Breaking the Textual and Visual Ice:

In Canadian Comic Book Translation

by

Charity K. Slobod

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Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies
University of Alberta

Abstract

'Comic Studies' is an ever-evolving field including approaches ranging from documenting comic book growth and its history, to perspectives in critical theory. Even with this rich diversity in comic-subject matter, there are a surprising few who have focused on how cultural studies and translation affect the genre. This thesis uses notions of translation and cultural theory to help determine how Canadian comic books fare within an existing and broadened framework. Included are each books' respective milieu, notable changes when the pieces are translated into either French or English, and whether the process has been completed locally or by crossing international borders. Exploring a corpus of seven domestic comics – examples are pulled from chronicles to help detail particularities in comic translation within the Canadian cultural, transcultural, graphic, and symbolic sense. These are not found in a compounded, or 'narrow' meaningful deliverance, but culturally expressive in meaning. The comic book enquiry arises from the communicative relationship between the picture and its words. Using messages from the two forms, this study aims to clarify dissimilarities between image and text found in comics, further exposed during its translation.

Preface

This thesis is the product of using a corpus of seven Canadian comic books which served as the main source of research material. The collaboration between myself and Dr. Chris Reyns-Chikuma helped explore the repeat examples which led to each chapter's respective topics. It is an original piece of work with no portion previously published.

This is dedicated to my family, although slightly unsure of my work, supported me anyway.

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The research conducted in this thesis is built from budding studies in comic books and their translations. Although a new and emerging field, this work could not materialize without the kind guidance and extensive knowledge from my supervisor, Dr. Chris Reyns-Chikuma. Not only did we collaborate on this project - continually bouncing ideas off one another – he also helped me grow through my time as a Master's student. My years under his tutelage were truly inspirational, encouraging, and memorable. A dear thank-you Dr, Reyns-Chikuma!

The University of Alberta is a strong community, and without the helpful advice received from Dr. Renee Polziehn, I would not have learned how to approach exactly what we do behind these campus walls. She has taught me the importance of sharing my research with others, challenging myself, and focusing on what comes next. Thank-you so much for your open door and kind heart. I would also like to thank Dr. Sathya Rao for his enthusiasm in our department's work.

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What Exactly Are We Dealing With?

Comic Books: An Overview

Although it may vary in degree from culture to culture, comics have been frequently perceived as a fringed, non-art form, based solely in fandom, and reserved for children or socially stunted adults. This is aligned closely with the concept of 'pop' or 'low-brow' culture, as having little intellectual or aesthetic appeal, and is often associated with people of modest levels of education[1]. Shifts in these perspectives have occurred gradually in the past thirty years thanks to, among other factores, several seminal pieces of work, which have help bring about a new genre described as "graphic novels."[2] For comics, the 1970s and 80s began changing towards a more visual voice[3]. Publishing houses were moving away "from the serial production of short comic books to focus on more complex book-length titles, and as a result, comic readership expanded from children to young adults to adults, who found their preferred format maturing along with them."[4] This format transformation initiated theoretical studies from both academics – such as Thierry Groensteen – and from cartoonists working in the medium, like Will Eisner and Scott McCloud. In fact it was Eisner, (the creator of the American comic, *The Spirit* (1940-1952)), who first popularized the term "graphic novel" in the 1970s.[5] This he followed with exploring the form itself in an essay entitled *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985). At its very basics, 'sequential art' means two or more pictures connecting a story or a narrative; however, its

[1] Claessens, Nathalie, and Alexander Dhoest. "Comedy Taste: Highbrow/lowbrow Comedy and Cultural Capital." *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 7.1 (2010): 51. Web. 30 Dec. 2014.
[2] Behler, Anne. "Getting Started with Graphic Novels: A Guide for the Beginner." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 46.2 (n.d.): 17. *Jstor*. Web. 29 Dec. 2014.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Such as superhero and 3-panel comics. Ibid.
[5] "The Spirit Archives." - *WillEisner.com*. The Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation, n.d. Web. 29 Dec. 2014. <http://www.willeisner.com/spirit/spirit-archives.html>.

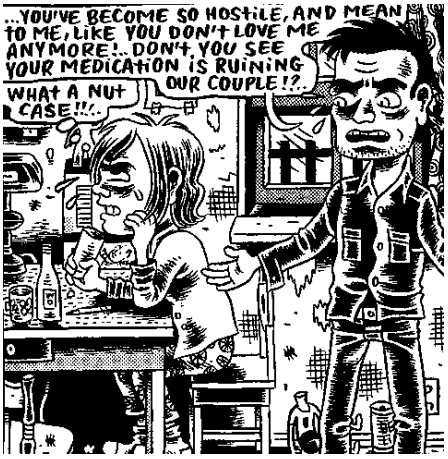
complexities signify something far deeper which we will be exploring further in this thesis. In his foreword, Eisner explains his chosen art as "a means of creative expression, a distinct discipline, and art and literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea"[6]. This broad description invites numerous types of art to be considered 'sequential'. "If people failed to understand comics, it was because they defined what comics could be too narrowly", McCloud explains in *Understanding Comics*[7]. Separating 'graphic novels', from 'pictorial images', and 'sequential art' begins classifying the artform, that I believe all united under Eisner's original description as "a means of creative expression..."[8]. In addition, this thesis is a work of multiculturalism and bilingualism, combining elements of French and English Canada and France. Moreover, in French they have but one word describing the new visual media: comics and graphic novels are "*les bandes dessinées*", or casually known as "*les bd*"[9]. For these very reasons, I have chosen to streamline the terms into one all-encompassing word: that being of course 'Comics'.

Comics: Physical Properties and Terminology

Before moving on to how one reads, sees, or gains meaning from comics, it is important to briefly cover certain terms this thesis will use in describing how the pages are presented. Beginning first with the **panel**, defined as a traditionally bordered rectangle displaying a moment of time, a single instant, or an action[10]. In other words, "to deal with the *capture* or encapsulation of these events in the flow of the narrative, they must be broken into sequenced

[6] Eisner, Will. Foreword. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Tamarac, FL: Poorhouse, 1985. N. pag.
[7] McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994. 3.
[8] 'Sequential art' can be defined as pictures joined by a linking succession. Ibid.
[9] French people have also been using "roman graphique" for 'more serious' BDs, although this is under the influence of the American concept and genre.
[10] Terescenko, Vineta. *Translating Comics: Comics Creation, Common Translation Strategies, DOs and DON'Ts*. London: Lulu Enterprises UK, 2010. 11.

segments"[11]. These 'segments' – or panels, are divided by white blank spaces called **gutters**. They have a distinct function in comics, not only to demonstrate where one panel ends and another begins, but to note a change between the scene's time and space. They need to be fractured by these gutters to help give closure to one moment, or action, and connect to the next[12]. As far as textual communication, we have a **caption** usually reserved for the story's narrator, or as an indicator of the panel's present place or time, for example: "The next morning"[13]. Usually situated at the top left-hand corner, it is meant to be read prior in order to contextualize the action to the dialogue in the panel. Lastly, how the characters think or verbally express themselves is a trait completely unique to comics. They will use **thought**, or **speech balloons** respectively, and each one has a different contour around their text. While thought balloons are usually in the shape of a cloud with smaller circles leading down to the individual's head, speech balloons are drawn frequently as steadier "circles"(sometimes more awkwardly contoured than other, see Doucet below 33:4). Although comics do not follow these terms in a restricted type of canon, it is made easier if certain concepts are universal to help focus on what is being described in this thesis.



[11] Eisner,Will. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Tamarac, FL: Poorhouse, 1985. 38.
[12] McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1994: 67. Print.
[13] Malley, Bryan Lee. *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*. Ed. ed. Portland, Or: Oni, 2004. Print.

Semiotic Systems: How do we Define Meaning?

For this thesis, I want to make clear that I have tried to avoid connections to structuralism, and semiotics as a science and a school of thought started by Saussure and Peirce. That said, I use aspects of signs systems and concepts of visual culture to help define how we perceive reading comics. In terms of this medium, Groensteen explains:

> Classic semiotic theory is inadequate for an understanding and description of visual messages. There are many reasons for this, and a complete account of these would be very lengthy. For the sake of brevity, I would just make the point that a picture cannot be broken down into discrete, stable, elementary units in the way that language can[14].

Then, how do we begin to define 'meaning' found in comic books? This can first be done with how we interpret a sign – or "something that stands for something else"[15]. Scott McCloud's chapter "The Vocabulary of Comics" opens up with the famous French painting by Magritte called "*The Treachery of Images*"[16]. The iconic image depicts a pipe, with the words below: "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*" ("This is not a pipe"). This demonstrates that in fact, it is "not a pipe, but a painting of a pipe"[17]. In other words, it is considered the representation of the real object - the visual which makes its viewers think of 'a pipe'. In terms of comic books, this is a basic way how to transmit meaning through its images. The text that subtitles the image helps the reader further analyse the author's intended message. However, both pictures and words have the ability to be signs, and can be split into "two primary kinds of meaning...depending on usage and

[14] Groensteen, Thierry. "A Few Words About The System Of Comics And More." *European Comic Art* 1 (2008): 87. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 1 Jan. 2015.
[15] Danesi, Marcel. *Glossary of Technical Terms*. *Sign, Thought, and Culture: A Basic Course in Semiotics*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars', 1998. 290. Print.
[16] McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994: 24. Print.
[17] Ibid.

situation"[18]. Denotative "is the initial meaning a sign intends to capture", and is usually how a certain language or culture has systematically decided to define something[19]. Otherwise said, it would be found in the most recent dictionary to that specific society. Connotative, on the other hand, can be extended more freely and openly to mean something more through thoughts like word associations or analogies. For example, a basic connotative use of the word "house" would be to refer to it as "anything that involves or implicates humans (or beings) coming together for some specific reason"[20]. Alternatively, one person may say "house", and another thinks of "home" as being "a place of security, comfort, and family"[21]. The combination of denotative and connotative with how images and text are each capable of numerous interpretations will lead us into the important communication that occurs within comics.

Comic Text and Visuals: The Spoken and Unspoken Bond

Perhaps the most vital component for this to keep in mind is according to Eisner: "'comics' deal with two major communicating devices, words and images"[22]. He continues with: "admittedly this is an arbitrary separation...(because) they are derivatives of a single origin and in the skillful employment of words and images lies the expressive potential of the medium"[23]. What is visually occurring in the panel is associated with the text in a caption, thought, or speech balloon – if not a combination of all three. These are then read and seen together, before the reader moves onto the following panel. Take the following example from

[18] Danesi, Marcel. *Sign, Thought, and Culture: A Basic Course in Semiotics*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars', 1998: 19. Print.
[19] Ibid. 19-20.
[20] Ibid. 21.
[21] "Connotative and Denotative Vocabulary." *Vocabulary Games and Resources Connotative and Denotative Vocabulary Comments*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Jan. 2015.
[22] It is important to note that not all comics have text, but do have a visual component. An example of the wordless graphic novel is: *The City (Die Stadt*) by Frans Masereel, 1925. Eisner, Will. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Tamarac, FL: Poorhouse, 1985: 13. Print.
[23] Ibid.

Scott Pilgrim: My Precious Little Life (20:5). We read a speech balloon which says "hello", while seeing Pilgrim holding a phone to his ear. We must therefore assume he is in the midst of answering a phone call.

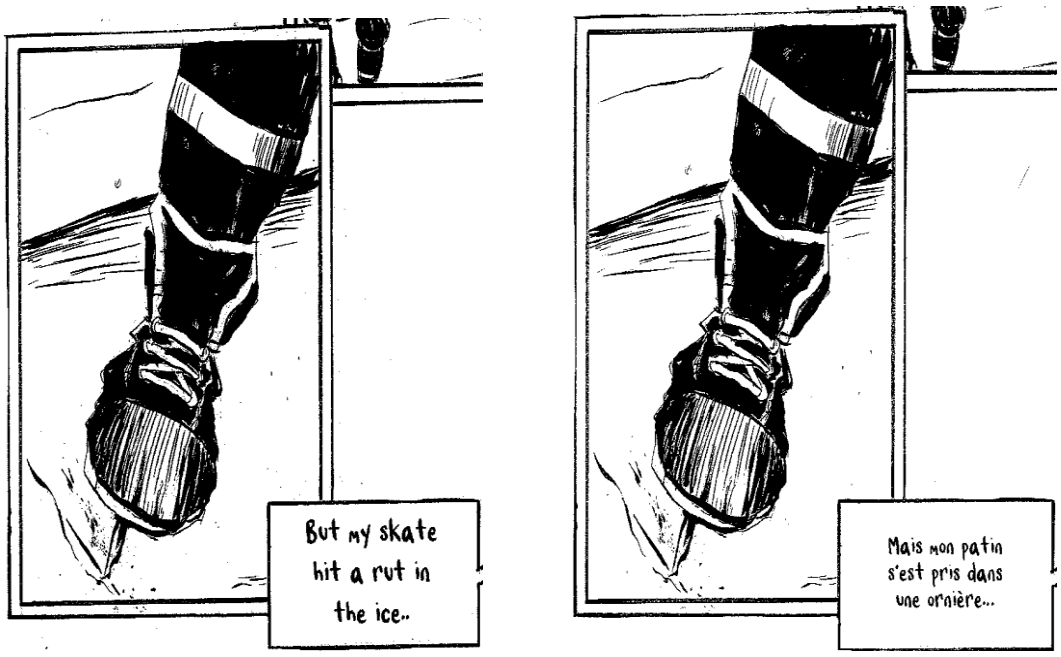
It is in this interdependency between image and word which creates a strong sequential narrative[24]. *Scott Pilgrim's* next panel will lead us to find out who is on the other side of the conversation, what they look like, and what he/she has to say. In *The System of Comics*, Groensteen describes this as "the semantic articulations of a story...(which) allow me to identify and circumscribe a story segment of any length, characterized by a unity of action and/or space"[25]. This mix of text and images is considered the real communicative value of comic books.

Visual and Textual Semiotics, Plus Translation!

This is where the complexities already existing between text, image, and sequential narratives become even more intertwined. The addition of translation into these established structures can cause difficulties in terms of how the translator approaches the source text. To

[24] Williams, Rachel Marie-Crane. "Image, Text, and Story: Comics and Graphic Novels in the Classroom." *Iowa Research Online: The University of Iowa Research Depository*. Department of Teaching and Learning Publications, 11 Jan. 2008: 13. Web. 1 Jan. 2015.
[25] Groensteen, Thierry. "Restrained Arthrology: The Squence." *The System of Comics*. Trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen .Jackson: U of Mississippi, 2007 : 111. Print.

begin, Zanettin also details the different forms of meaning found working simultaneously in comics. Here he says "all 'languages' used by comics can be 'translated' within/or between semiotic systems; however, translation takes place between texts rather than languages"[26]. This means that if a source text is 'a', and its connecting semiotic system is 'A', while the target text is 'b' and its system 'B', then the translator must concurrently move 'A' → 'B' and 'a' → 'b'[27]. To help clarify, take these two panels from *Essex County* (210:3, 226:3).



The words have been changed, yet its systems of meaning connote something different from English Canada (A) into France French (B) where it was translated. Text 'a' on the left is now text 'b' on the right; however, the image of an 'ice skate' conjures different connotations for group 'A' compared to group 'B' since ice skating is a strong cultural reference in Canada, yet much less so in France. In other words, the language is related to each culture and how they uniquely interpret the visuals and their sequences presented by the original illustrator.

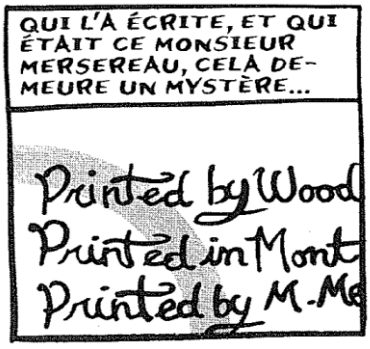
[26] Zanettin, Federico. "Comics in Translation: An Overview." *Comics in Translation*. Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Pub., 2008.: 12.
[27] Ibid.

Translating Comics: Approaches and Considerations

To begin, comics are presented as a multimedia text, meaning they use a combination of means of communication. This can cause issues like mentioned above on a more tangible level. For example, translators are restricted in incorporating the target text into the confines of the panel, caption or balloons. Defined as an example of '**constrained translation**', comics are not unlike "film dubbing...by both visual limitations (lip-synch for dubbing and legibility for subtitling) and temporal limitations"[28]. The translators are not able to follow the original faithfully but rather concentrate on transmitting the most essential information. The translation is often a shortened paraphrase with entire phrases deemed unnecessary completely removed. As we'll see, this can be a problem for comics since translations are usually longer than the original, especially from English into French[29].

Therefore, in translating comics one must first approach the image, then the sequence of images, followed by the text, all the while never losing sight of the interactive quality between the images and the text. It is crucial to note that although the images have not been altered in the vast majority of translated versions, they must be included in the translation process. It can be more difficult and costly to translate if the text is imbedded into the image itself. This is usually the case in the background such as with a store name, street addresses, and media sources (i.e., a newpaper read by one of the characters, etc.). Due to their deep integration within the image, they are not usually translated and display loudly the source text and its subsequent language. In *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* we see a written letter kept in English script (89:6).

[28] Zanettin, Federico. "Comics in Translation: An Overview." *Comics in Translation*. Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Pub., 2008: 21. Print.
[29] Gained In Translation." *Quill & Quire* 71.4 (2005): 4. *Canadian Literary Centre*. Web. 10 Jan. 2015.



This also places a large relevancy on cultural significance, since many of these texts are dependent on a specific area and its immediate surroundings. It situates readers from both cultures in an either familiar or unfamiliar surrounding (or milieu). This presents a common translation conundrum based around the concepts of foreignization or domestication of a text. Lawrence Venuti, uses the notion of 'transparency' in terms of understanding how one approaches the two translation strategies:

> A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or non-fiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text - the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original'[30].

In other words, "the translator is always faced with the choice of either 'as far as possible leaving the author undisturbed and moving the reader towards him, or leaving the reader in peace and moving the author towards him'"[31]. As a result, all the translators in our Canadian comic book

[30] "Translating the Foreign: The (In)visibility of the Foreign." *Cultural and Political Agenda* (n.d.): 145. n. pag. Web. 2 Jan. 2015.

[31] Translated Steven, Jefferson from Schleiermacher in Hans Joachim Störig, *Das Problem des Übersetzens* (Stuttgart: Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchges, 1963: 47. Print.
Jefferson, Steven. "Telling It Like It Is: Domesticating and Foreignizing Translation." *Telling It Like It Is: Domesticating and Foreignizing Translation*. Academia.edu, n.d (2012): 2. Web. 02 Jan. 2015

corpus are faced with these careful considerations. This is perhaps best summed through the "equivalence and function"[32]. If equivalence is measured as "accuracy", "correctness" or "fidelity", and function is defined as "a variable notion of how the translated text is connected to the receiving language and culture", then comic book translators may rely on the images to help balance the two[33].

Ka-Boom! The Canadian Comic Book Explosion

Although Canadian comic books have a long history prior to the most recent 'boom' beginning in the 1990s, the corpus of this thesis is only within this more contemporary expansion. With its subject matter staying within Canadian linguistic and cultural translation themes, I have chosen to solely discuss as far back as my earliest book study allows. Chapter 2 features Julie Doucet, who's *New York Diary* (1999) would be considered one of the first comic books of this increase in visibility. Published through the Anglophone yet Montreal based, Drawn & Quarterly, Doucet represents what makes Canadian comic books so distinct: a Francophone living in Montréal, writing in English, and choosing to self-translate her books into French. With Drawn & Quarterly being launched in 1990, "it was probably no accident that Chris Oliveros's publishing firm emerged in Montréal, a hot house of comic art" which has exposed "creators and readers" to work in English Canada and Québec[34]. On the other hand, the Francophone publishing firm "La Pastèque" is also located in Montréal – exposing the area as a major hub for Canadian comics. The two houses are able to move books between one another sharing the translating responsibilities in bringing pieces from English into French, and vice

[32] Venuti, Lawrence, ed. "Translation Studies: An Emerging Field." Introduction. *The Translation Studies Reader*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2000: 5. Print.
[33] Ibid
[34] Bell, John. *Invaders from the North: How Canada Conquered the Comic Book Universe*. Toronto, Ont.: Dundurn, 2006 : 178. Print.

versa. This exchange allows for both sides of Canada to benefit from their linguistic differences. The creativity defined and demonstrated through the comic books represents a unified glance into Francophone and Anglophone contact, communications, and similarities.

Depending on the language, they are able to move this relationship across the border to the United States or overseas into France. The latter has been a prevalent buyer into the translating rights for English-Canadian comics. France and Belgium's long established enjoyment of the medium has in the past ten years acquired a novelty for comics from Canada. With their city or landscapes, subject matter, and culture, each comic represents Canadian living at distinct times. These themes seemed to have entered a niche market in Europe. "If time is one dimension of the process of developing an identity, space is another"[35]; therefore, "just as Canada has found its own unique and powerful voice in literature and other arts, it is now creating its distinct visions within the field of graphic narrative"[36].

A Few Last Considerations...

Simply put, this thesis is about Canadian comic book translation. Each chapter looks at one or two books, and how they fall under those specifics. This heavily includes their Canadian content, and how publishing houses overseas, along with their hired translators, decide to approach the material. According to Zanettin, "in different countries and times comics may primarily address a certain readership rather than another, and this may have implications for the way translated comics are perceived and the strategies used to translate (or not translate) them"[37]. This means how the reading public receives the 'foreign' text can influence the commercial,

[35] Lortie, Leon. *Canadian Identity: A Symposium*. Ed. F. Stanley. Sackville, N.B.: Mount Allison U, 1969 : 20. Print.
[36] Bell, John. *Invaders from the North: How Canada Conquered the Comic Book Universe*. Toronto, Ont.: Dundurn, 2006 : 190. Print.
[37] Zanettin, Federico. "Comics in Translation: An Overview." *Comics in Translation*. Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Pub., 2008: 7. Print.

marketing and production process. In other words, 'domesticating' the comics often alters the original cover art and title, or shortens its text to mere paraphrasing.

Now Meet Our Canadian Comic Books

Our first chapter, *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* by 'Seth' defines 'Canadiana' and with mixing both fact and fiction, can influence a reader's interpretation of the text. With a rupture existing from the source to the target text, we can assume the translator may have been swayed by the images and their narrative while translating. As already mentioned, chapter two examines *My New York Diary* by Julie Doucet. Completely personal and autobiographical, Montréal-French native Doucet travels to New York, detailing her time spend there in the featured story. Not until she returns does she self-translate into her first language (French), for a Paris-based publishing house. In her translation, she appears to present a distance between herself and her own subject matter, at times reinterpreting her own panels as something else. .

Chapter three shifts notions somewhat from individual translators interpreting comics, to a more collective and global sensibility. In other words, the French travelogue *Shenzhen* by Guy Delisle is depicting 'an outsider-in' perspective through his comic art. A bit of a world citizen, Delisle exemplifies the interconnectedness and movement of transculturalism. Comparatively, *Scott Pilgrim: Precious Little Life* shows how these notions are additionally reflected in the youth-centric, Manga (Japanese comics) styled Canadian comic. Bryan Lee O'Malley's popular series has moved into the digital and multimodal world which could further weaken national and cultural boundaries.

In chapter four, *Louis Riel* and *Paul a un travail d'été* are perfect examples of how detecting changes in topography and onomatopoeias can influence the comics' reading experience. With Chester Brown's *Riel* and Michel Rabagliati's *Paul,* each visually depicts – through either grammar or fonts – verbal communication and language interactions between French and English.

Lastly, we finish this study with *Essex County* by Essex County native, Jeff Lemire. Lemire creates a story spanning three generations of rural Ontario living. While details of this text are specifically and nostalgically Canadian – such as overt mentioning of hockey – his use of the human condition and easily transferable symbolism makes this comic relatable to all who read it, regardless of cultural or linguistic background.

To conclude, our corpus of Canadian comics portrays the country's bilingualism. Each comic chosen has been written originally in French or English, and then translated into either one or the other. Namely, each one has at least one inference or example of the two languages or cultures interacting. To clarify, Gregory Gallant (Seth), Bryan Lee O'Malley, Jeff Lemire, and Chester Brown are English native -speakers; while Michel Rabagliati, Julie Doucet, and Guy Delisle speak French. The individual creative comic exchanges depend on the creators' native tongue, and therefore can differ in how translators approach one language to another. This unifying sense of – in truth – multiculturalism, is then translated and brought into the global, and local, comic book market for purchase.

