

Athens Institute for Education and Research

ATINER



ATINER's Conference Paper Series

LIT2012-0242

**My Words + Your Words =
Our World@Literature.global**

**Graciela Boruszko
Associate Professor
Pepperdine University
USA**

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209
Email: info@atiner.gr URL: www.atiner.gr
URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.
All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the
source is fully acknowledged.

ISSN 2241-2891

19/09/2012

An Introduction to ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. The papers published in the series have not been refereed and are published as they were submitted by the author. The series serves two purposes. First, we want to disseminate the information as fast as possible. Second, by doing so, the authors can receive comments useful to revise their papers before they are considered for publication in one of ATINER's books, following our standard procedures of a blind review.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

Boruszko, G. (2012) "My Words + Your Words = Our World@Literature.global" Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: LIT2012-0242.

My Words + Your Words = Our World@Literature.global

Graciela Boruszko
Associate Professor
Pepperdine University
USA

Abstract

Contemporary urban communities are the likely scenarios where the constructions of personal identities are achieved within a bilingual or multilingual sociolinguistic environment. The use and choice of language plays an important role in this process as a medium to communicate, to express the self, and to represent the world.

Biculturalism and bilingualism deconstructs a unified block of representation originating a new synergized portrayal. An individual outlook at society determines this unique linguistic and sociopolitical representation as society itself exercises influences over the individual. Tradition acts as a negotiator between these forces that chisel a modified shape to an individual that seeks to immerse the self into a new collectivity. Between the fear to loose the already acquired identity and the forging of a new identity, there are words and worlds that need to be expressed within a discussion on the use of self-translation as a linguistic bridge to reach the other.

The decision to embrace bilingualism is based on the desire to explore beyond their “village” and engage in broader conversations. Independently of the reasons of the individual to decide to be immersed in another culture, the decision implies the acceptance of modifications to the somewhat monolithic vision of the “self” and the “other”. To get immersed in bilingualism is the first step to penetrate a biculturalism that is bound to leave marks on the chore of the self as another referent is taken alongside the self even in a competing way or at least in a comparative approach. That cumulus of life transcends to others through words that reveal a personal mysterious world that is in constant formation and transformation.

In this paper I explore the experience of the self and the stranger in relation to linguistic and artistic exile in literature. The multicultural and multilingual author, Nancy Huston chose literature, the land of words, a place where to establish her inner personal worlds. Words and worlds create a fascinating synergy as they interact with the illusion of a certain identity. “Self and the other” engage in conversations that lead to reinventing the self through the use of languages.

The situational “exile” of the author is then expressed at multiple levels as the concept of national and foreign, original and translation, individual and collective, fidelity and infidelity, identity and otherness, and mother tongue and foreign language all play interchangeable roles in the “illusion of a unique identity”.

Contact Information of Corresponding author:

(...) textual activity (...) runs over, back and forth, between language systems,
failing to respect the boundaries that normally contain
the French and English languages.
Brian Fitch, 134

Nancy Huston describes herself as “(...) a Canadian and French writer but not Canadian-French.”¹ Referring to Nancy Huston’s bilingual work, Shread affirms that “a self-translated text is more than the chanced contiguity of two languages; instead, it involves degrees of reciprocal interference.” (55) As we approach the study of *Nord Perdu*, a work by Nancy Huston situated in the *francophone* literary world, the tension between two languages and two nationalities finds a fertile and welcoming terrain in the literary world of a globalized century.

The directing vector of the story is the ‘absent mother’ (her absent biological mother), which represents the writer’s Anglophone world of her childhood and is represented in English, and the “*mère nourrice* or nourishing mother” is in French and represents the culture that influenced her adult life after she moved to Paris. The writer expresses her situational ‘exile’ as languages, nationalities, identity, and otherness. Original and translation converge in a literary work charged with narrations of personal experiences as testaments of a quest for personal identity and intimate freedom. The secondary language is a space of vulnerability; nevertheless, it becomes a second *chez moi* when the author feels at home in her new French environment.

