seems to transform into the collective, as the lack of distinction between Roy's buildings makes them appear to meld together into a single, confused mass: « Luttant pour un espace dans cette ville de prière et de travail, les toits descendaient par étages, de plus en plus confus, de plus en plus resserrés jusqu'à ce que leur monotone assemblage cessât brusquement à la bordure du fleuve » (Roy 265). This streetscape seems an obvious metaphor for the residents of Saint-Henri, increasingly numerous and desperate to separate themselves from a sprawling, monotone flock. It is the thrill of difference that first entices Florentine to Jean, as he represents a life distinct from the hundreds of redundant fates she witnesses in Saint-Henri (see Roy 22). It is when she experiences a complete and utter disjunction with the world that she knows (on a trip to a fancy restaurant in which everything—from the menu filled with « mots étranges » to an incident in which she applies too much perfume—shows how entirely out of her element she is) that she ultimately falls in love with him.

The danger of being like everyone else is ever present in Saint-Henri, where faceless crowds pass by on sidewalks, at restaurants, and in squares. While on the streetcar, « Jean, par les vitres embuées, apercevait des bras levés, des journaux dépliés, des dos affaissés, un amoncellement las de membres et parfois, de cet enchevêtrement, un regard montait, un regard triste, abattu, qui était peut-être celui de toute la foule et dont l'expression longtemps en lui demeurerait » (Roy 91). As in Verhaeren, this amalgam of body-parts represents the

submission of individuality to a greater collective, reinforced in this case by the single expression meant to encapsulate the feeling of the entire crowd. In a neighborhood where so many share the same history—from the unemployed masses who frequent the bars to the hordes of spring migrants forced to find a new home every year—the risk of failing to stand out is ever-present. Even in her flirtation with Emmanuel, Florentine alludes to this force, as Emmanuel asks « Est-ce qu'on s'est pas déjà vu, mademoiselle Florentine? » and she jokingly responds « Ça se peut . . . les trottoirs sont pas larges dans Saint-Henri et il y passe gros de monde » (Roy 126). This desire for distinction, in part, is the allure of wealth to people like Florentine, who desire more than a simple material improvement to their lives; who, like Ken Bugul, yearn to be *remarquée*. In a way, Florentine is like one of the passers-by who gawk at those inside Bugul's luxury hotel, covetous of a life that to them represents a shattering of their monotonous template of existence, without stopping to consider that the conformist pressures of the city would not allow such individuals to exist without a template of their own.

One finds no better proof of this than at Emmanuel's parents' residence. When Emmanuel and Florentine first enter the luxurious house, about which she had been daydreaming long before her arrival, she seems content to revel in the new scenery. Yet, as soon as it is discovered that the mansion is not her own private villa—indeed, the parents were hosting a soirée with dozens of guests—she becomes ill at ease. Roy describes a scene in which, making a tour of the various groups of party guests, Emmanuel introduces his date: « Devant chaque groupe, Emmanuel murmurait 'Mademoiselle Lacasse'. . . Puis il lui nommait rapidement quatre ou cinq personnes. Et elle, chaque fois, pinçait un peu les narines, souriait avec effort et disait, Ah, je sais pas par exemple si je vas me souvenir de tous les noms » (Roy

156). The social convention that dictates the presentation of guests not only makes them feel socially awkward in its forced interaction with people to whom they have no desire to connect, but ultimately seems to be an entirely futile gesture: a ritual based around acknowledging the individual identities of a crowd no less anonymous or collectively embodied than the one on the streetcar in Saint-Henri. Despite being surrounded by wealth, this scenario makes Florentine uneasy, as it is a reminder that there has been no fundamental shift in who she is. She remains a mere body in a crowd, forced to put on a smiling façade that belies what she feels inside. This is an especially unpleasant task for her in light of the fact that, as a waitress in Saint-Henri, she particularly despised the fake smile that her job demanded (Roy 20). It is not until she asserts her individuality—becoming the center of attention as she and Emmanuel dazzle the crowd with a dance routine—that she begins to feel happy and confident.

Faïza Guène also writes about the need to escape the mundane repetition of an impoverished urban life. The very title of *Kiffe kiffe demain* alludes to the emotional taxation of the routine; to have any hope of loving (*kiffer*) tomorrow, one must see a hope that it will represent a change from the fundamental, mundane repetition of life (*kif-kif*). In considering the context of life in the slums of suburban Ile-de-France, the reader is prone to sympathize when Doria's mother's remarks that she finds the Western obsession of naming natural disasters, such as hurricanes, to be profoundly stupid (Guène 81). When everyday life is filled with overlapping minor tragedies and destructive events, what sense does it make to pay homage to one incident over another by bestowing a superficial individuality upon it, as though the latest incarnation were somehow fundamentally different than every other gust of wind that ruined lives and left piles of rubble in its wake? For Doria, the existence of conditions and

events brought about by poverty often seem less unbearable than their utter predictability, as she has come to expect repeated failure on the part of state workers, to be a perpetual lost cause to her teachers, and that all good turns of events inevitably preclude a crushing disappointment. Believing she has an understanding of how her society functions, she is quick to dismiss the notion of individuality when analyzing the motives of those around her, forming stereotypes that assume that similar people behave similarly. For example, the problem with *all* people whose careers begin with psy- is that they never share information about themselves (Guène 40). The *only* people who could have an interest in the neighborhood would be the « journalistes mythos avec leurs reportages dégueulasses sur la violence en banlieue » [Guène 125]). Human actions *always* reflect first and foremost a desire to conform (believing that Hamoudi's changes in demeanor reflect a loss of himself in an attempt to become what Lila wants him to be [see Guène, 164]), and her teacher only wants to have a meeting with her « pour se donner conscience et raconter à ses potes dans un bar parisien branché comme c'est difficile d'enseigner en banlieue » (Guène 26).

Doria has no reason to believe in anything other than fundamental human similitude when her life is so replete with homogeneity, as one superficial incarnation after another of the same basic elements embody the sense of *kif-kif* that Doria loathes. If names and titles constantly escape Doria, it is because they are irrelevant, offering the false notion of difference between subjects who are functional clones of each other with respect to their role in Doria's life. Drawing no distinction between individuals, she bestows generic names on her social workers: Mme Dumachin, Mme Dutruc, Mme Duquelquechose (Guène 17-18)—variations on the same name for variations on the same person. They retain in common the “du-” prefix that

represents the only truly substantive or important aspect of these names: a marker « pour qu'on sache que tu viens de quelque part » (Guène 17). Similarly, it is unimportant whether people are psychologists, psychiatrists, or psychoanalysts, as all psy- words are fundamentally the same in her eyes. These homogeneous humans, products of their urban environment, are reflected in the city itself, epitomized by the convenience store known as Malistar, « une toute petite supérette qui existe depuis des années même si elle a changé de nom plein de fois. Au moins dix barèmes différents depuis que j'habite ici: World Provisions, Better Price, Toutipri . . . Le problème, c'est que tout le monde l'appelle différemment ce magasin, en fonction du nom qui l'a marqué » (Guène 83).

Faïza Guène's architectural descriptions may focus on poverty and intercultural relations (see Guène 21, 89-90), but by setting *Kiffe kiffe demain* in the HLM of Livry-Gargan, the author is already making a statement on homogeneity. These neighborhoods, filled with stark, white, cubic residences represent urban sprawl at its most visually striking. In this environment, it is easy to see why Doria indulges so heavily in escapism. Like Florentine, her young romantic fantasies are predicated on difference: her man needed not only to be good himself, but to be « le type qui ferait passer tous les autres pour des gros nazes » (Guène 40). Deep down she, like so many others, feels stifled by the environment's insufficiency in allowing her an individual voice. At one point, she begins to hope that her vote will be meaningful, noting, « Je me dis que c'est peut-être pour ça que les cités sont laissées à l'abandon, parce qu'ici peu de gens votent . . . Ici, on n'a jamais la parole. Alors quand on nous la donne, il faut la prendre » (Guène 97-98).

Patrick Chamoiseau also addresses the relationship between residential environment and self-expression in *Texaco*. To Chamoiseau, the value in the old residences that the city condemns lies in the idea that they are an outlet for the memories—and by extension, the stories—that come from personal and community experience. These homes undoubtedly qualify as sprawl in the eyes of the city planning commission, which has sent a representative to consider razing the neighborhood on the pretense that the houses are insalubrious and unregulated (Chamoiseau 19-21). Yet while these houses may not conform to the aesthetic that pleases the city council, they are nevertheless individual, built by members of the community like the narrator's father, Esternome, examples of how « l'esprit des ouvriers nèg défaisait l'habitat et le réinventait...dans une esthétique espéciale » (Chamoiseau 104). Esternome explains it: « Métier, c'est belle mémoire » (Chamoiseau 59). Just as the neighborhood itself embodies individual and communal self-determination—homes and land that, after centuries of slavery, are finally property of those who established them—so too do the houses embody the labor and memories that preserve both individual and community legacies. The materials of the houses that Esternome builds and the techniques he uses to build them provide links to history. He learned good environmental roofing techniques from the indigenous Caribs and takes pride in his long-lasting shutters made from a domestic cypress no longer available to construction workers at the time that the narrator recounts the story to the urban planner (Chamoiseau 59, 63). Yet architecture offers more than just a link to the past; it also provides the potential for developing a legacy through the present. When Chamoiseau writes « Être, dans l'En-ville, c'était d'abord y disposer d'un toit » (352), he highlights the idea that environment is crucial to self-definition, and that shaping this

environment fulfills emotional needs. It is in building the City that the mason Esternome is able to feel not only a sense of possession, but a complex emotional connection to the City, including both a pride and a love that he is able to share with his wife (see Chamoiseau 140) and his child (see Chamoiseau 59-63). And it is in seeing his own handiwork destroyed by a volcanic eruption that he loses a part of himself that he is never fully able to recover.

It is not only the loss of his buildings or their physically embodied memories that leave Esternome unable to bond with Fort-de-France in the way he had become entangled with Saint-Pierre. Long before the age of concrete, Esternome sees hints of what City could become with an architecture that stifled individual stories.

Il la suivit [Adrienne] au bas de façades maçonnées, incertaines dans la boue fermentant sous l'En-ville. Les rues étaient toutes droites et se coupaient carrées. Rien n'évoquait une ville. Tout était fabriqué sans souci de mémoire. Le bois était ou trop vieux ou trop neuf. Les maçonnes signalaient plusieurs mains de maçon. Les fenêtres différaient. Nul ne prenait le frais aux mille petits balcons qui imitaient Saint-Pierre. Et, partout, de vastes bâtisses sans âme, aux fenêtres poussiéreuses, résonnaient des échos de casernes, sentaient fort l'entrepôt ou l'écurie guerrière. Rien n'exprimait l'En-ville, je ne me souviens de rien. (Chamoiseau 167)

Here there was a different philosophy of living than in Saint-Pierre, and a different relationship to the buildings. Esternome understands that « tu fais . . . l'En-ville par ce que tu y mets » (Chamoiseau 228); soulless architecture led to alienation, as Esternome would come to realize. On numerous occasions Chamoiseau or his city planner write of a balance between center and periphery (Chamoiseau 218, 235-236, 401); the real threat of sprawl does not come from the untamed shacks in Texaco, but from the central organization that consumes all with its immutable philosophies, including architectural ones. When, many years later City goes up in flames, the city planner muses, « Texaco se souvient du jeu de forces entre la case et la

Grand-case, entre l'habitation et le bourg, entre le bourg rural et la ville. Fort-de-France, emportée par l'idéal pavillonnaire et le blockhaus infernal, avait un peu oublié les équilibres originels » (Chamoiseau 401). The townhouse ideal (cheap, dense, homogeneous units) and the blockhouse remain viable threats even at the arrival of the city planner to Texaco, where Marie-Sophie admits « À le voir [l'urbaniste], il semblait un de ces agents de la mairie moderne, qui détruisaient les quartiers populaires pour les civiliser en clapiers d'achélèmes . . . » (Chamoiseau 20). The danger in razing Texaco was not only that memories would be lost with houses, but that there would be no viable system to replace this connection with architecture.

3.3 The Need for Escape

3.3.1 The City as Prison

Although the authors examined in this chapter represent different eras and cultures, they share a common depiction of the city as a space of entrapment. The characters in these diverse novels are plagued with a desire for escape, yet this desire inevitably proves impossible. In the case of *Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orleans*, Sidonie de la Houssaye's New Orleans may not be enclosed by walls, but it is a prison nonetheless. The city exudes an almost magnetic pull on the various protagonists, offering them tantalizing reprieves during which they heal from their urban trauma, only to be lured back to New Orleans in the end. Alfred's troubles in New Orleans begin when he takes up with Octavia, yet when he finally breaks free of the influence of the city during a trip to Europe, he begins to get his priorities straight (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 7). However, he is drawn back to the city, where his problems with Octavia intensify, culminating in her threat to destroy him, a threat on which she eventually carries through. Alfred and his newfound love are able to escape the city temporarily, during

which time they find happiness and return to “small-town” values, staying “pure” by avoiding big city temptations:

Ajoutons qu'Angèle n'a jamais rien su des menaces d'Octavia et qu'elle se trouve suprêmement heureuse dans son calme intérieur, si près de ses parents et à côté de son mari et de son enfant. Ce bonheur suffisait à la jeune femme, qu'on ne voyait jamais dans une salle de bal, jamais au théâtre, et qui, malgré son immense fortune, était toujours habillée avec la plus grande simplicité . . .

Au moment où le public et les journaux s'occupaient le plus de la belle quarteronne, Angèle donna une fille à son mari. Pour cette jeune femme qui ne cherchait le bonheur que dans la vie de famille, la naissance de cette enfant fut un nouveau bonheur. (Raymond, “Octavia” ch 10)

Once they are drawn back again to New Orleans, their miseries multiply. Octavia steals Alfred and Angèle’s daughter to raise as her own clandestinely, leading to Angèle’s death and Alfred’s eventual demise. His son finds himself deteriorating ethically for the sake of his own *quarteronne*, as he lies, steals, and ruins himself financially to please her. Yet, the family once again finds time to recuperate spiritually and morally as the son pursues his studies in Germany (Raymond, “Octavia” ch 13). They cannot escape the pull of New Orleans, however, and upon their return, a series of events leads to the son’s death and the father’s murder of his own daughter (Raymond, “Octavia” ch 17). The city’s irresistible siren’s call also snares Louis Pain who, despite constant intentions to settle down with his rural family, « ne pouvait rester longtemps loin de cette Nouvelle-Orléans qui, comme l’aimant attire l’acier, attirait le jeune homme en faisant scintiller à ses regards le souvenir de ses plaisirs enivrants qui étaient maintenant une des nécessités de sa vie » (Raymond, “Violetta” 20).