Chapter 1

‘Canadiana Reimagined’:

Seth’s *G.N.B Double C* and its Imagery Translation

Introduction

The *Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* (abbreviated as *The G.N.B Double C*) by ’Seth’ – or Gregory Gallant – is a unique comic book brimming with Canadian content. This chapter aims to show how when combining iconic cutural imagery and text with a sequential art narrative, a translator can be made impressionable by the visuals. In effect, this may influence a standard text-based translation process. This book of study was first published in 2011, and in 2012 was translated into French by the Paris resident, Julien Gangnet. Although Gangnet means to abridge the original for the target language, it becomes questionable whether his word-choice is solely due to paraphrasing the text or instead, by reinterpreting several images. This causes the interactive relationship between the image and the words to further askew the translation. This examination will further separate how understanding a text and readying it for translation differs from the analysis of meaning taken from the image. While both text and image are trying to convey meaning, they may share this communicative task or stream a new storyline if taken as distinct properties. In the case of *The G.N.B Double C*, its subject matter and stylistic choices have created a different approach seen through the work of the translator’s decision. As we will see, complications begin from the translator’s interpretation of the original image or narration, to the outcome of actually translating the text according to this initial perspective.

Issues involving *The G.N.B Double C* and its translation, *La confrérie des cartoonists du grand nord*, are due to three initial distinguishing factors. Beginning primarily with the book’s

heavy themes involving English-Canadian – yet sorely lacking, French-Canadian – nostalgia and iconophilia which is unique in terms of its open blatancy. This portion will also include Seth's background and chosen approach to his work through his introduction, outlining, colour palette, and character depictions. The second variant is not found in the publisher's decision to translate the edition from English to French, but rather in the choice to do the translation in France. This will lead into the final item, approaching reasons why the original differs for the translation. Adaptation to France's readership is crucial for financial reasons on behalf of the publication house; however, some contextual and formatting changes may only be necessary. Alternatively, finding substantial comparative differences between the source and target text, it is important to return back to the notion of images taking precedence over the original English wording. In other words, Seth's 'Canadiana' is visually impactful yet produces new interpretations in a French subtext.

Themes and Bilingual Values of *The G.N.B Double C*

Written and drawn through the perspective of an omniscient but subjective narrator, *The G.N.B* 'sketchbook' details a wistfulness mixing of both fact and fiction of Canadian themes, history, symbolism, and most importantly – comics. Seth's work traces an imagined, glorious past of all things cartoon and Canadian kitsch. This includes sketchings and storylines based on Royal Canadian Mounted Police, French-Canadian trappers, "Inuits", cultural icons, new immigrants, geographical locations, political and historical figures, and anything otherwise as examples of 'Canadiana'. These are recognizable factors of a complex Canadian identity. Exploring this concept further, we find that there is not a unilateral way to define this term. It conjoins simultaneously French and Anglo-Canadians, First Nations, and immigrants from all

parts of the world[38]. 'Canadiana' is even further complicated due to its proximity to America and its very own 'Americana'. In regards to Anglo-Canada, "the tendency in practice...has been to construct (its) identity by contrasting it against its brash and aggressive American counterpart"[39]. When comparing the two expressions, they embody the same meaning or significance – yet carry distinct and different national items under each umbrella term.

The book begins in a fictional Ontario town at the now depreciated headquarters and member clubhouse of the G.N.B Double C. From this point, it describes the building's current and crumbling situation, although moves back through time depicting cartoonists and their characters that began this narrative. This tale, however, does mention real artists, historical figures, and comic book awards. For example: Chester Brown, (author of *Louis Riel*), Doug Wright ("Nipper" creator), Pierre Trudeau (Prime Minister 1968-1984), General James P. Wolfe (British officer in the "Battle of Québec", 1759), The Jasper - "best cartoonist" – and for "the cartoonist of the decade", The Journeyman (Seth 67). The fiction is mostly spun from Seth's imagination, creating an entire romantic ideal of what embodies Canadian subject matter – or 'Canadiana' -- and he artistically depicts them iconically and in a cartoonish style. He is continually playing with both the real and unreal, fact and fiction. This challenges the Canadian readers – which are his initial target audience - to answer the question: how much do they actually know about their cultural collective memory?

This summary of *The G.N.B Double C* raises issues when we consider translating work so embedded in Canadian culture. It has the potential of exclusivity, insofar as having elements more recognizable particularly by Canadians than by non-Canadians. Furthermore as a bilingual country, there exists historically a divide between English and French Canada. This separateness

[38] Dittmer, Jason, and Soren Larsen. "Captain Canauck." *Captain Canuck, Audience Response, and the Project of Canadian Nationalism* 8.5 (2007): 739. *JStor*. Web. 07 Feb. 2014.
[39] Ibid. 740.

is famously exemplified in Hugh MacLennan's 1945 novel of historical-fiction, titled *The Two Solitudes*:

> Articulating what 'hundreds of thousands of Canadians felt and knew' – as MacLennan himself later put it – about the divisions in Canadian society, it concludes in 1939 with Paul Tellard (French) marrying Heather Methuen (English) and with a nation apparently marching off to war again in unity[40].

This partition can be seen as French-Canadians being "'a minority in a country they considered their own'" with their English counterparts not equally valuing their discernible language, religion, and culture[41]. It is difficult to say whether or not this metaphoric gulf is wider or narrower today, although in contemporary comics we can find evidence which may argue towards the latter. However, *The G.N.B Double C* leaves out large sums of Franco-Canada's subject matter. That said, it is written by an Anglo-Canadian, and appeals to its adjoining culture and language. Interestingly, the book was selected for translation and publication in France which can in turn be resold to a French-Canadian language demographic[42]. This movement of cultural transfer helps unite the creative divide between Anglophone and Francophone Canada, even if only to serve as a French glimpse from France into English Canada.

In addition, the limited knowledge an average Canadian has of the niche Canadian comic book market is of little comparison when taken out of this country's demographic. If few know where the fact or fiction intercepts, it will be up to the translator to do the substantial research in finding out when an image is a representation of something once based in reality opposed to being a complete artistic fabrication. Perhaps most importantly, the translator must analyse the

[40] Leith, Linda. *Introducing Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes: A Reader's Guide*. Toronto: ECW, 1990. 28. Print.
[41] Ibid. 33.
[42] For example you can buy the French version, *La Confrérie des cartoonists du grand nord*, at "*La librairie Gallimard de Montréal*" (The Gallimard Bookstore in Montreal).

overall tone, impression, sequential art, and physical properties of the comic book's images, then translate the text and make it comprehensible to the target audiences. This includes French from Canada and France. Are these images taken from already established, iconic imagery familiar to Canadians or is this simply an example of Seth's imagination running wild? And more importantly, are they and the tone they carry translatable, being of both ironic and cultural-specific nostalgia? Questions like this only begin to break the surface demonstrating the difficulties a comic book translator must face when approaching a text-image combination. It is necessary to remember it is not solely the translation of the words, but the translation between the relationship of word and image.

Art Mirroring Life: 'Seth's Fact and Fiction

Born in Clinton, Ontario, as Gregory Gallant, 'Seth' now resides in the city of Guelph in the same Canadian province of his hometown[43]. Notably, - and as with numerous other young aspiring comic book authors – he was originally a fan of the standard American-dominated 'hero comic book' genre widely popular in the earlier 1960s[44]. While this may have been his influence as a youth, he has since taken a more mature look at the graphic novel medium itself[45]. For example, his themes usually involve reminiscence for the old and things seemingly now-forgotten. 'Seth' will frequently incorporate himself within his own stories in a part auto-biographical, part fictional fashion. His books are presented as being factual and true; however, with inevitable fan-based research, it is easily discovered to usually be a work of partial fabrication. It takes a close, careful reading to help distinguish truth from sheer figment. With this in mind, he specifically traces back a particular cartoon to its initial origins (more often than

[43] Batson, Billy. "Seth." *(Person)*. 7 Dec. 2013. Web. 3 May. 2014
[44] Mercer, Greg. "GregMercer.ca." *GregMercerca*. Web. 3 May. 2014
[45] Ibid.

not they are completely fictional), and is masterful at creating an entire narrative focusing around its earliest cultural meaning, and eventual sequential significance. Through this journey, he frequently shows his disregard for some aspects of mainstream popular culture and those who have chosen to move forward unto the next 'hot new thing' while leaving the relics behind[46]. Beginning in 1991, and continuing today, his series *Palookaville* has gained wide notoriety for these ongoing themes. His first published graphic novel, *It's a Good Life, if You Don't Weaken* (1993-1996) is an ideal example of the above mentioned, as his character searches for a long forgotten cartoonist. His other notable works include *Wimbledon Green* (2005) – another fictionalized account of the world's largest comic book collector – and *George Sprott* (2009) about the *New York Times* cartoonist, George Sprott. Interestingly in the introduction to *The G.N.B Double C*, Seth mentions *Wimbledon Green* as the book he was dedicating the vast majority of his time to while casually writing the former. Recently as of 2012, Seth was the primary illustrator and cover artist for the famed children writer Lemony Snicket (pen-name of American author Daniel Handler) and his book *Who Could that be at this Hour[47]?* This body of work has garnered several awards for the Canadian artist including the Eisner, the Harvey, and the Ignatz for *It's a Good Life.*

Although he is considered "an A-list talent in the literary comic book marketplace", there are relatively few articles written in response to his work and life[48]. It is possible that Gregory Gallant's use of a pen-name and his propensity for creating ambiguous truths has left him as a figure in the background. Often donning an oversized suit, fedora, and small circular spectacles, his recognizable style of dress is easily mimicked in a cartoonish fashion. Drawing himself into

[46] Miller, Bryan. "An Interview with Seth." *Bookslut*. N.p., 2004. Web. 3 May 2014.
[47] "Lemony Snicket - Daniel Handler Biography." *Lemony Snicket - Daniel Handler Biography*. Yahoo, n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2015.
[48] Miller, Bryan. "An Interview with Seth." *Bookslut*. N.p., 2004. Web. 3 May 2014.

his own stories, he resembles somebody whom time has forgotten. His attire seems dated, yet he stands out against his own comic book backdrop. Saying once in an interview: "I think that the early to middle 20th century was aesthetically more pleasing time period...The modern world is very ugly…" further affirms this fact[49]. Although his creations are often fictional, it is undeniable that his true personality, sense of self, and opinions are substantially reflected in his work.

The opening pages of *The G.N.B Double C*, Seth demonstrate his strong artistic voice and viewpoint. In this introduction he recounts the random nature of this sketchbook coming to life, the struggles he had completing it, and his concerns of overtly referencing himself and another cartoonist – namely New Zealander, Dylan Horrocks and his graphic novel *Hicksville*. As previously mentioned, he was switching back and forth between this piece and the one which he pursued with more vigour, *Wimbledon Green*. There is an extensive explanation which gives plenty of insight into Seth's mindset, and his creative and editing process during this comic's fabrication. He references numerous Canadian comic book essentials such as: Doug Wright and the Doug Wright Award, cartoonist James Sturm, and Tom Devlin from famed Canadian comic publishing house "Drawn and Quarterly". Those familiar with the comics scene in Canada will recognize several of these mentioned figures and features, and immediately understand the comic community's cultural liaisons.

'Seth's Persona Transferred Through Translation

Now what happens when another culture – one which may be culturally and geographically removed from Canada - appropriates Seth's introduction into their language and society? It is unlikely it will have the same value of familiarity for the new target audience,

[49] Ibid.

especially if this is the first translated publication from this individual. In Seth's case, *It's a Good Life* was translated into French in France by popular publishing house "Les Humanoïdes Associés" in Paris as *La Vie est belle malgré* (2009). There it received reasonable attention from the graphic novel market, and hence seemed to establish Seth as an international author[50]. These inferences are important due to Seth's original introduction found at the beginning of *The G.N.B Double C* in relation to the translator's approach with the introductory page. While glancing comparatively, it is instantly noticed that the translated issue omits passages from the original text. For example, the paragraph where he mentions "the pages dealing with Doug Wright were written before the formation of the Doug Wright Awards. I cribbed most of the writing for that award's inaugural speech from the narration of this sketchbook story", is completely removed. This would be due to its irrelevancy to France's readership considering "The Doug Wright Awards" are a Canadian designation, named after a Canadian cartoonist and unknown in France. It could also be argued that the culturally important value of Seth's Canadian – previously rather elite and fan-based – popularity does not equate in another country, especially overseas; although, his previous work has been well-received in France. Also, Canadian comic books have recently been gaining acknowledgement and wide recognition on the international market. This increasing acquaintanceship extends to those selected authors whose work has been chosen for translation and global distribution. With these considerations in place, it is a curious decision on the part of the French translator to decide to trim Seth's original introduction. This is a beginning indicative example of the different direction taken by Paris based translator, Julien Gangnet[51].

[50] *His book, La Vie est belle malgré tout, has been reviewed and written about on popular 'bd' sites such as: actuabd, coinbd, bdgest, du9, and bdparadisio.*

[51] Very little is known about Gangnet (including his other translations) except a Twitter account and IdRef website found at: http://www.idref.fr/166072621

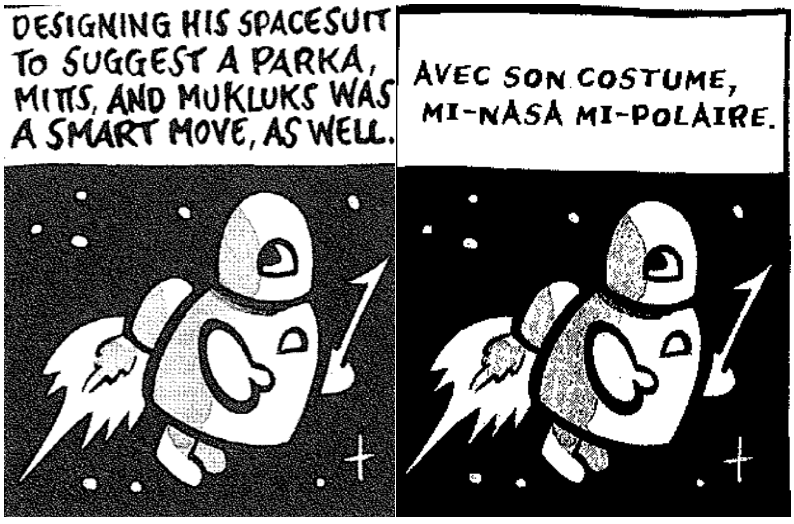
As previously stated, the *G.N.B Double C* was translated in 2012 through Guy Delcourt Productions or *Editions Delcourt*. Formed in 1986, this Parisian publication house has quickly become one of the leading comic and manga distributers in France, concentrating on works of science-fiction, hero-fantasy, and pop-culture phenomenons such as Star Wars or Harry Potter[52]. Seth's previous collections have been translated from other well-known houses such as literary publisher Seuil – *Palooka ville* (2002) and *Wimbleton Green* (2006), bd-publisher Casterman – *Le commis voyageur* (2003), and notably with *La vie est belle malgré tout* (2009), from Les Humanoïdes associés, by various translators. His reoccurring themes and style has gained a reasonable translation repertoire overseas.

While the content found in *The G.N.B Double C* is specifically imbedded within English-Canadian culture, its printed format is also less common overseas. In France, comics – called albums – are often printed in large, hard or soft covers, with full-colours and usually around 48 pages to 64 pages[53]. Sold often in bookshops, they are addressed to "an upper-market readership"[54]. Volumes are released through unregulated instalments, which vary greatly depending on each author's and publishers' personal discretion[55]. Increasingly the binding, printing, and refurbishing are done in countries with 'lower-manufacturing costs', such as Indonesia and Bangladesh[56]. In the case of *The G.N.B*'s, the translated version was reprinted in China causing an aesthetic 'error' on the cover. International manufacturing is directed by the languages of its clients. The original edition is done brightly in embossed gold, while the French

[52] Pasamonik, Didier. "Delcourt prend le contrôle des éditions soleil - Actua BD: L'actualité De La Bande Dessinée." 22 June 2011. Web. 20 May 2014.
[53] Lefèvre, Pascal, 'The Importance of Being 'Published'. A Comparative Study of Different Comics Formats' (15 p.), in: Anne Magnussen &Hans-Christian Christiansen, Comics & Culture Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum at the University of Copenhagen. Web. 2000: 91-105.
[54] Zanettin, Federico. *Comics in Translation*. Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Pub. 2008. 8. Print.
[55] Ibid.
[56] This is an interesting turn of recent events due to the decreased sales in printed books, now with online reading. It may appear that publication houses have turned to manufacturing countries to produce their goods to save costs.

edition is in silver[57]. In terms of physical form, this can cause a less recognizable cover which could affect subsequent sales. Bilingual readers familiar with the first copy may not be so quick to purchase the second variation doubting its authenticity. The original cover may also be coyly depicting a Golden Age of comics in Canada, with this subtle reference disappearing in the French version. In either case, this is a unique example of a translation of a translation getting mixed-up in a global industrial transition.

Inside its pages, the two versions of *The G.N.B* continue diverging in different directions. In some instances, text has been entirely omitted, shortened, or condensed. Typically, books translated from English into almost any other language are significantly longer[58]. Into French specifically, an extra 20% is approximately added; nevertheless, this comic book instance shows otherwise[59]. Arguably it could just be an example of 'constrained translation', however comparing the two versions show that extra room for text could be made available (See figure below 46:1):



[57] The Latin alphabet spelling for Gold is 'jin' and Silver is 'yin'. It is possible (perhaps even when spoken phonetically) that the two words were mixed up. The Chinese character/spelling, however, differs quite substantially. This is assuming that it was in Chinese (and not another language spoken in China).
[58] "Gained In Translation." *Quill & Quire* 71.4 (2005): 4. *Canadian Literary Centre*. Web. 10 Jan. 2015.
[59] Ibid.

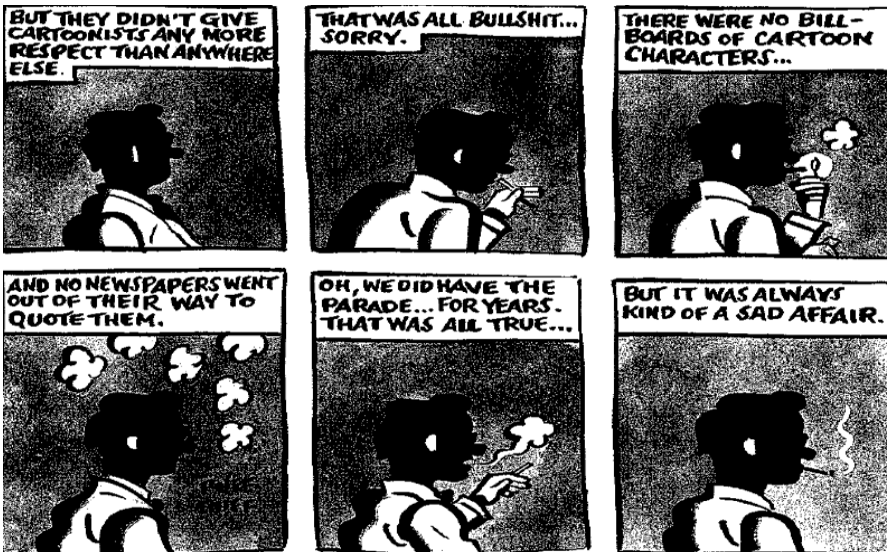
The choice in this case to remove words, or entire sentences, and opt for different, yet brief, paraphrasing is seemingly not due to limitations associated with constrained translation. Similarly, the decision to vastly shorten Seth's introduction aligns with how Gangnet approaches translating the remainder of the book. As we will see, entire pages and narration panels are in fact reinterpreted from the source to the target text.

Fortunately, Gangnet has been reached via email and questions relating to his approach to translation were addressed. When asked about his decision in abbreviating the target text, he responded by describing French as historically being a rather 'long-winded' and 'talkative' language. In effect, his translation of *The G.N.B Double* C has created a fast-paced readability for the French public. In this regard, his translating liberties serve as an example of him adapting to the foreign nature of the book's content and style to help grasp a larger audience overseas. Nonetheless, this can alter the overall style of the original. In other words, Gangnet is bringing the author to its readers rather than the adverse choice, which is done often as a strategic commercial mesure. On the other hand, this can be an occurance demonstrating how the pictures and sequential narratives are speaking louder than the original words.

Stylistic Analysis

A stylistic analysis of *The G.N.B Double C* is crucial due to understanding the potential interpretations possible in seeing prior to reading the comic book. Superficially it is entirely black, white, and grey, using different shading techniques for detailing. This style selection is congruent to Seth's ever prevailing draw to nostalgia and the past. The physicality of the text - or the font - is written in a hand printed fashion, possibly done originally in pencil, and completely worded in capital letters. The text is most frequently a caption at the top of each panel and it

covers almost one third of the space. The words monopolize much of each page which causes a slower read, filled with long narratives. Similarly, the images are also reflective of this gradual reading pace. Individual panels are almost reproduced, varying just slightly showing minute movements (129:4-9).



This steady imagery keeps the reader's visuals nearly monotonous, yet the captions progress the story forward often going into more and more detail with its descriptions. Seth is drawing his characters from narrative moment-to-moment, bringing a quiet stillness often associated with nostalgia and reflection. This is done similarly while depicting imaginary and real landscapes and architecture, narrating truths and untruths, and constantly merging the two. His character depictions further exemplify this point. He illustrates many of the book's *G.N.B* cartoonists in the same manner as their supposed cartoon creations, thus further blurring the lines between what he has created and what is already established as truth.

Each page features nine individual panels which are divided horizontally and vertically by dividing gutters. Alternatively, Seth occasionally uses the odd panoramic image yet maintains their gutter divisions. He will span one entire image across three, six, or all nine panels depending on the subject matter and the individual page. Just as a person would survey a

real-life scene, this allows the reader to 'view' the comic imagery from left to right even if the movement of the protagonist goes the in the other direction, sometimes into the past (see below 41:1-3).

The action to time sequence of *The G.N.B* is only as quick as each individual reader's gaze allows. This creates an ever-expanding visual which relates to the narrator's perspective, and the characters shared space or story line. Each grouping of panoramic images function as other comics would in switching from one individual panel to another, yet in taking a step back from its reading, you can realize they are part of a bigger picture.

The Market of Readability and a Translator's Decisions

Regarding *The G.N.B,* we have discussed the book's Canadian – almost unilaterally English – content, Seth's ongoing themes, style, and narrative elements. In terms of *La Confrérie des cartoonists du grand nord*, we have introducted several ideas relating to its comic book translation. This has included cultural relevancy – as with the shorten introduction or word abridgement – and cover art adjustments. Comic book translation begins with these raised considerations, yet common dealings range depending on how the translator decides to approach his work. There are numerous factors which need to be addressed regarding each given word,

phrase, or connecting idea. A translator must decide whether or not a certain term or image can be easily translated and appropriated into the target language's audience. This is also called the 'readability' of a say product, and although they are initially responsible for finding the source text equivalent, it is up to the publication house to determine, for example, if a certain title will be 'a good sell', or 'popular material'. Financial motivations are a main focus, and the more the subject matter has a wider readability, the more the translation will be profitable. It is thus up to the translator to find a way to keep the work culturally relevant while working to increase the scope of potential readers and buyers of that disclosed comic book. The challenge is it needs to stay both true to the source text, yet appeal to the target culture. As we've mentioned, *The G.N.B Double C* varies substantially from its French counterpart. To return to our opening point: is this due to the foreign publication house appropriating the subject matter and subsequent images, deciding to make its narrative style, word choice, and certain culturally specific icons easier to digest for its public audience? Alternately, the translated product is ultimately the work of the translator, who is deemed most knowledgeable and well-versed in both languages. As we will discuss further in the following paragraphs, the cause could range from the translator's inadequate knowledge of the source text's language, or more likely, images are not as universal as often believed. This notion opens up many subjective interpretations from both the translator and how the greater public will receive the body of work. It is crucial to note that when translating, one must never begin on a word-to-word level. Generally, it begins by reading the text in its entirety, understanding its literary style and tone, and then proceeding to write a new version in the target language. This is common when translating text only; however, images create a new level of translation which is far more open to interpretation.