Another vector of this narrative is the contrast between the North and the South. The North is associated with the distant, cold land of her childhood. However, the adjective ‘lost’ denies the geographical localization. Thus the direction is contradicted leaving a void, an absent place, a nowhere in the most critical state of confusion at which point the *Nord Perdu* becomes a shadow, a presence, through the absence. This is the environment where the chaos of a shortfall will inspire an artistic creation as a redeeming act out of that loss. The reader is then invited to participate in a fictional world where worlds have multiple directions, thus necessitating the modification of geography. The story is anchored in a joint quest between the reader and the writer to find what was lost and what was not visible or tangible at the beginning of the narrative. The words and worlds of the writer become the literary world situated in a global scenario.

For Huston, the North is synonymous with home, her habitat, her country, and all that was familiar to her during her childhood as a Canadian. The retrospective outlook testifies to a childhood in which an imposed silence created a void in the absence of words.

In a foreign land, we become children again and in the worst sense of the word: infantilized. Reduced to be a child; that is to say to silence, bereft of the capacity to speak. Lacking all power! (The English word ‘dumb’

¹ ‘une écrivaine canadienne et française mais non pas canadienne-française.’ Huston, (*En français dans le texte*, 232)

describes it well, as this word corresponds to the lack of ability to speak as well as to the stupidity.)

À l'étranger, on est enfant à nouveau, et dans le pire sens du terme: infantilisé. Réduit à l'infans; c'est-à-dire au silence; privé de parole. Totalement idiot et impuissant! (La langue anglaise le dit bien; qui fait converger dans le mot dumb le mutisme et la bêtise.) (Nord Perdu, 78)

It seems that the writer is trying to find her words as an adult to compensate for the silence of her infancy. The writer's choice of the English word 'dumb' over the French *bêtise* conveys a hint of regret. It would seem that French plays the role of a 'nurturing linguistic mother' in contraposition to the 'severe linguistic English mother.' As Huston refers to a dialogue with her mother, she says: "...je veux mes corn flakes! MAMAN !!!" (Nord Perdu, 79). The use of the exalted tone and capital letters is charged with emotion because the communication with her mother is marked by frustration. The dialogue reaches a climax when the silence is broken by a scream as the return to infancy enters into crisis. The drama is declared as the past enters the present and the present enters into the past and two times are superposed.

We all live the different stages of life in superposition (and not in confusion, at least until we suffer from Alzheimer.) For me, the word 'train' echoes with it the Canadian trains of my childhood, (...).

Tous, nous vivons les différentes époques de notre vie dans la superposition (et non, du moins jusqu'à la maladie d'Alzheimer, dans la confusion). Pour moi, le mot de train trimballe avec lui les échos des trains canadiens de mon enfance, (...). (Nord Perdu, 104)

The writer associates time with language within a personal perspective. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the narrative, she adopts a more generalized approach to bilingualism and biculturalism.

To become disoriented it to loose the east. To loose the north is to forget what we had the intention to say.

Se désorienter, c'est perdre l'est. Perdre le nord, c'est oublier ce que l'on avait l'intention de dire. (Nord Perdu, 12)

Huston associates her geographical coordinates with her profound feelings towards the stages of her life and the linguistic practice of the time. In this way, her native country of Canada is associated with the act of remembering and France is associated with orientation. While remembering her roots, she can orient her life towards a new multicultural and multilingual world that can be better managed because she remembers her roots. The role that personal and national traditions play in the linguistic reconciliation of individuals and nationals is emphasized in contrast to new, later experiences of multicultural and multilingual exchanges.

Have we asked the Indians and the Innuits if they agreed with our "multicultural" ideals before we appropriated their lands in order to expand our own cultures: the French, the English, the Irish and the others?