In *Bonheur d’occasion*, Gabrielle Roy details how various characters feel confined by Saint-Henri. In the case of Florentine, even her own residence functions as a prison. It is a

constant reminder of poverty to the point of becoming an embarrassment; Florentine is too embarrassed of it to show Jean after their date uptown (Roy 102). Ironically, she is not the only one who feels trapped by it. After he finally does visit, Florentine's house forces Jean to relive memories of his past: « Le silence pesait sur lui. L'humble arrangement domestique d'objets si nécessairement confondus avec les gestes de la vie le gênait. Il voulut fuir » (Roy 251). To Florentine, Jean represents the promise of a ticket out of the neighborhood, the fulfillment of her own deepest desire to flee. « . . . Jean, c'était quand même sa fuite longtemps combattue en elle-même, Jean c'était celui qu'il fallait suivre, jusqu'au bout, pour toujours » (Roy 140). In looking for Jean, she realizes she has spent her entire life trying to escape, not just from one house, but from Saint-Henri and the lifestyle it brings with it. « Florentine reconnaissait l'odeur des logis d'autrefois, toutes les pauvres maisons où ils avaient été ensemble et cependant déjà séparés les uns des autres. Elle découvrait avec une lucidité extraordinaire toute une série d'intérieurs où les mêmes images saintes, les mêmes portraits de famille, se superposaient devant elle comme pour l'emprisonner » (Roy 309). From her very first meeting with Jean, he has represented the allure of elsewhere; even before he showed her the possibilities of uptown (Roy 93-100), she knew that he represented a chance at escape.

Il sembla à Florentine que, si elle se penchait vers ce jeune homme, elle respirerait l'odeur même de la grande ville grisante, bien vêtue, bien nourrie, satisfaite et allant à des divertissements qui se paient cher. Et soudain, elle évoqua la rue Sainte-Catherine, les vitrines des grands magasins, la foule élégante des samedis soirs, les étalages de fleuristes, les restaurants à portes-tambours et tables dressées presque sur le trottoir derrière les baies miroitantes, l'entrée lumineuse des théâtres, leurs allées qui s'enfoncent au-delà de la tour vitrée de la caissière, entre des reflets de hauts miroirs, de rampes lustrées, de plantes, comme en une ascension si naturelle vers l'écran où passent les plus belles images du monde : tout ce qu'elle désirait, admirait, enviait, flotta devant ses yeux. Ah ! ce garçon ne devait pas s'embêter les samedis soir ! Pour elle, ce n'était pas gai. Parfois, peu souvent, elle était sortie avec un jeune homme, mais

il ne l'avait emmenée qu'à un petit cinéma du quartier, ou à quelque pauvre salle galeuse de banlieue, et encore, pour un si mince divertissement, il avait cherché à se faire payer de baisers. . . . (Roy 22)

The feeling of imprisonment is not confined to those in Saint-Henri, however. The city confines all of its citizens, even the wealthy ones. After leaving his house, Emmanuel « se retrouva dans la rue avec le sentiment de s'échapper d'une prison . . . oh ! une prison bien agréable, pas sévère, une prison de tendresse, mais qui, tout de même, quelquefois, l'énervait » (Roy 353). We see in the awkward formality of Emmanuel's parents' party how truly stifling the imposed etiquette of the upper class can be (see Roy 156-170), and that the desire to set one's own destiny cannot be confined by class.

In *Kiffe kiffe demain*, the suburb of Livry-Gargan presents a multifaceted prison from which escape seems impossible, yet the idea of it is constantly on Doria's mind. From her inner cell—her broken apartment that embarrasses her and makes her feel vulnerable at the hands of the state (Guène 67-69)—she continues to be surrounded by layers of invisible barriers. Invisible social borders, such as the separation between *la cité du Paradis* where she lives and the more affluent *zone pavillonnaire Rousseau*, enclose her neighborhood (Guène 89-90). The walls of her city quite literally confine her in her recurring dream:

J'ouvrais la fenêtre et j'avais le soleil qui me tapait fort dans le visage . . . J'ai passé mes jambes par-dessus la fenêtre jusqu'à me retrouver assise sur le rebord, puis, d'un élan, je me suis envolée. J'allais de plus en plus haut, je voyais les HLM qui s'éloignaient et devenaient de plus en plus petits. Je battais des ailes, enfin des bras, et puis à force de les secouer pour continuer à monter, je me suis réellement cognée au mur à ma droite et ça m'a fait un énorme bleu. (Guène 71)

It is little wonder that Doria's psychiatrist puts her constant thoughts of escape at the forefront of their discussions, such as the episode in which Doria marked in her atlas a dream trip around the world, yet remained trapped at the « point de départ » (Guène 72). However, there is no realistic destination to which she could flee. Bound to her mother by a sense of duty, she knows that they could never return to Morocco for reasons of poverty and the shame that would befall her family as others become aware of her father's betrayal (Guène 12); thus, she must remain in a place that she detests. Escapism becomes a weapon in a fight against a city that holds her against her will; having no realistic way to physically escape her prison, she must escape it mentally, through fantasy, television, and daydreaming. If her teachers complain that she seems elsewhere while in class (Guène 45), her mother clearly has similar episodes, where « Enfin, elle est présente physiquement. Parce que dans sa tête, elle est ailleurs . . . » (Guène 11). Escapism is so fundamental to Doria that she believes that the root of her profound connection to Hamoudi is that, as he gets high so frequently, « Il est tout le temps déconnecté et je crois que c'est pour ça que je l'aime bien. Tous les deux on n'aime pas notre réalité » (Guène 27).

3.3.2 Nature as Impossible Refuge

Facing the prospect of perpetual imprisonment, it is only natural for the human soul to develop a desperate and nagging sense of yearning for some form of reprieve. When one identifies his jail as the city around him, it seems logical that freedom should equate to that which is not city—that the physical antithesis of urbanity should be its functional antithesis as well. Indeed, as people continually battle a tireless urban enemy, the promise of finding reprieve in the form of nature and/or the rural realm wends its way into literature from all over

la francophonie, as city and country are not only depicted as opposites, but often find themselves at odds with each other, even to the point of being in direct conflict. Yet while the virtues of nature and of small-town life would seem to offer a utopian refuge from the urban fortress, such a notion rarely transcends the realm of fantasy, as wild enclaves never offer more than a temporary or partial respite from the burdens of the city. Whether on the part of the author or his/her characters, images of bucolic sanctuary are always marked with a distant and desperate longing, perpetually coveted yet constantly out of reach. As much as the hope of a natural asylum permeates literature from numerous *francophone* countries, it is always accompanied by the disappointment of unachievability, as the urban nightmare routinely finds a way to shatter the rural dream.

To those who have read *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, the notion of Verhaeren idealizing the countryside might seem absurd. In this volume that predates *Les Villes tentaculaires*, rural Belgium is as miserable a place as any in existence, a desolate and melancholic wasteland plagued with disease (42-45, 66-70). Poor farms line monotonous fields under sad and anguished skies (25-27), and wickedness fills some hearts with hate and rancor (32) while driving others to a violent madness (40). Such a landscape would seem to complement rather than oppose Verhaeren's merciless city, yet in the opening poem of *Les Villes tentaculaires*, we are presented with what, at least in certain ways, represents a markedly different portrayal of *La plaine*. From the outset it is clear that the city and the country are adversaries, as different in moral intention as they are in physical character. Verhaeren evokes a country that, in its noblest times, is a classic idyll of physical beauty, mental tranquility, and spiritual purity:

Dites ! l'ancien labeur pacifique, dans l'Août
Des seigles mûrs et des avoines rousses,
Avec les bras au clair, le front debout,
Quand l'or des blés ondule et se retrousse
Vers l'horizon torride où le silence bout.

Dites ! le repos tiède et les midis élus,
Tressant de l'ombre pour les siestes,
Sous les branches, dont les vents prestes
Rythment, avec lenteur, les grands gestes feuillus.

Dites, la plaine entière ainsi qu'un jardin gras,
Toute folle d'oiseaux éparpillés dans la lumière,
Qui la chantent, avec leurs voix plénières,
Si près du ciel qu'on ne les entend pas. (89)

The evil that had previously plagued rural figures such as *le Fou* and *le Donneur de mauvais conseils* seems to have become an exclusively urban trait, as the demonic aggression of the city is juxtaposed by a passive innocence on the part of the plains. In a conflict that represents an unequivocal case of evil versus good, the city envelops and destroys the countryside, as Verhaeren writes « Formidables et criminels,/Les bras des machines diaboliques,/Fauchant les blés évangéliques,/Ont effrayé le vieux semeur mélancolique/Dont le geste semblait d'accord avec le ciel » (Verhaeren, 87). This fragility and innocence represents a marked departure from Verhaeren's depiction of the plains in *Les Campagnes hallucinées*. In a landscape where « Comme le sol, les eaux sont mortes, » consider the lines « C'est la plaine, la plaine/Où ne vague que crainte et peine/ . . . C'est la plaine, la plaine/Mate et longue comme la haine » (Verhaeren, 27). The same desolation and putrefaction that imbue the plains with a sense of malicious power in *Les Campagnes hallucinées* now seem to demonstrate an opposite quality, marking its martyrdom at the hands of a similar power, as suggested by lines such as « Un soleil pauvre et avili/S'est comme usé en de la pluie » (Verhaeren, 87), and « On ne

rencontre, au loin, qu'enclos rapiécés/Et chemins noirs de houille et de scories/Et squelettes de métairies . . . » (Verhaeren, 89).

In observing this scene transpire, one comes to understand why the innocence of the countryside can never provide refuge for those who have become trapped in the diabolical mechanics of the city. The two representations of country found in Verhaeren's two collections of poetry—the frightening and powerful wasteland and the pure but sacrificial idyll—are not inconsistent visions but rather different manifestations of one landscape. Both the first ("La ville tentaculaire") and last ("Le départ") poems in *Les Campagnes hallucinées* affirm an urban backdrop against the countryside depicted in the volume, and although *Les Campagnes hallucinées* was written prior to *Les Villes tentaculaires*, the countryside within it represents what exists after it has been felled by urban forces. Although the country "dies" and is "eaten" by the urban monster (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 87), it is not wholly consumed, but instead is transformed as the city injects itself into it. Verhaeren's city has a tendency to merge with all that it envelops, as is the case with the humans who reside in it. The city becomes an organic entity that sees with animal eyes and is constructed from flesh and body parts; citizens, conversely, are transformed into simple building materials that comprise its architectural infrastructure: « Morceaux de vie en l'énorme engrenage,/Morceaux de chair fixée, ingénieusement,/Pièce par pièce, étage par étage,/De l'un à l'autre bout du vaste tournoiement./Leurs yeux sont devenus les yeux de la machine ;/Leur corps entier : front, col, torse, épaules, échine, / Se plie aux jeux réglés du fer et de l'acier » (Verhaeren, 88).

In a similar fashion to the residents of the city who meld with the mechanical beast, the countryside becomes a part of the city as well, taking on not only its physical characteristics (from « La noire immensité des usines rectangulaires » to the « trains coupant soudain les villages en deux » [Verhaeren 87, 89]), but its moral ones as well. No longer beautiful or tranquil, the wilderness is no longer pure and good either, as « Les Madones ont tu leurs voix d'oracle/Au coin du bois, parmi les arbres ;/Et les vieux saints et leurs socles de marbre/Ont chu dans les fontaines à miracles » (Verhaeren 89). When Verhaeren writes « Et tout se plaint ainsi que les âmes perdues/ Qui sanglotent le soir dans la bruyère humide » (90), he highlights the pain felt by a populace who remembers the countryside as it once was. Those trapped in the humid fog of the industrialization do indeed yearn to escape to the angelic countryside that Verhaeren describes, but such a yearning is actually a mournful and nostalgic longing, for that country no longer exists except in their memories. To escape to Verhaeren's post-industrial country would be no escape at all, but rather to remain trapped in an ugly world of wickedness and pain as you pass from one vast and menacing landscape to another, to « part[ir] de l'infini pour l'infini » (Verhaeren, "Les Campagnes hallucinées" 78) as former villagers did when they first came to the city to escape the barren and hopeless country.

Like Verhaeren, Ken Bugul mourns memories of a beautiful rural sanctuary that becomes increasingly impossible to access with the passage of time. As in *Les Villes tentaculaires*, city and country are natural enemies in *Le Baobab fou*, engaged in a conflict whose one-sidedness is subtly evident, suggested by clues such as an airplane engine that drowns out the bleating of sheep (Bugul 35) or the birds that are frightened away by the sound of school children voicing a vowel during their first French grammar lesson (Bugul 115).

However, while the city occasionally taints nature to the point of leaving one feeling ill at ease (such as the animal enclosure Bugul's brother visits on the weekends [Bugul 141]), for the most part the natural world that has survived the urban assault retains its idyllic mystique. Alienated by cold concrete and colder human hearts, nature remains one of the only sources of joy and comfort to Bugul, as is evident in her love of Vovoendal park and of the Denoëls' rural dwelling (Bugul 83, 104), but perhaps nowhere more so than during her walk in the Soiges Forest outside Brussels, where she temporarily regains the vigor and inner peace that the city has drained from her, remarking:

C'était calme, c'était bon, c'était merveilleux. Et les odeurs de la forêt par ce froid qui vous donnait envie de rire, de jouir, de sauter comme un enfant. C'était dans la nature toujours qu'on redevenait enfant. Mes bras se déliaient de leurs articulations, mes jambes retrouvaient leur agilité comme là-bas, dans le village quand je passais des heures à gambader dans cette brousse qui m'était si familière. . . . Nous étions dans le décor. . . . Nous frissonnions et de froid et de bien-être (Bugul 66)

It is during the times at which she feels the most imprisoned that, unable physically to flee to the pastoral comfort of her homeland, she resorts to a mental escape, always affiliating the comfort of home with the nature that characterizes it. Immobilized as the doctor probes her, the "protective" sky of home appears to her (Bugul 58), just as her first thought while confined in a room with a client who repulses her is to run to the safety of the baobab that served as the centerpiece to her village (Bugul 87). In both of these cases, she feels security as she is sheltered by vast natural canopies, symbols of strength in their immensity and steadfastness. Trapped by the claustrophobia of a bustling crowd on the asphalt streets, she longs to feel the sand beneath her feet (Bugul 47), while spending her nights confined in her brother's apartment makes her miss the trees back home (Bugul 141). Sadly, mental

recollection is an insufficient escape, as the happiness of memory is always tinged with the sadness of longing.

Even in Belgium, nature is a foil to the city's negative qualities, comforting while the city disturbs, re-energizing while the city fatigues, and fostering relationships while the city alienates. Scarred by the trauma of culture shock and an unwanted abortion, it is thanks to the bond she establishes with Leonora in the forest that her « rétablissement physique et moral était rapide. . . » (Bugul 66). Similarly, surrounded by a hearth fire and a garden « plein d'odeurs, de fleurs, de feuillages et de terre mouillée » she develops a deep bond with Paul Denoël and feels at ease (Bugul 104). However, within this remedy lies an insidious cruelty, as the promise of refuge remains a constant temptation for Bugul, yet proves to be an insatiable hope as time after time she is faced with a paradise that is somehow imperfect. She finds happiness in a heavily-windowed house that overlooks Volvoendal park (to the point that « on avait l'impression que la maison se trouvait au milieu du parc » [Bugul 69]) only to watch her tranquility crumble as her possessive roommate makes her residence « *invivable*, » exiling her to a studio in another part of town where she misses the park terribly (Bugul 83). Similarly, while she goes to visit the Denoëls in hopes of escaping the torture of her urban prison (or as she puts it, « Pour changer un peu. Aller à la campagne! » [Bugul 103]), the respite she finds is dishearteningly fleeting, marred by a jealous wife who mistakenly sees her as a threat to the marriage, such that after her initial visit she is seldom able to return (Bugul 105). Even as she revels in the natural beauty of the setting and the gaiety of the evenings spent philosophizing with friends, there is an aura of slight melancholy that suggests that this rural dwelling is not the true refuge it appears to be. Frequently seeking solitude in the garden and burdened by

sadness in the moments when Paul tucks her in at night, all of the elements that she loves about her setting simultaneously infect her with a profound homesickness. Even when she feels joy and comfort, it is as though they are not really her own because her only possible sanctuary lies miles away, a fact of which she is somewhat conscious as she reflects « En serrant très fort l'oreiller moelleux contre moi, je soupirais dans ce répit de mon existence tourmentée, souhaitant être ainsi là-bas, à la maison au village, quand la lune, les étoiles et les baobabs accompagnaient la terre dans le sommeil » (Bugul 105).