According to Terescenko, "a translator's task is to fill the missing space with words that correspond to the story implied by pictures"[60]. They are thus given a blank area from where once situated the original text[61]. If this is so, then comic book translation seems less about finding the appropriate word variant in the target language, and more about connecting new words to the already established images. This already being challenging, it additionally places the translator in a role as overseer of the two cultures. They must straddle the two distinct backgrounds, and find a commonality by expressing in a given language what the pictures are trying to portray and signify. This knowledgeable position allows for the translator to approach their work in several different ways. First, they can choose to follow rigidly a restricted form of translation, splitting the two semiotic systems demonstrated in comics, and find close linguistic equivalents combining the communication between the two expressions of meaning. Alternatively, a comic book translator can approach mainly the text while isolating the pictures as a main consideration during their working process. The reasoning behind such a direction may be since the alteration of comic book images is highly irregular; the text is required the bulk of attention needing to be readapted. Lastly, a translator may choose to be less restrained by instead centering their interpretation of their comic book through the images and sequential art. One singular panel can emit a moment in time, express an action, a sign, a thought, a conversation, or an idea – in truth, it's a near endless array of potential meaning through its imagery. Nevertheless, when several panels are brought together, the connotation can become more specific and complex. Additional elements include more ideas, and linking these sequences becomes the art of comic book storytelling. It is then possible for this visual narration

[60] Terescenko, Vineta. *Translating Comics: Comics Creation, Common Translation Strategies, Do's and Don'ts*. London: Lulu Enterprises UK, 2010 : 17. Print.

[61] Either from the thought or conversation bubble, the caption, or barrier-free text often intertwined with the background art.

to be re-appropriated by each individual translator, and then reinterpreted through their work into the target language. This, in turn, can make them a secondary author to the already established images.

Arguably, this is the case in the translated version of *The G.N.B Double C*. Common differences of traits and patterns between the two versions have been seen repeatedly, and have thus led to the creation of four distinct categories. Examples of omitting verbal stylistic elements are the most frequent and are the first to be discussed. This is followed by culturally specific references and the translator's chosen equivalents. Thirdly, we will direct our attention to examples of alternative interpretations of certain images, and their individual panels, with the translation of their contributing text. Lastly, disparate interpretations of entire image narratives – or sequential panels - and the translation of their contributing texts will complete these explored topics.

Missing Verbal Cues

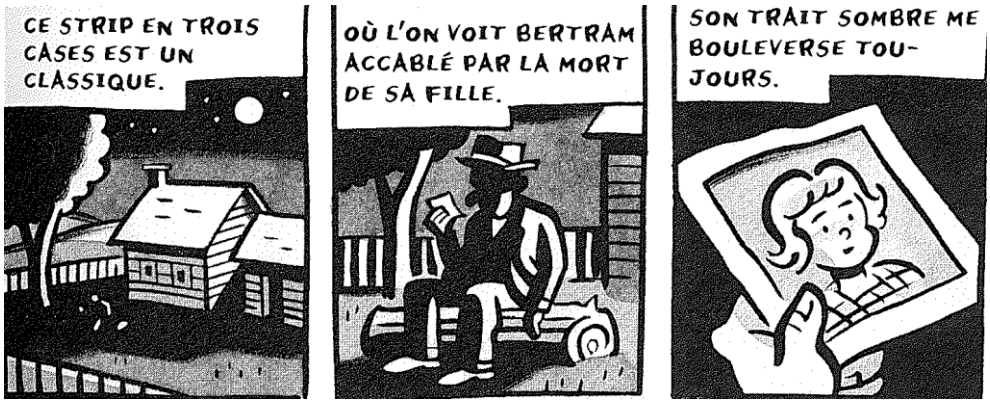
The first category relates solely to an omission of stylistic verbal elements. No target language equivalent was employed; rather expressive sentences were translated into ones of simple description. As Gangnet mentioned, he resisted against the French language's habit of being too long-winded and instead opted to use straightforward sentencing. For example, the first few pages open up to the directions in getting to *The G.N.B Double C*. A now unpopular, unassuming building, getting to the club house is perceived as having a hap-hazard nature in finding the cartoonists' headquarters. "If **you should happen to be wandering along** King St. in Dominion/for Milverton Street and take a right on it" (13:1/2). The French translation "***Si vous allez à*** *Dominion sur King Street/Rendez-vous à Milverton Street, puis tournez à droite*"

(15:1/2) has decidingly gone down a different route (15:1/2). The directions are clear, concise, and therefore lacking the more random act of discovering such a place found originally in the English sentence itself. As with introduction to the comics' artistry, this phrasing sets the ongoing tone for the pages to come.

Setting the narrative mood for the story is often left to the first few opening pages. If the book is dark and dramatic or – in this case – lightly satirical and whimsical, the author usually transmits the underlying atmosphere right at the beginning. Shortening his chosen phrases, Gangnet has also changed the language tone in French. With short and declarative sentences, stylistic elements are not as evident and the author's original voice is far less pronounced. Due to this translation decision, a language remedy is needed to display intended humour found in the source text. On page 15, in the midst of tour of the G.N.B Double C, Seth is describing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) financed (by Ottawa) to welcome all visitors. He adds – in a tongue in cheek fashion – "hopefully nobody in the government will look into that little expenditure any time soon" (16:9). This playful and comedic language has already been established early into Seth's style of writing. The first few pages offer connotative wording and expressions leading to this sense of whimsy. Readers have then become aware of the underlying pitch conjured for this particular piece of work. To translate this rather subdued humor, Gangnet has needed to either begin the comic with a similar style, or use slight linguistic displays in one singular dose. "*Personne au gouvernement ne semble s'être aperçu de cette petite dépense,* ***hé hé***" (16:9). As noted, the inclusion of a delicate laugh – in the form of "*hé hé"* – has helped substitute the lack of subtle humour used from the beginning in English, yet not found as strongly in French. Used as a compensation to simulate the original tone, this chosen allegory has allowed Gangnet the regaining freedom to keep his sentences short and precise.

Although *The G.N.B* often emits moods of satire, Seth still explores both sides of theatrical storytelling[62]. Speaking of course in a nostalgic sense, one of his favourite cartoon pieces offers up a tragic story. Albert Batch's "Trout Heaven", which begins in 1957 and ends in the 1990s with a final three-paneled story (34). Seth describes the scene when one of its main characters suffers a devastating loss. "This 3 panel daily on the wall—it's a famous one/The night Bertram's grown daughter Clem burned to Death in a house fire" (35:1-2). The darkly shaded imagery creates tones of a somber and lonely nature. The final panel in this story shows nothing but Bertram's hand holding a photo of his deceased child. These details in narration are necessary to establish a sentimental closeness to the visuals, the characters, and the storyline. This said, the French version has removed certain specifics in the story yet still reveals the narrative basics. Translated as "*Ce strip en trois cases est un classique/Où l'on voit Bertram accablé par la mort de sa fille*" (ibid). Instantaneously we see that the daughter's name, Clem, is omitted from the target text. Though not entirely crucial to the overall meaning, failing to add (or translate) the name of the deceased makes the story less personal between the characters and its readers. Additionally, Gangnet has not mentioned anything about how Clem met her unfortunate end. To not translate the fact she perished in a house fire does not tie together the intended connotation from the panel's first image: that of a lowly, shadowed home in the night seen below (35:1). The notion of a family member perishing at home carries a tragedy needing further expression equivalent of original text correlating to the images.

[62] Namely comedy and tragedy.



Cultural Differences in Translation Choices

Moving briefly to the decisions made in translating cultural references seen in the source text, we begin with the title itself. Comparing "The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists" to "*La Confrérie des cartoonists du grand nord"* distinguishes one from another in geographic specifics. This may distance a reader from France, yet retain familiarity for French-speaking Canada[63]. In English, it directly refers to Canada as being the location – and subject – of Seth's current publication. In France, potential buyers are only given the wide open "*grand Nord*" (or 'far/wide north') as the only indication of where this comic is situated. To find out more, readers must be familiar with the images on the cover such as: a French-Quebecois trapper and a RCMP/police montée. A reader overseas may not get his first concrete sign of this being a book brimming in Canadian content until "*la police montée* ***canadienne*****"** is presented (16:5). In terms of politics, the French-Canadian political figure, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is referred to as "Sir Laurier", while with Pierre Trudeau they must specify that he was in fact a Prime Minister (24:9, 25:7).

[63] Gangnet (or the publisher) chose to maintain the word, "cartoonist" in the title and in several sporadic places in the book (ie. 24, 25, 107). This foreignizes the text, from the "*grand Nord*", from the very beginning.

Perhaps one of the more surprising choices in handling cultural translation comes in Seth's storyline about a mural painting. The artist was apparently a heavy drinker, and his cartoon characters also embodied this habit. His little imp-like "Doo-Dads" are thought to be moonshiners from Prohibition, and were "strange creatures—part brownies, part Dr. Seuss. Relatives of the pink elephant, perhaps?" (19:8-9). These sentences produce culturally exclusive terms, many of which are not easily translated. Notice in the French translation, "*Les doo-dads étaient d'étranges créatures,* ***mi-brownies, mi-poètes/Et jamais les derniers pour s'arsouiller"***, the immediate retention of the description "brownies" yet deletion of "Dr. Seuss" (Ibid). Although the English and French word "brownie" equivalently translates in Canada and overseas, they come from the imagination of a Québec born, yet English speaking creator: Palmer Cox was part of the English-speaking minority in Québec [64]. Due to his proximity to Canada's literary heritage, the image of the 'brownie' may carry more iconic significance here than overseas[65]. Nevertheless, the two words are interchangeable and similar cultural ideas of what constitutes a hop-goblin/dwarf are visualized. Alternatively, the latter choice in omitting the famous Dr. Seuss has given rise to questioning. Publishing his first book in 1957, Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss himself) has been translated in over twenty languages[66]. This feat demonstrates his international success as a renowned author going beyond solely being translated from English into the romance languages. Therefore, why did Gangnet broaden the description of Seth's 'Doo-Dads' being "half-Dr. Seuss" as 'half-poets'? Was he under the assumption that the French readers of *The G.N.B* would not catch this international reference? Or did he see the

[64] His stories about all different ethnic types of 'little imp-like *(lutin)*' were published from 1874 to 1918. "La Littérature Jeunesse/Palmer Cox." N.p., n.d. Web. 25 May 2014.
[65] Important to note, the Girl Guides also have a group named "The Brownies" which is an internationally recognized organization.
[66] "Theodor Seuss Geisel - "Dr. Seuss" Biography." *Theodor Seuss Geisel - "Dr. Seuss" Biography*. Web. 24 May. 2014.

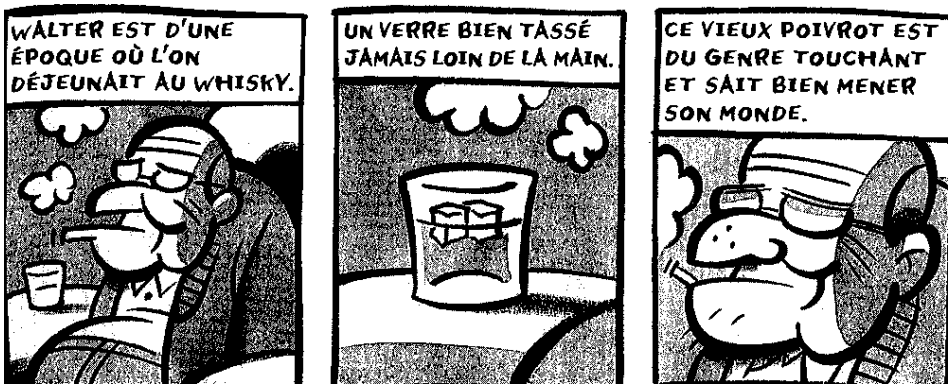
depictions of the drunken 'brownies', and consider them too far from Dr. Seuss' child-centred imagery to reuse the allusion in translation? These questions are difficult to answer, however it could be assumed that using two iconic English-speaking references would be a lot to adequately digest into a French-speaking culture.

Changing Meaning: From Panel to Text

Aforementioned, linking comic images and text are at the core of transmitting their full meaning. A different interpretation of either can lead the reader down another trail apart from the original author's intended message. From the source to the target text, there are alternative understandings seen in two distinct formats: single panels and sequential narratives. An individual panel, with a translated caption reading something unlike the source, differs the understanding of what is momentarily taking place. A simple demonstrated example is shown near the end of *The G.N.B*. When recounting the story of an obscure cartoonist and his "magnum opus" entitled "The Great Machine" (114), a sketch of "a pool of perfect black stillness. Far from 'shore' can be seen a mechanical orb. It surfaces, gulps water, and descends. Purifying the pond?" (123:4-6). These phrases are spanned between three panels, yet in the 6th panel – and final caption – it captures the image of the solo 'orb'. Translated it has become: "*Un bassin noyé dans la pénombre…dont l'eau est régulièrement nettoyée…par* ***des robots****"* (ibid). Albeit, the punctuation has changed from periods to ellipses and the middle sentence affirmatively states that the water *is* in fact purified, it is the basic adaptation from a single "mechanical orb" to numerous "robots" which causes a disruption from what is seen and what is being read. It could be argued that the French version is not working adequately in conjunction with the visual and its

caption. This is a reversal from what is seen and interpreted, to the initial text interpretation and its image.

It should be noted that the adverse is exemplified on page 31. In this story, Seth speaks of an elderly cartoonist left perpetually sitting alone at the headquarters. "Ask the staff and they will tell you that he's never without a drink. Clearly an alcoholic…and has been for years" (ibid). Although the sketches of this man are redundant from panel to panel – with the showing that one panel is different from the other, is by the changing billows of smoke coming from his cigarette – they then briefly flash to the image of a glass full of alcohol. Here the English version says "Clearly an alcoholic…and has been for years", while Gangnet has chosen "*un verre bien tassé jamais loin de la main*" (ibid). Using "*Verre"* (meaning 'a glass' in English) better clarifies and connects the reader to the full cup of booze they see when fully examining the comic book imagery. This demonstrates a more closed interpretation of the glass depiction. In its stead, the translator thinking in terms of a lexical field and using 'alcoholic' as a description, he sees a glass and thinks 'cup of alcohol'.



Changing Meaning: Sequential Narratives to Text

Lastly we step towards the final segregation of image connotations and English to French adaptations, including sequential art and language narratives. This is unique due to the translation reinterpreting of the entirety of the story instead of one sole panel. We see this exhibited in the retelling of the comic book series Kao-Kuk. "An outer space Eskimo" - fictionally said to first be printed in 1957 – goes on a wide array of sci-fi adventures. In this tale, Seth cleverly details his most famous issue "The Death of Kao-Kuk" (47:8-52:9). As Kao-Kuk returns to the orbiting space station near Earth, he discovers that an atomic blast has destroyed Earth and everyone he loved. With his space ship now damaged, he must stay there alone until his final breath. The orbit-station eventually burst into flames, and right before everything goes dark, Kao-Kuk realizes "Everything's reversed" (51:6)! Here the French version begins to diverge from the original: instead of having Kao-Kuk's final words expressing a mysterious systematic reversal, he says "*Mon Dieu, ils l'ont fait*" (51:6)!! This literally means, 'my God, they've done it'!! First we must wonder, who exactly are 'they' considering everyone is deceased. The preceding images do nothing to advance the notion that humans initiated saving his life; however, the concept of a reversed world suits the original sketches. His, and the world's survival, is explained by a sudden explosion of radioactivity and Kao-Kuk "…realizes he

must have been in a kind of mirror world. A reflected version of our universe – but entirely backwards" (52). The concept of two worlds facing one another, like a reflection in a mirror, is the premise aligning closely to the original narrative visuals and lexical choices. In these panels, we see two globes facing each other and twin Kao-Kuks standing shoulder to shoulder. These unchanged images are still seen in the French version, however the piece takes a different direction. "*Kao-Kuk réalise qu'il a certainement été happé dans le para-monde. Probablement propulsé par l'explosion atomique…vers cette dimension dans laquelle l'univers est dédoublé"* (ibid). This narrative tells of Kao-Kuk being seized by this alternate world, most likely by the atomic explosion. The final sentence is the only point which alludes to the 'doubled' universe noted in the source text. The idea of paralleled images, a mirrored universe - where right is left and left is right - is not 'reflected' in Gangnet's decision while approaching the translation. Reading this individual story as a whole, it can be deduced that he was more concerned with certain imagery more so than others. The panels of fiery explosions and seeing everybody the 'space-Eskimo' loves after darkness ensues were potentially more impactful than the dual-illustrations of the world and Kao-Kuk. It is still interesting to note how this narration ends. In English, "the story closes, disappointingly, back at the status quo"; however, in French "*une fois de plus, l'épisode se finit sur une énigme*" (ibid). The former closes any sense of mystery – the series will revert back to exactly how it was before. The latter opens up the possibility of an ever-questioning enigma as the strip continues.

Conclusion

Essentially, translated comic books cannot stray too far from the source text due to the often intact nature of the already established images. This encapsulates the artist's unique and

recognizable visual style, especially if they've already published other pieces. In Seth's case, he is working within material nostalgically and distinctly Canadian. The decision to translate *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists* in France has approached these careful considerations. Certain cultures do experience a temporary boost in international attention, thereby becoming fashionable to adopt works from that country. The widening spotlight on Canadian comics is not guaranteed to always maintain its stride. For this reason, it has been important for the French publication house to soften certain English-Canadian influences on the target text. *La Confrérie des cartoonists du grand Nord* has been shortened to adhere to faster reading. This is not uncommon in instances of 'constrained translation'. Additionally, certain cultural references have either been given more information to help specify their explicit context, or broadened to avoid such local specifics. Finally, we have examples of shifts in meaning. This has been split between what the images or sequential art may – or may not – say, and how the words interact with this system of open meaning. Finding the exact French equivalent of an English word is difficult enough – now add a visual link of one, two, or numerous diverse panels and for a foreign translator, it is a perpetual struggle to balance all of the considerations discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Julie Doucet and her *New York Diary*

Introduction

Julie Doucet's work is intertwined with her life. She has stated, "I take all my material from my own life experience, I'm afraid…for me autobiography is a disease"[67]. Her contagion is writing her text to narrate her past experiences, and her illustrations help depict her visual memory. Her artistry creates tangible glimpses into the world seen through her eyes. For Doucet, her life directly reflects her creative work, as he journals her personal events in the form of an autobiographical comic book. As the sole creator, illustrator, penciller, colourist, and translator – she unanimously decides how to present her perspectives through her art. In terms of her distinct subject matter, fans and critics alike have classified her work as quintessentially Generation X. Born in 1965, she was at the cusp of the generation known for rejecting the notions of the 1960s and that of their post-war 'baby-boomer' parents[68]. Children born roughly from 1961-1981, are seen as adopting rather "a deeper cynicism of the fact that such 'idealism', (is) inevitably doomed in its gratuitous naïveté, (that) quickly gave way to an era unequivocally focused on commercial and industrial progress"[69]. Underground, feminist, and subversive are common adjectives frequently used in defining Doucet. These systematic trademarks have catapulted her into cult-classic status, which was then soon followed by being a popular academic research topic. Although numerous articles have been written about her comics' subject matter, very few have addressed her written languages and her subsequent self-translations.

[67]"Interview with Julie Doucet!" *Lady Gunn RSS*. 8 Apr. 2010. Web. 14 April. 2015.
[68] "Julie Doucet." *Drawn & Quarterly*. Web. 8 April. 2015.
[69] "Generation X - Definition, What Is Gen-X." *Generation X - Definition, What Is Gen-X*. Web. 8 April. 2015.

Therefore, how does an autobiographical comic book author approach her own material while translating said work? In Doucet's unique case she was originally writing in her second language, not her first. Beginning in English, she eventually translated her own work into her native French. Here we see her at a crossroads of not two, but three linguistic directions: English, France-French, and regional French in Montreal. With the first, she found her earliest creative voice, the second home to her French publishing house, and the third, a product of her Quebecois upbringing. Doucet's linguistic mobility is directly in conjunction with her migrant attitude seen early in her comic career.

The debate between whether or not a self-translation is itself an essential translation or simply a rewriting of the author's original work is an ongoing topic of dispute. With auto-translation in comics, are they solely translating from the text or do the images again play a central role in this process? This issue, especially since combined with the inclusion of an additional system of meaning through images, becomes more complex. Do the images influence this process, and if so, how? As we have seen it is most frequently the text – not the panel's images – that are changed during comic book translation. Nonetheless, it is impossible to separate the visual narrative from the written word regardless of whether or not the translator is also the original author. How have all these aspects mentioned above influenced her translation process? This chapter aims to answer how self-translation can influence a comic's narrative.

Julie Doucet and Samuel Beckett: Self-Translators

Very little is known about Doucet's early childhood, her parents, or family background. Her comic books, on the other hand, are notorious for displaying shockingly personal female

themes and visuals[70]. "Unlike most autobiographical comics, Doucet's don't give any sense of what the artist is "really" like"[71]. What we can deduce from her character is how she reacts to - not sentimentalizes - situations around her. Her narratives are riff with many things one only shares with their doctor, close family or dearest friends, meanwhile there exists a real distance between her body and emotions. This separation from the physical to the non-physical exists similarly in her chosen language of expression. A Francophone from Montreal, Julie Doucet began writing her first comics in English. "I really liked writing in English…writing in a foreign language is fun; it's like trying to figure out a puzzle. Also, you are not self-conscious about your writing, your are more free in general. I loved it. And people loved my funny French way of writing in English"[72]. The concept of not "self-conscious" or "more free in general" could be seen as Doucet further removing herself from her own subject matter due to her writing in a second language. Our linguistic backgrounds connect us to a nostalgic and closer relationship to our past. Rainier Grutman's article "Beckett and Beyond: Putting Self-Translation in Perspective", discusses Samuel Beckett, the famed bilingual author and self-translator. Beckett's decision to write in French instead of in his native English tongue began making personal sense, to which he explained "my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at things (or the Nothingness) behind it" (197)[73]. This said, the reversion to his first language during self-translation has the potential to reanimate memories of his familial ties. Grutman further explains:

[70] In her first English compilation, *Lift your leg, my fish is dead* (1993) her artistry deals with her menstruation, sex, mutilation of the female/male body ('penis envy'), hybridity between humans and animals, and body issues. At times it can be gruesome, universally honest, and off-putting.
[71] "BOOKLIST Reviews JULIE DOUCET'S My Most Secret Desire." *Drawn & Quarterly*. Web. 9 April. 2015.
[72] Interview with Julie Doucet!" *LADYGUNN RSS*. 8 Apr. 2010. Web. 14 April. 2015.
[73] Grutman, Rainier. "Beckett and Beyond." *Orbis Litterarium* 68.3 (2013): 188-206. *Wiley Online Library*. Wiley Online Library, 3 May 2013. Web. 3 Sept. 2014.

> In Beckett's case, self-translation thus became an individual venture, albeit one marked (and sometimes marred) by personal or family history. Purposefully choosing another language than the one passed down by his mother was a sure way of distancing himself from someone who had been more than kin and less than kind, and with whom he had scores to settle. It was the very foreignness of his adoptive language, without natural links to 'things (or the Nothingness) behind it' and without roots in either his family or his original speech community, that allowed Beckett to indulge in brooding introspection and ontological word-games, far from the messy political stuff that societal bilingualism tends to involve (197-198).

Both Beckett and Doucet seem to share in the creative and individual liberties with writing in a language detached from their early development. Also like Beckett, Doucet specifically does not mention, depict, or narrate her girlhood in any interview or comic book publically published. The privacy of her past is further shielded by the English she learned autonomously. When she first found her autobiographical voice, it was in a language uprooted and progressively moving forward.

This move eventually led her to notoriety in the English community with her first self-published comic book *Dirty Plotte*. The title itself is cleverly indicative of her writing in a language limbo – she is approaching different linguistic audiences. A monolingual English reader would take "Dirty Plotte" literally. It means nothing more than dirty stories, or a dirty plot. To understand its full meaning, the person must be truly bilingual and in touch with slang used in Quebec. 'Plotte' is considered an extremely vulgar French-Canadian word for the female reproductive organ, and is often used impolitely. This expression is not widely used in France;

therefore to fully understand the play on words, you must be a bilingual, French-Canadian, basically like Doucet herself.

Doucet Self Made Artist

Similar to the mid-to-late 1980s punk attitude, Doucet embodied the DIY notion of 'if you want something done, you have to Do-It-Yourself' (DIY). Ever as autonomous, she wrote autobiographical stories while being her own editor, publisher, distributor, and eventually her own translator. Beginning in 1987, she distributed her comics in the form of a fanzine which was photocopied on a Xerox machine and then self-distributed[74]. Fanzines are often passed widely through that specific 'zine's community and eventually the Anglo-Montreal based publishing house Drawn & Quarterly was introduced to her work. This led to Doucet being formally published in 1991 with "Dirty Plotte" featured as an irregular and sporadic series. This ongoing publishing relationship ended only in 1998 when she completely retired from the comic book world.