Avons-nous demandé aux Indiens et aux Inuits s'ils étaient d'avis avec nos idéaux « multiculturels », avant de nous approprier leurs terres pour y épanouir nos cultures à nous: la française, l'anglaise, l'irlandaise et ainsi de suite? (Nord Perdu, 83)

When we are abroad, we become children again.
À l'étranger, on est enfant à nouveau... (Nord Perdu, 78)

In Poland, once, I remember, I asked a question in English to an old man...
En Pologne, une fois, je me souviens, j'ai posé une question en anglais à un vieux monsieur.... (Nord Perdu, 79)

Now, I am a mature woman: in the street, even in Italy and in Spain (...)
I have acquired a thousand ways to be confident and knowledgeable...
Je suis une femme mûre maintenant: dans la rue, même en Italie et en Espagne (...) j'ai acquis mille formes de confiance et de savoir-faire,...
(Nord Perdu, 77)

Huston uses the internal and external focalization of the reality of the different worlds—whether personal or general, individual or collective, historical or contemporary—so that every reader can empathize with the stories narrated. The writer chooses a direct formulation of her thesis using an intimate tone of confidence, as well as a reflective analysis of a more general nature that invites the reader not only to listen to her story but also to reflect on an experience that represents experiences that are common to a majority of the global population. The author merges the readers' worlds into 'our world.' In his *Letter to Herodotus*, Epicurus indicated that "...on the whole, language boundaries appear to coincide with boundaries between peoples; and it means that our language is not just an accidental part of who we are as a people, but has been directly moulded by the most fundamental part of who we are, our bodies."¹

Huston seems to concur with this thought:

The true North strong and free is therefore inside me, my national anthem. The true North is the 'truthful and geographical north' the one that sets the compass, the North Pole really. To lose the compass is 'to lose one's head,' 'to become crazy.'

The true North strong and free, *c'est donc chez moi, mon hymne national. True North c'est 'le nord vrai ou géographique', celui qu'indique la boussole: le pôle nord; quoi. Perdre la boussole; c'est 'perdre la tête', 's'affoler'.* (Nord Perdu, 14)

I come from the North. In French, every time that we refer to it, we specify that it is big.

Le Nord, j'en viens. En français, chaque fois qu'on y fait allusion, on précise qu'il est grand. (Nord Perdu, 13)

¹ Letter to Herodotus, 75-6 translation by Bailey 1926.

Huston represents the Canadian notion of the North as being 'home,' while the French perception of it is what the adventurer covets. The author creates a duality of the perceptions of her land by the two cultures that participate in her narrative, giving a clear direction to the literary text from the enunciation of the title of the story. The geographical *Nord* is not lost; nonetheless, the geographical duality and translation between the two cultures seem to create emotional and social confusion within the author.

I come from the North.

Le Nord, j'en viens. (Nord Perdu, 13)

The childhood, close or far away, is always within us.

L'enfance, proche ou lointaine, est toujours en nous. (Nord Perdu, 17)

Here you don't say what you have been... There you don't tell what you do.

Ici, vous taisez ce que vous fûtes... Là, vous taisez ce que vous faites...(Nord Perdu, 20-21)

Your kinfolk are far away.

Vos proches sont loin. (Nord Perdu, 86)

Huston creates a literary map extrapolated from the geography of the two continents, Europe and North America. She layers this geography with superimposed times, life stages, and linguistic attitudes, creating a synergetic world that functions linguistically and influences the spaces where it takes place. At this time, a literary artistic 'world' is being created. The literary cosmogony of Nancy Huston becomes enriched with many layers of elements, constituting a unique and personal world, and at the same time, it is an accessible world to the reader. This literary interaction is charged by the author's emotions that are enhanced by the superposition of the childhood memories and the present appreciation of those emotions.

... the whistling trains that recedes into the dark night,
somewhere in the gorges of the Allier, filling me with
nostalgia as heartbreaking as it is mysterious

*... des trains dont le sifflement s'éloigne dans la nuit
noire; quelque part dans les gorges de l'Allier, me
remplissant d'une nostalgie aussi déchirante que
mystérieuse... (Nord Perdu, 105)*

In late September 1959, while in western Canada, my parents divorced, and the woman who became my stepmother took me to her parents in Germany in a small village called Immerath.