While at first it seems that mere oceans separate her miserable quotidian existence in Belgium from the natural paradise of her family's village in Senegal, finding asylum is not simply a matter of hopping on a plane and returning home, as she discovers upon making a trip back to Africa on the occasion of her father's death, noting « J'y passai quinze jours de mélancolie à me dire que ce n'était pas non plus là que je trouverais le rêve éternel. Il fallait faire demi tour et laisser reprendre l'éternel supplice » (Bugul 95). By the time she returns a second time, the death of the town baobab (see Bugul 181)—symbol of safety and protection—ensures that her wild sanctuary is gone forever. Ultimately, the symbiosis between Bugul and her village is rooted in the experience of childhood—in its innocence, joy, and need for nurturing and protection. The longing Bugul feels is not merely for place, but for a synthesis of place and time; as desperately as she desires it, she can never find refuge because it was designed for the person she was, rather than the person she is. Just as Eve could never return to Eden, so has Bugul's loss of innocence and development of worldly knowledge ensured her permanent exile from paradise.

Gabrielle Roy presents her readers with a remarkably similar paradigm, establishing a polar relationship between city and country that leaves urban citizens yearning for an escape to nature while not fully understanding that the refuge they seek is has been lost with the past. Her Montreal cityscape is primarily a mosaic of shops and stone, yet in describing the smattering of trees that remain, one sees the scars of an all too familiar battle. As Jean surveys Rue Saint-Ambroise, for example, it is revealed that:

Autrefois c'étaient ici les confins du faubourg ; les dernières maisons de Saint-Henri apparaissaient là, face à des champs vagues ; un air presque limpide, presque agreste flottait autour de leurs pignons simples et de leurs jardinets. De ces bons temps, il n'est resté à la chausse Saint-Ambroise que deux ou trois grands arbres poussant encore leurs racines sous le ciment du trottoir. (Roy 36)

The forcing of the roots through the stubborn cement seems to symbolize the final stand of an all but failed defense against an all-consuming foe. Even those elements of nature that have resisted the urban takeover seem to have lost their spiritual potency. In lieu of the vibrancy and life that one generally associates with nature, the trees that have become a part of the city tend to exude death and decay. On one street we find « les hauts troncs des érables, leurs branches nues et grises où scintillaient des gouttes d'eau, [qui] se détachaient déjà dans la demi-clarté du square » (Roy 169), while on another we are confronted with « les arbres noirs [qui] se tordaient avec des craquement secs au cœur de leur tronc noueux » (Roy 178).⁴⁸ Even in the full bloom of spring, the reader is presented with a form of nature that, while different, is

⁴⁸ One exception to the death and decay are the *pignons verts* outside Marguerite's house which, perhaps not unintentionally, serve as markers that Florentine uses to identify a place in which she hopes to find sanctuary after a terrible fight with her family, followed by a flight through the streets in which "Les murs de la grande cotonnerie, rue Saint-Ambroise, l'enveloppèrent de leur ombre pleine de l'essoufflement, de la plainte des machines" (Roy 322). Not surprisingly, this refuge is fleeting, as Marguerite's offer of financial support forces Florentine to confront the embarrassment of her poverty, and she feels compelled to leave (Roy 327-328).

no less corrupted, as flowers are boxed and put on display for sale while animals are kept in cages (Roy 302-303). Uncontrovertibly, the power of the city transforms nature to the point that it loses all of its pastoral majesty. Even the mighty Saint Lawrence is sullied by urban industry, failing to impress Rose-Anna and her family in the way that the Richelieu does, as out in the country it flows with « une telle tranquillité, une telle plénitude de force et de vie calme », so much so that Rose-Anna declares it to be the most beautiful river in the nation (Roy 233).

The citizens of Saint-Henri believe in a natural idyll that rests outside the city lines, an uncorrupted wilderness free of tumult and strife where one can revel in a joy and a peace that eludes them as they struggle with the day-to-day realities of their impoverished existence. In their minds, nature represents a freedom for which they all yearn; the more they reflect upon the prison that urban society imposes on them, the more acute that yearning becomes. Fresh on the heels of a depressing discussion between patrons of Les Deux Records concerning their helplessness in a society that denies them both employment and dignity, Pitou appeals to the emotional atmosphere by singing a song « qui évoquait la douceur des plaines, la liberté des cerfs, des faons naïfs aux grands yeux innocents, la tranquillité du majestueux original qui vient le soir s'abreuver entre les roseaux: le magnifique horizon de la solitude » (Roy 74-75). The song itself, sung while some patrons turn to the bottle to drown their sorrows, is meant to provide a similar analgesic escapism, yet only seems to intensify the lament of a people who are aware of the life to which they must return upon walking out the door. Later on, it is a drunken Alphonse who clings to the idea of a rural escape from the city's ills, as he recounts to Emmanuel the tale of a man who founded a miniature village on a garbage dump outside of

town, a sanctuary with the regenerative strength to withstand an assault from urban forces, as the city's sanitation commission burns the village only to see it rebuilt exactly as it was before (Roy 377-380). One might expect a trash heap to be a metaphor for a miserable life in the poor quarters of a city rather than a foil to it, yet *la dompe* is unquestionably an Eden in Alphonse's mind. Its divine substance stems from location rather than function, by virtue of which it is fundamentally connected to a bucolic antipode that is the city's equal in might and majesty. Alphonse even goes so far as to paint a scene of abundant flora and fauna to Emmanuel, noting that in the dump there were rats, cats, and even « des fleurs qui se sont mis à pousser aussi devant les cabanes, des fleurs de soleil » (Roy 379). The dump is a paradise precisely because it is not the city, mere miles away geographically, yet so fundamentally different in essence that « c'est un autre pays; c'est pas le même pays pantoute » (Roy 379-380). As Alphonse explains, in *la dompe*:

. . . t'entendais pas d'autre chose la nuit que les rats qui fouillaient parmi la charogne . . . T'avais la ville dans le dos, la ville pis son secours, la ville pis sa file de gueux qu'attendent leurs tickets pour le pain, la ville pis son vacarme à cause de bon Dieu sait quoi! Plus de clink clank de tramway, pus de grosses limousines te crachant au nez comme si t'avais la peste, pus de boucane, pus rien. T'étais chez vous. (Roy 378)

It is here that the spell of urban captivity is broken, and Alphonse understands perfectly why a man would abandon his burghal lodgings to stake a claim in a dump despite the repeated threats of the sanitation council, for « quand t'as goûté à l'air de campagne, tu y reviens, tu finis par y revenir » (Roy 379).

Those who would attempt to enact such an escape, however, are doomed to disappointment, as a trip into the wilderness proves the surest way to shatter the carefully

constructed myth of a pastoral asylum that resides in the hearts of the city-dwellers. After Azarius announces a surprise vacation to the country to see Rose-Anna's family, she immediately becomes nostalgic with memories of the beauty of the countryside from her youth. As she becomes obsessed with the hope of a refuge from the city, she begins mentally to reconstruct the terrain of her youth as a faultless arcadia, a divinely beautiful panorama where the taste and smell of maple syrup infiltrate the senses and where « les bois montr[ent] de grandes arches ensoleillées où la neige disparue mettait à nue la terre rouille et les feuilles pourries de l'automne » (Roy 208-209). She selectively omits unhappy memories—conveniently forgetting, for example, that growing up in abject poverty once gave the city the allure that the country now possesses for her, so much so that her mother once believed the engagement to Azarius to be an attempt at escape, declaring to her « Tu crois p'tête ben te sauver de la misère à c'te heure que tu vas aller faire ta dame dans les villes, mais marque ben ce que je te dis : la misère nous trouve » (Roy 240).

Such a premonition proved true for Rose-Anna's journey to the city, yet she is so intent on fleeing to the country as a means of escaping her problems it does not occur to her that the reverse might also apply. « Elle aurait voulu que cette journée en fût une de détente, de jeunesse retrouvée, d'illusion peut-être » (Roy 235), a trip that would serve as confirmation that there exists a haven in this world that is safe from sadness, pain, and tension, and one that would sever all ties, at least temporarily, to the person that the city has made her become. The constant and intense build-up of these hopes and desires only makes the actual experience more painful, as it does not take long after her arrival for reality to shatter her idealized illusions. Ultimately, while she has successfully crossed the city's borders, she never truly

escapes it, as the problems and conditions that make urban life a burden follow her wherever she goes. The constant family tension that has marked her recent nights at home takes new form at her parents' house, where her extended family remains cold towards her husband. Just as the city and the country themselves seem trapped in an eternal and mutual antagonism, there remains a seemingly irreconcilable friction between their actors. Rose-Anna's mother may love her dearly, yet « pour Azarius, un citadin, elle avait eu encore moins d'amitié que pour ses autres beaux-fils, tous de la campagne » (Roy 240). She had hoped that the comfort that accompanies the care of family would negate the discomfort of her life in Saint-Henri, yet her parents' generosity only strengthens the city's grip on her as it serves as a reminder of her own failings. After the exhaustion of defending her husband and the torment of realizing she cannot provide for her children the way her mother does for her, the accumulation of time in the countryside takes its toll on Rose-Anna, who finds herself even more miserable than she was before she left. Encumbered by her pregnancy, she does not even get to enjoy the solitude of the nature around her. As her children run into the woods to play, Rose-Anna is confined to the house feeling all of the things that she feels in the city: frustration, isolation, and imprisonment. Her deception is wrenching:

Ses yeux se levaient par instants; et elle se haussait un peu sur sa chaise pour suivre la marche des enfants; elle les vit pénétrer dans l'érablière, une petite masse de couleurs se dénouant et se mettant à la file entre les arbres. Et elle regretta si vivement de n'être pas partie avec eux que ses yeux s'embruèrent de larmes. Elle n'avait point osé, lorsque sa mère, la morigénant comme si elle était restée une enfant, avait déclaré : 'Dans ton état, t'es pas pour te mettre à courir les bois. . .' Sans doute aussi, avait-elle cessé quelque temps de se voir elle-même telle qu'elle était aux yeux des autres et, éblouie par son désir, entraînée par sa déception, elle avait rêvé l'impossible. Et elle craignait tant maintenant d'en arriver à trouver son rêve ridicule qu'elle se défendait d'y penser, le reniait et se disait 'Je savais bien aussi que j'irais pas. . . dans l'érablière.' (Roy 242-243)

Like Ken Bugul, Rose-Anna has committed the fatal error of mistaking place for memory. Even if her childhood had been as perfect as the one she constructed in her mind, there was never any possibility of refuge in the countryside of adulthood, for the sanctuary that she believed she was seeking in nature was really one that she was actually seeking in the past. Her contemporary life is forever tied to the troubles of Saint-Henri, and from this moment at her parents' cabin she remains perpetually aware of the falsehoods entwined in the beautiful mask of the pastoral world. As a trip past the flower markets in spring attests, she no longer finds beauty or hope in nature, which only serves to remind her of the ugliness and hopelessness of her own existence; surrounded by a sea of gorgeous flora, « elle détourna la vue, blessée par cette fête de couleurs, cette abondance d'odeurs fortes auxquelles elle ne pouvait plus prendre aucune joie » (Roy 303).

Not everyone who dreams of a pastoral haven from urbanity is seeking refuge in the past, however. In the case of Doria, imprisoned amidst the concrete residences of Livry-Gargan in *Kiffe kiffe demain*, it is in fantasizing about a less taxing present and/or a happier future that she constructs idyllic natural settings to contrast with the bleakness and hopelessness of her current surroundings. With little actual experience outside of the urban milieu, she uses television as her template for her mental Shangri-Las, envisioning environments where her life is as neatly packaged as it is for the characters in the shows she watches. In one instance, avowing a desire to escape the city in which she lives, she confesses,

. . . des fois j'aimerais trop être quelqu'un d'autre, ailleurs et peut-être même à une autre époque. Souvent, je m'imaginais que je fais partie de la famille Ingalls dans La Petite Maison dans la prairie. J'explique le plan :

Le papa, la maman, les enfants, le chien qui mord pas, la grange et les rubans dans les cheveux pour aller à l'église le dimanche matin. Le bonheur quoi . . . L'histoire, elle se passe dans des ambiances, genre avant 1900, avec la lampe à pétrole, l'arrivée du chemin de fer, des vêtements préhistoriques et d'autres trucs vieux comme ça . . . Ce que j'aime bien chez eux, c'est que dès qu'il arrive un drame, ils font le signe de croix, pleurent un bon petit coup, et à l'épisode d'après on a tout oublié. (Guène 73-74)

Doria takes care to describe the physical setting because it is intimately tied to the emotional goal of the fantasy. To be the experiential opposite of her current existence, Doria's sanctuary must be its physical opposite as well. As the city brings only misery, at least to those without money, then *le bonheur* must be tied to the innocent simplicity of a bucolic life devoid of its influence. She never stops to consider that life on the American frontier was actually quite grueling: dogs most certainly bit, and farms signified intense labor. To accept these facts would be to admit that there are no physical Edens on earth, dashing the hope that by escaping the city someday she will escape the hardship of her life. Instead, even though her logic tells her that cinema is fantasy, on a subconscious emotional level she continues to cling to the hope that somewhere in the country lies a refuge where her life can be as perfect as the backdrop in which it is lived. In another instance, she becomes furious that her first kiss was an awkward experience with a nerdy neighbor in her own apartment, a situation thrust upon her so suddenly that she could not avoid it. Her anger stems from the idea that, like most events in her urban life, she has had no say in how it transpired. Given the liberty of choice, she would not only have changed the actor, but the stage as well. She declares:

Ça ressemble vraiment pas à ce que j'avais imaginé pour mon premier baiser. Non, moi, je voyais plutôt ça dans un décor de rêve, au bord d'un lac, en forêt, au soleil couchant avec un super type qui ressemblerait un peu au mec qui joue dans la pub pour les vitamines, celui qui fait un demi-tour sur sa chaise, se met bien face à la caméra avec son sourire dentifrice et fait : « Si juvabien, c'est Juvamine ! » Le mec, il serait en train de m'expliquer

comment on fait du feu avec une lime à ongles et un caillou quand, au milieu de notre entretien philosophique, on irait l'un vers l'autre, tout doucement, et on s'embrasserait, naturellement, comme si on le faisait depuis toujours. (Guène 99)

Again, fueled by televised images of romance, Doria creates a setting that is entirely crucial to the nature of her fantasy. Her ideal kiss could not have taken place anywhere in the city because everything there is tainted. By changing the backdrop, she is erasing all ties to the things she dislikes about her life, and in the process granting herself the liberty to choose her own happiness—a luxury that Livry-Gargan seldom, if ever, affords her.