For this chapter, the chosen book of study from Doucet's repertoire is *My New York Diary,* with the French translation being *Changements d'adresses*. This completed work is a collection of three English episodes previously printed in *Dirty Plotte.* Each one deals with different true events or periods in Doucet's life. "The First Time" was printed in 1993, "Julie in Junior College" (1995), and finally "My New York Diary" (1998). Respectively, the episodes

[74] She started gaining critical attention in 1987 once famed comic artist Robert Crumb (Felix the Cat) began publishing some of Doucet's fanzine work in his "magazine-sized comics anthology" *Wierdo* "Weirdo (magazine)." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
Much of Doucet's work is highly influenced by Crumb, such as: the cruder subject matter, heavy inked styling. Crumb is widely considered a 'forefather' of American underground comic books. He helped bring the art into a more adult medium in North America.
Comics were once considered an art outside the mainstream, but with a heavy, passionate fan-base. The word 'fanzine' comes from "magazine" yet split into "fan-zine". A 'mag'azine made by fans for the fans of a specific and underground topic. Donnelly, Kate. "Julie Doucet." *From the Desk Of...* N.p., 07 Dec. 2010. Web. 20 Apr. 2014.

deal with her loss of virginity, her first year in art school and a friend's attempted suicide, and finishes with her in New York City. Each one flows together to create a well-rounded portrayal of how the author perceives her surroundings and how she has decided to interact with them. Although the English title appears to be a misnomer considering the other happenings in the collection, it is still physically the largest feature and it demonstrates the author's instability and vast personal changes. In "New York", she meets her pen-pal/boyfriend and moves in with him. Then as readers we first discover her ailment with epilepsy. We witness her frequent substance abuse, financial troubles, and gradual social reclusion. This autobiography concludes with Doucet breaking up with her New York relationship and giving up her frequent use of illicit drugs. She decides to move to Seattle, not seeming to fully understand – nor be certain – where life is going to take her. Since her original inception to comics, she has been the sole writer, illustrator, penciller, and colorist. It has been her life masterfully done under her control. Now she understands that where she's already been has lost its value, and once again it is about personally and creatively moving forward instead of revisiting the past.

This logic expressed in her *New York Diary* seems concrete and stoic, however we witness the contrary. Since 1998, she has given up creating comic books although not before returning to her time in New York City. The "New York" episode was originally featured in the last volume of *Dirty Plotte.* This she proceed to translate immediately, including "The First Time" and "Junior College". This new edition, *Changements d'adresses*, was published in Paris with the French company L'Association[75]. Appropriating Doucet's unique style overseas comes with several difficulties in terms of readability. Her comic art has been described as: "dark and

[75] L'Association can be seen as a French replica of Drawn & Quarterly. Both houses were created in 1990, and each publishes 'underground' or 'indie' comics.
Gauvin, Edward. "La Grève, C'est Grave (Striking Is a Serious Business)" *RSS*. Words without Borders, 19 Jan. 2011. Web. 02 Jan. 2015.

detailed with thin lines, cross-hatching, shadowing, and other textural techniques. Her characters look ragged, half-starved, and drug-addled, which might have more to do with the company she kept rather than the manner in which she chooses to draw"[76]. She uses very minimal shading, with a mixture of black and white patterns to break up the mono-colouring, palette, and condensed chaos of her illustrations. Her influences, subsequent artistry, and fellowship circles were part of the American underground and post-underground comic book movement from Robert Crumb to Art Spiegelman[77]. However, in France, her usually heavy penned style and cluttered panels are not nearly as recognizable since she doesn't have the already established cult-classic status seen in North America (especially in Quebec). Overseas she's a relatively new player in a large, saturated market. That said, the option was still open for her to create a new fan base in a culture which readily accepts comics as a valid and ubiquitous art form. For the L'Association, importance lies heavily on how they decided to initially market and format Julie Doucet's inimitable craftsmanship.

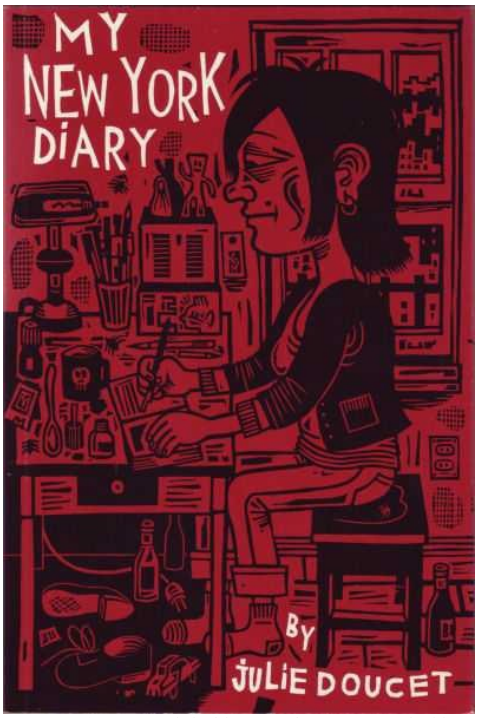
Changing Her Address – A New Audience Overseas

This is exemplified in demonstrating the books' publications. In the English and French versions, the episodes appear in the same sequential order – however, the title and the title page have been decidedly altered. The two are marked by very distinct differences beginning with the cover art. The English collection uses a panel from the series itself. This printing is extremely familiar to fans of Doucet's *Dirty Plotte* fanzine and comic, and thus is more likely to be purchased. On the other hand, the French version uses a more subdued, minimalistic, and almost

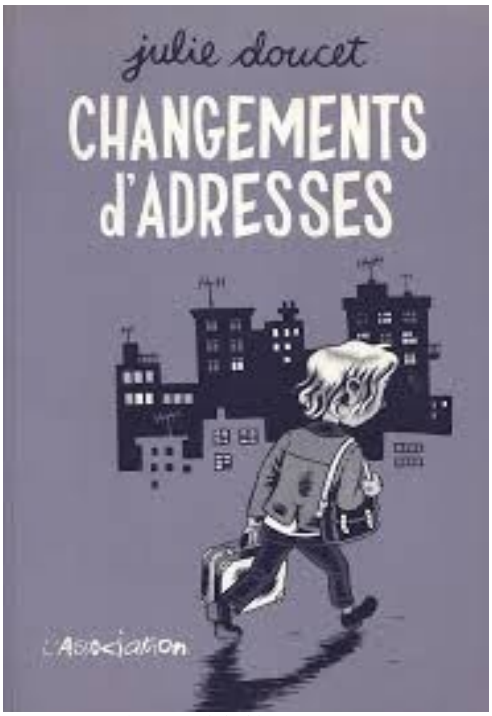
[76] "On the Shelf: My New York Diary." *Contextual Life*. Wordpress, n.d. Web. 20 Apr. 2014.
[77] Beatty, Bart. "Unpopular Culture." *Google Books*. 1 Jan. 2007. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

definably adolescent cover art, especially when one considers what lies in the pages inside[78]. It is published in larger print more closely aligned to France's standard comic book format[79] .

The second difference is in the book's title. Doucet could have easily chosen to translate *My New York Diary* into "*Mon journal de New York*", although we know the compilation carries further episodes. This would have given first time readers an insight into what they are partly about to read. Instead Doucet decided to take the translating opportunity to change her original title into a double entendre. *Changements d'adresses* literally means "changing addresses" and notably conveys the impression of somebody moving residencies.



My New York Diary. Digital image.The Contextual Life, n.d. Web. 20 June 2014.



Changement D'adresses. Digital image. *Senscritique*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 June 2014.

The readers see a recurrent instability and almost frantic mobility throughout the book alone. In "The First Time", she explores the realm outside her school's suburb. With "Doucet in

[78] The cover for *Changements* is actually seen in the pages of *New York*, but it serves as the title page to the "New York" episode.

[79] Refer back to chapter *G.N.B. Double C*, where differences in the countries format are addressed (the standard comic book size, hard/soft covers, and the number of pages).

Junior College" she relocates to Old Montreal, and obviously she moves to New York in "My New York Diary". There she then narrates her successive plan in shuffling to Seattle[80]. Interesting, for her change is exemplified in more ways than one. "*Changements d'adresses*" can also mean a formal adjustment to whom she wishes to address, or in other words, a change of audience. Doucet, a Canadian-Francophone, switches out of her own upbringing and language background to write in English with evidence that it is not her first language. This is followed with her translating her own work into French, yet publishing through a firm in France[81]. Here it is also clear she is Quebecois. In conclusion, she has re-directed her original diary to a new French language base and is expressing this transformation in her new title. With a language modification, comes a different readership and culture. This opens up questions about how the autobiographical author wants her own translation to be approached from a reader's perspective. She has the freedom to decide how she wishes to re-approach her past - this includes developing her work into her native language. In turn, Doucet is in control of how she wants to address her new fan base.

Speaking For Both Parties – English and French Interactions

The interactions between English and French in *My New York Diary/Changements d'adresses* encapsulates the relationship between text and image found in comic books. There are numerous points of references which demonstrate gradual English development and exposure. As we know, the two first episodes – "The First Time" and "Julie in Junior College" – are situated in the Montreal. Although she is writing in her second language, it is evident her

[80] Outside of *My New York Diary*, she does move to Seattle briefly then settles in Berlin from 1995-1998During this time she publishes a series of French short stories *Ciboire de criss* (1996) through L'association. In 1998, she settles back in Montreal – to where she now remains - and finishes the episode "My New York Diary" and the compilations translation. . "Julie Doucet." *Drawn & Quarterly*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2014.
[81] It available for purchase in comic book stores in Quebec.

friends and surroundings are unanimously Francophone. Reading the compilation comic book progressively, her age and English language skills grow as well. Coming from a sheltered and confined background, Doucet went to school in an all-girls, self-described "convent"; all the while living in the suburbs[82]. This would have kept her reasonably isolated from the greater Montreal area, with fewer occasions to interact with English. After High School graduation, her entrance into *College du Vieux Montréal* fine arts department, she was still sequestered from the English community[83]. It was not until her 'world' began to expand that she began learning and writing in this new and developing second language.

As she previously mentioned, she first began writing in her second language because it was enjoyable and people found her quirky use of the English language novel and foreign. Remarkably, examples of an ESL[84] learner writing in English are infrequent; however, there are still a select few found in *My New York Diary*. In the "college" episode, Doucet is narrating a description of her newly acquainted roommates: "He's very clever. He knows all of what's really going on in this world" (2). My underlined portion, "all of what's" is comprehendible, yet an Anglophone would have most likely chosen to use "everything that's" in place. A secondary example is demonstrate in the titular "New York" episode, and causes uncertainty in what Doucet was originally trying to express. During her walk to the P.O Box (three blocks away), she narrates: "This morning, he decided it would be each one in his turn to go get the mail" (14). The underlined portion, "it would be each one in his turn" is grammatically incorrect, but once again the general sense is still understood. Alternatively, if expressed correctly in standardized English, it would have been 'This morning, he decided we would each take a turn getting the

[82] Doucet, Julie. *My New York Diary*. 3rd Paperback Printing. ed. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2010. (Title page)
[83] In several panels in the "College" episode, "Ontario Street" is drawn into the background, as well as Bus #125 (14-15). This situates Doucet's community, neighbourhood, and life at that time (1983).
[84] English as a Second Language.

mail'. This sampling of grammatically incorrect second language writing is completely reworked in the French version. As a self-translator, Doucet has the opportunity to revisit her work and correctly alter her original meaning. Translating her work into her native language, she no longer sees the reason in maintaining these initial "mistakes" since they symbolize a Francophone writing in English.

The most evident situation demonstrating Doucet's linguistic 'foreignness' is during a flashback she recounts in "*My New York Diary"*. Unlike previous examples, these are done purposefully and tactfully. She is reminded of a time, when she suffered a seizure a few years prior on a bus in Montreal. While at "St-Luc Hospital", she meets an "anglo-rasta-young-man" (25). To begin, most Anglophones would change the order of the adjective & noun structure to 'young-anglo-rasta-man', or even drop the 'man' entirely since Rasta is the needed noun[85]. In the caption she then narrates: "my English was pretty bad at the time, but we managed to communicate", and her preceding dialogue bubbles exemplify the language barrier the two encounter (ibid). As the young man is beginning to speak about his current employment, Doucet questions: "Ah? And what do you work?" (ibid). The mixing of two different expressions is considered poor English grammar. Instead the sentences 'and where do you work?' or 'what do you do for work?' are considered spoken correctly[86]. Several panels later – on page 26 – before Doucet and the man begin intimate relations, they decide that considering her recent delicate health, they should not proceed. "I…I think you're right…I'm not too much in a good shape". Here, the use of the indefinite article "a" is awkwardly placed. It would also be safe to imply dropping the "too much" in the sentence would aid in the casual flow of dialogue. As we will see late, it is wise to assume these two grammatically incorrect phrases are purposeful. Doucet is

[85] This has been shortened from a Jamacian Rastafarianism follower to 'rasta'.
[86] Difference between using a noun or action verb for the sentence.

demonstrating the eventual improvements made to her English. We can trace back the origins of these common language learning mistakes between the two languages. They are rooted in the French language structure, and can be inaccurate when verbally – and directly – translated into English. This is typical of a new language learner.

French and English are exchanged in both Doucet's original chosen language of creative expression and her recollections of ESL learning through her comic autobiography. Both provide an interesting backdrop when translation is considered. *Changement d'adresses* demonstrates less evidence of 'the foreign' in her work; however, the novelty of a francophone writing original content in English is lost. Additionally, Doucet's choice in how she approaches the communication between her and the 'anglo-rasta-young-man' fails to demonstrate the same difficulty experienced in English. "Ah! And do you work" is translated as "*Ha bon? Et tu fais quoi?*", and "I'm not too much in a good shape" becomes "*Je suis pas dans ma meilleure forme*" (25-6). The French version holds no grammatical mistakes, and is written in perfectly articulate, colloquial language. The only evidence the French reader has that Doucet lacks a strong grasp on the English language is through her narrative explanation "*Mon anglais était pas fameux dans ce temps…*" (25). It is important to note that dropping the use of the "ne" in the French negative form is very common in speech. Native speakers predominantly do this, however it is considered a grammatical mistake in formal spelling. Although this is the creative choice she has taken, the alternative may not have worked. If she would have decided to translate her erroneous English into grammatically incorrect French, it would not have the same cultural impact, and therefore be lost in translation transit. Examples of her Canadian-French heritage through language are equally not as represented, thus showing her motivation in keeping her translated artwork at a personal distance.

Her Illustrations Revisited – "Chuck/Richard"

Up to this point, we have discussed translation on a word-based level. This does not vary far from translation based in literature, where text is the sole semiotic system to consider. Comic book translation adds another variant to the equation that readers see, yet not necessarily read. Both the image and the text can stand alone; although, the latter is needed to be changed to the target text for the target audience to understand. Here the question remains: who is her intended audience and at which time? Is she translating for a France-French market, or staying true to her unique 'foreignness' and novelty as a French-Canadian/bilingual author? Considering her approach while writing in English, yet remembering and reinterpreting in French – she does not discredit this geographical background. Additionally this mutual exchange of meaning – between the visual and the written - presents an appealing consideration when she seemingly has relative freedom in translating her work.

There are always two different sides to consider, this being the less freeing aspects to translating your own comic book creations. In this regard, Doucet has to reexamine, reinterpret, and relive her previous dialogue, narration, and drawings. These layers are distinct due to the added graphic component found in comics. Doucet is not solely rereading her past, but in fact seeing it as well. For her, *My New York Diary* is simultaneously a mixture of previous work, as well as an account of an older chapter of her life. While all three episodes were translated into French in 1998, each one was first published in English through the *Dirty Plotte* series. In "The First Time", she takes the translating opportunity to reiterate and further clarify the story at hand. It begins with her and her girlfriend talking over the phone. Both girls come from a sheltered upbringing in the suburbs of Montreal, with the majority of their education spent at a "convent" – also known as an all-girls high school (title page). "My friend Nathalie (from the same

respectable institution) had a boyfriend, she knew everything about love…I was the typical ingénue" (ibid) [87]. As the two recently graduated high school students go to Nathalie's boyfriend's apartment in Montreal, they are met by a woman who answers the door – wearing only a towel. "Hey Chuck, there's two little girls here to see you!", meanwhile Chuck is lying on the couch in his underwear. Nathalie seems utterly unaware of the connotations of the other, half-dressed woman in 'her boyfriend's' apartment, and she innocently proceeds to ask him to steal her a motorcycle helmet. Still on the couch, Chuck replies "Oh yeah? Well…all right. Let me get my shoes" (1-2). While it seems apparent to the reader what is taking place, the two girls remain seemingly rather clueless. The casual nature of "let me get my shoes" – as the person lies nearly nude – is somewhat an understatement. This situation doesn't become further clarified until Doucet reproaches the original through translation. Although not largely changed, the translated version sheds further light on the circumstance by the simple alternation of a noun to a verb. When "Chuck" – who is renamed "Richard" in French, due to the difficulty of the name to pronounce in French - expresses: "*Bon, ok ça va…j'va aller m'a habiller*" (2), the Francophone reader establishes both simultaneous the Quebecois origins of this phrase and its literal meaning. The word "shoes" is replaced by the verb 'to put clothes on', yet in a more colloquial form as: 'I'll go get dressed'. Seeing both "Richard/Chuck" and the other woman nearly completely unclothed, the text and the visual are united in a closer manner and makes the two girls seem less unaware with the situation at hand. With the English version's ambiguities, this leaves the interpretation more to its readers; while in French, the text connects closer to the images, therefore making clear that Doucet and her friend did not understand, at that time, what was really happening in that apartment.

[87] French, meaning 'innocent or naive".

Doucet may have been completely aware of the nonchalant use of the word "shoes" to outline the innocence and naivety of the two sheltered girls. On the other hand, it could have been due to how she remembered that specific moment when writing "The First Time" in English. Through translating five years later, and deciding to change the original meaning into French, the author may be reanalysing the past. Including her previously drawn images, she instead wanted to stress the importance of Nathalie's 'boyfriend' very likely having relations with a woman closer to his own age. This creates a divergence between two different perspectives: one seen through the eyes of convent educated school-girls, and the other being closer to the actuality of their original experience.

Her Illustration Revisited – No Regrets...

The closing pages on *My New York Diary/Changements d'adresses* demonstrate a final example of English and French interaction. This follows Doucet's own rehashing of her few final moments in New York, and how she again decided to delineate differently this scene through translation. The variation is slight, yet significant in relation to how she revaluates the entirety of her time spent in the Big Apple. The difference between how she relates back in each version of this episode shows two different autobiographical accounts. As usual, the images stay the same although the texts change.

In "New York", the forth part is titled "Winter", and begins with Doucet sitting in a stark suite where she has been living since the breakup between her and, her live-in, boyfriend. Instead of the following panels using the standard comic book caption for her narrative, she employs a dialogue balloon to recount her past four and a half months (52). She explains she has not been feeling that good in general, and has mostly stayed hidden in her room, "drawing, or

drinking beer and watching '*Cheers*' and '*The Honeymooners*' on t.v." (ibid). She proceeds to tell of her ex's most recent verbal abuses. Intriguingly, she never mentions his name choosing to refer to him as "the/*le* boyfriend" (36, 52) "*monsieur*" (20, 32), or the rare pet-name "my darling/*mon chéri* (11). She includes quitting drugs permanently due to frequent problems with seizures. She expresses never returning to live in Montreal, choosing Seattle instead as her next venture. Lastly, she begrudgingly receives a large outstanding bill from a Canadian utility company stating that her apartment's subleasing-tenant never once paid the due charges (52-3). "After all, this city is not for me. It's too much of a big scary merciless place to live…a pretty monstrous apple, really. I say…well, everything went wrong for me! So…I'm leaving…today (53)[88]. Here the French translation is pretty equivocal. "*En fin de compte, c'est pas une place pour moi. C'est une trop grande ville, démesurée et effrayante…qui ne pardonne pas. Ca a mal tourné pour moi, c'est tout…*" (53). Looking directly at her readers, the cartoon image of Doucet voices herself in a frank, open, and honest manner while reflecting on her past year living in New York City. She is delivering a monologue to her audience, in a genre known in the late 1970s as feminist documentaries style. "Using a 'realist' documentary approach, these first films often presented women who spoke directly to the camera as they told their efforts to deal with 'the public world of work and power'"[89] Upon this carefully formatted contemplation, it appears Doucet is realizing the important moment she's currently straddling. "Well, it's time to go now…and I have no regrets", she says as she gathers her suitcase, cat, and finally puts on her coat (54). Her cat Charlotte has an interesting function in these final scenes. Her reactions to

[88] The only alteration comes from "a pretty monstrous apple" being changed to "qui ne pardonne pas", which means "it is not forgiving". She could have used Big Apple, or La Grande Pomme to stay closer to the source text. They are both used, but not as frequently in French. As for "monstrous", both size and its horrible nature could have connoted by "monstrueuse", but she decided to imply something more internal and personalized. The city – to her – seems to be a cold, and unforgiving environment.

[89] Erens, Patricia. "Issues in Feminist Film Criticism." *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*. N.p.: Indiana UP, 1990. 216. *Google Books*. Web. 02 Jan. 2015.

these new places she is brought to are often of confusion, uncertainty and fear (39, 54). It is possible these displacements reflect Doucet's own insecurities. Descending the stairs from her apartment, she reiterates through a thought balloon: "No, no regrets at all…" (ibid) [90]. The last three panels depict her silently walking through the rain on Good Friday[91] 1992 with Chopin's Funeral March playing ubiquitously into the street. There is a full funeral procession outside, carrying a cross in mark of this day.

This heavy symbolism is purposeful and meaningful to the author. The reader is bought into this literal iconoclasm as well, and we are left with connoted impressions. With "no, no regrets at all…", she is marching with her past – accepting the suffering and death of her time in the city of New York. She may be completely at ease saying she has no regrets about her New York experience, but the finale seems sombre yet hints at the assurance of an eventual resurrection. Her decision to move there for love, her subsequent habits and actions, anxiety issues, and realising she didn't find what she was looking for, all point to someone deep in self-reflection. Does she regret how she spent this period of her life? Not until her French translation, do we get a more solid answer to this question. In "The Rhetoric of Image" by Roland Barthes, he mentions: "in every society various techniques are developed intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds[92] as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques" (156). With Doucet using the vast amounts of visual allegories in her closing few panels, it is important for her to use what Barthes calls 'anchoring' of the image through text (157). This "linguistic message no longer guides identification but interpretation, constituting a kind of vise which holds the connoted meaning from proliferating…" (156). We

[90] The importance of an ellipses ('etc' or the use of '…') is both a visual mark and a literature device. It symbolises a continuing thought, yet unnecessarily written due to its obvious meaning surrounding the already known context.
[91] Good Friday is a Christian Holiday symbolizing the crucifixion of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. According to the bible, in three days he is resurrected from the dead and ascends to heaven.
[92] That which carries individual meaning from the symbolism of a specific sign.

see this tactic demonstrate by Doucet employing the same monologue format as in English, however in this version she specifies solidly what she does not regret. "*Bon hé, c'est le temps d'y aller…et je regrette pas <u>de partir</u>*" (53). As mentioned, in English Doucet simply states she is without any regrets. The only observable difference between the two is in the inclusion of "*de partir*", yet it presents a large, effective variant to her careful deliberation. Instead of questioning whether or not she regrets how she approached this delicate phase, she stresses how little she grieves moving forward. The moment of turning the figurative page on this chapter is met with very little disappointment. "*Non, pas un seul regret!"* – with an exclamation mark – demonstrates an excitability in leaving, a very strong declarative sentence, grammatically speaking. Visually her bags are packed, her cat is in her kennel, and she heads out into the rain soaked New York with an alternative perspective. The sombre funeral march is still being played by a band, with the cross being carried through the streets; however, this time the images conjure a different tune. For the French reader, it evokes similar feelings to how Doucet describes the big city on page 53[93]. It is certainly seems as a "big scary and merciless place to live", and therefore not regrettable to exit such an environment (53). In reaction, her previously drawn images reveal a more momentary scene, one which we as readers become eager for her to leave as well.

[93] See note 27.

Conclusion

Doucet's comics are honest accounts of a person turning her gaze from the inside out, albeit she doesn't explore the origins of her perspectives. Her original work depicts and narrates those once a part of her personal circle and surroundings. Unique to comics, the reader is then able to interpret numerous different methods of transmitting meaning that differs from prose. Each component of a comic expresses a variety of significances that may vary greatly from one individual to another. This is even further complicated when another language and culture is

introduced to the specific body of work. Printing an original comic book, the author and publishing house must consider how the receiving cultural will respond to its marketed format and cover, storyline, content, foreign or domestic appeal, and the delicate relationship between the images and text. These are also the same careful considerations given to publishing a translated comic. Doucet, however, has noticeably opted to do this process differently. From being an autobiographical Canadian-Francophone comic book creator to a self-translator for an overseas market, her art is always physically exposing, purposeful, and conflicted. Beginning her career by writing in her second language, she has shown Anglophone readers a unique and evident foreignness. Similarly, her self-translations have shown these attributes to European-Francophone. Approaching two French-speaking comic book cultures has challenged Doucet to answer how she wants to address the potentiality of a newly acquired audience. This has been all been done while retaining her already established Anglophone fan-base. Interestingly, much of her comic creations are based in a bilingual or a predominantly English setting. The dual-language interactions seen in her collective work - and most importantly, in periods of her life - are already solidified through her primary artistry. Her immobility maintained throughout this journey.