*Fin septembre 1959, pendant qu'à l'ouest du Canada mes
parents divorçaient, la femme qui allait devenir ma belle-
mère m'a amenée chez ses parents à elle en Allemagne; dans
un petit village du nom d'Immerath. (Nord Perdu, 74)*

Huston formulates the progress of the exile and the process of becoming bilingual and bicultural in the sequence of the titles of each chapter of the book:

Sending, orientation, disorientation, the mask, ... and the pen, the false bilingualism, the innate, the acquired and the innate, the distress abroad, the arrogant mosaic, relatively relative, the three stepdaughters, the memory hole, the other selves I, the other selves II.

Envoi, orientation, désorientation, le masque, ...et la plume, le faux bilinguisme, l'inné, l'acquis et l'innée, la détresse de l'étranger, la mosaïque arrogante, relativement relative, les trois belles-filles, la mémoire trouée, les autres soi I, les autres soi II.

In this sequence, Huston exposes a personal pilgrimage that parallels the reader's own pilgrimage while sharing this literary world with the author. The image of the pilgrimage (either literal or metaphorical) echoes the biblical image where the pilgrim is always a traveler and a fixed and glorious goal is always the final destination that motivates the journey.

the expatriate discovers consciously (and sometimes painfully) a number of realities that shape, most often without our knowledge, the human condition.

...l'expatrié découvre de façon consciente (et parfois douloureuse) un certain nombre de réalités qui façonnent, le plus souvent à notre insu, la condition humaine. Back cover of *Loosing North*.

In the Bible, the pilgrimage is rooted in the worship practices of the Old Testament where the location and displacement is specifically mentioned. "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand *outside*./ I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God/ Than dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalms 84:10). "And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD (...)' " (Isaiah 2:3).

The narrative starts with an enigmatic phrase that follows the dramatic title of *Loosing North*, "I do not like it. Yes. This is Sviatoslav Richter speaking," *Je ne me plais pas. Oui. C'est Sviatoslav Richter qui parle (Nord Perdu, 11)*. The identity crisis is expressed in a climax when the author starts with a negative sentence. She continues with the affirmation of the negative and finally adopts another identity as a mask that can only reveal the pain of the author that will expose her wounds in the narrative. The writer continues by stating that "At the beginning, self-hatred" *Au départ; la haine de soi*. The author from the beginning lost the common, natural feeling of self-love and replaced it with hatred. The feeling of hatred placed at the beginning of this statement marks a catastrophic event because it is not a natural feeling but rather a feeling that responds to tragedy. Considering that the object of hatred is the same individual, the reader is catapulted to the writer's abyss. The story

continues by indicating that “For whatever reason” *Peu importe pour quelle raison*. By trivializing the origins of the self-hatred, the feeling is emphasized as it lacks a reason, just as the writer is ‘losing the North.’ It is important to note that the title in French reads *Nord Perdu*, indicating the past tense of an action already completed, while in the English translation, it reads *Losing North* in the progressive tense. It is as if the French, being a foreign language from a foreign world, highlights the process from a spectator’s point of view, whereas the English title indicates the dramatic continuity of the loss.

The author continues stating that “We can become an artist. Commit suicide. Change the name, country, language” *On peut devenir artiste. Se suicider. Changer de nom, de pays, de langue*. Huston continues to describe the way to get to ‘your words,’ which is a way to commit suicide as the author, leaving her personal universe, enters a new world, the world of ‘words’ that is shared in a global literary realm. There is a linguistic change that follows this displacement, indicating that the author needs to leave a familiar world and be inserted into another world and learn new ways. The metaphor of the suicide is associated with the artistic work because the writer is going to expose herself to her intimate and private life, thus making it public (thereby dying), just as the suicide exposes the private loss of hope and self-inflicted hatred. In the *Journal de la création*, Huston declares that “A woman who ‘kills’ her mother symbolically, through the act of writing or otherwise, is also ‘killing’ herself.” *Or une femme qui « tue » symboliquement sa mère, à travers l’acte d’écriture ou autrement, se « tue » toujours elle-même aussi* (33). Again, the author establishes a parallel between the private life and the public life of a writer such that by using her words and joining them to the reader’s words, she aims to create a new world that belonging to both, thereby helping her to escape her private tragedy. At the end of this first section, Huston again uses the words of Romain Gary because she is desperately attempting to use other masks to hide her loss.