At the same time that she dreams of an ideal rural haven, Doria is aware on some level that the actual countryside would not provide the relief that she seeks. The sanctuary for which she yearns is impossible not because it is tied to the past, as it has been for others, but because it represents a perfection found only in fiction. Yet, even to flee her prison temporarily is impossible, as it has attached itself to the deep recesses of her psyche. It is clear that Doria feels as if she is held captive by the city to the point that a proposed ski trip to the mountains far outside its borders seems pointless, as it would provide no actual escape from the pressures of the urban environment. Doria explains her reluctance to go on the trip, noting « Je veux pas y aller parce que j'ai pas envie d'abandonner ma mère, même si c'est rien qu'une semaine. Et puis les séjours en groupe, avec des gens que j'ai même pas choisis, hors de question . . . Huit heures dans un car qui pue le vomi, où on chante des chansons des années quatre-vingt et où on fait des pauses-pipi toutes les demi-heures, laisse tomber ! » (Guène 39). In making such an assertion, she is essentially saying that she is so constrained by the city that it would follow her even into the countryside. As long as she remains constrained by economic limitations and

psychological senses of obligation, then even the beauty of nature cannot provide her with the one thing she most desires from it: liberty.

The promise of liberty is also the primary allure of the rural areas of Martinique in *Texaco*, yet both city and country prove to have far more complex relationships with each other and with the urban citizenry than they do in other novels. On the one hand, a polarity marked by a mutual antagonism between the urban and the rural remains as sharply defined as ever. The city is a beast that « pétrifie de silences les campagnes comme autrefois les Empires étouffaient l'alentour » (Chamoiseau 455). In describing a garden that she and Esternome maintained on the outskirts of the city in order to provide sustenance during times of war, Marie-Sophie acknowledges « Se trouver à manger fut un méchant travail. Heureux-bonheur, l'En-ville n'avait pas encore avalé la campagne » (Chamoiseau 243), suggesting that Chamoiseau considers the process of urbanization to be the same sort of gluttonous attack that Emile Verhaeren did. The convergence of city and country is marked by the language of struggle. When the urban planner does his initial assessment of Texaco, for example, he walks, « scrutant nos cases à l'assaut des falaises incertaines » (Chamoiseau 22). However, the Martinican countryside is not as defenseless as Verhaeren's country is. From the woods that "arrogantly" cover the big hutch after it is abandoned (Chamoiseau 138), to plagues of fever and famine (Chamoiseau 243, 283), to the volcanic explosion that ultimately destroys the city of Saint-Pierre (see Chamoiseau 207), the country shows that it is not afraid to fight back against the city's predatory ways.

On the other hand, nature eventually discovers a certain harmony with the city. Flowers that adorn balconies cultivate the joys and dreams of the city's residents (see Chamoiseau 291), and the blossoming plant life is not merely portrayed as a cultivated beauty isolated within the city, but as an integral beauty of the city, most notably in the scene where Esternome attempts to show and share the wonders of the city he loves with the woman about whom he feels the same (Chamoiseau 140). Texaco itself is repeatedly described as a hybrid of country and city, even one whose success relies on the fusion of the two (Chamoiseau 336-337, 360, 462). Yet such a fusion does not truly mean the eradication of fundamental polarity. On the contrary, there is always an unease in cultivating the country within the city, as the natural tendency of the city is to dominate all that it can. It is, after all, Texaco's independent way of growing, existing, and cultivating its own culture that causes the urban planner to be sent to raze the neighborhood in the name of conventional development. The repeated motif of gardening (see Chamoiseau 65, 85, 177-178, 221, 243) represents a form of self-defense, a building of a fortress around cultural tradition and memory, maintaining ties to a pre-industrial heritage in the face of a city whose natural tendency is to gradually and insidiously loosen its ties to the land (Chamoiseau 283). While the inherent labor of the garden might initially evoke the fields of slavery, in actuality these small plots of land represent the opposite. The labor is honest and independent, and the fruit that comes of it are the rewards of one's own efforts. Esternome gardens when he receives his liberation from his master at the plantation (Chamoiseau 65), just as he "loses himself" in the garden of his hillside community while learning to be self-sufficient in the wilderness (Chamoiseau 178). Yet his rootedness in the land runs in firm defiance of the pulse of the city, as more and more, people abandon their own

gardens in search of factory jobs and cosmopolitan lifestyles (see Chamoiseau 181, 283-284).

As Marie-Sophie reflects on the changes of war and industrialization, she notices:

L'En-ville s'était développé; à mesure-à mesure, il avait distendu son rapport à la terre, supprimé ses jardins. Les cultures de mon Esternome avaient sans doute été couvertes par des cases nouvelles, et les nouveaux habitants du Quartier des Misérables . . . s'installaient sans même planter un fruyapin, dégrader un bout de terre ou lâcher un cresson dans l'eau claire d'un canal. Fiers de leurs ongles sans boue, ils se laissaient emporter par l'En-ville qui avalait l'entour. (Chamoiseau 283-284)

Left to its own devices, the city not only destroys nature, but the connection that people have with it. Little do they understand that in shedding the burdens of land management, they lose the independence of self-employment and self-determination, thus diverging from the freedom they are seeking in the first place.

Herein lies the crux of the paradox of natural refuge in the Martinique of *Texaco*. Most characters yearn for the freedom of nature, yet find themselves unfulfilled by what nature has to offer, often getting sucked in by the siren's call of the city. Meanwhile Esternome sees the city as his only chance at liberation, yet it is in maintaining his ties with the land that he is able to preserve that which is important to him in the face of the city's all-consuming power. Although the countryside is not depicted to be the idyll it is in the other novels examined in this chapter (descriptions of beauty and tranquility are not at all Chamoiseau's focus), multiple characters, nonetheless, idealize it for its symbolic liberation. Upon the eve of liberation from slavery, there is a movement afoot to conquer the rural areas of the land. Former slaves are encouraged to « prendre de toute urgence ce que les békés n'avaient pas encore pris: les mornes, le sec du sud, les brumeuses hauteurs, les fonds et les ravines, puis investir ces lieux qu'ils avaient créés . . . » (Chamoiseau 74). Yet Esternome feels that conquering the city would

bring more liberation than sacking it, and fears that running to the hills might actually be a regression, a trap rife with the possibility of losing one's self through disconnection, just like the Maroons who remain hostile and trapped in a past, living ghosts who remain « sombres, absents du monde aussi, différents » (Chamoiseau 163). While his compatriots migrate towards the promise of their own land, he remains convinced that « la terre ne servait à rien si on n'était pas béké, que tout était dans l'En-ville, c'est dans l'En-ville qu'il fallait tender les attrapes aux bonheurs » (Chamoiseau 121).

As others seek out their sanctuary, only Esternome seems to see the wilderness for its dangers, a hostile environment full of snakes and zombies (see Chamoiseau 116). Eventually the mass exodus reverses itself; disillusioned by the difficulty of life in the hills, the city suffers an influx of those from the country who have become convinced of what Esternome believed all along: that hope and opportunity are better fitted to the city than the country (see Chamoiseau 148). Those who believed they could conquer the lands of the plantations were similarly deceived, as the City gave way to a steady stream of *affranchis* « [qui] fuyaient les champs d'habitation, hostiles à toute semence qui ne soit pas békée. L'En-ville par contre était offert aux vents du monde. Un côté pour envolées nouvelles » (Chamoiseau 89). Many who assumed that the end of slavery would mean rights of rural land ownership were stunned as former plantation owners reclaimed their fields, either driving out those who had come seeking their own piece of the country, or returning them to a labor-based subservience that was little better than slavery had been (Chamoiseau 145-146). The illusion of rural liberty shattered, the destitution of the poor and overcrowded city would ultimately prove to be a different sort of prison.

The more that a conscious desire for freedom is developed, the more the city curtails the possibility of liberty. As long as the city remains the primary object of Esternome's desire, it remains a friendly and open environment to him. However, upon falling in love with Ninon, his self-determination is wrested from him, and he begins to feel shackled and confined—not, ironically, by the force that most directly binds him (Ninon, to whom, despite her cold-heartedness and infidelity, he remains steadfastly attached [Chamoiseau 117-118]), but by the force that he feels impedes the possibility of being with her, namely the city into which he is inexorably integrated. Ninon herself is driven by an insatiable quest for freedom, constantly fleeing anything to which she risks becoming attached; for example, she constantly fluctuates between two men who both desire to possess her for themselves (Chamoiseau 119). She is constantly seeking the refuge of the wilderness, running away into the woods or down to the river, only to end up back in her prison of civilization (at first, her plantation, then, eventually, the city [Chamoiseau 115-121, 179-182]). Irresistibly attracted to the notion of an independent life in the wild, she unconsciously makes Esternome feel limited by his familiarity with the urban milieu. Although Esternome had previously received an official document freeing him from slavery, the choices he made with his life thereafter proved to be a disadvantage when competing for Ninon's hand. Comparing himself to his romantic rival, a strong and virile *chabin* (a light-skinned, red-headed individual of mixed race), Esternome realizes that this man's life as a slave kept him in touch with the country, making him more attractive to Ninon, for the Chabin « savait construire une case, dégarder une broussaille pour en faire un jardin, racler un bord de mer quand les poisons font banc, renverser sur la plage d'avant-jour des tortues repérées, les vendre en tranches . . . Et mon Esternome de papa de se mettre à regretter cette annonciade

de liberté sans laquelle ses avantages eussent supplanté ceux du chabin . . . » (Chamoiseau 118). Feeling shackled to the city by his lifestyle, it would soon begin to feel like a physical prison as well. In the chaos of the revolt to bring about abolition, the city becomes an active agent of hostility, seemingly consciously thwarting his attempts to shepherd Ninon away from the violence. To him and others caught up in the fear and paranoia of the moment:

. . . l'En-ville était soudain devenu la mâchoire même du piège. Chaque rue se transforma en dame-jeanne. On y tourbillonnait sans trouvait de sortie. Les murs s'étaient rapprochés comme pour serrer les rages. Les impasses s'étaient multipliées. Chaque fenêtre semblait une gueule. Les escaliers dévalaient en pentes lisses. Derrière chaque volet, à la fente des persiennes, un béké nous visait, un béké complotait, un béké chargeait ses balles. Nous croyions les voir tout-partout. Les auvents s'effondraient sur nos tas affolés. L'effroi imaginaire dura ainsi jusqu'à la première ombre. (Chamoiseau 131)

The barriers of the city remain in the aftermath of revolution. Whereas they had kept him in during the violence, they were now keeping Esternome out, blocking the path to the economic self-sufficiency he once had, as the city « avait posé sur chacune de ses chances des volets à targettes et des portes à serrures » (Chamoiseau 119). It is in this context that the temptation of the hills once again beckons. Not wanting to « s'abîmer dans l'En-ville sous des djobs sans âme . . . » (Chamoiseau 120), Esternome is finally convinced to leave the city he once loved to seek out a rural refuge where he and Ninon can be together, happy and free. Yet, in scouring the countryside for a spot to settle, they encounter numerous examples of unfulfilled individuals who have failed at a similar quest: « des négresses . . . penchées sur la terre comme au-dessus de leur propre destin qu'elles tentaient de déchiffrer dans les racines crochues qui leur donnaient à manger, » chained to the land as others were chained to their ideals, running away from the newcomers and « refusant d'exister autrement qu'au fil à plomb de son désir:

mère des mulâtres qui se mariant entre eux finiraient bien par devenir tout blancs et posséder la vie » (Chamoiseau 162-163) —maroons who, though independent, were not content, but rather driven by an anger that made them contemptuous to all outsiders, ones who « surgissaient non pas pour le bonjou [*sic*], mais pour nous signaler que tel lieu était pris » (Chamoiseau 163); slave stewards who knew nothing of abolition, refusing the pilgrims' call of freedom while « ils allaient sur la terre de leurs maîtres comme chiens à corde courte. Jamais ils ne voulaient nous suivre, comme pris dans l'habitude d'être mort avant leur enterrement » (Chamoiseau 164).

In all of these cases, nature's promise of liberty of proves to be merely an illusion, as it provides some form of unhappiness and/or psychological incarceration to all those who have taken up residence there. As Esternome and Ninon explore further, they encounter tableaux of natural imperfection, underscoring how much more complex finding paradise is than simply finding an unoccupied spot in the wilderness and planting one's roots there. Along the cliffs, spots were too cold, too windy, too wet. « Trop haut, la terre était malement chabine, c'est-à-dire à mauvais caractère, nerveuse, peu fidèle, elle trahissait les cases et les cultures. Menant de vieilles noces avec la pluie, elle s'en allait soudain dans un désastre de vies, d'outils et de jardins » (Chamoiseau 166). Yet, for all of these warning signs, Esternome and Ninon continue their quest, eventually settling in a small community that appears at first to be the sanctuary they have been seeking. For a brief moment, they have found their natural Eden, their *Noutéka* of the hills where, self-sufficient and tied to the land, they appear to have shaken free of the miseries of civilization. An antidote for the "civilized indifference" of the city, *Noutéka* is a word that Esternome uses to emphasize the sense of community rooted in place that would

eventually come to describe the Texaco neighborhood. As Marie-Sophie explains, « C'était une sorte de nous magique. A son sens, il chargeait un destin d'à-plusieurs dessinant ce nous-mêmes qui bourrelait sur ses années dernières » (Chamoiseau 160-161).

Alas, there is no true escape from City, whose influence slowly erodes at the heart of the settlement, both physically and psychologically. As plantations shutter up and rural dwellings are abandoned, Ninon and Esternome climb to the top of the hill, where they see a new landscape: « beaucoup de champs, peu de Grand-cases, et partout, reliées par un lacs de voies ferrées, de routes et de rivières, les torches puissantes des grandes usines à sucre—nouvelles reines du pays » (Chamoiseau 181). Ultimately, the rural dwelling is “defeated by the town,” and the *noutéka* fails because “it suffered the illusion that it could exist independently from Saint-Pierre” (Britton 95). As an increasing number of settlers abandon their gardens for jobs in the factory and houses in the city, it is clear that the quest for refuge has failed, leaving its few remaining residents feeling as trapped and ill at ease as one feels within the city's borders.

Le Noutéka des Mornes avait comme avorté. On survivait oui, libre oui, mais bien vite se pointait l'arrière goût d'une misère. C'est l'amertume d'une terre dont les promesses s'envolent. C'est l'ennui d'une nature qui ruinait quatre patiences pour un voeu exaucé . . . On se retrouvait en face du vaste ciel posé comme un couvercle, un petit peu inquiet, quelquefois démun, toujours sans perspective, et les hauts immobiles ne souffraient pièce faiblesse. Ainsi, d'année en année, les Traces marronnes se mirent à descendre vers l'Usine. Y'avait là une chance. (Chamoiseau 181)

Eventually Ninon gets lured back to the city she had longed to escape, and Esternome, ever her servant, follows her there. While Esternome grows increasingly uneasy and anachronistic in the city, particularly after his move to Fort-de-France (see Chamoiseau 209-

224), he nevertheless takes great pains to impart his love and respect of the city to his daughter, Marie-Sophie. She, however, is never able to develop the same feelings as her father once had, feeling that the place of her birth was little more than a transition ground for her (Chamoiseau 289). What she longs for, despite the failings of prior generations, is her own *Noutéka* of the hills (Chamoiseau 284). Marie-Sophie becomes trapped by the mysterious forces of her urban prison in spite of her strong desire to leave. At first, she acknowledges, « C'est la guerre qui me fit demeurer dans l'En-ville, car l'En-ville demeurerait immobile sur lui-même et n'avait plus la force d'atteindre les campagnes » (Chamoiseau 289). Yet her dream of having her own *Noutéka* of the hills never dies (see Chamoiseau 349-350). As Marie-Sophie becomes romantically entangled with Nelta, whose desire to escape rivals her own, the pull of the city grows stronger, and a growing emotional distance between them prompts him to leave without her. When later he sends a postcard of a pastoral scene from an unknown province in France, it fills her with sorrow (Chamoiseau 353). Eventually, the neighborhood of Texaco becomes Marie-Sophie's compromise: not quite outside the city, yet still preserving the wildness she had longed to find in the hills. Whether the tumultuous quarter constitutes a true refuge for Marie-Sophie is debatable, yet it is certainly not an unequivocal escape. Although Marie-Sophie may have convinced the urban planner not to recommend the destruction of the quarter to his superiors, the fate of the neighborhood remains up in the air at the end of the novel. What is clear is that the menacing presence of the city is a relentless and insatiable danger that is still lurking, waiting for its chance to devour any haven that it has not already absorbed (Chamoiseau 455, 462).