Chapter 3

Transculturalism in Comics:

Guy Delisle in *Shenzhen* and Bryan Lee O'Malley's Youthful *Scott Pilgrim*

Introduction

Used as a citation in the book, *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives*, "Derek Paker Royal makes the following claim:

> Given its reliance on symbols and iconography, comic art speaks in a language that is accessible to a wide audience, transcending many of the national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries imposed by other media and giving it a reach that is as democratic as it is immediate[94].

In other words, comic books are capable of moving freely through unbordered channels. Regardless of cultural background, there are avenues to explore image, text, or both and create meaningul connections to the subject matter. Often, the works themselves are representative of interactions within and between different cultures, which in turn constructs a kind of "democratic" dialogue. This chapter uses the instrumental works of Guy Delisle and Bryan Lee O'Malley to help define these movements of cultural exchange; notably, they have also been impacted by this dynamism. Delisle, in his comic travelogue *Shenzhen*, and O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim (Vol. 1-6)* have built creative outlooks defined from being entrenched in a global or international environment. For example, migratory Delisle introspectively details his thoughts, experiences, and interactions, while living in Shenzhen from an 'outsider-in' perspective. Adversely, O'Malley takes inspiration from inside exisiting Canadian youth multiculturalism. He then uses that space to reintegrate *Pilgrim* into current global popular culture and multimedia.

[94] Denson, Shane, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein. "Introducting Transnational Perspectices on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads." Introduction. *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives Comics at the Crossroads*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 4-5. Print.

Through translation, these comics are further transferred into a new environment, thus continuing the imaginative and cultural migration. This network can influence and motivate other individuals, changing their perspectives and creative interests, thus perpetuating the multidirection, transitory motion of "comic art"[95].

Before continuing, it is important to note the differences between "transnationalism" and "transculturalism", for we will be working more with the latter concept[96]. 'Transnationalism' is based between existing nations and their borders, yet connects through a "process that 'involves the flow of human (...) capital, commodities and ideas, with transformative effects on both source and destination regions"[97]. 'Transculturalism', however, "refers to cultural diversity in any given space and, by extension, to globalization itself"[98]. Traditionally, it serves as a unify view not limited to any specific world location. We are all products of hybridity through information and cultural correspondences. Otherwise said, we have been influenced by the international world in which we live. Our first book of study, *Shenzhen*, we will begin by particularizing Delisle language choice, translator's notes, and publication houses. This help give geographical context in terms of where the starting points are located in aiding global-minded publications. This will be followed by his background, so we can establish his cultural foundation which has influenced his perspective and has helped create his work. We will conclude with mutual understanding and value of his communications during his stay in China. This will be further layered by its translation into English. In the case of Bryan Lee O'Malley, we will also include his upbringing, his areas of interest, and his own globetrotting

[95] Ibid. 5.
[96] Bieloch, Katharina, and Sharif Bitar. "Batman Goes Transnational: The Global Appropriation and Distribution of an American Hero." Ed. Shane Denson, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein. *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives Comics at the Crossroads*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 113-14. Print..
[97] Ibid. 114.
[98] Ibid. 113.

tendencies. His material is directly correlated to Manga and its own comic universe. Due to his material being popularized in film, video games, and on the Internet, it is important to note it helps broadcast Canadian identity into a large multinational market. Through examples of language translations with both *Scott Pilgrim: Precious Little Liar* (Vol. 1) and *Shenzhen* they reflect the notions associated with transculturalism and multi-linguistic interactions.

Delisle's *Shenzhen* (2000) was published in Paris by L'Association, although printed into English when Drawn & Quarterly chose it for translation in 2006[99]. Helge Dasher was selected to translate the work, and according to the apropos-named website "Words without Borders", she is also responsible for the English version of Delisle's residency in Burma, *The Burma Chronicles (Les chroniques brimanes)*[100]. As with Julie Doucet, when certain books begin to receive increased interest and exposure, these two houses find freelance translators to convert these pieces into each other's linguistic market. This is an ideal example of transnationalism in action. The Canadian and French companies are sharing authors, copyrights, and commodities, to mutually extend capital and comic book popularity. As we've seen, how they decided to translate, market and produce that piece of work is dependent on their own 'nation's' interests and familiarity with a type of comic product[101].

As seen previously with Seth and Doucet – even when translated for an audience overseas – it is extremely evident of their national point of origin, whether the translation is French or French-Canadian, and if there are instances of Canadian French/English language interactions or subsequent cultural exchanges. These aspects must be carefully respected when the translators tackle their work, especially since the previous books have been written originally in English and then translated as Canadiana in French, and into French-Canadian due the origins

[99] Same publication house as Julie Doucet's *Changements d'adresses*.
[100] "Words Without Borders." *RSS*. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
[101] See chapter 1, 'Seth's shortened introduction.

of the self-translator Doucet. Delisle and Dasher represent a different example from the previous chapters. Here it begins as a book written in French, spotted with slight examples of French-Canadian influence. On page 10, for example, evident Quebecois vulgarities are muttered in dialogue such as "*tabernak*" and "*cul a chier*" (:4-5). His narrative captions are often written in standardized French yet – as the case with most verbal conversations – his speech or thoughts makes his Canadian upbringing transparent. On the other hand, Dascher's English translation shows little evidence of Delisle's linguistic lineage with the only information given through the translation of his own autobiographical accounts. This is to be expected since his maternal tongue is French from Québec City, while now living in Southern France he writes in as an amalgramation due to this context and identity.

Delisle's Global Tendencies

Moving to the author himself: Guy Delisle, embodies an international point of vu amongst the genre. He is at once a Francophone from Quebec, a resident of France, and a world traveler. Growing up in Quebec, he read Franco-Belgium classics – such as Tintin, Astérix, and Lucky Luke– and gradually moved "toward a wave of cartoonists who in the 1970s dared to aspire to an adult audience: Marcel Gotlib, Philippe Druillet, and Jean Giraud"[102]. Although he now calls Southern France his home, he was educated as a cartoonist outside of Toronto[103]. His career has led him to rather obscure places often unseen by foreigners – most notably Shenzhen, China and Pyongyang, North Korea. The success of those named comic book travelogues enabled Delisle to support himself solely on creating more autobiographical chronicles with his

[102] Köhler, Nicholas. "Guy Delisle: Stranger in Strange Lands - Macleans.ca." *Macleansca*. 26 Apr. 2012. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.
[103] Ibid.

French wife and kids in Burma and Jerusalem[104]. His comics are described as "funny, precise, and unafraid to mention national foibles, Delisle begins his narratives as the baffled outsider: the galumphing expat who must cope with all the boring logistics of life, from finding a playground for his children to predicting the vagaries of the bus service"[105]. In his hefty repertoire, the selected book of study, *Shenzhen* is one of his earlier pieces and takes place before his life as a family man. Themes, as mentioned above, are abound in each of his comic accounts, yet it is in this lonely and isolating stationed post in China which details a reflective, inner interaction between him and those around him. This unique perspective is parallel to him as an individual. He interprets his surrounding through his own cultural lens. This we will explore with examples in the comic, varying from the books he has read, the art he enjoys, and his means of communicating with others.

Although *Shenzhen* is a book written in French, we witness Delisle speaking in English with people in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, including his interpretor[106]. Reading the translated version, readers do not find this out for sure until the very end, when she discovers Delsile lives in France: "You know I speak '*un peu français*' (145:5-6). Up to that point, he read dialogue exchanges in a mixture of French and English. French is seemingly used in more complex sentences to help steer the plot "*Pour bienvenue, le 'chief manager' vous invite pour manger*", while English for more universal and simple phrases "yes…no problem" (26:4)[107]. In terms of translation, Dasher has not had to demonstrate this multidirectional highway of communication.

[104] She works as an administer with *Médecins Sans Frontières*/Doctors Without Borders (*MSF*).
Cooke, Rachel. "Guy Delisle: 'The Challenge Is Not to Explain Too Much'" 31 May 2012. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.
[105] Ibid.
[106] There are a few English interviews with him where he is speaking the language fluently, especially after the popularity of *The Burma Chronicles.*
[107] Translation being "*In welcoming you, the chief manager would like to invite you to eat*" (10:6).

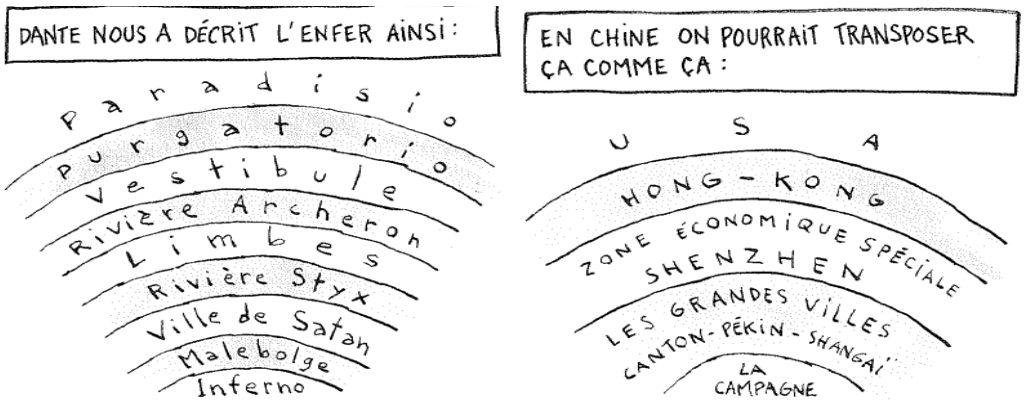
English has long been seen as the "global language"[108]. For the translated *Shenzhen*, both French-Canadian and English have been juxtaposed into a 'standard' English translation.

Delisle and Shenzhen: His Perspectives

The work seen in *Shenzhen* is not driven by a character arc or definable plot. It is quite simply a story of a man, stationed in Shenzhen as cartoonist, for three months. It is a travelogue of dialogue, narration, thoughts, and most importantly, sketches of his experience while there. These sketches are glimpses of how he fits into his individual role, position, and presence while in the industrial city. As discussed beforehand, he is situated as the 'outsider-in'; however, there are numerous ways in which he has merged himself into his surroundings. He uses his own background knowledge of this world as metaphors in describing aspects of his environment. He entertains himself with Western cultural throwbacks. In one of his first few days in Shenzhen, he reads an excerpt from Jules Renard's children's novel, *Poils de carrote (Carrot Top)* (13:3). This is a story of a red-headed child mistreated by those around him due to the color of his hair, yet he finds strength to happily move forward[109]. Perhaps feeling a bit sensitive, Delisle is purposefully including this tale as a means of expressing how he feels. Additionally, when explaining what living in different regions in China may mean to the Chinese, he uses "The Descent to Hell" by Dante (38:1-2). Comparing China's lack of geographical mobility for its citizens, he organizes areas in a hierarchical manner. He has chosen this allegory of hell not

[108] "How English Evolved into a Global Language." *BBC News*. BBC, 20 Dec. 2010. Web. 2 Dec. 2014.
[109] Renard, Jules. *Poils De Carrote*. N.p.: Project Gutenburg, n.d. *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Poil De Carotte, by Jules Renard*. Project Gutenburg, 27 May 2009. Web. 12 Dec. 2014.

based on what they have told him, but rather by what he's witnessed in terms of difficulty in receiving "a visa that's hard to get, seeing that just about everyone wants out" (38:3)[110].



Lastly, his love of comics as a child is transposed into a global consciousness as he mentions reading old "Spirou" editions when he should be working in Shenzhen (26:3-27:1-3). In a telling panel, he sketches a lovely hybrid of him in an iconic Tintin adventure (101).

Here he may be facing difficulties in communicating or articulating how he feels in this foreign environment. By using recognizable images to express notions to himself and his readers, Delisle is once again able to connect to his surroundings. Finding his voice through two French

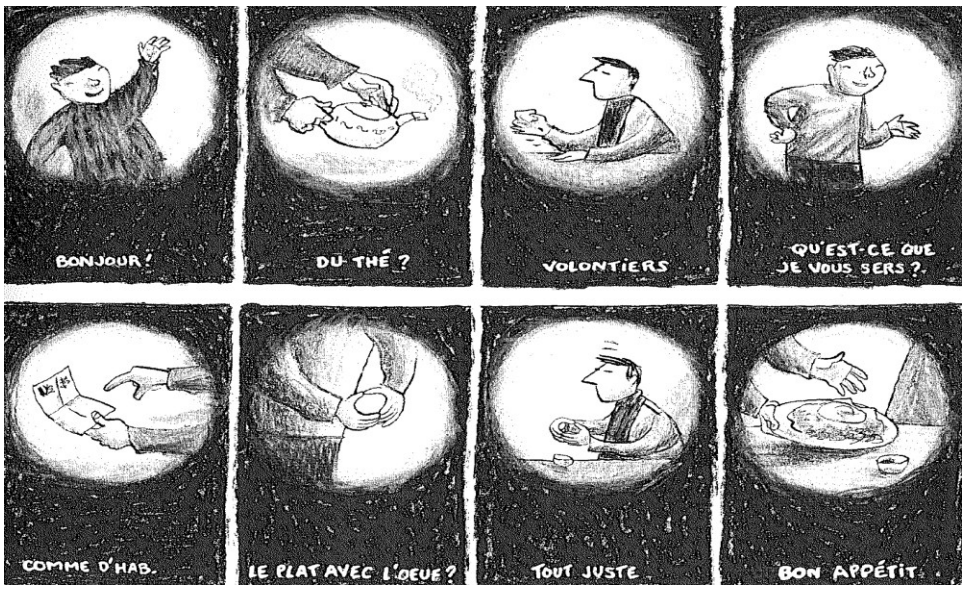
[110] This is translated as: "*The Descent to Hell, according to Dante: Paradiso, Purgatorio, Vestibule, The River Acheron, Limbo, The River Styx, City of Satan, Malebolge, Inferno/Same thing, transposed to China*"…

comic 'journalists', "Spirou" is a more childhood, nostalgic figure while Tintin is of course massively popular. The Belgium cartoonist and creator of Tintin, Georges Prosper Remi (or Hergé), wrote the *Blue Lotus* where the famous blonde journalist and his dog, "Snowball" travel to China. Known to be less than empathetic, or well-researched, in terms of his depictions of foreign societies, this comic demonstrated a change in Hergé's approach[111]. Befriending Zhang Chong Ren – a man born in Shanghai, and they acquired a close friendship and bond[112]. While they spoke together in French, "their communication was as much graphic as it was verbal" with Zhang even buying Hergé "a set of Chinese paintbrushes and a small manual of exercises in linear drawing"[113]. Comparatively with Delisle, this type of communication through transculturalism is detailed in the examples below.

Gestures and Language Form

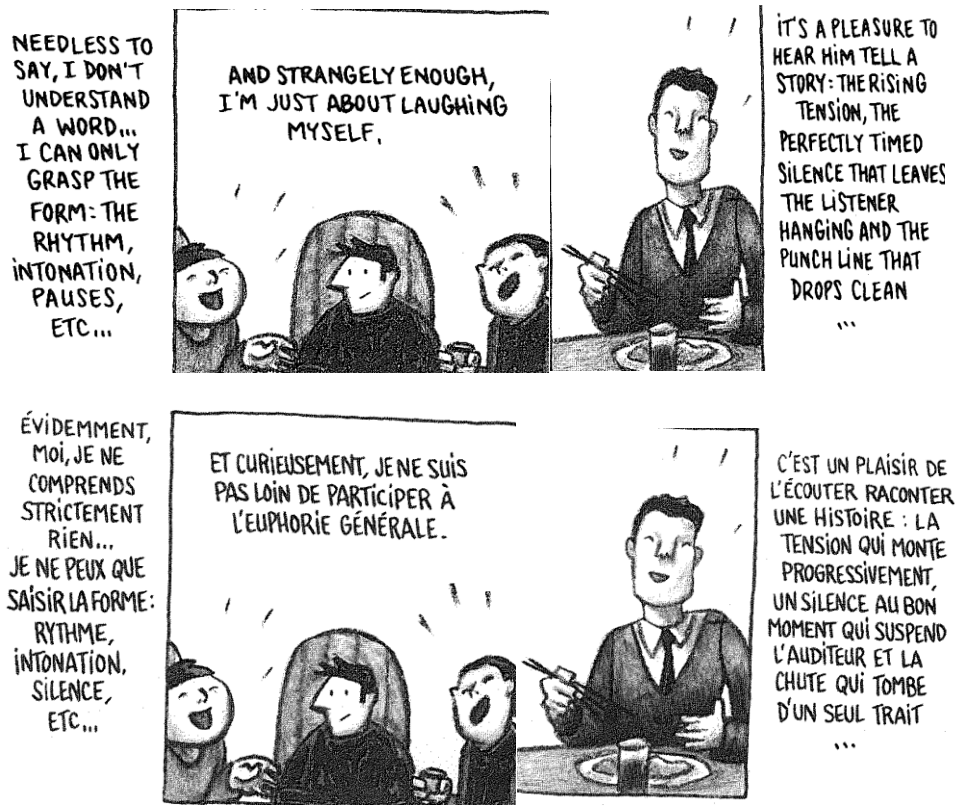
As time passes through his job posting, we notice more frequently that despite his lack of knowing standard Chinese, understandable communication is still transmitted. Much like how Delisle sketches his thoughts, emotions and interactions, he also demonstrates how he has communicated with those in his surroundings. Numerous examples arise of physical interpretations, or charades, played between the author and the interlocutor. Describing his interactions while frequenting a local diner: "*Trois fois par semaine, muni de mon bout de papier, j'ai toujours mange le même plat. Sans avoir un mot à prononcer*" (31:3-8)[114].

[111] Most notably with the infamous and racist *Tintin in the Congo*(1931), which after visiting a Museum of Congo in Tervuren, he was provided with "basic elements: a dugout canoe, fetishes, a leopard-man, and a large collection of stuffed and mounted animal specimens". Peeters, Benoît, and Tina A. Kover. *Hergé, Son of Tintin*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012: 46. Print.
[112] Ibid. 76.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Translation: "*Three times a week, scrap of paper in hand, I ate the same dish. Without having to say a word*" (31:3-8).



He has arrived to a country vastly different from his Western world, and these sentiments are at times only expressed through the impressionable imagery he, and his readers, recognize. We then see spotlighted, single framed images for each word of communication. Both the French and English translation of each image acts as a subtitle for produced meaning between languages; however, words are not needed in this instance. As readers from numerous linguistic or cultural backgrounds, we can deduce the meaning of these actions, and hence gain perspective on the mutual understanding between Delisle and his server.

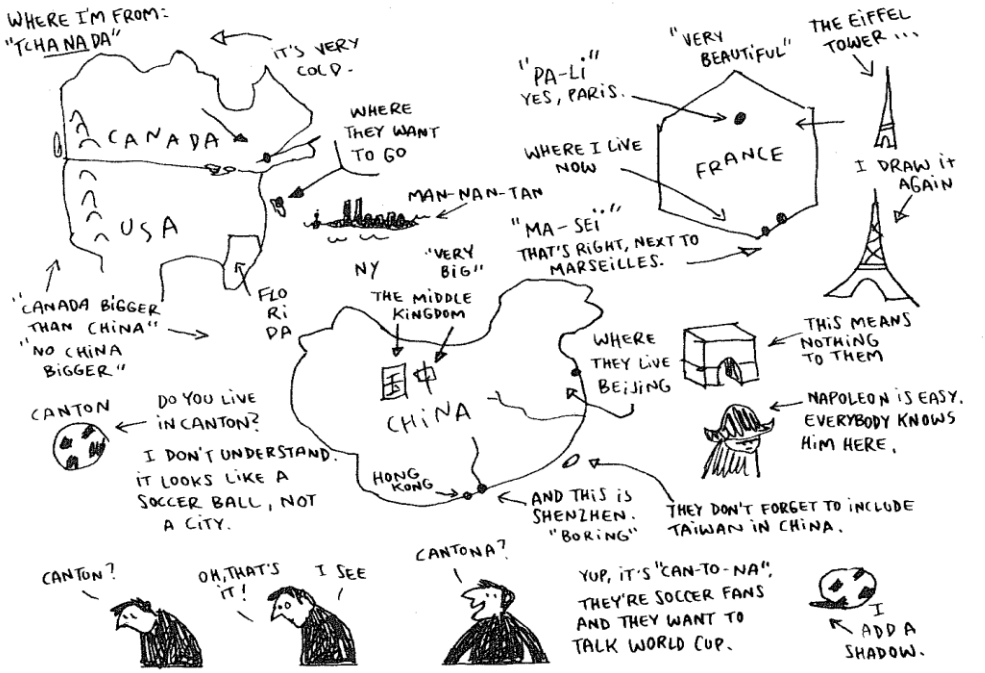
Shenzhen depicts simple narratives as meaning large ideas. During this dinner towards the end of stay, these panels express vast context. To begin, he lights the importance of speech structure as a way to connote meaning during a dinner with his Chinese co-workers (1387-8, 39:1-3):



In the French and English panels, there are little variations in terms of language choices; however, in the original, Delisle describes "*l'euphorie générale*" which directly translates into English as 'general euphoria'. Different from what you would experience from an overall sensation of 'joy', the panels depicting three vertical lines from open mouths looking as if embraced in laughter. On the left we see a content Delisle, enjoying his experience; although, on the right we are on the cusp of him "just about laughing" (ibid). Secondly, his near concluding statement in these visuals connects the author to earlier misunderstandings. He reveals how meaningful contact is portrayed through language form, not solely the verbal content itself. Even if distinct differences existing between East and West, there is still the possibility of sharing the same communicative techniques.

Cultural Mapping

Lastly, conceptual transfers of this nature provide fast moving language and cultural exchanges similar to what is seen through the Internet and social media. Moreover the issue of translation itself problematizes this rapid movement of these human networks. Adapting a text to a different cultural milieu is considerably more difficult to do well because it requires the translation not only of words and images, but of different layers of cultural meaning. It amasses multinational communication occurring in one text and projects it outward to be received by the new public. In other words*, Shenzhen*, is written by a cartoonist born and raised in Quebec, currently living in France, principally documenting in French his experiences in China, and eventually having his work translated for an English audience. Published by Drawn & Quarterly, it is dispersed first through Canada for a North American readership opposed to an Anglophone European market. This carries the possibility for new significance to Delisle's travelogue best demonstrated on the page 20 (:4):



It is a situational map and communicative tool between Delisle and his Chinese supper mates. This brilliantly sketched diagram embodies "crossroads of culture" and its "multidirectional flows of…the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process"[115]. Seen here are drawings of historical importance (*L'Arc de triomphe*, Napoléon), geographical (Canada, U.S.A, France, etc.), and iconic (Cantona, *La Tour Eiffel*). Furthermore, he presents textual examples of standard Chinese conversations using phonetic spelling such as "*Pa-li*", "*Ma-sei*", or "Tchanada"[116]. Further visual and verbal communications drift back and forth with both cultural parties using recognizable global traits to enter into a common understanding. This graphic example of a dialectal and semantic 'crossroad' carries a similar significance whether originally depicted in French or translated into English. It just simply continues to spread and broaden through the increasing range of cultural transmittance.

Lee O'Malley's Multicultural Influences

Bryan Lee O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim: Precious Little Life (Vol.1)* is no exception to the transcultural concept; however, its themes represent a different direction. As seen with Delisle, he provides us the 'outside-in' perspective, but O'Malley presents an 'inside-out' angle. Alternatively the 'in' (or 'inside', in this case) is the social North American environment he knows, belongs to, and finally is marketed within. Similarly, he has been creatively influenced by Japanese manga and Canada's own 'inter-webbed' and interconnected youth[117]. As we will see, O'Malley's background and outside interests have led to the hybridity found in *Scott Pilgrim*

[115] Denson, Shane, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein. "Introducing Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads." Introduction. *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives Comics at the Crossroads*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 4. Print.
[116] Tonal macron 'a' in the French version (diacritical markings) absent in the English edition.
[117] Meaning globally connected through the Internet.

and its success enhanced by its adaptions into other internationally popular medias (such as films, games, etc.).