The author uses in her narrative different types of arguments. She presents arguments of authority as she exposes her personal experience. Some examples of these arguments are the instances when she talks about a geographical exile that implies a variety of disconnections. The physical displacement connotes the absence of the place of origin involving not only the physical aspects of the separation but also the emotional detachment. Another *leitmotif* of the writer is her childhood memories. It is at this stage in life that the child establishes a connection with the community, learning the culture, the language, and all the behavioral expectations of a certain social class. Huston presents her experience as a personal loss rather than as an enriching experience. The writer argues that the childhood memories are present in the adult life, and they continue to determine it. Huston cites in her work *Journal de la création* that “Hatred of childbirth is almost always a fear of mortality” *La haine de l’enfantement est presque toujours une peur devant la mortalité* (99). This same hatred resurfaces in *Losing North* as the self-hatred associated at the beginning. Huston also argues that memories are tied to geography and that coming back to the geographical setting of their origin constitutes a failed

attempt to recuperate them. The phantom of the double and the desire of unity become pivotal in the life of the exiled. In a parallel way, the relation with the mother is essential to maintain the unity of an individual. The fragmentation of this relationship is metamorphosed into the relation between the two cultures.

For he who knows two languages necessarily knows two cultures as well, so the complex transition from one to the other and the painful relativization of one by another.

Car celui qui connaît deux langues connaît forcément deux cultures aussi, donc le passage difficile de l'une à l'autre et la douloureuse relativisation de l'une par l'autre. (Nord Perdu, 37)

A closing argument deriving from the writer's reflections in this narrative is that the true identity of an individual is manifested in solitude and cannot be fully manifested in any of the separate worlds of the exiled. That is why the individual chooses to use a mask and approaches the new culture through imitation to manipulate the reality that does not allow the individual to fully express their original identity. It is at this moment that the literary world opens up a terrain where the literary identities of 'writer and reader' can meet, originating 'our world.' Huston dedicates a whole chapter to the discussion of the mask. The author indicates that childhood is the only formative stage and that the rest of life is manifested in relation to this origin using different masks. "...It means to accept to settle forever in imitation, in pretending, in the theater." ...*c'est accepter de s'installer à tout jamais dans 'l'imitation, le faire semblant, le théâtre'* (Nord Perdu, 30).

Huston also uses arguments that generalize the personal experience. One of these arguments states that the mother tongue nourishes the individual while the second language has to be nourished to access it. The native language establishes a connection with the surrounding community, but the second language of choice requires that the individual connect with it even if it is not close. The writer states in the *Journal de la création* that "...a murderous impulse was transferred from my mother to myself."...*une pulsion meurtrière transférée de ma mère sur moi-même* (33). Mother tongue refers to the image of the mother, so the deadly impulse not only kills the mother but also the mother tongue as the relationship is generated in a lethal direction. It is not surprising, then, that the writer tried to fill the void with a second language. In the *Journal de la création*, Huston relates through her own pregnancy that "Another body occupies and modifies mine, imperceptibly but in the long run spectacular" *Un autre corps occupe et modifie le mien, de façon imperceptible mais à la longue spectaculaire* (21). The author constantly associates the images of the mother with the image of the mother tongue such that the physical pregnancy mirrors the 'linguistic pregnancy' of an individual, who carries within the self another language that is lodged within the self, thus becoming one with the self.

Another argument that Huston puts forth in this narrative is the exoticism of a second language. This argument presents a fascinating contrast because the language, while being exotic or foreign, is nonetheless lodged in the individual. In this way, the exotic world, instead of being far away, becomes intimate with

the speaker in spite of being introduced as an exotic linguistic place. The author makes an interesting observation that testifies to the relation between both cultures to the 'exotic other.'

I know some Americans who, living in France as long as I lived there, grow unhindered their accent, their blue jeans and hamburgers, and are accepted and loved by those around them with all their "quirks" of Yanks.