3.4 The City and Sin

The literary image of the city as a corrupted and corrupting center of sin is one that transgresses epochs and cultural boundaries. Raymond Williams notes how the British countryside was often idealized so as to present a moral foil to the cultivated image of the sinful city (see Williams 54, 59). Yet if this image is not unique to francophone literature, it is certainly prevalent throughout it, offering a genuine and immutable link between peoples not only from different nations, but, despite constant change in the nature of the city, from different eras as well. The fact that such a simplified image ignores the moral complexity of all human settlement—belying both urban and rural realities described in British literature, as Raymond Williams described in *The Country and the City* (2)—makes the literary depiction of the sinful city all the more potent as a point of commonality. While sin is everywhere and widespread social innocence a myth, there is something truly fundamental and universal that has caused authors of such a wide array of cultural and temporal backgrounds to filter information in a way that results in a common perception of cities around the world.

While sin may be present outside of the city, it is inherent within it. It is a potent vehicle of urban conflict with the potential to accost an individual on multiple levels. When it comes to the experiences of the characters in francophone literature, there are two primary ways in which the sins of the city serve as an ever-present menace to the good-hearted: as a threat of corruption and as a threat of interpersonal treachery. Simply put, one may be a victim of sin itself or one may be a victim of others who are sinful; the latter generally manifests itself through the specter of crime and deceit, while the former is recognizable by a protagonist's descent into immorality. The city presents a backdrop of temptation and desperation, toying

with the emotions of those with the potential to be lured by the pleasurable side of sin as well as those who would fear the atrocities that stem from it.

Les Quarteronnes de la Nouvelle Orléans stands as proof that New Orleans' contemporary reputation as an epicenter of crime and vice is by no means a recent invention. Even in the nineteenth century, we see shades of the focal points of modern moral criticism: a glut of entertainment venues, including many of a scandalous nature, as well as the threat of crime that ranges from burglary to murder (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 1; "Octavia" ch 2, ch 16). The dialogue of Sidonie de la Houssaye's characters who remain outside of (or have yet to enter) the urban sphere of influence is less a confirmation of the presence of sin in the city than it is an affirmation of its reputation. It is this reputation that leads an out of town guest, Monsieur Nelson, to suggest to his host, Pierre Saulvé, that they visit the quadroom balls on Bourbon Street in search of some fun, while it is this same reputation that inspires an entirely different sentiment in the suburbanite Saulvé—trepidation:

—Alors, mon cher, dit M. Nelson en riant, au lieu d'aller au théâtre, allons au bal des quarteronnes.

—Il y a bien des années que je n'ai été au bal, dit Pierre, et l'on dit qu'il se passe des abominations à ceux de la rue Bourbon.

—Mon cher, reprit l'Américain en posant sa main sur l'épaule de Saulvé, nous ne sommes plus de petits garçons, ni vous ni moi: les abominations de ce genre ne m'effraient point, et j'avoue que je suis très curieux de voir un de ces bals de quarteronnes dont les journaux parlent tant. (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 1)

There is unquestionably an affiliation of the city with moral danger; sin is not merely in the city, it is of the city. Few parents would feel their heart filled with « les plus noirs pressentiments » to send a child to the city on a simple errand of watch repair (Raymond,

“Octavia” ch 2), but Charles’s family understands that to set foot inside its borders is willingly to surround oneself with corrupted souls. In declaring his concern, Charles’s father expresses faith that his son knows business better than anyone, but proclaims « [C]es gens de la ville sont assez malins pour me montrer la lune en plein midi. Et une autre chose: avant que j’aie fait dix pas dans les rues, quelqu’un m’aura enlevé mon portefeuille et . . . femme, songe aux conséquences de cette perte! Ce serait pour nous la ruine et le déshonneur . . . » (Raymond, “Octavia” ch 2). Such a proclamation suggests that the sinful force of the city is ubiquitous: it is not simply that there are swindlers and thieves living in the city, it is that city folk are by nature deceptive and criminal. It matters little that Charles possesses strong business acumen, as the power of the city lies in its ability to wear and degrade, eventually dominating even the seemingly indomitable. If Charles’s previous visits had left him uncorrupted, it is because « . . . à l’exception du théâtre et du cirque, il n’était allé nulle part » (Raymond, “Octavia” ch 2). The more one exposes himself to the city, the more he succumbs to its temptations, of which there are no shortages.

Raymond’s New Orleans is exaggerated to the point of being almost comically immoral, so much so that one does not encounter a single virtuous character residing in the city. The scope of the city’s immorality is so vast, in fact, that over the course of the novel the reader encounters all seven of the infamous “deadly sins” established by the Catholic Church. Gluttony follows Violetta wherever she goes. In a scene at the ball where Pierre first meets her, we are presented with an excessively lavish table spread:

Tout au bout de l’immense salle, il se trouvait un long comptoir où se vendaient des oranges, des pommes, des gâteaux, des bonbons, et aussi du sirop, de la limonade, de la

bière et même du whisky; comme nous le voyons, il y en avait pour tous les goûts. Plusieurs fois, pendant la soirée, Pierre avait observé que les commis de son magasin avaient conduit leurs conquêtes à ce comptoir pour les régaler et les désaltérer. (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 3)

Gluttony is also evident in the insatiable appetite that makes Violetta lose all social decorum while dining with Pierre:

Au lieu de prendre sa place à table comme venaient de le faire les trois autres convives, Violetta se mit à pirouetter autour de la table, saisissant un gâteau ou un bonbon du bout de ses doigts mignons, croquant le céleri et les radis, approchant ses petites narines roses des plats qu'elle ne connaissait pas, goûtant à tout, examinant tout . . . Comme nous le voyons, Mlle Miette allait vite en besogne; du reste, elle n'en était pas à son coup d'essai et montrait de suite ce qu'elle était: vulgaire, insolente et capable de tout faire pour de l'argent. (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 4)

Violetta also suffers from pride with regards to her social status, which renders her indignant towards the thought of eating food meant for the « basse classe » and insulted by Pierre's lack of understanding on the matter (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 3). Greed consumes the quadroons, who entice their men to ruin themselves in order to satiate demands for luxury (see Raymond, "Octavia" ch 5, ch 16; Raymond, "Violetta" ch 4-5, 7). In perhaps the most telling example, Pierre presents an expensive bracelet to Violetta, only to have her demand that he buy its twin as well (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 7). Greed also marks the doctor who has no qualms about aiding Octavia in stealing an infant in exchange for a bribe (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 11), as well as the Royal street jeweler who fabricates a false history in order to sell his necklace at exorbitant cost (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 4). Like the quadroons, the jewelry and clothing sold on Royal Street can be seen as an encapsulation of the city itself, upon whose excessive luxury and beauty Raymond dotes on numerous occasions (see for example,

Raymond, "Octavia" ch 1, ch 4), yet which inspires abominable behavior in those who fall under its spell. The high-end material goods sold on Royal Street instill and inspire envy, both in Adoréah during her covetous window-shopping (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 4), and in Violetta's fellow quadroons when she shows them her cashmere sweater:

Le cri de surprise et d'admiration qu'elle jeta appela autour d'elle plusieurs de ses amies, Gina et Octavia parmi les autres. Nous savons que la maîtresse du juge D. . . se connaissait en objets de prix, et, de plus, elle avait souvent admiré le magnifique cachemire dans la vitrine du magasin donnant sur la rue. Elle l'avait même demandé au juge, qui le lui avait promis . . . pour plus tard. Aussi, ce fut avec une bonne dose d'envie et de jalousie qu'elle apprit à Violetta la valeur du présent qu'elle venait de recevoir. (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 4)

Even the least materially-driven of the seven deadly sins are present. There is a lust that all male protagonists feel towards their respective quadroons, though none more so than Pierre Saulvé, whose lecherous stares at Violetta reveal an emotion that consumes him entirely, as suggested by the lines « Les yeux de Pierre dévorent la petite houri, et dans cette muette contemplation il oublie Hermine et ses enfants. Il est fou, il oublie tout » (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 2). Lust also manifests itself through the "indecent" dance of the Bamboula performed at a private soirée (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 11), as well as the numerous orgies that transpire in Violetta's *boudoir vert*. Wrath catalyzes vengeance in Octavia who, after threatening to poison Alfred for leaving her, burns with rage for decades as she slowly exacts her revenge [Raymond, "Octavia" ch 9-16]]. Alfred murders Mary after his family's honor is disgraced (Raymond, "Octavia," ch 16); Pierre sets out to ruin Georges (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 25) and Georges (who in turn murders Pierre [Raymond, "Violetta" ch 27]). One must finally take note of the sloth that all characters exhibit as they search for easy paths to quench their desires and their pain, whether it is the quadroons who would rather be given their material possessions than

work for them, the men who would steal rather than face the prospect of enduring a life without the objects of their desire, or those unfortunate characters (namely Charles and Alfred) who, rather than live with their own shame, turn to suicide as a solution to their problems (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 5, ch 16).

Ultimately, no major character escapes the confines of New Orleans morally unscathed, save perhaps Alfred's wife Angèle, who still falls victim to the sins of the city (albeit the sins of others). Being incorruptible, she is incompatible with the city, and therefore necessarily suffers an early death after her child is stolen shortly after arriving in New Orleans from Europe (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 11). An innocent victim of crime, her fate is that which Charles's parents feared for him when he set into the city to repair his father's watch. Instead, New Orleans proved far more deleterious towards Charles, as it did for numerous others besides him, as each successive protagonist finds his morality gradually eroded in an attempt to appease their quadroons. In Charles's case, the consequences of a grave sin, forging his father's signature to withdraw his funds in order to pay for a necklace for Adoréah, result in the committing of an even graver one (his suicide) (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 5-6). After keeping Octavia as his mistress, Alfred appears to return to a life of virtue after separating from her (and temporarily leaving the city), only to end up murdering his daughter and himself upon discovering his honor had been besmirched (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 16). Much like Charles, Léonce steals a relative's money, yet his sin is even more heinous as it was money needed to take care of his sick grandfather (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 15). Pierre begins his own saga as a man of conscience, protesting against his client's desire to visit quadroon balls that are « licencieux, infâme, indécent » (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 2), yet slowly deteriorates as the

simple sin of lust becomes an affair that leads him to steal his wife's ring and lie to her about it, engage in wild orgies, abandon his wife and children in poverty, and seek out the ruin of his future-son-in-law at the expense of his daughter's happiness (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 5, 11, 13, 25). Even the noble Georges eventually succumbs to evil. Upon his arrival to the city, he was entirely innocent; « élevée par une mère pieuse qui ne lui parlait que du ciel, refusant de lever à ses yeux un petit coin du voile qui lui cachait l'enfer, c'est-à-dire les vices du monde, le jeune homme était arrivé à la Nouvelle-Orléans aussi ignorant du mal qu'un enfant de dix ans » (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 23). Yet he slowly becomes possessed by the demons of sin, cheating on his fiancée, and then challenging his would-be father-in-law to a duel during which he ignores pleas for forgiveness and cold-heartedly murders a man who, despite being a better shot, steadfastly refused to fire on him (Raymond, "Violetta" ch 24-26).

While in all of the aforementioned cases it would be easy to blame sin on a series of rogue women, the quadroons are an embodiment of the city itself: beautiful and criminal, « leur luxe étonnait et ravissait . . . Elles savaient inspirer les passions les plus violentes » (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 1). Like the stores on Royal Street, they entice with their physical allure (see Raymond, "Octavia" ch 4), yet like thieves who steal travelers' wallets (see Raymond, "Octavia" ch 2), they leave men in ruins. From the luxury boutiques, to the numerous entertainment venues (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 10, Raymond, "Violetta" ch 2), to the debauchery of parties in private residences (Raymond, "Octavia" ch 11; Raymond, "Violetta" ch 11, 14), the temptations of the city become the vehicles through which these sirens lead men to sin.

Belgian cities prove no less sinful than those in Louisiana. If New Orleans is populated by those who would show you the moon in mid-day, then Verhaeren's city, both as it is expressed *Les Campagnes hallucinées* and in *Les Villes tentaculaires*, is marked by the same spirit of deceitful exploitation, full of figures like « l'aveugle [qui] . . . /vend de la lumière, en boîtes d'un sou » (Verhaeren, "Les Campagnes hallucinées" 23). The centuries of history that make up the soul of the city are characterized by a « vie immense et criminelle/Battant - depuis quels temps ? -/Chaque demeure et chaque pierre/De désirs fous ou de colères carnassières ! » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 92). It is a city built from sin, composed not only of the aforementioned stones and residences, but of docks and houses « en façades de sang » which are the embodiment of the rage that sparks revolt (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 137), of buildings and stalls in the vieux quartier of which « fenêtre par fenêtre, étage par étage/ses façades dardent, de haut en bas/Le vice—et jusqu'au fond des galetas » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 133). Vice is not contained within the human soul of those whose only means of coping with life is constantly to « boire son mal [et] taire sa rage » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 76), but spills out into the open city, like the alcohol and the drunkards that flow out from the bars onto the sidewalks: « Aux carrefours, porte ouverte, les bars:/ . . . D'où luit l'alcool/Et sa lueur vers les trottoirs/Et des pintes qui tout à coup rayonnent/Sur le comptoir, en pyramides de couronnes;/Et des gens sours, debout/Dont les larges langues lapent, sans phrases/Les ailes d'or et le whisky, couleur topaze » (Verhaeren, "Les Campagnes hallucinées" 20). The city is a showcase for those who have been felled by sin, from the « ivrogne sommeille étendu sur un banc » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 132) to the « bouffon des rues/Qui se convulse en mimiques obscènes » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 133). The

perpetually sinful environment of the city forges a people in whom « la débauche . . . si fortement bouscule/Leur avarice et leur prudence routinière/Qu'elle les use et les ruine, avec colère » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 131).