Born in London, Ontario, O'Malley is half Korean and half French-Canadian – although he has no knowledge of the former and only poorly speaks, yet understands and reads a bit of French[118]. After high school, he briefly enrolled in Film Studies at the University of Western Ontario, only to quit his program and move to Toronto, his future setting for "Scott Pilgrim"[119]. He then moved to North Carolina, where he married an American comic book author and together they moved to Los Angeles[120]. At times Canadian artists relocating to America tend to lose their creative cultural identity in the process; however, O'Malley's work remained definably Canadian[121]. This is even considering *Scott Pilgrim*'s close ties to Japanese manga, it still is "very visibly a *Canadian* comic"[122]. For example, we see this through visuals of a cold winter, and it is best summed up as "an alit-lit, rock 'n' roll graphic novel with wonderful manga-influenced drawing and a comically mystical plot that manages to capture both the genuine intimacies and serial dishonesties of young love"[123]. These descriptors carry insight into O'Malley himself. People traditionally chose to write from experience or personal interests.

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[118] He mentions in the cited interview that he began liking 'alternative' comics like It's a Good Life if you don't Weaken by Seth, back in the mid-nineties when he found out that Seth lives around London, Ontario as well. "It just had a map on the back, and I recognized the towns, because he's basically local to me. And in the book, he goes to London, which is where I lived at the time. So I was like, "Oh wow! Local comics! I'll buy this! Support local talent!" McAlpin, Gordon. "Gordon McAlpin - Writing - An Interview with Bryan Lee O'Malley.". 24 May 2006. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.

[119] Medley, Mark. "Bryan Lee O'Malley's Finest hour." *National Post Arts: Bryan Lee O'Malley's Finest Hour Comments*. 20 July 2010. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.

[120] Ibid.

[121] "The influence of the United States on the Canadian people and our culture is indisputable. Not only do Americans outnumber us ten-to-one, as a market it's difficult to compete in shear dollars and cents with the media and business opportunities of the giant next door". Ouellet, Debbie. "Truth Seekers: Oh! No Canada! The Cultural Identity Crisis." *Truth Seekers*. 31 Dec. 2009. Web. 1 Jan. 2015.

[122] Berninger, Mark. ""Scott Pilgrim Gets It Together": The Cultural Crossovers of Bryan Lee O'Malley." *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives Comics at the Crossroads*. Ed. Shane Denson, Christina Meyer, and Daniel Stein. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 244. Print.

[123] *PublishersWeekly.com*. Web. 23 Nov. 2014.

Stating that he really first got into anime - such as Sailor Moon (which was broadcasted frequently on Canadian television) - before enjoying manga[124]. In one interview, he describes reading the informative: *Even a Monkey Can Draw Manga* by Koji Aihara and Kentaro Takekuma, to help him perfect the art. Detailing what shaped *Scott Pilgrim's* fight scenes, structure and concept, he mentions the chapter on *shonen manga*, which likened its plot to "a shish-kebab, where's there's meatball, meatball, meatball on a stick, with each meatball representing a fight"[125]. Nonetheless, manga was not O'Malley's only lingering influence. He says video games "are a fabric of his youth" and has always been a music-fan,and played bass in several bands. Examples of these derivatives are incorporated into O'Malley's own artistic vision. As we will see, with massive popular appeal they are then projected to a wide receiving International audience. This is done through language translation and multimedia adaption and distribution.

Now Here's Scott Pilgrim...

The global, yet local storyline is as follows. Its main character, Scott Pilgrim, is a 23-year old living in Toronto hoping to win the heart of Ramona Flowers – a girl from the United States[126]. The catch in dating her is: he must defeat her seven deadly 'exes', break up with his

[124] Cartoons from Japan which can be compared to manga comics has its own unique canon (ie. Astroboy, Sailor Moon, Pokemon, etc.)
Aoki, Deb. "Interview: Bryan Lee O'Malley - About Manga." Web. Nov.25. 2014.

[125] *Shonen manga* literally means "comics for boys." The genre includes action-packed, dramatic and humorous stories about sports, adventure, superheroes and sci-fi". Aoki, Deb. "Introduction to Shonen Manga - About Manga." Web. 25 Nov. 2014.
Ibid.

[126] In "Volume 1: Precious Little Life", we only find out that Ramona is not from Canada when she reminisces a story when she was in the 7th grade. Here she mentions that her boyfriend then was the only "non-white, non-jock kid in school…or in the entire state, for all I know". We obviously do not have states, but provinces. *Note, there are no page numbers in either version of Scott Pilgrim.

17-year old girlfriend Knives Chau, make a living, and play bass in his band "Sex Bob-omb"[127]. The comic series "blends video games, manga influences, music and other aspects of modern pop culture" with Pilgrim acting as a contemporary Canadian superhero[128]. "The homegrown series wears its flag on its sleeve, with past volumes exploring Pilgrim's childhood in Northern Ontario" with Toronto, of course, being its main focus[129]. Our book of study, "Precious Little Life", is the first volume of a series of six comics published annually between August 2004 and July 2010. Interestingly, this series was printed and distributed through an American company, Oni Press. Founded in 1997, located in Portland, Oregon, it has been deemed the purveyor of "comic books for people who like to read books"[130]. The French translation, by Philippe Touboul, was not released until March 2010[131]. Curiously the title remained unchanged and in English. Published in Paris under the French independent house *Bragelonne* known solely for printing fantasy and science-fiction, "Pilgrim" was distributed under their new 2009 comic book label Milady-Graphics, who publish and translates books from International authors[132]. Interestingly, one month after the last volume of the series "Scott Pilgrim's Final Hour" was distributed, the film "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" premiered in August 2010 to a wide North American screening. Directed by Edgar Wright, the screenplay by Michael Bacall was in development since 2005[133]. In December 2010, the film premiered in France, and that following February the movie first appeared in Japan. As seen, the slowest moving disbursement of

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[127] Medley, Mark. "Bryan Lee O'Malley's Finest hour." *National Post Arts: Bryan Lee O'Malley's Finest Hour Comments*. 20 July 2010. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Mondor, Colleen. "Comics Books for People Who Like to Read Books." *Bookslut*. N.p., 2005. Web. 23 Nov. 2014.
[131] Was not able to find any information of this translator.
[132] Name is a reference to Alexandre Dumas' *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*.
"Auteurs." *Milady.fr*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
[133] A British filmmaker, his films include the comedy *Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz, and The World's End.* Interestingly, he also co-wrote Steven Spielberg's *The Adventures of Tintin*. "Edgar Wright Here." *Edgar Wright Here RSS*. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.

O'Malley's – and Scott's – journey has been the writing, developing, printing, and publishing. Once something begins gaining popularity in one type of medium, it is financially viable to create and quickly promote other forms as well. Thus 2010 saw "Scott Pilgrim vs. the Animation", an anime series aired online. This was followed by the video game "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World: The Game", which coincided with the movie. When something becomes such a large cult hit, what types of images and significance are carried through to these other mediums? What has O'Malley created and how does it transcend into other languages and cultures? To answer these questions, we must look past the author and explore the book itself.

Manga Origins

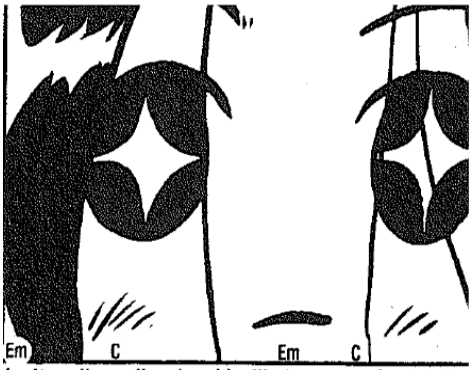
It is no coincidence that *Scott Pilgrim* has been compared to Japanese manga and more specifically Original English Language (OEL) manga. The increase in the Western translations of both Eastern anime and manga has spawned a new subgenre merging both comic book traditions together. Often OELs are inspired by the manga's style and take "some of the artistic and storytelling conventions…such as the big eyes, exaggerated action or sensitive romances to create stories from a Western point of view for English-language readers"[134]. As mentioned before, Pilgrim has fallen in love with Miss Flower, and he goes through emotional tailspins to be with her. Mini-flashbacks and dreams sequences are also quite common, such as Scott has a chasing a roller-blading Ramona in a desolate desert (33-4). Furthermore, Ramona recounts the time she dated her first evil ex-boyfriend, which leads to Scott's fight sequence seen below (27:1):

[134] Aoki, Deb. "Introduction to Original English Language Manga - About Manga." Web. 22 Nov. 2014.

(Manga Fight Scene. "Gamaran, a Manga with Realistic Martial Arts." *Thoughts on Anime*. N.p., 08 Jan. 2013. Web. 3 Jan. 2015).

Similarly, in this more traditional manga comic, notice the use of onomatopoeias as the characters seem to nearly fight in mid-air. The upward lines give the illusion of fast motion and add to the feeling of chaos experienced in the scenes. In terms of the panels themselves, note there is an uneven amount from page to page and reading is done in a less traditional sequence (such as left to right)[135]. As seen below, manga uses visual cues to help portray the sentiments of its characters. Knives Chau is very much in love with Scott, thus she is illustrated as having 'stars' in her eyes (15:2).

[135] Vandermeer, Jeff. "Understanding Manga: An Interview with Robin Brenner."*Bookslut*. N.p., Jan. 2008. Web. 20 Dec. 2014.



This has happened as she gazes at him playing music –uniquely, that we can only imagine hearing. Thus, no text is needed for the messages to be portrayed. Textual silence does not equate to silence of meaning. Even the words mirror the stillness seen with the emoting pictures. As noted above, surrounding each text is a 'whitespace', or 'MA', placing the written word in the middle of a large dialogue bubble (2:1). In traditional Japanese art, it is considered the negative space around the object. 'MA' literally means 'space-time', but "does not correspond to our idea of space. To the Japanese, (it) connotes the complex network of relationships between people and objects"[136] . This notion presents a different value to how we approach

[136] Genosko, Gary, and Derrik De Kerckhove. *Marshal McLuhan: Theoretical Elaborations*. Vol. 2. London: Routledge, 2005. 157. Print.

interactions occurring between characters; however, with Manga being an extremely popular art form, centered within a youth and multicultural fan-base, these traditional aspects become well-known and transferable symbolic devices.

Cultural Motion

As we have discussed, *Scott Pilgrim* is a hybrid of Eastern and Western comic book traditions. The definition of 'Western' in this case equates to the Canadian context. We clearly know the story takes place in Toronto and as early as Volume 1, there are several notable transparencies. The examples to note are the ones in which cultural translation takes place. We are not solely looking for instances of 'canadiana', but rather 'canadiana' in transnational motion[137]. This is of course in unison with the Japanese manga already imbedded in the series. Reverting back to Philipe Touboul, Milady Graphics, and the French language, we see how they have decided to receive these influences and have adapted them into a new linguistic context. To begin, O'Malley's choice in naming his characters carry Canadian pop-cultural significance. In fact, the name 'Scott Pilgrim' comes from the title of a song performed by the all-girls band "Plumtree". For further reference, Pilgrim is seen wearing their t-shirt during his first fight with the evil ex. Without changing the title, it's assured that the hero's name remains the same in French; although potential significance is lost. Stephen Stills is the lead singer in the band, and is similarly the same name of a successful American musician[138]. Lastly we meet Scott's youngest friend who they introduce as "Young Neil", yet for Canadians he is easily recognizable as being a word reversal of "Neil Young". Neil Young is a famous Canadian singer who has crossed-over years ago into the American market. In the French version, Touboul may not have

[137] See Chapter 1.
[138] Stephen Stills and Neil Young were in a band together during the 1970s. It was amply named "Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young".

been familiar with Neil Young's and the pun in reversing his name. He chose instead to do the literal translation of "Young Neil" as "*le jeune Neil"*. Strangely all the other names stayed the same, even "Knives Chau" which is phonetically difficult to pronounce in French. The meaning of "Knives", as a sharp, dangerous instrument will also not translate in the same manner.

In translating a comic, images usually stay the same, and the text in the background is often still considered part of the image. This means in these instances, the source language is not translated and remains unchanged. For the French version of *Pilgrim,* this further spotlights its Toronto, Canada setting and Anglophone origins. On the bus Knives is about to board, there is an advertisement for a new album from the band "Trapnest Trigger", presented by "Canada Rocks" (17:3). There are also several stores or restaurants in the background as the characters are out walking, such as "Bicycles", "Scherfe Insurance", "Premier Cleaners", "Nippon Sushi", and "Goodwill". At the battle of the bands, Stephen is presenting "Sex Bob-omb" with posters from the other competing bands: "Crash and the Boys" with "Trasha, alias Trisha Ha" (105:1). Mixing English situational and pop-culture references with manga influenced visuals, plots, and themes all are conjoined and transferred into another cultural realm. Where it moves from there, we will have to wait and see.

Conclusion

Guy Delisle and Bryan Lee O'Malley both represent language and cultural transfusion beyond borders. Each has a strong perspective heavily influenced by their earlier interests. This is an ever continuous motion of culture spawning new cultural innovations. This influences different ways to tell different stories while defying any separation between nations, languages and their unique and individual creative outlooks. Delisle shares with us his understanding of

Shenzhen by his world experience up to that point. He is an outsider, looking in. O'Malley has created a book ripe with Canadian multiculturalism, intertwined existing international influences only to release them back into the popularity of transmedia. Transculturalism defines this mixing, merging, and hybridity seen between these two authors' work.

Chapter 4

The Sights and Sounds of Michel Rabagliati's Youth and Chester Brown's Canadian History:

Paul a un travail d'été and *Louis Riel*

Introduction

"Lettering, treated 'graphically'…functions as an extension of the imagery. In this context it provides the mood, a narrative bridge, and the implication of sound"[139]. This citation from pioneering cartoonist, Will Eisner, demonstrates how important the visuals of a text are to the comic book's overall aesthetics. In addition, the letters that make up words are symbols themselves; therefore, comics transmit meaning in several different manners – from their artistic font to its linguistic meaning[140]. This chapter leads us to two books which at first glance are vastly different. The French-Canadian book, *Paul a un travail d'été,* is a coming-of-age story part of an autobiographical series by comic artist Michel Rabagliati. *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, however, is written by Toronto-based artist Chester Brown and is a well-researched, historical comic book on the ill-faded Métis leader from the 1885 Northwest Rebellion. These two pieces bring together comparisons in how they have created sounds and communication through lettering, onomatopoeias, and grammatical and phonetic visuals. With their translation, these devices are reapproached and adapted to another cultural audience. Beginning with a brief synopsis of each book – including information on author, publishing companies, and translator – we will move unto lettering and their actions, and finally French and English language communications. Each gives the impression of sound in comic books, and how it changes the way we read these essential visuals.

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[139] Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001. 10. Print.
[140] Ibid. 14.

Paul and His Working Summer

Paul a un travail d'été is a comic written originally in French and set in Quebec during the 1970s. The story chronicles the author's experience after quitting high school and working briefly in a printing factory. Young, angry, and aimless, Paul serendipitously receives a phone call to work as a counsellor at a summer camp for underprivileged children (21:6). Here he meets, works, and lives with other teens and young kids, forming friendships and lasting memories of this one summer. Filled with 70s nostalgia, it is set briefly in Montreal yet mainly in Quebec's back-country. The comic includes numerous references to style – Paul's mother tells him to shave because he "looks like a hippie" (23:4) – and music. Panels combine with popular songs from that era, creating the impression of a soundtrack from his youth. Incorporating both French and English musicians from Europe and North America, such as: ""Harmomium, Paul Piché, Jim and Bertrand, Beau Dommage… and Led Zeppelin" (83:4), Georges Brassens (82:3-7), Supertramp (107:5-6), and Queen (55:1-7). In *Paul* Michel Rabagliati is recreating an important moment in his young adulthood; one of first loves, personal growth, and pensiveness.

'Paul's Real Life

Rabagliati has numerous comic chronicles from different phases of his life. Continuously writing in a semi-autobiographical manner, his first work was *Paul à la campagne* (1999) and most recent, *Paul au parc* (2011). Born in 1961 in Montreal, it took him about thirty-eight years – with twenty of those spent as a graphic designer – to eventually following his dream and become a comic book artist[141]. During a recent interview, Rabagliati has expressed his Franco-Belgian influences such as "Spirou, Gaston", and admits to no familiarity to "Batman,

[141] "Michel Rabaliati Biographie." *Biographie*. Web. 4 Jan. 2015.

Superman, Spider-man"[142]. He has no interest in writing for adolescents. Instead, he has found his voice in adult comic books[143]. Fortunately there is a large fan-base in the genre, and he has been published repeatedly by La Pastèque and Drawn & Quarterly. Both located in Montreal, La Pastèque has been has been an invigorating force in French-Canadian comic book publishing. Launched in 1998 as a reaction against uncertainty "*to the future of the medium in the Quebec market and doubt as to whether the industry would be able to sustain itself",* creators Frédéric Gauthier and Martin Brault felt they could create an emblematic Quebecois publishing house which develops subject matter on a more personal basis[144]. For Anglophone fans of Paul, all of Rabagliati's books have been translated into English from Drawn & Quarterly. They have routinely employed Shenzhen translator, Helge Dascher, to furnish bilingual Canada with the series.

Brown's 'Non-Comic', Comic Portrayal of Louis Riel

Alternatively, Chester Brown's Canadian book was written in English, yet about a French speaking individual. Louis Riel tells the story of the controversial nineteenth century Métis leader, who through a progression of disagreements and events led his people to a violent rebellion in the provincial prairies[145]. In Brown's own word: "this is not a full biographical treatment of Riel's story…I've mostly concentrated on (his) antagonistic relationship with the Canadian government"[146]. Complete with end notes to help give context and added information to panels throughout the comic, this book gives readers the opportunity to read and visualize

[142] Corbier, Bernard. "Michel Rabagliati Interviewed in Here." *Drawn Quarterly*. 29 Mar. 2007. Web. 19 Dec. 2014.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Boyd, Kevin. "Outstanding Publisher 2010: Montreal's La Pastèque." *The Joe Shuster Awards*. The Joe Shuster Awards, 21 June 2010. Web. 10 Jan. 2015.
[145] The metis people are the offspring of French-Canadian trappers and Aboriginal women.
Brown, Chester. "Backcover." *Louis Riel*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2003. N. pag. Print.
[146] Ibid. Foreword.

historical first-hand accounts. Maps and actual documented quotes further solidify its unique authenticity in terms of being Canadian historical fiction. Reconstructing Riel's identity is a delicate topic; he represents different things to different people. At once considered a religious fanatic, a prophet, a madman, a hero, a political pawn, or spokesperson, he is a symbolic representation of Canadian history and its diversity[147].

Michel Rabagliati, the self-proclaimed comic-novice, mentioned he became fascinated with adult-comic genre after seeing the types of work done by Chester Brown[148]. Brown began his career as an experimental, underground artist emerging in the mid-1980s. He has since written raw autobiographical comics such as The Playboy (1992), I Never Liked You (1994), and Paying for It (2011). Friends with fellow cartoonists, Gregory Gallant ('Seth') and Joe Matt, they too have become characters in his books representing real situations. Comparably, Louis Riel is considered a departure from his usual genre; however, its themes still coincide with his unabashed political views as a Libertarian[149]. Brown has stated he loves Hergé, and that "his Tintin books have probably affected (his) drawing style to some degree". For Riel, his main visual influence was from American artist Harold Gray's, Little Orphan Annie, about the famed orphan[150]. The similarities between the two are traceable to their stark penmanship, adult characters of broad-build, and unfilled white circles for eyes.

Initially ten separate issues, the complete Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography was proudly published by Drawn & Quarterly in 2003, adding more awards and accolades to the

[147] Thomas, Lewis, H. "Dictionary of Canadian Biography – Dictionary of Canadian Biography." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography – Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. University of Toronto/Universite Laval, n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2014.
[148] Corbier, Bernard. "Michel Rabagliati Interviewed in Here." *Drawn Quarterly*. 29 Mar. 2007. Web. 19 Dec. 2014.

[149] Ibid.
[150] Brown, Chester. "*Louis Riel: Ten Year Anniversary"*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2003. Foreword. Print.

notable Canadian company, most notably three Harvey awards [151]. Being a large critical and commercial success, its translation followed suit. Translated into French by Sidonie Van den Dries[152], this Riel has two versions in circulation. The Franco-Belgian house, Casterman, published an edition in 2004 but under the title: Louis Riel: l'insurgé. The added subtitle "l'insurgé" in English means 'insurgent' or 'rebel'. The reason being, in France the name "Louis Riel" is virtually unknown. For commercial reasons, it was important for Casterman to add context to the book's original title, otherwise to potential buyers it is a comic about an indistinguishable individual named "Louis Riel". Many would be completely unfamiliar with the Canadian icon. Notably, Louis Riel: l'insurgé was sold under France's Casterman until 2012, until Quebec's la Pastèque proudly brought the book back to the publishing house[153]. Having repurchased the exclusive translating rights, editions previously sold with Casterman are no longer for sale. In other words, Casterman's previously contextualized, Louis Riel: l'insurgé is now only sold as Louis Riel: Les éditions de la Pastèque. Although the cover has changed, Van den Dries' original translation remains the same.

Creating Sound Through Graphics

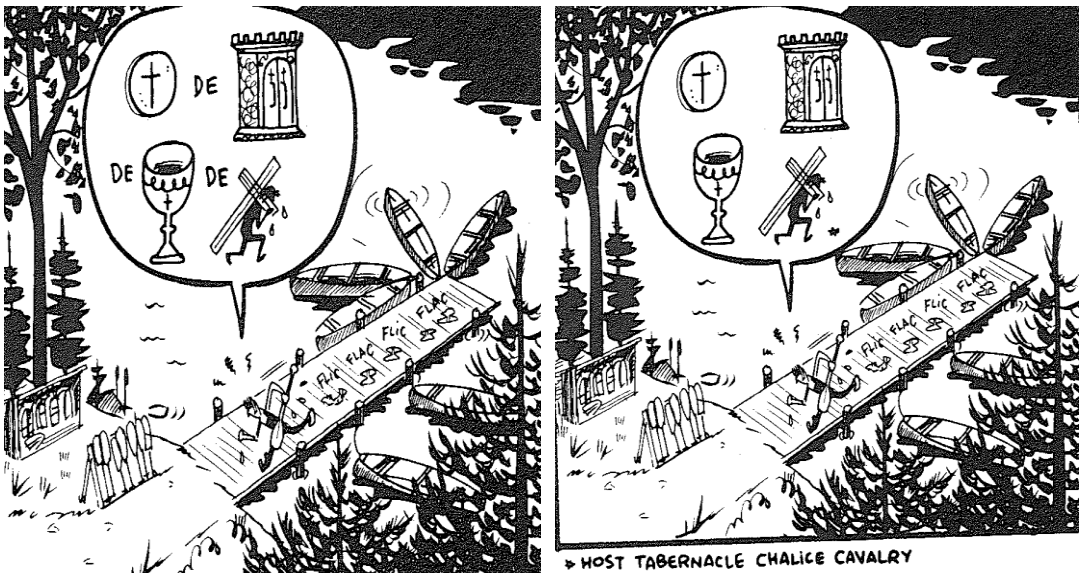
Therefore, how have Rabagliati, Dascher, Brown, and Van den Dries chosen to convey connatative messages through the use of graphics? To begin is it possible for letters and symbols to transmit meaningful words without using the recognizable construct and spelling? Considering the author's original intent, the answer is of course yes; however, this may cause unforeseen difficulties for the readers. This is especially true if the translator has chosen to omit certain stylistic choices. In Louis Riel, there is a scene in which they have imprisoned Irish-

[151] Cross, Karin. "Bookslut." *Bookslut*. 1 Apr. 2004. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
[152] Also of *Essex County: Ontario, Canada*
[153] "Louis Riel." *Louis Riel*. La Pastèque, n.d. Web. 26 Dec. 2014.