Je connais des Américains qui, tout en habitant la France depuis aussi longtemps que moi, cultivent sans gêne leur accent, leur blue-jean et leur hamburger, et sont acceptés et aimés par leur entourage avec toutes leur « bizarreries » d'Amerloques. (Nord Perdu, 30)

The individual is going to spend a generous amount of energy to try to fill an intimate void by imitating a language or a culture to foster a personal connection with the new environment. The urban environment seems to be the community that fosters these cultural exchanges that characterize our globalized world. Finally, Huston also mentions analogic arguments by inserting her narrative in the Francophone literature, as well as in the global literary world. On page 46, Huston mentions Beckett, another writer that, like herself, shares the Anglophone and Francophone linguistic worlds.

The writer delicately combines the physical geographies with the emotional geography, creating artistic spaces that will become 'our world' as readers of the story. By introducing the personal memories in relation to the present of the writer, she creates another space that unites opposites. Each country represents a separation with the other, describing the experience and the space of the exiled, as well as mirroring the image of her absent mother. In the same way that a person cannot be in two places simultaneously, the writer cannot recuperate the lost relationship with her mother. This impossibility generates a final cry when Huston wishes she could live two simultaneous lives because she cannot attain harmony and unity.

The times in the narrative superimpose. The past-present tense does not allow the normal advancement of time. The present tense is lived according to the past, creating a conflict in the individual that generates the tragedy of the incapability to change the past or to even come to terms with it. The literary world, however, orders times and circumstances as desired, offering the writer and the reader a time and place to find peace. The absent mother creates a void in the present that perpetuates an absence that even the second culture or language as 'nourishing mothers' cannot replace.

The narrative of Huston is part of the inter-textual world. In his work *L'homme dépaycé*, Todorov narrates a story that correlates to *Nord Perdu* because both belong to the literary production of the twentieth century and share experiences of exile and immigration. In *L'homme dépaycé*, Todorov centers his narrative on the social aspect of exile, connecting the individual not with their personal roots but instead with the individual, national roots. The biological mother is replaced by the motherland. The image of the absent mother is presented instead as the image of the idea of returning to his motherland, which creates a void in the protagonist. The two narratives are complementary, in spite of the

geographical difference between the 'North' in *Nord Perdu* and the 'East' in *L'homme dépaycé*. Nonetheless, both narratives represent a personal tension between the 'here' and the 'over there.' In his work *Léon L'Africain*, Amin Maalouf presents the experience of the forced immigration in the opposite direction. In this narrative, the protagonist is rooted in Spain even though he nourishes himself through contact with the Arab culture at home. At the time of the forced immigration, he is uprooted and challenged by an acculturation process that is very complicated. The most remarkable difference with Huston's story is the presence of the mother. For Maalouf, she is always near and becomes the connection between the two worlds, Spain and Africa. Even if both stories seem to go in opposite directions, both of them expose an uprooted experience. Todorov's and Malouf's stories show that the displacement is mostly geographical with personal ramifications, while in Houston's narrative, the displacement is personal within a personal story.

The process of being culturally and linguistically uprooted is also connected with *L'Etranger* of Camus. The contrast between the two stories is that the foreigner in *L'Etranger* becomes a cold and mechanical entity. He loses his name, his identity and, even more catastrophically, he loses his humanity, which is why the protagonist inspires fear. In the narrative of Huston, she expresses a deep desire to establish connections with the new community through French, which provides her with a new culture and a new opportunity to look for the absent mother that is not dead; in this way, the absence is not absolute. The stranger seems to have crossed this conclusive border when he cuts all family ties and his connections to the past. He does not look for anything as he goes into the future that is already disconnected from his own self. In *Le testament français*, Makine also elaborates on the linguistic aspect of the transmission of the language through the maternal line. The French language and motherhood constitute positive currents in the life of the protagonist. French is the 'mother tongue,' while his first language, Russian, becomes the language of his exile. In *Tanguy*, the mother is also absent and is far from being nourishing. The absence of his mother leaves the protagonist on a personal quest that evolves from the uprooting experience. As in *Nord Perdu*, the instability, as well as the constant quest for a mother that evades him, exposes a mother that is not dead. The French language works as a connection between the personal story and the Francophone literary world. In *Le dit de Tianyi*, the nourishing mother tongue is not the French language but the Chinese culture and tradition that constitute his childhood environment. As he loses his mother, French becomes his nourishing culture and language.