As in de la Houssaye's New Orleans, sin is not simply rampant but immensely varied. In an environment marked by gluttony, even the city itself is portrayed to be a voracious consumer as it eats the countryside (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 87). Excess is everywhere, fueling a hedonism that renders people intoxicated both literally and figuratively. The constant availability of entertainment provided by the urban medium offers the opportunity for unbounded indulgence, as people partake in spectacles that function as « alcool pour les regards, alcool pour les pensées, » all the while making victims of those who become consumed by what they are consuming, for in this same stanza, pleasure is said to « exige des proies » by its very nature (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 111). From the desire for pleasure springs covetousness, which intermingles with greed and pride as people seek to possess whatever they can. Imbued with a « sens même de la gloire [qui]/Se définit par des monnaies » (Verhaeren, "Les Villes tentaculaires" 128), avaricious individuals seek personal gain at the expense of others, using the venues the city has placed at their disposal (the stock exchange, the bazaar) as a means of accomplishing their goals. Exemplifying criminality without illegality, these sites are amongst the bloodiest battlegrounds in the conflict between people and urbanity. Inside of "La Bourse," « La haine ronfle, ainsi qu'une machine,/Autour de ceux qu'elle assassine./On vole avec autorité, les gens/Dont les coffres sont indigents./On mêle avec l'honneur l'escroquerie,/Pour amorcer jusqu'aux patries/Et ameuter vers l'or torride et infamant/L'universel affolement » (Verhaeren, 125). The casualties of this *mêlée* seem less

victims of other human beings than martyrs at the altar of a greater force. Even those who steal without remorse have fallen victim to something beyond themselves. It is an arena in which the double-edged nature of sin is revealed, where one risks assault from the sins of others as well as from sin itself, an environment where both souls and wallets are left in ruin, just as they are in “Le Bazar,” where:

Tous les chercheurs qui se fixent pour cible
Le front d’airain de l’impossible
Et le cassent, pour que les découvertes
S’en échappent, ailes ouvertes
Sont là gauches, fiévreux, distraits
Dupes des gens qui les renient
Mais utilisent leur génie,
Et font argent de leurs secrets. (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 128)

Covetousness in turns fuels wrath, as thwarted or unfulfilled desires present the options of either attempting to obtain them by force, or releasing one’s anger at that which prevents one from obtaining them at all. As Verhaeren expresses in “L’Âme de la ville,” century after century, greed and arrogance have led to animalistic battles: « [P]our l’orgueil vain d’une oriflamme/Haines de sceptre à sceptre et monarques faillis/Sur leur fausse monnaie ouvrant leurs fleurs de lys,/Taillant le bloc de leur justice à coups de glaive/Et la dressant et l’imposant, grossière et brève » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 92). Yet those who govern are far from the only ones to fall victim to rage, or to carry it out through violent means. Urbanity gives power to war and revolt, as the mass of humanity in “La Révolte” becomes a force of violence that leaves victims in its wake in « la rue en rouge, au fond des soirs, » while « Ce que toute la sève humaine/Silencieuse a renfermé/S’épanouit, aux mille bras armés/De ces foules, brassant leur houle avec leurs haines » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 136). Ultimately,

as it is with pleasure and desire, humanity is never more than a vehicle for anger; even those who use it to dominate others are dominated by it. Sin is a powerful weapon that the city knows how to wield and only it remains unscathed, for « malgré l'assaut des jours/Et des peuples minant son orgueil lourd/Elle [la ville] résiste à l'usure du monde » (Verhaeren, “Les Villes tentaculaires” 93).

Nearly a century later, moral depravity remains a defining characteristic of the literary Belgian city. In its battle against Ken Bugul in *Le Baobab fou*, sin is perhaps the most important vehicle through which the city controls and consumes her, slowly severing her ties to her village roots by causing her to abandon community-based values engrained in her as a child as she develops an increasing focus on self, seeking personal sensation as a means of combating her depression. Her corruption is a gradual process in which each instance of debauchery represents a step of a larger descent, while the city slowly hacks away at the essence of her being. Her pregnancy at the hands of a man she does not wish to be with despite his desire to marry her (Bugul 53, 63) becomes compounded as the city presents her with the option of an easy and effective abortion clinic, resulting in an act that represents one of the very first ruptures from an African society that places an immense value on family, as she admits « Si j’y étais restée [au village] . . . je n’aurais jamais eu à subir un avortement, » while coming to understand that « Dans tout exode, il y a altération de l’échelle de valeurs » (Bugul 64-65). While the act was her own decision, she nevertheless begins to feel a loss of control as she is prodded and manipulated by a racist doctor whom she dislikes to the core (Bugul 62), the victim of larger forces that leave her feeling « tuée » and « abbatue » (Bugul 64) in a harsh environment of asphalt and concrete that compounds her torture by offering no comfort in this

time of emotional fragility (Bugul 61). The city continues to attack her sexuality as it exposes her to its underbelly, providing her with the opportunity to degrade herself wherever she goes. What little *naïveté* she has left by the time she moves into her own studio apartment is shattered when she comes to understand that the sauna below her is actually a brothel where men would come, « riches de leurs poches et leurs fantasmes . . . [dont] la plupart cherchaient désespérément la jouissance, les autres la frivolité comme s'ils n'avaient jamais été enfants » (Bugul 86).

Bugul herself spends much of the novel questing for these same things, and admits to being « irrésistiblement attirée » by such a world (Bugul 87), yet what she succumbs to in agreeing to work as a prostitute is less sexual temptation than it is economic, as it provides an easy and convenient means to pay her exorbitantly high rent (Bugul 86-87). The sin of the city enslaves her as she becomes repulsed by her work yet tied to it through financial necessity, feeling as much a prisoner as her nude photos held captive by the glass on the wall (Bugul 87) while slipping into deeper and deeper isolation, severed not just from her friends but from herself as she becomes « consciente de rien . . . viv[ant] l'instinct dont [elle] n'avai[t] aucune conscience, aucune contrôle » (Bugul 85). Long after she has moved from her residence and the brothel, she remains entangled in the perverted cosmopolitan sexuality, taking up residence on « la rue de la prostitution » and becoming obsessed with the street workers as she finds herself drawn into an even more blatant and full-fledged form of prostitution than that of the sauna (Bugul 121-128). Addicted to the attention she receives and to the fleeting escape from her daily life, she begins actively to seek out sexual opportunity. Yet it is an experience with a rich man in a hotel lobby that proves that any power she feels from being an object of

desire (or from having proposed the encounter herself) is illusory, as every action of his—from his ability to purchase her at a price she thought unattainable, to his commands of how she should act, to the act of physically throwing her on the bed (Bugul 123-128)—emphasize the fundamental control that she has lost over her very being.

Sex is not the only urban vice to which Bugul succumbs. From residential soirees, to concerts, to the numerous bars and nightclubs to which Bugul is attracted, the city provides a backdrop in which drug use is not simply prevalent, but culturally engrained. She begins to experiment as a way of ingratiating herself into intellectual circles in an attempt to form bonds that would combat the isolation of the city, yet ultimately discovers a hollowness to chemical happiness that only augments her isolation; the people and the moments are often as false as the pleasure she imbibes (see Bugul 74, 110-111). Inside a cheap Greek restaurant that plays host to the city's counterculture, she smokes cannabis for the first time, revealing the insidiousness through which sin exploits those who believe they are exploiting it:

Au dessert je fumai du haschich pour la première fois ; la cigarette qu'on appelait le joint, passait d'une main à une autre comme un calumet et je m'étais retrouvée avec un fou rire incontrôlable. Je riais, comme je ne l'avais jamais fait, d'un rire 'infini', et bientôt les gens durent me demander si ça n'allait pas, tant le rire avait l'air sanglotant.

Personne ne m'avait demandé au préalable si j'avais déjà fumé, étant évident pour eux que quiconque les fréquentait fumait ; de plus, étrangère et noire, ne venais-je pas des pays tropicaux où l'herbe poussait. Ils ignoraient que nous n'avions pas la même vision des choses. L'Occident désacralise tout. L'herbe en Afrique sert dans les cérémonies ou en thérapeutique, fonctions sacrées (Bugul 76).

In this one moment, we see all sides of her defeat: not only does she lose control of her situation, as well as begin to feel the sharp pangs of conscience as she feels herself sliding down a destructive path, but we see the bonds between her and the village become slightly more

severed as the city gains possession of another part of her soul. From hashish, she descends into harder drug use; she takes LSD out of a desire to feel special and unique, to find a higher awareness of the world (Bugul 111). The entire trip seems to rip her from herself, almost as though the city is making her a part of it, taking away her human life by sucking the breath from her lungs and turning her flesh and blood into metal: « Le souffle me manquait comme si les paillettes métalliques me bouchaient les narines . . . Je m'entendais chuchoter. Un malaise général me gagnait. J'avais l'impression que mon sang était coagulé par des paillettes métalliques. J'eus peur. Une angoisse de mort me serrait la gorge » (Bugul 111-112). After nearly being hit by a car, she finds herself entirely devoid of control, such that she needs to be carried to her friend Laure's house and looked after until she finally comes down. Instead of gaining a higher level of self-awareness, the experience leaves her with a « conscience en loques » (Bugul 112).

It is important to note that urban sin in *Le Baobab fou* is not limited to Europe. Bugul was victimized by sin long before she was corrupted by it, as the dismantling of her innocence began from the moment she left the comfort of her village to attend school in the city. For Bugul, exposure to the sins of others routinely ends in misery: at twelve years old, she takes up residence with her high school's assistant principal—ideally a figure in whom one should establish trust and safety. However, this experience is tainted by his lust for her, and by his wife's envy and anger, forcing Bugul to leave the house. Confused, the entire situation forces her into an impure world before her time (« La femme m'insultait, menaçait de me tuer, me traitait de putain . . . J'avais failli demander à la femme, avant de partir, ce que voulait dire putain . . . » [Bugul 131]). Soon thereafter she is subject to unwanted sexual advances from a

female bunkmate, yet she is too afraid to cry for help (Bugul 135). Eventually she becomes subject to the whims of a sadistic schoolmaster who threatens to cut her throat, an act from which she suffers less than watching him torture her friends and classmates (Bugul 154-156). These students become broken by sin—even if they resist succumbing to its whims, they remain educationally stunted and psychologically scarred (Bugul 156). Even in Africa, there is no moral asylum to be found in the cruel confines of the developed city.

At first glance, Gabrielle Roy's Montreal appears to be a far less sinful city than the aforementioned examples; filled with generally sympathetic (if not always entirely likeable) characters, the novel lacks the overt violence and heinous acts that expose sin's unabashedly evil core. However, even the title of *Bonheur d'occasion* implies the presence of a moral conundrum. From Rose-Anna's dilemma over whether to purchase groceries or toys and candy for her children (see Roy 107) to Florentine's choice between the exciting but neglectful Jean and the boring but faithful Emmanuel, the central question of the novel—to do what brings intense joy or to do what is good for you—reveals how the city uses pleasure as a weapon against its residents in much the same way it did against Ken Bugul or the men of de la Houssaye's New Orleans. Certainly vice is everywhere in Saint-Henri, from the inescapable cloud of tobacco (Roy 120) to the prevalence of restaurants that cater more to pleasure than sustenance, such as Les Deux Records, which, « comme la plupart des petites boîtes de ce genre dans le quartier, était moins restaurant que tabagie, bar casse-croûte, et débit de liqueur douce, de crème glacée, et de gomme à mâcher » (Roy 48). Undoubtedly this vice exploits the desperation of those who would escape into a bubble of self-satisfaction rather than confront the problems and obligations that tie them to others. This sort of escape is commonplace: we

see it, for example, when Azarius rushes to Les Deux Records to escape a family fight (Roy 180). Although Florentine's brother Eugène's decision to join the army proves to be a sound one, it too is initially assumed to be rash and self-serving (suggesting that these types of decisions usually are), as he is drunk when he makes it, and his mother believes it is because she will not provide him with money for cigarettes (Roy 85, 87). Yet this is far from the most deleterious way in which the city preys upon its residents. Not only is temptation omnipresent in Montreal, it is, according to bar patron Alphonse, the *only* thing that urban society has ever given the residents of Saint-Henri (Roy 68). To be surrounded by temptation is to be automatically and forcibly launched into conflict, not merely to be faced with the struggle of whether to give in to it, but to become embattled regardless of the decision one makes. To succumb to temptation often involves compromising one's values and typically harms others in the pursuit of selfish desires. Such is the case when Azarius gambles away money he borrows from his brothers-in-law in « une affaire de sweepstake » and almost comes to blows with the police (Roy 196). To resist temptation is not to eliminate it, but rather to continue to face an impossible situation, imbuing one with a deep and brooding sense of envy or anger. To Alphonse, it seems as though the sole purpose of the material goods that the city so blatantly flaunts in the windows of the stores of streets like Rue Saint-Catherine is psychologically to torture those who cannot afford them, as those who can don't even have the time to take full advantage of them:

Avez-vous déjà marché, vous autres, su la rue Sainte-Catherine, pas une cenne dans vot' poche, et regardé tout ce qu'y a dans les vitrines? . . . Moi, j'ai eu le temps de vors du beau : pis en masse. Tout ce que j'ai vu de beau dans ma vie, à trainer la patte su la rue Saint-Catherine, ça pourrait quasiment pas se dire. Je sais pas, moi, des Packard, des Buicks . . . des skis, des lignes de pêches. S'y a quelqu'un au monde qu'aurait le temps de s'amuser avec toutes ces affaires-là, c'est ben nous-autres, hein ?

Mais le seul fun qu'on a, c'est de les regarder...La société nous met toute sous les yeux : tout ce qu'y a de beau sous les yeux. Mais allez pas croire qu'a fait rien que le mette sous les yeux. (Roy 69)

The constant assault of temptation evokes sin in thought and action, drawing out the most ugly demons hidden in the recesses of the soul. The soldier Emmanuel reminds Alphonse that in his list of temptations dangled by the city, he has forgotten one of the most important: "T'as oublié la plus grosse des tentations . . . La tentation . . . qu'ont les ours et les bêtes en cage . . . La tentation de casser leur barreaux pis de s'en aller dans la vie . . . la tentation de se battre" (Roy 72). Indeed, there is an inner rage that stirs when taunted by the mockery of economic imbalance that is such a prevalent part of the cityscape. We see it in Florentine as she seethes with hatred of her job (Roy 21), her house (Roy 203), and at times even her family (Roy 318-320). Florentine's moral shortcomings are wrapped up in a selfishness that turns spiteful when she cannot obtain what she desires. She willfully exploits Emmanuel's attraction to her as a means of making Jean jealous (Roy 126-127), and when her mother confronts her about her late-night absences that are a result of her search for Jean (whom she hopes to anger for his treatment of her [Roy 313]), she runs away rather than aid the family in its time of need—but not before violently lashing out at a woman that has become (at least for the moment) an enemy, as she succumbs to « une noirceur si profonde qu'elle étouffait en soi » (Roy 318-320). Not only does the city accost her with the covetousness it uses to control her, it facilitates her sinful behavior, providing the entertainment that leaves a lasting impression long after Jean uses it to seduce her, to which she then turns (in the form of dance halls and boutiques) as she neglects her obligations to family (Roy 313).

3.5 Conclusion

In recent years, some scholars have stressed a desire to reconsider our literary approach in terms of a true world literature, one that views texts independently of political identities. This would represent a sharp departure from traditional textual conceptions because, historically speaking, “our literary unconscious is largely national. Our instruments of analysis and evaluation are national. Indeed the study of literature almost everywhere in the world is organized along national lines” (Casanova, cited in Kinoshita 3). Yet, if we are to erase lines of national identity, we are obligated to offer an alternative means by which we can consider texts and authors to be bound together in similitude, creating new literary communities to supplant political ones. Verena Conley notes how the seeds of possibility for such an endeavor were planted in the late 1960s, when “a number of writers, artists, and theorists . . . founded or developed literary journals that focused on the poetics of texts rather than on national literature and literary history” (146). In doing so, these thinkers created new geographies which posited that :“writers and theorists from around the globe were in proximity with each other across genres as well as spatial and temporal boundaries through their writerly treatment of similar dilemmas such as the articulation of life and death” (Conley 146). In this chapter, I have suggested that a particular articulation of the city can provide such bonds of proximity. Like life and death, the city itself is a concept that is vast and complex enough to offer far more launching points towards a global network than can be articulated in this thesis. There is, however, a particular “writerly treatment” of the city that has proven global enough as to have repeatedly manifested itself in three different centuries, over the space of six nations on three continents.