Canadian Thomas Scott for attributing to the murder of a French speaking person they thought was a spy for Riel. Beginning his discourse, the openly defiant Scott says: "Imprisoned by a bunch of xxxxxxx xxxx xxxxxx! *" (61). The asterisk at the end leads the reader to a caption box at the bottom of the panel explaining its lack of wording. "The letter x is used here to indicate racist comments and profanity" (ibid). It is up to us to assume the words he may be using in this context. This reader imagined profanity continues for several pages, fluctuating from large 'x's to smaller ones depending on how angry Scott becomes or how far Riel is from his cell. His dialogue bubble is either seen coming directly from him, behind his prison door, or from the different scenes at the Upper Fort Garry. His curses are heard, regardless of the location. Consequently, the readers must assume his fellow prisoners and Riel's men are getting increasingly annoyed with his Scott's loud and aggressive character. The differences in the sizes of the 'x's are important indicators of Scott's location in relation to his surroundings; however, this font choice was not equally represented in the translated version. In French, the varying 'x's remain a rather consistent size and letter thickness. While the meaning of the x's are still explained, its connection to Scott's emotions and physical placement is not as strongly exemplified. The omission of offensive words to be instead guessed or presumed by its readers is still portrayed, however the graphic significance is not. The individual reader places their impressions on what the 'x' means, but the concept of yelling these words, hearing them from outside the fort, or mumbling them under a breath is not conveyed in all the editions of the comic. This demonstrates how the same letter can be compared between different comics—when they are purposefully different it can represent a noticeable change in verbal projection. 'X' means nothing concrete, but its significance to the reader manifests in how it is scribed. In

omitting this nuance, the translator may have missed its meaning, therefore not demonstrating in French the same brashness of the individual about to be put to death.

Paul a un travail d'été, on the other hand, displays an example where drawings denote culturally specific curses. Instead of using lettering to creatively represent censored words, Rabagliati provides images to detail the words being expressed. Seen below, Paul becomes extremely frustrated after flipping his canoe (66:5).



Given Quebec's Catholic history, many of their swear words are "generally religious in nature"[154]. Each image represents a different curse adding to a connecting expression, which is easily recognizable to French-Canadians, or more specifically Quebecois. Dascher has considered this symbolic language and has addressed its meaning in both a caption at the bottom of page 66, and on the last page of the English version. Here she explains any additional cultural notations, which occur throughout the book. Dascher proceeds to write the English words to each picture's meaning; however, she does not completely explain the actual expression until the back notes. For readers unfamiliar with French – or more specifically "'joual', the Quebecois

[154] Back page of *Paul has a Summer Job*. Part of the translation notes.

dialect" – the context surrounding Paul's frustrations still alludes to vulgarity yet their actual connotations are not fully discovered until the endnotes[155].

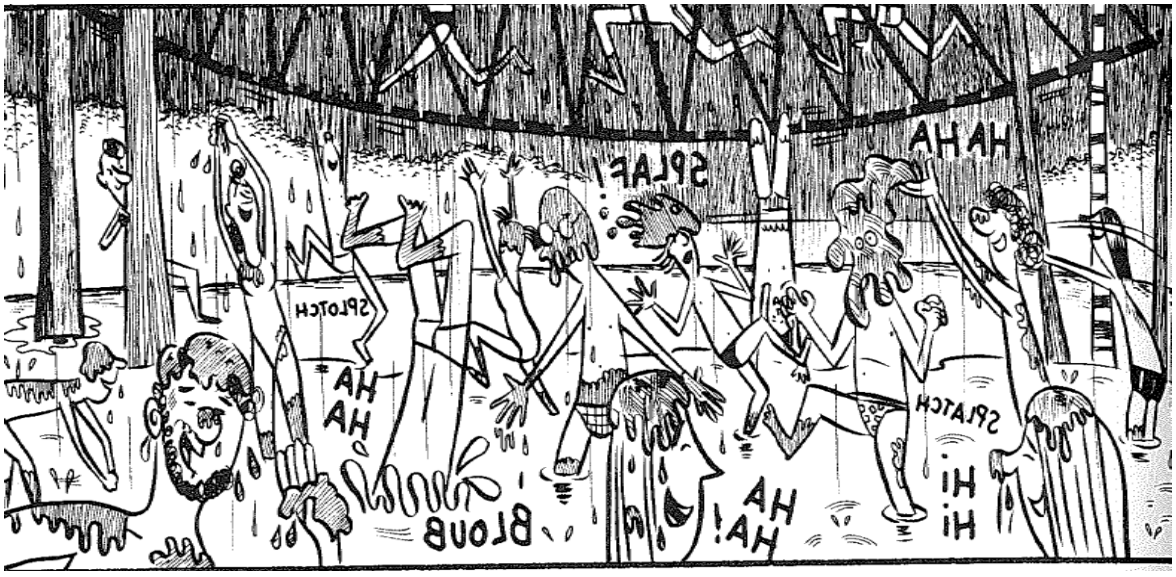
Onomatopoeias and Translation

This chapter aims to answer the question: how is still possible to equate the original depiction of sound in the source text or image, even once translated? Thus, onomatopoeias present a unique dilemma. Defined as "the naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it (as buzz, hiss)", onomatopoeias change from language to language depending how they would phonetically pronounce that same sound[156]. The spelling of that word would thereby also differ. Specifically in comics, they unite onomatopoeias with a visual reference of a perceived action. For example, in Paul there is a panel where a fellow counsellor – Annie – sarcastically applauds Paul after he gets boisterously upset at his young campers (68:2).

[155] Ibid.
[156] "Onomatopoeia." *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

We know she is clapping due to movement lines surrounding her hands, and additionally noted by the words "clap clap" (ibid). Reading those words helps 'create' the noise of clapping while simultaneously demonstrating Annie's action in the panel. Otherwise said, it is the phonetic spelling of Annie's seen movement. In the English, there is no need to change "clap-clap"; fortunately, it is a recognizable and frequently used onomatopoeia in both languages.

When difficulties arise in finding a language equivalent, it is often due to "cross-cultural differences caused by grammar and phonology"[157]. In comics this also applies, although there is the added complexity of considering whether or not the onomatopoeia is inside or outside a thought or conversation balloon[158]. The translator may have difficulties in finding the necessary space to write the language counterpart, or if it is used outside the balloon "the constraints may be greater as the onomatopoeia is then part of the picture"[159]. In the panel taken from Paul below, the counsellors are playing in the mud during a rainstorm. In the English version, the complete image and its onomatopoeias remain unchanged (89:1).



[157] Terescenko, Vineta. *Translating Comics: Comics Creation, Common Translation Strategies, DOs and DON'Ts*. London: Lulu Enterprises UK, 2010. 29. Print.
[158] Graces, Carmen, V. "Onomatopoeia and Unarticulated Language." *Comics in Translation*. Ed. Federico Zanettin. Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Pub., 2008. 238. Print.
[159] Ibid.

We are both seeing and reading the sounds of their actions and enjoyment. "Ha Ha" and "Hi Hi" are – of course – transferable from one language to another, but the words representing 'squishing', 'splashing', or 'squirting' are not[160] . The French words seen in the image and their English equivalencies have been compiled in the table below:

French original	**English translation**[161]
Bloob	Bloop
Splaf	Splat
Splatch	Splash
Splotch	Splosh

For English readers, the written sounds are not linked to the perceived actions in the image. Although creating a loss in terms of the sounds transpiring; the above panel demonstrates a gain in exemplifying the original foreign language influence.

French and English Written Graphically

Lastly, we will move to the use of visual text to indicate the differences between a French person speaking English and vice-versa. In variation to previous chapters when dealing with French and English language exchanges, this time we will be looking at the graphic nature of the written words to express these differences. Louis Riel must obviously address the conflicts regarding the two linguistic cultures. It is important to show that the Metis people are speaking French while the Anglophones speak English. Brown has decided to mark this difference by using brackets around the sentences, which symbolise when one is speaking French. He explains

[160] "Liste D'onomatopées." *Liste onomatopée.* Web 23 Dec. 2014.
[161] Used "Wordreference" to find English equivalents.

this in an early caption in the book. "These brackets in a word-balloon signify that the person indicated is speaking French (or thinking in French if the words are in a thought-balloon)" (9:1). From that point onward, it creates an awareness of difference between English and French speaking Canadians, albeit that the book is entirely in English. To further illustrate this disparity, Brown phonetically writes Riel's English dialogue using a typical – and noticeable – speaking trait. In French, the 'h' is nearly always silent therefore he omits the letter when Riel, or another French-native speaker, is speaking English[162]. During his trial when asked if he is guilty or not guilty, he replies: "I 'ave t'e honour of answering t'e court, I am not guilty" (203:4). Naturally there is no apostrophe denoting the excluded 'h' in "honour" since in English, it is also not pronounced. Although they still symbolically use brackets to denote they are 'speaking' French, these visible language differences are not paralleled in the translated edition. In the circumstances when Riel is speaking English, the use of an apostrophe instead of an 'h' has been completely removed. The lack of brackets surrounding his 'English' sentences is the only indication of a variance in language use. A suggestive alternative in the French version is when Riel is speaking 'English' the translator could put two brackets around each 'h' with a caption explaining the difference.

Rabagliati, however, uses poor grammar or extra lettering to demonstrate an English speaker speaking in broken French. While visiting the home of one of his wife's friends, Paul meets her discernibly Anglophone husband. "**Aôh**! C'est là que vous êtes! Vous **wregardez** le nouveau dinky toy de Domnic! Ha Ha " (134)! Roughly translated as: 'Hello, it's there that you are! You guys are looking at Dominic's new dinky toy'! First, this is noticeably awkward language for a French reader. Second, the words in bold demonstrate mispronunciations of established French words. "Allô" is used as a greeting on the other page between Paul's wife

[162] In the odd case, as with digraphs 'ch' and 'ph', like with *chaud* and *photo.*

and her friend, therefore the way he expresses "Aôh" phonetically shows his accent. Additionally, "wregardez" is emulating the contrast between an English and a French 'r'. A difficult letter to master for an Anglophone, it is often due to the differences between the phonetic mechanics of pronouncing the sound. In French, it is frequently produced at the back of the tongue close to the uvula while in English it is generated behind the front teeth, or the "alveolar ridge"[163]. The 'w' reflected before the 'r' in "wregardez" is detailing the sound created near the velar, or velum[164], which is travelling closer to where the tongue must be to form a proper sounding French 'r'. As with *Louis Riel: l'édition de la Pastèque,* the translated version of *Paul* lacks the subtlety of these cultural and linguistic exchanges. Paul and the Anglophone speak cordially in English together, and the reader is never aware of the original clashing interaction between the two.

Conclusion

Riel and *Paul* exemplify how fonts, or graphics, are used to denote different types of spoken language can influence the narrative of a comic book. Letters are, in effect, communicative symbols and whether they are forming words or used to represent ideas, it is important to note how they are visually written. Images can replace expressions, while letters can replace entire words. Actions are produced though nonsensical words, or spelling can denote accents and poor second-language skills. Taking these into account, they are visual representatives of the pictures in each frame. When translated, certain disconnects can occur between image and text when these are not able to transfer into another language.

[163] "French Pronunciation: The French R." *Utter French*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Dec. 2014. O'Grady, William D., and Michael Dobrovolsky. *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987. 20-2. Print.
[164] Ibid. 22.

Chapter 5

Symbolic Translation in *Essex County*

Introduction

The notion of the universality of images is often disputed. In fact, this thesis has shown in previous chapters how pictures and visual narratives can be created and interpreted differently depending on the reader's individual background. Specifically, this includes their cultural upbringing, geographical location, contextual knowledge, age, and at times even gender association. The addition of text to image has the ability to 'anchor' the interpretations of a picture, and help narrow its meaning towards the author's original intent[165]. Comics have the ability to help bridge word/picture communications into an individual significance. This final chapter will divides visuals from text and demonstrate how symbolic, metaphoric, or iconic imagery can transcend language to disperse meaning. This is presented through examples of Canadian hockey history and culture, yet broadened through images that are easier to translate. Instances of cross-cultural symbolism will transfer to metaphoric animal representation to physiognomy. Prior to this study, we will encounter issues relating to publication differences, Anglophone/Francophone exchanges and cultural significances, and creative font techniques. We will see, these can also have a tendency to sway into the visual realm. Quite simply put, the final book of our study titled *Essex County* (2009) incorporates the majority of themes approached in the previous chapters while demonstrating cross-cultural understanding. It exemplifies the complex relationship –and translating relationship –between the visual and the text found abundantly in comic books.

[165] In Doucet's chapter on self-translation, Roland Barthes' "Rhetoric of the Image" refers to the notion of text being capable to 'anchor' meaning to the images.

Written by Jeff Lemire, *Essex County* began as a compilation trilogy published originally as three different volumes. Each one can be taken on its own, however to fully understand its many layers, publishing them together broadens its reaching scope and intertwining nature of rural Canadian living. *Tales From the Farm* (2008), *Ghost Stories* (2008), and *The Country Nurse* (2009) are combined with two additional short stories, "The Essex County Boxing Club" and "The Sad & Lonely Life of Eddie Elephant Ears" found at the end of the book. Although the books deal with difficult human conditions such as loss, loneliness, aging, betrayal, and regret, they are in essence about reasons or events that tie family and community together. Perhaps most importantly, the small community of "Essex County, Ontario" – which is not that unique or special from other Canadian counties – has found a voice in Lemire's work. The author himself is from a farm in that region. Although the material is not autobiographical, he still pulls inspiration from his background. *Tales from the Farm* tells the story of a young boy named Lester, who has lost his mother to cancer and now lives with his sombre uncle, Kenny. He finds solace pretending to be a superhero and creating his own comics, all the while fighting imaginary aliens with the local gas-attendant (and injured ex-Toronto Maple Leafs hockey player) Jimmy. Volume 2, *Ghost Stories*, spans over the past fifty years of Jimmy's grandfather Vincent and great-uncle Lou's lives. It is narrated by a deaf and increasingly senile Lou, who recounts his life full of guilt, regret and surprising joy in relation to his little brother Vincent. His fluctuating memories take us from Essex County to Toronto, and back again. Needing special care, he is aided by a nurse named Anne who – we find out in the following chapter –is widowed with a problematic and aloof son at home. She is also the title character in the final story: *The Country Nurse*. This volume switches its story between her current situation and an orphanage in 1917

featuring a nun, a hunter, and fourteen orphans. Taken as a whole, *Essex County* is a multigenerational story and according to Lemire, is "exploring a small rural community"[166]:

> You have to use family as the central metaphor. Everyone's family is ripe with great, real characters, human drama and often rich stories. Mine was no exception. So, while the characters in 'Essex County' are fictional, they all draw from different people I grew up with and around.[167]

Simultaneously, Lemire has created a story which acts as a window into a real rural region. In the grand scheme of things, the County of Essex is a microcosm amongst microcosms. It could have simply been an inclusive reading for those who grew up in the area. Instead, Lemire created something tangible and universal through his human stories, themes, and visual imagery.

Lemire's Quiet Artistry

Notoriously quiet, Lemire shies away from heavily detailed interviews and instead enjoys solitude in both writing and illustrating his comics in his current place of residency: Toronto [168]. Known for subject matter embedded with wisdom and subtle life introspections, he was only twenty-nine when he begun gaining notoriety for his first comic *Lost Dogs* (2005). Numerous critical accolades and award nominations soon followed[169]. Although self-published through Ashtray Press, he was eventually contracted by the American owned and operated Top Shelf Production for the *Essex County Trilogy*. Its headquarters are located in Atlanta, Portland and

[166] Manning, Shaun. "Lemire on 'Essex County' & New Vertigo Work." *Comic Book Resources*. 7 July 2009. Web. 12 Dec. 2014.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Brophy-Warren, Jamin. "Tales of the Country." 27 Aug. 2009. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.
[169] For Essex County specifically, he was nominated for two Eisner awards, a Harvey, and an Ignatz. He has won a Doug Wright and achieved a coveted spot out of five in "Canada Reads 2011: People's Choice Award", amongst others. Moran, Rodger. "Jeff Lemire." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 15 Dec. 2013. Web. 27 Nov. 2014.
These awards will be featured at the end of the Introduction as part of 'comic book contextual lingo' (ie. What the awards mean, what is a panel, etc…).

they promote "sophisticated comics for the modern age" from "artists of singular vision"[170]. With Lemire, he has extended his creative vision to more subtle, simple, and realistic dramas – as with *County* – yet is also creating superhero genres for the comic powerhouses Vertigo and DC[171]. In fact, April 2014 marked the unveiling of Lemire's *DC Justice League of Canada* which is a direct offshoot of the famous *Justice League of America* comic book series[172]. Mentioning in an interview, while working on the latter, he humorously suggested the Canadian title to the editor since "I was always sneaking a bunch of Canadiana into my stuff"[173]. Even when his work is not directly related to Canada, he still at his core maintains this cultural perspective. With *Essex County,* he is able to unite wide reaching interests with his background.

Essex County on the International Stage

When a book beings garnering national and international attention, it is often translated successively into other languages. The English trilogy was released in August 2009 and the publishing house Futuropolis, in Paris, commissioned Sidonie Van den Dries to translate the comic into French for March 2010[174]. In an interview, the prolific Van den Dries mentions part of her translation process includes noting where she'll have to do additional research[175]. She understands certain syntax structures or turns of phrase are at times sacrificed, but never the original author's ideas[176]. Understandably, Lemire's title has been altered to help give context to the publication by displaying underneath *Essex County:* ***Ontario, Canada***. Additionally, on the

[170] "Top Shelf Productions." *Welcome*. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
[171] Famous for holding such iconic titles or characters as: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Sandman, V for Vendetta, etc.
[172] Tepper, Sean. "Jeff Lemire Is Proud of Canadian-based Justice League | Toronto Star." *Thestar.com*. 27 Apr. 2014. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.
[173] Ibid.
[174] See also translated *Louis Riel* from English into French. See chapter 4.
[175] Soyouz. "Interview De Sidonie Van Den Dries." *Franco-comics: L'esprit Comic-book*. N.p., 1 Oct. 2009. Web. 8 Dec. 2014.
[176] Ibid.

backside is an excerpt taken from an aged Lou in *Histoires de fantômes (Ghost Stories)* explaining the precise geographical location of his farm in Essex. This is in relation to such larger, and more recognizable, cities as Windsor, Detroit, and Toronto (137). Albeit the majority of Canadians distanced from its surrounding region – Francophone or Anglophone – would not be able to locate Essex County on a map, it would be unrecognizable to readers in France. The cover visuals further solidify its location by using images of wheat fields, large skies, and a tractor, with Lester standing in the midst wearing his superhero cape and mask. For those overseas, the illustrations and title could be a motivating selling feature demonstrating a culturally Canadian read.

***Essex County*'s Canadian Heritage Moments**

While Futuropolis contracted French translator Van den Dries and printed, marketed, and released *Essex County: Ontario, Canada* in France, languages and its contexts can exceed publication borders. With the Internet making online purchasing fast and easy, those who speak French worldwide are able to buy the regionally Canadian book to read in their maternal tongue. This literary and cultural transfer, which includes regular bookselling channels, can quickly return translated products to French-speaking Canada[177]. In turn, this opens it up, to an entirely new audience. In this bilingual country, the Anglophone and Francophone language and cultural dynamics are frequently approached in literature[178]. These exchanges can be challenging when translating between French and English, and *Essex County* is no exception. This leads to answering the question of how these depicted language interactions are received in France opposed to French-Canada. Historically speaking, there are quite divergent differences. In the

[177] Such as local bookstores shipping in requested or popular material, libraries, orInter-library loans
[178] We have previously seen this with Doucet, Seth, Brown, and Rabagliati.

comic, the treatment of Francophones by Anglophones – and the language shared between them – portrays symbolic reference to past actualities. For example in *Ghost Tales (Chapter 2)*, Lou is reflecting back to 1951 when he and his little brother, Vincent, are playing in Toronto for "a now defunct semi-professional hockey club called THE GRIZZLIES" (138). On a large double page spread, we find the entire team speaking to one another in the locker room prior to a game. Since Vincent is new to the city from the farm (Essex County), one of the players comments on his arrival to the Francophone: "At least he's not another Frenchie, eh Gerry?" to which Gerry immediately responds: "*Oui, gros porc ignorant!...Illetré!* (140-41)! Although it means, "yes, big ignorant pig!...Illiterate!!" this remains French in both versions, and leads to a difference in the proceeding 'cover-up' conversation. "Porc!! What's that, like a pig or something? What the hell'd you say to me!?!/Pig? Oh no, no, no…It means pal, buddy, chum! You are my best 'porc', eh" (142:1-2)! In the translated version, ironically it begins by "*Au moins c'est pas un Français, hein Jerry?"* (156-7). Stating in French, that at least it is not "another Frenchie" tends to outwardly display this was a text not originally written in English. Additionally, note the switching of names "Gerry" to "Jerry". The sound associated with the letter 'j' is represented in French with the letter 'g' when followed by e, i or y[179]. This gives slight evidence the antagonistic Anglophone is not pronouncing "Gerry's" name correctly. As for the clever French defense, it is translated as: "*Porc!! C'est quoi, ça? Un cochon!? Putain, qu'est-ce que tu viens de me dire !?!/Cochon ? Non, non…Ca veut dire copain, pote ! T'es mon meilleur « porc », hé ! hé !"* (158:1-2). Here we have two different words for the 'pig'. '*Porc'* usually refers to the edible meat 'pork', while '*cochon*' means the actual animal. Language is well capable of creating insults, and in both French and English pig, *porc,* and *cochon* can mean several different things. 'Pig' is a farm animal, a vulgar older man, or an unclean individual. In terms of slights,

[179]"French Pronunciation: Fricatives." *French Pronunciation: Fricatives*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014.

'*porc*' and '*cochon*' can also mean a vulgarity or being a slob. No English speaker would insult another by calling them 'pork'. Humorously we must assume the Anglophone is not capable of understanding the rather transparent meaning of '*porc'*, which is also why he includes "*illetré*" (illiterate) at the end of his initial verbal retaliation.

The notion behind this quickly escalating situation is due to Canadian historical issues, and brooding conflicts between the English and French sides of Canada. This type of divide is nothing new, yet it is far more recognizable to a Canadian than to a person living in France. Sticking solely to the era depicted in this scene in *Ghost Stories*, the climate between the two cultures is coming to a clashing head. The belittling behaviour seen from the Anglophone towards 'Gerry' – and his defensive attitude – is attributed to the poorer social and economic status of the Quebecois versus their fellow English citizens[180]. Treated as second-class citizens, this eventually led to an increase in Québec nationalism and growing dissent in the province[181]. In 1955, the famed French-Canadian hockey player, Maurice Richard "The Rocket", was mythologized to be the igniting force behind the dubbed "Richard Riots"[182]. While the above mentioned exchange in *Essex County* is small, it presents an increasing tension between English and French Canada which will erupt just 4 years after the fictional Lou and Vincent together in Toronto. For Canadians, the dynamics between the two language groups have been tied into the cultural hockey narrative and is thus, easily recognizable.

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[180] Fortin, Pierre. "Quebec Quiet Revolution: 50 Years Later." *Inroads* (n.d.): 90-9. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

[181] An excerpt taken during a budget speech in 1962, the 1960 elected Québec Liberal Prime Minister Jean Lesage mentioned: "*We constitute an ethnic minority that has been able to survive till now, but whose material power is far from corresponding to that of our English compatriot"* (Ibid). Changes began occuring in terms of "The provincial public service was modernized and allowed to unionize and expand. Education and health were secularized, professionalized and centralized" (Ibid). Fortin, Pierre. "Quebec Quiet Revolution: 50 Years Later." *Inroads* (n.d.): 90-9. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

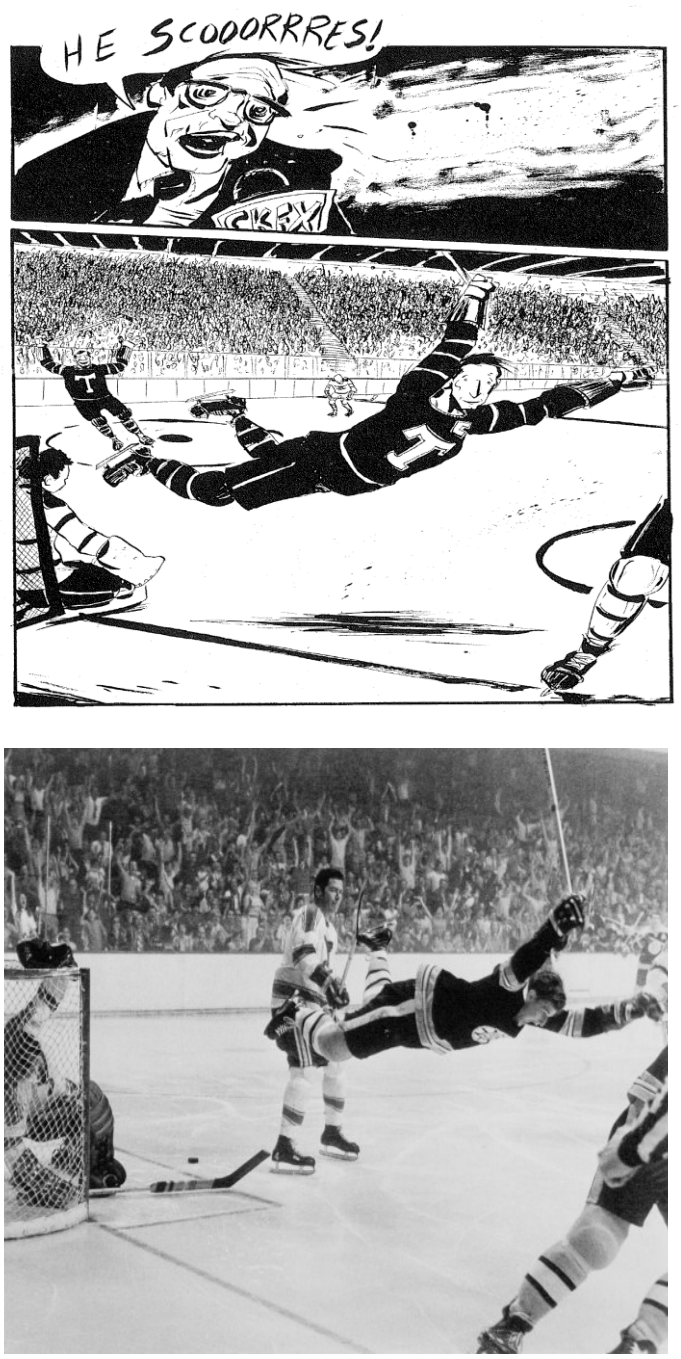
[182] Playing for the Montreal Canadians, it is said that he suffered verbal and physical abuses due to his ethnicity. Already being a French iconic hero and a symbol of pride for the Quebecois; anger, destruction of property, and clashes with the police arose in Montreal following his March suspension due to an altercation during a game. French-Quebecers felt this was an extremely stern punishment and reflective of poor treatment experienced prior and presently by Anglophone Canada.