In all these stories, the role of the mother is a pivotal element in the protagonist's personal quests. The mother is absent in the entirety of the narrative, or in part of it, but the language become the nourishing mother. The *francophonie* has a specific role in the life of the protagonist, as it becomes 'our literary world,' thereby uniting both 'my words and your words.' All the protagonists are forced to look for a language other than the mother tongue to establish connections between 'the self and the other' in communities where the bilingual or bicultural settings become protagonists in the construction of

personal identities. The use of the language of choice participates in a complex layered block of representations, wherein the personal quest evolves into new quests in which the national and foreign, original and translation, individual and collective, fidelity and infidelity, identity and otherness, and mother tongue and foreign tongue all play interchangeable roles in the illusion of the achievement of a unified identity. The field that hosts this multitude of events is the literary world that allows for 'my word and your words' to constitute 'our world.'

Bibliography

- Alexakis, V., (1995) *La langue maternelle*, Paris: Fayard.
- Bailey, C., (1926) *Epicurus: the Extant Remains*, (ed. and transl.) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Brincourt, A., (1997) *Langue Française, terre d'accueil*, Montecarlo: Editions du Rocher.
- Chemain, R. & Degrange, A., (1996) *Imaginaires francophones*, Nice: Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis.
- Cheng, F., (1998) *Le dit de Tianyi*, Paris : Albin Michel.
- Combe, D., (1995) *Poétique francophones*, Paris : Hachette.
- Corcoran, P., & A., Miguel, (1996) *Francophonie: mythes, masques et réalités. Enjeux politiques et culturelles*, France : Publisud.
- Del Castillo, M., (1957 réed. 1995) *Tanguy*, Paris : Gallimard.
- Du continent perdu à l'archipel retrouvé, le Québec et l'Amérique française*, sous la direction de Louder, R., & Waddell, E., (1983) Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- ECHOS, *Spécial Francophonie*, No 56, 1989-1990
- Fitch, B., (1988) *An Investigation into the Status of the Bilingual Work: Beckett and Babel*, Toronto : University of Tronoto Press.
- Huston, N., (1995) 'En français dans le texte.' *Désirs et réalités : Textes choisis 1978-1994*, Montreal : Lemeac/Actes Sud. 231-36
- Huston, N., (1985) *Histoire d'Omayya*, Babel No 338, France: Seuil.
- Huston, N., (1990) *Journal de la création*, France: Seuil.
- Huston, N., (1981) *Les variations Goldberg*, Babel No 101, France: Seuil.
- Huston, N., (1999) *Nord Perdu suivi de Douze France*, France: Actes Sud.
- Huston, N., (1996) *Prodige*, France : Actes Sud.
- Huston, N., (1989) *Trois fois septembre*, Babel No 388, France : Seuil.
- Jouvert, J.L., & Lecarme, J., et alii, (1986) *Les littératures francophones depuis 1945*, Paris: Bordas.
- Kristeva, J., (1988) *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, Paris: Fayard.
- Le Canada en Francophonie*, (10th June 2012) http://www.dfaitmaeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/francophonie/declaration-fr.asp
- Maalouf, A., (1986) *Léon l'Africain*, Paris : Grasset.
- Makine, A., (1995) *Le testament français*, Paris : Mercure de France.
- Shread, C. (January 01, 2009). Redefining Translation through Self-Translation: The Case of Nancy Huston. *French Literature Series*, 36, 51.
- Todorov, T., (1996) *L'homme dépaycé*, Paris : Seuil.
- Téu, M., (1997) *Qu'est-ce que la francophonie*, Vanves : Hachette Edicef.
- Une enfance d'ailleurs 17 écrivains racontent*, textes inédits recueillis par Huston, N., & Sebbar, L., (1993), Paris : Belfond.