The authors in this chapter have forged a common *imaginaire* in which the city is more than merely a space of conflict; it is an agent of it. Citizens are locked in a perpetual tension with their urban environment, forced to weather mental and emotional assaults that take a toll on their well-being. Life within the city implies a battle against it: such a dichotomy is clearly articulated by authors such as Verhaeren and Chamoiseau, who go so far as to anthropomorphize their cities, imbuing them with agency and a clearly malicious will. Yet the other authors examined in this chapter detail relationships that are no less conflicted, envisioning cities that can only be described as adversarial to their residents, for they are actively deleterious to the point of provoking extreme emotions in them. The hostility that Florentine feels towards Saint-Henri, the revulsion that Ken Bugul exhibits towards Brussels, the utter defeatism that characterizes Doria's conscious and subconscious reflections of her HLM—these are as real and as pointed as the sentiments that people exhibit towards other humans over disputes involving language and religion. There is no tranquility for residents, as the city relentlessly follows and engages: crowds descend on passers-by, solitude “pursues” those who try to escape it (Bugul 110), sin finds outlets at every corner. There is no space upon which the city does not encroach: it destroys Verhaeren's countryside, interrupts Doria's fantasies, and follows Esternome into the mountains. Chaos, solitude, imprisonment, and temptation—all represent forcible confrontation, compelling city-dwellers to either succumb or (more often than not, futilely) resist.

The relationship between city and citizen is marked in much the same way as the relationships that characterize the conflicts highlighted in the other chapters of this thesis. Speakers of certain languages and practitioners of certain religions suffer from a profound

sense of alienation at the hands of others who make them feel disconnected from those around them (see, for example, Loh 218; Young 214). Similarly, alienation is a key component of the way in which the city psychologically weakens its residents. The authors examined in this chapter mutually recognize the ability of urban culture to make an individual feel alone despite crowds of people. Alienation also represents much of what makes sin an insidious urban weapon against the individual. From the increased estrangement of Pierre Saulvé from his family as he descends into debauchery to the shame of abortion and prostitution that makes Ken Bugul feel increasingly removed from her Senegalese community, the sin of the city is a surefire means of distancing individuals. Conflicts of language and religion also often represent struggles of control: tension fomented over a lack of self-determination as individuals are not permitted to speak their language in certain contexts, or are banned from worshipping in the manner they desire. Likewise, the city wrests control of self away from the individual. Crowds envelop people and control their speed and movement. Despite a will to leave the city, individuals are unable to escape it. The temptations of the city wear at the ability to exert self-discipline. In all of these cases, the frustration of being manipulated by forces acting against one's will exacerbates the antagonism between residents and their environment.

We often speak of land in terms of conquest. Certainly this is the terminology we apply to empirical expansion. Yet even in terms of land devoid of civilization, the phrase is still applied: climbers "conquer" Mount Everest, for example. However, the authors in this chapter subscribe to a vision in which, in the process of inhabiting territory, people may also be conquered by it. Humans fall prey to the city's illusions: a mass of people promises interpersonal connection yet results in profound solitude; the proximity to nature promises a

sanctuary that ends up failing to safeguard; the allure of sin promises pleasure, yet results in sorrow and ruin. The repetition of these motifs across cultures and eras demonstrates a common understanding of how the city confronts and even dominates the individual. If there is a common thread above all others that links these manifestations of confrontation, it is an erosion of the human spirit. Feeling alone causes Ken Bugul to obsess, Doria to lash out, and Esternome to fall into a depression. The inability to shake the city saps the life from Verhaeren's *paysans*, sobers Rose-Anna, and breaks Esternome's resistance. Giving in to one's base desires makes virtuous New Orleanians reprehensible, dehumanizes Verhaeren's city dwellers, and burdens Ken Bugul with suicidal tendencies. Collectively, these motifs represent a vision of a city in perpetual battle with the people who constitute it.

Cities have become a gateway to globalism in numerous respects. It has even been suggested that the way in which metropolises are now networked in terms of economics, communication, and transportation represents a new model of global organization that is replacing the nation-state (Orum and Chen 57-58). Yet they are linked by more than the direct flow of people, goods, and information between them. In assessing the interconnectedness of lyric poetry, Evelyne Ender suggests that it is global not because it speaks of exotic lands, but because the experiences and emotions it expresses are experienced across time and space, "in ways that transcend geographic differences" (124). What makes Baudelaire's "À une passante" universal, for example, is that it expresses experiences that "are as true now in Mumbai, Sao Paulo, and Beijing as they were yesterday in Paris or Berlin" (Ender 124). Through their interpretation of the urban experience, authors from throughout *la Francophonie* have shown

that cities of diverse nations may be linked through more than similarity of form and global economic culture; there is a common rapport with those who reside in them.

CONCLUSION

International connectivity is more than merely an important and contemporary issue with respect to *la Francophonie*: it is no less than its very foundation, the structural framework on which the entire conglomerate depends. Within this context, the role of the nation-state remains central and problematic, defined as well as complicated by relationships to individual communities and to the collective communities they comprise. Recent academic publications have emphasized this connectivity, positing reevaluations of traditional models of global interactions of francophones while blurring lines of internationality. Although they approach the problem from opposite directions, both the 2010 anthology *French Global*, edited by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman, and François Provenzano's 2011 critical analysis *Vies et mort de la francophonie* challenge assumptions about that which is national versus that which is global, impressing upon the reader the need to reconsider both international boundaries and the ways in which they are transgressed.

To Provenzano, the persistent interests of the nation-state are more than simply an impediment to the solidarity of *la Francophonie*; they are the impetus behind the entire existence of the organization, cleverly disguised as global interests in order to conform a French expansionist agenda to an age in which there has been a « tabouisation de l'euphorie impérialiste » (173). The author devotes his efforts to demonstrating how, at every stage of its inception, *la Francophonie* has been driven by a rhetorical doxa that, through incessant repetition and subtle reinvention, legitimizes French political interests while denying their true nature. In a review of Provenzano's book, Jacques Dubois succinctly summarized French

intentions in noting: « À coup sûr, le discours francodoxe possède ses arrière-plans politiques inquiétants. Outre qu'il fleure bon l'entreprise néo-coloniale . . . il tente de façon plus avouée de compenser la grandeur perdue du français en coalisant, autour de la République, régions périphériques . . . et nations africaines ou asiatiques où le français demeure langue de culture » (Dubois). To Provenzano, *la Francophonie* has always been a project by which France attempts to reconcile two seemingly contradictory goals: « la défense linguistique avec ce qu'elle implique de purisme [et] la coopération internationale sous le signe du pluralisme » (27).

Early rhetoric with respect to a global network of French speakers is transparent in its colonial aims, at least by modern standards, as it suggests that other nations are in a stage of infancy in terms of civilization, capable under the right guidance of developing into full-fledged « adulte[s] » (Provenzano 159). *La Francophonie* would thus be a way to transform other nations into « petites France hors de France, » and to help them realize a cultural potential that could only be achieved « dans le cadre de l'influence française » (Provenzano 79, 85).

Decolonization necessitated the reformulation of arguments however, as imperialism had become a dirty word and nations began to demand recognition of autonomy. The French were forced to reframe their international role in a way that would allow them to maintain their position of centrality while projecting their cultural values as representative of all nations. In light of this new paradigm, it was the Americans who were labeled as “imperialists,” and the French became protectors of the suddenly important national cultures within the francophone realm (Provenzano 144-150). French paternalism reinvented itself as well: no longer was France there to civilize, but to act as a guide, culturally and economically, towards modernity. The French language still had “universal” qualities, yet its “*rayonnement*” was downplayed in

favor of its ability to facilitate access to a world marked by technological innovation and economic competitiveness (Provenzano 161, 183). The colonial past was euphemized, spun to be a positive trait by suggesting that contemporary relationships have roots in a “shared” history, in which francophone nations “lived” and “worked” together (Provenzano 156).

In essence, Provenzano sees modern francophone dialogue, marked by proclamations of mutual benefits and shared interests, as simply a repackaging of old ideas and fixed relationships. France still believes in the global application of its own culture, yet has reframed the nature of its international impact in a way that emphasizes « l’ensemble » (Provenzano 170). The idea of a universal civilization still dominates discourse, yet instead of « la civilisation » or « notre civilisation » it is « une civilisation mondiale » (Provenzano 181). Identity, diversity, and pluralism are ideologically and politically correct responses to cultural interpenetration, suggesting a new, good universalism in place of an old, homogenizing, bad universalism. Because of the contemporary value placed on cultural independence, the French language has been remarketed as the « langue de pluralisme par excellence » (Provenzano 26). It is still imbued with intrinsic traits of superiority: instead of the natural “clarity” for which it was once praised, it is now the language that universally « incite à la tolerance » and « conduit à l’humanisme, » as though other languages were insufficiently equipped to do so, ironically serving as the one device, « plus que toute autre . . . qui permet aux peuples d’exprimer le mieux leurs propres singularités » (Provenano 213-214).

The ideological notions that would most seem to promote empowerment of national cultures are often those that most definitively reaffirm dependent relationships. For example,

as former colonizers praise francophone literatures for their expressions of colonial resistance and quest for individual identity, they are subtly controlling the discussion as to what francophone literature is, identifying qualities that writing must possess in order to be seen as valid or noteworthy. « Cette homogénéisation thématique annule également l'épaisseur historique possible des corpus envisagés, puisque ceux-ci sont connectés exclusivement à l'actualité idéologique du message délivré: "quoi de plus actuel que cette quête identitaire ?" » (Provenzano 217-218). Thus, the very thing that is supposed to liberate literature constricts it. Furthermore, supposed affirmations of the success of non-Hexagonal authors, such as major literary prizes and critical comparisons to great French writers, only confirm the indispensability of French acceptance for all things literary. « En deuil d'un exclusivisme national, la nouvelle universalité française se nourrit ainsi d'une littérature 'francophone' qui demeure malgré tout sélectionnée et légitimée selon des critères strictement hexagonaux » (Provenzano 217).

When properly scrutinized, the biases of *la Francophonie* become evident, and as such, the system is untenable. Provenzano concludes that our approach to *la Francophonie* is in need of an overhaul in favor of a perspective that is more global in nature (Provenzano 243-257). *French Global* proposes a similar reform in thinking, yet not necessarily for the same reasons. That work is not necessarily concerned with *la Francophonie* as an organized entity, but rather with the literary (and often, by extension, historical) connections that link national space to the world. Although a select few articles focus on other nations (notably Alison Rice's "All Over the Place: Global Women Writers and the Maghreb," Christopher Miller's "The Slave Trade, *La Françafrique*, and the Globalization of French," and Lise Gauvin's "Traversal of Languages: The *Québécois* Laboratory"), the collection is primarily aimed at reinterpreting the literary tradition

of metropolitan France by means of examining its relationship to spaces, people, and ideas that would generally be considered “foreign.” Such a reinterpretation is necessary in the context of modernity: in an increasingly globalized world, where the French interior is marked by international networking and multiculturalism, long-standing notions of a monolithic national *patrimoine littéraire* no longer make sense. In light of the “obvious falsity of the idea of a self-enclosed national literature,” the book aims to reread French literary tradition from a “world perspective,” examining encounters with others and with the “idea of otherness” while critically asking “what within French tradition survives a rethinking of relationships in the new millennium?” (Suleiman and McDonald ix, xvi, xix).

Like my own thesis, *French Global* focuses on a new understanding of *lieux communs* as a means of linking disparate cultures, aiming not to be an exhaustive analysis of all possibilities of globality, but rather proposing to be “an approach” to history that challenges contemporary thinking. In order to create community across cultural borders, we are called upon to conceive of “new ways of ‘being in common’” (Conley 156). The challenge addressed by the authors in this compilation is to articulate connectivity in a way that invalidates old paradigms, or at least calls them into question, by circumventing the obstacles contained within them that have traditionally prevented cultural rapprochement. For example, similar to Provenzano, McDonald and Suleiman recognize that the post-colonial condition can impede global connections not merely because of the continued imbalances of colonialism, but because the condition itself can define and limit the relationship between two nations, as people tend to reinforce alterity by filtering every interaction through the same lens. They specifically mention Pascale Casanova’s *République mondiale des lettres* as an example in which the quest for the cohesive

traits of a world literature becomes reduced to a prism in which dominated peoples are always trying to rise above the situation and the periphery is always trying to change its relationship with the center (Suleiman and McDonald xviii). Yet, within the anthology, they are not alone in identifying this problem. Alison Rice notes the frustrations of author Leïla Sebbar, who complains that every time she talks about herself as a writer, she is forced to situate herself in her *métissage*, to “repeat that French is my mother tongue and explain that I am not an immigrant, nor a *beur*” (172). Christopher Miller openly wonders, “Is any escape possible, in politics or in literature, from the permanent binarism of this relationship between France and its former colonies?” (243). The answer, of course, lies in the new *imaginaires* made possible through a re-envisioning of commonalities. One of the most innovative solutions comes from Françoise Lionnet, who uses tropical weather patterns as her primary point of connection: the ferocity of the storms in the Antilles and *la Réunion* inspired the writing of French novelists such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Georges Sand, who drew upon them for descriptive imagery in their novels (*Paul et Virginie* and *Indiana*, respectively). These works, in turn, influenced Creole writers such as Édouard Glissant and Nathacha Appanah, who invoked similar imagery in *La lézarde* and *Le dernier frère* as a means of examining their own cultures (Lionnet, “Critical Conventions” 139-142).

If *Vies et mort de la Francophonie* challenges the sanctity of global space by insisting on the presence of national influences, then *French Global* does the opposite: in a variety of ways, the authors of this text call into question supposed national realities by demonstrating the persistent intrusion of global connections. Each author takes a different approach to this task, yet each succeeds in transgressing or redistributing national borders by means of techniques

such as analyzing pathways of influence, challenging personal identities, or seeking new conceptions of universals. Consider the medievalists in this collection alone: each problematizes in a different way the tendency of modern scholarship to treat French literature from their era of study as a self-contained, homogeneous unit. Sharon Kinoshita, noting that this is already a somewhat dubious idea, as the literature comes from a place that does not remotely resemble modern France, highlights the ambiguities of figures such as Marco Polo, who wrote in French while hailing from Venice, and texts such as the *Chanson de Roland* originally composed in Anglo-Norman (3-7).⁴⁹ Kimberlee Campbell posits that French identity did not become affiliated with geographic location until the end of the twelfth century, previously having been delimited by boundaries of class, such that many aristocratic residents of England would have seen themselves as French (182-185). Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet prefers to establish internal borders, calling into question the cohesiveness of French literary space in an era when French itself did not exist, and there was little unity between authors who not only wrote in the languages of oil, oc, and si, but even debated amongst themselves as to which language was preferable for literary endeavors (339-345).

In the case of this last example, it is worth mentioning, in light of my own focus on national divisions as inherently linked to international unities, that multiple authors in *French Global* see internal rifts as a means of illuminating global pathways. Whether it is Danielle Haase-Dubosc highlighting how writers challenging gender-related strictures in France speak to issues pertinent in other countries (352), or Emily Apter illustrating how the anti-Semitic

⁴⁹ As a literary language, the Italian vernacular was only beginning to emerge during Marco Polo's era, employed by writers such as Dante Alighieri.

economic policies illustrated in the works of Balzac and Zola can offer a point of reference for contemporary Americans concerned with exogenous control of our capitalist system (389), domestic conflict often serves as the launching point for international connection. In fact, as Lawrence Kritzman demonstrates through a comparison of the writings of figures such as Julia Kristeva, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Etienne Balibar, it is in understanding our internal divisions and exclusionary practices that we are able to come to terms with our external ones. To paraphrase Kritzman's reading of Kristeva, it is in recognizing the foreigner within ourselves that we may see ourselves in others (328-330).