More Canadian Hockey Heritage

Essex County is ripe with impressions relating to collective Canadian memories and nostalgia. Continuing with hockey and *Ghost Tales*, we see a young Lou moving the puck up the ice during a championship game. As he fires the puck, the radio sports announcer broadcasts: "He shoots…/He scooorrres"! (188:3, 189:1). This famous phrase is used frequently when announcing goals and is associated with Hockey Night in Canada on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)[183]. Used repeatedly in televised games, with youth playing on their local rink, and even in corporate commercials, it has become imbedded in hockey culture. There is an equivalent in French Canada as well. "*Le tir et le buuuuuuuuut*" (the shot and the goal) is heard frequently when The Montreal Canadians score[184]. This equally unites a sense of sports nostalgia and community for their fans. The translated version of *Essex County* did not equate this cultural reference. "*Il tire…/Il maaaaarque!"* (204:3, 189:1) is the direct translation of "he shoots, he score", however this dismisses the use of a French-Canadian counterpart. This could be attributed to Van den Dries distance from Canada's hockey culture, and without immediately recognizing its important implication, choses to instead translate on a basic word level. These panels are then followed by a larger one where Lou is horizontal, two feet up in the air with his arms stretched victoriously out, all the while holding his stick (189:2). Note below, this is a direct allusion to the famed and celebrated Bobby Orr photo seen below which is engrained into Canadian hockey iconography.

[183] This was first used by Toronto native, Foster Hewitt, in 1923. He would go on to be the sports radio, then television, announcer for The Toronto Maple Leafs – one of two Canadian teams until 1970 (the other being The Montreal Canadians). "CBC Digital Archives - Foster Hewitt: Voice of Hockey - Foster Hewitt: He Shoots, He Scores!" *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, 20 Mar. 2014. Web. 3 Dec. 2015.

[184] Made popular by Pierre Houde, who has broadcasted Habs games on the Réseau des sports (RDS) since 1989.



(Source: *Google Images* https://www.bobbyorrhall fame.com/robert-gordon-orr/)

Essex County is ripe with this type of cultural nostalgia, and is not necessarily divided between French and English Canada. With hockey being a large part of Canadian collective identity, entwined with a pastime to either watch, talk about, or play, it is largely a reason for

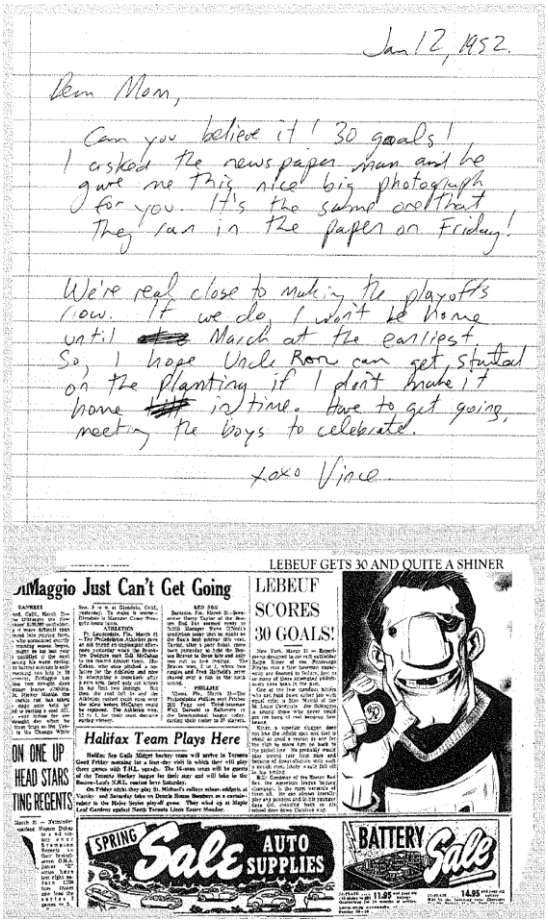
family and friends to get together. The significance of amicability and nostalgia resonates with the sheer mention of *Hockey Night in Canada*. Being the CBC program responsible for broadcasting the sport, it carries memories just in its mention. Understandably this importance may not translate overseas. In *Tales from the Farm* (Chapter 1), Kenny is trying to bond with his nephew Lester. Sitting on the couch, drinking a beer, he asks: "Hey Les, Hockey Night in Canada**'s** on. Two-one for Boston. Second period, wanna watch with me" (16:3)? Alternatively in *Essex County: Ontario, Canada,* Kenny ask invitingly: "*Salut Les, le match de hockey a commencé…deux contre un pour Boston à la deuxième période. Tu veux regarder avec moi"* (14:3)? The choice to translate as 'a hockey match' is directly due to its lack of cultural significance in France. Choosing to opt for a general term gives further context to Kenny's invitation, yet removes the sense of nostalgia for the game and its iconic show seen in Canada. For a French-Canadian reading *County,* they would be aware of *Hockey Night*; however, the French-Canadian version televised on "R**é**seau des sports" is called *La soir**é**e du hockey*[185]. For its translation basically meaning 'a hockey evening', this is once again closer to Lemire's original intent without alienating Francophone Canada readership. Although still portraying a cultural pastime, 'a hockey match' lacks in defining an entire evening centered on the game's spectacle for either side of Canada's language divide. This is usually completed with famous theme music, notable sports anchors, and the opinionated Don Cherry on his *Coach's Corner* segment.

Tell-tale Handwriting

While these Canadian cultural specifics carry meaning on a collective and individual level, the text itself can impose unique connotations. Returning to *Ghost Tales*, Vincent is

[185] "La Soirée Du Hockey Présentée Uniquement à RDS Au Québec." *RDS 25 Ans*. RDS, 2 July 2004. Web.

writing home to his mother in Essex County and the letter is seen as part of a scrapbook. It is a hybrid of printing and handwriting and often difficult to read. He writes outside the lines and has two mistakes scratched out in pencil, which could be defined as a sign of excitement (181, 197). Below the letter, is a newspaper clipping with a press photo showing a delighted Vincent grinning a toothless smile holding a puck (181, 197)[186]. Interestingly, this entire page changes in the French version, most noticeably with Vince`s writing. Printed, legible, calm and composed, it seems to be written by a steadier, more delicate hand. Arguably not the penmanship of the man in the photo we see below.



Jan 12, 1952.

Dear Mom,

Can you believe it! 30 goals! I asked the newspaper man and he gave me this nice big photograph for you. It's the same one that they ran in the paper on Friday!

We're real close to making the playoffs now. If we do I won't be home until ~~May~~ March at the earliest. So, I hope Uncle Ron can get started on the planting if I don't make it home in time. Have to get going, meeting the boys to celebrate.

Lots Vince.

LEBEUF GETS 30 AND QUITE A SHINER

DiMaggio Just Can't Get Going

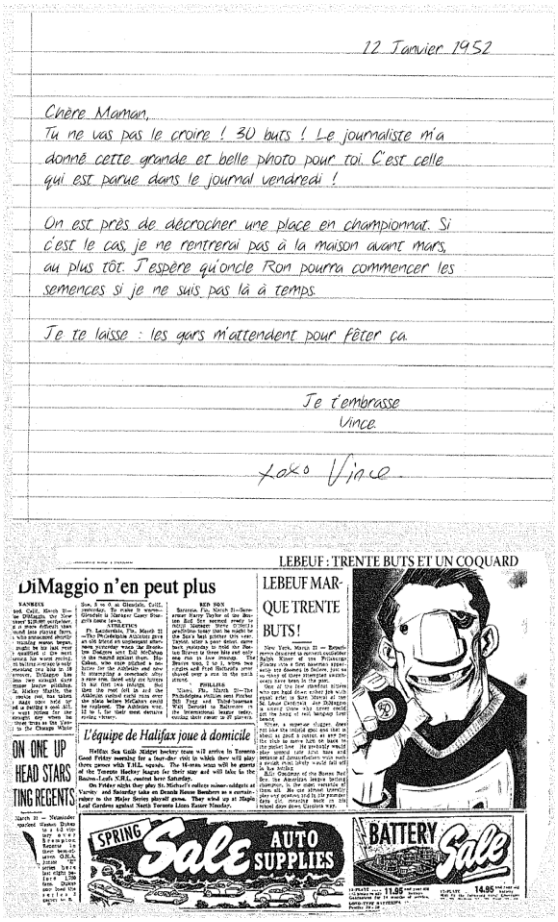
LEBEUF SCORES 30 GOALS!

Halifax Team Plays Here

ON ONE UP HEAD STARS TING REGENTS

SPRING Sale AUTO SUPPLIES

BATTERY Sale



12 Janvier 1952

Chère Maman,
Tu ne vas pas le croire ! 30 buts ! Le journaliste m'a donné cette grande et belle photo pour toi. C'est celle qui est parue dans le journal vendredi !

On est près de décrocher une place en championnat. Si c'est le cas, je ne rentrerai pas à la maison avant mars, au plus tôt. J'espère qu'oncle Ron pourra commencer les semences si je ne suis pas là à temps.

Je te laisse : les gars m'attendent pour fêter ça.

Je t'embrasse
Vince

Lots Vince.

LEBEUF : TRENTE BUTS ET UN COQUARD

DiMaggio n'en peut plus

LEBEUF MARQUE TRENTE BUTS!

L'équipe de Halifax joue à domicile

ON ONE UP HEAD STARS TING REGENTS

SPRING Sale AUTO SUPPLIES

BATTERY Sale

[186] This again is another iconic hockey image, but of a photo of Ontario born Bobby Hull. Seen smiling from ear to ear, Hull is missing his two front teeth yet still proudly displaying the number '50' written on a puck. Once more, this is instantly recognizable as part of a shared memory, although the impression may be lost overseas.

On a side note, in the newspaper article the subject titles have been translated yet the fine-print underneath remains in English. This of course would be extremely difficult to translate, but it gives further evidence of a foreign voice in the story.

Speech and Graphics

Told non-linearly, *Ghost Tales* moves back and forth through Lou`s memories and current reality. He is at once a hockey player in Toronto, a farmer in Essex County, and an elderly man stricken with dementia and a severe hearing impairment. His lost mind is depicted through imagery – such as him floating in water –and with grammar – like using questions marks in thought bubbles. In terms of Lou`s deafness, Lemire has chosen a creative use in visual fonts to demonstrate a difference in his speech. Note the shakiness of the font, or how certain words linger or double on a certain letter. This makes evident that he speaks differently than others, but also changes how the reader internalizes his dialogue and voice. Unfortunately, Van den Dries instead decided to keep the font and grammar visually similiar to the other printed characters, and the graphic unsteadiness of Lou`s conversation bubble from the original. This rendition of his text does not transmit the same tone and intonation as in the English version. The simple divergence to a more formal font creates a different experience for its readers. Lou believing he ``sound(s) funny" while speaking is not equally recreated in this translated typography (131:4). The basic change of incorporating one visual font from another can modify how the character is portrayed.

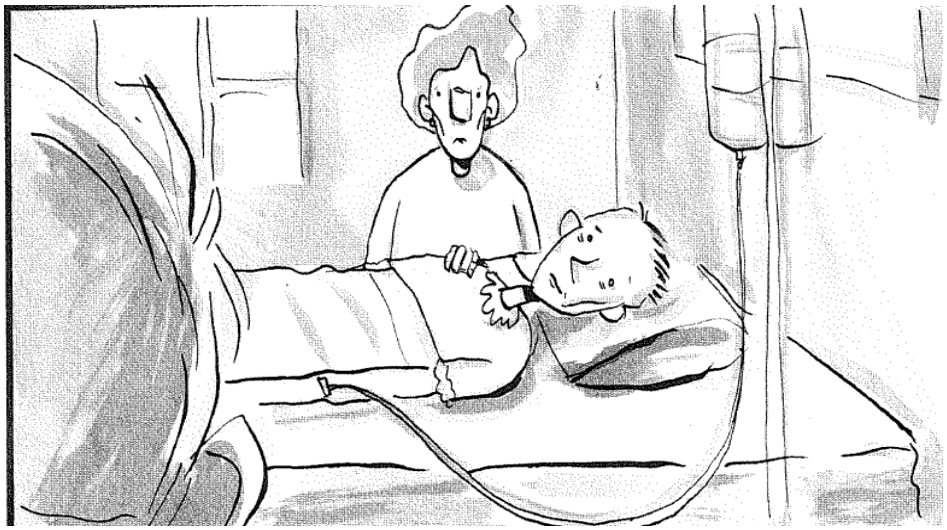
Exploring *County's* relationship between comic text and its imagery have helped exemplify how one can influence the other. To refresh: this has included English and French language interactions, cultural portrayals and their translated equivalents, and font differentials. Within a Canadian context, these examples also address the notion of meaning through visuals and how they are being transmitted and understood. They provide ample demonstration of the cultural and subjective nature of reading a text largely image based. The existence of drawings representing a more concise object, action, situation, or trait, etc; yet they are those which carry abstract notions and the possibility of divergent interpretations. For *Essex County,* these open perspectives are moored by the surrounding narrative and the symbolic nature of its images. Defined as "a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way", symbols are often created in a social context and maintained through an established order[187]. For example, 'love', 'enjoyment', or 'the act of caring' can be represented by a simple heart shape. There are certain symbolic, repetitiously used, devices Lemire has employed which exceed the compounds of language. Not only do they help thread the three stories together – often seen in quiet image-

[187] Danesi, Marcel. *Sign, Thought, and Culture: A Basic Course in Semiotics*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 1998. 43. Print.

based panels and within a wordless narrative – but instead of demonstrating a separation between French-speaking communities in France and Quebec with English Canada, a mutual understanding has occurred from visual abstract representations. At its core, *Essex County* is a universal human story and this creates subsequent imagery with the possibility of shared comprehension.

Fading Memories

Our first example comes in the form of imagining a character remembering a moment in time; Lemire has made an artistic choice in how he wanted to symbolically recreate reminiscent snapshots. In *Tales from the Farm* and *The Country Nurse,* Lester remembers back to when his mother was dying of cancer in the hospital. With the backdrop of only white and only light shadings of grey, the contour lines are very fine, used sparingly and are wavy and vague (83:2-5, 360:3). Most comics will use a caption box narrating time makers such as: 'a year ago', 'last spring', etc. yet the lightness of Lemire's sketches portray the same idea. It is a memory in the past, and just like something removed from its immediate surroundings and placed in the distance, it is less vivid and clear.



Filtered through memory a previous experience can diminish certain details, yet amplify others. In Lester's last flashback, he remembers the nurse Anne Quenneville helping his mom; with a distinctive darker penmanship outlining her nose. This imagery is, of course, reproduced in *Essex County: Ontario, Canada*. The intangibility, fragility, and shaded perception of a person's memory translates equivalently through the faded artwork in Lemire's English original.

A Crow

The example of a threading pictograph in all three chapters is the appearance of a crow. It is featured on the front of *Essex County* and on the back of French translation *Essex County, Ontario, Canada*[188]. A rather ubiquitous bird, it presents itself at specific and thoughtful moments, but is only mentioned as an explained, tangible presence in *The Country Nurse*. Reverting back to 1917, a nun called Sister Margaret and a woodsman named Charles Gerrard are responsible for looking after an orphanage of 'about' fourteen young children. Complaining about Mr. Gerrard bringing "that filthy bird into the house", he replies in defense of his pet: "Aw, He don't hurt none. Cold out there for him too, eh" (387:1-2). Following this storyline, Sister Margaret and the children lose their home – and Mr. Gerrard – in a fire, and are forced to trek for two days in anticipation of finding the new settlement, "Essex County". Nearly frozen to death and losing all hope, it is then when the group sees Mr. Gerrard's crow. "It was as if he was watching over us…/It stayed with us the rest of the way, flying ahead…/Guiding us…" (444:1-3). First seen flying above Kenny's farm on page 42, it is marked with symbolism as it

[188] The two covers focus on divergent connotative images. In the English version, it is a large tree with plenty of deep roots – the crow is seen flying out of its branches. This is obviously in reference to ancestry and a 'family tree', with the bird being liberated, and the roots keeping things profound and stable. It could also be seen as growth from two different directions. The French cover has already been discussed (page 4 above), but the back cover uses a page from the book. On page 21, we see a country road, Kenny's truck, telephone poles, and no crow. On the back however, we see the bird looking to perch on the wire, as to continue seeing everything that occurs from above.

increasingly becomes an omniscient, benevolent overseer passing through times of personal growth, death, struggle, and peacefulness. A widespread creature, it is easily recognizable on both sides of the Atlantic. Long a subject from numerous cultural and folk backgrounds, our context remains from art and literature[189]. "A messenger; a prophet; associated with the idea of beginning; attribute of Hope personified" are words used to describe its significance[190]. *Essex County: Ontario, Canada* hints at the crow's symbolism throughout the story. Mirrored as in the English text above, Sister Margaret narrates: "*C'était comme s'il veillait sur nous, de là-haut./Elle est restée avec nous jusqu'à la fin du voyage. Elle volait devant./Nous guidait…* (474:1-3). Using the simile stating that it was "like the crow" was helping guide their path, this cross-culturally solidifies Lemire's intent in its portrayal.

Facial Expressions Express

The final example comes from the depiction of the characters themselves. In *Essex County*, they have a simple essence to their basic physical traits, and most importantly to their facial features. According to Rodolphe Töpffer:

> Graphic symbols that enable one to project all the varied and complex expressions of the human face turn out at bottom to be very few. Consequently, the expressive power of these devices springs not from the great number one has to work with, but from the countless easy ways by which you can vary them[191].

[189] Olderr, Steven. *Symbolism: A Comprehensive Dictionary*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1986: v.
[190] Ibid. 32.
[191] Töpffer, Rodolphe. "Chapter Five." Trans. E. Wiese. *Enter the Comics: Rodolphe Töpffer's Essay on Phsyiognomy and The True Story of Monsieur Crépin*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 1965. 10-12. Print.

He continues with demonstrating the slight alernation of a simple sketched line part of a facial characteristic ("as one nostril") "is enough to suggest a host of emotions[192]. With Lemire his faces follow this canon, bearing little detail with the exception of prominent noses, beady eyes, thin eyebrows, closed lips, and mustaches, wrinkles on the older individuals. That said, there are numerous examples of facial – and eye – close ups focusing on the persons reflections or how they are feeling. This is perhaps best exemplified below in the three proceeding images. In the first example, Jimmy and Kenny are exchanges threatening words. Note the simple furrowing of the eyes-brows express quite deeply a menacing stare down (76:5).

On the other hand, an elderly Lou changes his expression from surprise, to a happy and peacefulness with the upturning of his eye-brows and lips (333:2-6). The reversal of these features create an opposite effect, therefore the adverse emotions are portrayed. The final depiction is more reactionary and is slightly more complex to distinguish. It is in its cumulative narrative which works with the actions in the background. A scene from 1917, these three panels show an extreme close up of Sister Margaret's partial face (389:1-3). Her eye is the only part which changes, and it is with exact timing as the slamming of the door by the woodsman, Mr.

[192] Ibid.

Gerrard. Not solely a reaction against the noise, the closing and eventual opening of her eye reveals feelings of regret, reflection, and remorse. As readers we are left with sympathizing with her worried, dilated countenance. Recognizing different types of emotive expressions – as mentioned above – have the possibility to breach cultural or language restrictions. According to a study 1963 by Paul Ekman, they broke down facial expressions into different components, which are exemplified by the cartooning done by Lemire, such as "eyebrown postion, eye shape, mouth shape, nostril size, etc."[193]. Their changing of form and positioning had the ability to present different expressions, where "Ekman found very little variation across cultures in these components and in their combinations"[194]. In the end, he found facial "'grammar' shows less cross-cultural variation than do language grammars"[195].

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Essex County* in both French and English display the cultural interactions which can occur in a bilingual country. Taking recognizable iconic imagery in a Canadian context often has an important historical significance. Reactions in the communication which occurs between Anglophone and Francophone Canada holds continued value due to past circumstances and events. Although imagery and text may split at times, they are still brought together with the commonality of human narrative.

[193]Danesi, Marcel. *Sign, Thought, and Culture: A Basic Course in Semiotics*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Canadian Scholars', 1998. 55-6. Print.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.

Conclusion: What Do Canadian Comics Have to Say?

"I think we're at a threshold of a big directional change in comic book art...I think the biggest single thing that is happening in comics is that it's moving toward intellectualism".

Will Eisner (Interview, 1974)

This thesis has presented both Francophone and Anglophone Canadian comic books, including their adjacent communities, and analyses of their significance nationally and overseas. The comics discussed have all used a wide array of semiotic systems, with the first one being under the exploration of visual aspects, such as: pictures, sequential art narratives, symbolism, fonts/graphics, and physiognomy. Secondly, on a textual basis there are: character names, grammatical stylings, and French/English language interactions. Finally temporal and cultural components of music, history, sports, media/multimedia, and literature are also abundant, which can be recognized differently depending on one individual reader to another. Comics in this foundation, have the potential to be borrowed, bought, trademarked, translated, and then re-issued through a new system of cultural marketability. Seeing this list of text-related categories as inevitably being interconnected, the difficulty arises in the enrooted images often reappropriated and reinterpreted to adapt into another language or culture.

Dealing with French and English Canadian comics, it is impossible not to address Canada's linguistic divide. In terms of partitioning the 'Solitudes', of either being Francophone or Anglophone, translating comics from French into English and vice-versa, has helped project information to both sides of Canada. They have also aided in merging the thriving multiculturalism with Canada's existing official bilingualism. Perhaps in a future corpus, the emergence of homegrown Canadian comics featured originally in Punjabi, German, Mandarin,

Cree, or Ukrainian could be translated into English and French further progressing language and cultural interaction through understanding of both image and text[196].

Considering the elements above found in comics today – Eisner's 1974 prediction came true. Furthermore, he sagely bonded "I think as technology increases the physical format of comics is changing...As the audience becomes more demanding and more intelligent, I think comics will become that way too."[197] Recently, advances have brought new formats and developments to the comic-sphere. This is most evident in the increase of digital comics, with sales up 260 percent over just the last three years[198]. These types of comics found on the web, often have interactive qualities such as sound-bites or interactive role-playing with the characters themselves[199]. Coupled with its popularity and easy-accessibility, cultural and language exchanges are becoming more and more frequent through the comic book medium. What this means for their translation, will be left to someone else to predict.

[196] Tahirali, Jesse. "Map: Canada's Most Common Non-official Languages."*Map: Canada's Most Common Non-official Languages*. CTV News, n.d. Web. 3 Jan. 2015.
[197] Eisner, Will. "An Interview with Will Eisner: Dave Sim." Ed. M. Thomas. Inge. *Will Eisner: Conversations*. Jackson: U of Mississippi, 2011. 33. Print.
[198] Shaban, Bigad. "The Evolution of Comic Books in the Digital Age."*CBSNews*. CBS Interactive, 22 July 2014. Web. 2 Jan. 2015.
[199] Ibid.

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