Although *French Global* presents itself as a new understanding of French literary history, it is just as much an examination into international solidarities. Writers like Françoise Lionnet, who seek out common practices and referents between France and francophone authors, are not simply trying to re-situate the history of a single nation, they are attempting to "build shared literary identities across time and space," or at least to recognize the unity of such a construction as the authors themselves have built (Lionnet, "Critical Conventions" 129). "France's tendency to describe French thought as universal goes back a long way" (McDonald and Suleiman ix), yet as François Provenzano's text makes clear, its ethnocentricity prevents it from truly being universal: it represents a unilateral output of beliefs and practices, unwilling to accept a reciprocal input. In shaping a global network of connectivity that allows for a bilateral flow of influence and for the creation of mutual identities that are not geographically limited, we are able to "reevaluate and reelaborate the tradition of French universalism" in which France is merely a part of a larger whole (Conley 156). Shared identities are achieved by nullifying the exclusionary qualities of national borders; the organizational system of *French*

Global, which is divided into sections entitled “Spaces,” “Mobilities,” and “Multiplicities,” alludes to some of the ways in which this can be accomplished. The *lieux de rencontre* can overlap boundaries, cross them, or exist on both sides of them, always offering ways in which to conceive of oneself as like others who have traditionally been kept at a distance. In describing the cross-cultural commonalities exhibited in the French literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Michael Sheringham notes that the works of numerous authors are

characterized . . . by a redistribution of boundaries: frontiers become multiple and ubiquitous, but also blurred, evanescent, and impalpable. Putting death, desire, laughter, irony, alterity, and spatial dislocation into the mix . . . postmodern writing has by no means questioned the pertinence of boundaries but has radically queried the possibility of delimiting or stabilizing them” (451).

Yet as the other authors of *French Global* aptly demonstrate, what Sheringham concludes with respect to postmodern literature can truly be applied across epochs, and, as I have tried to show with this thesis, extends beyond literature into the realms of history and culture as a whole.

In reading *Vies et mort de la Francophonie* and *French Global* together, a few observations become evident with respect to *la Francophonie*. The first is that conventional conceptions of international relationships are outmoded and in need of reconfiguration. Both works represent reevaluations of accepted structures of global networks, illustrating the faults inherent in current delineations between national and international domains. With the blurring of boundaries comes a blurring of identities (Sheringham 443), and the identification of new systems of connectivity can help to forge new affiliations across old lines of division.

Francophonie’s communal potential remains stunted by a self-perpetuating mechanism in

which predetermined points of view are expressed *ad nauseam* until they become the standard by which the legitimacy of a point of view is judged. This is a large part of what François Provenzano refers to as *francodoxie*. We have encountered it in his observations with respect to the quest for identity as a defining feature of francophone literature, yet it is also evidenced in *French Global*. Consider, for example, Christopher Miller's discussion of *la Françafrique*, in which he notes that francophone African literature has been limited in its global reach, having almost exclusively revolved around the African encounter with metropolitan France. In truth, there is a « hégémonie francodexe de plus en plus systématisée » that guides modern francophonie thought (Provenzano 193). Most of the organizational and ideological "realities" of *la Francophonie* are little more than "francodoxic" constructs that seem inescapable in the analytical literature that deals with the subject. From quantitative data on the vitality of the French language to a rigid system of geographical *découpage*, to a steadfast belief in the system as an antidote to cultural homogenization, to the insistence upon a global vision of development, most authors remained confined to a specific and limited conception francophone space (see Provenzano 193-243). The persistence of this *francodoxie* is proof in and of itself of the need for a fresh perspective on the relationships within *la Francophonie*.

A second observation illustrated by a careful reading of these texts is that, even in the twenty-first century, France has not ceded its position of centrality either in the French-speaking world or in the scholarly analysis of it. Even in discussions that criticize the *métropole* or champion other nations, it remains the focal point of reference (see Lionnet, "Critical Conventions" 137; Miller 252; Provenzano 46-49). Such discussions can even be counterproductive to attempts at garnering solidarity as they reinforce alterity between France

and the rest of the world (see Provenzano 143). One of the primary faults of contemporary approaches to Francophonie is that they are never truly transversal: francophone issues are simply re-situated in a post-colonial context, while France remains held to a different standard of evaluation (Provenzano 49-53). The need to alter this model has been articulated on numerous occasions, yet it remains theoretical. Numerous authors in *French Global* make reference to calls for the “death” of Francophonie in favor of a “world literature in French,” as it was expressed in a 2009 manifesto in *Le Monde*, precisely because the contemporary model is so Franco-centric (Rice 161; Miller 249; Sapiro 316), yet ironically these same authors are perpetuating this system by keeping France at the center of their analyses. My thesis, on the other hand, presents a model that decentralizes France without minimizing it, making it a component equal to all others within the context of a larger unity. By centralizing loci of connection in non-geographically specific spaces, I have attempted to offer a model in which post-colonial binaries can be bypassed, allowing nations such as France and Belgium to be joined with, rather than placed in opposition to, regions such as Louisiana and the Antilles.

Finally, it is apparent that multiplicity is an essential component to any understanding of global unities. In addition to its blatant cultural specificity, the major problem with French universalism is that it is unilinear, representing a *racine unique* to which all other thought must trace back. No one trait or value is likely to apply to all people or cultures, for reasons that have to do both with the scope of human existence as well as the fluidity and temporality of human identity. An approach to a global network must “recognize that the world consists of different, even conflicting, universalities that all make up, and redefine contemporary . . . culture[s]” (Conley 156). I have tried in this thesis to show how this is possible: within a culture,

opposing solidarities may be formed, such as those who believe in linguistic evolution versus those who favor preservation. While each viewpoint may not allow for connections with all members of a foreign culture, nevertheless both camps are able to see their likeness across borders, to understand that their own communities extend beyond the cultural specificities they have known.

When Denis Diderot set out to encapsulate the totality of human knowledge in his *Encyclopédie*, he quickly discovered the impossibility of confining a complex system into singularly delineated roots and spaces. In the end, the project “relied on a team of authors and was laden with cross-references, side remarks, and digressions that guided his reader through a maze of definitions that were at the same time unified and escaping control” (Citton 381). Such is the nature of the bonds of community as well. Summarizing Jean-Luc Nancy, Lawrence Kritzman writes that nations are composed of “a plethora of singularities that is always already infinite. If community defines itself as absolute identity, it forecloses the possibility of true communication” (325). Infinitude is one of the defining characteristics of Glissant’s conception of *tout-monde* as well, as the exclusionary practices of traditional communities have contributed to the conflicts that divide humanity. At the same time, there is a risk of “losing oneself in a space as large and unbounded as *tout-monde*” (Priam 465-466). Within the infinitude of *lieux de rencontre*, we must be able to define particular relationships; yet in order to do so, we must first recognize the possibilities of what these might be. With this thesis, I offer one possible roadmap by which francophones may reconceive community.

For the past twenty years, there has been an increased attention in *la Francophonie* to the idea of unity in diversity, building on the theme of a 1993 francophone summit in Mauritius. Yet while most of the focus has been on issues of diversity (see Bonn 44; Guédon 168; Chaudenson 25), the bonds of unity remain in need of solidification.

« Le thème “unité dans la diversité” . . . attend encore que soit précisé le contenu de l’unité en question. Le fait d’avoir en commun, à des degrés très divers, l’usage d’une langue internationale peut contribuer à fonder, mais non à souder durablement une communauté...La communauté francophone...doit encore accomplir un travail important sur elle-même, pour donner un contenu plus solide à son unité » (Salon 131).

One need only look upon the fault lines of society to see structures that, while dividing people across intranational lines, reforms them across international ones. If the ties that bind people across lines of linguistic, religious, and urban experience are not inherently confined to the borders that constitute *la Francophonie*, neither is the ultimate francophone spectrum. For what is *la Francophonie* if not an alternative *mondialisme*? In keeping with the growing the size of the O.I.F, francophone goals increase. Boutros Boutros-Ghali wrote of his desire to expand beyond traditional borders, establishing bonds with other linguistic communities: « Le combat pour la Francophonie, c’est enfin et surtout un combat emblématique, un combat pour une autre vision du monde dans laquelle la diversité des langues et des cultures a toute sa place. C’est pourquoi je compte ouvrir la Francophonie aux autres communautés linguistiques. Je pense notamment au monde hispanique, au monde lusophone, au monde arabe » (Boutros-Ghali 19).

Francophonie is, at its core, a different type of globalism, an alternative to a hegemonic and monolithic system of uniting different cultures through an imposed vision of the world

(Phan and Guillou 22-29; Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 143-144; Landry 9; de Charette 53-54; Ellenbogen 53-55; Durand 25). *La Francophonie* itself is a test case, an experiment towards a greater *tout-monde*. “Francopolyphonie, one and multiple, universal and plural, can be a privileged laboratory, in this respect, or the humanism of the new age. This humanism will give a soul to the civilization of the universal, the true and new spring of humanity” (Ager 58). *La Francophonie* is in need of reorienting its bonds of solidarity along threads of connection that bind more universal rifts. « Approfondir la Communauté et la doter, telle qu’elle est, des moyens nécessaires à ses rôles d’espace de solidarité Nord-Sud, de laboratoire d’humanité, de lieu de dialogue privilégié entre des cultures différentes entre l’Occident et l’Orient, entre la chrétienté et l’islam, est la première nécessité » (Arnaud, Guillou, and Salon 143-144).

In an increasingly globalized society, many people have called into question the validity, the relevance, and even the durability of the nation-state (see Tuan 101; Orum 57; Bhabha 4-6; Brennan 45). Yet the nation persists, held together by strong bonds of solidarity forged in the idea of a shared experience and a shared history. If *la Francophonie* ever hopes to achieve a comparable solidarity, it must forge an *imaginaire* of its own, offering alternative *lieux de rencontre* along these same lines. Glissant has expressed the need to find common *traces* that link the people of the world, common histories and experiences that are themselves dependent upon a certain degree of *rupture*, a severing with traditional means of self-definition that exist in an exclusionary relationship with others.

La pensée de la trace s’appose . . . comme une errance qui oriente . . . La trace ne figure pas . . . une allée fermée sur elle-même, qui borde un territoire. La trace va dans la terre, qui plus jamais ne sera territoire . . . La pensée de la trace permet d’aller au loin des étranglements de système. Elle réfute par là tout comble de possession. Elle fêlé l’absolu

du temps. Elle ouvre sur ces temps diffractés que les humanités d'aujourd'hui multiplient entre elles, par conflits et merveilles. Elle est l'errance violente de la pensée qu'on partage. (Glissant 18-19)

When we adhere wholeheartedly to identities based around individual principles (nationality, language, religion), the system confines us by forcing us to remain in a position of opposition with respect to those who fall outside of these categories. To connect with others often requires breaks within closed systems: such is the case with national conflicts, which shatter the illusion of a space distinct from the outside world by virtue of its homogeneous character. Yet *rupture* is also a fantastic opportunity to establish alternate unities, ones that link nations across national borders rather than along them. « Les interrelations procèdent principalement par fractures et ruptures. Elles sont même peut-être de nature fractale : d'où vient que notre monde est un chaos-monde » (Glissant 24). In questing for common *traces* of sentiment and experience hidden by the way that history is recounted, we can create a new self-definition forged in a cultural memory that links us to others around the world. Ernest Renan proposes that nations are primarily defined by two characteristics, namely "the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories" and "present-day consent" (Renan 19). If *la Francophonie* is to achieve the latter, it must be acutely aware of its own rich legacy of memories—diachronic bonds that traverse periods of a shared history. These bonds provide points of common reference that are rooted in a deeper, global model.

It is not the fault of the French language or of westernized humanitarian values that they have not been able to alone hold together an international community, for no individual *racine unique* could accomplish this. Like a rhizome, our connections must be diverse and

multiple, just as our system of connection must be able to forge new connections as old ones are broken. Just as a rhizome has a framework without a core or center, existing « toujours au milieu, entre les choses » (Deleuze and Guattari 37), the bonds that hold together an international community must be delocalized, favoring no individual cultural traits or mode of thought, but instead providing a flexible network outside of geographic space by which all individuals have an equal opportunity to connect with all others. Neither can the nation-state remain a barrier to community, requiring a reinterpretation that allows for interpenetration. Françoise Lionnet has proposed the form of the archipelago as a reconciliation of unity and diversity as it relates to the nation:

When imagined as a closed system that needs to protect itself from exogenous influences and infiltrations (be it immigrants or *franglais*), the “one” is analogous to a continental landmass with well-defined borders and territorial waters to keep out undesirables and intruders . . . [It has become] possible to reimagine, in a global context, the twentieth-century nation not as fortress and landmass (the borders of which must be protected at all costs to maintain homogeneity within) but as a fluid and open “one” that is receptive to change and exchange, as an entity that connects disparate islands. Instead of being kept apart by the waters that surround them, the islands form a network of solidarity in which land and sea, the fluid and the solid, are both part of [a] hybrid legacy . . . (“Continents and Archipelagoes” 1508)

To bind a new globalism, we must think in terms of a network of unities with a multitude of intersections, a rhizomic and archipelagic model that allows individuals to connect on levels that ignore contemporary boundaries (Glissant 58, 63, 181). « Nos lieux communs, s’ils ne sont aujourd’hui d’aucune efficacité...contre les oppressions concrètes qui stupéfient le monde, se tiennent pourtant capables de changer l’imaginaire des humanités » (Glissant 16). If we can find a common heritage that links francophone nations along lines that transgress traditional divisions such as language and religion, then it may provide a launching point in the

face of evolving visions of *la Francophonie* that continue to expand towards an inevitable global reimagining.

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VITA

Mark Huntsman was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1979, where he developed an interest in foreign languages and cultures at an early age, enrolling in French literature courses at the University of Wisconsin while still a student in high school. A National Merit Finalist and member of Phi Beta Kappa, Mark graduated from the University of Wisconsin with comprehensive honors in 2002, earning Bachelor of Arts degrees in French and Linguistics.

After a brief internship as a travel agent, Mark resumed his pursuit of French in 2004, receiving a four-year Board of Regents fellowship to study at Louisiana State University. In 2007, he earned his Master of Arts degree, successfully defending his thesis entitled *Les Cuisines Mères: Une Analyse Historique des Racines Francophones de la Gastronomie de la Nouvelle Orléans*, for which he received the Alexander Hoguet Award for the Most Distinguished Master's Thesis. Driven by an affinity for all things cultural, he received the honor of being selected to participate in the Dartmouth Summer Institute in French Cultural Studies, and would later win the Joel Lafayette Fletcher Award for the Preservation of French Culture.

In 2008, Mark accepted a one-year position as a *lecteur* in the English Department at the University of Limoges, where he taught a wide variety of classes, returning to Louisiana State University in 2009 to serve as a teaching assistant. In 2012, Mark successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, *The Common Struggle: Locating the international connections of national spaces of conflict in the francophone world*, while awaiting publication of an article, « Les écrivaines culinaires américaines, » in the *Dictionnaire des femmes créatrices*.